

## THE LAST OF THE FOREST TREES.\*

BY JOHN MACDONALD, M.P.

Oh! tell to me, thou old pine tree,  
 Oh! tell to me thy tale,  
 For long hast thou the thunder braved,  
 And long withstood the gale;  
 The last of all thy hardy race,  
 Thy tale now tell to me,  
 For sure I am, it must be strange,  
 Thou lonely forest tree.

"Yes, strange it is, around this trunk,  
 So withered now and gray.  
 Waved many noble forest trees  
 Long, long since passed away:  
 They fell beneath the woodman's axe,  
 Nor have they left a trace,  
 Save my old trunk and withered limbs,  
 To show their former place.

"Countless and lofty, once we stood:  
 Beneath our ample shade,  
 His forest home of boughs and bark  
 The hardy red man made.  
 Child of the forest, here he roamed,  
 Nor spoke, nor thought of fear,  
 He trapped the beaver in his dam,  
 And chased the bounding deer.

"Sweet, then, the early breath of  
 morn,  
 Fragrant as spring time leaves,  
 The crowded city's curling smoke  
 Had not then stained the breeze.  
 The woods in summer's sunshine  
 Sparkled with dew drops bright,  
 Nor looked less gay in winter's day  
 When decked in snowy white.

"No gallant ship with spreading sail,  
 Then ploughed these waters blue;  
 No craft had old Ontario then  
 But the Indian's birch canoe;

No path was through the forest,  
 Save that the red man trod;  
 The forest was his dwelling-place  
 And temple of his God.

"Now where the busy city stands,  
 Hard by that graceful spire,  
 The proud Ojibway smoked his pipe  
 Beside his camping fire,  
 And there where busy commerce builds  
 Its markets in the west,  
 Amid the rushes in the marsh  
 The wild fowl had its nest.

"The pale-face came, our ranks were  
 thinned,  
 The loftiest were brought low;  
 The mighty forest faded fast  
 Beneath his sturdy blow.  
 The steamer on the quiet lake  
 Then ploughed its way of foam,  
 And then in bands, to far-off lands,  
 The Indian sought his home.

"And many who, in childhood's days,  
 Around my trunk have played,  
 Are resting like the Indian now  
 Beneath the cedar's shade;  
 And I, like one bereft of friends,  
 With winter whitened o'er,  
 But wait the hour when I shall fall  
 As others fell before." †

And thus the mighty city sweeps  
 Each old landmark away.  
 Soon ships of far-off nations  
 Shall anchor in that bay.  
 And not in all the city's bounds,  
 Nor by Ontario's shore,  
 Shall aught remain to tell one  
 Of the Indians' home of yore.

\* From Dr. Scadding's "Toronto of Old."

† It has since been cut down.