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# MEN OF THE DAY

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**SIR LEONARD TILLEY**

by GEORGE STEWART, LL.D., D.C.L.

**Twenty-second Series:**

**WM. CORNELIUS VAN HORNE**

by CARROLL RYAN

EDITED BY

**LOUIS-H. TACHÉ**

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MEN OF THE DAY



SIR LEONARD TILLEY

## SIR LEONARD TILLEY

Samuel Leonard Tilley, son of Thomas N. Tilley, was born on the 8th of May, 1818, at Gagetown, Queen's County, New-Brunswick. He came from a stock which was early identified with the settlement and growth of the province. His great-grand-father, Samuel, was a staunch and uncompromising Loyalist, who, at the close of the American Revolutionary War, left the ties of his own home in Brooklyn, New-York, and settled in New-Brunswick, which becoming a grantee of the city of St-John. At that time the family, which is of Dutch extraction, spelled the name "Tilly," and in that form it often appears in public documents and records of a century ago. The future statesman, at the outset of his career, had not many advantages in his favour. He was educated at the County Grammar School, and, notwithstanding the limitations of his opportunities, his record is most creditable. At the age of twelve years, he left his home and went to St-John in search of employment. This he was not long in finding, for he was a bright and clever lad, with an honest face and an engaging manner. Having a predilection for the drug business, he entered the establishment of the late William O. Smith, Esq., a gentleman of superior intellectual abilities, the Mayor of St-John for several years and a man of mark in the municipal politics of the day. With him he remained four years. Young Tilley became a member of a debating society, where once a week political questions were discussed with freedom and liberality. It is quite probable that Tilley received his first lessons in politics at the debating club, for it included in its membership men who have since become famous in various callings, and there, too, it is likely his future career was shaped. Among the members of that little club was Joseph W. Lawrence, the annalist, of St-John, author of a number of useful monographs relating to the foundation of that city, and president for

several years of the Historical Society of New-Brunswick. Mr. Lawrence only passed to his rest in November, 1892, full of years and honours, and greatly respected by all who knew him. He was to St-John what Dr. Henry Scadding is to Toronto, and Mr. J. M. Lemoine is to Quebec. Mr. Smith once told the writer that it was a common event in his store for Tilley and Lawrence to continue in the declining hours of the afternoon the discussion of the previous evening at the Club over the top of the large show-case, in which various toilet requisites were displayed. Up to a short time ago, the surviving members of the Club used to meet at the Lieutenant-Governor's residence in St-John once a year at dinner, when old battles were fought over again and old times revived.

When quite a young man, Mr. Tilley took up the cause of temperance reform in great earnest. He adopted no half-way measures, but joined the order himself, maintained unflinchingly its high principles, and preserved from that day to this his spotless record as a consistent tee-totaller. He never missed the opportunity of advocating total abstinence, practising his whole life-long, as well as preaching the doctrines of his cause. In recognition of the distinguished services which he rendered, the National Division of the Sons of Temperance of America, in 1854, elected him to the highest office in the gift of the order, namely, that of Most Worthy Patriarch. This post he held for two years with very great acceptance.

After duly serving his time, as a chemist and druggist, he went into business on his own account with the late Thomas William Peters, afterwards Colonel Peters, also the descendant of a strong-hearted Loyalist. This partnership lasted many years, and when Mr. Peters retired from the firm, S. L. Tilley conducted its affairs alone, until a short time before confederation, when he disposed of the business to his brother-in-law, Mr. T. B. Barker, who still carries it on.

We first hear of Mr. Tilley's name in connection with the politics of his province, in 1849, when espousing the side of the protectionists of that date he nominated and helped to elect a candidate for the legislature. The new tariff proposed by the Government proved too high, and the leading merchants and consumers pronounced their dissatisfaction with it in so emphatic a manner, that the obnoxious

measure was withdrawn. In those days even moderate taxation was regarded in the light of a bugbear.

It may interest the reader of to-day to know that the scheme provided only for the levying of a duty of ten per cent on all articles alike, and an *ad valorem* duty additional, on spirits, tobacco, sugar, molasses, &c.. The people, however, would not have it, and repeal speedily followed its introduction.

About the end of this year, Mr. Tilley took a very active part in forming the New-Brunswick Railway league, which had for its object the construction of a line of railway from St-John to Shediac. The league succeeded in exerting a large amount of influence. It owed its inception to an indignation meeting of citizens who, enraged at the conduct of the legislature in defeating the various railway projects which had been brought before the House, petitioned His Excellency, the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Edmund Walker Head, to dissolve Parliament and appeal to the people. Mr. Tilley was a spirited member of the league, and at the general elections of June, 1850, he found himself the nominee of a powerful political party for the legislature, in the reform interest. He ran for the city of St-John, and was elected, by a fair majority, a member of the House of Assembly. The old coalition government was broken and disgraced, and the reformers looked with confidence to the future. In 1851, however, the Liberals were much exercised over the defection from their side of two of the leading men in their party, viz., the Hon. John Hamilton Gray, afterwards a Supreme Court Judge in British Columbia, and the author of a valuable History of Confederation, one volume of which, however, has only appeared, and Robert Duncan Wilmot, afterwards Speaker of the Senate of Canada, and Lieutenant-Governor of New-Brunswick. Both men are now dead. In their time they possessed much influence in the politics of the province. They entered the government on the very day that their treachery was communicated to their late allies and friends. Messrs. Tilley, Ritchie, afterwards Sir William Johnston Ritchie, the late Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, and Charles Simonds were justly indignant and the whole Liberal party were pained and astonished at the conduct of their quondam associates. The fact that they were men of great ability added seriously to the general discomfiture. A meeting was immediately held, the month was August, and an agreement was entered into between Messrs.

Tilley, Simonds, Ritchie, and William H. Needham. A card to the electors, signed by these four gentlemen, was issued, in which their views of the situation were strongly put. The people were asked unreservedly to pronounce judgment on Messrs. Wilmot and Gray by their votes, at the polls, and should the deserters be sustained by the electors, the four representatives declared their intention of resigning at once their seats in the House. The issue was placed before the constituents, fairly and squarely, but the fickle public, which at the former election chose two men to oppose the government, now returned them triumphantly as members of an administration which had proved so obnoxious in their eyes but a few months before. But, says George E. Ferrety, in his *Political notes and observations*, "no county in the province has ever been more uncertain than that of St. John. It has been known to reject men one day, and elect them on the next opportunity that presented itself, not upon a change of principles in the candidates, but from a change of *feelings* in the electors themselves." Messrs. Simonds, Tilley, and Ritchie, true to their promise, like high-minded men, resigned, but Needham failed to carry out his agreement, and clung to his place with the grim remark that "it had cost him enough to get it." Mr. Tilley retired into private life. But in private life such a man could not remain long. He was a born politician. He loved the excitement and turmoil of politics too well to relinquish a career on which he had embarked with so much ardor and zeal. Besides, his friends refused to permit so eloquent a voice to remain silent, so energetic a nature to stay passive. In 1845, he re-entered the arena, more determined than ever to achieve success in his chosen field of activity. He ran for his old constituency of St. John, and was triumphantly elected in November. He was offered a portfolio in the cabinet of the Liberal government, which he accepted, and began from that hour a lease of power and influence in public affairs, which has continued, almost unbroken, up to the present time. On but two occasions he suffered defeat: in June, 1856, he was beaten at the polls on the Prohibitory liquor law question, when the ministry made the subject a direct issue. The act had become law during the session, but the people had expressed themselves so strongly against it, that pressure, being brought to bear, the Lieutenant-Governor remonstrated with his advisers and hinted at the advisability of a dissolution. A hint was enough from that quarter, the ministry resigned.

and an appeal was made to the country on the question, resulting in disastrous defeat. The new government met a House determined on a repeal of the act, and it was repealed on short order. On other questions, however, the tenure of power held by the administration was so slight and uncertain, that, in the following year, a dissolution took place, and Mr. Tilley and his *confrères* were victoriously returned to power. In a few days, he was reinstalled in his old position as Provincial Secretary, whose functions embraced those of the treasury also,—the Secretary being the financial man of the government,—and shortly afterwards he became leader of the ministry. In his evidence before the Royal Commission Prohibition, Sir Joseph Hickson chairman, in 1892, Sir Leonard Tilley supplies this story of that famous prohibition campaign of 1855-56. He thought that the prohibitory law, then enacted by the legislature of New-Brunswick, was in advance of public sentiment at that time. Its advocates supposed, from the number of petitions presented in favour of the law, that a very considerable majority favoured its passage, but the result of the general election proved otherwise. Then the period selected for the general election was not favourable to the law, for had the vote been submitted later on, thought Sir Leonard, beyond a doubt, the result would have been different, and the measure would have been sustained. He explained the action of the Lieutenant-Governor in dissolving the House, and of the course taken by his council in opposition, which led to their resignation. Speaking of the present, he expressed himself strongly in favour of prohibition, the moment public sentiment demanded its enforcement, but he feared that the time had not yet arrived. It was necessary to its enforcement, that all the provinces should be ready for it.

In 1854 and 1856, two new political terms were invented, which attached themselves to the fortunes of the rival parties for a period extending from that day up to the date of confederation, in 1867, when their usefulness ceased. These were the well known words familiar to New-Brunswickers of two generations ago, of "Smasher" and "Subtail." Their origin is of sufficient interest and value to note down here, indeed so popular were they at one time, that "Liberal" and "Tory" readily gave place to "Smasher" and "Subtail." In those times, "Grit" was not known as a political term in the Maritime provinces,—it having application only in On-

tario,—and a noted journalist predicted that they would become historic, and that the local parties would be known by them for all time to come. "Smasher" was first used in 1854. A leading member of the legislature announced from his place in the House that the policy of the Liberal party should be: "to the victors belong the spoils." Great objection was taken to this assertion by the opposition, and they called the party "Smashers," as it appeared they seemed disposed to break up old usages in respect to the tenure of office. At the general election in 1856, it was alleged that the then opposition sought to influence votes by a liberal distribution of an inferior description of flour, the brand being "Subtail." The result was that the party was nicknamed the "Subtail" party.

From June, 1857, to March, 1865, Mr. Tilley remained Prime Minister. In September, 1864, he went to Charlottetown, Prince-Edward-Island, to attend the conference of the Maritime Parliamentarians, with the view of forming a legislative union of the three Eastern provinces. The convention opened on the 8th of the month, under the Hon. John Hamilton Gray's presidency. Mr. Gray was, at that time, Prime Minister of the island. So far as parties were concerned, the representation was pretty evenly divided. The recommendations of the different governments had been approved by the respective Lieutenant-Governors before the date of calling the convention. The meeting, which was held in the Chamber of the House of Assembly, was conducted *in camera*, the object being "to avoid, as much as possible, any undue pressure upon the island delegates from their constituencies, which surrounded them,—to ensure an unrestrained freedom of discussion,—and a clear, candid, and business-like consideration of the important questions involved,—in a word, to remove all inducements to *buncombe*. There being no occasion for display, the speeches were practical and to the point. It is to be borne in mind this convention was not a public representative body having power to legislate, determine, or finally affect the public interests, but rather a committee of public men, deputed by their several governments to enquire and report upon a proposition which might or might not ultimately be adopted, but which, before either its adoption or rejection, would be subject to a searching and exhaustive public discussion in the several legislatures of the provinces." Several members of the Canadian government, including

Sir John A. Macdonald, happening to be on a visit to the Lower Provinces, and hearing of the proposed meeting, requested permission to be present. Invitations were accordingly sent to them. They accepted, and so carried the delegation away with them, that they succeeded in getting the smaller scheme abandoned. It was also proposed to meet later in Quebec, when a grander union of the five provinces would be proposed, and discussed. The greater assembly met in the ancient capital on the 16th of October, and sat with closed doors, until the 28th of the month, when the famous Quebec Scheme, as it was termed in New-Brunswick, was completed. The plan proposed was for the different governments to submit the question to the House of Assembly, in each province, without allowing a line or a dot of its provisions to be changed. The utmost secrecy was enjoined, and until the subject should regularly come before the House, it was agreed that no publication of the scheme should be made. Public curiosity was stimulated, but the people had not long to wait for the *expose*. A Prince-Edward-Island newspaper, by some surreptitious means, got hold of a copy of the precious document, and immediately published it *in extenso*. All was excitement then in New-Brunswick, Nova-Scotia, and Prince-Edward-Island. The people were filled with consternation and alarm. The country was overrun with pamphlets and broadsides, printing presses were kept going night and day, and publicists on both sides exhausted themselves in finding arguments for and against the topic which was in everybody's mind. The rival factions, forgetting for the hour that they were Liberals and Tories, Subtails and Smashers, allied themselves under fresh banners, and were known henceforth as Confederates and Anti-Confederates. The old Liberals, for the most part, favoured the union, while the Conservatives joined the ranks of the "Antis." A new society was formed, under the name of the British American Association. It was handsomely endowed by partisans friendly to the union cause, and the ablest political writers in the country were employed to find arguments in favour of the scheme. The society's publications were extensively circulated all over the land. On the other side, there was *The Patriot*,—a campaign sheet, —which was conducted with very great ability, besides the regular press of the day.

The fight was a very bitter one. In March, the general elections

• were held throughout the province, and Mr. Tilley, with all his popularity and prestige, was ignominiously defeated in his own stronghold, while, in the other counties, his party suffered severely, not a single member of the ill-fated conference being returned. The whole province emphatically pronounced an adverse opinion to the hopes and aspirations of the confederate party. Those opposed to the union had stated broad-cast that the inevitable fate of the Confederated provinces would be annexation to the United States, and that cry had the effect of sending to the side of the hostile camp, the descendants of the old Loyalists and their sympathizers. But notwithstanding his defeat, Mr. Tilley never lost faith in the ultimate success of the great measure. He felt sure that all the people needed to carry it was further enlightenment. They must be educated up to the scheme. The British Association, encouraged by ardent Liberals, continued to spread the Gospel of union, and the public men of the province lost no opportunity of keeping the matter before the people, while the press constantly discussed the question, pro and contra.

The new government came to power, pledged to defeat Confederation, and at its head were Albert J. Smith, afterwards Sir Albert J. Smith, and George L. Hatheway, in the Assembly. The "Antis" had a large and influential majority, but while the Lower House was anti-confederate in its views, the Upper House was entirely the other way. That body, led by the Hon. Peter Mitchell, presented an address to the Hon. Arthur, (afterwards Sir) Hamilton Gordon, son of the Earl of Aberdeen, Lieutenant-Governor of the province.

Mr. Mitchell, in those days, was a fiery and impetuous man of about forty-seven years of age. Energetic to a high degree, he usually carried things with a high hand, and had, in consequence, earned for himself the nickname of "Bismarck" Mitchell. The sobriquet clung to him for years. He had the majority of the Legislative council with him, and S. L. Tilley, called in derision by his enemies, the "forty-second member," (the House of Assembly consisted of 41 representatives,) was constantly at his elbow. It was Peter Mitchell who induced the Councillors to present the memorable address to the Lieutenant-Governor, which brought matters to a crisis. The Colonial Secretary, Mr. Edward Cardwell, afterwards raised to the peerage as Baron Cardwell, and since dead, informed

Her Majesty's representative that the imperial government approved of confederation.

Of this fact much was, of course, made, and in the hands of the promoters of the scheme, it proved a potent weapon.

A Fenian excitement also taking place about the same time served the friends of the great movement well in their emergency.

The Fenian raid occurred in the summer of 1866, and created a tremendous impression, in all parts of the British North American continent. Gray describes it as "one of the most wanton and outrageous violations of international law that has occurred since modern civilization began," and adds, "though not one of the causes which led to confederation, was yet one of those incidents which essentially proved the necessity of that military organization which, it was alleged, would spring from confederation, and which was one of the first measures carried after confederation was adopted. It exemplified in a strong degree the alacrity with which the young men of the country were ready to spring to arms at the call of duty, and intensified the devotion of her people to Canada." Other writers have been found who go further than Gray, and declare openly that the Fenian scare had more to do with the final acceptance of confederation by the people, than the statesmen of the provinces at the time were disposed to admit. The raid could in no way be justified. It was one of those episodes, however, which, in the end, led to results undreamed of by its contemptible promoter. It changed the political belief of many thousands of persons, almost in a night. The first administrative body to feel the affect was the Smith government of New-Brunswick, which was not slow in making up its mind to resign. The Lieutenant-Governor accepted the resignation.

Mr. Tilley was sent for, a new election was held, and the verdict of 1855 was, in the very next year, set aside, the anti-confederates being reduced to a mere corporal's guard. It may be said, without fear of contradiction, that New-Brunswick entered the union with the almost unanimous consent of her people. Delegates from Ontario, Quebec, Nova-Scotia, and New-Brunswick, (for Prince-Edward-Island declined, at that time, to join her fortunes to the larger compact,) were sent to London to complete the terms of union, and at this conference Mr. Tilley ably represented his province. For his services in this capacity, his Queen bestowed upon him the compa-

nionship of the Bath (civil). On resigning his seat in the New-Brunswick House of Assembly, he ran for St-John for the House of Commons, was elected, and became the Minister of Customs, in the first Dominion cabinet. From November, 1868, to April, 1869, he was acting Minister of Public Works; and on the 23rd February, 1873, he was made Minister of Finance. This important portfolio he held until the fall of the Macdonald-Cartier government on the Pacific Scandal matter, November 5th, same year. Before leaving office, Sir John Macdonald appointed his colleague Lieutenant-Governor of New-Brunswick, Mr. Tilley succeeding the Hon. Lemuel Allan Wilmot, D.C.L., the eminent and eloquent jurist, and first native Governor of his province. Mr. Tilley held this office until the end of 1878, and could have retained it for a second term, had he felt so disposed, but his friends insisted on his return to more active politics, and yielding to their importunities, and deferring to the wishes of Sir John and his colleagues, he allowed himself to be nominated in his old constituency, for a seat in the Commons. The campaign of September, 1878, will long be remembered, for it was most bitterly contested, and resulted in the complete overthrow of the Mackenzie government. New-Brunswick in several constituencies reversed her former vote. Notwithstanding Mr. Tilley's great popularity, he barely gained his election, his majority being only nine votes over Mr. J. Boies Deveber, who had sat for the City during the previous Parliament. This was due mainly to the fact that Tilley had espoused the National policy as the platform of the Liberal-Conservatives,—a measure which failed to win support in a district bred on the strictest principals of free trade, and naturally opposed to a higher fiscal tariff. In October, he accepted his old office, that of Finance Minister, and on presenting himself for re-election, he encountered no opposition. On the 13th of February, 1879, the fourth parliament of the Dominion held its first session, and, in due time, Mr. Tilley formulated the Protective policy of the ministry, in a masterly speech of great power and force. It was a clear and convincing address, and although the measure was hotly discussed it finally passed, and has ever since been the policy of the country. On the 24th of May, Mr. Tilley was created a Knight Commander of the most distinguished order of St-Michael-and-St-George, by the Marquis of Lorne, then Governor-General, at an

investiture of the order held at the Windsor Hotel, Montreal. Sir Leonard's colleagues on that occasion were Hon. Dr. Charles Tupper, Minister of Railways and Canals, Senator Alexander Campbell, Postmaster-General, Hon. Richard John Cartwright, Minister of Finance in the Mackenzie-Dorion government, Hon. William Peace Howland, C.B., ex-Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, and Sir Narcisse Belleau, who, in 1860, had been knighted by the Prince of Wales, during his visit to Canada. Sir Leonard Tilley holds a patent of rank and precedence from the Queen, as an ex-Privy Councillor of New-Brunswick. He occupied the office of Finance Minister until October, 1885, when his health could no longer stand the strain put upon it, and he retired from Parliament and the ministry, to accept, for a second term, the less laborious post of Lieutenant-Governor of his native province. That position he still holds, (1892).

His return to New-Brunswick was hailed with joy by men of both political parties and the welcome which he received was hearty and spontaneous. On the 13th of November, he was sworn into office, in the Legislative Council Chamber at Fredericton, by the Chief Justice, Hon. John C. Allen, now Sir John. In December, the Liberal-Conservative Club of St-John, N. B., received at the hands of Mr. Rogerson a fine bust of the Lieutenant-Governor. The presentation was made amid great eclat, and Mr. Charles A. Everett, then M. P. for St-John and a life-long friend of Sir Leonard, delivered a happy and able address, outlining the career and life of the distinguished statesman.

One incident of importance took place during Sir Leonard Tilley's second administration of New-Brunswick. In March, 1892, the Blair government was charged with eighteen acts of corruption by the leader of the opposition. But in making his charges and demanding the appointment of a Royal commission to investigate them, Dr. Stockton and his *confrères* addressed the Lieutenant-Governor personally, and refused to take the Legislature into his confidence, though the House was still sitting. His Honour declined to entertain the proposition, and replied to the Memorialists in a note which is a masterpiece of parliamentary literature and tact.

Sir Leonard Tilley is a fluent and convincing speaker, ready in debate, fond of opposition and interruption, and quick at figures. He has great tact, and fine administrative talent. His character,

politically, or socially, has never been impugned. He has ever commanded the respect of all. He has carried his temperance principles to the extremest limit, and, during his occupancy of Government House, no wines or liquors have been used in his house-hold. Industrious to a high degree, he has won his way to power and influence by his own unaided efforts, and is a striking example of the self-made man. Many important acts of Parliament owe their origin to him. He has been twice married: first, to Julia Ann, daughter of James T. Hanford, of St-John; and second, in 1867, to Alice, elder daughter of Z. Chipman, Esq., of St-Stephen, N.B..

GEORGE STEWART, LL.D., D.C.L..

Quebec, 10th November, 1892.



St Andrews

Augt 15/92

My dear Mr Stewart

I send with this some  
one of my latest Photo's,  
asked for in your notes  
of the 11<sup>th</sup> inst. I hope it  
may reach you in good  
order.

Yours sincerely

A. R. V. Riley

To Geo Stewart

Leabce

## MEN OF THE DAY



WM. CORNELIUS VAN HORNE

## WM. CORNELIUS VAN HORNE

Great ideas are common property. All men have entertained them. The ambitious dreams of youth are proverbial. All boys cherish the hope of greatness, of becoming famous. Their generous impulses, stirred by stories of heroism, make them impatient of the years leading to manhood when it will be their glorious fortune

“Th’ applause of list’ning senates to command,  
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,  
To scatter plenty o’er a smiling land,  
And read their hist’ry in a nation’s eyes.”

But, alas, how few realize the dreams of their ambition! Though great ideas be common property, to the few only are given chances of distinction, to fewer still are the opportunities vouchsafed when circumstances are so shaped as to produce that “tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.” It is true, nevertheless, that the occasion always finds the man. If he prove unfit, he is thrust aside and another chosen. Perhaps many are thus selected in succession only to be discarded, till the right man appears and all the world acknowledges his supreme fitness for the position. The history of all great enterprises illustrates this process. But if we study the careers of men who have achieved greatness or success in any walk of life, we will find that their good fortune was owing more to patient labour and application and the faculty of knowing how and when to act, than to any fortuitous concatenation of circumstances. As all genius consists in finding wonders in common things, so success in life is dependent on the faithful observance of its immediate commonplace duties. This obvious truth, overlooked and neglected by many men of great natural ability, is demonstrated in a most remarkable manner in the career of Mr. Van Horne.

Although he belongs to an order of men peculiar to the present

phase of civilization in America, there can be no doubt that, were he born in other times and under other conditions, the same qualities which have raised him to his present position of eminence would have placed him in the command of fleets and armies, or made him powerful in the control of the destiny of nations.

The close of the Southern war of Secession marks an epoch in the history of America unparalleled in the annals of human development. Rejuvenated instead of having been exhausted by that terrible struggle, the American republic turned at once from the wasteful extravagance of war to the cultivation of the arts of peace. The dangers that had threatened the stability of the nation had been met and overcome. It was the dawning of a new era. Great armies of soldiers were absorbed with astonishing rapidity into the industrial forces of the commonwealth and a period of progress set in which, in the space of twenty-five years, has transformed the face of the continent. Wealth, once beyond the imagination of man, has been created, great states have come into existence, and enterprises, vast beyond precedent, have been carried to success.

It was only natural that a period like this should produce its great captains of industry, its commanders of industrial forces, its new nobility of enterprise, whose claims to distinction were as truly founded on their capacity to manage and direct the stupendous influences, thus suddenly brought into operation, as ever were the titles of European kings and nobles founded on their superiority in war. There are leading spirits in every nation in every phase of its progress and development, and an industrial nation will produce its Captains of Industry by the same natural process that a warlike people will produce its military commanders. The order of intellect is the same in both, only that different occasions direct their energies to the accomplishment of diverse purposes.

The world has been so long accustomed to regard those men who have won the most battles and spread their conquests the farthest as its greatest heroes that it is hardly prepared to admit the claims of the new aspirants to fame, whose matter of fact methods, in directing vast complicated affairs of business, have none of the glare, blare and bombast with which a Bonaparte would direct the movements of an army, none of the ceremonial with which royalty loves to surround itself. Yet there are men in America who, like Mr. Van Horne, go

about the streets with nothing personal to distinguish them from other people, but who possess more real power than many monarchs ever wielded, and who control forces in the service of humanity as incalculable as they are beneficent. While thus describing them, I am not unaware of the estimation in which they are held by certain schools of thought. Nor is it my business to defend them as a class. If, in carrying on their operations, they have resorted to the employment of human devices, they did no more than men have always done in obedience to the first law of nature. Particularly must we make this allowance in considering those great business enterprises which in their nature partake somewhat of the character of government. Monopolists by necessity in the service of the public, their primary object, as they now exist, is to make dividends for investors, but this is held in check by the necessity they are under of rendering good service. Thus they have to deal constantly with legislatures, whose acts have a direct bearing on their money-making operations. Hence comes their interference in politics, though there is nothing men like Mr. Van Horne repudiate with more vehemence than the imputation of being politicians. Nor are they politicians in the ordinary sense. In the prevailing conditions of unsocial socialism on this continent, enormous interests struggle with each other for existence. In the lobbies of legislatures and on the floors of parliament these battles have often to be fought out. Therefore, until the time comes, anticipated by some people, when the railways and other great business organizations in the public service are owned and controlled by the national government, we may look for the exercise of their influence in parliament.

These observations are essential to a proper understanding of Mr. Van Horne's peculiar position in relation to the public life of the Dominion. "I am no politician," he said to me on one occasion; "I have no time to give to politics, even were I inclined that way, which I am not. I am only a plain business man. All my time is given to the Canadian Pacific. I never interfered in politics in my life but once, and I hope I will never have to do so again. I care nothing about parties, and the company is under no compulsion to either Government or Opposition."

There can be no doubt that, in thus defining his position, Mr. Van Horne was perfectly sincere.

But the character of the man, his place in his day and generation, can only be rightly weighed and estimated by the magnificent work he has accomplished in connection with the construction and management of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Previous to his appearance on the scene the history of that stupendous undertaking was a record of failures. Projected through what was then an unknown wilderness, occupied by savage tribes of Indians, the hunting ground of the buffalo, hemmed in, as many thought, by a sea of mountains on the west and an impassible barrier of rock and water on the east, its construction was regarded by men who had some knowledge of the country and of the resources of the Dominion as the wildest chimera that ever dazzled human imagination.

When the delegates from British Columbia modestly proposed, as part of the terms on which that province would enter the confederation, that the Federal Government should construct a waggon road to connect the sea-board with the country east of the Rocky Mountains, and Sir John Macdonald magnanimously declared he would give them a railway, the proposition was scouted as lunacy. But Sir John knew what he was doing. Without a railway to connect with the older provinces, the newly acquired North-West Territories were worthless, and with the prescience of genius he grasped the magnificent idea of a transcontinental railway, which Mr. Van Horne was afterwards so largely instrumental in carrying to successful realization.

It is not necessary for the purposes of this memoir to enter into a review of the early incidents in the history of this great enterprise. The agreement with Sir Hugh Allan, its collapse, the Pacific scandal, the fall from power of Sir John Macdonald, the well-meant efforts of the Hon. Alexander Mackenzie to build the railway, the explorations and surveys under the direction of Mr. Sandford Fleming, the construction of the Pembina Branch of the Lake Superior Section, the defeat of the Mackenzie Government, were events which extended over a period of six years and led to the formation of the present company, through the restoration of Sir John Macdonald to power.

Up to that time there were few men, indeed, either in Canada or elsewhere, who grasped the full meaning of the Canadian Pacific Railway, or formed even an approximate idea of the revolution it would bring about in the commercial affairs of the world. Some American writers delight in harping upon it as a British military enterprise, but,

though its value to the Empire as an alternative highway to India and China is certainly great, that feature had really nothing to do either with its conception or construction. It was purely a Canadian enterprise, designed to give unity and strength to the Confederation, to open up the country, develop the resources thereof and afford a new route for commerce between Europe and Asia.

Long before the project was seriously entertained by the Government of the Dominion, the superior advantages possessed by the British territory were pointed out by Governor Stevens, of Minnesota. In the report of the Select Committee of the Legislature of that State he expressed the belief that the most desirable route to the Pacific would be found in the possession of Great Britain, and that a great inter-oceanic communication was more likely to be constructed through the Saskatchewan basin than across the American deserts, the cretaceous and comparatively rainless areas of the southern latitudes. American enterprise, however, solved the problem at enormous cost, but the superiority of the Canadian route, not only on account of soil and climate, but also by reason of better grades, has been abundantly demonstrated. It also possesses another great advantage in shortening the ocean voyage from America to Japan, China and India.

In the year 1881, the contract entered into by the Dominion Government with the Canadian Pacific Railway Syndicate was ratified by Parliament about three years after the defeat of Mr. Mackenzie's administration.

During that period the Government had put forth the utmost endeavours to obtain the assistance of capitalists in Europe and America for the prosecution of the work. British Columbia was clamouring for the fulfilment of the terms of union, and the settlement of Manitoba was retarded by the want of railway communication with the rest of the Dominion.

Much had been done, however, during the Mackenzie regime. The Pembina Branch, which placed the city of Winnipeg in railway connection with the United States system, was completed, the sections of the main line between Thunder Bay and Red River were placed under contract for construction, and a practicable route across the prairies and through the Rocky Mountains, by the way of Yellow Head Pass, had been surveyed. Furthermore, the Indian title to the

whole territory had been extinguished by a series of treaties with the various tribes inhabiting it. Settlers, attracted by the extreme fertility of the soil and the salubrity of the climate, had begun to pour into Manitoba. A splendid future, rich in the promise of everything that could contribute to the prosperity and happiness of a people opened before the country.

When the history of the Canadian Pacific Railway comes to be written, as it will some day, it will disclose a romance as wonderful in many respects as any magical tale with which the Arabian storyteller ever enchanted the imagination of his listeners.

The genius of man never conceived a grander enterprise than that of spanning a continent, two-thirds of which was all but an unexplored wilderness. Over the vast prairies where, from time immemorial, the savage hunter chased the buffalo through illimitable solitudes; across great rivers, whose names of mysterious aboriginal signification sounded strange and uncouth to civilized ears; along wide stretches of pathless morasses, whose treacherous depths seemed to defy the ingenuity of man to bridge them; through mountain ranges, whose peaks, clad in eternal snow and bases girt about with glaciers, appeared to impose an impassable barrier to all who would seek to penetrate their forbidding recesses,—the people of Canada undertook the construction of a railway more than two thousand miles long! Well might this be called—

"A wild dedication of themselves  
To unpath'd waters, undream'd shores."

But, if the physical obstacles to this great undertaking appeared thus insurmountable to the imagination, staggered by the vastness of the work to be accomplished, how vastly more difficult it must have appeared when its financial aspects came to be considered. No wonder is it that there should have been grave shaking of heads when all these things were considered, or that the money kings of Europe and America should draw their purse-strings tighter when the Canadian Pacific Railway was mentioned.

But it is to the everlasting honour of Canada, at a time when the prospects of the road were thus over, shadowed by doubt and the scheme appeared condemned to failure, or indefinite postponement, that men were found among her citizens who had the ability, the energy, the enterprise, the wisdom, above all faith in the country and

genius to grasp the situation in all its magnitude, to devote themselves, their lives and their fortunes to the realization of this greatest of modern undertakings.

It is not necessary to the purposes of this memoir to enter into particulars. The terms having been agreed upon between the Government and the Syndicate, the Canadian Pacific Railway Company came into existence. This was after the close of the session of parliament in 1881.

Satisfactory financial arrangements having been made, the next thing was to find a capable, practical man to control and direction of the construction. Where to find such a man was the difficulty. Men there were of high character and large experience, but the Company required the services of a man of Napoleonic genius in addition to these qualifications. Searching through the railway world of America, the directors found the man they wanted in the person of W. C. Van Horne, General Superintendent of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway Company.

Time and experience have justified the selection infinitely beyond the most sanguine expectations, for Mr. Van Horne stands to-day a king among the Railway kings of the world.

Descended from an old Dutch family of New York, he was born near Joliet, a city in the state of Illinois, forty miles southwest of Chicago, named after an early French explorer and trader, who also gave a name to a county in the Province of Quebec, his career affords the best biographical study which could be placed in the hands of an ambitious youth. It was on the 3rd February, 1843, that he first saw the light, and is, therefore, at the present writing, in the meridian of his mental and physical powers. The early death of his father, Cornelius Covenhoven Van Horne, who was a lawyer by profession, and who left but little, beyond his library, to his family, compelled young Van Horne to set to work in his fourteenth year to earn something towards their common support.

As a boy he was remarkably bright and clever, with the most engaging manners, but, if the anecdotes told of his youth are to be believed, full of mischief. That, however, is nothing unusual in clever boys. But even in his tricks and pranks, he gave indications of mental and mechanical resources which few boys possess.

"Fair Science frowned not on his humble birth,"

though it cannot be said that

"Melancholy marked him for her own."

At an age when most boys are struggling with the mysteries of the three R's, he began his experience in railroading on the lowest step, as office boy at the railway station in his native town. It is a matter of singular ethnical significance that the great majority of the railway men of America who have attained prominence commenced their working life at a similarly early age and in the same small way, climbing from the very foot of the ladder and acquiring as they advanced that intimate knowledge of details which is so necessary to success in every kind of business. There his quickness of apprehension and readiness to oblige brought him under the favourable notice of his superiors. He soon acquired a knowledge of electricity, which he seems to have put to some amusing, as well as practical, uses.

He first became attached to the Illinois Central Railroad, as telegraph operator, and shortly afterwards to the Michigan Central, where he served in various departments until he reached the age of twenty-one, when he accepted an appointment on the Chicago & Alton Railroad, where he successively held the positions of Train Dispatcher, Superintendent of Telegraph and Division Superintendent. Anyone acquainted with the business of railroading knows how serious are the responsibilities attaching to these situations. There is no position in life where the wits of a youth are better sharpened than in employment in railway service. Mental and physical activity, the keenest and most alert is there demanded at any moment and at all times, while the personal contact it affords with all phases of human character is an education in itself in the ways of the world, the foibles of mankind and the necessity for self-command and decision of character. But when a youth, like Van Horne, possesses a splendid intellectual outfit and intuitive genius, his success is assured. But so well did Mr. Van Horne acquit himself that, in 1872, he was offered and accepted the position of General Superintendent of the St. Louis, Kansas City and Northern Railway. Two years afterwards, in 1874, he became General Manager of the Southern Minnesota Railway, a line then in the hands of a Receiver, and which he quickly extricated from its financial difficulties, extending and improving the property and converting it from a bankrupt to

a most profitable concern. His success was soon rewarded by his elevation to the presidency of the company. In 1878 he returned to the Chicago and Alton Railroad and accepted the position of General Superintendent of the line, at the same time retaining the presidency of the Southern Minnesota.

Two years later he was called to the position of General Superintendent of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway, at that time the most extensive Railway in the United States, with more than five thousand miles of track in Iowa, Wisconsin, the Dakotas, Minnesota and Missouri, and three hundred and sixteen miles in Illinois, from Chicago west to the Mississippi and north into Wisconsin. He entered upon the discharge of the onerous functions of this important position on the first of January, 1880, only to relinquish them on the following year, when he was selected by the directors of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company to take control, as General Manager, of what was then projected and has since become the greatest railway organization on earth.

In the autumn of 1881, Mr. Van Horne arrived at Winnipeg to assume his new duties. The *Railway Journal*, edited by Mr. Mott, the present Librarian of McGill University, announcing his appointment, said:—"Mr. Van Horne, although, comparatively speaking, a young man, has had a large and varied experience in connection with railways. He is recognized among railway men as a man of wonderful power and shrewdness, and with such a thorough mastery of the details of railway work as to pre-eminently fit him for the larger and more extensive sphere of labour which he has been called upon to occupy."

Soon the tremendous energy of the new manager became infused throughout every department of the company's service. He first made himself thoroughly acquainted with the plans and resources of the company and gave the proof of greatness in showing that he knew how to select his lieutenants. He seemed to understand every man's qualifications by intuitive perception and, like all great commanders, could place each one in the position he was best fitted to occupy. He next turned his attention to the country which was to be the future field of his labors.

At that time the Government had given out contracts for the construction of the main line of the railway from Thunder Bay to a point

one hundred miles east of Winnipeg, along the route which extended by way of Battleford towards Yellow Head Pass. The question of route had given, I may observe, an immense amount of trouble and had caused large expense in explorations and surveys. In a speech on this subject in the House of Commons, March 31st, 1876, Hon. Mr. Mackenzie gave a luminous description of the several routes by which it was proposed to reach the Pacific across the Rocky and Cascade Mountains. The result of the explorations up to that time went to confirm the opinion that there was no pass practicable for railway purposes south of the Yellow Head. Farther north, where the Rockies sink into the great plateau of the Peace River country, the shortest and, perhaps, the best route of all was to be found, but it was too far north. Westward from Yellow Head Pass, however, there was several alternative routes, each of which had its advantages. In time, I have no doubt, when the country becomes settled, these routes will be utilized for railway purposes; for the vast commerce which must arise from the future great cities, teeming agriculture and incalculable mineral resources of the Canadian North-West, will require many railways to give an outlet thereof to the Pacific Ocean. When that time comes the great city of the north will probably arise in the neighborhood of Dean Inlet.

But the location of the railway so far north, at the period of which I am writing, would not suit the people of British Columbia. To them, located as they were at the southern extremity of the Province, principally on Vancouver Island and adjacent to the mouth of the Fraser River on the mainland, it appeared of no more value than a railway to to the moon. Mr. Mackenzie therefore determined upon the route across the plains to Yellow Head Pass, thence down the valley of the Fraser River to Barrard Inlet. No change in this route had been attempted by the Macdonald Government.

A glance at the map will show that the route mentioned described a great "circumbendibus", which involved not only stupendous cost for construction, but also an excessive and unnecessary length of haul across the mountains. The line across the plains to the north of the Saskatchewan would also cost more for construction on account of the numerous and deep valleys that would have to be traversed. In order to avoid these obstacles and disadvantages the company applied its energies to the discovery, if such were possible, of a more

southern pass through the mountains. Such was the situation when Mr. Van Horn assumed the management of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

The search for a passage through the Rocky Mountains, which would cut off the great loop before mentioned, resulted in the discovery of a feasible route by way of Kicking Horse Pass. The change was decided upon, and the fact announced to Parliament by Sir Charles Tupper in the session of 1882.

Thenceforth the construction of the railway was pushed to completion with an energy and rapidity that astonished the world. Nothing like it was ever seen before, even in the United States, the land of gigantic enterprises. The stupendous obstacles I have already described disappeared like the fabled terrors of a fairy tale before the irresistible advance of the railway, directed by the indomitable will of a man in whose bright lexicon there was no such word as fail.

The railway was still far from complete when it was subjected to its first great trial on the breaking out of the Halfbreed rebellion on the Saskatchewan in 1885. Then it was that the capacity of Mr. Van Horne and his subordinates was most severely tested. Unprepared for such an emergency, they had to provide for the transport of troops and supplies at the most difficult season of the year, when the ice was breaking up, over a road but partially constructed, and through a country which for most of the way would be complimented if described as a howling wilderness. The expedition to Red River under General Wolseley was a summer picnic in comparison to the expedition to the Saskatchewan. But Mr. Van Horne was equal to the occasion. A living embodiment of the Miltonic idea—

“Zeal and duty are not slow ;  
But on occasion's forelock watchful wait :”

he conducted the troops and the supplies to their destination, and the fame the railway obtained from the manner in which the duty had been performed gave it a standing in the estimation of the world which redounded infinitely to its credit and to the reputation of its managers. As a feat of military transportation, it was, in view of the fragmentary condition of the railway and the unfavourable season of the year, (late winter), so remarkable as to excite the surprise and curiosity of the leading military authorities of Europe.

The story of the subsequent progress of the road westward deserves a place in the fairy tales of science. When Crowfoot, the

old chief of the Blackfeet Indians, surrounded by his braves, heard the shriek of the locomotive, "That," he exclaimed, "is the death song of the Indian!"

In advance of the time fixed by Parliament the road was completed. The glorious dream of a Canadian transcontinental railway was realized, and from that day to this the company has gone on, success attending all its operations, till now its arms stretch from Montreal eastward to shores of Europe and westward to India's coral strand, grasping two-thirds of the surface of the globe, and revealing to the strained imagination a future as far beyond estimation as are the coming triumphs and glories of civilization.

The last rail was laid in the transcontinental line of railway fifty-four months after the work of construction was commenced by the Company, and in much less than half the time required by the contract between the Government and the Company. The system built up by the Company during the eleven years of its existence embraces 9,000 miles of railway, extending almost everywhere in the Dominion of Canada and through the States of Maine, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Dakota, and its steamship lines reach to China and Japan. The soul of this wonderful organization, the man whose spirit animates its activities and imparts a character of absolute business perfection to all its ramifications, who even in his dreams may be said to work out its future still more wonderful destiny, is Mr. Van Horne, who, from a poor boy, has risen to the proud eminence he occupies by the sheer force of genius.

Upon the retirement of Mr. Duncan McIntyre from the Vice-Presidency of the Company, Mr. Van Horne was elected to that office, and on the retirement of Lord Mount Stephen he became President, and has continued since that time to fulfil the duties of President and General Manager.

How shall I describe him? Knowing as I do, the horror he entertains for what he himself described as "ante-mortem obituaries," I feel the extreme delicacy of the task. The description which he gave of himself as "a plain business man," which I have already quoted, may be accurate enough in one sense, but it lacks that amplitude required in a biographical sketch. A business man he certainly is, but he towers above other business men, as Mont Blanc towers above the lesser Alps.

"There is nothing in my life," he said to me once, "but hard work as long as I can remember."

Here we have the secret of his success. A great philosopher has said that genius is nothing more than the capacity for work, and W. C. Van Horne is a living demonstration of the truth of the saying. It was by work, honestly and faithfully performed that he first won recognition. Unlike many youths and young men who cherish lofty ambitions, but forget that it is only by patient toil and attention to duty that anything worth having in this world is to be obtained, he fitted himself for promotion by the thoroughness of his work. Much, of course, must be conceded to his natural ability, but, like John Stuart Mill, he disclaims the idea of personal superiority of endowments, and thinks any man with ordinary gifts could do as well, if he would apply himself. Such modesty of self-estimation is often a characteristic of great men, for, as Hazlitt has observed, no really great man ever thought himself great. If, however, as Mencius says, the great man is he who does not lose his child's heart, then is the man whose career we are considering most worthy of being called great.

The railway business, however, is one which calls into activity the utmost powers of intellectual application to affairs that touch and have a bearing on every one. Indeed, it may be said that the business, pleasure welfare and convenience, even the comfort and happiness of everybody depends largely on the organized wisdom with which the railways are conducted. The railways have become so much a part of daily life, that people do not pause to consider how much they are indebted to them. But they realize this when some unforeseen disaster interrupts the usual current of traffic. Besides the labour incident to the management of this vastly complicated business, the railway managers must be prepared for war on all sides and at all times. I use the word war advisedly, or in competition with each other it is war, and not infrequently war to the knife. At the same time they must be on their guard against frauds of all kinds from without and within. As a consequence a whole system of distinctively Railway legal practice has come into existence.

When a railway has been established for a long time all the details of its organization are reduced to precise system, and it is comparatively easy for man of experience in railway management to take

hold of it. Far different was the condition of the Canadian Pacific Railway when Mr. Van Horne assumed the position of General Manager.

He had to determine the route for a considerable portion of the line, watch over its construction, organize all its departments, choose the men who should preside over them, and, in fact create the whole system and put it into working order. The manner in which he performed this herculean task, and the splendid success which has attended the road from the day he became connected with it, are monumental proofs of his greatness.

Although Mr. Van Horne has led a busy career all his life, and devoted himself always with unwearying assiduity to his exacting duties, he has found time, nevertheless, to richly store his mind with liberal knowledge. He is widely and deeply read in literature, has studied history profoundly. As a scientist he would undoubtedly have made a distinguished reputation, had he devoted his splendid talents to such pursuits as those which aim at making the forces of nature subservient to the welfare of mankind. Endowed with extraordinary intellectual penetration, and a most retentive memory, what he once reads, or observes, he never forgets. In electrical science he is expert, and as engineer he could take rank with the ablest men in the profession; and as an artist, a landscape painter, he excels. This last is his chief recreation. He loves art for art's own sake. His pictures not only show a mastery of the mysteries of colour, but also an insight into nature and an intimacy with her manifestations, which only a mind and heart deeply imbued with love of the grand and the beautiful could acquire.

His home on Sherbrooke street, Montreal, one of the finest mansions in that city of merchant princes, is filled with treasures of art, works of old masters worth a king's ransom, and many notable achievements by the hands of later celebrities, adorn the walls. Here also are collected many exquisite specimens of English, Dutch, French, Italian, Spanish, Persian, Chinese, and Japanese art, not only in painting, but in sculpture, bronzes, china and tapestry, with antique vases and pillars rescued from the ruins of ancient cities. Everything that wealth, guided by consummate good taste, could command he has gathered about him. Here he is always accessible to visitors when not absent from the city on railway business, and a

more charming host it would be impossible to imagine. Simple, extremely modest and singularly winning in his manner, he makes one feel at ease in a moment. Simplicity, directness, sincerity, absence of all pretension, eagerness to please and be pleased, are his special characteristics. But occasionally in conversation he reveals, apparently without being aware of it, those profounder depths of his nature which the observer can readily perceive are concealed under his unassuming exterior. Mr. Van Horne was married in 1867 to Lucy Adaline Hurd, a lady of great sweetness and dignity of character, and has two children—a son and a daughter.

From what I have written, it will be perceived that a character as nobly endowed with the qualities which command success, and which, judging from a career that has been an apotheosis of labor wisely directed towards the accomplishment of great and worthy objects, must be animated by the truest philosophy. This is, indeed, the fact. He seems to have grasped the meaning of life in all its significance, and no one can come in contact with him and not be profoundly impressed with his all-compelling mental force and acumen. In business he is all business. In private life he is the most genial companion, the kindest and most gentle of men. He has not been spoiled by success, and his faults, whatever they may be, spring from the inherent necessities of the man's nature, which moves, like one of his own locomotives, with irresistible force, precision and swiftness to its destination.

CARROLL RYAN,

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