

example of the aberrations of the popular mind, as well as of the often unaccountable vicissitudes of political life. The new Minister, although he had been returned at the previous elections by a majority of more than 700 votes over his opponent, Mr. Tessier, a most eloquent and distinguished member of the notarial profession, now found himself unable to secure his re-election, in spite of the increased influence which he might naturally have been expected to derive from his new portfolio as Minister of Inland Revenue. He was defeated by a worthy and inoffensive village tradesman, who distanced him by a majority of twenty-one votes!

This was a repulse to the Mackenzie Government, from which it never recovered. Laurier, indeed, returned to the Capital as the chosen representative of Quebec East, but it was in vain. The impulse had been given, and the political see-saw began to sway. The young Minister's immense popularity in all other parts of the country was powerless to stop it.

Nevertheless, the crushing defeat which was suffered by the Liberal party in the following year did not in the least degree affect his personal prestige. He had said on re-entering Parliament (the words may be seen reproduced as legend under an engraving in an illustrated paper, which represents him in the act of hoisting a flag over a rampart):—"I have unfurled the Liberal standard above the ancient citadel of Quebec, and there I will keep it waving."

He has been true to his word. To-day we see not only the city, but the whole district, of Quebec distinguished as the stronghold of Liberalism in the Province. M. Mercier, indeed, has given the finishing strokes to the work, but to Laurier undeniably belongs the glory of having uplifted the banner, and his name has no small share at this very hour in sustaining and stirring the breeze that plays among its folds.

And now I come to two events in the life of the man whose portrait I have undertaken to sketch, which, beyond all others, have proved his right to a place in the ranks of exceptional men: one of them because it proclaims in the most unmistakable manner possible the immense influence which his talents and his character have gained for him; the other, because it brings out in strong relief the versatility of those talents, and throws into dazzling prominence the