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## THE LATE RIGHT HON. SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD.

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AT Ottawa, on the sixth day of June, 1891, Sir John Macdonald, the greatest Canadian of the age, closed his remarkable career. On the evening of May 29th the members of the Dominion House of Commons were engaged in a fierce debate, when it became the painful duty of Sir Hector Langevin to announce to the House that the Premier had been stricken by paralysis, and that his medical attendant expected his death hourly. The voice of party strife was at once hushed, and the House adjourned for some days. But the heroic man fought death bravely, and the struggle continued for more than a week. Each day brought the news to his sorrowing countrymen that the Premier, although still alive, was getting weaker. Finally, on the evening of the 6th of June, the most distinguished of Canadian and one of the most distinguished of contemporary statesmen passed quietly away.

To write the history of Sir John Macdonald is to write the history of Canada for the long period of his service as a public man; and the history of Canada for the last forty-seven years has been too eventful to be disposed of in a magazine article. Nothing, therefore, is attempted in this sketch beyond giving the barest outlines of a life which has been phenomenal in its rapid and continual success.

John Alexander Macdonald, the son of Hugh Macdonald and Helen Shaw, was born in Glasgow on the 11th day of January, 1815. The family emigrated in 1820, and settled at Kingston, Ontario, at that time the

chief centre of the Scottish population of Upper Canada. The future Premier was placed in the Royal Grammar School under the tuition of Dr. Wilson, an Oxford man; and he soon gave token of the splendid talents which later in life displayed themselves in his country's service. He had an excellent memory, and a special aptitude for mathematics; and it is said that when the head-master was showing off his pupils to visitors, he always called upon young Macdonald. In his sixteenth year the young man entered the law office of George Mackenzie, a leading barrister, and he was called to the bar of Upper Canada in 1836. He soon became prominent in his profession. Two years after his admission Von Schultz, a Polish adventurer, who led a band of raiders from the United States into Canada, was captured and put on his trial. Mr. Macdonald defended him with great ability, though unsuccessfully, and a Montreal paper describing the event said the young lawyer would soon be one of the first men in Canada.

Five years later, in 1844, he turned his steps to the sphere in which he was afterwards to shine so brilliantly. A general election was pending, and he contested Kingston in the Conservative interest. He was returned, and during the next few years he showed such wisdom and moderation in his treatment of public questions that in 1847 he was asked to take the portfolio of Receiver-General in the Sherwood-Daly administration. He accepted, and soon exchanged his post for the Crown Lands. His party, however, was growing weak; and