

(For the Torch.)

PARLIAMENTARY PORTRAITS.

PHOTOGRAPHED FROM THE GALLERY BY OUR ARTIST.

No. 11.

Sir John A. Macdonald is a man of marked individuality. He is a phenomenal man, and Nature broke the mould when she made him. He was born a politician, went early into public life, and has been a party leader for more than a generation. He is a lawyer, and a good one, but his devotion to politics has prevented him from building up a lucrative practice in keeping with his talents. He is now 63 years old, as men reckon age, and shows some of the signs of being no longer young. Only some of them, however, as in most respects he appears to be the junior member of the House of Commons. His gaiety, sprightliness, ready wit, and boyish liking for a scene, remind one of what was said of Diraëli at his age. He shows his age somewhat in his knees, as he walks quickly along with what is called a stubbing step, and is slightly bent. But his curly brown-black hair has hardly any gray tinge, and his whole appearance is that of a man fully twenty years younger. Although one of the most arbitrary of leaders, either of Opposition or Government, and always compelling his colleagues or supporters to accept his views, he carefully preserves the appearance of deferring to his associates in all things. His words, tone and manner are always those of one who leads by virtue of being merely the mouthpiece of those who support him, and he allows his lieutenants to do most of the work in the House and Committees, more because it pleases them to be engaged in the fight than because he lacks taste or energy for the constant skirmishing. But when the battle grows hot, and blood begins to flow, the gallant old leader leaps to his feet and makes the House ring with his battle cry. No other man can quicken the pulse, arouse the passions, and agitate the nerves of the House like him. He changes a monotonous cannonade into a cavalry dash, a dull siege approach into an assault on the enemy's walls, a defense behind breastworks into a charge upon the enemy's lines. The rank and file on both sides of the House, bored by the continued wrangle between the occupants of the front benches, are roused into feverish interest when the old war-horse bounds to the front with the gleam of battle in his eye. Then a voice which is ordinarily too low for the galleries rises into trumpet tones, reaches distant corners of the building, and brings truant members back to their seats. Members lean forward eagerly to hear him, remain silent for a minute, and then applaud or express dissent. He lays on the lash until his opponents howl with rage and pain. He flashes out lightning-like strokes of sarcasm, and his followers cheer and clap their hands. He makes an intensely humorous assault, and the laughter is loud. He strikes home with lance-like thrusts, and members jump to their feet, and amid deafening shouts of order from Sir John's friends, try to interject a denial or reply. And thus, with cheers, laughter and approving shouts on one side, and cries of dissent on the other, the voice of the orator rising clear and sharp above the din, Sir John pours forth his fiery invective. He turns to his followers, whenever he makes a statement in which they are supposed to coincide, takes their applause and cries of approval as assent, and then wheels around and repeats it with great emphasis. "We will not submit to this Ministerial tyranny," he will say, and then, after looking over his applauding followers, repeat with a loftier and more triumphant air, "No, we will not submit to it." His followers are taken into his confidence in the same way when he makes a joke, so that the dullest of them may not be necessarily behindhand with an appreciative laugh. This enhances the effect, gratifies the thick-headed,

and saves the speaker from the anti-climax of horse-laughs after he has begun to make serious remarks. By this kind of comradeship Sir John endears himself to his supporters, and makes them feel that they are with him and not behind him. The French Conservatives fairly worship him. He is their natural leader, and can rouse them more effectively in English, whether they understand the language or not, than any other man can in French. Their eyes sparkle with delight when he is on the war-path, and they dance around him with extravagant joy when he holds up the scalps of the foe. They manifest their feelings in all parliamentary and many unparliamentary fashions, cheering, stamping, shouting and crying out approbation in two languages. He electrifies them at will. They would follow him to the deadly breach of a division, though political death mounted guard before it. His impassioned oratory is of the thorough French style—every gesture eloquent, every feature expressive, every muscle moving in harmony with his motions. His hands are lifted on high, as the volume of his denunciatory eloquence rises, and fall like a shot when the enemy is swept from his vantage ground and left to struggle in the flood. His body is bent forward until his head is nearly as low as that of the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod when he bows to the Speaker of the House of Commons, and then he straightens up with the elastic quickness with which a bow regains its shape when the arrow has been shot. He singles out a victim, holds him with his lightning darting eye as the Ancient Mariner held the Wedding Guest, transfixes him with a thrust of his bony finger, and makes him writhe and groan under the scorpion sting of his invective. The onlookers divide their attention between the orator and his victim, their feelings depending chiefly upon their personal or political relations with them. Indignation is manifested by passionate outcries, pity by commiserate looks, and approval by all the signs of irrepressible hilarity. Looking at Sir John Macdonald at such times, and noting how supreme is the power with which he sways his party, how their foes suffer under his assault, it is not easy to imagine the leadership in other hands while he retains the vigor, the elasticity and the spontaneity which now make him master of the situation on all occasions. When discussing questions of policy, the details of legislation, or the principles of Constitutional law, Sir John's manner is entirely different from his fighting attitude. He is calm, clear, cold, incisive, logical and good-tempered, quick to see the bearings of every phrase, ready with a remedy for every defect, and very successful in making the other side of the House understand it as he does himself. He is as wise in debate, as he is mighty in conflict. His last great speech, in arraignment of Lieut. Governor Letellier's conduct in the dismissal of a Ministry supported by both Houses of the Legislature, was never exceeded in the annals of Canadian political life for calmness of tone, freedom from personality or partisanship, clearness of statement, judicious array of authorities which supported without encumbering the argument, and severity of logic. It was unanswerable, and the political friends and supporters of the Lieut. Governor of Quebec did not attempt to answer it. The thing that the time had not come for expressing an opinion on the case, and the resolution of effect of the speech on Mr. Blake, the only great legal mind on the Ministerial benches, was shown by his going out of the House when the division bell rang. He was convinced that Sir John was right, was too honest to act against his conscience, and yet, naturally enough, shrank from embarrassing his friends by recording his vote against them. I will not give you any specimens of Sir John's happy retorts, witty repartees, and laughable *bon*

mots, as hundreds of them will occur to every reader who is familiar with the political life of Canada. The Imperial honors which have been bestowed upon him are greater than any other Canadian enjoys. He is almost the only Colonial statesman who has been admitted among the chosen few who enjoy the dignity of the ancient Order of the Bath, others having been honored only with the insignia of the modern and less desirable Order of St. Michael and St. George. He is also the only Colonial statesman who has been made a Privy Councillor of the Empire. While the rest of our great personages—our Ministers, Senators and other high functionaries, except those who have been knighted—lose their title of Honorable when they go to England, and become plain Mr. or Esq., Sir John Macdonald enjoys the title of Right Honorable throughout the Empire. His mercurial temperament is easily affected by wine, and under the influence of a very little of the ardent his marked peculiarities of gesture and expression become extravagantly demonstrative in the eyes of his passive people. It has long been the fashion of his enemies to say, at such times, that he is drunk, and they keep it up still. If they could have seen him, after his headlong charge against their ranks had routed them from the field, coolly consulting his followers on the conduct of the campaign, advising, directing, suggesting, master of every detail, seeing clearly to the end of every course proposed, they would have taken back their charges. This it is that those who do not know him intimately often accuse him of being intoxicated when his associates are ready to take the stand and swear that he was perfectly sober. A good deal of strong feeling, stimulated by a very little wine, will make Sir John shake his fist in the faces of the "honorable gentlemen opposite," and use epithets which, while being perfectly parliamentary, sound startling to legislative ears. Then they say he is drunk. Sir John is, according to those who are opposed to him, always drunk when he enters the arena with his war-paint on and makes one of his fierce and brilliant assaults. He is drunk at such times—drunk with the inspiration of battle. Sir John's opponents have one motive for accusing him of being drunk which must not be forgotten. They like him personally, almost every man of them, and, while smarting under punishment, they excuse the feeling that prompts them to show no stinkiness or resentment by attributing his severity to intoxicants. "Sir John would never have gone for me that way if he had been sober," they say, and then speak as pleasantly as they can when they meet him. There is no other man in Canada, drunk or sober, so well able to lead a party as Sir John Macdonald, and the talk of deposing him from the chieftainship of the Liberal-Conservative combination is all moonshine.

PRINTER'S GEEK.—The following is an acknowledgment of a wedding notice and a generous allowance of cake, by a rural professor of typography: "We make our most respectful bow to the happy twain, and the opportunity to return our thanks for this most unjudged act of liberality. May the matrimonial *cluse* which now looks the form of our brother type justify all his preconceived impressions. In whatever § of the country he may roam, whether called upon to face the —ing waves of adverse fortune, or stand before ¶ and ¶ of enemies, may his life be such that when the ⚡ of death shall be laid on him, and the . of existence draws to a close, he may produce a *clean proof*, and claim a clear title to an honorable ¶ in the page of history, as well as to an earthly inheritance beyond the * * *"

Claude De Haven will pilot the Great London Circus through the country this summer.

Mr. Kirk, late of Moncton, is about to open a hotel in Newcastle.