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THE RIGHT HON. SIR JOHN S. D. THOMPSON, K.C.M.G., P.C., Q.C.,
AS A LAWYER.

BY RICHARD ARMSTRONG.

SIR John Thompson's life has many lessons for the young lawyers of Canada. He was a self-made man; by hard work and steady application he won his way upward. In every position which he occupied he did his work faithfully. It is the object of this sketch to show why and how he succeeded. He was born in Halifax on the 10th of Nov., 1844. His parents were not wealthy, and so he did not receive a finished education. He attended the common school and free Church Academy, and at the age of 17 he entered on the study of law in the office of Henry Prior, in Halifax. The Hon. Robert Sedgewick, of the supreme court (who was a student then), remembered Thompson at that time attending the Law Students' Literary and Debating Club, and says he remembers him as a slight, delicate youth, very bashful and diffident, and but seldom taking part in the debates or programmes, and but little noticed by the other students. In July, 1865, Johnnie Thompson, as he was then known, was called to the Bar, and began the practice of law, but he failed to draw clients around him, and, having learned shorthand writing when a student, turned his attention to re-

porting for the Legislature. He was thus employed during the following four years.

In 1869, Mr. Joseph Coombes, then a celebrated lawyer of Halifax, took Thompson in as a junior partner. This gave Johnnie Thompson his great opening. He seized it, and from that time he worked incessantly until the time of his tragic death. While he was with Coombes he did the office work and prepared the briefs—working late and early, filling his mind with legal knowledge, until it became a vast store-house, from which he was afterwards able to draw on with such telling effect.

When he first started taking counsel work, he did so in the Equity Court, but soon practised in all the courts, taking a great deal of jury work. In 1874 we find him for the first time, in the case of *Wylde et al. vs. The Union Marine Insurance Co.*, appearing in the Supreme Court of that province. He acted as junior counsel to Mr. Weatherbe, now Judge of that court. Mr. Rigby, Q.C., acted for the plaintiffs. A few months after that he acted as counsel in the case of *Parker vs. Fairbanks*, in the same court, with Mr. Rigby, Q.C.,