

PAST REFORM STRUGGLES AND SUCCESES—
ONTARIO'S ASSETS.

SIR OLIVER MOWAT'S SPEECH

AT

WHITBY, COUNTY OF ONTARIO,

8TH FEBRUARY, 1894.

REVISED EDITION.

PERSONAL MATTERS, 1857 TO 1872.

It is 36 years and more since I made my first appearance in the South Riding of Ontario County as a politician, and 29 years and a few months since I ceased to be the member for the Riding. I don't see to-day many of the faces that I used to see at political meetings during that time. I seem to have survived most of my old South Ontario friends, and of my opponents too; and, though some remain, most of these appear to have left the field of active politics to a younger generation. When I made my first appearance in the Riding I do not know that there were a dozen persons in the Riding who knew me personally, but the electors were made aware that I had the confidence of the great Reform leader, Mr. Brown, and other prominent Reformers of that time, and that they desired to have me in Parliament. I discussed at public meetings in the Riding the questions of the day; and when the election came on I had the honor of being selected and nominated as the Reform candidate, with the concurrence of the other aspirants for that honor. I remember with gratitude the hearty support which I received from them and from the whole Reform party, as well as from a sprinkling of Conservatives, both at that election and at subsequent elections. I represented the Riding for nearly seven years. During those seven years it happened that I was five times before the people for election—thrice at as many general elections, and twice at bye-elections, the first of the two bye-elections being in consequence of my accepting the office of Provincial Secretary in the Brown-Dorion Government of 1858, and the second bye-election being on my acceptance of the office of Postmaster-General in the Coalition Government formed in 1864 with Sir Etienne Taché as Premier, for the purpose of settling the difficulties between Upper and Lower Canada, and the difficulties also which there were between Protestants and Roman Catholics as to Separate Schools in Upper Canada and some kindred matters. I had also been Postmaster-General in the Macdonald-Dorion Government, formed in 1863, just before the general election of that year. I remember with gratitude that at my first election the Reformers and other friends in South Ontario gave me a majority of 778. I believe that I lost no friends afterwards, though the majorities at the three subsequent elections were not so large, it being now known that little exertion was necessary to secure the result, and less exertion in consequence being made. At my second election, which took place in August, 1858, the electors gave me a majority of 491; at the third, in July, 1861, a majority of 669; at the fourth, in September, 1863, a majority of 479; and at the fifth election, in 1864, I was returned by acclamation. Afterwards, the office of Vice-Chancellor becoming vacant, and being offered to me, I accepted it, with the concurrence of my