

# THE CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS,



Vol. I—No. 25.]

HAMILTON, C.W., SATURDAY, MAY 2, 1863.

[63 PER ANNUM, IN ADVANCE  
SINGLE COPIES 6 CENTS.]

HON. GEORGE E. CARTIER, M.P.P.  
FOR MONTREAL CITY.

The prominent position occupied by Mr. Cartier for six years as a Cabinet Minister, four years as Premier of the Provincial Government, and since May, 1862, as leader of the Lower Canada Opposition in the House of Assembly, will recommend his portrait to public notice, and this biographical sketch to all readers who care to be instructed in the history of Canada; for this eminent representative of Franco-Canadian interests made his advent as a politician at a critical juncture in Provincial events, namely, in the agitation immediately antecedent to the rebellion of 1837 and 1838.

George Etienne Cartier was born on the 6th of September, 1814, at St. Antoine, on

the Chambly river, in the county of Vercheres, Lower Canada. The descendants of the nephews of Jacques Cartier, the famous sea Captain of St. Malo, France, and navigating pioneer of the French colonists in Canada, settled and have long resided in Vercheres; consequently it may be fairly presumed that the late Prime Minister in the Cabinet which was known as the Cartier-Macdonald government is descended from the stock of the first European explorer of the waters of the St. Lawrence. The grandfather of the eminent gentleman, whose memoir we are about to write, was Jacques Cartier, an enterprising and successful merchant. He was one of the first representatives of the county of Vercheres after the concession of representative government by the Imperial Act of 1791, but the county was then named Surrey.

George Etienne Cartier was educated at the College of St. Sulpice in the city of Montreal, an institution founded in 1773 by the Seminary of Montreal, which is an Ecclesiastical corporation possessing large revenues derived from real estate within and around that beautiful, wealthy, widely and rapidly expanding city—the commercial and financial emporium to the growth and wealth of which all Canada West is contributing. At St. Sulpice he went through a regular College course of education for eight years under the ecclesiastics of the establishment.

On leaving College he studied law in the office of the late Mr. E. E. Rodier, a leading member of the Montreal bar and at one time a member of Assembly. In 1835, Mr. Cartier commenced practice in Montreal. By energy, assiduity, severe and continuous labor, he succeeded in becoming the central figure and worker in an extensive professional practice. But though

beginning in 1835 he did not rise high in his profession until a disturbing, stormy interval, that of the rebellion of 1837-1838, had come and passed away. In Mr. Lindsey's Life and Times of William Lyon MacKenzie, a list of Lower Canadians, for whose apprehension rewards were offered, includes the name of E. E. Rodier, with whom the subject of this memoir studied law; but not Mr. Cartier's own name. Yet it has been frequently stated that he was one of the 'exiles' who for a time absented themselves from Canada. When he had become Prime Minister and Attorney General, and Mr. William Lyon MacKenzie had returned from 'exile' and was a member of the House of Assembly, sitting in Opposition, he sometimes reminded that minister of the difference of price at which their heads were once

officially valued in the Governor General's proclamation; Mr. MacKenzie's head at four thousand dollars, Mr. Cartier's at only four hundred.

In 1848 Mr. Cartier was first elected to Parliament, succeeding the Hon. Mr. Leslie in the county of Vercheres, who had been appointed a crown member of the Legislative Council—the Canadian House of Lords. Mr. Cartier continued, by several renewals to be member for that county until 1861, when, at the general election, he contested the east section of Montreal city with Mr. Dorion, leader of the extreme democratic or red French party, and defeated him. He had contested Montreal in 1857, unsuccessfully, while being elected at the same time for Vercheres, his supposed object being to split a sufficiency of votes to defeat the Hon.

Luther Holton, in which effort of partizan strategy he succeeded.

Mr. Cartier's connection with official political life dates from January 25th, 1856. He was made Provincial Secretary in the ministry of Sir Allan MacNab and Sir Etienne Tache. Then when Sir Allan had retired, and the Cabinet had become the Tache-Macdonald ministry, Mr. Cartier on 24th May, 1856, succeeded Mr. Drummond as Attorney General East. In November, 1857, he took the leadership of the Lower Canada section of the government, Mr. John A. Macdonald taking the office of Premier, and their Cabinet being termed the Macdonald-Cartier ministry. On the 5th of August, 1858, the Brown-Dorion ministry having held office two days and been jostled or 'jockeyed' out of it by means which were certainly not constitu-

tional, nor consistent with that responsible representative government, to obtain which 'liberals' and 'reformers' had rebelled in 1837, the cabinet was reconstructed on its return to office, as the Cartier-Macdonald ministry. That lasted until the adverse vote on the Militia bill, led by Mr. Sandfield Macdonald, 26th May, 1862.

In 1858 Mr. Cartier visited England and was the guest of Her Majesty the Queen at Windsor Castle. On the arrival of the Prince of Wales in the St. Lawrence in July, 1860, this gentleman who is at once poet and politician, and can sing as well as make a speech, led off one of his songs on board the royal flag ship, the chorus of which was given with fine effect by all hands, the Prince included—a song smooth in versification, simple, sweet, and set to good music—'La Claire Fontaine.' The man who can find delight in composing the words and music and in singing such a song as that, has something in him more exalted than the abilities requisite to lead and plot in the tricks and traps of political party faction.

Mr. Cartier assisted to carry bills for making the Legislative Council elective; for secularizing the Clergy Reserves in Canada West, and for extinguishing the Seigneurial Tenures in Canada East. In 1856 he framed and carried a measure for the establishment of three Normal schools in the Lower Province; and in the next year the Laval Normal school at Quebec, the Jacques-Cartier and McGill Normal schools at Montreal, were in practical operation. In 1857 he introduced and carried a measure to provide for the codification of the procedure and civil laws of Lower Canada. In the same session he framed and carried a bill to change the system of judicial centralization, which in that long ex-



HON. GEORGE E. CARTIER, M. P. P.