

and by their eloquence they were able to sway vast multitudes. Laurier, though never a strong man physically and inferior in this respect to his great rivals in eloquence, possessed in his prime the art of captivating and swaying an audience, and his influence as an orator was increased by his striking personal appearance—almost æsthetic as it was. The passage of years, while it has diminished his vigour as a speaker, has made his appearance the more striking.

But great as were Chapleau, Mercier and Laurier in their days of power, not one of them could electrify a popular gathering as Mr. Bourassa can. Not only does he appear to be himself transformed, but it seems as if his eloquence hypnotises the whole assemblage. I have stood beside him on many notable occasions and have watched him closely and witnessed the evidence of his unique power. I heard him in the St. James campaign; I stood near to him when he was addressing ten thousand people gathered on the Place d'Armes to commemorate Dollard's heroic exploit; I listened to him as he spoke in Notre Dame Church during the Eucharistic congress; I was in the audience when he addressed twenty thousand people on the Champ de Mars, protesting against insults to the Christian faith; and I was on the platform when following the Drummond and Arthabaska election he received a great ovation from ten thousand of his countrymen gathered in the Ontario rink in Montreal. On all those occasions his power as an orator was conspicuous. Mr. Bourassa has his peculiarities as a speaker, as all great orators have. He begins quietly, and if you have never heard him before you may be disappointed at the outset and wonder if this is indeed the great orator you have heard so much about. But wait. It is not long before you are listening with interest, the spell of his voice has begun to work, and as he proceeds a wonderful change is wrought. Stronger and more resonant becomes his voice till it reaches out to the furthest limits of the audience, his countenance, in fact his whole figure, seems to become transformed; his gestures are more frequent and effective, his utterances more and more forcible. He is constantly changing his position on the platform. One minute he directly faces his audience from the centre of the stand, addressing his