

OUR LATE PREMIER.

It having pleased the Almighty in his infinite wisdom to remove from us our first statesman, SIR JOHN ALEXANDER MACDONALD, there remained to the nation he had served so faithfully the duties of giving to his funeral obsequies every measure of dignity and impressive ceremonial that could be devised, and of honouring his memory by the careful preservation of those principles of high-minded loyalty to Sovereign and country, to the upholding of which he devoted the greater part of his life. That the first of these duties has been performed to the uttermost is well known to all the world; the eagerness with which the Government, the Parliament and the nation vied in the outward expression of sorrow at their loss, has resulted in a funeral pageant impressive to a degree unknown in the history of this Dominion, and seldom, if ever, surpassed in the annals of the British Empire. Never before has such universal sorrow been known; never before has the ceremonial of a concurrent memorial service in England's great Abbey been observed for any but those whose services to the state were in some degree bounded by the oceans that beat against England's shores.

In the honouring of our dead statesman's memory by the retention of the great national principles from which his actions sprung, we must remember that his success in evolving the Canada of to-day from the chaotic and discordant elements which existed when his service to British North America began has been largely due to working on lines carefully thought out. The goal of his ambition was, from the outset, the creation of a great Canadian and British nation on this continent; Canadian in self-government, in attention to Canadian development, in firm maintenance of Canadian rights; British in loyalty to British institutions, in close kinship to British people, and in aiding, to whatever extent was possible, the maintenance and growth of British power. To this end all his energies were directed. At an early period of his political career he had the opportunity of learning what magnificent natural advantages the then scattered provinces and territories of British North America possessed; that beyond the confines of what most men at that time considered the habitable area, stretched west and north a vast territory, capable of supporting in comfort and affluence many millions of souls, and of, in time, pouring its cereal treasures into the crowded centres of Europe; and that still further west Britain held sway over a land rich to a marvellous degree in gold and coal. What a herculean task to attempt to weld together these far-distant territories into one harmonious nation with the Canada of that day, and with the then foreign and far-away

provinces on the shores of the Atlantic. With British Columbia just emerging into the rudest form of provincial life, and totally inaccessible to direct intercourse with her eastern cousins; with the fertile territories of the North-West locked up in the tenacious grasp of one of the most powerful corporations the world had yet seen; with the Maritime colonies jealous even of each other, working on purely isolated lines, and looking to the Mother Country for trade, for government and for all necessary assistance, the task of building a Canadian nation out of these jarring elements seemed a hopeless one. Imperial statesmen, far-seeing in most matters, had no faith in it; and in the several colonies concerned, many of their most brilliant public men opposed the scheme with all the oratorical and diplomatic powers nature and circumstance had given them. Yet to this apparently chimerical project JOHN A. MACDONALD bent all his energies. Events of such magnitude, and with such difficulties hedging their accomplishment, require a man who possesses, in addition to force of character, tact, and mental ability, that marvellous gift of command, by which he can wheel into line with himself men—perhaps his superior in intellectual powers—who dissent markedly from his views, but who are irresistibly drawn to his side by his personal hold over their minds. Such was LORD CHATHAM when his masterly qualities broke down the barriers of party, place and lineage, and developed a policy which brought forward a WOLFE and an AMHERST; such was his son, the Great Commoner, who turned an epoch of shame and defeat into one that raised England to the highest rank among nations; and such is GLADSTONE, who has in recent years bent a great party to share in views which they had persistently condemned. A Canadian nation, extending from Atlantic to Pacific, knit together not only by bands of iron and steel but by brotherly affection and mutual national aspiration, and British to the back-bone in constitution and sentiment, has been the object of his hopes and of his steady, undeviating attention; how successful he has been, the Canada of to-day can tell, and does tell with no uncertain sound.

For while political partisan and party hack bitterly attack their opponents and accuse them of sentiments and actions unfavourable to growth of national life, all well know that not only is the country advancing to prosperity by leaps and bounds, but also that the great mass of the Canadian people is imbued with a love of country and a pride of race that are inconsistent with any measure tending towards national dishonour. The note of despair that we have heard during the past few days, is a false and discordant one. It is heard but little, thank God, in this country; rather does it sound from the

press of foreign and distant lands, which from ignorance of our affairs, from failure to discriminate between politics and national feeling, or with the inimical wish to belittle a neighbouring country which is in some respects making greater progress than is their own, seem to delight to make editorial statements on Canada's position which evince little or no knowledge of their subject. The death of the First Minister undoubtedly leaves a great gap; but does any sane man suppose that such a gap cannot be filled, however imperfectly it may be done? Our two great political parties possess many men of undoubted ability, of unquestioned reputation, of great experience in the life political, and possessing to a marked degree power in oratory and skill in debate; and the acme of false conclusions is reached when we are told that the death of SIR JOHN MACDONALD will lead to startling changes in our political system. When around the Speaker of the House of Commons are grouped men such as are now the recognized leading minds of the two great camps, all solemnly pledged to loyalty to the Sovereign, to Canada and to Canadian institutions, and who are honestly employing their best talents in their country's service, there should not exist in the mind of any sensible man or woman the slightest doubt as to Canada's future. Their methods of furthering the country's growth may be open to criticism and opposition, but such is only a matter of opinion. So long as a political leader is found to be a lover of his country, a worker for her interests, and honestly doing his best for her advancement, the colour of his party coat is a matter of secondary importance. But if, unhappily a leader be found—be he of politics, literature or journalism—who delights in continually vilifying Canada and Britain, and ostentatiously and continuously holds up foreign institutions and foreign statesmen as our models, and does his utmost to sink our nationality and our flag—then it becomes a duty to oppose and attack his sentiments to the utmost extent of our powers.

Although a native of Great Britain, proud of her fame, and unusually well versed in her history, SIR JOHN MACDONALD has always been, first and last, a true Canadian; all his energy, ability and personal power poured lavishly out in the advancement of those measures, which would make Canada great. Had he sought Imperial influence and honour at the expense of his adopted country, there is little doubt but that such could have been obtained; but his ambition and work was for Canada; and this, added to love of command, made him spare no pains to gratify both national and personal ambition. How well he has succeeded may be read from the story of his life, and from the measure of prosperity his country had attained when he was called from its service. In all, he has been the embodiment of that life pictured so beautifully by our Laureate, as one

"Who makes by force his merit known
"And lives to clutch the golden keys,
"To mould a mighty state's decrees
"And shape the whisper of the throne."