

OUR CANADIAN PORTRAIT GALLERY.—No. 17.

SIR GEORGE E. CARTIER, BART.

Despite the political troubles through which Canada has passed, and though the differences in language, religion and national traditions between the two classes of the population were such as to have naturally aggravated these troubles to an extraordinary extent, the country has arrived at a degree of development in its political institutions, and in combining freedom with order, at a cost of agitation and social disturbance quite trifling compared with the trials other countries have been compelled to endure. Its success in establishing a political system so much in harmony with the sentiments of all classes of the people, though in a great measure due to the indulgent policy of the British Government, has been materially aided by the excellent spirit of mutual forbearance and consideration shewn by each class towards the other. The claim of majorities to tyrannize over minorities, or to force them into conformity against their consciences, has never been recognized in Canada. In fact this country has been peculiarly placed on the question of minority rights, and Sir George E. Cartier has won few more honourable distinctions throughout his political career than that of being the unflinching advocate of these rights. Recognising the obligation imposed upon the public men of the country to secure harmony among all classes, he has worked to that end on the enlightened principle of giving the fullest recognition of the rights and privileges claimed by each class, compatible with equal justice to both. Unwilling to abate a jot of what is due to his own race and creed, he has been equally resolute in upholding the same measure of freedom for others. And in the wider field of Canadian statesmanship, the remodelling of the constitution and the development of the material resources of the country, as well as in the reform of its laws, he has shewn a spirit eminently Canadian—tenacious of the right, fearless in dealing with the wrong, and hopeful of the bright destiny which the future has in store for the country, if well and wisely governed, and the energies of the people properly directed. The author of "*O Canada! Mon Païs, Mes Amours!*" may well take a pride in his native country. To him it possesses more than the ordinary attractions of country, for it is in a sense a sort of family inheritance. Sir George is a lineal descendant of the brother of the intrepid navigator of St. Malo, who, in 1534, explored a portion of the river St. Lawrence and took possession of the country in the name of his sovereign Francis the First. Such a circumstance is calculated to inspire patriotic feelings of more than usual warmth; and when we find Sir George the foremost public man in his own Province, and one of the foremost in the Dominion, we recognize the propriety of the position alike from hereditary association and personal achievement.

George Etienne Cartier is the son of the late Jacques Cartier, of St. Antoine, and was born in 1814. He was educated at St. Sulpice, Montreal, and admitted to the bar of Lower Canada in 1835. In 1854 he was created Queen's Counsel, and in 1866 admitted to the bar of Upper Canada. About the time when Mr. Cartier entered on his professional career, political feeling ran high, both in Upper and Lower Canada. The "patriots" were then deep into the agitation which culminated in the troubles of '37 and '38, and Mr. Cartier, with the impetuosity of youth, advocated the popular cause. But the spirit which chafed under and rebelled against an unequal system of government proved in later years the staunch upholder of Crown and Constitution, when the latter was remodelled so far as to confer upon the people that voice in the direction of affairs to which, according to British theory and modern practice, they are fairly entitled, and which, in Canada at least, it must be said they have not abused. These troublous times over, Mr. Cartier settled down quietly to the practice of his profession in Montreal, and soon won a distinguished position at the bar. At the general election, in March, 1848, he emerged from his retirement and offered himself as a candidate for the representation of the County of Vercheres, which at a former time had been represented by his grandfather. In this appeal he was successful, and continued to sit for that County up to 1861. At the general election in 1857, when the late Mr. McGee first appeared as a candidate for Parliamentary honours, Mr. Cartier ran for Montreal as well as for his old constituency; but the city then declared for the Opposition, returning Messrs. Dorion and McGee on that side, and Mr. Ross as the only representative of the Ministerial party. Before the next general election Montreal was divided into three constituencies—East, West and Centre; and in 1861 Mr. Cartier was returned for Montreal East, which division he has continued to represent up to the present time, thus enjoying an uninterrupted Parliamentary career of twenty-two years, with every prospect of there being many more yet to add to it.

Mr. Cartier entered Parliament as a Liberal, that is if we class the two French Canadian parties of the time, led

respectively by the late Sir H. Lafontaine and the Hon. L. J. Papineau, as Liberals and Radicals (Rouges). When the Union between Upper and Lower Canada became an accomplished fact, Messrs. Baldwin and Lafontaine, the Reform leaders of the Western and Eastern Provinces, joined their forces, and resting upon that act as the charter of the country's liberties, devised, and to some extent, carried out a policy designed for the general welfare of both peoples, by giving to each the largest possible measure of privileges consistent with the rights of the other. In a few years Mr. Hincks succeeded Mr. Baldwin, and Mr. Morin Mr. Lafontaine, but only to carry out the same policy; and as the Lafontaine-Morin party had no opposition among the French Canadians, except that offered by the extreme Radicals, it soon became in name, as it was in fact, the French Canadian Conservative party. Mr. Cartier entered Parliament as a member of this party; and in 1851 and again in 1853 was offered a place in the Government, but on both occasions he declined to accept office, because of the claims on his time of his professional practice. He, however, from his first entrance into Parliament held a prominent rank in the party, and on the retirement of Mr. Morin from political life, became its leader in the Legislative Assembly. On the re-assembling of Parliament on the 5th September, 1854, immediately after the general election, Mr. Cartier was put forward as Ministerial candidate for the Speakership. The Opposition nominated Mr. L. V. Sicotte who was elected by a majority of three. It was a vote on the question of confidence or non confidence in the Government, shewing that the two parties in opposition—the Conservatives and the Radicals—were prepared to club their resources for the purpose of turning out the Ministry. It shewed the relative strength of the two sections of the Cabinet at a time when the "double majority" was a live element in Canadian politics. Mr. Cartier had a majority of nine from Lower Canada, shewing that Mr. Morin was sufficiently well backed for all practical purposes; but from Upper Canada there was a majority of twelve against him, proving not only that Mr. Hincks had lost command of the Upper Province, but that the Ministry was in a minority of the whole. This state of affairs led to the retirement of the Hincks Morin Cabinet, and the Macnab-Morin Ministry immediately came into power. We have been thus precise about this matter, because it was the beginning of the famous "Coalition" government, of which Mr. Cartier became a member in January of the following year (55), holding the office of Provincial Secretary until May, 1856, when he was appointed Attorney-General in the Tache-Macdonald Cabinet then formed. When Sir E. P. Tache retired from the Government, in November, 1857, Mr. Cartier became the Lower Canada Premier, in the Macdonald Cartier Cabinet, and after the Ministerial changes in the first week of August, 1858, the same Cabinet, with the title changed to Cartier-Macdonald, continued in office until the 21st of May, 1862, when it retired from office on an adverse vote of the Assembly. Mr. Cartier was again invited to form a government in March, 1864, on the fall of the J. S. Macdonald-Dorion Cabinet, but declined in favour of Sir E. P. Tache. In the Tache-Macdonald Cabinet then formed Mr. Cartier resumed the L. C. Attorney-Generalship, which he continued to hold up to the Union. On the first day of July, 1867, he was sworn in of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, and accepted the office of Minister of Militia and Defence in the government then formed by Sir John A. Macdonald, which office he now holds.

On the 1st of July, 1867, Lord Monck signified to the gentlemen assembled in the Privy Council Chamber the pleasure of Her Majesty that the distinction of the Companionship of the Bath be conferred upon Mr. Cartier, along with several other members of the Colonial Conference, which had sat in London to frame the "British North America Act of 1867." That distinction Mr. Cartier, along with Mr. Galt, declined, and in the following year Her Majesty was pleased to create him a Baronet of the United Kingdom.

Mr. (now Sir George) Cartier has had, along with Sir John A. Macdonald, the chief direction of public affairs in Canada for the past fifteen years. His singular energy and activity have rendered him not only a most useful but a most fortunate public man; for in spite of every change, whether of party or of constitution, he has always been found at the end of it with a following which rendered him personally the strongest politician in the country. In 1858 he heartily supported the proposition for the Confederation of British North America. In the fall of that year, with Messrs. Galt and Ross, he visited England to press this policy on the Imperial Government, and on that occasion had the distinguished honour of being the guest of Her Majesty at Windsor Castle. On the vexed question of the Seat of Government, Mr. Cartier proved loyal to the maintenance of the Queen's decision in favour of Ottawa, and in that particular has laid old "Central Canada" under deep obligation for his fidelity. It need not be remarked that he was a principal party to

the alliance with the Hon. George Brown in 1864; that he was a prominent member of the Charlottetown and Quebec Conventions the same year; or that he was, in 66-67, among the leading members of the Colonial Conference which framed the Union Act. In the early fall of 1868 Sir George, with the Hon. Mr. McDougall, again visited London to accomplish a settlement with the Hudson's Bay Company, and represent to the Imperial Government certain colonial views regarding the subject of defence. In spite of great difficulties that mission was very successful. Though his colleague, Mr. McDougall, laboured during great part of the time under a severe sickness; and though a change took place in the Imperial Government, bringing into office a large representation of the Anti-Colonial party, still the Canadian Ministers did their duty to the entire satisfaction of their own country, and succeeded in completely enlisting the sympathies of the Colonial Office in their object. It is to be hoped the early future may bring forth good fruits as the result of this negotiation—at present it is something worse than barren.

Space will not permit of our enlarging on the many important Government measures passed into law during Sir George Cartier's term of office—to discuss these would be to write the history of Canada for the past fifteen years. But it may be remarked as characteristic of the genius of the man that at the Union he undertook the reorganization and management of the Militia force of the country, the very subject on which his government fell in 1862. To say that this bespeaks the possession of great moral courage is but a poor compliment; Sir George not only had the courage to deal with the delicate subject, but the tact to present it in a popular form, and the result has been that Imperial statesmen have been able to say, without exaggeration, that the withdrawal of every British soldier from Canada was but the signal for ten Canadians to spring into the field. The Seigneurial Tenure Bill, Codification of the Laws of Lower Canada, and other measures must be passed over, as also Sir George's enthusiastic advocacy of an enlightened British American policy, in contradistinction to those who look forward to, and would fain prepare for new political alliances. As a parliamentary leader, if success be the measure of merit, then he surely can compare favourably with the public men of this, or any other country. As a debater, he is energetic but somewhat tiresome to most listeners; with an extraordinary memory and a faculty for unlimited discursiveness, he can spin out a discourse to any required length; but is pre-eminently distinguished for courtesy and good humour, so that his harangues are always agreeable, and when he closes with an opponent he can show himself betimes the master not only of logical argument but of biting invective. Though the leader of the French Canadian population of Canada, he enjoys a very wide popularity among the people of British descent; and his place among Canadian statesmen will ever be counted in the first rank. The following, from the last edition of Burke's *Peerage and Baronage*, will shew what that recognised authority has to say of him:

Sir G. E. Cartier, Baronet of the city of Montreal, P. Q., Dominion of Canada, C. B.; Minister of Militia in the Privy Council of the Dominion of Canada. Born on the 6th of September, 1814; married on the 16th of June, 1846, to Hortense, daughter of Edouard Raymond Fabre, Esq. of Montreal, and had issue: 1, Marguerite Josephine; 2, Marie Hortense; 3, Reine Victoria, deceased.

Sir George, a distinguished member of the Canadian Bar, and a statesman of the highest rank, has occupied several high positions. He was one of the delegates from Canada East at the conference held in London respecting the Confederation of the Provinces of British North America. He was Provincial Secretary in January, 1855, Attorney-General of Lower Canada in May, 1856, a member of the Executive Council and Premier of the Canadian Government from 1858 to 1862. Again appointed Attorney-General in 1864 he continued to hold that position until Confederation. He was created Baronet on the 24th of August, 1868.

The Cartier family is one of the oldest in the country. Pierre Cartier, of Prulliers, Anjou, France, a lineal descendant from one of the collateral relations of Jacques Cartier, of St. Malo, the celebrated navigator who discovered Canada, had by his wife, Marie Beaumier, a son named Jacques Cartier, born in 1710, who emigrated to Canada in 1735 and married on the 6th of July, 1744, Marguerite, daughter of Nicholas Monjeon and aunt of Monseigneur Signal, the first Archbishop of Quebec. Jacques Cartier died in 1766, leaving several children, one of whom was

Jacques Cartier, born on the 11th of April, 1750, who was a Lieutenant-Colonel of Militia and a member of the Canadian Legislature. He married on the 27th of September, 1772, Cecilia, daughter of Charles Gervois, of Chateauguay, and of Celeste Plessis, his wife, a cousin german of Monseigneur Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, one of the most distinguished prelates of the Catholic Church in Canada, and the only Bishop of that Church who was called on to form part of the Executive Council. By this lady, who died on the 8th of February, 1783, Lieutenant-Colonel Jacques Cartier (who died on the 22nd of March, 1814,) left a son named

Jacques Cartier, Lieutenant-Colonel in the Canadian Militia, born on the 29th of August, 1774, who married on the 4th of September, 1798, Marguerite, daughter of Joseph Paradis, of St. Antoine, and died on the 29th of August, 1841, having had by his wife, died 26th of April, 1848, several children, of whom, besides three daughters, survive three sons, Sylvestre, Come, and George Etienne, who was created Baronet as above, and is the present Sir George E. Cartier.

His motto is *franc et sans dol*.