

MR. A. F. PIRIE

MR. A. F. Pirie, the President of the Canadian Press Association, was born in Guelph in 1849, and his boyhood was spent in his father's newspaper office. He went to Toronto in 1874, and in the *Toronto Sun* introduced into Canadian journalism the semi-humorous column of paragraphs, now a distinct feature of many American newspapers. This column attracted wide attention, and at once Mr. Pirie found himself with a provincial reputation. It was about this time that the late Adam Crooks, while holding a portfolio in the Local Government, had a rather unhappy search for a constituency, and the genial and caustic paragrapher had the whole country laugh at the minister's situation. But of late years Mr. Pirie has not given as free play to his rare humor as at this early period in his newspaper career. Then he was at least as witty in print as in speech. Now his writings are more sober and solid, while his tongue seems touched with a richer humor than ever. He was the first writer engaged on the *Evening Telegram* in 1876, and he edited that paper for twelve years. His bright, crisp, sharp editorial work gave the new paper a wide reputation and a great popularity, and combined with an energetic business management the *Telegram* at once leaped into a popular favor which it has ever since retained. Some of Mr. Pirie's best work was done in the gallery of the Local Legislature, and he has also served as a special correspondent in the gallery of the House of Commons.

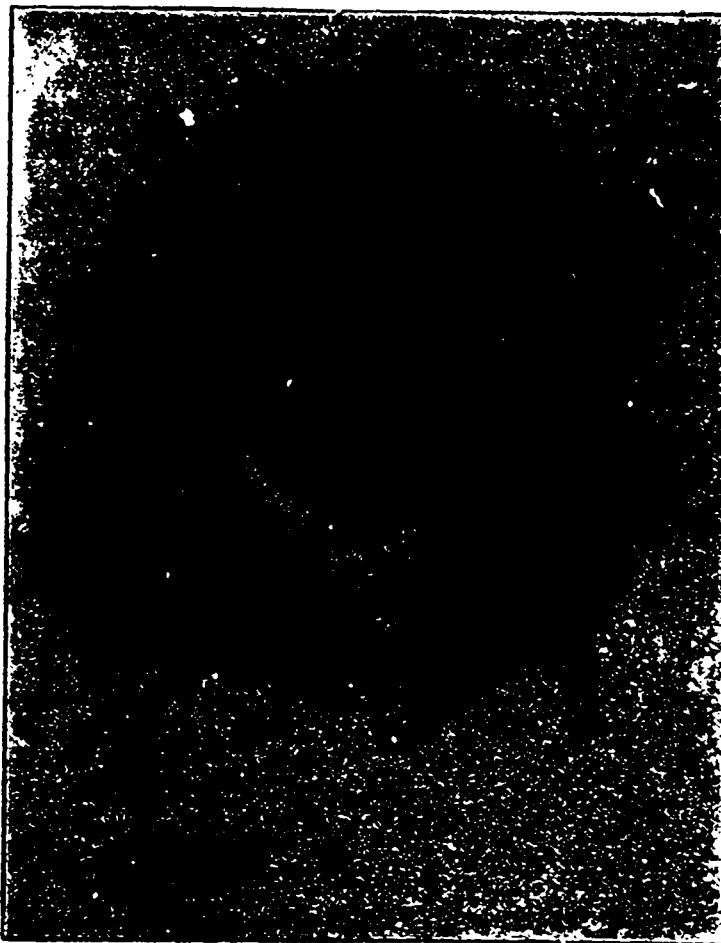
He was for a time, immediately following his withdrawal from the *Telegram*, the chief writer on the *Montreal Star* and it was that journal that he represented at Ottawa. He retired from the *Star* three or four years ago and became owner of the *Dundas Banner*, for many years one of the best and most

influential journals in the country, and which at least has not lost in brightness and strength, or declined in popularity or prestige, under Mr. Pirie's management.

Mr. Pirie has contributed to the *Week*, *The North American Review*, and other high class journals and magazines, and from his pen *Grip* has received some of its brightest contributions. For more than twenty years Mr. Pirie has done editorial writing. His English is pure and strong. He uses plain, simple words, never rants, never gets on stilts, never seeks to dazzle with adjectives, or imposing sentences. His wit is keen and penetrating, but it never wounds. His jokes have no "victims." The subject upon whom Mr. Pirie may practice enjoys the joke as heartily and as unaffectedly as the audience for which it is written or spoken. As an after dinner speaker Mr. Pirie is absolutely unrivalled. He is a mine of royal, rollicking humor, of humor always fresh, sympathetic, and unrestrained. He goes from joke to joke, from story to story with a frank and easy abandonment to the business in hand, that make one fear that if he should ever become more reckless than Oliver Wendell Holmes and dare to be "as funny as he can," few of us would ever fully recover from the effects. He is a first-rate political campaigner, and

in the political conflict he can be strong, keen and aggressive, as when occasion demands he can prove that he is master of a chaste, persuasive and sympathetic eloquence. But while Mr. Pirie is unquestionably a Liberal, he can never be a mere partisan. The narrow partisan is badly fitted for the business of journalism, as narrow partisanship is very different from broad, earnest attachment to a set of political principles which may form the platform of a political party.

Mr. Pirie is very popular with his fellow journalists both in city and country. For some years he has taken an active interest in the affairs of the Cana-



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