

## THE LATE BARON SYDENHAM,

FIRST GOVERNOR GENERAL OF THE UNITED PROVINCES OF UPPER AND LOWER CANADA.

Died at Kingston, September 19, 1841.

A SERMON ON THE DEATH OF LORD SYDENHAM,—BY THE REV. W. AGAR ADAMSON.

THE event which this eloquent discourse commemorates is of too much and of too melancholy interest to pass without record in our pages, although it be already known and wept far beyond the limits to which our notice of it may ever reach.

Lord Sydenham was yet young when the dread summons called him to his Creator's footstool. His life had not passed beyond its summer; or, at farthest, it was at that point only where summer and autumn meet—when the intellectual man is in his highest vigour, even as the inanimate world is richest in the approach and promise of maturity. But, brief though his existence had been, he had achieved more than myriads, his equals in rank and station, who have gone to the grave before him, borne down by the weight of years. During his brief term of life, he had been no niggard of his toil, nor did he eat the bread of idleness and sloth. His days had been days of labour, and his nights, nights of thought. With equal facility he planned and executed, and in his plans as in their execution, it was easy to trace the unerring stamp of the presiding and master mind. During his latest days his toil and anxiety were for us—given freely in behalf of the noble colony placed by a confiding sovereign under his guardianship and care. Under his sway it rose regenerated from its political and deathlike lethargy, and took again its station among the dependencies of the Island-Empire. Under his auspices it has made one rapid stride to free itself from the social derangement and confusion which have, as it were, held us struggling, almost without hope, far behind our compeers in the race for honour and improvement. The mission entrusted to Baron Sydenham was near its accomplishment when he died. When undertaken by him, all men confessed that it was hedged round with difficulty; though the events of the few, immediately preceding years had predisposed men's minds to receive the peace offering he had been commissioned to present. But, whatever the difficulties were, he was endowed with energies to meet and to subdue them. His rapid attainment of success astonished all men but himself. He seemed intuitively to trace back to their origin the causes which had marred our prosperity, and retarded the progress, physically and intellectually, of the country he was called upon to govern—and he determined to cut deep into their roots, and utterly weed them out. He saw a country for which nature had done much, and man almost nothing, whose wealth, like the riches of an unwrought mine, was unproductive, and without value—he saw the treasures which our limitless forests might cover, but not conceal. He saw, and he determined that the spectacle should meet the view of the powerful among his countrymen, satisfied that, once unveiled, the bounties of Providence would ere long be turned into productive channels, and our boundless wastes converted into smiling fields, from which might be supplied with bread the starving millions of his native land, while every acre reclaimed from its native wildness would give forth comfort to be shared round the cottage fires of those from whose labour sprang the earth's abundance.

Before he did all that he hoped to do, he died. The seed he sowed it was left to other hands to reap. But if it prosper and grow into maturity, the end for which he laboured will be fulfilled, and to him it matters not what hand may gather in the harvest. To those for whom he toiled it would have been pleasing to know that he still watched over what he had so well begun, but the great ones of earth, equally with the weak and lowly, are only instruments of one whose illimitable greatness no finite mind can fathom. That One willed it otherwise, and the creatures of His mercy can only say, "Thy will, not ours, be done."

But though we own the power and bend humbly in acknowledgement that though we see it not, all things are ordered wisely and well, the heart melts in sympathy when it contemplates an event, to all human eyes, so full of sadness, so brimming over with melancholy thoughts, as is presented in the death of one like the departed, surrounded by all that makes life desirable—"bound to existence by so many delightful ties—the honoured of his country, the favoured of his sovereign,—the hearts of thousands knit to him as the heart of one man." Regretful tears