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A Great Civil Servant.

A Review of "A Memoir of the Public Services of Lord Haliburton."

By T. B. O'CONNOR, M.P., in "T. P's Weekley."

The civil servant of this country is in a curious position. He often is the brains carrier, the inspiration, the guide of a great public department; he often keeps young ministers from mistakes that have been proved mistakes in previous epochs with his practised wisdom, his ordered enthusiasm, his heritage of tradition, while so often his superiors are transient and embarrassed phantoms — to use the classical phrase of Disraeli; and yet he has to undergo the humiliation of serving under incompetence, or of seeing the work and triumphs of his mind claimed by others. Silent, obscure, a subordinate, as remote from the great world outside as though he lived in a fixed and remote star, the civil servant must belong to one of two classes. either the man who, accepting his obscurity, finds his joy in the sense of work well done for the nation to which he belongs and the public that pays him, or one of those unhappy and embittered beings who ultimately seek out of life only as much loafing and as much money as can be safely extorted from a neglectful, indolent, and absent-minded employer, as a nation always is.

I.

The man whose life is sketched in the interesting book before me belonged to the former of the two classes. It is a record of brilliant, conscientious, high-minded, as well as intelligent work in the great department of the War Office; and of a man who did that work with a lofty patriotism that was superior to all the drawbacks of the obscurity which his position imposed upon him. The work has an additional interest from the fact that the man whose life is told belonged to the large class of colonials who bring to the mother country and its work a fervid patriotism that sometimes puts to shame the man whose roamings have never taken him outside the shores of the island in which he was born. Lord Haliburton was not only a Canadian, but a Canadian proud of his birth in that colony which above all other things in the British Empire is a triumph of British institutions and a vindication of the British genius for government in most, though not all parts of the broad dominions of the Empire. When he was raised to the peerage he quartered his coat-of-arms with the maple-leaf and the beavers of his native pro-