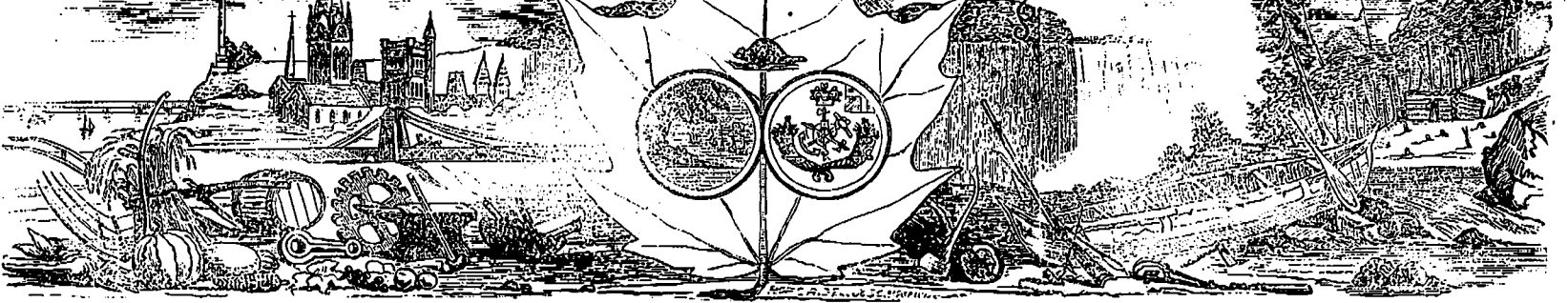


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THE LATE SIR ALLAN NAPIER McNAB.

On the eighth of August, 1862, Sir Allan McNab ceased from the labors of an active public life. His age 65, not quite that allotted as the period of man's pilgrimage on earth. His appearance indicated both health and vigor, and years of activity seemed still before him. For some days he had been ailing, but nothing serious was apprehended. It was, therefore, with surprise the public heard of the fatal termination. His portrait, on the first page, taken but recently, saves us giving a pen and ink sketch of his personal appearance, and will, we are sure, be far more acceptable to the reader.

Sir Allan was a Canadian by birth, having first seen the light in the little town of Niagara, in the year 1798. His genealogy, so far as known, is neither long nor intricate. He was the son of a Highland Scottish gentleman whose father was the owner of a small estate in that part of the world. His father, imbibing the spirit of those times, and perhaps, for want of something better to do, joined the army. He became attached to the staff of General Simcoe, and accompanied him when ordered to this country. The young McNab gave early promise to follow the profession of his father, for when the Americans attacked Toronto, he shouldered his musket, being then only in his fourteenth year. He served during the war both in the field and on board the fleet, and took part in several engagements. Peace found him an ensign on half-pay. It is possible that he saw little prospect of future active employment in the army; for he soon afterwards turned his attention to the study of law. In 1825 he was called to the bar, and selected Hamilton in which to carry on the practice of his new profession. Fortune seems to have smiled upon him, for he soon became Queen's Counsel, and was elected member for the County of Wentworth in 1829. On the breaking out of the rebellion in 1837, he doffed the gown, and once more took the field. Appointed chief of the Upper Canadian loyalists, as the Tory section were then called, he hastily collected a number of men and marched to the defence of Toronto, where the danger was most threatening: having with little difficulty dispersed the rebels, he proceeded to the Niagara frontier and



SIR ALLAN NAPIER McNAB, BART.

conducted operations against Navy Island until it was evacuated. He also put down another attempt at insurrection in the London district. For the services rendered at this juncture, he was knighted, and received the thanks of the Provincial Parliament. It was not, however, till after the union of the Provinces, that Sir Allan became a prominent politician; elected at this time member for the city of Hamilton he represented that constituency till 1857, when he resigned his seat, with the intention of making England his future home. During all this period he took an active part in political affairs. For a time he filled the office of Speaker, and on the retirement of Mr. Draper was made leader of his party. While in England he became a candidate for Brighton, but was defeated by Mr. White; Sir Allan soon after returned to Canada, and a vacancy occurring in the Western Division he was elected a member of the Upper House, and at the opening of last session he was chosen Speaker of that assembly.

As a public speaker, Sir Allan had an imposing personal appearance, and a voice of the richest quality. He was always

fluent and at times impressively earnest. There was in him a rich vein of humor, which spoke through the merry twinkle of his eye and the sudden lighting up of his countenance; in the selection of his humorous images he was by no means fastidious, especially, when a political opponent was to be held up to ridicule. There was about his whole manner, when speaking, a genial frankness which told well with the election audiences, he had so frequently to address. His invective however, was fierce, and unsparing, accompanied by that bending forward of the head, and its rapid oscillation from side to side which phrenologists call the natural language of destructiveness; he never raised his hearers to the higher regions of thought, he never attempted to expound first principles, and had none of that soul awakening power which constitutes true eloquence; neither the constitution of his mind, indeed, nor the training it received, fitted him for such eloquence. He was essentially a practical man, not a theorist—a man of action, not a man of thought; and, therefore accustomed to deal only with the fleeting questions of the hour, and to study only

that part of human character which floats on the surface of every day life. We never heard him in parliament; but in his youthful days—with his naturally vigorous intellect and intimate knowledge of Canadian politics,—he must have been a formidable debator.

He was twice married; first, on the 6th of May, 1821, to Elizabeth, daughter of Lieutenant Daniel Broke, by whom he had a son and a daughter, and who died in 1825. He again married in 1837 Mary, daughter of Mr. Sheriff Stuart, who bore him two daughters, but whose death in 1846 left him once more a widower, in which state he continued during the remainder of his life.

Such is a brief sketch of one of Canada's most prominent public men. The success which attended him in his various professions of Soldier, Lawyer, Politician, seems to have depended more upon time and circumstances, his own self-reliance and shrewdness, than any very intimate knowledge he possessed of the principles of the one, or the tactics of the other. He was however, always ready and always willing to face the foe and to do battle—whether the weapon of warfare was the tongue or the sword—an very frequently came off victorious favoring fortune, a pleasing address, and agreeable social qualities, rendered him very popular especially was he so among the people of Hamilton, where he spent the greater part of his life, and

saw it increase from a few houses to a city containing between twenty and thirty thousand inhabitants. Enemies no doubt, he had, for it is not possible that one who had taken an active part in public affairs, for so many years, could avoid giving offence to some and disappointing the expectation of others; his death will be regretted by a large number of friends, and his name will occupy no unimportant place in the history of our country.

On the 11th his body was committed to the tomb. Its last resting place is the grounds attached to his late residence and on the heights overlooking Burlington Bay. Long before the hour at which the funeral was appointed to take place large numbers might be seen wending their way to Dundurn, and congregated within its precincts were men from all and distant parts of the Province. It was rumored that previous to his death he had become a convert to the Roman Catholic faith; but seems not to have been generally believed. When, however, it was known (which was shortly before the funeral took place) that he was to be buried according to the rites of the