

When he entered the Federal Arena, the great race and religious storm swept this country, and yet he stood unmoved, patient, just, and candid amid it all, and within six months he probably won the greatest personal triumph of his life in the debate on the execution of Louis Riel. The Hon. Edward Blake, on that memorable occasion, arraigned the Government as it had never been arraigned before, and it was felt that no man on the Government side could reply to the greatest forensic orator Canada ever produced, and one who, in the opinion of the writer, may to-day be fairly ranked among the world's greatest forensic orators. Few, if any, in that House believed that the Hon. John Thompson could make an effective, let alone a crushing reply. But there was one young man who, probably had faith in him, and who was largely accountable for Thompson's entry into the Dominion House. That man was Charles Hibbert Tupper, who had studied under the great Jurist, and believed in him firmly. Mr. Thompson had singular good fortune, in that Mr. Blake finished his speech after midnight on Friday, the 19th day of March, 1886, and he had until Monday afternoon to prepare his reply. It will be remembered that Lord Erskine's first great hit when a young briefless barrister, was attributed largely to his having over night to prepare his reply to the jury. In fairness to Mr. Blake it must be also remembered that the resolution condemning the Government for the execution of Riel was not one that Mr. Blake chose. Sir John Macdonald had very craftily put up a supporter to

move this one, and consequently Mr. Blake was at a disadvantage. Further, he had undoubtedly underrated Mr. Thompson and made his argument wider than he would have otherwise done, had he anticipated that it would pass under review by a great legal mind. Thus stood the situation on the afternoon of Monday, the 22nd day of March, 1886, when Mr. Thompson stood up to make his reply to the Leader of the Opposition. The scene at that moment was intensely dramatic. The supporters of the Government scanned Mr. Thompson as he stood up, but there was nothing in the air or manner of the quiet little gentleman from down by the sea, to give them hope or confidence, and a look of doubt and fear passed over their countenances. On the other side, the Opposition, as they surveyed the quiet, unassuming Minister of Justice, felt that they had nothing to dread from him. But the indefatigable work for years as lawyer, Attorney-General, and Judge, and months spent on *Woodworth vs. Troop*, when he had masticated the rights, duties, and prerogatives of the British Parliament for centuries, were now to stand him in good stead. And as he proceeded in his argument and exposed or brushed aside, one after another, the sophistries of Mr. Blake, and drew from his great store-house of accumulated knowledge, fact after fact and argument after argument, he must have felt that his years of toil and midnight oil had not been spent in vain. All Canada knows the result of that debate. His party went wild over him, and he woke up the next morning to find himself famous. It is honorable to