

JUDGE GOWAN.

prominent part during the past 30 years of his life, but it by no means professes to be an accurate record of his manifold services to the profession and the state. It is well known that many important Acts of Parliament, and many valuable amendments of existing statutes have originated in his fertile brain, and any suggestion coming from this eminent Judge, with his known experience and ripe judgment, it may well be believed, was eagerly and gladly made use of by the officers of the Crown for the time being, and speedily these suggestions would be found reflected in the Statute Book.

Towards the organization and practical working out of our somewhat complicated municipal system, Judge Gowan has contributed more than perhaps any other one individual. Living himself after his appointment in a new District—brought into daily contact with the immigrant and the old settler, forced to hold his first Division Courts in localities to which for a time the only means of access would be a bridle path, and the only means of locomotion a saddle-horse or one's own stout legs—he was brought face to face with the wants and peculiar requirements of settlements hewn out of the primeval forest, and the learned judge thus acquired a practical experience which was open to few. This special knowledge, added to his well-known legal attainments, and the confidence which was felt in his judgment and knowledge in his quarters, gave him the opportunity to mould much needful and practical legislation—legislation which otherwise would have been largely theoretical and of questionable value. In all such matters Judge Gowan did not confine himself solely to the limited sphere of his local judicial duties, but with pen and voice brought under public notice any notable abuse, or suggested some sensible amendment of the existing law, which would bring order out of chaos, and tend to reduce the constant friction which is an incident to all newly devised systems no matter how carefully framed. Through such labors as

his—and the labors of many others, too, who are entitled to be credited with efforts in the same direction—we have perfected a most flexible and workable system of local self-government, which, while a boon to the various local communities, is at the same time a monument more enduring than brass of the untiring energy and patriotism of men like the late Judge of the Judicial District of Simcoe.

Possessed of such qualities of mind and temperament as we have depicted, so singularly well adapted for judicial work, and judicial distinction, it may be a matter of some wonder why Judge Gowan has not many years since been translated to a larger arena and found a place upon the Superior Court Bench. We believe we are guilty of no impropriety in stating that such preferment has on more than one occasion been within his reach. The learned Judge has, however, always declined any such promotion. A certain natural tenderness of heart, notwithstanding his firmness of character and admirable judicial temper, has prevented him from accepting so responsible a position, since it would involve the necessity, in the higher place, of dealing with capital criminal offences, a duty from the performance of which his sensitive nature recoiled. Had he seen his way clear to accept promotion, his record would undoubtedly have been a fitting sequence to his brilliant career upon the County Court Bench. As a highly conscientious man, Judge Gowan no doubt felt that he was fitted for the position he found himself in, and that it was in his power, possibly, to do more for the advancement and improvement of our legal and municipal system as a County Court Judge, than he would be able to do if he occupied the higher place. The country, by this decision, though it lost the services of an able jurist in the Superior Court, gained largely, we venture to say, by his determination to serve her faithfully and well in the County Court.