

in London. Mr. W. R. Meredith passed his very early years on his father's farm, and in 1848 was sent to the Grammar School in London, where his parents had then taken up their residence. Of this Grammar School, the Rev. Benjamin Bayly, B.A., an Anglican clergyman, and a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, was head master. Very probably, the fact that Mr. Bayly was a member of his own *Alma Mater* influenced Mr. Meredith's father not a little in choosing the school to which to send his son.

Mr. Meredith remained under Mr. Bayly's charge for several years, and subsequently entered Toronto University, where he graduated as LL.B., in 1866. Twenty-three years later, in 1889, at the same time that a similar honor was conferred on Sir Oliver Mowat, he was created LL.D., a distinction alike honorable to the University and to its recipient, he being one of the most distinguished of her sons.

In 1856, Mr. Meredith entered the office in London, as articled pupil, of the late Mr. Thomas Scatcherd, representative in the Dominion Parliament for many years of the constituencies of West and of North Middlesex. He was called to the Bar and admitted as a solicitor in 1861, and almost immediately entered into partnership with Mr. Scatcherd. This partnership continued until the death of the latter gentleman in 1876. Mr. Meredith was created Queen's Counsel for Ontario in 1875, and "took silk" for the Dominion in 1881. Until 1888 he resided in London, and practised in, or, to use the technical term, "went" the Oxford and the Western circuits. He devoted himself to both civil and criminal business, and soon became known as an accomplished pleader.

In 1872, Mr. Meredith determined to try to obtain a seat in the Ontario Legislature, and with that object in view offered himself as a candidate to the electors of the Forest City. He was not, though, to be allowed a "walk over," for he was opposed most vigor-

ously by Mr. James Durand, who was a pronounced Reformer. However, the victory lay with the Conservatives, Mr. Meredith gaining the seat, but only by the narrow majority of forty-two votes. But, like Mercutio's wound "it was enough," and Mr. Meredith attained the object of his ambition. In 1875, there was another contest with the same opponent, when Mr. Meredith was again at the head of the poll with an increased majority of one hundred and forty-one. Nothing succeeds like success, for though at the election of 1879 he had to fight for his seat against Mr. James Magee, his majority was no less than four hundred and forty-three. When Parliament was dissolved in 1883, no one could be found sufficiently intrepid to try to wrest the seat from him; and to the satisfaction of his party, and doubtless to his own (for, after all, members of Parliament are but human), he was returned by acclamation. But when he had again to appeal to the constituency in 1886, he was opposed by a labor candidate, a Mr. James Peddle, a working cabinet-maker, but he succeeded in holding his seat, though his majority was reduced to about two hundred. In 1890, once more he was elected without a contest, a satisfaction that is not to be afforded him in 1894.

On the elevation of Mr. Matthew Crooks Cameron, the then leader of the Opposition, to the judicial bench in 1879, Mr. Meredith was by the all but unanimous voice of his party, both in the House and in the country, called upon to become the leader of the Conservatives in the local Parliament, and in that position he has continued since.

Some amusing stories are told illustrating Mr. Meredith's ready wit and imperturbable *sang froid* in the face of interruptions, when speaking in public. One of these is to the effect that, on the day before the polling, on the occasion of his first contest, when making his final appeal to the electors,