

LORD SYDENHAM.

TOWARDS the close of last century there was in the city of London, England, a prominent mercantile house which carried on business under the style of "J. Thomson, T. Bonar & Co." The branch of commerce to which this house chiefly devoted its attention was the Russian trade. It had existed, under various styles, for more than a hundred years and had built up so extensive a trade as to have a branch establishment at the Russian capital. The senior partner of the firm was John Thomson of Waverley Abbey and Roehampton, in the county of Surrey. In the year 1820 this gentleman assumed the name of Poulett—in remembrance of his mother, who was heiress of a branch of the family of that name—and he was afterwards known as John Poulett Thomson. In 1871 he married Miss Charlotte Jacob, daughter of a physician at Salisbury. By this lady he had a numerous family, consisting of nine children. The youngest of these, Charles Edward Poulett Thomson, destined to be the first governor of United Canada, and to be raised to the peerage under the title of Baron Sydenham, was born on the 13th of September, 1799, at the family seat in Surrey—Waverley Abbey, above mentioned. His mother had long been in delicate health, and at the time of his birth was so feeble as to give rise to much solicitude as to her chances of recovery. She finally rallied, but for some months she led the life of an invalid.

Her feebleness reflected itself in the constitution of her son, who never attained to much physical strength. The feebleness of his body was doubtless increased by the nervous activity of his intellect, which constantly impelled him to mental feats incompatible with his delicate frame. It may be said that he passed through the forty-two years which made up the measure of his life in a chronic state of bodily infirmity. The fret and worry incidental to an ambitious parliamentary and official career doubtless also contributed their share to the shortening of his life.

His childhood was marked by a sprightly grace and beauty which made him a general favourite. In his fourth year he was for a time the especial pet of His Majesty King George III. He made the King's acquaintance at Weymouth, where, with other members of his family, he spent part of the summer of 1803. While walking on the Parade, in charge of his nurse, his beauty and sprightliness attracted the notice of His Majesty, who was also spending the season there, in the hope of regaining that physical and mental vigour which never returned to him. The King was much taken with the vivacity and pert replies of the handsome little fellow, and insisted on a daily visit from him. The child's conquest over the royal heart was complete, and His Majesty seemed to be never so well pleased as when he had little Master Thomson in his arms,