

THE HON. THOMAS CUSHING AYLWIN.

THE late Judge Aylwin possessed one of the shrewdest and keenest intellects that ever adorned the Canadian Bench. His knowledge of criminal jurisprudence and his skill as a forensic and Parliamentary debater were unsurpassed by those of any Canadian of his time. He won a high place alike as an advocate, as a statesman, and as a jurist; and had the promise of his youth been borne out by the performance of his mature age, he would have left behind him the record of a truly great man. But he paid the penalty of a too early maturity. His physical powers declined before he could be said to have passed middle life, and for some years before he sank into his grave he was both physically and mentally a mere shadow of what he had once been. He will long be remembered, however, as a man of much note in his day, and is well entitled to a place in the present collection.

He was born in the city of Quebec, on the 5th of January, 1806. His father was a native of Wales, and his mother—whose maiden name was Connolly—was of Irish extraction. He received his primary education at a private school in Quebec, kept by the Rev. Dr. Wilkie, a Presbyterian clergyman. He subsequently spent a short time at Harvard College, Cambridge, Massachusetts. It does not appear that he graduated there, but he was known for a youth of great intellectual precocity, and was

looked upon as a genius by his tutors and companions. Having resolved to devote himself to the study of the law, he entered the office of Mr. Moquin, a distinguished advocate of Quebec. After studying for some time under that gentleman's directions, during which he paid special attention to criminal law, he transferred his services to the office of the late Judge Thompson, of Gaspé. He displayed great aptitude as a linguist, and it is said that when he was only sixteen years old he acted as interpreter in the Criminal Court at Quebec. In 1828 he was called to the Bar of Lower Canada, and speedily acquired repute as an advocate of remarkable brilliancy. He was especially noted among his brother practitioners for his skill in detecting a flaw in an opponent's case, and his sagacity in this respect gained him many a forensic victory when the cause appeared well nigh hopeless. For some time after his call to the Bar he practised in partnership with the late Judge Short, of Sherbrooke. He had strong political leanings on the Reform side, and took an active part in the discussion of the various exciting public questions of those days. He was an admirable writer, and during the three or four years prior to the breaking out of the rebellion of 1837 and '38, he contributed many slashing and effective newspaper articles to the provincial press. He was an unsparing assailant of Lord Gosford and