

tary influence over their mid-day meal. And we had the vanity to believe that we should be everywhere a welcome guest; that the people would say, 'Why here is Howe amongst us again; not Mr. Speaker Howe, nor the Hon. Mr. Howe, but Joe Howe, as he used to be sitting in his editorial chair and talking to us about politics, and trade, and agriculture; about our own country and other countries; making us laugh a good deal, but think a good deal more even while we were laughing?' Such is the reception we anticipate, homely but hearty; and we can assure our countrymen that we fall back among them, conscious that there is no name by which we have been known of late years among the dignitaries of the land, that we prize so highly as the old familiar abbreviation." In such an editorial greeting there may be egotism, and a craving for the sweet voices of the multitude. Restlessness or impatience of the shackles of official life there certainly is; but there was no hypocrisy about him when he intimated that he loved best the common people, and that, therefore, he valued the popular abbreviation of his name as a sign of popular love and confidence. He never desired to be other than a tribune of the people; though, like most tribunes, he could be and often was more tyrannical than if he had been born in the purple. And as he grew older, he became more familiar instead of more reserved in manner. Most men become conservative as they grow old. In his case the reverse was the fact—all his life he seemed to be progressing or degenerating—let each of my readers take the word he likes—from Toryism to Radicalism. When at the height of his power, his perfect openness and unreserve of manner constituted his greatest charm. As the Hon. Edward Chandler, of New Brunswick, who knew him well, said of him in 1851:—"We all feel Mr. Howe's greatness, but what I admire is the simplicity of his manners, combined with such high intellectual re-

sources. Negotiating with Ministers of State, at the Governor-General's Council Board, or even in presence of his Sovereign, as beneath the lowly roof of the humblest farmer of the land, he is ever the same—Joe Howe."

Who was this Joe Howe? Some sketch of his life-work, some insight into his inner-man, we should have. Our soil has not produced so many sons of his quality that we can afford to pass him by without notice. But no one, so far as I am aware, proposes to write his life, and a new generation is rising up that knows neither him nor his work. The old state of things against which he had to contend in bitterest strife has passed away so completely, that it is remembered even by old men only as a dream. Few in the Upper Provinces probably think of him save as the leader of the Nova Scotia Anti-Confederates. Yet for nigh forty years he was the central figure in the political life of his own Province. He made his name known and felt also beyond Nova Scotia, but no Scot nor Swiss ever kept his heart truer to his native land, and none, when far away, longed more earnestly for home. As editor, orator, politician, pamphleteer; in Government or in Opposition; he was generally to be found in the front; and even among his equals intellectually and his superiors in scholarship, he was pretty sure to be first. During all that time few measures were passed in Nova Scotia without his mark on them. His notch, too, was generally unmistakeable. Five years ago, he left Halifax to live as a Cabinet Minister in Ottawa, amid misunderstandings and heats that made many say that he had shaken off the dust of his feet in departing, and that the ties which had bound the people to him had been finally broken; but three years after, his County of Hants re-elected him in his absence without opposition. The year following he came back to die; and at this day, I believe, there is no name so powerful to conjure with in half the counties of Nova Scotia as the old name of Joe Howe.