

Dr. Oronhyatekha.

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It has been said that the most important movements in the progress of humanity are controlled by some strong personality, and that, in spite of the assertion of philosophical students to the contrary notwithstanding, the effect of the individuality of the leader is of an exaggerated, and that the great changes which society has made would have come in some form at all events, with or without the one whose name has been made great thereby. Nevertheless it is for the most part true, that history is a series of biographies, and that the leader is a factor equally potent with the sentiment which calls him into being.

Of no one can this more truly be said than of Dr. Oronhyatekha, Supreme Chief Ranger of the Independent Order of Foresters. A biographical sketch of Dr. Oronhyatekha could not be written with Forestry left out any more than a history of the Order be given with no mention of Dr. Oronhyatekha, since through his masterly management this organization has been brought up from a membership of a few hundred to many thousand in America alone, with a growth scarcely less phenomenal in England, Scotland and Ireland. All other pursuits have been made subordinate to this, the great object of his endeavors to make the Independent Order of Foresters the largest and best trusted of all fraternal organizations.

To master the first difficulties of such a position, and to win the reputation which his personal ambition naturally coveted, it will be understood, exacted from him great labor, hard study and a will to over ride all discouragements. Of course he had his friends about him in the Order to cheer his hopes and stimulate his efforts to the task; but these friends were also his competitors in his struggles for leadership, men of established renown, reputed for their talents in politics and in the professions; and so it may be regarded as no doubtful praise of the new associate in the fraternity to say that he speedily earned, and has sustained in the estimation of the Order and the public generally, a fair and acknowledged title and place on the same platform socially and—I had almost said politically—which they occupy. But Dr. Oronhyatekha has not permitted himself to have political aspirations, though time and again well-meaning friends have urged him to announce himself a candidate for parliamentary honors, painting in alluring colors the advancement awaiting him along that road. But he has thought best to adhere to the organization whose name has almost become a synonym for his own, and in which he has had all the satisfaction only to be experienced by a man having built up such an Order as that of the I.O.F. For this same reason, Dr. Oronhyatekha has declined flattering editorial offers that have come to him through the recognition of his ready, graphic and forceful pen. Not easy sacrifices these, for the frequent echo of one's name as a gifted speaker or writer, and the agreeable filipp

to personal vanity which is given by the notice of the press magnifying into matter of public importance the conceits of one's brains and rendering his thoughts a commodity in the market is flattery not unrelished by even the most modest, and straightway sets the wits at work again to redouble the echo and its accompaniments.

At the time we first hear of Dr. Oronhyatekha in connection with the I.O.F., he was practicing medicine in London, Ontario, and his professional career was being characterized by a rapid and steady progress upward to the attainment of reputation, influence and independence. But carrying the same energy and enthusiasm into Forestry that he had into the practice of his profession he was soon elected to the office of High Chief Ranger of the province, and in this capacity showed such steadfast devotion to the Order, marked by its regular and continued advancement which it was recognized could only have come by his unremitting watchfulness and toil, that he attracted the attention of the entire Forestry world, and was rewarded by the highest office within the gift of the Order, that of Supreme Chief Ranger.

The increasing demands of the organization under his leadership finally necessitated the abandonment of his profession, which must have seemed a great sacrifice at the time. However, the reward has been great, for to day he has the proud distinction of standing first in fraternal societies of America, with the splendid new home of Forestry, now going up on the corner of Bay and Richmond streets, Toronto, to stand forever a memorial to his zeal and efficiency.

The City of Toronto in particular and the Dominion in general owe Dr. Oronhyatekha a debt of gratitude greater than they know. It is doubtless not generally understood that Canada is not the birthplace of the I.O.F. Like a few other good and useful things it is of Yankee origin. Newark, New Jersey, having been the cradle of the Order. How long it was nursed and rocked in the Union is immaterial, since for so many years it has had its headquarters in Toronto, and been officered chiefly by Canadians. Is it such a common occurrence for Canadians to supplant capable men of the United States in official positions, and to take hold of and build up societies that have been born under the stars and stripes, that no one has thought to question how the I.O.F. came to be transplanted? Has it not occurred that the movements of the Society have been controlled by some unusually strong personality? And do not all fair-minded Canadians see in such a leader of men one to whom they should be proud to "crook the pregnant knee."

Not only is the S.C.R. a born Canadian but also born a full-blooded Indian, and one as loyal to his blood as to his country and to the great Order he represents, which leaves nothing to be added in way of either personal, patriotic or fraternal pride.

The romantic story of his birth, early struggles and varied education is as a twice-told tale already, but one too full of dramatic situations to ever lose in interest. He was born at the Six Nations Reservations near