

# THE OWL.

Vol. VI.

OTTAWA UNIVERSITY, APRIL, 1893.

No. 8.

*J. J. CURRAN, SOLICITOR-GENERAL OF CANADA.*



Our Christmas number we presented to our readers a photo-engraving of Sir John Thompson, and in the accompanying notice we took occasion to mention the fact that the Owl had no politics. In this issue we have the pleasure of presenting an engraving of another life-long Conservative, Mr. J. J. Curran, Solicitor General of Canada. And again we wish it to be understood that the OWL is non-political. We publish this notice of Mr. Curran, not because he is a Conservative, but because he is a graduate of Ottawa University, who has risen to prominence in the affairs of his country.

Mr. Curran was born at Montreal on the 22nd of February, 1842, and in the schools of that city received the early education which fitted him to commence a college course at Ottawa, an advantage then enjoyed by few Irish Canadians, and one of which Mr. Curran seems to have made the best use. Old St. Joseph's, afterwards Ottawa College, now Ottawa University, had, even in these days—the early "fifties"—made a reputation for itself throughout Canada and the States, and already it had attracted to its classrooms—then somewhat few, it is true—some of the brightest young men in the two Canadas, not to speak of many others from across the line. Among the former were two who on account of their after career, deserve special mention. They were J. T. Duhamel now Archbishop of Ottawa, and the subject of this sketch, J. J. Curran, now Solicitor-General of Canada. As is easily understood, Catholic colleges at this early date, and indeed any kind of colleges were far inferior to what

they are at present. Consequently, when Mr. Curran entered old St. Joseph's it was not to study the natural sciences in well equipped chemical and physical laboratories, to pass through the hands of twenty-five specialists, or to spend his recreations and holidays in a well furnished reading-room or spacious campus. All these were advantages reserved for students of later times. Modern languages, classics, philosophy, and a little mathematics constituted the main part of the programme of studies. However, he who has energy and talent can succeed under the most unfavorable circumstances, and young Curran possessed both to an admirable degree. It is not surprising, therefore that when he left the College in 1859 he had laid a solid foundation on which to commence the study of his chosen profession, law. Having graduated at McGill Law School, he was called to the Bar after which he soon settled down to a lucrative practice, devoting himself to all the branches of the profession, but making his mark more especially as a jury lawyer in criminal cases. In fact he has figured in nearly all the criminal trials that have taken place in the Province of Quebec for the last twenty-five years. This fact alone is sufficient to show that he is an orator of no mean ability. Nor is he a man of mere words as is frequently the case with pleasing speakers who are not possessed of a solid education. His speeches are noted for their pointedness and clearness while they easily show their author to be a methodical thinker of broad experience. Perhaps Mr. Curran showed this more clearly than on any other occasion, when the statute known as the "Controverted Election Act" was passed. At this time, he, as well as many others was re-