

WHEN LAURIER BECAME LEADER

By Sir John Willison

THE AUTHOR OF "SIR WILFRID LAURIER AND THE LIBERAL PARTY: A POLITICAL HISTORY" IN THIS NOTABLE ARTICLE, TO APPEAR IN THE NOVEMBER *CANADIAN*, WRITTEN LONG AFTER HE BECAME AN APOSTLE OF LAURIER'S AND AFTER HE IN TIME BECAME A MOST SEVERE CRITIC OF THE GREAT FRENCH CANADIAN'S POLITICAL PROPOSALS, WRITES MOST CHARMINGLY AND WITHOUT MALICE HIS PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF THE LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY IN CANADA. HE RELATES MANY INCIDENTS THAT ARE ENTERTAINING AS WELL AS ILLUMINATING. HE THROWS A CONSTANT STREAM OF SUPERIOR LIGHT UPON A PERSONALITY THAT FOR TWENTY YEARS HAS STOOD IN THE FIERCEST GLARE OF PUBLIC LIFE IN CANADA. HE GIVES HIS FORMER LEADER MANY TRIBUTES, MAKES NO HARSH COMMENT, REFRAINS FROM ANY DISCUSSION OF POLITICAL ISSUES, BUT COMMENTS RATHER ON LAURIER'S MANY ATTRACTIVE QUALITIES, TASTES AND ATTAINMENTS, HIS LOVE OF BOOKS, HIS WIDE READING, AND RECOUNTS INCIDENTS SUCH AS THE FOLLOWING:

"I ONCE HEARD MR. LAURIER AND MR. GOLDWIN SMITH DISCUSS TREATISES ON FRENCH COOKERY WITH A FAMILIARITY AS INTERESTING AS IT WAS SURPRISING. IT WAS THIS LAURIER [THIS MAN OF BOOKS] WHO DID NOT ASPIRE TO BE LEADER OF A POLITICAL PARTY AND WHO SEEMED TO HAVE SETTLED IN A WAY OF LIFE HE WAS RELUCTANT TO FORSAKE."

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