

we glance over its well proportioned, simple and massive exterior, only ornamented by stately Ionic columns, surmounted by a well cut representation of the royal arms. The dark tint that the stones have assumed in the course of years gives the whole structure an appearance of antiquity which is quite refreshing in these days of modern improvements, and recalls the many interesting historic associations that cling to its venerable walls. The interior of the building itself has been very little changed since the days it was opened with so much ceremony by Lord Dalhousie, and it was described by a contemporary writer as "the most splendid legislative building" on the Continent. The building contains the two legislative chambers, a small library, and provincial offices, all of which are reached by gloomy corridors and stairs redolent with the odours of age. No marble pillars or tiled floors meet the eye as in later structures of a similar kind; but the whole aspect is sombre and uninviting until we look into the handsome legislative council chamber, which has fine proportions and a simple architectural beauty, very pleasing to the eye in these days when the tendency is to lavish ornate decoration on our public buildings. Nova Scotians, however, like the present writer, who have known these legislative halls for forty years and longer, will dwell little on their architectural characteristics, but will rather recall the voices and faces of those distinguished men, statesmen, orators, poets, humorists, historians, and publicists, whose feet have echoed on these gloomy stones of the lobbies that lead to the chambers with which must be always associated the most striking episodes in the political history of the Peninsula of Acadia.

Leaving the dark lobby we find ourselves suddenly in a small chamber, always set apart for the legislative chamber. Since I last stood within its walls, more than a quarter of a century ago, it has been subject to a number of changes, the arrangement of the seats being the most noticeable. As I remember the chamber, the members formerly sat on a raised platform, below which was a lounging place to which strangers had access. The Speaker's chair was then at the upper or north end, and the members sat on benches or long sofas on either side of the clerks' table. Now the room has been made smaller, but the old simple decorations of the ceiling can still be seen. The Speaker's chair now faces the main entrance, on what was once a side of the chamber, while the members have separate chairs, covered with that old-fashioned, though durable horse-hair cloth which is generally relegated to second-rate rural hotels and steamboats. What interested me most in this chamber, where some of the most brilliant orators of America once spoke, were the full-length portraits of two men, famous in their day—two names long associated with the struggles, victories and defeats of the Conservative and Liberal parties in Nova Scotia. To the right of the Speaker is the picture of Joseph Howe, somewhat coarsely painted, giving him, perhaps, too harsh an expression, but still on the whole an excellent portraiture of the printer, poet and politician whose name will be always connected with the triumph of responsible government in his native Province. On the other side of the chair is the intellectual face and bent figure of James William Johnston, the eminent lawyer and jurist, who was for a quarter of a century and more the able leader of the Conservative party, and the earnest opponent of Joseph Howe. The names of these two men were for years household words in Nova Scotia, as representing widely antagonistic principles, though sometimes meeting on the common patriotic ground of the public welfare. For thirty years they were associated in their representative and legislative capacity with men whose eloquence, wit, and power of debate have never been surpassed in the legislative halls of Canada. Nova Scotia has been always known, not simply for her great natural wealth of fisheries and mines, but notably for the intellectual gifts of her sons in statesmanship, letters and war.

It is quite probable that few of my readers, outside of Nova Scotia, will remember the name of James William Johnston, though he exercised in his lifetime large influence in the legislative halls and the law courts of the Province. Indeed, to verify a fact or date, I have just turned over the pages of the "American Cyclopædia of Biography," but find his name does not appear, though space is devoted to vastly inferior men in the same Province. The portrait that recalls

his memory in the Commons' House of Nova Scotia where he was so long an honoured leader, delineates a face of great intellectual power, with its finely cut features as if chiselled out of clear Carrara marble, his prominent brow, over which some scanty, white hairs fall, his earnest thoughtful expression, and his bending form, which tells of unwearied application to the many responsible and arduous duties that devolved upon him in the course of a busy life as lawyer and politician. The portrait presents him in his later life when age had accentuated all the forces of his character and the cares of his life, in the very expression and lineaments of his visage. He was, during his life, the chosen friend and adviser of governors, during the most critical period of the history of responsible government. He was a Tory and an aristocrat by education and inclination, but the annals of the legislature show he was not an obstinate opponent of reform, when he came to believe conscientiously that the proposed change was really a reform. A great lawyer in every sense of the term, an impassioned orator at times, a master of invective, a man of strong and earnest convictions he exercised necessarily a large power in the political councils, and did much to mould the legislation of the Province. His speeches, however, were too often the laboured efforts of the lawyer, determined to exhaust the argument on his side—in this respect he resembled Edward Blake in these later days—and he had none of the arts of Joseph Howe, whose eloquence had more of nature and of the people. He had no deep sense of humor or ability to amuse an assembly—qualities indispensable for a great, popular leader, especially on the platform. At rare times, however, he forgot the lawyer and gave full scope to the pent-up fires of a man in whose veins flowed the hot blood of the tropics, for he was not a Nova Scotian, but a West Indian by birth. It is an interesting fact that, while a Tory by education and aspiration, he was more than once an advocate of most radical measures, one of which simultaneous polling for elections—or the holding of elections on one and the same day—he himself carried even before it was thought of in the Canadian provinces. To him more than any other does Nova Scotia owe the relief from the monopoly of the coal mines, long held by an English company under a royal charter, given to a royal duke who sold it for jewels for his mistresses. To him, as well as to Joseph Howe, we owe a most eloquent advocacy of the union of the provinces "as calculated to perpetuate their connection with the parent State, promote their advancement and prosperity, increase their strength and influence, and elevate their position in the Empire." In social intercourse he appeared much buried in his thoughts and never displayed those magnetic and sympathetic qualities that made Joseph Howe so widely liked by all classes, especially the poor and humble. For many years the prize he had always in view was the chief justiceship—the natural ambition of a great lawyer. The contest lay between him and William Young, an equally eminent lawyer and the recognized leader of the Liberal party, though Joseph Howe was really its soul and popular idol. Both in politics and law Johnston and Young were rivals; their aim was the same, the leadership of the government, and the chief justiceship as the crowning result. The office was held for very many years by Sir Brenton Halliburton—no relative of the famous humorist, also a judge, whose name must be spelled with only one "l". When the contest was at its height Sir Brenton was an octogenarian and his usefulness was fast disappearing, but he held on with persistency, to the great anxiety of Conservatives and Liberals, who wished the prize to fall to their respective chiefs, Johnston or Young. One day Sir Brenton died and unhappily for the aspirations of the Conservative leader the Liberals were in office, and William Young became chief justice and was afterwards knighted. It was undoubtedly a blow to Mr. Johnston, not quite mitigated by his subsequent appointment as chief judge in equity—an office made specially for him by the Conservative party as soon as they came into power. New generations have grown up since Mr. Johnston was a force in law and politics, and his name seems fast fading away from the memory of the old people of the Province where he laboured so earnestly and conscientiously. His speeches have never been collected in a volume, but it is questionable if they would now be read, since they were, as a rule, powerful, political and legal arguments intended for present effect, and not replete with those graces of literary culture and eloquence that