



REV. DR. RYERSON.

A TALK WITH CANADA BOYS ABOUT A GREAT CANADIAN.

BY UNCLE JOHN.

"GREAT Canadian!" "Can any one in this new country become great?" Certainly, greatness does not consist of large possessions and high sounding titles. Many have been born to the possession of these who have only proved to be great simpletons, or great sinners, or both. True greatness belongs to the mind, and heart, and moral conduct, great intellectual attainments (a dunce can never be great), great virtues, and great usefulness in some way or other. Such persons, in the long run, will be greatly beloved and respected.

This was the case with the venerable Canadian lately deceased.

You will say that this person must have come of great parents who had great possessions, and that he himself had great early opportunities. No; he would never have claimed that. His father bore the title of "Colonel," but if I mistake not, he was not a Colonel of the regular army, but only in the militia. True, he had borne an inferior commission to that in the military service, during the revolutionary war, and drew a good many hundred acres of land; but land in that early day was not very valuable and the family to provide for was very large. They lived far away from the seat of government and centre of population, and lived mostly on the produce of their farms, which they did not feel above tilling for themselves. That, however, was nothing derogatory to true greatness. The poet Thomson speaks of the old Roman commanders, upon their return from winning victories for their country, as resuming the tillage of their land:

"They seized the plough and greatly independent lived."

HIS BOYHOOD.

The boy I am speaking of did not inherit great abilities from his father, who was nothing remarkable as to the usual elements of greatness; but his mother was a person of superior sense and excellence. She left her children the legacy of a good example, and early taught them the fear of God and the catechism, and gathered them together

for family devotion. She encouraged her boys, of whom there were five at least, to attend the preaching of the Methodist itinerants, to which the father was long opposed; and when some of them joined that Church (which they did before the mother dared to) she gave them sympathy while he persecuted them, and she followed them into the church as soon as the way was open. Two of her older sons became Methodist ministers at an early day, and were distinguished for the time in which they lived; and the boy of whom I am writing also became a minister after a time and outstripped all the others.

HIS EARLY TRAINING.

Our subject owed his greatness to several things which it will be instructive for boys to consider. First, he had an unusually vigorous mind as indicated by his very looks. He had a high, broad, well-developed, and well-balanced head, a lustrous eye, and, what is thought to be an indication of character, a large though not a long nose. His mind was so active and strong that he could easily have excelled in any branch of knowledge. And then he industriously cultivated his mind. Some boys have naturally good minds, but they let them go to waste for want of cultivation. Our friend had not the school advantages that boys in Canada have now, but he had better than some others had at that time. Several relatives (by marriage at least) were men of more or less classical education, who, no doubt, stimulated and aided the inquiring lad. Then his own vicinity was one of the few places in the province which enjoyed the advantages of one of the old-fashioned grammar schools, "district schools," as they used to be called. The school referred to, I have learned, was taught for a time by a brother-in-law, by which he may have had some special advantages. I am sorry that I cannot tell you for a certainty what sort of a boy he was at school; but I am sure from certain hints gained by accident, that he was never immoral, and that he had always a great thirst for and made earnest inquiry after knowledge. He was fond of history, ancient and modern, especially British general history, and the history of British constitution and law. This may have been stimulated by the conversation of the old U. E. Loyalists, who would naturally congregate at his father's, an experienced and intelligent class of men. But in the meantime, he learned to do farm work and showed an aptness for mechanics, doing upon one occasion the joiner-work of an unfinished room in their rambling old-fashioned house. His naturally good physique was strengthened by these labours as well as by the boating, hunting, and fishing of which he remained fond after he became old, and for which the lake hardly furnished opportunities. Thus he had the "strong body" as the residence of his "strong mind." He was favoured with the advantages of one of the first

Sunday-schools formed in the country, and his first efforts at usefulness was as a teacher in that school.

HIS CONVERSION.

He gave his heart to God at the early age of fourteen, and never wickedly departed from the Lord. The difficulties interposed by his father kept him from joining the Church he professed until he was eighteen, on which account he had to leave home.* That period of exile was spent in attending better institutions of learning than he had ever done before, becoming a considerable proficient in Latin and Greek. He was two years an assistant in the grammar school at London, and some time in study in Hamilton. It was supposed that he was preparing himself for the profession of law in which he would have had no superiors; and from law he would likely have become a statesman, in which noble career he would no doubt have become eminent. But in the meantime he was pious, full of zeal, and a gifted exhorter; and in a time of great emergency he was persuaded to go into the ministry as a supply, from which the Church would never release him. Two gentlemen gave him his outfit—horse and saddle. He preached his first sermon on Easter Sunday, 1825, and spent nearly fifty-seven years in the ministry. He was very eloquent and faithful, and was the instrument of converting a great many souls. He served as an Indian missionary and taught them domestic economy. But his learning and statesman-like mind prepared him to serve the Church in many ways in which ordinary ministers do not. He wrote much in its defence and on public questions of a moral, religious, and educational character. He was the first editor of the *Christian Guardian*, fifty-three years ago, and at several other times. He aided in founding and getting a charter for Victoria University and was its first President. He went abroad to transact important business for his Church and the country to the United States, to England, and the continent of Europe. But the government of the country chose him to finish and administer its common school system, in which he consumed thirty-two of the ripest years of his life, earning a world-wide reputation and conferring a boon on every Canadian boy who reads this paper, and every one who will be born hereafter.

Our quick-witted and well-educated boys will perceive that I have been writing of one who won and wore the titles of D.D. and LL.D. to the name of EGERTON RYERSON.

A LADY in Nova Scotia, while renewing a subscription for our S. S. papers for a friend, writes: "He called one very stormy day, saying his children were nearly crazy for the little papers. It seemed to be the little SUNBEAM that did the business. A serious case of sun-stroke and in February too. I showed or rather sent samples of your papers to our S. S. Superintendent, pointing out how much cheaper they were than formerly, and he has ordered a number for the school."

We hope that other friends will do us a similar service, and we will try to do our part to make the papers interesting and instructive.

*"Egerton," said his father, "you must leave the Methodists or leave my house." He never wavered for a moment in his choice.—ED.

THE ATTACK ON THE QUEEN.

Every boy and girl, every man and woman in Canada, will rejoice that the wicked and dastardly attack made upon our beloved sovereign so signally failed. Again, as in no less than six previous instances, God turned aside the bullet that would have plunged a nation into mourning. Is it not true that all her life long, in answer to the prayers of millions of loving hearts throughout the world, God has set His love upon her to keep her, that no weapon formed against her might prosper. This is another illustration of the terrible evils of drink. For drink it was that nerved the assassin's arm to attempt the desperate deed.

On another page we give some opinions of the English press upon the subject. Let us while rejoicing in the deliverance from so serious a danger of our Gracious Sovereign continue to sing and pray with great fervour than ever:

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.

The March number of the *Methodist Magazine* contains a paper on the Rev. Wm. Ryerson, by Dr. Carroll, a paper by Dr. Douglas, *Loiterings in Europe*, Lute in a Parsonage, Missionary Heroes, and other interesting articles.

The April number will contain a paper by Dr. Nelles on "Personal Recollections of Dr. Ryerson," and also the Rev. Hugh Johnston's *Personal Recollections of Dr. Punshon*, also a chapter from Dr. Ryerson's "Story of my Life"—a book left in manuscript at the time of his death. This will be a number of unusual interest. Please send orders at once, as an extra edition may be required.

Price \$2 a-year; \$1 for six months; 20 cents per number. A \$1.20 premium for 30 cents; *Guardian* and *Magazine* together for 3.50 a-year.

THE WINDMILL.

BY H. W. LONOPELLOW.

BEHOLD, a giant am I!
Aloft here in my tower
With my granite jaws I devour
The maize, the wheat, and the rye;
And grind them into flour.

I look down over the farms;
In the fields of grain I see
The harvest that is to be,
And I sling aloft my arms,
For I know it is all for me.

I hear the sound of the flails
Far off from the threshing-floors
In barns with their open doors,
And the wind, the wind in my sails
Louder and louder roars

I stand here in my place,
With my foot on the rock below,
And whichever way it may blow
I meet it face to face,
As a brave man meets his foe.

And while we wrestle and strive,
My master, the miller, stands
And feels me with his hands—
For he knows who makes him thrive,
Who makes him lord of lands.

On Sundays I take my rest;
Church-going bells begin;
Their low, melodious din;
I cross my hands on my breast,
And all is peace within.