

all, of the "great principles" of his storming opponent; but he was also always governing the country, carrying on its affairs, gradually accomplishing the high end he had in view—the consolidation of British North America. He trusted to time rather than to the exploitation of principles, to accomplish good for the Canadian people. George Brown stands in bronze, to-day, in the Queen's Park at Toronto, as the great advocate of Reform principles, while close beside him, also in bronze, stands Sir John Macdonald, as the founder of the Confederation. But George Brown must rank as an assistant—sometimes not even that—in his rival's great work of nation-building.

Sir John's political sagacity was best illustrated, as Mr. Laurier very aptly pointed out, in his management of his own party. "I doubt," said the eloquent leader of the Opposition, "if in the management of a party, William Pitt had to contend with difficulties equal to those that Sir John Macdonald had to contend with."

And having got this far in showing that Sir John Macdonald was possessed in a remarkable degree of political sagacity: was never an advocate of political principles, so called, but was always carrying on the government of the country by a policy of compromise and conciliation, and always working to the goal of a British North American consolidation, let us see what kind of a man he was in detail, and how his biographer has done his work.

Sir John Macdonald was well-bred, in the best sense of that term. He came of Highland stock, of people of strong, inherited characteristics, and long used to mental discipline, and of a people who had a high opinion of themselves. Self-respect is a strong Highland characteristic, but that word does not well express it. A Highlander accepts his lot, however low, but he himself pays, and expects others to pay, the highest deference to

his self. His self is something equal to any other self, and may rise to any place and position, and though he is in lowly surroundings, he respects a self that for any act of his or his father's, might be the highest in the land. A Highlander regards himself of a noble line. As Macaulay delighted to tell us, it is never any trouble to him to be a gentleman, though his definition of that term is not quite of the modern Saxon significance. Sir John's forefathers were, nevertheless, ordinary Highland folk. His grandfather kept a store a hundred years ago in Dornoch, the shire town of Sutherlandshire, a town of which he was provost; his father drifted south, tried the cotton trade in Glasgow, but failed, and, like other families that we could name under similar experience, he sailed with his wife and two boys, one our "John A.," then five years of age, to try his fortunes in America. This Hugh Macdonald for twenty years passed a precarious existence as store-keeper and mill-owner in Kingston or about the Bay of Quinté. Sir John Macdonald had for a mother a remarkable woman, whose portrait shows us whence he got his pronounced physiognomy.

Here is Sir John's origin and rise, as told by Mr. Pope:

"He left school at an age when many boys begin their studies. He did this in order that he might assist in supporting his parents and sisters. * * * Life with him in those days was a struggle: and all the glamor with which it is sought to be invested by writers who begin their accounts of him by mysterious allusions to the mailed barons of his line, is quite out of place. His grandfather was a merchant in a Highland village. His father served his apprenticeship in his grandfather's shop, and he himself was compelled to begin the battle of life when a mere lad. Sir John owed nothing to birth or fortune—not that he thought little of either in themselves, but it is the sim-