

REV. J. A. MACDONALD

MIDDLESEX COUNTY, Ontario, contributed two orators to Canadian public life, Sir George Ross and J. A. Macdonald, both Celts; impassioned, somewhat bardic characters, both quite celebrated in politics, and both Liberals. The orations of George Ross, once Premier of Ontario and for many years Minister of Education, have gone into living history. The orations of J. A. Macdonald are still in the making. These eloquent Gaels came up out of a fecund, temperamental community which had two mainsprings of progress, predestination and Liberalism.

Macdonald, however, with all his belief in what was to be and therefore must be, could scarcely have suspected when he was a student of the higher catechism on a Middlesex farm, that at the dawn of the twentieth century he would become editor-in-chief of the paper on which he had been nurtured once a week along with the syndicate sermons of Talmage. Neither was he likely to imagine that the day would come in 1911 when he should be the accredited agent at Washington and Ottawa of the Taft-Fielding scheme of restricted reciprocity that drove the Liberal Government out of power.

His first liberating passion was for the pulpit. The platform, the sanctum, and the lobby came in the fulness of time. He attended college and went out to preach, in the days when great preaching was considered one of the civilising arts in a new country. Once upon a time while he was preaching to a rustic congregation in eastern Ontario, Macdonald pilgrimaged to Toronto for a week of theological examinations in Knox College. On the Sabbath he trudged early down to St. Andrew's on King Street—seated devoutly before the organist