



### UNDERSTANDING OUR FOREIGNERS.

**T**HE strangers who are within our gates continue to be "taken in" and bamboozled and patronized and "missioned" and plundered and put upon and educated and—everything but intelligently understood. We will do anything in the world for them—and to them—except set our imaginations at work in an effort to find out what they are, and why. We just marvel at them—that they can actually come to this Heaven-blessed country and really see our superior selves living the beautiful lives we so easily see ourselves living, and yet go on being so unlike us as they manage to do. It is truly beyond words. How obdurate they must be! Why, we should think that one good look at a Canadian would convince them that they were all wrong where they differed from that "specimen brick," and set them copying us like so many industrious monkeys.

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**W**ELL, it doesn't. They pick up our language in such broken fragments as they find most easily masticated; and they pick up a living after the manner of their own kind; and they have their quarrels and their pleasures—and they usually go about both of them in a fashion which brings them into collision with our laws. Doubtless, they wonder at us quite as much as we wonder at them; but we are both very slow at understanding each other. And mutual understanding must come before we get very far on the road toward assimilation. A little understanding, indeed, would help a lot. Take, for example, the playful habit the Italian has of carrying arms and using them. We send him to jail for it, and we scold him and assure him that he doesn't need a knife, and sometimes forcibly take his "side-arms" away from him. But we never take the pains to think out why he wastes his good money in buying weapons, and to ask ourselves if we may not be in a large measure to blame. One might think that we would come to suspect that it is not pure perverse wickedness which makes the Italian carry a knife, when we see practically all Italian immigrants doing it. Surely this might suggest to us the idea that there must be some general cause for what looks like a national habit. And if we could get at the cause, we would do more toward wiping out the effect than by jailing individual Italians after they have stabbed somebody.

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**I**F you will imagine yourself to be an Italian immigrant for a moment, you will see the cause plainly enough. At home, in "sunny Italy," you have had a profound distrust of the authorities, and have looked to your own right hand for your safety. You may have belonged to a secret society which made that safety more secure; but even the secret society has defended its members by an extreme readiness to use the knife when necessary. That has been your home training. Very well; you think of venturing forth out of Italy, the centre of the world's civilization to you, the country which was old before "America" was discovered; and risking your skin in that far-away "America" where there must be much less law and order than at home. If you have any doubt on that point, you will probably have bought some books on "America" in your Italian book-store—the novels of Fennimore Cooper, for choice. There you have learned that deadly combats with Indians form a daily part of the lives of most Americans. I may just say that, in Naples, Fennimore Cooper's yarns, turned into Italian and illustrated in the most blood-thirsty fashion, are to be seen in many bookshop windows.

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**S**O you start out for "America," believing that, when you step off the ship, you will be taking your life in your hands. And what is the first thing you see? In one Canadian city that I know very well, the street all about the Italian Labour Agencies is lined with second-hand stores in whose windows are displayed all sorts of revolvers and ugly-looking knives. They are more frequent in that district than any other single sort of merchandise. Now what does the Italian immigrant infer? Why, what else than that his previously conceived notion was right, and that any man who would be safe in "America" must be well-armed? He probably thinks that all these "gun shops" mean that every Canadian carries a revolver; and he feels

exceedingly insecure until he gets one. The fact that the police do not want him to be armed doubles his conviction that he ought to be. He has grown up with an innate distrust, as we have said, of all police. So he buys his revolver or his knife; and he meets all too many occasions upon which undeniable bad treatment leads him to think that this is a time when he should "show himself a man."

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**T**HEN consider the Chinaman. He has a weakness. He loves "a little game." I know lots of "whites" who have the same weakness; but they know enough to play their "little games" while keeping within the law. The Chinaman wants to take a risk. He does not understand the Stock Exchange, and so cannot take his risk in the kid-gloved manner affected by our best citizens. If he knew a little more, he could gamble, not only with impunity, but amidst the admiration of the community. Nor is he sufficiently informed to join in the riotous real estate "game." If he could only

do that, he would be so respectable that we would see in him the makings of an ancestor of one of our future "best families." But poor "John" doesn't understand these "games." They are too deep for him. Still he wants to frisk with the "elusive goddess" a trifle, just to sweeten his hard hours of labour. And he gathers together in a quiet company in a little back room and starts to enjoy the game he does understand, when we send our police—who never play anything but checkers—to break up his party and drag him into court. He and all his tribe are not nearly as much a menace to the community as one "bucket-shop" artist—I beg pardon, there are no "bucket shops" officially now. What I mean is one man who encourages stock-buying on small "margins."

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**N**OW do you not think that this refusal to let the Chinaman relax a bit over a game of "fan-tan" may drive him to worse vices? Remember, he is a pretty lonely individual out here—a bachelor, an alien, finding no association with "whites," except with those who want either to rob or to preach to him. I think that Chinamen might be doing worse than losing a little money to each other. As for the "Dago," why not give him a help along the right direction, by forbidding the exposure of arms for sale, and enforcing the law? He will believe what he sees ten times as quickly as what the police tell him.

THE MONOCLE MAN.

## The Birthplace of Sir John

**T**HREE well-informed Conservatives lately had a dispute as to the birthplace of Sir John Macdonald. They were yachting down Kingston way, and the talk turned upon the suggested memorial to the late Conservative chieftain to be erected at Adolphustown on Hay Bay.

One of the party, a Conservative journalist who knows Kingston even better than the city he lives in, said:

"But why not at Kingston? Sir John was born there."

"I think you're wrong," said the Ontario M.P.P. "He was born in Adolphustown."

"I believe you're both wrong," said the third, also a member of the Albany Club. "But I can't set you right. I don't know where Sir John was born."

**A**LL three of these Conservatives had begun to be young political workers about the time Sir John Macdonald died twenty-one years ago. They knew a great deal about Sir John's political life and character and his place as a nation-builder. They knew rafts of the stories told or said to have been told by the weirdest character that ever came on the stage of Canadian politics. They had a most vivid recollection of the dramatic events in Canadian public life that centred about the chief actor. They had heard the old chieftain speak many a time. They knew his personality better than they know that of Sir Wilfrid Laurier or Premier Borden. But not one of them remembered, even if he ever knew, the exact place where Sir John Macdonald was born.

One might fancy three equally representative Americans having a talk about Abraham Lincoln, who certainly was no more remarkable a figure in the United States than Macdonald was in Canada; and a book might easily be written about the similarities between these two great men. But the chances are, there would have been no doubt in any of the three as to the exact spot, perhaps the year, and most certainly the day of the month that had to do with the birth of Lincoln, whose birthday alone with that of the "Father of his Country" is one of the public festivals in the United States.

**M**ERELY as a matter of fact Sir John Macdonald was born at neither Kingston nor Adolphustown. He was born in Glasgow on January 11th, the year of the battle of Waterloo. His father was a manufacturer who, as a young man, moved to Glasgow from a Sutherlandshire village in the Highlands. The boy John, third of five children, was five years old when he came with his parents to Canada. They settled first in Kingston, which was then important as a military and social centre. The elder Macdonald failed to succeed in business in Kingston, just as he had failed in Glasgow. The family moved first to Hay Bay, then to Stone Mills, on the Bay of Quinte. From ten to fifteen years of age the boy John was a pupil at the Kingston Grammar School, which was all the formal education he got. As he once remarked to a friend, "I had no boyhood. From the

age of fifteen I began to earn my own living."

At the age of fifteen he began to study law as a junior clerk on a small salary in the office of George Mackenzie, a friend of his father in Kingston. At twenty-one he was called to the bar in Kingston. The following year he became almost famous at the hands of subsequent political biographers by his connection with the defense of Von Schoultz, the Polish revolutionist who had joined the rebels of 1837 in Canada. In 1842, at the age of twenty-seven, Macdonald made his first visit to England, and for the first time revisited Scotland, the Highlands and Glasgow. Two years later two hundred electors presented an address asking him to become a Conservative candidate for Kingston. In his first address to a Canadian constituency Macdonald said:

"I therefore need scarcely state my firm belief that the prosperity of Canada depends upon its permanent connection with the mother country, and that I shall resist to the utmost any attempt to weaken that union."

**H**E was elected by a huge majority as member for Kingston, which, with one short interruption, he represented from 1844 till 1891. He was the first Premier of Canada after Confederation, of which he was at least one of the "fathers." In 1873 his Government was succeeded in office by that of Alexander Mackenzie. In 1878 he reaffirmed his British connection plank and added to it the bigger one of a national policy of protection for Canadian industries—since endorsed and adopted by the late Liberal Government along with the British Preference. By a big majority he was returned to power, which he held until his death in 1891.

In that period there were four general elections, the Northwest Rebellion and the building of our first transcontinental railway. The 1878 election was won on the British connection and the National Policy ticket. In 1882 the principle was confirmed.

In 1887 the issue was Commercial Union, whose chief protagonist in the United States was the ex-Canadian Erastus Wiman, and in Canada the ex-Englishman Goldwin Smith. In that election Sir John lost part of his grip on Quebec by the agitation over the hanging of Louis Riel, leader of the Northwest Rebellion, in 1885; in which year the last spike of the C. P. R. was driven at Craigellachie, B.C. In 1887 Hon. Wilfrid Laurier succeeded Hon. Edward Blake as leader of the Liberal party. The election in 1891 revived the commercial union bogey and led Mr. Blake to decline a nomination for the House of Commons. Sir John won the election by a reduced majority after a hard winter campaign, which led to his death while Parliament was still assembled in June. He died in Ottawa and was buried in Kingston, where as a lad of fifteen he first studied law.

So, Highland Scotchman though he was, John Macdonald probably had more regard for Kingston till the day of his death than he had for either the Highlands or Glasgow.