

JUDGE GOWAN.

Judge Gowan, it is conceded, was first amongst his County Court contemporaries, and his administration of justice in the County of Simcoe, has been a model for judicial imitation in the other Counties of the Province. His paramount influence in inducing order, system and accuracy of detail in the various departments presided over by judicial and municipal officers, within his jurisdiction, is acknowledged by all who have any acquaintance with the County of Simcoe. It is indeed wonderful that one man could do so much, but his heart was in his work and his officers and others caught his reflected energy. Few men could have discharged official duties for so long a period with such fidelity and credit, and to their latest year displayed such untiring activity and such mental vigor; and it is not given to all men to preside in a county for more than 40 years, and call forth such spontaneous and universal expressions of regret as those heard on all sides when Judge Gowan's retirement was announced.

Few of his decisions have been reviewed in the Superior Courts, and we believe throughout the whole of his judicial career but two of those pronounced have been reversed. There is therefore but little material upon which to base an estimate or express an opinion as to the literary style and matter of his written judgments. All of his that we have read, however, are clear in diction, dignified and concise. They are entirely free from any parade of learning or affectation. Two objects seem to absorb the attention of the Judge. 1—Properly to adjust the disputed rights of the parties. 2—To establish a rule by which similar questions may be solved in the future, and if possible to bring each case within the scope of some general principle which he has enunciated and defined, guarding it, however, with proper conditions and exceptions. Without resorting to forced interpretations or fanciful analogies, he seems anxious to support his opinions by legal precedents

which he cites often and with great felicity. The soundness of his judgments and the care with which he prepared his decisions is evidenced by the fact before mentioned, that but two of his judgments appear to have been reversed on appeal. Judge Gowan occupies as strong a position in the hearts of his friends and acquaintances from his high personal character as from his judicial excellence. A kind thoughtfulness for others and a benevolent disposition endear him to the community in which he has heretofore passed his long and useful life. Spotless purity, entire freedom from undue influence, and an earnest desire to do justice have characterized him as a Judge; great force of character combined with cordiality and courtesy of demeanor, and a high consideration for the performance of his duties have distinguished him as a citizen.

We might refer, did space permit, to the many acknowledgments of valuable assistance given by him to many who, as text-writers and annotators, have endeavored from time to time to help their professional brethren in various departments of legal literature; but we cannot conclude this brief and imperfect sketch without an allusion to the fact that Judge Gowan was instrumental in founding the "Upper Canada Law Journal"; that he has ever been to us a devoted friend and a constant and valued counsellor, one whose interest and assistance have on many occasions shielded the venture from the rocks and shoals to which journalism is so constantly exposed. The columns of this Journal have often reflected his opinions on important matters; and if it has been a success, it is largely due to his many wise and pregnant suggestions, and to the deep personal interest he has always manifested in its welfare.

He takes with him into his well-earned retirement the best wishes of a large circle of friends and admirers for his future health and happiness. And we trust that in some way or another the country may still have the benefit of his talents and his ripe experience. His career is a brilliant example to those