

partnership with Mr. Stephen Maule Jarvis, the firm being known as that of "Jarvis & Blake." This partnership was subsequently dissolved, when a new firm was established comprising Edward and his brother Samuel Hume Blake. Thereafter the name of the firm many times changed. In 1858, he married Miss Margaret Cronyn, of London, a daughter of the late Right Reverend Benjamin Cronyn, Bishop of Huron. An unaccountable lack of self-confidence led him, even when his talent had made him conspicuous, to often distrust himself, and it is said that during the early years of his practice he did not hold his own briefs. After a severe struggle with himself, and hard study, he outgrew this fault, and became in time one of the most able lawyers at the bar. Especially was he expert in cross-examination. Ever since 1867, the Reform party, which had been in a state of disorganization, and comparative lassitude, recognised what a gain it would be to add a man of Edward Blake's great ability and high character to its ranks. So many overtures were made to him, and, after much earnest solicitation, he reluctantly consented to their request. Mr. Edward Blake was elected to the House of Commons for West Durham, the same constituency which he represents at this day; and the electors of South Bruce chose him for the local legislature, dual representation being then permitted. In December, 1869, he became leader of the Provincial Opposition, succeeding Mr. Archibald McKellar. He retained the leadership of the Opposition for eighteen months. In the Ontario elections of 1871, John Sandfield Macdonald's Coalition Government lost many of its supporters. On the assembling of the Legislature Mr. Mackenzie moved a direct want of confidence in the Ministry, and Mr. Blake supported the motion in a magnificent speech. The Ministry was overthrown, and Mr. Blake called on to form a government, a task which he accepted much against his inclination. He took the office of President of the Council without a salary. Shortly after the prorogation of Parliament, the condition of his health made it necessary for him to go to Europe. In the autumn he resigned the leadership to take his seat in the House of Commons, dual representation having been abolished. He very readily made his great abilities felt in the latter body; and his speech in reply to Sir John Macdonald on the occasion of the Pacific Scandal was the most powerful utterance that had ever been heard in that House. On the downfall of Sir John Macdonald's

administration Mr. Blake entered Mr. Mackenzie's Cabinet without portfolio, but resigned on the following February, in consequence of ill-health. In 1875, he accepted office again as Minister of Justice, his health being improved by a visit to England. In June, 1877, he resigned the ministership of Justice and became President of the Council. Shortly after the downfall of the administration he was chosen leader of the Opposition in place of Mr. Mackenzie. Mr. Blake has been instrumental in the creation of several valuable acts of legislation. He advocates some change in our relations with the mother country; and, as far as can be ascertained, the change he proposes is the adoption of something in the nature of a federation of the empire. He advocates the reconstruction of the Senate in such a manner as to bring it more in harmony with popular institutions, and has made a speech powerful in argument and irresistible in logic, showing that Canada should have the right to make her own Commercial treaties. Mr. Blake's public character is above reproach, and his entire career has been an honour to Canadian politics. He has sickened of the ways of party, and is often pained at being held responsible for the utterances of irresponsible followers. He has frequently contemplated resigning the leadership of the Liberal party, declaring that expediency, not conviction, is sometimes hardly less the rule among his supporters than among their opponents. He is charged with being repellent in manner, but the truth seems to be that he is above flattery and the arts and tricks by which men of less honour and principle would maintain an ascendancy over their followers. Mr. Blake sometimes propounds schemes that are impracticable; he is frequently timid when the time arrives for decision and courage, yet for all this he is in all the higher qualities, the ablest, but not the most successful statesman in Canada. In this age when our people are party blind, and to a large extent demoralized by the corruption of politicians, a high-minded and honourable man like Edward Blake, is sure not to get the recognition that he deserves. But the force of his example, and the wisdom of his precepts cannot fail to leave their impression on our young generation, and eventually to bear their fruit. It may not be out of place to add that he was defeated in South Bruce in 1878, but was the following year elected by acclamation for Durham, his present constituency.