

CHAPTER XXIII

EVENTIDE

IN the study at 'Winterholme' is a desk piled high with books and papers, and beside the desk stands a little table kept scrupulously clear of everything but writing materials. Walls of books rise from floor to ceiling on every side, and their titles tell the tale of the life-work of the man whose personality dominates the place—Reports on the Inter-colonial and the Canadian Pacific Railway, volumes of pamphlets on the Pacific Cable and the Standard Time Movement, publications of the Canadian Institute, and material on many subjects touching the welfare of Canada and the Empire. With these are also many works of standard literature, history, biography, travels, science, for the owner of this library is a man of catholic taste, a student and a wide reader as well as a man who has done things.

Before the little table he sits, writing to or answering letters from correspondents in every quarter of the globe, glancing through a magazine article or a pamphlet on some question of national or imperial policy, or perhaps making notes for a contribution of his own to one or other of the various subjects which he has made peculiarly his own, and in which his interest is as keen and shrewd as it was twenty-five or fifty years ago.

His manners are those of the old school, nor will he accept the privilege of his years to dispense with any of the courtesies which he considers are due to his guest, be he an intimate friend or the most casual of visitors. He may be in the middle of a letter or article when you are announced, but he rises immediately and welcomes you with a warm clasp of the hand and a kindly smile. His tall figure is still erect, in spite of the burden of more than eighty-seven years, his face is full of character—one sees in it humour, kindliness, and