

bought ten dime novels, had another "thrown in" because I took so many, and walked all the way home again, richer than I have ever been in all the years that have since settled on my head. As was his habit, my father scolded his erring son, made his choice out of the collection, and one by one read first all the "trash" that I had accumulated. This is a digression, but Reminiscences are chiefly digression and disconnection. No man serves a youth so well as he who lures him into reading what wise men have said, and foolish men have thought and vain men have dreamed. I think with gratitude of Mr. Fred. Meen, who established the Mechanics' Institute at Greenwood, as I confess a lasting debt to Honourable David Mills and Mr. Edward Farrer, who opened to me the books out of which they drew strength and inspiration, and which at least I have loved for their solid counsel, their beauty, authority and integrity.

In 1874, when I lived at Greenwood, the country was convulsed by the "Pacific scandal". Even the village school was broken into factions. Reared in a Tory household, and in worship of John A. Macdonald, I clung to the faith as it was received from the fathers. But I fear that I wavered as I found life-long Conservatives falling away from the standard. At school those who held to the Conservative leader were denounced as "Charter-sellers". I cannot recollect that the taunt was supported by fact or argument. Nor was there any better support for the retort of youthful Conservatives that all Reformers were "rebels". But if there was comedy in the schoolyard, there was an element of tragedy in the position of many Conservatives. Grieved to the soul over the "scandal", they turned sadly from the leader who had commanded their complete sympathy and devotion. This was long before we had manhood suffrage and many of those who deserted Sir John Macdonald were old men whose loyalty

to the leader and the party had become a tradition and almost a religion. Not only did they forsake the old allegiance, but they became active working members of Liberal committees. There is nothing in the political history of Canada to justify the notion that Conservatives submit more readily than Liberals to the bondage of party.

The Conservative candidate in South Ontario in 1874 was Honourable T. N. Gibbs, who had been admitted to the Cabinet in 1873, a few months before Sir John Macdonald resigned office. Of fine presence and high character, and with influential social and business connections throughout the riding, he was formidable in the canvass and on the platform. It was Mr. Gibbs who defeated Honourable George Brown in 1867, in a contest in which, if rumour was not unjust, there was expenditure of money as lavish as ever fertilized a Canadian constituency. The charge of corruption always lies against the victor, but there is reason to think Mr. Brown was not empty-handed. Thought of that achievement still brings a flush of pride to the furrowed cheeks of Conservative veterans in South Ontario. But I think of more than one gray-haired Conservative who resolutely resisted Mr. Gibbs's personal appeal, and of at least one woman who shed bitter tears over the contumacy and recreancy of her husband. Honourable Malcolm Cameron, of Perth, famous in early political battles in Lambton and Kent, was brought into the riding to oppose this strong local candidate. He was called "The Coon" in contemporary political writing. Once when Honourable George Brown appeared as a candidate in Kent, Mr. Cameron wrote a letter urging the "clear Grit" wing of the Liberal party to give Mr. Brown "a coon-hunt on the Wabash". From this he was "The Coon" while he lived. A pioneer temperance agitator, Mr. Cameron had many anecdotes which he told with good effect. At Brough-