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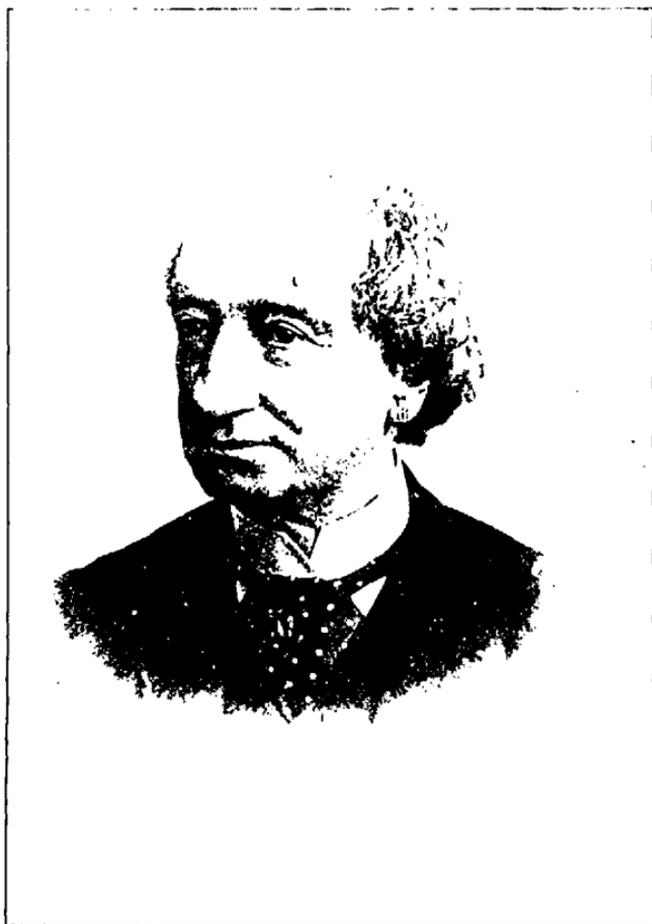
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MEN OF THE DAY



SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD

POPULAR EDITION

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A CANADIAN PORTRAIT GALLERY

EDITED BY

LOUIS-H. TACHÉ

No. 71 a St. JAMES STREET, MONTREAL.

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INTRODUCTION

For a quarter of a century Canada has paced with giant stride the path of intellectual and material progress. Thanks to the men of the generation on which devolved the difficult task of erecting it, the Canadian Confederation has become strengthened more and more in proportion as time has allowed the definition of its politics and the accomplishment of those colossal enterprises which have attracted the attention of the world. To-day, after but twenty-five years, our country occupies the first colonial place of the globe. It is not, then, amiss to present, in a work easily accessible to the public, some of the great figures which give lustre to the present time. Seeing thus grouped these statesmen, these *sarants*, these men of letters, these kings of finance and industry, who, each in his own sphere, have laboured for the glory of our country, our fellow-countrymen will understand better the elements of cohesion which bind us and the duty incumbent on all to strengthen them, instead of weakening them either by indifference or by ignorance.

This gallery will contain portraits of but a limited number of those who are entitled to a place in it. The order in which they will appear is neither an order of merit nor of precedence. On the contrary, the aim of the management is to mingle them so as to avoid monotony.

The smaller provinces, so proud in their collective strength, so little known and appreciated in certain parts of the Confederation, will have their share in this publication, destined to be spread throughout Canada. Their illustrious sons will there appear as it were in solemn protest against the indifference in which they are held in some quarters.

The passions of party, political entanglements, or the violence of strife, too often exhibit men in a false light. Almost invariably,

according to the exigencies of the moment, they are either exalted to the clouds by eulogy and adulation, or dragged in the mud to serve the ambition of some, the jealousy or hatred of others. It is a sentiment of the injustice thus daily done which has inspired us with the desire to do a useful work by making better known, and, therefore, better loved, those of our fellow-countrymen whom talent, industry, or a laudable ambition, have brought to the political, intellectual, and moral leadership of this country.

Party spirit will be forgotten in this publication. The biographical sketches will be written from an impartial standpoint, kind rather than hostile, and the responsibility of the opinions expressed will be left to the author, each writing being signed by a responsible name. The editor will see, however, that praise to a man of one party is not bestowed at the expense of a disloyal or passionate attack upon another, and that justice and history are respected as well as men and parties themselves.

LOUIS-H. TACHÉ.

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD

Canada's "Grand Old Man" has never taken too kindly to biographies or biographical sketches of himself or to the writers thereof. In this he has shown his usual discernment. For, at the risk of bringing out an Irish bull with an awkward pair of horns, it must be said that any biography which does not include a thanatology of its subject must be unsatisfying. One of the highest beauties of a great life, as of a good life, is its symmetry.

"Our little lives are rounded by a sleep."

It is this sleep of death which smooths off the jaggedness and inconsistencies of life, softens harsh outlines, and gives time for just judgment.

Sir John Macdonald, however, must submit to the inevitable even as other men. Since it has been deemed advisable to have a "Portrait Gallery of Prominent Canadians," accompanied by biographical sketches, the Premier must submit to be put in the first place, and to the further infliction of being "sketched." Otherwise it were a case of playing "Hamlet" with the Prince of Denmark omitted from the list of *dramatis personae*.

Of course, within these limits there will be considerably more sketch than biography. Sir John Macdonald's Boswell will, no doubt, come forth when the great man shall "have shuffled off this mortal coil," and will give us all that fulness of detail, those bits of conversation, those random remarks, those day-in-and-day-out habits and happenings which make up the presentment of an individuality. He who would do this well, time and ability being taken for granted, should be one who has had well-nigh unlimited opportunities of observing Canada's greatest statesman in the domestic and social sphere as well as in public life; in a word,

should know him well, a privilege which the present writer cannot boast. The present writer, therefore, can do little more than follow the high road of Sir John's career as a public man, pointing out those milestones commemorative of the ever decreasing distance between the Architect of the Dominion and his assured niche in the Temple of Fame.

People talk glibly enough about statesmen, but few realize the import of the word. The term "statesman" is, by uneducated and half-educated persons, applied to clamorous politicians and hysterical grievance-mongers, who should be better described as "stateswomen," an expression which, as we all know, Ben Jonson used in contempt.

But a statesman is a *rara avis*. There are not three now living in the United States. There are not five in Canada. Sir John Macdonald is, beyond all comparison, the greatest of our four, and, indeed, the greatest on the continent. Why a population of between fifty and sixty millions should yield fewer statesmen than a population of between five and six millions need not be discussed here. Our freer institutions and immeasurably grander tradition and history as an integral part of the greatest empire of the world are more favourable to the production and development of statesmanship than are the "rough, raw, and democratic" fashions of the American Republic. An eminent Canadian forcibly expressed, on the 4th of January, 1889, an estimate of the dignity of positions in the two countries which implied this truth, and so speaking, he showed himself to be not only a patriot, but also a man of sound, practical common sense: "I would myself," said the Honourable Oliver Mowat, "rather be Premier of Ontario than Governor of New York; and, if I had any ambition for still higher public honours, which I have not, I would rather be Premier of Canada than President of the United States." While the main attributes of statesmanship are necessarily the same everywhere, the accidents differ widely in the case of the public men of Great Britain, the United States, and Canada. Nowhere does the training of men for public life begin as early as in Canada and in the American Republic: and one would, therefore, look for a proportionate thoroughness and culture in American and Canadian public men.

It is, however, one thing to look for a result and another thing to find it. Strange to say, although young men in the United Kingdom do not begin to take a lively interest in public questions for fully five years later than their Canadian fellow-subjects, and for fully ten years later than their American cousins (who enter on the comparative study of ward politics at the mature age of twelve years or so), they are, on the whole, when the right time comes, quite as well able to judge intelligently public issues as are these more precocious students. I venture to think, too, that not only do young Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Irishmen come at the start to conclusions as intelligent as do their transatlantic brethren, but that, speaking generally, they ultimately rise to a much higher level of culture and power of government. Hence it has been always considered a compliment to a Colonial or American statesman to compare him to an Imperial Minister. And, from this point of view, many thought it was a notable honour for Sir John Macdonald to be compared, as he occasionally is still, to the illustrious Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield. It is paying a still higher compliment to the Canadian Premier to assert that the comparison is honourable to both.

There are certainly strong points of resemblance in the lives and character of these extraordinary men, though one cannot establish as striking a parallel as some enthusiasts would wish; nor is it unfortunate for Sir John Macdonald that his career has not been an exact counterpart of Disraeli's. He thereby escapes the reproach of one or two glaring inconsistencies and of a certain grotesque egotism with which Beaconsfield is fairly chargeable. On the other hand, a measure of greatness must be conceded in one direction to the illustrious Jew which the illustrious Scotchman does not share. Over and above his greatness as a statesman, Lord Beaconsfield was great as an author; and, to quote his own words in the introductory notice to his father's work, "Curiosities of Literature": "An author may influence the fortunes of the world to as great an extent as a statesman or a warrior; and the deeds and performances, by which this influence is created and exercised, may rank in their interest and importance with the decisions of great congresses, or the skilful valour of a memorable field." There are, of course,

authors and authors. As an author, Lord Beaconsfield has not influenced the fortunes of the world to anything like as great an extent as he did by statesmanship; but yet the writer of *Vivian Grey*, and, above all, of *Contarini Fleming*, has a permanent place of honour in the annals of English literature. Merely to get out a book is not so tremendous an achievement in these days of paste and scissors—"A fact," however, as Mr. Augustine Birrell naïvely remarks, "hidden from a large but unfortunately decreasing number of persons." If Sir John Macdonald ever wrote a book, it would, no doubt, be worthy of his genius, but I never heard that he essayed authorship. He may, indeed, have had books printed "for private circulation," as to which this deponent knoweth not. He is altogether so phenomenal a man that it would not be surprising to see him surprise the world by some great literary masterpiece in his evening of life, even as a certain Cato, not wholly unknown to fame, began to study Greek at the age of eighty. Sir John Macdonald has been ever a man of dazzling surprises, and a practical believer, so to speak, in the Disraeli ethics, a striking formula of which is, "It is not enough to govern men; you must also astonish them." As to age, that does not count with him; "John A," shouted an enthusiastic rustic at a pic-nic, moved by a feeling allusion of the Premier's to his prospective translation to the celestial Treasury Benches, "John A., you'll never die!" It is of a piece with the story now going the rounds as to the anxiety of an English gentleman that his young son should see and hear the truly glorious Gladstone "before he dies," to quote the words of the eager father. "But, my dear sir," said the person to whom he vented his feelings, "Mr. Gladstone is extremely well just now; there is no prospect of his expected death." "I was not speaking of *him*," quoth pater-familias, "I was speaking of my boy." May the lives of England's Grand Old Man and of Canada's Grand Old Man be spared and prolonged to the utmost verge of possibility! "And even beyond it," would be the fervent *Amen* of Sir Boyle Roche. So say we all.

Sir John Macdonald and Lord Beaconsfield both studied law. The latter never practised. The former did. Neither was a very young man on first taking a legislator's seat. In 1837, when

Disraeli was elected to represent the borough of Maidstone, he was thirty-two years old. It would have been a case of *adolescentulus* in the days of Cicero, but the days of Cicero have been.—

Illium fuit et ingens gloria Teucrorum.

When Sir John Macdonald, in 1844, was elected to represent Kingston in the old Legislative Assembly of United Canada, he was of the comparatively mature age of twenty-nine. Kingston received him, on his entry into public life, with open arms, and he knew not then the bitterness of repulse; but thrice had the electors of High Wycombe, and once "the free and independent" of Taunton, rejected Disraeli before Maidstone, like a female Barkis, "was willin'."

From 1847 to 1876, for twenty-nine years, Disraeli sat for the County of Buckingham, until, in fact, his elevation to the peerage. From 1844 to 1878, a still longer space of years, Sir John Macdonald represented Kingston. Disraeli served an apprenticeship of twelve years of Parliamentary life before becoming a Minister of the Crown; but the Canadian statesman had had barely two years and a half of a legislator's experience before he was appointed Receiver-General in the Draper-Daly Cabinet. Lord Beaconsfield began life as a Radical; Sir John Macdonald has ever been a consistent Tory. By birth a Scotchman, the latter has proven himself to be absolutely loyal and devoted to Canada; while the former, the descendant of Jews, showed himself more English than the English themselves, though so eminently magnanimous an antagonist as Mr. Gladstone once hurled at him the reproach that "he had not in his veins one drop of English blood." But the most striking similarity between the statesmanship of the two men is seen in their cult of a lofty opportunism. By this Sir John Macdonald has won some of his most signal victories; and it is no more than his due to say that with him opportunism, while it may have clashed with consistency, has never been inconsistent with patriotism. No man in the public life of any country has felt the public pulse more intelligently than the Premier. He has prescribed for the public health just as he thought best at the critical time, practising now on the lines of

homeopathy, now on those of the allopath. Let us change the metaphor to the apt figure of Hare, so singularly expressive of Sir John Macdonald's guidance: "A statesman, we are told, should follow public opinion. Doubtless—as a coachman follows his horses, having a firm hold on the reins and guiding them."

The city of Glasgow, in Scotland, has the honour of being the Premier's birthplace. It is an honour, of which not only Glasgow, but also all Scotland, mother of so many illustrious sons, may well be proud. It was on the 11th of January, 1815, that the future statesman made his first appearance in the theatre of this world, on whose stage he was destined to play so grand a part. Were it not for what may, in a sense, be called the accident of birth in Scotland, Sir John might be looked upon as a thorough Canadian, having come when a mere child to these shores. His early education was almost wholly received at Kingston, Ontario, at the Royal Grammar School, under the supervision of Dr. Wilson, a Fellow of that historic University of Oxford, from which his famous pupil was one day to receive one of the highest academic honours. The distinction conferred on the Premier when, in 1865, he received from the University of Oxford, the greatest seat of learning in the world, and the most jealously watchful in the distribution of its honours, the degree of Doctor of Civil Law, was one that, while it shed lustre on Canada's greatest statesman, reflected no less lustre on England's historic University, thus gracious in recognizing the commanding merit of him who was mainly instrumental in consolidating for England her mighty transatlantic Dominion.

Very soon after attaining his majority, the young John A. Macdonald, of whose lithe, active figure and bright ways, many old Kingstonians still have a vivid remembrance, was called to the Bar of Upper Canada. It was in Hilary Term, 1836. He made his mark soon, the legal profession being one eminently suited to his acute, logical mind. Sir John Macdonald has never, even by his bitterest foes, been charged with undue love of money. They have charged him with undue love of power. That is a nobler passion; and the people of Canada seem to have determined that Sir John should be led into the way of that temptation—and kept therein. Certain it is that, had he kept to the practice of his

profession pure and simple, eschewing politics, he might have amassed a princely fortune, instead of being practically a poor man. The same is partially true of the illustrious Edward Blake, who cannot, however, be called in any sense a poor man, though there can be no doubt his patriotic attention to politics has prevented his amassing as splendid a fortune as his genius could command.

From 1847 until Confederation, the burden of office was laid, though not continuously, on the shoulders of the aspiring lawyer. He held successively the portfolios of Receiver-General, Commissioner of Crown Lands, and Attorney-General for Upper Canada, and was Prime Minister in July, 1858, when his Government was defeated on the seat of Government question. After his return to power in the same year he held the portfolio of Postmaster-General just twenty-four hours, resigning it to become again Attorney-General of Upper Canada. The functions and duties of this office he discharged with splendid ability until the year 1862. In the May of that year the Administration of which he was a member resigned office, having met with an adverse vote on the Militia Bill. There were never in Opposition more strenuous and gallant leaders than were John Alexander Macdonald and the late Sir George Cartier for almost two years following this defeat. The record of that period has become almost legendary in the annals of our parliamentary debates, and forms, with the onslaughts of the Opposition, led by the Honourable Mr. Chapleau in the Quebec Assembly, in 1878 and 1879, the golden age of legislative eloquence in the last thirty years.

Sir John has not tasted much of the bitterness of Opposition. During far the greater part of his career he has enjoyed the sweet savour of power; nor is it the least part of his glory that, like Timoleon of old, he has ever shown himself able to bear a prosperous fortune even more wisely than an adverse one. That is saying a good deal, for no man can have shown to greater advantage in adversity than the veteran statesman. Even the tremendous reverses consequent on the Pacific Railway charges, in 1873, did not cause him to lose faith in himself. This man, indeed, has that rare faculty, possessed only by the most gifted, of evolving the most brilliant and substantial success from circumstances the most adverse and soul-depressing.

The Government of the Honourable John Sandfield Macdonald having lost its grip on popular confidence, after a lease of power not unmarked by singular merit and well-doing, the Taché-Macdonald Administration took office on the 30th March, 1864.

From that date until the great measure of Confederation was an accomplished fact, Sir John sat in the Assembly as leader of the Government forces. Sir Etienne Taché died in 1865. He had been a notable and a noble figure in the public life of this country, and was a man of uncommon foresight and statesmanlike vision. Sir John Macdonald might have been Premier in 1865, but knowing that "everything comes to him who waits," he stepped gracefully and modestly aside in favour of Sir Narcisse Belleau. The Conference of Charlottetown, in 1864, was the precursor of the famous Conference of Quebec, held in the same year, to formulate a plan for the union of all the possessions of the Crown on the continent of North America. The Conference at Charlottetown had been originally convened merely to effect the union of the Maritime Provinces; but the evolution of the nobler and vaster plan was thenceforth inevitable.

The London Colonial Conference, of which Sir John Macdonald was Chairman, after having been a delegate at the two Conferences just named, was in session in 1866-67, when the Dominion of Canada received from the Parliament of the United Kingdom its charter and constitution in the shape of that Act so often referred to by constitutional writers, and known as "The British North America Act." The fact that it was the Conservative leader who was summoned to form and carry on the Queen's Government in Canada, after the Dominion was formed in 1867, should emphasize the fact that he was generally looked on as having taken the most commanding part, and as having done the most important work in welding the feeble and scattered Provinces into a strong and compact nation.

Being sworn of the Privy Council, he again took up the duties of Attorney-General, a title, however, somewhat lost sight of when following the more magnificent designation of Minister of Justice of Canada. Fortunate even in his reverses, Sir John Macdonald could not have gone out of power at a time more singularly oppor-

tune than the late autumn of 1873, when he and his Government resigned office in consequence of the Pacific Railway charges. It was the beginning of an era of world-wide financial depression, which, necessarily, very largely affected Canada, paralysing trade and industry and causing wide-spread insolvency and apprehension. In the Dominion, matters were made still more gloomy by a succession of bad harvests, intensifying the effects of the prior causes of national depression and causing still more sluggish and morbid humours in the body politic. It was besides hardly to be expected that a Government of one political complexion should remain continuously in office from the time of the Union without giving an Administration of another colour a chance to take part in the experiment of Confederation. The Reform Administration, of whose merits or demerits this is not the place to speak, certainly got the chance of trying their "prentice hands" at the worst possible time. The Department of Agriculture was powerless to give the farmers good harvests. No portion of our population was so lacking in intelligence as to suppose that Mr. Mackenzie's Government could affect wind and weather; and yet, partly from the singular perversity of human nature and partly from a sort of curious reflex apposition, the great mass of the electors associated the advent and the duration of Reform Rule with scarcity of money, wretched prices, poor harvests, general gloom, and national biliousness. Sir John Macdonald, on the other hand, than whom no man better understands human nature, jocularly told the people in his jaunty way, at pic-nics and political gatherings, that if they gave him and the National Policy a chance, he would give them good harvests. They gave him a chance and God gave them good harvests.

By the same process of curious reflex apposition, the right honourable gentleman was pleasantly associated in the minds of Her Majesty's lieges in Canada with their pleasantly changed fortunes, although, of course, no portion of our population was so devoid of common sense as to believe the Premier able to regulate the action of the heavenly powers regarding the production and benediction of the fruits of the earth. It was a case of: *Post hoc ergo propter hoc*.—"Nothing succeeds like success." It was, nevertheless, far from

being a case of success without merit. The great statesman merited success by his bold enunciation of the National Policy, a policy, especially at that crisis, eminently adapted to meet the requirements of the national jaundice. Sir John Macdonald rode into the harbour of power on the wave of that popular enthusiasm which the breath of his genius awoke on the dull sea of national stagnation.

When the present Government was formed in October, 1878, the Prime Minister took the portfolio of Minister of the Interior. This he held until the 17th of October, 1883, when he resigned it to become President of the Council and Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs. The late Honourable Thomas White, most indefatigable of workers and most loyal of men, subsequently united the administration of the Department of Indian Affairs with that of the Interior; and the Premier himself, since the death of the Honourable John Henry Pope, has resigned the Presidency of the Council for the portfolio of Railways and Canals. Not the least notable trait in Sir John Macdonald's leadership has been the faculty of choosing for his colleagues men of special gifts for their special work, and, in some instances (notably in the case of Sir John Thompson), men of commanding intellectual power, not merely in the administration of one department, but in all the functions and offices of statesmanship.

Our Grand Old Man was knighted in July, 1867, when he was made K. C. B. (civil), receiving the higher honour of the Grand Cross of the Bath in November, 1884. Besides his degree from Oxford, he is the holder of the degree of LL.D. from Queen's University, Kingston, and from McGill University, Montreal, and is also a D. C. L. of the University of Trinity College, Toronto. From the Kingdom of Spain he received, in January, 1872, the honour of being created a Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Order of *Isabel la Catolica*; and in August, 1879, he was sworn one of Her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, having been named for that rare and high distinction nearly seven years before. It is in virtue of this capacity that the veteran leader is styled "Right Honourable."

With Earl de Grey (now Marquis of Ripon), the late Lord Iddesleigh, (then Sir Stafford Northcote), Sir Edward Thornton, and the Right Honourable Montague Bernard, Sir John Macdonald

acted as one of Her Majesty's Joint High Commissioners and Plenipotentiaries appointed to deal with certain Commissioners of the United States for the settlement of the Alabama claims and of other matters pending between the United Kingdom and the United States. The work of this Commission bore fruit in the Treaty of Washington, which was signed on the 8th May, 1871.

From 1844 until the present time Sir John sat for Kingston, except for the years between 1878 and 1887, during which he represented—first, Marquette, Manitoba; next, Victoria, B.C., and then Carleton. At the General Election of 1887, the Premier was elected for both Carleton and Kingston, but naturally enough chose the representation of that constituency which had been faithful to him every time he sought the suffrages of its electors, except once, in the memorable campaign of 1878.

In dealing with all the great issues of the last forty years, the Conservative leader has again and again proven himself to be a statesman of almost infinite resource and tact, a sincere patriot, and a firm upholder of the majesty of law and order.

The veteran Premier cannot be classed among orators, yet few orators can gain and hold the attention of the House so successfully and magnetically as he did. Much of this is doubtless due to the fact that it is "Sir John" who speaks, and naturally everyone wants to know what the first man in Canada has to say; but not a little is due to the matter of Sir John's speech, which is uncommonly characteristic of him—is, indeed, *sui generis*. The Premier, in speaking, adopts that style and manner more in favour in the Imperial Parliament than in the Parliament of Canada, that is to say, he is not remarkably fluent, hesitates, indeed, almost on purpose, is matter-of-fact rather than rhetorical, and is withal never embarrassed. Sir John's discourses are, however, spiced with wit as well as with wisdom, occasionally varied, too, by a brief anecdote of that humorous kind which never fails "to bring down the House." He is very happy, also, in making a running commentary on the speech of another, interjecting a shaft of wit or merriment whenever and wherever a mark is offered. The First Minister's voice is what is called "a carrying voice;" when he chooses to exert himself, which is not always, his words are distinctly heard in

the remotest corners of the House of Commons ; and, on what may be termed historic occasions, as in the Debate on the Jesuits' Estates Act, his tones acquire a strength and volume little less than surprising. Usually jaunty and off-hand in his delivery, Sir John is not seldom moved by genuine patriotic feeling when the theme is momentous : on such occasions, his voice trembles with emotion, his accents falter, and his entire bearing indicates intense earnestness. When a younger man he was a most effective and " taking " speaker in a political campaign.

No man in Canada is so well known as Sir John, not only by fame, but also individually and personally ; his characteristic and distinguished appearance, his versatile wit, his personal magnetism, his extraordinary faculty of evolving the best out of what appears to be the worst, are known and spoken of, familiarly as household words, from Halifax to Vancouver. Thoroughly charming and genial in society, the Premier is most gracefully and ably seconded by Lady Macdonald, who has been to Sir John all that Lady Beaconsfield was to the illustrious Disraeli. But Lady Macdonald far surpasses the Viscountess Beaconsfield in intellect and in literary ability, and her magazine articles have given her an enviable reputation of her own as a writer of remarkable clearness and strength. Sir John married this lady, who is his second wife, in the year of Confederation, thus doubly remarkable in his annals.

One feels, in concluding this brief sketch of him who is not only Canada's greatest statesman, but also one of the greatest in the British Empire, what a glorious duty will fall to the lot of Sir John Macdonald's future biographer ; for his labour of love it will be to give, in all the fulness of detail and description, the story of that noble life which here " is given in outline and no more."

JOHN FRANCIS WATERS.*

Ottawa, 5th June, 1890.

* This biography was published in the large edition of " MEN OF THE DAY," sometime before the death of Sir John A. Macdonald, which occurred on the 6th of June last (1891).

LES MOCHERS.
ST PATRICK.
RIVIERE DU LOUP.

July 3/1898

Dear Sir

In reply to your request
I have much pleasure in
sending you my autograph
which you will find at
the foot of this note

Yours faithfully
John Macdonald

L. H. Tache Esq



WILFRID LAURIER

WILFRID LAURIER

My memory carries me back just twenty-five years as I write this name, and, in imagination, I am once more in the editorial office of the *Union Nationale*, on the first floor of an old house (long since demolished and replaced by a building of a more modern type) which stood at the corner where Ste. Thérèse street meets the little *rue Saint Gabriel*. There it was that Médéric Lanctôt was to be found in those days, busy receiving his clients, adding recruits to his party, and flinging broadcast over Montreal and the whole country those fiery articles which so nearly wrecked the project for the Confederation of the Provinces. How many of those whom we now reckon as men of note were familiar figures in that office!

Of them all, the one who has beyond question attained to the greatest celebrity is Wilfrid Laurier, the present leader of the Liberal party throughout the Dominion—that unrivalled parliamentary orator to whom our English fellow-countrymen have given, as to a modern Chrysostom, the title of "Silver-tongued Laurier."

As I write, I seem to see him, as of old, seated before his desk at the far end of the room, with his back to the frequenters of the office,—turning over files of papers and covering the long pages of some legal document with his rapid and elegant writing; entirely absorbed in the task before him, and apparently unconscious of all the din of political discussion buzzing about his ears.

I was impressed by his self-concentrated seriousness amid all the noise and confusion around him, as well as by his display of a calmness of manner rarely to be seen in the feverish atmosphere in which the journals of that day were launched, written and

printed; and I was about to give rein to my curiosity, when the young lawyer rose from his seat, took up his hat, and, with his *serviette** under his arm, was passing me on his way to the Court House, when Lanctôt said:

"Let me introduce M. Laurier, my partner in this struggling firm of lawyers. A future Minister!"

Laurier smiled, and, being pressed for time, exchanged only a few polite phrases with me. As the door closed behind him, Lanctôt exclaimed:

"There is a head for you! Did you notice it? The young man who has it on his shoulders is sure to make himself heard of yet in the world. Why, sir, he is a poet, an orator, a philosopher, a jurist,—I cannot pretend to enumerate all his talents; but, mark my words, he is a coming man. Don't forget that face!"

The recommendation was needless. Laurier's physiognomy is one of those which strike the beholder at the first glance. Once seen, it photographs itself upon the memory, never to be forgotten.

It was some years before I again met the man who was to occupy the neighbouring seat to mine in the Dominion Parliament, and with whom circumstances were to unite me, later on, in the bonds of a friendship which I count as so great an honour.

When I next heard of him I was living in Chicago. He was publishing over his own signature, in some periodical of the day, the name of which I cannot now remember, a narrative,—half tale, half legend,—written in clear and vigorous style, and containing a mingling of interesting historical details, with sketches of men and manners, which disclosed a most original faculty of observation, together with a rare mastery of our language. I have never seen the conclusion of this work. Its publication was interrupted by a critical event in Laurier's life.

It was in 1867. The death of Eric Dorion had just occurred, and the *Défenseur*, that popular journal which had so valiantly fought the battles and won the victories of the Liberal party in the Eastern Townships, was on the point of ending its career with

**Serviette*: The portfolio carried by advocates, in the Province of Quebec, in place of the "blue bag" used by the Ontario barrister.—TRANSLATOR.

his, when Lanctôt's young partner went to l'Avenir, there to take up the pen which had fallen forever from the grasp of the unwearying patriot and ardent democrat who had hitherto wielded it with such effect.

Talent and courage were not enough, however, to successfully keep on foot an enterprise, the business management of which had long since fallen into neglect, and Laurier did not possess the necessary capital. Moreover, his talents demanded a different arena. He felt his vocation to be at the Bar.

Nevertheless, he did not return to Montreal. The novelty and activity of life in the Eastern Townships, which were then making even more rapid strides than they are to-day along the path of progress and prosperity, had proved full of fascination to him. One fine morning, therefore, encumbered by no luggage save his scanty wardrobe and a few law-books, but rich in hope and full of confidence in himself, the future statesman knocked at the door of the only hotel in St. Christophe, the *chef-lieu* of the judicial district of Arthabaska; and the next day the residents of the place glanced carelessly at a very modest little sign, bearing the three words destined afterwards to echo so loudly and so far: "Wilfrid Laurier, Avocat."

It was in this village,—now called Arthabaskaville,—that we renewed our acquaintance, in the year 1870. I soon became deeply impressed by the loftiness of his intellect, and by the truly philosophical bent of his mind, stored as it was with a multiplicity and variety of acquirements that were astonishing in a country where professional men, as a rule, think themselves in danger of compromising their reputations by reading anything save books bearing upon their own special subjects.

I must not, however, allow my personal recollections to tempt me into anticipating too far, and so breaking the chronological sequence of a biography. That we may proceed more regularly, let us go back to the 20th November, 1841. On that day, at St. Lin, in the County of l'Assomption, was born the statesman who, among very few others of our public men, has won and retained universal esteem and respect throughout the country.

His father was M. Carolus Laurier, a land surveyor by pro-

fession and a most estimable man and exemplary citizen. In due course he sent young Wilfrid to the nearest college—that of l'Assomption—where, from the age of thirteen, he began to manifest that intellectual superiority, that love of study, and that uprightness of character which were so highly to distinguish him in after years. He could not help being an excellent pupil and winning the esteem of his masters, but in spite of this, as M. David tells us: "he more than once incurred punishment by going without permission to listen to the argument of cases in the village Court House, or to applaud some political orator; his natural vocation thus proclaiming itself in defiance of all rules of discipline."

In 1860, we find him in Montreal poring over the Pandects and the *Coutume de Paris* in the law chambers of M. Rodolphe Laflamme, who was afterwards his colleague, as Minister of Justice, in the Mackenzie Cabinet.

Having been called to the Bar in 1864, he practised his profession for two years, in partnership, as we have already seen, with Médéric Lanctôt, that hot-headed and impetuous journalist and public speaker who enjoyed a brief period of noisy popularity, only to fall soon afterwards into such sad obscurity. The feverish restlessness of his surroundings at this time were by no means congenial to Laurier's calm and methodical temperament. This may have been one of the reasons which induced him to leave Montreal, where he could not well have avoided being forced by circumstances into more or less complicity in the youthful follies into which certain Liberals, forgetting prudence in their enthusiasm, were occasionally led.

Be that as it may, however, it was not long before Laurier had acquired a high reputation in the district in which he had settled as an advocate and lawyer; while his marvellous oratorical powers, his business integrity, and his pleasant and kindly disposition,—not to speak of the exquisite charm of his manner,—won him such popularity that, in the Provincial Elections of 1871, the electoral division of Drummond and Arthabaska returned him, as its representative in the Quebec Legislative Assembly, by a majority of 1,000 votes over those polled by Mr. Hemming, the former member, who was his opponent.

His *début* in the Legislative Assembly produced a sensation. Who could he be, this young member, not yet thirty years of age, who thus in his maiden speech handled the deepest political questions with such boldness and authority? Whence had this new orator come,—so fluent, cultivated, and charming,—who awed even his opponents into respect by language so polished, so elevated in tone,—so courteous in rebuke and sarcasm, and, above all, so moderate even in the heat of discussion?

The effect was magical. I can almost imagine that I still hear the thunders of applause which shook the galleries when, at the close of a graphic passage in his speech, in which he had made the long, sad column of our fellow-countrymen, emigrating to the United States, file slowly past before the very eyes of his hearers, the orator hurled at the Government of the day his scathing allusion to the celebrated salute of the doomed gladiators of ancient Rome: "*Ave Cæsar, morituri te salutant!*"

On the following day, the name of Laurier was on every lip and all who then heard it will remember how those two syllables, in their heroic suggestiveness, rang out true and clear,—their tone that of a coin of gold, pure from all alloy, and bearing the impress of sterling worth.

Let me hasten at once to add that since that day, and throughout the whole course of the stirring career of that young parliamentary *débutant* of 1871,—whether in his private or his public life,—never has a sign of faltering, a moment's forgetfulness, an ill-advised step, an over-hasty phrase, or an unlucky word been known to tarnish in the least degree the brilliancy of that initial success. On the contrary, in whatever difficult circumstances he has been placed, whatever the responsibilities he has been called upon to shoulder,—whatever the obstacles and prejudices with which he has had to wrestle, he has constantly developed and expanded before them,—surpassing at every trial of his strength the expectations of his admirers, who have watched with ever-increasing amazement the suppleness of his mind and the variety of his resources.

In Laurier there is no mediocrity. Whatever he does is a master-stroke. Thus, as the resounding triumph of his *début* in the Legislative Assembly of Quebec had placed him in the highest rank

among the most brilliant French orators of his own Province; so that which marked his entry into the House of Commons, in 1874, carried him at one bound to the distinction of being almost without a peer among the English-speaking debaters of the Dominion.

The occasion was a solemn one, and never to be forgotten by any of those who were present. The subject before the House was the expulsion of Louis Riel, the rebel of the North-West, who,—while under accusation of the murder of Thomas Scott, and a fugitive from justice,—had just been elected member for Provencher, and had had the oath administered to him in that capacity, although he had not dared to occupy his seat. The question was a burning one, and the public mind was terribly inflamed by the passions it aroused; while race antipathies added fuel to the fire. Mercy, justice, peace, and brotherhood were words that had lost all significance in many ears. It required, in very truth, a master of eloquence to undertake the defence of the absent insurgent before his bitterest enemies, and to thread his way without falling or stumbling, among the masses and mazes of prejudice which rose up all around the Métis chief.

The debate, which was violent and heated, had been going on for two days, when at last Laurier rose.

“Mr. Speaker,” he began.

Laurier was known to be eloquent. He had already addressed the House in French at the opening of the session. No one thought, no one dreamed, however, that he would risk his reputation by attempting a speech in *English* under such hazardous and trying circumstances. Great as was the general surprise, the revelation was greater. In my belief, no orator (unless, indeed, it be himself) has since achieved a like success in any of our deliberative assemblies.

As, in the elegant and academic diction of which he is so thorough a master, the brilliant speaker entered calmly into the heart of his subject,—a silence as of the tomb spread itself through the great Chamber, and the English members listened in hushed amazement to this charmer who wielded their own language with so much more grace than they could pretend to do themselves, and who dealt them such cruel home-truths in a tone they could not resist applauding. Astonished glances were exchanged on every side.

Laurier kept his whole audience hanging upon his lips for more than an hour. Not for a single moment did his wondrous eloquence fail him. You should have heard him, reader!

He expounded the doctrines and elucidated the principles of legal and constitutional rights with the ease of a parliamentary veteran and the precision of a practised dialectician. He grouped his facts so skilfully, adduced his proofs and authorities with such cumulative force, reared his arguments one upon the foundation of another with such close, quick, inexorable logic, that his conclusions seemed to flash out of their own accord, unforced, but irresistible. Every part of the speech, moreover, was linked to the rest in admirably reasoned sequence, and from beginning to end it flowed freely—without hesitation, without a moment's groping for words, and, at the same time, with never one superfluous syllable. And, if the matter of it was noteworthy, no less so was the manner of its delivery: the sonorous and vibrating voice, the superb wealth and variety of intonation, the chaste simplicity and appropriateness of gesture, and finally, the attitude of the speaker, as full of natural ease and grace as it was of magisterial dignity.

The enthusiasm it evoked was indescribable. The outburst of applause which greeted Laurier as he resumed his seat continued for fully five minutes afterwards; while Ministers of the Crown and prominent members of Parliament flocked around him, eager to shake him by the hand and offer their congratulations. For had not a future party chief proclaimed himself, and asserted his right to leadership by the "*Ego nominor leo*" that had rung through every word he had uttered? This famous oratorical effort had but one defect, that of discouraging any further attempt on the part of others. As I heard a member of the House remark: "If that speech had been delivered at the beginning of the debate, there is no saying whether it would not have turned the scale."

At all events Laurier had gained the day as far as he personally was concerned. From that moment a place in the Cabinet was virtually assigned to him; and he was called upon to fill it in 1877, upon the retirement of Mr. Cauchon, who had just been appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba.

Then occurred a singular mishap, which furnishes a striking

example of the aberrations of the popular mind, as well as of the often unaccountable vicissitudes of political life. The new Minister, although he had been returned at the previous elections by a majority of more than 700 votes over his opponent, Mr. Tessier, a most eloquent and distinguished member of the notarial profession, now found himself unable to secure his re-election, in spite of the increased influence which he might naturally have been expected to derive from his new portfolio as Minister of Inland Revenue. He was defeated by a worthy and inoffensive village tradesman, who distanced him by a majority of twenty-one votes!

This was a repulse to the Mackenzie Government, from which it never recovered. Laurier, indeed, returned to the Capital as the chosen representative of Quebec East, but it was in vain. The impulse had been given, and the political see-saw began to sway. The young Minister's immense popularity in all other parts of the country was powerless to stop it.

Nevertheless, the crushing defeat which was suffered by the Liberal party in the following year did not in the least degree affect his personal prestige. He had said on re-entering Parliament (the words may be seen reproduced as legend under an engraving in an illustrated paper, which represents him in the act of hoisting a flag over a rampart):—"I have unfurled the Liberal standard above the ancient citadel of Quebec, and there I will keep it waving."

He has been true to his word. To-day we see not only the city, but the whole district, of Quebec distinguished as the stronghold of Liberalism in the Province. M. Mercier, indeed, has given the finishing strokes to the work, but to Laurier undeniably belongs the glory of having uplifted the banner, and his name has no small share at this very hour in sustaining and stirring the breeze that plays among its folds.

And now I come to two events in the life of the man whose portrait I have undertaken to sketch, which, beyond all others, have proved his right to a place in the ranks of exceptional men: one of them because it proclaims in the most unmistakable manner possible the immense influence which his talents and his character have gained for him; the other, because it brings out in strong relief the versatility of those talents, and throws into dazzling prominence the

noble virility which distinguishes that character. The one has placed a wreath about his brows such as but few of his compatriots could ever have aspired to wear; the other has shown him triumphantly grappling with every obstacle that could be presented by political complications, creed and race hatreds, and the added animosities of bitter party feeling, to paralyse the noblest efforts, baffle the cleverest tactics, and unseat the doughtiest of champions. I refer to his appointment to the position of leader of the Liberal party for the whole Dominion, and to his great oratorical tour last year through the Province of Ontario.

The fact that, in the Dominion, the population of British origin outnumber the French in the proportion of four to one, had always led to the belief that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for a French-Canadian to attain to the leadership of either of the political parties; and this, not so much on account of the prejudices of English members of the House, as because of the natural unwillingness of the masses of the people to follow the guidance of a chief chosen from among "outsiders"—of a man "not one of ours."

For a political party, to select a leader from a group of men who are in a minority within its own body, is a hazardous experiment. Not only does it demand the sacrifice of a most important element of success, but it is not unlikely to run counter to the sentiment of the constituents, and so endanger the party cause itself. This consideration—generally paramount to all others in political matters—counted for nothing as against the prestige of our compatriot. In spite of the fact that the Liberal party numbered among its English members men of the calibre of Sir Richard Cartwright, Mills, Jones, Edgar, Paterson, and Davies,—when Edward Blake was forced by considerations of health to hand his marshal's *bâton* to a lieutenant, it was Laurier who was unanimously chosen to take his place at the head of the party.

The choice was unexpected, for it had appeared impossible. Nevertheless, it was arrived at, unhesitatingly and without a dissentient voice.

Has Laurier justified the confidence reposed in him, or has he fallen short of the expectations of any of his admirers?

It was said of him by some: "A man may be a charming speaker, a powerful reasoner and even an incomparable parliamentary debater, and still lack the essentials for party leadership. A brilliant record in the service, and the courage of a very hero, do not necessarily imply that their possessor has all the qualities required in a general. An excellent private may make but a poor captain. Will Laurier *lead* as well as he has followed?"

And what is the answer? So firmly and ably has the young leader kept his footing, even on this treacherous ground, that the choice of the party has been more than justified, the expectations of his admirers more than realized. He has maintained an attitude which has amazed—I should even say disconcerted them,—were it not for the ambiguity of that expression.

Only recently one of the most influential of the English Liberals said to me: "He is marvellous!" and the exclamation expresses no more than the exact truth. For Laurier is no ordinary leader. Thoroughly equipped with information on every subject, always ready at repartee, never to be caught off his guard, displaying matchless prudence at every step, leaving nothing to chance; charming his friends by his calm self-confidence and boldness,—disarming his opponents by his courteous fairness, no less than he confounds them by his sudden and brilliant attacks: he is never guilty of a false move, never permits himself to be taken by surprise, and, though he may not inflict a crushing defeat upon the enemy at every encounter, it is rarely, indeed, that he is driven from the field. It is, however, on occasions when some vital question has to be disposed of, when the application of some important economical or humanitarian principle has to be pressed home, when the supreme and critical blow which is to decide the fate of a campaign must be dealt,—that Laurier rises to the full height of his moral stature, and is able to spread the wings of his genius to their fullest stretch.

At such times let the news be whispered abroad—let it be known that "Laurier is to speak"—and the public will at once throng to the House; the galleries will be packed with eager listeners, all in full expectation of witnessing a brilliant display and of hearing a specimen of oratory worthy of figuring among the noblest records

of parliamentary eloquence : and no one, let me add, goes away disappointed.

It was during his recent tour through the neighboring Province of Ontario that our gallant compatriot gave, perhaps, the most convincing evidence of all his qualifications for political chieftainship.

No one, unhappily, needs to be told of the intense prejudice which, for two or three years previously, had been excited throughout that part of the country against all of us who are of French birth and of the Roman Catholic faith. A few fanatics, who saw in public strife the hope of private advantage, had waved the brand of discord and set the popular mind aflame. The old leaven of hereditary and half-forgotten hatreds was again fermenting everywhere, and rights that were represented as being menaced formed a pretext for arousing the hostility of a considerable portion of Ontario against ourselves and our Province. The party chiefs resisted to the best of their ability, and made Herculean efforts to stem the tide, at the risk of being swept to their own destruction by its angry waters. But, finding that in spite of all attempts to quell the disturbance, the danger of more serious strife was increasing every moment, the Liberals of the sister province decided that they could not do better than summon Laurier to the rescue.

It is no part of my present task to point out the causes of this deplorable outbreak, nor to decide upon whose shoulders should justly rest the bulk of the responsibility thereby incurred. I will confine myself to the statement, that for a party leader, who was both a Frenchman and a Roman Catholic, to venture, as Laurier did, into Toronto itself, and there confront the furious cries of "No Popery ! No French domination !" was more than heroic : it was positively rash. "As well face a tiger in its lair," it was currently said at the time. And when the young chief had accepted the almost superhuman task that had thus been imposed upon him, the conclusion very generally expressed was : "That's the last of Laurier !"

Nevertheless, Wilfrid Laurier returned triumphant.

By what magic had he conquered ?

By the frankness and generosity of his words ; by his eminently conciliatory nature, which enables him, with such tact and time-

liness to second the charm of gentleness by the mastering force of decision ; by the breadth and liberality of his mind, which rises without effort far above the paltry considerations that too often sunder communities as well as individuals, and soars unfettered in the calm atmosphere of philosophic and truly Christian tolerance. Such, and such alone, were his weapons. Before them, fanaticism could only sheathe its claws, and the whole host of prejudices beat a retreat.

The meetings were crowded with opponents, some of them fully determined to interrupt the speaker, to hiss him, to answer all he might say by derisive yells, and to do their best to prevent his even making himself heard. All of them went away, if not converted and convinced, at any rate mollified and charmed. Never had a public speaker found himself confronted with greater obstacles to overcome, and never did one attack them more victoriously.

In short, what had been dreaded as a formidable campaign, was turned into a triumphal progress ; and the outcome of the last elections in the Province of Ontario bears testimony—perhaps more than is generally recognised—to its successful results.

Laurier's great power lies in the fact that he does not submit to being mastered by circumstances, but masters *them*. It is not for him to obey, but to command. He is, moreover, uniform and consistent throughout. The profound and philosophical cast of his thought leads him to refer to first principles in all things, and from first principles his methodic mind impels him to deduce systematic results. We see in him a man governed not by expediency, but by reason. Hence it is that all the achievements of his career make up one compact and symmetrical whole. While he is not by any means an Ideologist, in the narrow sense of the word, he may be said to be under the domination of one germinal and originative idea, which we may regard as the synthesis, so to speak, of an intellect as diversified in its qualities as it is free from confusion or complexity.

The idea to which I allude may be summed up in the phrase : " Liberalism in the service of Patriotism." An advanced patriotism, let me add, and a temperate Liberalism. By an advanced patriotism,

I mean a patriotism that is broad and enlightened, and that dares look the future in the face; while I call that Liberalism temperate which has shaken off all the hyperbolisms and utopian dreams in which it is often wrapped in some of the countries of Europe.

Laurier sees far, because his standpoint is a lofty one. For the same reason, he perceives many things at one glance, and his eye is the better able to take in the whole situation. To this fact we may probably attribute that unity of thought in him, which, if I may use the simile, gives the impression of his being carved, like a marble statue, out of a single block. For, pliant and supple as is Laurier's eloquence, nothing is more rigid than his mental attitude upon a question of principle. Like Lafontaine's oak, it may break, but will never bend.

May it not be owing to the same cause that one is inclined to regard him as somewhat of a fatalist? He is no more disheartened by a reverse than he is carried away by success, and greets them both with a smile. His defeat in 1877 was a terrific blow, dealt him full in the face. To have the ground thus give way beneath his feet was so unexpected as it might possibly prove fatal to all his hopes. I was one of a group of friends who were with him on that memorable evening; and we all felt crushed and overwhelmed by the news. Not by so much as a hair's breadth, however, did his serene good temper vary from its habitual calm; nor was there the suspicion of a tremor in his hand as he raised his glass to propose the health of "better days to come."

In the face of facts like this, I find myself mentally querying whether, in the calculations of a mind of so profoundly philosophical a cast as his,—good and evil fortunes are not entered up, like the debits and credits in a cashier's books, as items in an account that he recognizes to be necessary elements in the grand total.

As I have already said, Laurier is a patriot; but a patriot of his own day, and—odd as the expression may appear—of his own country. There may be others among us who are more French in spirit than he is; that is to say, more enthusiastic in their devotion to French institutions; but there does not exist a truer *Canadian*. Canada—not the Province of Quebec alone—is his fatherland. It is upon Canada as a whole that his patriotic thoughts and hopes

are constantly centred. He loves his own race, and is proud of it ; but he strives to develop, both in himself and others, all that is broad and lofty in that sentiment, and to discourage any elements of narrowness and exclusiveness which it may contain.

And now as to his Liberalism. The formula of it he has borrowed *in toto* from the chosen high-priests of English Democracy, and its spirit and essence he recognizes in the British Constitution ; that Constitution which is, to adopt his own expression, elastic enough to admit all new ideas, yet solid enough to serve as a bridge between the institutions of the past and the aspirations of the future.

He is not, consequently, to be counted among those who lament beyond measure the turn of fortune which brought Canada under British rule. He loves the political institutions with which that rule has endowed us, and he makes no secret of the fact, either in our own Province or elsewhere ; merely holding himself at liberty for the future to do all he can to modify those institutions so as to bring them into accord with the needs of changing times and circumstances, whenever the interests of the country shall demand it.

As an orator, Laurier does not indulge in rounded periods and striking metaphors which aim solely at literary effect. He does not labour to find witty phrases and sonorous sentences,—nor does he ever appeal solely to the sentiments and passions of his audience. He deals only in good sense, fairness and logic. The truth is enough for him : the truth in all its beauty and purity, couched in language that is accurate, scholarly, copious, and as melodious as language can be, yet full of a virile energy which one divines, rather than feels, under the nervous pungency of some phrase that gushes out as limpid as the water from a rocky spring.

Here and there in his speeches you welcome some happily chosen aphorism which sums up a whole situation ; or you are met by some entirely new consideration, which is yet so obvious that you seem to have felt it germinating in your own brain at the very moment that the orator opened his lips to give utterance to it. Or, again, you find yourself listening to one of those convincing phrases which stereotype themselves in the memory as the solution of the question under discussion ; one of those happy expressions, so sudden, so unexpected, so clear-cut that they seem to have been struck like

a medal in bronze, and are as enduring. Above all, you are conscious of a contagious ardour of conviction which is almost irresistible. You cannot listen to him for five minutes without saying to yourself: "An honest man is speaking."—"*Vir bonus dicendi peritus.*"

Physically, Laurier is distinction itself, and would attract notice in the most aristocratic gathering. He is tall, slight, and elegant in figure; while he commands respectful admiration by the dignity of his carriage as well as by a certain unaffected, and, probably, unconscious grace, which is the ruling characteristic of his whole personality.

His face is clean-shaven and his complexion pale. His features, though not absolutely regular, are handsome. The eyes are determined, yet kindly in their glance, while the mouth is singularly expressive. His whole physiognomy denotes peace in himself and good-will to others. His head—with its flowing and slightly curling hair (which is still abundant enough to form a generous frame for his broad and thoughtful forehead)—rises erect and full of dignity from his shoulders, with a noble air of authority, tempered, however, by the suggestion of a sympathetic nature which is conveyed by his personal aspect as a whole. In short, there is a striking similarity between his physical and moral idiosyncrasies—between the character of his body and of his mind.

In his social relations Laurier suffers no loss of the prestige that distinguishes him in any other sphere. His affability and hospitality under his own roof, the charm of his manner and conversation as a guest, his generous open-handedness and open-heartedness on all occasions and to all men, would have been sufficient to earn him a reputation in society, had his renown as a statesman left room for a rival distinction.

He possesses in addition that loftiest characteristic of strong natures and of those whose merits have been established by fame, that of never making any one feel conscious of his overwhelming superiority. All are at ease with him. A great man in public; an amiable cavalier among the fair sex; a genial companion among his intimate friends,—his lips ever ready with a laugh as frank and hearty as his words,—such is Laurier. After this portrait—as faith-

ful a one as my hand has had the skill to trace—the reader will not be surprised when I add that Laurier is the soul of honour, even where his opponents are concerned. And they gladly proclaim the fact. Sir John Macdonald, indeed, once remarked to somebody: “I can trust Laurier without the slightest fear; he is incapable of breaking his word, even if he wished to do so.”

I must not omit to mention, as crowning all the other excellences of character I have enumerated, his admirable self-possession under all circumstances of life. In short, we seek in vain for a flaw or blemish in him. He presents a positively discouraging faultlessness. Is there anything, one asks, that this man lacks? Unhappily, there is. He has no son to inherit his talents and his civic virtues.

Childless as it is, however, Laurier's home is one of the pleasantest a visitor could enter. I should try to describe it, were it not that Mr. Willison, of the *Globe*, has already done so, in an article entitled “Laurier at Home,” with such a masterly pen that it would be unwise for any one else to attempt it after him.

I will, therefore, content myself by adding to his my own respectful homage and admiring testimony to Madame Laurier,—the worthy companion of a man who, if he is not, like Papineau, the type of my race, enjoys the no less enviable glory of being its model.

LOUIS FRÉCHETTE.

Montreal, 25th July, 1890.

[Translated by Arthur W. Gundry.]

Ortutas Sunday 14ms. 87

Monsieur Fricette,
votre vieil ami
M. Pacaud est
vostre bien cord. Les
femmes auront
bien samedi. Rien
tout droit à ma
manière.

Rien à toi.
Wilfrid Samois

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