

I have been calling to mind that I have now outlived nearly all my early contemporaries and early associates, and many of later date. I call to mind that in my own time, and within my own memory, a transformation has been accomplished in the political condition of the province, and in everything that goes to make up a great and civilized community. I remember when neither our province, nor any other British province, had responsible government. I remember when the conduct of provincial affairs was not by the elected representatives of the population,



JOHN MOWAT, ESQ.,
Father of Sir Oliver Mowat.

nor by persons of their appointing, or having their confidence. I knew the province when it had no municipal institutions, now known to be essential to local interests and local progress. I knew the province when the various churches amongst which its people were distributed, were not equal before the law; when the established church of old England was practically the established church here, and when there were claimed for it the exclusive rights and privileges of an establishment, and one-seventh of the whole land of the coun-

try. I remember the province when there was in it not one university, not one college, and no system of public schools. I remember when, at every election, there was but one polling place for a whole county, no matter how extensive; when the election lasted for a week, and when, except in towns, the only voters were freeholders. I remember when the province had not a mile of railway, nor, I believe, a mile of macadamized road. I remember when the principal cities of the present day were but villages—when this great city of Toronto was “Little York,” and its population was three or four thousand. I remember when the whole province had—or was supposed to have—a population of but 150,000, and therefore less than the population now of Toronto alone. My memory thus goes back of the time when I began the practice of my profession here, a half century ago. The city had then a population of but 15,000, and Upper Canada a population of but half a million. The changes which have taken place in our province in that half century have been very great. Its progress in population, in wealth, in education, in intelligence, in political freedom, and in most other things which serve to make a country attractive and great, has in fact been enormous.

His early education was received chiefly from private tutors, nine in number, and all of whom, with one exception, have passed away.

Choosing the law as his profession he, strangely enough, entered the office of the man who was to become his strongest political foe for many years, John A. Macdonald, at the time but twenty-two years old, while the young student was seventeen. When he arrived at manhood, Mr. Mowat was called to the bar and practised for a short time in his native city, and then removed to Toronto, where he has since lived. In this city, where he commenced his public life as an alderman for the years 1857 and 1858, only two of his associates in the City Council now survive him.

In the practice of his profession in Toronto he made choice of the Equity