

*With Compliments of  
Dean Harris*

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Our Own Land  
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I am deeply grateful, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, for the compliment you pay me when you invite me to partake of your hospitality tonight and enroll me among the members of the old guard. I appreciate your courtesy, not only because you have furnished me an opportunity of becoming personally acquainted with the representative men of this progressive community, but also that I am in some measure privileged to contribute my share to the perpetuity of these delightful social meetings. I hold it true that re-unions of this nature make for the upbuilding of national character and national unity. There is a hard metallic substance—a species of corundum—employed by lapidaries in cutting gems, and used for polishing iron and steel. It gives to these metals additional value without impairing their substance. So, it seems to me, does the social influence of meetings like this act upon the nature of each of us. The angularities of sectionalism disappear, political and religious animosities, if they do not entirely vanish, are at least clarified and subdued, while the sterling attributes of our manhood take on a refinement and polish that make association charming and life exceeding pleasant. For forty years I have been intimately identified with the social life of our people in pioneer settlements, in rural districts, in villages and cities, and, while I look back with pardonable complaisancy on the past, I regard the present as immeasurably better. I have noticed a marvellous transformation in these years. Many old prejudices are dead, others are dying, and, in a few more years will have entirely disappeared. The animosities begotten in the old land and transferred honestly but unhappily, to the new, are like unto the ruins of Carnac covered with the dust of decay. We are rising superior to sectional and insular prejudices. We say and rightly, let the dead sleep in the grave; we will not open vaults and tombs; we will not roll back the stone from the sepulchre, for out of it there will come, not the benediction

SPEECH of DEAN HARRIS, delivered at the "OLD BOYS" Meeting  
at Beamsville, Ontario, Monday, September 3rd, 1900  
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