

Let us look in at the Conference as assembled. At the head of the table sits Sir Etienne Paschal Taché, the dignified and venerable President of the Conference, Premier of Old Canada and a worthy representative of his race. A hushed feeling as of deep responsibility pervades the room as the conference enters upon its duties. Will this room be the birthplace of a new nation or will faction and disunion dominate its deliberations? That is the uppermost thought in every mind. Think of it! thirty-three men with the future of Canada in their hands; thirty-three men called upon to lay aside provincial, racial and all other prejudices, and to concentrate all the powers of statesmanship and foresight which they possessed in order to rescue Canada from political distraction and to project her into a larger orbit of national life and freedom. No wonder the room is hushed; it is a solemn hour.

Conspicuous among those who seem to feel the burden of responsibility most, stand three men, any one of whom could destroy the object of the Conference—George Brown, John A. MacDonald, and George E. Cartier. They met before now in many a conflict for supremacy. Never did Grecian gladiator strive more earnestly for his rival's blood than they strove for the honours of leadership. Can we divine their thoughts? Is George Brown still thinking of French domination and double majorities and religious intolerance? Does he grasp the magnitude of his present opportunity, the greater scope of Canadian statesmanship, the full sweep of Canadian expansion? We shall see. But there he stands, tall, athletic, forceful, intense; no words of denunciation on his lips, no harshness in his voice; he is at the parting of the ways and he knows it. French domination is no longer feared. It is not a question of domination now. It is a question of union and if that union is not accomplished it will not be his fault.

At the opposite side of the table sits John A. MacDonald, alert as in former years, with that keen, penetrating look so characteristic of a man given to the study of political problems and to the balancing of political exigencies. He too, has reached this hour through great tribulation and party strife. His thoughts are evidently of constitutional difficulties, of the division of federal powers between the Provinces and of a union of the whole, in undivided loyalty to the British Crown. Another gladiator disarmed that Canada might be saved.

There sits the other member of this triumvirate, George E. Cartier, trusty leader of his own people, who clung tenaciously through years of conflict to the language and institutions of his race. He appears to feel how much depends upon his course and the risk of all he holds dear in placing himself in the hands of a majority which for all his life he mistrusted. Will he do it? Will he follow the spirit