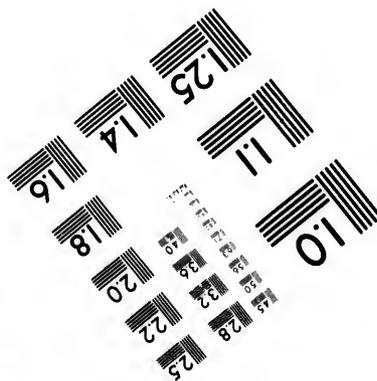
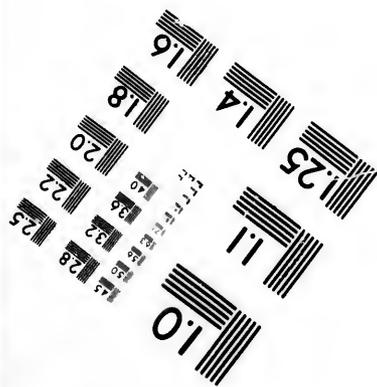
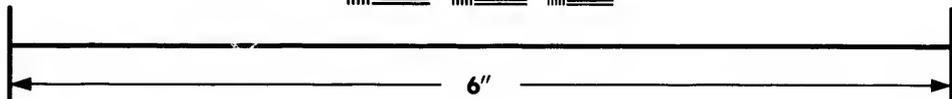
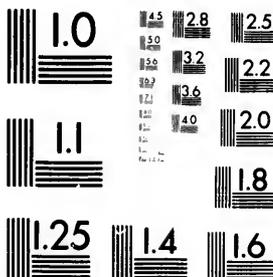


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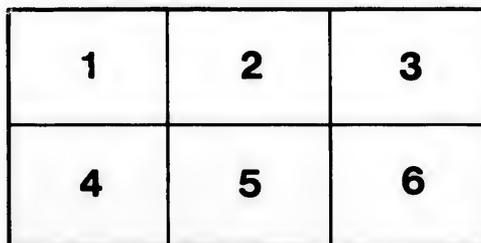
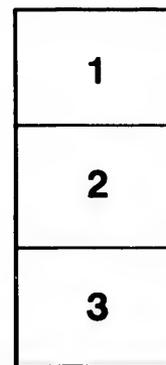
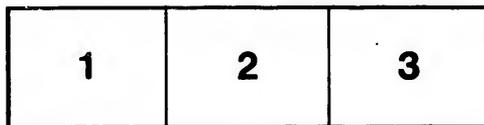
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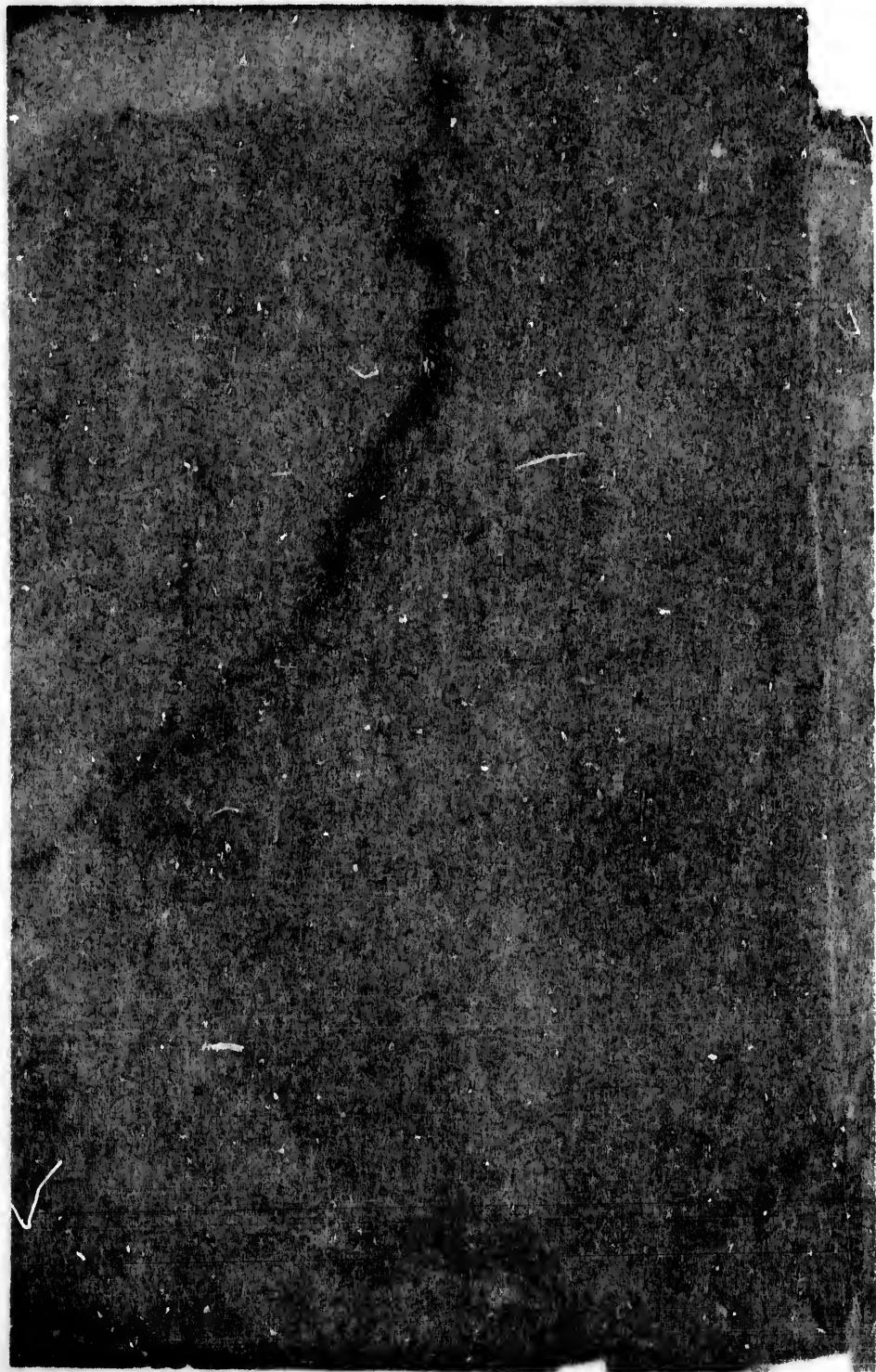
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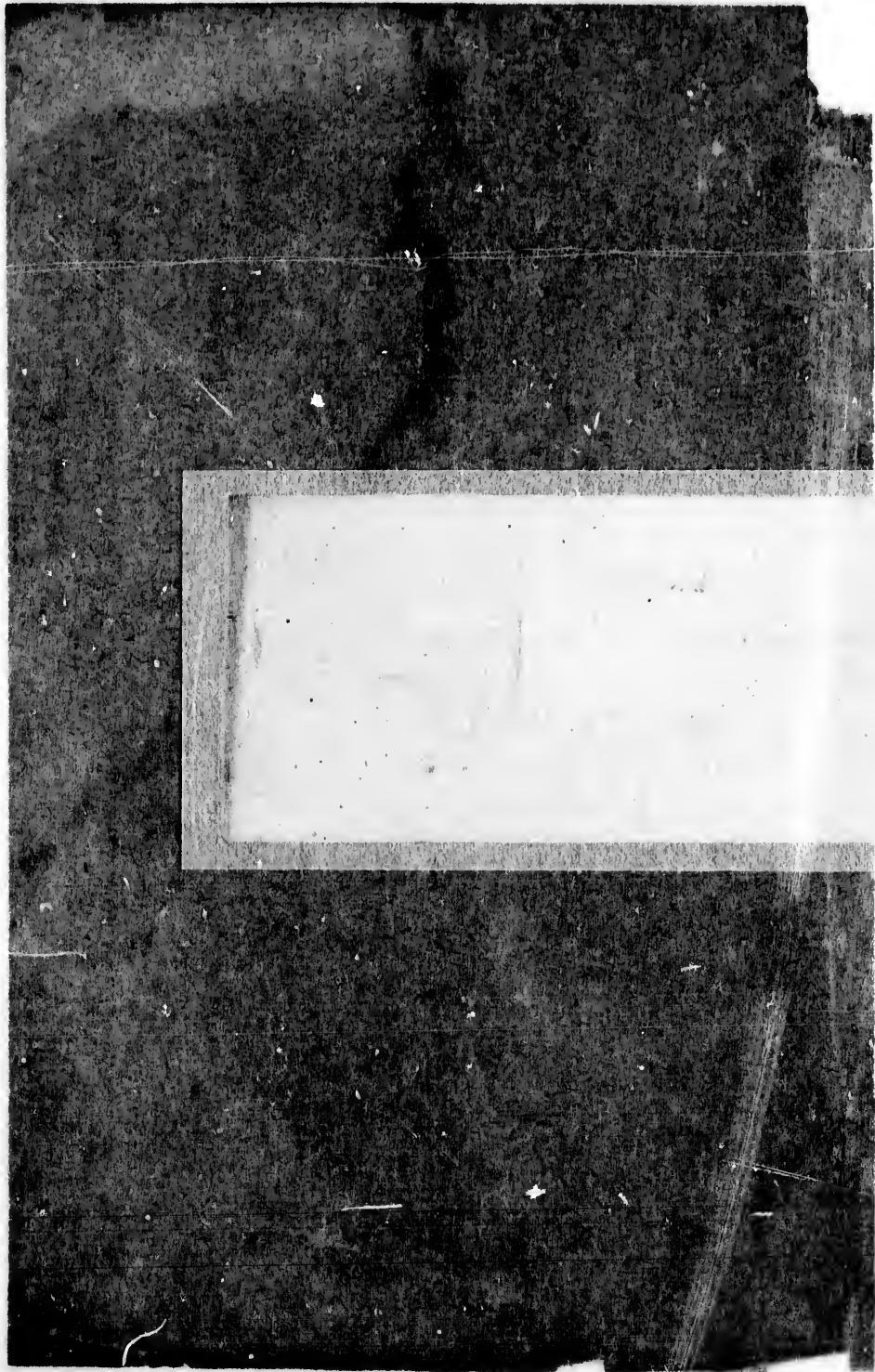
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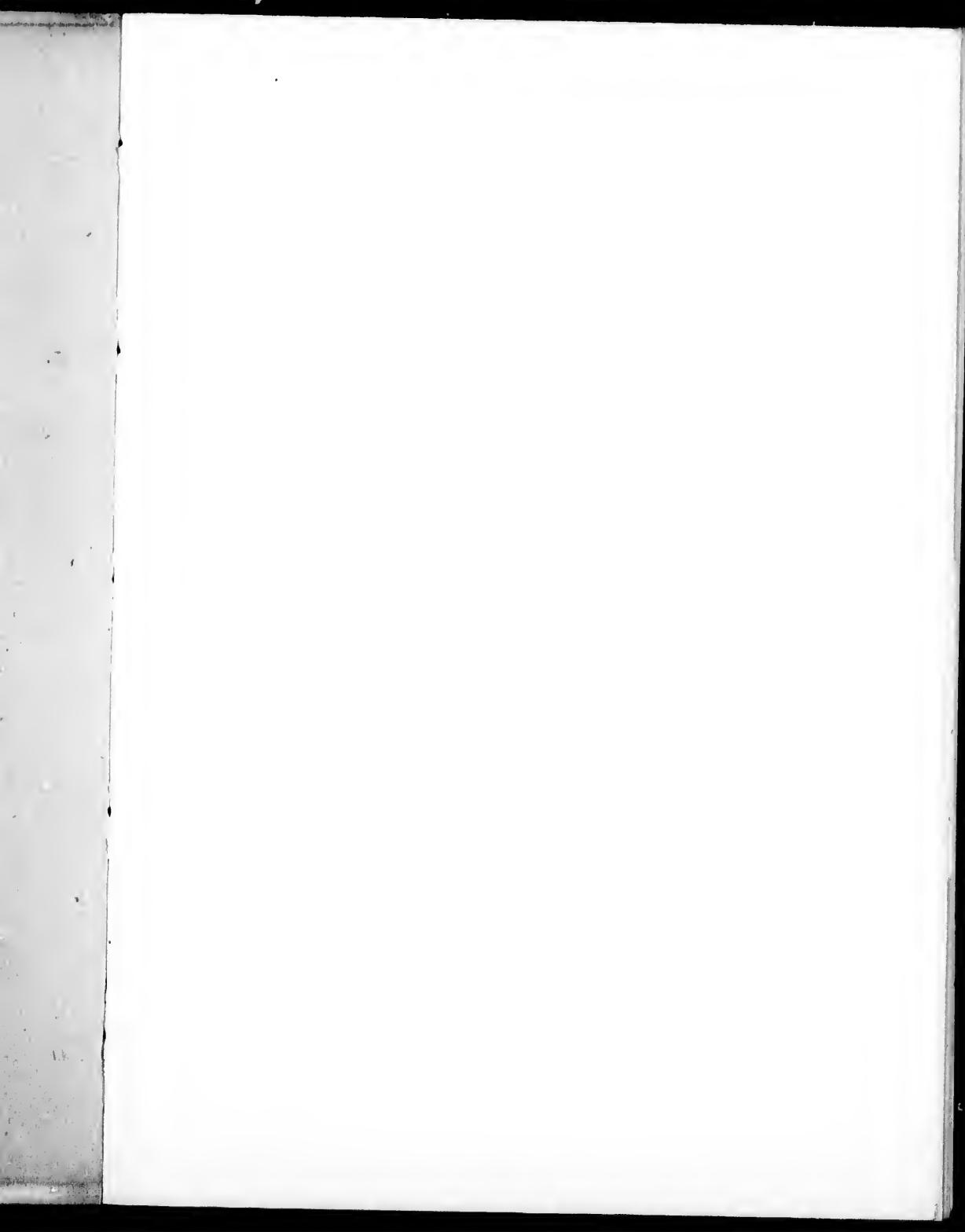
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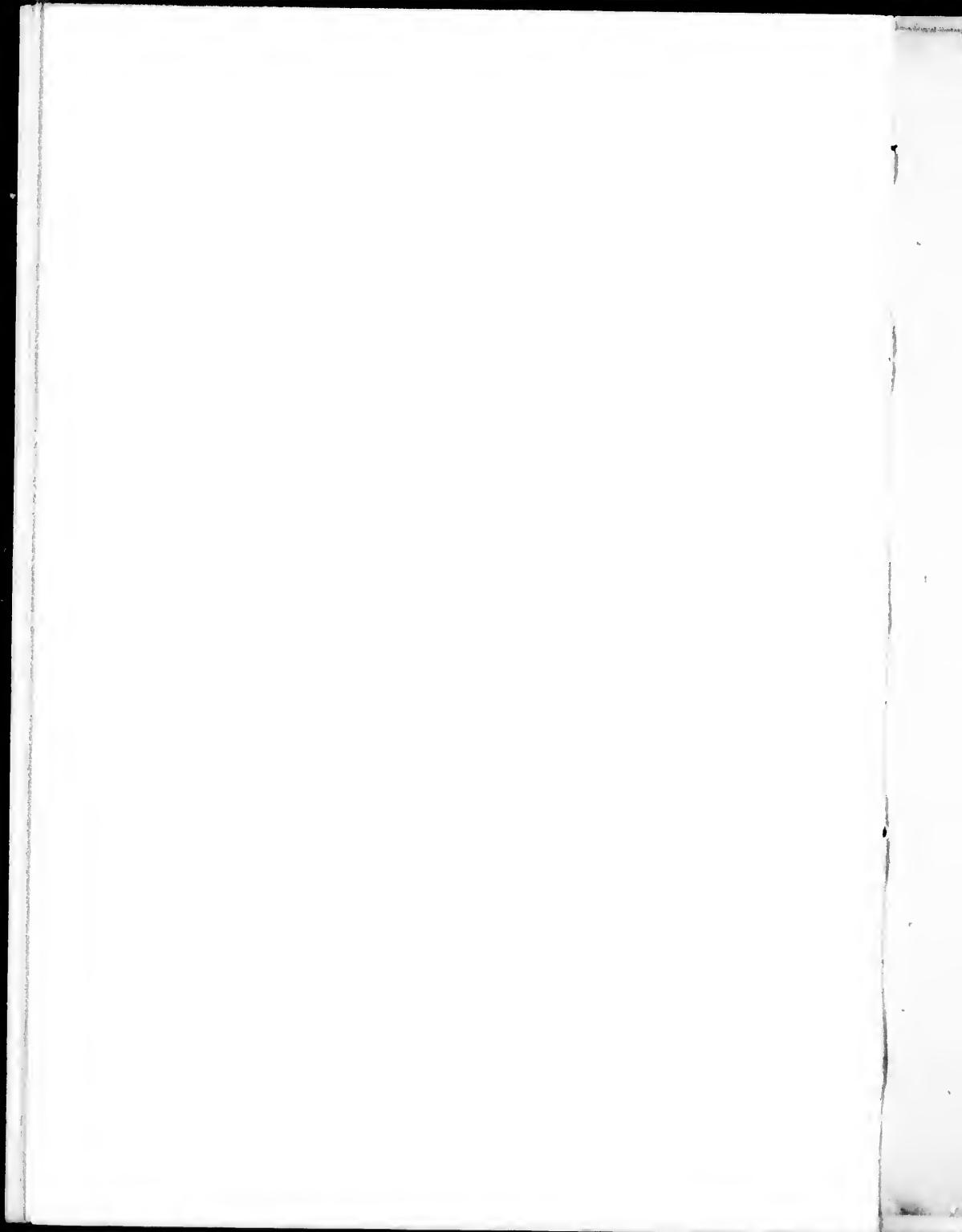
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THE POLITICAL ADVENTURES OF
SIR J. A. MACDONALD, K.C.B.

SIR JOHN MACDONALD has upon many occasions and by many persons been compared to the leader of the Conservative party in England. Time and again we have been told that he resembles him most strikingly in personal appearance. "Slightly above the medium height, rather slim, irreproachably dressed, close-shaven, pale and rather sallow, with dark hair and eyes, a prominent Oriental kind of a nose, and a curl that hangs lonesomely down on his forehead," is a description, which, with few variations, applies to either. There is also the semi-limp, the pleasant nod, and the agreeable, easy, unaffected manner about him so characteristic, according to certain authorities, of Lord Beaconsfield. The comparison goes further—both are adventurers; in different ways, it is true, but still political adventurers. Beaconsfield

rules England by "relying upon the sublime instincts of an ancient people;" Sir John Macdonald governed Canada at times by presuming upon the ignorance of the nation. "Dazzling surprises" is the policy of the former, and methods equally as curious that of the latter. He cannot be called the imitator because he anticipated the English Premier in this new style of political government. In more modern times Beaconsfield has had an Eastern Question and a Convention with Turkey; Sir John Macdonald had his Western Question and a Treaty with British Columbia. Both contracts have been called insane. Sir John Macdonald also had his North West Troubles, and Lord Beaconsfield, following his example, has at present a difficulty with Afghanistan. It only remains, to complete the comparison, for the English Premier to get some trusty friend to buy the Ameer off and transport him to Africa. By a recent brilliant writer Lord Beaconsfield's character has been described as "demoralizing to the national character, and as lowering the standard and aims of English politics." If this be true, it were much more so when applied to Sir John Macdonald. Long ago people declined to think of political morality in connection with him; they found it impossible to associate the two. His policy has in times past been to a very great extent of the Walpole stripe—meeting daily emergencies by daily expedients. English writers complain that the same may be said of Lord Beaconsfield. The governing

principle of their conduct has been not so much love of country or fellow-man, as love of power. In their contests for personal influence there has been no timidity, no flinching. Neither has been satisfied with a part, but has pressed on for the whole. The influence over others which both possess, particularly over those with whom they are continually coming into contact, is simply wonderful. The old office seeker who has been long and patiently awaiting his reward, the young member whose self-importance requires to be noted, and the stable, common sense, medium man, have all alike yielded to their blandishments. But Lord Beaconsfield, we are told, has been of some use to the English people. So has Sir John Macdonald to the Canadian people. Being a practical, commonplace, every-day sort of folk, he has by an ever varying policy full of surprisals and wonders, "applied incentives to the somewhat slow and feeble imagination of a rather dull and prosaic community." Both have kept politics from becoming too wearisome, too heavy. There is a point at which the comparison diverges. The Canadian Knight never wrote any books. A sketch of what his ambitions were when he was twenty-one, and how he intended to reach them, would have made an excellent "Vivian Grey," and if he had been a little more "moody, dreamy, eccentric and visionary" in his youth, he would have passed for Contarini Fleming. The desire for power, the craving for fame, were uppermost in the mind of both. Contarini

did not care to live unless he were the foremost of men. If people would only think about him, look at him, talk about him, he were satisfied. Neither does it matter to Beaconsfield's heroes how they attain the desired positions, whether it be by foul or fair means. The position, and not the manner of its attainment, is the principal thing. Sir John Macdonald has not been the most scrupulous of men about the means he uses. He has gone to great lengths, sometimes even straining the constitution to reach the end he had in view. These same heroes never seem to want power that it may be used for the good of others. These are only benefited as their own ends are advanced, or their power retained, at times even the country being made subservient to the gratification of their ambition.

Who is he? What is he? These, when applied to Sir John Macdonald, are difficult questions to answer. Call him eccentric and artificial, and he is undescribed. Exhaust adjectival phrases in the attempt, and the same mystery still exists. Do as Macaulay did with Walpole, tear off the outer guise, and you are as far as ever from the real man. "He has played innumerable parts, and over-acted nearly them all." At one time he has made associates of men who a short time before he had considered unworthy opponents, receiving them, "steeped to the lips in corruption," to his bosom. At one time he has denounced with all his power as disloyal and

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destructive, certain principles, of which afterwards he became the most earnest advocate. While always helping his own ends, these inconsistencies were frequently for the country's good. That he has practised corruption, sometimes on a large scale, is indisputable; but with all his faults in this direction it is questionable whether he deserves the invective which has been uttered against him. "No man ought to be severely censured for not being beyond his age in virtue." It has so happened that Sir John Macdonald's public career in Canada has been during the time that may be called the "palmy days of corruption." By this means he governed because it was impossible for him to govern otherwise. For a good part of his life he has been associated with men who possessed an unquenchable thirst for pelf, and by these he has too often been led to do things which were of no benefit to himself, and which have afterwards been used against him as personal matters. No one denies that the people, in 1874, condemned him for his political recreancy, and more particularly for the culmination of all previous acts in the so-called Pacific Scandal. But it may now be properly asked is it just, is it generous, is it charitable, to keep harping upon this one string? The deed was done, the culprits caught, the trial held, the verdict given, the sentence passed and the punishment inflicted. Is it manly to be continually casting up to an ex-criminal the recollection of his guilt? It is not likely, in

fact, it is almost impossible that such a thing should occur again. The discovery was too speedy, the penalty too swift and severe. Sir John Macdonald's character is a hard one to delineate, and the task is made much more difficult by the tenor of the times. "The fact is, the private or commercial characters of public men in this country are gauged by their political conduct, and they are held up to public admiration or odium because they are or are not the political time-servers of this or that party which happens to be in power or in opposition." Be just and one side declares there is too much leniency, and the other too much severity. More or less the life of a statesman is the history of the country which he serves during his public career. Largely the life and character of the nation are moulded by his acts and words. In the light of history he may be considered not alone as representing a party, but as representing a country. His public utterances, opinions, policy and actions, very materially aid in determining the moral and political structure of society. His position is one of great temptation and great danger. So much is this the case that in the estimation of his character these should have considerable force as a plea for allowance, or in extenuation of faults. This should particularly apply in the case before us. For more than a quarter of a century Sir John Macdonald has taken a prominent part in the public affairs of our country, and for nearly the same period he has been the leading

spirit of a great party. Sometimes the ruler, sometimes the planner, sometimes the director, and always one of the guiding stars, it is not a matter for surprise that all his acts should not meet with universal satisfaction. The old adage, notwithstanding the boasted perfection of these latter days, has not yet lost its virtue :

"Humanum est errare."

Like a good many other men who have raised themselves in the world, Sir John Macdonald never had a Collegiate education. For the University was substituted the Grammar School, and this, at the early age of fifteen, was superseded by the solicitor's office. His studies must have been vigorously pushed, for his majority had scarcely been attained when he was called to the bar. Upon the death of Mr. George Mackenzie, with whom he had studied, he succeeded to a large and lucrative practice, which for a number of years received his undivided attention. It was an easy matter to predict a distinguished career for the young Macdonald. People who knew him then tell us that he had almost the same peculiar distinctions which characterize him now. He smiled upon everybody, with that jaunty carelessness and easy manner still retained by the Prime Minister. Even thus early he made good use of his best powers, and the young advocate was soon very popular. After his successful *debut* in the General Van Schultzz case, it became quite plain that he was one of the

coming men. Not that his abilities were very great, or that he possessed that power of speech which has been the sole means with some men of placing them in the front rank ; but he had a keen perception of mankind, how best to use and handle them, and possessed that personal charm to a remarkable degree which draws and keeps men firm. These qualities often succeed where better ones fail. In this case they were highly successful. It was in Kingston, in 1844, that Sir John Macdonald first ventured actively into politics, being then returned as a member of the Second Parliament of United Canada. He took his seat as a moderate Conservative, seemingly anxious to support Lord Metcalfe, who was then governing, in the Tory principles he had enunciated. The year previous the Governor had differed from his advisers upon the question of making appointments, and they had retired. Though Lord Metcalfe was sustained by a number of English statesmen, there is little doubt but that the views he held were erroneous, and at the present day would meet with but little favor. An able man, it is somewhat strange that he should have taken such strong grounds against the introduction of even the first principles of responsible government. Sir John Macdonald was one of his disciples. His first vote was given against responsible government. There have been times in his after career which indicate that his first political actions were the result of honest con-

victions. Though the day has some time passed away, it was when he believed in the good old Tory doctrine of an individual government, and that individual being himself. That at this time his ambition ran high can be little doubted. His every action spoke it. Who can for a moment think that a man of ability, of prophetic vision, or of oratorical power, would ally himself with a party opposed to popular rights? Were not the great issues involved in a system of responsible government sufficient to attract a man of superior mind to their side? But the Governor's new Ministry was weak in intellectual power. Daly, Morris, Cayley and their colleagues, respectable enough men, possessed no very great abilities. An Opposition, fronted with Lafontaine, Baldwin and Hincks, was intellectually strong. The chances for a clever, sharp young man were with the Ministry, and this the youthful aspirant was not slow to perceive. In 1847 his support was recognized, and rewarded by a position in the Cabinet, under Mr. Draper. He was first Receiver General and afterwards Commissioner of Crown Lands.

As an administrator or departmental head no one will claim any very great distinction for him. He lacks that power which many of his colleagues and some opponents, notably the Opposition leader, have acquired, of mastering details. He grasps the whole, but seldomly understands the parts. To this rather than to any wilful neglect is due the

fact that his work was often behind and scarcely ever completely done. He is essentially a planner, schemer and adviser, but not a worker. A streak of sincerity must have crossed his mind when he was moved to place the two now famous letters "M. I."* over the desk in his late office. It must not be forgotten that those were different times from the present. The Governmental system was very imperfect. Besides the seas were often tempest-tossed, and the man who would launch his political barque must needs be brave. Even the few years the member for Kingston had been in public life many changes had taken place. Lord Metcalf had returned home, and scarcely had his shadow vanished than Lord Cathcart, his successor, followed. Then came Lord Elgin and a new era. Mr. Draper's administration was passing a most precarious existence. The addition made to its *personnel* in the young Macdonald could not save it, and during the session which lasted from June 4th to July 28th, 1847, it was several times defeated. A general election followed, resulting in the return of Baldwin, Lafontaine and Morin, supported by a large majority. The Ministry resigned and a Liberal one took its place. Sir John Macdonald has often claimed to be the descendant of those old-time Reformers—Baldwin and Lafontaine—but, in appealing to history, his opposition to them, fre-

* Mr. Blake interpreted them "Masterly Inactivity."

quently factious and often bitter, from 1848 to 1854, would be very poor evidence in support of his claim.

It was during these six years spent in Opposition that Sir John Macdonald made his *debut* as a public speaker. His first noticeable speech was an arraignment of the Hincks Government, and it was delivered in much the same style that characterizes his present utterances. Mr. Hincks, with a surprising hardihood, had asserted that he would not allow any legislation during the session that did not suit his convenience. The young Macdonald made a vigorous onslaught on this declaration. "What! had it come to that? Were they a free Parliament or were they not? Had they to be told by the Minister in that House that they must do only that which he would allow them and no more, and after that be sent away to their homes. Might not the honorable gentleman go a step further, and say, take away that bauble (pointing to the mace). The honorable gentleman surpassed even himself in audacity when he ventured to thus express himself. The majority of the honorable gentleman was becoming small by degrees and beautifully less, and it might be very convenient for him to have a short session, which would pass only such bills as he wanted. He believed that the announcement was an unconstitutional one, and that they might search in vain in the annals of the British Legislature for such an announcement from the lips of a Minister. He knew the

“ answer that would be made on the part of the Govern-
“ ment. He would be told that he (Sir John Macdonald)
“ did not want to have the clergy reserves secularized this
“ session or any other session. That was quite true ; but
“ that did not alter the position of the Ministers. Every
“ member of the House had an interest in insisting that the
“ pledges and promises of the Government should be kept,
“ and that the public mind should not be debauched by the
“ moral wrongs of the Government. They had an interest
“ that the public mind should not be contaminated. It was
“ immoral that the Government should occupy their places
“ upon the strength of violated pledges and the grossest cor-
“ ruption, while they enriched themselves by speculations in
“ public property.” The notions of the expert are decided-
ly at variance with the eloquence of the tyro. As a debater
Sir John Macdonald has not been a very great success. He
never understands a subject unless it refers to himself.
With a surface knowledge of many things, he appears in-
capable of diving into any one of them and becoming mas-
ter of it. His greatest speeches, such as those upon the
Washington Treaty, the North West Troubles, the Quebec
affair, and other subjects, abundantly prove this. In some
of these he shows a sublime ignorance of the real questions
under discussion. Not that he has really failed as a politi-
cal speaker, for in this view of his oratorical powers he can
claim a measure of success. “He has none of the high-

toned eloquence of Bright, combining the utmost dignity of thought and manner with the most beautiful simplicity of expression ; none of the keen incisive logic and the reserve of intellectual power that distinguishes the greater efforts of Mr. Blake ; none of the subtle analysis or the sustained argument clothed in the ornate style of Mr. Gladstone. But he has the art of adapting himself precisely to the mental capacity of his audience ; of supplying the apt illustration most familiar to their ideas and habits ; of assuming an air of earnestness even when it is sometimes hard to believe it real ; of seizing hold of some point that will afford an appeal to the passions or prejudices of the listener, and investing it with an importance sober thought might deem it hardly to deserve ; and dexterously appropriating as his own popular ideas or patriotic sentiments." Our House of Commons has not yet reached that point when a man is viewed as a good speaker only as he possesses a "business like directness and knowledge of affairs." To constitute an orator at present one simply requires a fluency of empty words and an occasional gush of meaningless eloquence. Sir John Macdonald's speeches, however, are always listened to with pleasure. He studies well the temper of his audience, and learns how to please it. He is always light and fanciful. A retentive memory enables him to bring to his subject many pleasing quotations from the best authors. But he lacks thoroughness, and, what is of still greater im-

portance, earnestness. He may, like Lord Beaconsfield, be very properly compared to that game which children are so fond of seeing played, in which two persons are concealed behind a curtain, the head of one and the arms of the other only appearing. The head declaims and the arms gesticulate as nearly in harmony as may be, or with as ridiculous an incongruity as can be devised. So it often is with Sir John Macdonald ; his head and arms are in his speeches, but his heart seldomly. Mr. Macenzie, Mr. Tilley, and better still, Mr. Blake, bring their whole being, thought, feeling, voice and frame to the help of their subject ; but Sir John speaks mechanically. Often eloquent, always pleasant, his speeches excite curiosity but do not carry conviction.

In 1849 the question agitating the public mind was the Rebellion Losses Bill. It was a Government measure, and as such was opposed by Mr. Draper, the leader, and Mr. Macdonald, the lieutenant, of the Opposition. The latter's course was a temperate one, and he should in no way be held personally responsible for the frantic acts which followed its passage and sanction. As he had a right to do, he opposed it, but not by appeals to mob violence, as has been represented. His was the constitutional opposition. It may be true that the mob which burned the Parliament Buildings and insulted Royalty, was composed of men, who, for the most part, supported

the Opposition, but the inference from this cannot be that its acts were approved of by the Conservative leaders. Rather would the honest and fair-minded man point out the fact, that no number of defeats and disappointments could make Mr. Draper or Mr. Macdonald waver for a moment in their loyalty to the crown and constitution. From about this time Sir John Macdonald may be looked upon as the leader of the Conservative party. Though he often held a subordinate position, he was its life and soul. It was in 1854 that he again found himself in office, this time as the Attorney-General for Upper Canada. But this was not a Conservative Government. It was one formed to carry out the broken pledges of its predecessors, and particularly to frame and introduce a measure for the secularization of the Clergy Reserves. It was true Mr. Draper and Mr. Macdonald were opposed to this, but public sympathy was with it—the voice of the people demanded it. The tide had been slowly rising, but was now at its full height and carried everything before it. Had they resisted then it would have been fatal. That they could swallow their convictions and forget their past actions was due, not so much to a lack of principle, as a ruling desire to retain place and power. The coveted quietude of an official calm appeared in the distance, and a small political inconsistency should not retard their progress toward it. Besides, there were the precedents before them

of such men as the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel. Had they not obeyed a nation's mandate against their wills, and why should not these Colonial small-fry? The existing state of affairs must also not be lost sight of. The Hincks Ministry had fallen far short of its duty. In breaking promises, violating principles, and refusing to fulfil pledges, they can only be compared to Charles I. He did not more completely violate every clause of the Petition of Right than did they every pledge they had made. Their defeat had been brought about by a union of the advanced section of the Reform party and honest Conservatives. Neither were strong enough to act without the other, and both saw the necessity for the expulsion of Mr. Hincks and his colleagues for the country's welfare and the national honor. Let it be written in letters of gold that at such a time both Sir John Macdonald and Mr. Geo. Brown, his opponent, could forget their party allegiance for the country's good. The union accomplished its purpose; Mr. Macdonald took office, Mr. Brown did not. In coalescing with men whose opinions he did not share, to carry out a measure in which he did not believe, and in agreeing, as the new ministry did, to declare white that which was black, to become the champions of the men who beforetime were not describable by the most opprobrious terms in the lexicon, we have a fair example of Sir John Macdonald's wonderful versatility. Perfectly justifiable was the remark of the

London Daily News: "He is wily and audacious as a party leader; he is full of resource as a politician." The secularization of the Clergy Reserves, a reform measure, was now introduced and carried by the Conservative leader, who was actively opposed by the head of the Liberal party. Let posterity declare which of the two was the more consistent.

The new Government was a strange mixture. The vehement language used by its two leaders against the Hincks-Morin administration was still fresh in the memory of the people. Its policy had been described as "a system of a most rampant corruption, appealing to the most sordid and basest motives of men," and its individual members had been told that "there might have been Walpoles among them, but there were no Pitts; they were all steeped to the lips in corruption; they had no bond of union but the bond of common plunder," by this youthful statesman. Mr. Morin, however, with all his "rampant corruption" and "common plunder," was esteemed worthy to be a colleague of Sir John Macdonald, and was made a member of the Government. The whole charm of the latter's life seems to be in its strange inconsistencies. Scarcely six months had passed away since he had denounced "coalitions formed between men of widely differing opinions in the same cabinet" as "base and demoralizing;" he did more, for he aided and abetted a white-

washing committee in condoning those offences which he had so earnestly and eloquently condemned. Making friends of men he had unsparingly attacked and accepting principles he had long opposed, have been prominent features of his public life. The Seignorial Tenure Act he described as "a miserable proposition by which Upper Canada was to be bribed with her own money in order that Lower Canada might be benefited;" but shortly afterwards helped to frame and carry it. Equally inconsistent was his course on the question of an Elective Senate. At first bitterly hostile to such a proposition, he ere long became one of its supporters. By his recent actions it would appear that he has again gone back to his first principles, for he is now one of the most earnest defenders of the nominative system. It must not be forgotten, however, that in those days no man could long oppose these measures and hope for political advancement. The popular tide was in their favor. Sir John Macdonald knew and submitted to it. The Prime Ministership was before him, and a few inconsistencies could not be permitted to stand in the way of its attainment. He, too, has been branded a coalitionist, and proof is not wanting to substantiate the charge; but whether he is to be condemned for that is a matter open to dispute. Coalitions have not always been productive of good, but the fact remains, that many of our most important measures owe their origin to such combinations. One secularized the

Clergy Reserves and passed the Seigniorial Tenure Bill; another first took up the question of Responsible Government; and a third gave us Confederation.

It was not long before the Cabinet was relieved of Mr. Morin's presence, and, upon a reconstruction, Messrs. Cartier and Cauchon were made Ministers. The former, during a long and distinguished career, remained the firm ally of Sir John Macdonald. Though not above the prevalent political tricks of his day, his character remained comparatively unsullied until near his death. He was ever ready to do what he could for the establishment and permanency of British institutions in our midst. The latter lives—or ought to live—only in the execrations of his fellow men. The two additions brought little strength to the Government, and signs of decay were every day becoming more visible. Sir Allan McNab was a Tory of the old school of exclusion, and his ideas were unsuited to the requirements of a progressive country. Reformers, and the more independent Conservatives, felt that it was necessary "to the future progress of the country and to the triumph of moderate and rational views in politics," that the coalition should have a different leader. Sir John Macdonald no doubt thought so too, but he was not prepared to advise or advocate the displacement of his old leader, for such a thing did not mean his own promotion. Feelings of admiration and

gratitude also prompted him to opposition. Above all, their views were alike, for they were disciples of the same school. Both believed in domination and exclusion. But the time came when a longer allegiance to the party's chief and his principles meant deposition. No one perceived this quicker than the Attorney General for Upper Canada, and whilst it ought not to be said that he deserted Sir Allan McNab, but rather that he supported him too long, it is certain that Sir Allan was soon forced into retirement. Sir Etienne Tache replaced him ; but ere long gave way to Sir John Macdonald. Then commenced the Macdonald-Cartier—or the Cartier-Macdonald—*regime*, which, with a slight interruption, lasted until 1862. To follow it through all its doings must be left to the historian. Adventures there were and many of them, but they cannot all be given. If during those years many mistakes were made and many political sins committed, it is equally certain that useful laws were passed and much good accomplished. To this period must be given the credit of the commencement of the solution of the question whether Canada was capable of the full and free self government which to-day we enjoy.

One episode of those years deserves more than a passing notice. Amidst the strife of contending parties, the selection of a place for the seat of Government was left to the Queen. Upon the representations of the Governor, and no doubt with the sanction of her Canadian advisers,

her decision was in favor of Ottawa. Against this choice there was a strong feeling in the country. All the places that had been pushing their claims were disappointed, and anxiously awaited an opportunity of showing their disapprobation. A motion expressive of disapproval and laying the blame upon the Government was introduced in the Assembly in the session of 1858, and after an acrimonious debate was carried. The Ministry resigned and Mr. Brown was called upon by Lord Elgin, and, with the assistance of Mr. Dorion, formed a coalition Cabinet. While the new Ministers were unable to take their places, and before any opportunity had been given them to announce their policy, both Houses voted non-confidence in them. Every lover of fair play must condemn such a proceeding. But those were strange times. One Government was allowed to resign possessing the confidence of the House, if not of the country, and another formed and hurled from power before its policy was known. Mr. Brown demanded a dissolution ; but, on the plea that a general election had been recently held, the Governor refused to grant the request. This was an intimation that he had called to his aid men whose advice he was unwilling to accept. In that ponderous and able speech which Sir John Macdonald made in the session of 1878 on the Quebec *coup d'état* he referred to this very point. He claimed that at the

time Sir Edmund Head sent for Mr. Brown he told him that though he was going to charge him with the formation of a Government, it was not to be understood that if he succeeded he would have the right of dissolution as a matter of course ; and further, that the Governor only promised to hear reasons for a dissolution after the Government was formed. Sir John Macdonald is undoubtedly a constitutional authority ; but it would be an easy task to prove how thoroughly antagonistic such views as he here represents are to the principles laid down by Bagehot. Though Mr. Brown did not possess the confidence of the Assembly, there can be little doubt that a new election would have resulted in his favor, for East, West and Centre were incensed at the location of the capital. If he was a fit man to be Premier, and Lord Elgin must have thought so or he would not have called him to the position, his advice should have been taken and a dissolution granted. A far more careful statesman than Lord Elgin dissolved the House of Commons at the request of the ruling Premier, though the general elections had taken place but a short time before. But His Excellency, and we must presume it was after due deliberation and upon his own responsibility, thought otherwise. Not a little has been said and written about collusion between him and some of the members of the defeated Government, about clandestine meetings and secret advice,

but these require to be substantiated by more proof than has yet been presented. After a forty-eight hours' existence Mr. Brown's Government died. During this crisis the conduct of Sir John Macdonald, to say the least of it, was censurable. If he knew, and he must have known, that he was sufficiently strong in the Assembly to force it at his dictation and under questionable circumstances to condemn Mr. Brown, he was acting falsely to his Sovereign and party in resigning. It was eminently the conduct of the political schemer. Mr. Cartier, as the leader of the largest following in the House, was called upon by the Governor to assume the duty of forming a Government, which task, with the help of his old chief, he accomplished. By what has since become known as "the double shuffle," one of the most disgraceful political proceedings of our history, the new Ministers assumed office without seeking re-election. It was, so the Courts said, a strictly legal act, but not even the judges themselves would assert that it was within the spirit of the law. No public man in the present day will defend, but both parties heartily condemn it as a political fraud. It served the purposes of Sir John Macdonald and his colleagues well, for whilst Mr. Brown and the other members of his Government were before their constituencies seeking re-election, the business of the session was quietly carried on and completed. Slightly altering an old

couplet it can be well applied to those times :

“When all were for the party,
And none were for the State.”

Faction was rampant. Party spirit had dimmed the national honor. Each session witnessed some strange encounters between the opposing parties. To the true patriot the signs of the times were anything but assuring. The present was dark and there was little light in the future. Amidst all this unseemly strife, however, great questions were gradually pushing their way to the fore. The “Confederation of the British North American Colonies” and “Representation by Population” were not dead issues. Only quietly hinted at in the past, they were now boldly agitated. The latter was the chief topic of discussion during the session of 1861. As was his custom Sir John Macdonald opposed it ; indeed, it has been a characteristic of his political life that he has opposed at first nearly all the great reforms which the country has asked for, and only when his own position was endangered and the popular request could no longer be resisted has he accepted and helped to carry them. On this particular question he took a most peculiar stand. “Let us,” said he, towards the close of the session, “return to our homes determined to use every legitimate means for carrying out our views on other subjects, but let us not make this question of representation by population

“a matter of party agitation and strife. He deprecated the “introduction of a question so likely to endanger the peace “of the Province.” This being freely interpreted meant that all matters could be legitimately and properly discussed, except those that might imperil the position of Sir John Macdonald, and these were dangerous and disloyal.

In 1862 the Cartier-Macdonald Government succumbed upon its Militia Bill, and was succeeded by the Macdonald-Sicotte, afterwards the Macdonald-Dorion, administration. According to Mr. Brown the new Government lived a precarious life until March, 1864, when it resigned. Once more Sir John Macdonald, with his old colleague, came to the fore, in an administration formed by Sir E. P. Tache. The new combination, however, was not strong, and met with continual defeats. Matters were becoming serious and men upon both sides were asking the question, “what of the future?” All were becoming alarmed at the state of affairs. Election had followed election—Ministry had succeeded Ministry—with the same result. Parties were so equally balanced that the vote of one member might decide the fate of the administration and the course of legislation for years. It is not surprising, such being the case, that in the session of 1864 Mr. Brown could readily obtain a committee to consider “the very grave difficulties which then presented themselves in conducting the Govern-

ment of Canada in such a manner as to show due regard to the wishes of its numerous populations." To this committee properly belongs most of the credit due for the Confederation scheme. Mr. Brown was chairman, and with him were associated the leading men of both parties, and prominent among them Sir John Macdonald. Its deliberations were carried on and the subject discussed without reference to political antecedents. There was an honest desire to find some solution for the perilous problem before the committee. But this hour of momentous importance, nay, almost of national calamity—for such it was—showed the world of what stuff Canadian statesmen were made. Who is there to-day that will deny that the Hon. George Brown and Sir John Macdonald in "casting aside "political partizanship, banishing personal considerations, "and uniting for the accomplishment of a measure so "fraught with advantage to their common country," exhibited the greatest statesmanship of their lives? Some there may be, but the race is almost extinct. On the 14th March, 1864, the committee reported to the House that its general feeling was in favor of changes in the direction of a Federative system, applied either to Canada or the whole of the British North American Colonies. The desperate position of affairs may be best understood by a knowledge of the fact that on this same day the Govern-

ment was defeated by a vote of 58 to 60. The crisis was now at hand, but there were men equal to the exigency. Mr. Brown was the first to move. He urged the Government to utilize the moment by making some attempt to settle the great difficulties surrounding the proper governance of the country, particularly the constitutional questions in dispute between Upper and Lower Canada, and at the same time patriotically offered his services to the men who would deal with these matters. Sir John Macdonald nobly responded, and then commenced that brilliant period in our history during which the greatest boon the country ever received was conferred upon it. The end of the session found Sir John Macdonald and Hon. George Brown in the same Cabinet together. They had opposed one another in the past, it was true; but had either done anything to make him unworthy of the companionship of the other? This, too, was a national movement, and personal conduct should be subordinated to it. The two leaders recognized the country's peril, and as patriots sunk their own differences and hastened to the rescue. It has been a point of a great deal of discussion as to who was the "Father of Confederation." In 1858, Sir A. T. Galt, with a fearlessness well becoming his high statesmanship, had brought the matter before the House, and even before that date the subject had been extensively written upon by others; but,

after giving the claims of all these due consideration, there are none more entitled to the honor of the position than Sir John Macdonald and Hon. George Brown. Speaking upon this point in the Assembly, on 6th February, 1865, Sir John Macdonald gave the credit of the introduction of the subject to Sir A. T. Galt, but claimed that the Cartier-Macdonald administration of 1858 had first made it a governmental question. "He believed the attention of the Legislature "was first formally called to it by his honorable friend the "Minister of Finance. Some years ago, in an elaborate "speech, while an independent member of Parliament, he "(Sir A. T. Galt) had pressed his views on the Legislature, "at great length and with his usual force. But the subject "was not taken up by any party as a branch of their policy "until the formation of the Cartier-Macdonald administration in 1858, when the confederation of the colonies was "announced as one of the measures which they pledged "themselves to attempt, if possible, to bring to a satisfactory conclusion." Two days after this, Mr. Brown, referring to these remarks and some others made by Sir George Cartier, thought "it was all very well that his honorable "friends should receive credit for the large share they had "contributed towards maturing the measure before the "House; but he could not help reflecting, while they "spoke, that if this was their very scheme in 1858, they suc-

“ceded wonderfully in bottling it up from all the world
“except themselves—and he could not help regretting that
“it was not until 1864 that this mysterious plant of 1858
“was forced to fruition.” Whatever political demagogues
may say, the people will not forget that it was the coalition
of Sir John Macdonald and Hon. George Brown that
brought about Confederation. Shoulder to shoulder they
worked for the country’s cause. It is not necessary for us
to follow all the steps that were taken. Conferences, meet-
ings and banquets followed one another in rapid succession,
at which the promoters of the scheme explained it in many
able addresses. The debate in the old Assembly of Canada in
the session of 1865 was the most elaborate and important
of the series. Sir John Macdonald’s speech was undoubt-
edly a masterly one in many respects. It had not the
weight such a speech should carry, for he occupied a pecu-
liar position. For many long years he had been opposing
the principles for which he was now contending. Mr.
Holton put the matter truthfully—though certainly not
generously—when he stated that “the hon. gentleman (Sir
“John) was in that speech giving the lie to twenty years of
“his political life. He was offering to the cause he was
“now advocating one speech against his continuous voice
“and vote for twenty years. He was struggling all through
“that speech against the consciousness of the falseness of

“his political position, and what everyone conceived would “be the brightest effort of his life was the feeblest address “he ever delivered on any important question.” In all these deliberations he took a prominent part, and was chairman of the London Conference of 1866-7, at which the final terms were agreed upon. During these negotiations his conduct, though not entirely free from suspicion, for his old ambition, doubly stimulated with the prospects of the Premiership of the Dominion, still prompted him at times to questionable actions, had much that was patriotic and statesmanlike about it. Through his efforts in no small degree were the people of Canada able, on the 1st of July, 1867, to upraise the ensign of a united Dominion.

During these years many changes had taken place. Sir E. P. Tache had passed away and Sir Narcisse Belleau taken his place. Mr. Mowat, who, with Mr. McDougall, had entered the Cabinet with Mr. Brown as the representatives of the Liberal party, had accepted a Vice-Chancellorship, and Mr. Brown, becoming dissatisfied with the Reciprocity negotiations then being carried on between Canada and the United States, had left the Government. To fill their places Messrs. Howland and Blair were selected, but they were not the representatives of the Reform party. Sir John Macdonald was master of the situation. Confederation accomplished, he became Premier. With an

old time cunning he announced the demolition of all party lines, expressed his intention of conducting the Government upon coalition principles, and by promises of economy and honesty secured an overwhelming majority at the elections that ensued. No statesman ever found himself in a prouder position. He was leader, not of a party, but of a country. In his hands lay the moulding of the political and social standing of the Dominion. He was the first Premier of a new nation. All he had ever coveted must now have been obtained, and all the strivings of his ambition satisfied. Every Province rallied to his support but Nova Scotia, and the submission of the late Hon. Joseph Howe brought even it into line. Surrounded by men of such liberal ideas as Howe, Tilley, McGee and Howland, his position seemed impregnable. Tact and foresight were displayed in the formation of his first Cabinet, and indeed in whatever other respects Sir John Macdonald's career may have been a failure, he has certainly shown himself a most expert leader. For this he is well adapted, especially if the requisite qualifications be such as many contend. Not long ago a leading journal laid down the rule that a leader should be :

1. Frank and genial by constitutional temperament ;
2. Kind and courteous in manner ;
3. Easy of access ;
4. Unaffected ;

5. Affable to all men ;
6. Flexible in bearing ;
7. Always conciliatory, but never vacillating.

These are the external qualifications. There are also the internal ones :

1. Intellect ;
2. Constitutional learning ;
3. Clear head ;
4. Power of expressing what is passing through the mind ;
5. Thought ;
6. Readiness in resource.

The first seven Sir John Macdonald possesses to a remarkable degree. He goes beyond them, for he can at times be a flatterer, a soother and an accommodater. He is an adept at suiting himself to all sorts of positions. Like Talleyrand, as described by Luclos, though in a different sense, "it is true he will yield to circumstances, and will deem that he can make sacrifices to peace." He was equally at home governing arm-in-arm with Sir George Cartier and sitting in a coalition Cabinet with Hon. George Brown ; in opposing a scheme of responsible government as in supporting it ; in proving Mr. Hincks black as in washing him white ; in thundering against corruption as in spending "the other ten thousand." The "internal" six he may not so fully possess. He is not an ideal statesman, in fact, he falls

far short of one. The perfect description which Melmoth gives in such majestic language would but ill apply to him :

“See him in Senates act the patriot’s part,
Truth on his lips, the public at his heart ;
Then neither fears can awe nor hopes control
The honest purpose of his steady soul.
No mean attachment e’er seduced his tongue
To gild the cause his heart suspected wrong ;
But deaf to every faction’s plea, his voice
Joins here or there, as reason guides the choice ;
To one great point his faithful labors tend,
And all his toils in Britain’s interest end.”

Nevertheless, he has been a good leader. Mr. Mackenzie is too unbending and unswerving. Sir John Macdonald can do both. When adherence to a party’s programme interferes with its prospects he can afford to relax a little, but Mr. Mackenzie cannot. The one is a good deal of the politician and a little of the statesman, the other more of the statesman and less of the politician. To Sir John Macdonald the Conservative party owes everything. To it he has ever been faithful. His time, energies, talents and means have been freely sacrificed for its benefit. He has his reward in an undivided Tory allegiance. At times he has been almost deified, for it mattered not what were his acts, or what the evidence, his followers appeared to have adopted the old regal maxim, “Sir John can do no harm.” We would not recommend to the politicians of the

future the practice of those arts, or the acquirement of those qualities, that have distinguished his career. Rather to their natural ability let them add—culture, integrity, patriotism, courage, industry, zeal for the public welfare, and fidelity to party and principles.

The new Government had few obstacles to contend against. Supported by a majority larger than was necessary, judged by a not over exacting, but an expectant, public, there was little to fear. It was only by degrees that those who had given a helping hand in the work of Confederation, but who were opposed to the Government upon other matters, were forming themselves into an Opposition. The sailing was smooth and the storms few. The advocates of no-partyism might almost have claimed the arrival of their millennium. It was during this period, 1867-70, that Sir John Macdonald had ample opportunity of proving his powers as a law-maker. Important and wise as the measures and laws then considered were, exclusive of the British North America Act, few are entitled to a place of prominence. It is somewhat strange that, long as he has occupied a place in the Legislature of the country, his name is connected with but few great laws. He cannot claim the Insolvent Act, the Supreme Court Act, the present perfect Election Law, the Ballot Act, or Trial of Controverted Elections by the Judges, or any similarly important ones. Nor

were there outside of law making any great questions to be considered and dealt with during these years. But in a growing country like Canada such a peaceful state of affairs could not last long. Its requirements were every day increasing and calling for greater displays of practical statesmanship. Thus in 1870 and the few following years the Premier found himself face to face with such matters as the acquisition and troubles of the North-West, the British Columbia Terms, the New Brunswick School Question, and the Washington Treaty. Besides these there was a host of minor ones which taxed his ingenuity to the utmost extent. The manner in which the settlement of these questions was conducted estranged from the Government the support of a large and influential independent party in the country that had previously acted with it. Sir John Macdonald's solutions for the problems that came before him were not at all popular. He was fast losing that undivided support which up to this time his tact and skill had retained. Even in the House of Commons, constituted as it was, he was sessionally losing ground. In 1868 his majority ranged from 55 to 65; in 1869 from 50 to 60; and in 1870 from 40 to 50; and sometimes the vote was much closer. In Ontario particularly the British Columbia Terms and the Washington Treaty were looked upon with great disfavor. Besides this, since the death of Mr. Blair, there had been no prominent

Reformer in the Cabinet from the banner Province, and this was looked upon as a breach of the compact entered into between the two parties at Confederation, and the commencement of a return to strict party lines. In Opposition were men whose ability and integrity could not be doubted, and they enjoyed a freedom to a certain extent from the quarrels and prejudices of the past. By skillfully watching the tide of popular opinion, and identifying themselves with it, they were rapidly gaining the confidence of the people. Sir Francis Hincks, returning from service under the Imperial Government, was taken into the Cabinet and made Finance Minister. He endeavored to stay the current of feeling that was rising against the Ministry by issuing a direct appeal to his old Reform friends for support. But it was all in vain. The party in power was assuming its real position. The Premier was no longer a leader of both sides, but was fast becoming the leader of the Conservative party. As the ground was slipping from under their feet, he and his colleagues were forced to resort to expediencies of the most doubtful character. No one who has studied the politics of those days, or who is at all acquainted with the management of such affairs as the construction of the Intercolonial Railway, will wonder for a moment at the growing distrust in the country in the men who manned the state ship. In Ontario the Ministry's

waning popularity was temporarily saved by a movement for the acquisition and opening up of the North-West Territory. This was something for which the people had long been anxious. Farmers' sons were every day being enticed away by the tempting offers of the United States Government. The Liberal party contended that some effort should be made to provide homes for these sons upon British soil. Conservatives were not slow to perceive that the cry was a popular one, and Sir John Macdonald founded his action upon it. Once again a noble scheme was almost thwarted by political intrigue. For a time that valuable acquisition was entirely controlled by the French Canadian element in the Cabinet, particularly during the Premier's absence in Washington, and at one time seemed destined to be turned to other purposes than that for which it was intended. The policy of the Government towards the new territory was bungling and unstatesmanlike. The initiative was taken by an attempt to force the inhabitants of that country without consultation into the union. At this they became indignant and resisted the endeavors made, as they thought by a "foreign power," to put the machinery in motion for the proper government of the new Province. They claimed, with a show of justice, to be treated as other portions of Her Majesty's British North American possessions had been. This gave rise to those painful troubles from the

consequences of which the country until recently seriously suffered. In the settlement of these difficulties much duplicity was practised by the two leaders of the Government. Pledges were given to-day and violated to-morrow, as some fresh evidence of the state of feeling was brought to their sanctums from Ontario and Quebec. The different steps taken—Mr. McDougall's attempt to reach the promised land, the formation and acts of the Provisional Government, Colonel Wolseley's expedition, the murder of Scott, and the Amnesty Question—are well known subjects. The whole proceeding was highly illustrative of that incapacity which Sir John Macdonald's amiable colleague, the ex-Lieutenant-Governor, declared reigned supreme at Ottawa. That peculiar faculty of the Premier which some call inconsistency was during this period displayed to its fullest extent. At one time it prompted its possessor to wish to God he could catch one of the chief figures in the Troubles, and at another to give this same individual a handsome donation with which to take a holiday.

In 1871 Sir John Macdonald tried a new adventure. A Joint High Commission was appointed for the settlement of the Alabama Claims and other matters in dispute between England and the United States. The Canadian Premier was offered and accept-

ed a position at the Board, in conjunction with Sir Stafford Northcote, Sir Edward Thornton, and the Rt. Hon. Montague Bernard, as the English representatives. As a diplomatist his most ardent admirers will scarcely claim that he was a great success. At Washington he gave away about all he could without throwing Canada into the bargain. In the negotiation of that Treaty Canadian interests were deliberately sacrificed to Imperial interests. As a pretence a Canadian representative was appointed, but he was only such nominally, for he has often given us to understand that he was there as the delegate of Great Britain. His actions were entirely ruled by the English section, and, according to a leading American paper, he was obliged "to do as he was bid." It was a much loftier thing to be styled the Plenipotentiary of Great Britain than to be dubbed the Canadian Representative. The Kingston Knight (for he had been deservedly knighted at Confederation) knew also that the certain reward for his services was a new Imperial title. Preferring the good opinion of a few English aristocrats to the welfare of the colony he governed, he surrendered every privilege upon which the covetous eyes of the Americans were resting. As Prime Minister of Canada he was bound in every way to pro-

tect her interests. How did he do it? For the navigation of our magnificent canals we received the graciously condescending promise "that the President would use his influence with the State Governments to secure us the navigation of theirs for a term of years." For the free use of the greatest water highway in the world this British Canadian Plenipotentiary accepted the right to use the waters of two streams in Alaska, about as well known to the ordinary reader as the Kisliakovskaia. But, greater humiliation still, he was compelled to barter away as the British representative at Washington one of the most valuable of our national birthrights—the fisheries—and that, too, for what the Americans would pay for them. The execution of the Treaty was infinitely worse than its conception, and for a number of years we presented the pitiable spectacle of one great nation giving to another almost everything and receiving nothing in return. A place at the Privy Council of England and the prefix of Right Honorable were the inducements for these *patriotic sacrifices*. Upon returning from Washington Sir John Macdonald found Ontario in a state of increasing hostility. She had far more cause to complain than any of the other Provinces, but the English Privy Councillor resumed his position in the

Commons amidst the loudest acclaims. A servile majority voted the Treaty good without knowing the effect of its composition. A parliamentary Opposition numerically weak raised its timid voice in vain. The chief actor knew best how to appeal to those whose support he wanted; a blatant and blustering gush of loyalty took the place of common sense, and the scruples of a too confiding majority were easily soothed into obedience.

The Opposition had undoubtedly been gaining strength. It was no longer composed of those straggling members that a chance vote was likely to catch. It embraced men of great ability and irreproachable character. With a clear record, and with purity and economy as their watchwords, they were fast gaining the confidence of the country. The Washington Treaty had done much in weakening the Government in Ontario. The policy of putting off and duplicity in the North-West Troubles had a like effect in Quebec. The British Columbia terms—by which was meant the granting of a large subsidy to British Columbia and the building of the Pacific Railway in ten years in consideration of that Province entering the Union—were unpopular throughout the Dominion. After 1870 these were the chief topics of discussion and the prin-

cial questions that the Government had to deal with. The first Parliament of the Dominion was about to expire and the second general election to be held. Both parties were preparing for the struggle. The one was headed by Sir John Macdonald, Sir George Cartier, Hon. S. L. Tilley, and Hon. Dr. Tupper; the other by Hon. A. Mackenzie, Hon. E. Blake, Hon. Geo. Brown, Hon. (now Sir) A. A. Dorion, and Hon. L. H. Holton. The contest proved to be a fierce one. Once commenced, it was waged with great vigor to its close. Means fair and unfair were used by both sides. One distinction, however, must be made. In the one case the leaders were to blame, in the other the followers. The Conservative party have no more right to be charged with the acts of the Kingston and Montreal Knights than Blake, Mackenzie, Dorion or Holton are to be held accountable for the acts of some of their followers. The battle was skilfully fought by the Government. Sir John Macdonald knows well how to conduct a campaign. Into this one he carried all his past experience, suiting his actions and words to the particular place and its circumstances. With Sir Francis Hincks he made a tour of Ontario, holding monster demonstrations in many places, and these unquestionably had an effect upon the

result of the elections. His supporters found that the Washington Treaty, the North-West Troubles, and the British Columbia Terms were heavy burdens to carry. The first was called disloyal, the second bungling, and the last unconstitutional. But with all these odds against him the result proved that Sir John Macdonald's star was still in the ascendant. It was true Sir George Cartier was defeated in Montreal and Sir Francis Hincks was routed in Ontario, but the Ministry apparently still possessed the confidence of the people. When the House met majorities ranging from 16 to 35 testified to their success at the polls. The ship of State, manned by Captain John A. Macdonald and his crew, seemed safe for another five years' cruise, unless something unforeseen should happen. There was a torpedo ahead, and should it explode the ship would be blown to atoms, but it might be avoided. It was being fast approached; superhuman efforts were made to steer clear of it, but they were futile. It was reached, and the explosion came; its success was complete. The Pacific Scandal need not be detailed here. Suffice it to say that an Opposition anxious for power became, in some way (best known to themselves), possessed of evidence of so damaging a nature that no Ministry could stand

against it. Its publication confirmed the growing conviction that large sums of money had been spent in the elections. No wonder that, Sir Geo. E. Cartier with \$80,000, Hon. Mr. Langevin with \$32,500, and Sir John Macdonald with \$45,000, the elections were favorable to the Government. The excuse for this lavish use of money was that the other side was spending more. Truthful as the statement might have been, sensible people hardly thought the justification sufficient. There was also the ugly accusation that for these large sums of money a public contract had been sold. The evidence may not bear such a charge out, but simple minded folk had their suspicions aroused, when it became known that one side had received the money and the other the contract. Looking at the evidence on both sides, setting argument against argument, fact against fact, perhaps the greatest sin in the whole transaction was the spending of such large sums of money in influencing the voice of the people. Aside from this, there can be little doubt that eventually the misdeeds of the Government, from time to time being found out, would have defeated any party. Other things aided the overthrow. The Conservative Government in Ontario had been defeated, an almost unanimous request for a stringent elec-

tion law had been disregarded ; the authority of Parliament had been overridden ; and individual Ministers had been guilty of numerous petty acts not at all calculated to bring strength to the Cabinet. In the face of such a record it required something more than ability and experience to carry the elections. None knew it better than the three Knights, and, as a consequence, they did that which brought about their defeat. The last vote of the first session of 1873 gave the Ministry a majority of 35, but on the 23rd October of the same year, during a special session of the House, in order to escape an inglorious defeat, Sir John Macdonald and his colleagues resigned. Very few public men in any country had enjoyed a longer uninterrupted, or almost so, period of official life than did the now ex-Premier. For twenty years, in one position or another, he had remained in office. It was a record of which any man might be proud, but the cloud which hung over its close had almost dimmed the whole. Up to 1870 Sir John Macdonald's career had been that of a faithful servant, but when to the Washington Treaty were added the British Columbia swindle, the North-West troubles, and the grave charges in connection with the Pacific Railway, mistrust took the place of confidence, and the weight

becoming greater than could be borne, he and his colleagues were swept away by the indignation of a people to whose trust they had proved recreant. That most sycophantic of writers, the author of one of the works on the Administration of the Earl of Dufferin in Canada, has supplied us with words here, which, though somewhat overdrawn and not strictly correct, may be not improperly used: "A leader "confessedly the most able statesman Canada "had ever yet produced, supported by a party of "warm admirers,—one who had been for a quarter "of a century a member of every Conservative Govern- "ment in the old Province and of the new Dominion "of Canada,—who had rendered the Imperial Govern- "ment most signal and valuable services in its negotia- "tions with the United States,—who had been the "ruling spirit by which the noble work of Confederation "had been consummated,—a chief by whose astuteness "and adaptability to the reasonable wishes of the Pro- "vinces Nova Scotia had been quieted, and New "Brunswick satisfied; and by whose skilful hand the "beautiful Province of Prince Edward Island and the "magnificent territory of British Columbia had been "added to the great Dominion,—a gentleman whom "Her Majesty had signally honored,—a Minister who

“had dispensed the enormous patronage of the Crown
“for almost half an ordinary lifetime without his most
“bitter political opponent daring to charge him with
“personal dishonesty,—one who had by his admirable
“social qualities secured the esteem of all classes,
“creeds and races,—who counted his personal enemies
“on his fingers, his personal friends as the sands of
“the sea-shore,—one who had entered public life a
“comparatively rich man, but now laid down the seals
“of office a poor one,—a Minister who had raised
“thousands to posts of honor and wealth, and had
“taken no thought for his own old age : this man
“was compelled to bend to the verdict of the people
“of Canada, when they reluctantly declared him
“guilty of an act as to which much may be said in
“extenuation,—in justification, nothing.”

The Conservative party has never lost faith in its old leader. In the hour of his greatest adversity, when life-long friends were turning their backs upon him, and when the country so unmistakably condemned him, the remnant gathered round him and declared that none other should rule over it. As they did upon a recent occasion, so then, his supporters clamored “*aut Caesar, aut nullus.*” Shorn to a certain extent of his laurels, deprived of place and

power, he was still the idol of the faithful few who were returned to do service as Her Majesty's loyal Opposition. At first Sir John Macdonald seemed out of place in his new sphere. His long tenure of office had accustomed him to act on the defence, and he appeared ill prepared for the work of aggression. His inactivity may also be accounted for in the paucity of his following, which was sufficient to have dampened the feelings of the most ardent. In a speech delivered about that time, in a confidential moment, he gave his own reason for allowing the Government to have things their own way as being "that the Grits could not govern the country for six months, and if left alone would soon kill themselves." To his notion, they had been so long in opposition that they knew nothing about government. Practically Premier Mackenzie had no opposition for two sessions. His measures were such as the country demanded, and met with almost universal approbation. His, too, was the work of settling the many intricate questions left him as a legacy by his predecessor. Conservatives were not at all dissatisfied that these should be disposed of, for they hoped some day to return to power, and certainly had no great desire to be again harassed with them. When for nearly three

years Mr. Mackenzie and his colleagues had retained office, notwithstanding Tory predictions to the contrary, and the third session was about to be held, the Opposition leader began to bestir himself. The poor, benighted, incapable Grits were doing pretty well, and the country seemed satisfied. Unlike the proverbial calf, they had refused to take sufficient rope to hang themselves. It required something more than the ordinary every-day politics of the country to bring the Conservative party back to power, and none perceived this quicker than its head. Nor indeed had Sir John Macdonald given up the idea of again becoming Prime Minister, as his many speeches previous to the election prove. His old desires had not all departed.

“The seals of office glitter in his eyes,
He climbs, he pants, he grasps them.”

There could yet be discerned the workings of his restless ambition. All he wanted was his old-time means, but these he had not. There were no contracts to award, no beguiling measures to pass, and only uncertain offices to promise. But something more powerful than these was coming to his aid. A depression, destined to be the severest Canada ever felt, was setting in. All the rest of the world was suffer-

ing and how could the Dominion escape? What could become more popular than to blame the Government for the hard times? No one thought of accusing Beaconsfield and his Cabinet, Bismarck and his Ministry, or Hayes and his Secretaries, of being the cause of depression in England, Germany, or the States; but in Canada it was different. We enjoyed the inestimable boon of being able, so Conservatives contended, to do away with commercial depression by legislation, particularly if such legislation was carried by a Conservative Government. For two years previous to 17th September, 1878, Sir John Macdonald and his colleagues floated an ensign to the breeze inscribed with these words:

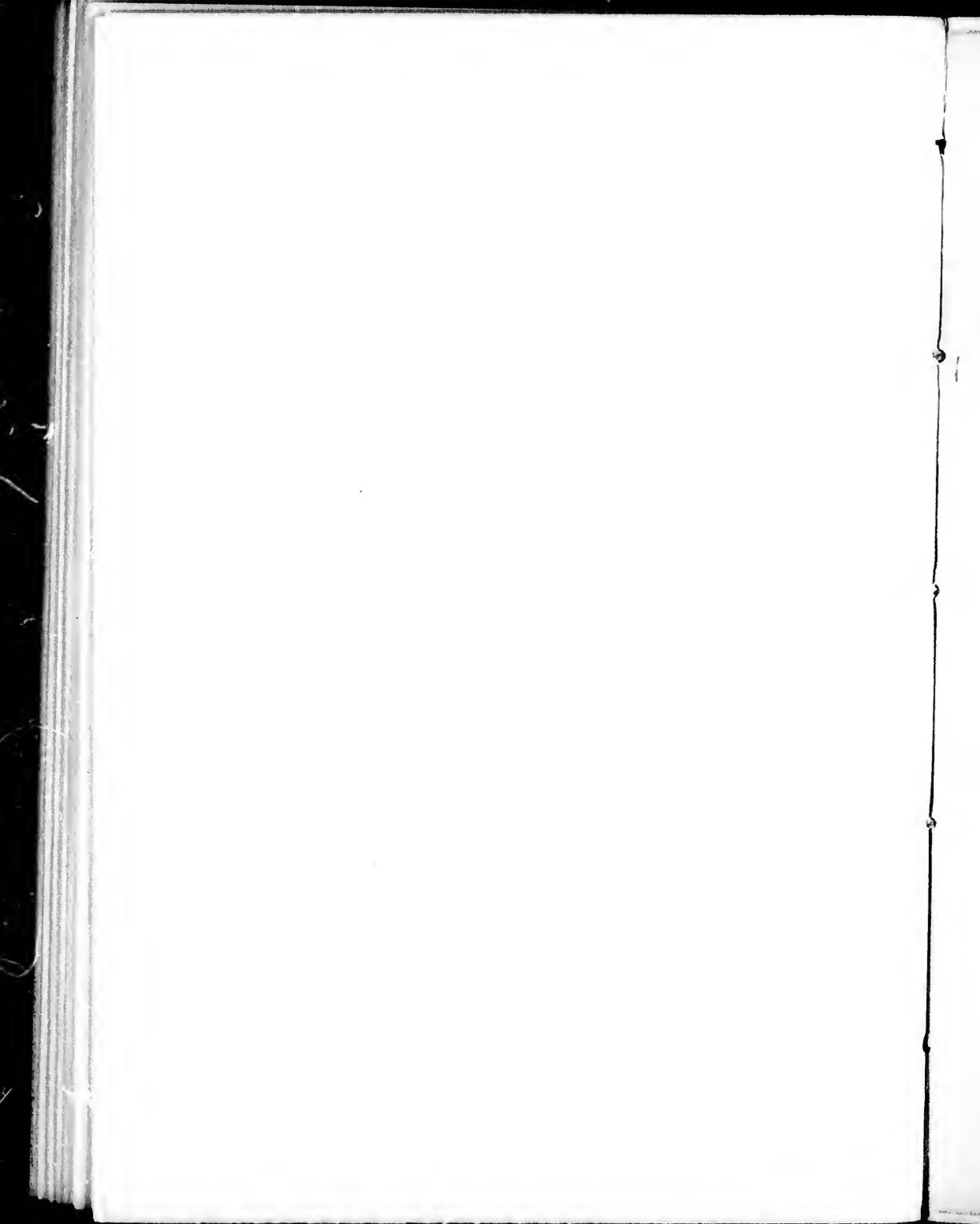
The Party that can Legislate Away Hard Times.

We need not stay here to describe how step by step protection became the issue before the country; nor how stubbornly the Government closed their ears to the people's cries; nor need we do any more than mention the summer tours of the "great John A. travelling combination." Never did party struggle harder than that led by him to regain lost ground. Hopeless as the task at first appeared the time was propitious. The Mackenzie Government had fallen sadly from grace. The last three years of its

probation had witnessed the wreck of many of the promises and professions made at its inception. Added to these were a weak Cabinet and an extremely unpopular fiscal policy. From all parts of the country came wails of distress. Anvils were silent; looms idle; furnaces fireless. Dissatisfaction prevailed all over, and a restlessly anxious people were willing to make any change likely to give the least hope for the future. Argument, logic and authorities were of no avail. A scheme far more ridiculous and chimerical than the National Policy would have been accepted by the people in their longing for a change. The leaders and the party were both lost sight of, and the electorate seemed only impressed with the one idea that there was a possibility, remote as it might be, of an improvement taking place if only Sir John Macdonald became Premier. This was the adventure upon which he rode into power. His sincerity cannot now be questioned. Time alone will give opportunities of testing it. We may, perhaps, after looking at his past career and considering his past utterances, particularly those upon the Budget of 1868, in which he declared that some portions of the great National Policy worked oppressively upon certain sections of our people, be allowed to have our doubts. Miss Mar-

tineau, in her History of England, says of Sir Robert Peel that "it was the fate of that distinguished statesman to surprise the public by suddenly appearing as the chief figure in what we may call the triumph of the principles which up to that moment he had spent his life in opposing." This applies equally well to Sir John Macdonald. Much more applicable, however, are the words of Lord Beaconsfield, in reference to the same English statesman, upon the introduction of Free Trade principles into England, when he said: "For my part, if we are to have Free Trade, I, who honor genius, prefer that such measures should be proposed by the honorable member for Stockport than by one who through skilful Parliamentary manœuvres has tampered with the generous confidence of a great people and of a great party. For myself I care not what may be the result. For me there remains this at least—the opportunity of expressing thus publicly my belief that a Conservative Government is an organized hypocrisy." At the present time Sir John Macdonald finds himself safely anchored in office, backed up by a large majority. The late elections have shown that our people have a very dim recollection of his faults and a lively one of his services. It is not the Conservative party of

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which he is leader, or a Conservative Government of which he is Premier. It is the party and Government of Protection. What that means many now bitterly know, but to others time alone will communicate. There is a mystery about it which the future only can completely unravel. An English orator once compared such a party to a "fat cattle show, wanting brain and heart"; this may not altogether be applicable to the protectionist party of Canada, discordant as its elements are, but the phrase is not inopportune. It is certainly a party composed of the most incongruous parts struggling for harmony. Its golden panacea for hard times has been put in force, what it may accomplish cannot now be known, and we "must possess our souls in patience" until the results are seen. In the meantime there should be generosity enough in the public mind not to impugn motives or doubt sincerity. One thing that is certain is that if a quarter of the good can be accomplished by the new Ministry and its policy, that has been promised, it is safe to predict for S.r John Macdonald, should such a thing be within the range of possibility, a lease of power longer than any he has yet had. Mischievous rumor, not always untruthful, has hinted that ere long he will seek repose

in the ermine of the bench, and become Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. If such should be the case not the most bigoted would raise his voice in opposition. It may be true that he is not peculiarly adapted for the place, that a long political career has unsuited him for a high judicial position, but the objection would lose its force in the fact of his having five able colleagues. A man who has given thirty-five years of his life to the interests of his country, open as his career may be to suspicion and attack on different occasions and questions, deserves a fitting recognition. No face will be more missed from the political arena, and not a few will regret, should the rumor prove true, the moment when the political garb is thrown aside for the sombre robes of the Judge.

Sometime in December last, Sir John Macdonald attended a meeting of workmen in Ottawa, at which he was presented with an address and made a speech. He appeared that evening the same mysterious person as ever. Sitting on the platform, resting his head on the knob of his cane, he occupied a good position to be closely scrutinized. There were the pale, sallow, close shaven face; the dark, piercing eyes; the listless, solitary curl encroaching on the forehead; the quick, restless movement; and when he rose to speak, the

semi-limp, the jaunty, easy manner, and the fascinating air of other days. Time has made a furrow or two across that brow and down those cheeks, the eyes are a little sunken, and the dark, glossy hair is commingled with grey. How near to Smalley's description of Beaconsfield he comes : " I never saw a human visage so "scarred and scored with strange lines. Not the least "thing about them is that they are as full of power as "they are of fantastic meaning. The parchment which "hides his skull is strained tight as a drum head over "the protruding bones beneath the eyes and hangs in "angular wrinkles just below. Beyond doubt it is a "thoughtful face and beyond doubt also is profoundly "contemptuous of other people's thoughts. There is "strength in the jaw and genius in the forehead ; with "a mocking glitter in the glassy eyes which belies "both With all that, the face has an immense fascination for the beholder. Lowell said "that the Venus of Milo made all other Venuses seem "ignoble. This man, with his incomprehensible mixture "of great qualities and incredible flippancy, makes the "greatest of his rivals seem commonplace."

But he speaks.

“With grave
Aspect he rose, and in his rising seemed

A pillar of state. Deep on his front engraven
Deliberation sat, and public care
Majestic."

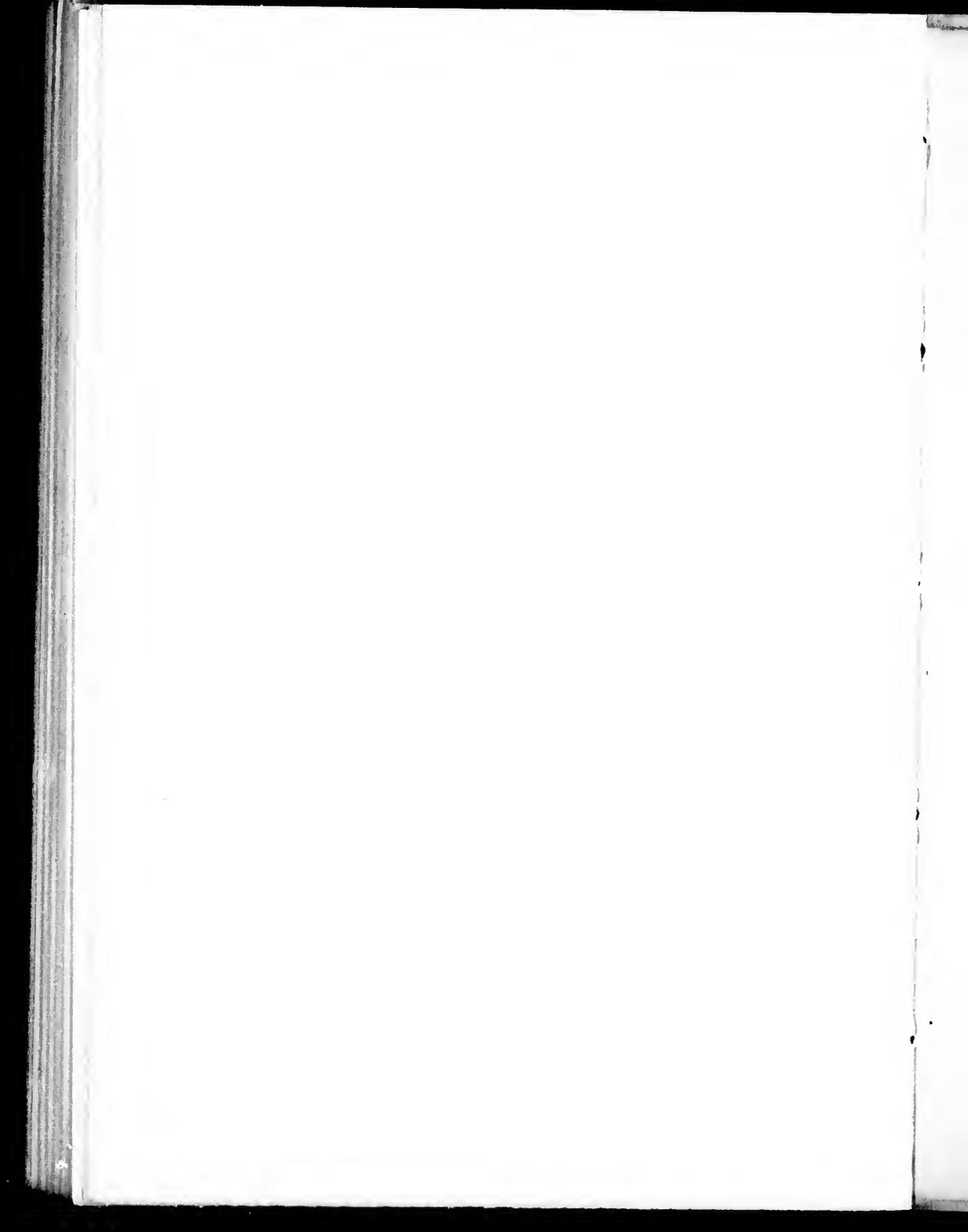
His utterances are as indescribable as himself.

Crafty? Yes: "This is not the first occasion on
"which I have been honored in the city of Ottawa.
"Whatever may have been the chances, changes and
"reverses of political life, I, as an individual and a
"public man, have always found that although betrayed
"elsewhere, although friends may have been estranged from
"me, although my party may have met with political
"adverses, in Ottawa I have always found a body of
"staunch friends, personal, political, and social, and a
"friendship which was not a fairweather friendship,
"which was not accorded to me only when I was at
"the head of the ruling party, but by the majority I
"believe of the people of Ottawa, even when I had
"fallen as it would appear like Lucifer, never to rise
"again."

Witty? Yes: "Trade prospects revived and bank
"stock rose because of the confidence of the
"people of Canada in the new administration of
"the country. I know an old lady in Toronto who
"solemnly assured me that her Conservative cow gave
"two quarts of milk more each day than it had done

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“before the elections. Another story I heard was that
“the hens of a Conservative friend of mine in the
“west, influenced by the general reaction consequent
“upon the election, announced their intention of laying
“more eggs, larger eggs, fresher eggs, and more to the
“dozen than ever they had done before.”

Spiteful? Yes: “You may all remember that the
“Hon. George Brown caused to be hauled to prison
“five of the employees of his establishment, under the
“provisions of an old statute passed years and years
“ago when the rights of men were not so acknowledged
“as they are now, when men were not allowed to ask
“a fair day’s wages for a fair day’s work. I myself,
“though Minister of Justice, had supposed that that
“act was not in operation in a country of equal liberty
“like this. It was an old statute of England, passed
“in the early part of the reign of George III., and I had
“not thought that in the Province of Ontario, in the city
“of Toronto, in the midst of all our intelligence and
“advancement of the age, it would be enforced. On
“the day that I heard that this cruel act, this act of
“oppression, had been enforced, I gave notice in
“Parliament of a Bill that would prevent the continu-
“ance of outrages of the kind which had been per-
“petrated. That act was passed at once, both sides

“of the House, I am happy to say, supporting me.
“The Governor General came down, gave his assent
“to the act, and the workingmen of Ontario again
“felt that they were free men.”

Bombastic? Yes: “But in the meantime we
“cannot expect everything to come at once. We
“would be overwhelmed with too many blessings.
“They have commenced gradually, freely and steadily;
“and so may they go on. But we must have an
“opportunity of carrying out our measures; we cannot,
“under the constitution, alter the present law, until
“the usual meeting of Parliament. The Government
“will then submit their measures, and we believe—
“and I feel responsible for what I say—that the
“measures which we hope then to introduce will tend
“greatly to relieve this country from its present de-
“pression, will help to foster our industries, to open
“our mines, to extend our manufactories, to assist our
“farmers in adding field to field and house to house.”

Evasive? Yes: “If our policy is to prevail,
“Canada which has so long been fighting under such
“adverse circumstances, hoping against hope, must of
“necessity work again with renewed energy. She must
“hope to bring back from the United States men of
“her own blood and lineage, men who despite their

“skill, energy and constructive ability, have not been employed here and have gone to a foreign country. I believe, gentlemen, upon my soul, that the legislation of next session will bring back many a young Canadian who has been expatriated from his native land ; I believe that this country will have a new era of prosperity, will rise from its present slough of despond.”

And this is the man who, for thirty-five years has been a leading Spirit in Canadian politics. Neither oratorical powers, administrative ability, or statesmanlike acts have kept him in that position, but a combination of faculties more than ordinary and possessed by few. An opponent—a life-long one—has enumerated them as being: fertility of resource ; a very facile temperament ; a mind always taking counsel with itself ; a talent for effect ; a readiness to use the best means at hand for the accomplishment of the purposes of the moment ; a will unfettered by scruples when an end is to be gained ; a genial manner and a ready wit. Ambitious he has been, but he has displayed no merely sordid selfishness. To-day, after so long a public service, his friends truthfully boast that he is a poor man, and many instances are related of his willingness to forget self and his own pecuniary interests

in his desire for his party's welfare. "His services to
"Canada have been clouded by grave faults. Friends
"and opponents are fain to agree in condemning not
"a few mistakes and errors. But when the necessity
"for referring to those errors and mistakes as they
"affect the present time, has passed, and the historian
"of the future scans the chronicles of the past, let
"us hope the services may be remembered and the
"faults forgotten." What he once said of himself—
not boastingly—may very properly be now repeated—
that there does not exist in our country a man who
has given more of his time, more of his heart, more
of his wealth, or more of his intellect, such as may
be, for the good of this Dominion of Canada.

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