

cerned as signatories of the Treaty." There is something hopeful in that—and it may yet be that Russia will abate her claims and pretensions in the interests of her Empire and peace.

The poor Czar is sad and sorrowful, and disgusted with most things of earth so far as they bear upon his lot in life. The recent assassinations, and the attacks on his imperial uncle have had a great effect upon his nerves, shattering them to pieces, and compelling a stay for an indefinite period at Livadia. The emancipation of the serfs cost Alexander a tremendous effort, which left him mentally prostrate, and from which he has never recovered.

Prince Bismarck is also in evil case. He is said to receive threatening letters by the thousand, and has to be guarded against assassination in town and country. There has never been a statesman more vigorous, more imperious, or more cynical, or less loved and trusted by the general public, than Prince Bismarck. His frankness has been deceit, his peace a preparation for war, his sympathy a dalliance and a bribe. And now a bitter old age has come upon him. Neuralgic pains, fought off or down by drinking of port-wine; frequent and violent outbursts of temper,—seasons of tremendous exertion followed by seasons of fretfulness, have done their work. The struggle in which he is now engaged with the Socialists seems to make demands upon his strength to which he is altogether unequal.

Even far-off Japan is in trouble. Awhile ago Okubo, the Minister of the Home Department, was murdered in the streets of Yedo in broad daylight. And the thing was not done on any personal grounds, but on account of Okubo's political misdoings. The assassins sent a document to the Mikado on the eve of the murder, which set forth their reasons, which were detestation of the officials, who, they say, suppress the voice of the people, make frivolous laws, waste the revenues upon useless and superfluous public works, keep the true and candid patriot at a distance, and are submissive towards foreigners. Threats were offered that upon others would fall the fate of Okubo, but the "Patriotism Advocating Society" was not strong enough to carry out its purpose. But the disaffection has spread; disturbances have broken out in the provinces, and there has been a military rising among the Imperial Guards in the Capital. So the political horizon in Japan is just as dark as that of countries older in civilization.

EDITOR.

CANADIAN CELEBRITIES.

NO. I.—SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD (*concluded*.)

Were it required to state in a single word the cause of Sir John A. Macdonald's fall from power, that word would be the same that raised him to his highest eminence—Confederation. For out of the necessities and exactions of the Union came those urgencies which induced Sir John to risk his political integrity and his popularity. At the time of the Act of Union the need was felt of stronger liens than were afforded by the parchment of even an Imperial Act. The Provinces were to be grappled to each others' souls with hooks of steel. British in the shape of a continuous railway from the Atlantic to the Pacific. British Columbia was needed in the Union to effect connection with the Continent of Asia, and to prevent Canada from being shut out from the Pacific, as she had already been largely excluded from the Atlantic, by the diplomacy or audacity of the United States. Accordingly the International Railway was commenced, and the Pacific Railway promised. The territory lying between Upper Canada and British Columbia was acquired from the Hudson's Bay Company, and its settlement commenced by partitioning off Manitoba. When the fertility of this new Province was understood, it became the object of a fierce contention. The Ultramontane element—which saw Federal power slipping from its grasp—beheld an opportunity to offset and limit Protestant ascendancy, by instituting a counterpart to Quebec in the great Far-West Territory. Hence, not only was immense pressure brought to bear upon the Government to secure special territorial privileges for the Roman-Catholic half-breeds who wandered over the vast western prairies, but discontent was fostered among them to the point of open rebellion; in order both to discourage Upper-Canada immigration and to secure further privileges as the price of efforts for pacification. In the course of these troubles occurred the murder—by a so-called "military execution"—of Scott; a resident Orangeman, who had resisted the revolt. When, by the influence of Bishop Taché the revolt was quelled, a storm of indignation burst forth in Upper Canada; coupled with the demand for the "murderer Riel" to be brought to justice. This, the secret compact with the Church forbade; and Sir John had a difficult part to play. He could not break his agreement; and he lacked courage to face the storm. What he did was weak and immoral; he ran with the hare, and held with the hounds. He disbursed money from the secret-service fund for Riel to fly the country, while he stood up in Parliament and vehemently invoked Heaven to witness his desire to catch the fugitive! The truth must be told; that the truth—for its own sake—was not in those days dear to Sir John. No doubt he held himself excused by the exigencies of the public welfare; no doubt the circumstances were grave and critical; and the Premier thought he was acting for the best. But the falsehood failed; for it was not even half-believed: and the Orangemen, who had been Sir John's traditional supporters, for a time fell away from him. This was one current towards the cataract.

Meanwhile the prosecution of the Intercolonial Railway was setting another current in motion from the east to drift Sir John A. Macdonald into unpopularity. Always ready to part the spoils of office among his followers, while satisfied

with official power himself, Sir John could not satisfy all—even with the pickings of a huge government railway in addition to ordinary patronage—and had to disappoint many, who forthwith clamoured against the Premier. The name of the road began to be banded about as the synonym of political corruption: and, here and there, little facts came to light which seemed to justify the clamour. The murmur of discontent grew louder as the general elections drew on. The roar of waters was on the air. But the projected Pacific Railway seemed to offer the means of safety. With it, as a mighty leverage, the governmental cause might yet reach the shore. Different companies were competing for the contract: what more reasonable (to a politician) than that these men should furnish the sinews of war to maintain in power those from whose hands it was hoped to receive the charter for the construction and working of the road? Sir John, doubtless, saw only the fair and specious side of the case. To his mind the first position would be that the country could be governed with greater tact and ability by himself than by his opponents. This being granted, the use of means which, however immoral, had been sanctioned by long and growing usage of party warfare, would be soon accepted as lawful. Money for election purposes was asked and received from the expectants of the railway charter. "Election purposes" is a wide phrase. There are some which are perfectly legitimate. Writers cannot be expected to use their time and strength without remuneration. Printers and reporters must be paid. Newspapers value their space by the inch for advertising; whether it be direct, oblique, or by implication. Even public speakers must live of their political gospel; and railway fares come expensive in this country of magnificent distances. One may therefore hear with equanimity of the call for an election fund, and of the formation of a prudential committee to disburse it. Happy the politician who knows no more about the fund than this: who can trust his friends to gather and spread the needful fructifier without touching the odoriferous heap himself. Sir John A. Macdonald was not so happy. In the heat of the contest he wrote and telegraphed for additional sums to be used for "election purposes." He was happy only in escaping the odium of applying any of this money to his private uses. Indeed there is something sublime in the personal indifference to money shewn by Sir John: there can be no doubt that he cherished a great pride in his superiority to mere sordid considerations. It was not in theatrical bombast, but with earnest sincerity that in his place in parliament, when taxed with corruption, he rose and, flinging out his arms excitedly, cried with flushed face and flashing eye, "These hands are clean." He meant it: and it was true—with a reservation.

Looking back upon the Pacific Scandal dispassionately, (as one can only do after the lapse of years) much appears to modify the hard—if righteous—judgment passed at the time upon the Prime Minister of the day. A bulky pamphlet—with bulkier appendix,—would be needful to present and weigh the evidence which has been offered to prove that there was no understanding between Sir John's government and Sir Hugh Allan, more than the general and silent understanding which might result from their belonging to the same party in politics. The one may well have thought that his party would favor him, without the party in any way expressing its purpose to do so. Apart from this, a calm review of the position of the parties then applying for a charter would, perhaps, shew that the two great contending companies which were applicants for it had already practically amalgamated before the date of the "Scandal." The promoters of the company doubtless thought that if the government were defeated, even the combined scheme might fall through: and in this light their liberal contributions to the election fund stand explained, without the need of supposing that there was absolute bargain and sale of the road privilege. Thus Sir John A. Macdonald's hands might be "clean" in a still wider sense; and yet have a sense in which they were not clean, and in which the indignation of the country might righteously be visited upon him.

But the Pacific "corruption" was not simply a fault, it was a blunder. The right hand of the astute statesman had forgotten its cunning. Had the monies passed into the hands of the Conservative Club, that tender organism—a political conscience—might have been saved from stain or injury; and the wave of commotion might have swept by without bearing with it into its Niagara the fortunes of the Premier. But Sir John seems to have so confidently trusted to the fact that the money was not adhering to his own fingers, as to be blind to the wrong of calling for it, and indifferent to the danger of handling it. So the government of Sir John A. Macdonald drifted into the rapids, was swept on by the storm, neared the cataract, and went over. He would doubtless be ready to-day to acknowledge, not simply that he blundered, but that the judgment for doing evil that good might come was in a measure just. And yet it is marvellous to find this doomed and wrecked statesman once more occupying his old position as Prime Minister of the Dominion of Canada. But the explanation is easy. His foes have been no wiser and no better than himself. They have undermined their own stronghold of political purism; and Sir John has but needed to use the material with which they have furnished him to rebuild his own fallen fortunes. The stones have been placed ready to his hands. True, the old versatility of his genius has not forsaken him, and his indomitable courage and perseverance have stood him in good stead. He reaps now the benefit of the wisdom with which he bowed to adverse gales, and with which, also, when the wind shifted, he once more set his sails to catch the breeze.

The last portrait of Sir John A. Macdonald is taken as he stands on a platform in Quebec receiving the congratulations of his friends, after being sworn into his new office, in October of the present year. The light falls thin and cold upon an elderly man who is worn and harassed with the anxieties of conflict, and with the severe physical strain of a campaign throughout the heats of summer. The old defiance is in his eye, and rings out in the clear challenge of his voice: but the sprightly jauntiness of earlier days is but the ghost of its former self, and hardly sits well with greyer hairs and more shrunken features. Yet it may be hoped—as we look at him—that a season of rest may rejuvenate the man: for he is one who, whatever his faults, has had them condoned by the people at the polls, and also must at least be credited with a sincere desire for the growth and welfare of his country. And it may be hoped that, avoiding the errors of the past, Sir John may yet have an influence for good upon the development of the country's resources and the consolidation of its institutions. With mere questions of policy this sketch has nothing to do. Protection may

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