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"NOW IS THE STATELY COLUMN BROKE,
THE BEACON LIGHT IS QUENCHED IN SMOKE,
THE TRUMPET'S SILVER VOICE IS STILL,
THE WARDER SILENT ON THE HILL!"

1919

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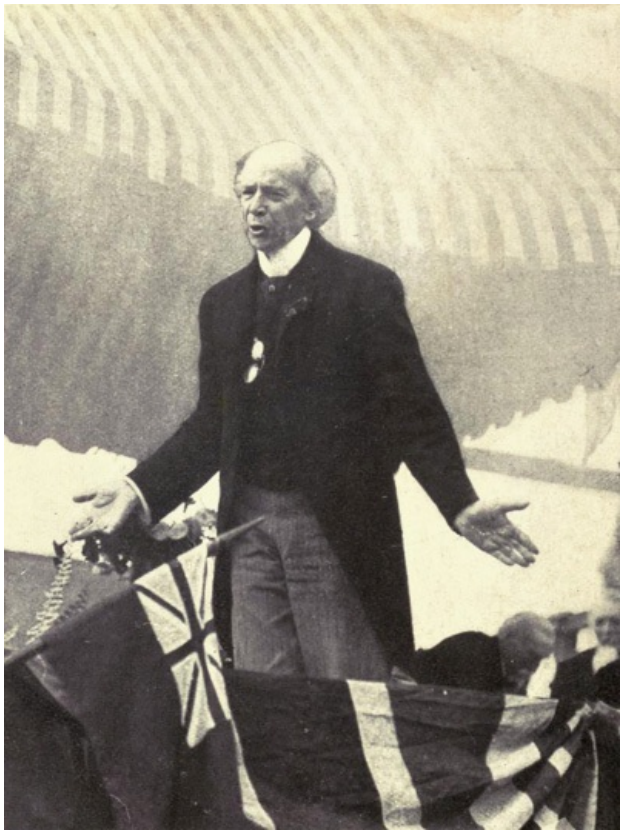

SIR WILFRID LAURIER
Speaking at Strathroy, Ont., September 19th., 1908

Sir WILFRID LAURIER

BY
PETER McARTHUR

"Now is the stately column broke,
The beacon light is quenched in smoke,
The trumpet's silver voice is still,
The warder silent on the hill!"

1919

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my fellow-writers of the Canadian Press. The merits of the book are due to their efforts for I have helped myself lavishly to their best brains.

I have long been of the opinion that a genius is a man who knows a good thing when he steals it, and this is the first time I have had a chance to steal on an ambitious scale. I have stolen much, and if I had had more time, I would have stolen more.

Peter McArthur.

Toronto, March 19th., 1919.

ERRATA. Page 119, line 17, word "conquer" should read "contend"

Sir Wilfrid Laurier

The length of Sir Wilfrid's public career alone challenges admiration and respect. He had been almost half a century in active politics; forty-six years a salient figure in Parliament; a leader of the Liberal party for thirty years; Prime Minister for fifteen years. He saw generations of men and generations of statesmen. He saw Confederation in its cradle and watched it grow to nationhood. Since he entered public life England has had three Monarchs, while the figures of Disraeli and Gladstone, of Salisbury and Campbell-Bannerman have passed across its national stage. He witnessed the rise of Cavour and saw the sword of Garibaldi flash, and he sympathized with their aspirations for an United Italy. He saw the German States confederated by Bismarck into blood and iron, saw France, his Motherland, crushed and bleeding at the feet of the Teuton conqueror, and lived to see the structure which Bismarck reared crumbled into utter dust. Since he entered public life, Russia has had two Emperors, emancipated its slaves, fought three great wars, overthrown the House of Czars and plunged into anarchy and ruin. France has been an Empire and a Republic, and countless rulers and statesmen have appeared and vanished from her national life. During that period the United States has developed into a great power, fought four wars, and the figures of Lincoln and Grant, of Blaine and Garfield, of McKinley and Roosevelt, have left their imprint and passed away. Meanwhile the British Empire has grown and expanded in size and strength and liberty, and Canada, from the feeble infancy into which the Fathers of Confederation tried to infuse the vitality of unity, has become the great Dominion of 1919. And during all those years, while rulers have come and gone, while statesmen have flourished and faded, while empires have sprung up or been destroyed, Sir Wilfrid remained a central figure on the international stage.

Wilfrid Laurier was born at St. Lin, Quebec, on November 20th., 1841, of a family that had settled in Lower Canada, six generations before. His forebears came from Anjou, France, and originally bore the family name of Cottineau. A marriage contract, drawn up in Montreal in 1666, bears the signature of the first representative of the family in Canada—Francois Cottineau, dit Champlauriet, or translated literally, Francis Cottineau, said, or called, Champlauriet. Apparently this latter appellation was subsequently adopted by the family, and after Louis XIV had, by royal decree, proclaimed the land to be French territory. They first established themselves in the forest of Ile Jesus, an island immediately north of the Island of Montreal, and at the mouth of the Ottawa River, and a little later removed to the Parish of Lechenaie, on the north bank of the same river. Charles Laurier, the grandfather of Sir Wilfrid was a man of remarkable energy and ability, and in the face of many obstacles taught himself surveying, and was master of mathematics in his scholastic district. At the beginning of the 19th. century he established his son, Carolus Laurier, on farm land which he had cleared in the bush near the little village of St. Lin, which nestles in the foothills of the Laurentide range, north of Montreal. Carolus Laurier, like his father, was a surveyor by profession, and a farmer by habit, and followed both occupations to his best advantage. He wanted some of the strong personality of his father, but was of a generous and friendly nature, and of an inventive turn of mind, as is evidenced by the fact that he was the first person in the colony to devise what then passed for a threshing machine, and which replaced the flail, which he had inherited from his father. Born in a quiet backwoods settlement, Carolus Laurier was a radical in the strongest sense of the word, and perhaps it was the father who laid the foundations of the son's political faith. In one respect Carolus Laurier is particularly deserving of praise. He was sufficiently acute to realize that his son had unusual aptitudes, and to make the best of those mental endowments provided him with a good classical education. In those days this was no light undertaking for a man of the station and means of Carolus Laurier. The father realized, too, that it would be of inestimable advantage to this son to have a thorough knowledge of the English language, and of English customs, and to this end he carefully directed the son's education.

Wilfrid Laurier's mother, née Marcelle Martineau, was a relative of the mother of the French-Canadian poet Frechette, one of the most gifted sons of Lower Canada, and it may be that the same family strain which produced the poet, showed itself in another way in the unusual qualities of the French-Canadian statesman. Five years after Wilfrid Laurier was born his mother passed away. Some time after Carolus Laurier married Adelaine Ethier, and she brought up young Wilfrid. The second offspring of the first marriage, Malvina Laurier, died at an early age. Of the second marriage, three sons were born: Uheld, a physician, who died at Arthabaska in 1898; Charlemagne, merchant, and until his death in 1907, member for the county of Ottawa, and Henri, prothonotary of Arthabaska, who died in 1906. Carolus Laurier, the father, died in 1881.

Young Laurier commenced his studies in the parochial school of St. Lin, where he learned reading and writing and the rudiments of arithmetic. His father then decided to extend his son's horizon so as to permit of his seeing something of the life and learning the language of his English compatriots. About eight miles west of St. Lin, and on the bank of the river Achigan, is the village of New Glasgow. This settlement was established about 1820 by a number of Scotch Protestants who came to Canada with English regiments. Carolus Laurier had done surveying in this neighbourhood and was well acquainted with many of the families, and thus an arrangement to have his son resident among them for a period was easily brought about. Shortly after young Wilfrid Laurier was a figure in the intimate life of the Murrays, the Guthries, the Macleans, the Bennetts and other families of the settlement. For a time he boarded with an Irish Catholic family, named Kirk, and later he lived with the Murrays, giving, in return for lodging and food, his services as a clerk in the general store kept by the head of the household.

The school which young Laurier attended for two terms, 1852-53 and 1853-54, was brusquely closed during the first term because of the departure for other parts of the teacher, one Thompson. He was quickly replaced by a man of considerable rough talent, one, "Sandy" Maclean, who possessed a pronounced and good taste for literature, and who in many ways made an admirable

teacher. His young French-Canadian pupil, learning English at play, at work, at home and at school, aroused in the good Scot a kindly concern, and Sir Wilfrid Laurier in later years never failed to attribute his knowledge of English literature to the man who first opened his eyes to the wealth of English letters.

These two years at New Glasgow proved of inestimable benefit to young Laurier. Not only did he secure a good foundation for further study of the English language, but he had inculcated in him a broadness of vision, an understanding of his English compatriots and a spirit of tolerance and good will, which ever afterwards proved a great asset. In September, 1854, at the age of thirteen years, Wilfrid Laurier was sent to college at L'Assomption. There he passed seven rigorous years of study. His health was delicate, and his physique did not permit of his taking part in the ordinary sports of his fellow-students. His favourite recreation was to visit the village court house when the judicial assizes were in progress and to listen there to the pleadings of the village lawyers. Sir Wilfrid often 8
recalled of this period of his life that a contradictory meeting of two political opponents always afforded him the keenest enjoyment. In fact, in his anxiety to miss none of such delightful and auspicious events as court sessions and public meetings he often ran foul of the school authorities.

Wilfrid Laurier's mother died when the boy was but six years old. His earlier years were spent under the constant supervision of the village curé. He knew no language but the French. St. Lin slept quite a distance from the centre of the earth—Montreal. It heard only echoes of the outer world. But like every other French-Canadian village, it had its church, its curé, and its dream. It prayed for a French-Canadian Messiah.

They say that something in the boy's temperament raised a vague hope in the heart of the parish priest. The priest was one of the dreamers of St. Lin, one who helped keep alive the name of New France. It is said that one afternoon he invited the lad Laurier into the garden of the presbytery, 9
and there tested as best he could the drift of his imagination, whether he loved the heroic, whether he would make a patriot or not. He let himself hope that the little imaginative son of the land-surveyor might be of use to his race by writing songs, perhaps, that they could chant on the day of their re-establishment, or perhaps—. He took the boy into his study, where the black crucifix hung upon the wall. From the bottom of an ancient chest of drawers, one that had come from Brittany, he drew forth an object carefully folded so as to conceal certain gaping holes and frayed edges. He lifted it and let the folds slip out, so that the colored cloth hung before the eyes of the boy.

"Do you know what that is, my son?" he demanded.

"It is the French flag, Father."

"It is our flag," corrected the priest.

On various occasions he took the boy to the study and told him stories connected with the flag. The visits became a sort of ceremony. Each day the boy learned a new fact about the piece of silk. It had been carried not far from Montcalm himself on the day that he rode out of Quebec to meet 10
Wolfe and defeat upon the Plains of Abraham. It was marked by British bullets. There were stains on it, almost faded out, that had come from French veins. This, it is said, was the strange first training which Laurier received for the works which he afterwards accomplished.

It was amid such associations that the future Prime Minister of Canada first learned the English tongue—"with a bit of Scotch accent," as he once himself described it—and religious breadth and tolerance, two endowments which helped to give to the man of French descent and Roman Catholic faith the grace and facility of expression and the breadth of vision irresistibly appealing alike to both the great races in Canada, British and French, Protestant and Catholic.

The powerful influence of the years spent under the shadow of the little Presbyterian church of New Glasgow was demonstrated throughout his whole career, while his life-long affection—almost amounting to reverence—for Murray, the sturdy Scot who "fathered" him at this time, resembled 11
the deep sentiment entertained by David Lloyd George for the worthy Welsh cobbler-uncle who did so much to make his career possible. Wilfrid Laurier never alluded to Malcolm Murray without evidences of the deepest appreciation and admiration.

That he also enjoyed with all the enthusiasm of boyhood, his stay in this Scottish settlement he has recalled on more than one occasion. "I remember," he once observed after he had become a national figure, "I remember how I fought with the Scotch boys and made school-boy love to the Scotch girls, with more success in the latter than in the former."

From his earliest boyhood, Laurier gave evidence of an independent character. While at college in L'Assomption, a debating society was formed, and there are men living to-day at the base of the Laurentides who remember the debating qualities of the man who was to shine later on as a Rupert in debate, in the home of the elder daughter of the mother of parliaments—the Canadian Commons Chamber. An instance of this comes to mind. A resolution had been submitted to the effect that the 12
old kings in the interest of Canada should have permitted the Huguenots to settle here. Opposition was, of course, manifest in the debate, but young Laurier espoused the affirmative side in the discussion which waxed very warm, and his speech, which followed, was of so aggressive a character that the prefect of studies was scandalized, and at one fell swoop stopped the debate, and threw such societies into the discard.

Up to his last days Sir Wilfrid used to laugh over this incident, and he often remarked that it was a great pity the debate was stopped, as the entire international situation in Europe might have been affected by the result of that discussion, participated in by the boys of L'Assomption College. "Of course," every ready with a joke at his own expense, "very few of us knew what a Huguenot was, but that made no difference. We had started in to settle questions affecting the religious future of humanity, and should have been allowed to accomplish our mission."

St. Valentine could not reproduce an incident so romantic, nor the gods that preside over the 13
efficacy of Mistletoe, narrate one of their well-known triumphs more picturesque, than that which

Fra Cupid could delineate when first he interfered with the heart and pulse beat, as well as with the slumbers of young Laurier trying to rest himself at Arthabaskaville! In the words of Senator David, it appropriately happened as follows:—

During his clerkship at Montreal, he made the acquaintance of a beautiful and good natured young girl, who refused a very advantageous marriage in preference to Laurier. Having heard one day, to what a degree she still remained faithful and devoted to him, he made his way to Montreal, got married on the following day, returned immediately to Arthabaska, and came a few weeks later to get his wife. Their union was a beautiful instance of unity of aim and interest. Lady Laurier proved to be a helpmate in the fullest sense, and to her love and devotion to him throughout life Sir Wilfrid paid many a proud and touching tribute. Lady Laurier, though quiet and retiring, took part in many activities and held office as vice-president of the St. John's Ambulance Association; vice-president of the Local Council of Women; vice-president of the National Council of Women; honorary president of the Canadian Immigration Guild; and honorary president of the Women's Canadian Historical Society.

In his home Sir Wilfrid Laurier was an exponent of the simple life. As a young man he cared little or nothing for games, preferring to devote his spare time to his books, and as he grew older none of the various forms of amusement to which Canadians are accustomed to devote much of their time appealed strongly to his fancy. He did not even succumb to the fascination of golf, the favourite pastime of many men of brain, and to the last was a "home" man in the truest sense of the word.

Although for fifteen years the first citizen of Canada, his residence on Laurier Avenue, Ottawa, was by no means the most imposing private dwelling in the Capital. It was comfortable and commodious, but not pretentious. Naturally within its walls entertainment was furnished to many, but it was all done without ostentation. Therein Lady Laurier presided, with an amiable and kindly grace, and what undoubtedly struck the observant guests was the note of domestic felicity and a freedom from the exactions of officialdom.

In the quiet of his library at home Sir Wilfrid spent a great deal of his time, and often burned the midnight oil. In fact, it was seldom he retired before the day had run its course. Only on very rare occasions did he go out in a social way in the evening, and on even rare occasions was seen at the theatre. The mimic world of the stage had little attraction for him. Nevertheless, he was fond of music, and few are more talented in that line than his partner in life, but the aesthetic side of things possibly appealed to him in a greater degree. He was very fond of art and painting, and his home was beautifully decorated.

A sketch of Sir Wilfrid's home life and habits would be very incomplete without more than a passing reference to his beautiful and restful domicile at Arthabaskaville, Quebec, where he always went as soon as it was possible to get away from the Capital after the close of the sessions. There it was his almost invariable custom to spend his Christmas holidays. Many were the invitations he received to be the honoured guest at more pretentious residences at the seaside and in the mountains, but these were nearly always rejected in favor of Arthabaskaville. There it was possible to get real rest and respite from the cares of a busy world. He preferred to go home back to the quaint little French-Canadian village and its restful influence. His Arthabaskaville home is a beautiful place, and it was kept open nearly all the year round. There are lovely shade trees and a beautiful lawn, and, once there, Sir Wilfrid always put on the conventional summer attire and took it easy on the lawn or in the garden. He got all the leading Canadian newspapers, and in this way kept in touch with the outside world.

His arrival in the little home village always caused a good deal of excitement. All Quebec was proud of her distinguished son, but he was particularly adored in the village in which he spent so large a part of his life. His neighbours, knowing that he sought Arthabaskaville for the blessed privilege of a rest, did not intrude on him, but none of them ever missed an opportunity to exchange a greeting with the famous statesman.

Every Sunday spent at Arthabaskaville saw Sir Wilfrid at the little parish church where he would attend the mass and hear a sermon to the faithful by the curé. After church the villagers would crowd around to clasp the hand of the distinguished Canadian statesman. No barrier of haughty reserve surrounded Sir Wilfrid. It was "Bon Jour, Baptiste" here, "Comment ça va" there, and there was general handshaking. Nowhere more markedly than at his old Arthabaskaville home were the qualities which contributed to Sir Wilfrid's success brought out—the simple manner, the genial ways and the indefinable grâce which drew people to him, and won their admiration and devotion.

Sir Wilfrid once said that his sympathy and respect always went out to the working newspaper man, as he had in his early life followed the business, being editor of "Le Defricheur," of Arthabaska, succeeding Eric Dorion, well-known as L'Enfant Terrible, and as Laurier was a very advanced Liberal he made things quite lively in the editorial columns of that newspaper, so hot, in fact, that his bishop, who was no other than Mgr. Lafleche, at Three Rivers, forbade the reading of Laurier's newspaper, with the result that a very large percentage of the subscription list was withdrawn, and the future leader saw his first journalistic enterprise go out of business. It is not necessary to say that the articles so severely condemned by the Bishop of Three Rivers would not be considered very radical these days, but his Lordship was a staunch Tory, as well as a churchman, and, no doubt, thought that the sheet in question could be dispensed with easily enough. Later on, however, Sir Wilfrid was a successful contributor to "L'Electeur," the predecessor of "Le Soleil," of Quebec, his article on "the den of forty thieves" creating a sensation, and a libel suit at the time. That was during the Chapleau-Senecal-Densereau regime at Quebec, and party feeling ran very high, the cause célèbre having been tried in Montreal before the late Mr. Justice Ramsay, resulting in the defendants being acquitted. There was intense excitement in political and journalistic circles, when it became known that Laurier was the author of the article in question, and, in fact, the paper pleaded justification through its attorneys.

About fifty-five years ago the Undergraduates' Society, faculty of law of McGill, was holding a general meeting. The students attending this meeting had the opportunity of hearing their elder confreres of the class of 1864, bidding farewell to old McGill.

Curiously enough, the proposer of the address of farewell was a young man, who in the years to come had the good fortune to reach to the height of honour, which a country can confer upon her sons, and whose name was to be written in golden letters upon the register of the faculty. This name was Wilfrid Laurier.

In his address, this talented young lawyer said among other things, that: "I pledge my honour that I will give the whole of my life to the cause of conciliation, harmony and concord amongst the different elements of this country of ours."

The routine of his student days was wise, modest, studious and sober. He employed his leisure 20
moments, that is to say, as many as he could snatch away from his office and university work, in reading, in studying literature and great speeches and the art of eloquence, in the political or literary clubs, just as at McGill, he was counted amongst the first rank and was the means of compelling others to recognize in him the first rays of an eloquence which, later on, was to shed so much lustre.

The steady and persistent preparation of Sir Wilfrid for that which was his heritage, was early noted by his admirers. He was stamped as an orator in his speech-making address to the throne, in 1871, when he spoke on the timely topic of "National Industry." It is interesting to have the testimony of one of his contemporaries who thus describes Sir Wilfrid at that time:

Tall, slender frame, pallid face, brownish hair, supple, approachable, steadfast and convincing look, slightly a dreamer, a sort of pleasantness about his facial expression, modest and yet distinguished, a certain demeanour of confidence or of melancholy which tended to call forth 21
sympathy.

Before Laurier left Montreal to take up his residence in the Townships, he was a prominent member of the institution known as L'Institut Canadian, which in time came under the episcopal condemnation of the late Mgr. Ignace Bourget, Bishop of Montreal, and became very prominently before the public by the death of Guibord, a well-known Montreal printer, and the subsequent refusal of the head of the diocese to allow his internment in the family lot at Côté des Neiges. This incident belongs to the religious history of Montreal, but Hon. L. O. David is authority for the statement that had Wilfrid Laurier died under the same circumstances as Guibord, his remains would have been also denied entry into the Catholic city of the dead, as he never retracted following the fulmination of the then Bishop of Montreal.

Sir Wilfrid was the one man, perhaps, in French-Canada who was opposed, through most of his political career by the bishops of his race, yet he had the satisfaction of seeing the clergy, both high 22
and low, rally to his side during the crowning act of his life, and oppose conscription. He proved to the world that his race could sacrifice their religious sentiments, but that there was no surrender in matters of race or tongue as he was the one man in Canada who could repeat before the Orangemen of Toronto, with Henry VIII: "No Italian priest will ever tithe or toll in my dominions," and hold the Province of Quebec in the hollow of his hand at the same time. He carried his French followers successfully through several elections, in spite of episcopal opposition, and died mourned and beloved by the whole Province.

Since 1871, Sir Wilfrid has been actively before the public. That date marked his entrance into the Quebec Assembly on his election in the Riding of Drummond and Arthabaska. His first appearance in public life revealed the qualities that were to make him famous. The effect of his fluent, cultivated and charming discourse is described by Frechette, the poet, as magical, "On the following day," he writes, "the name of Laurier was on every lip, and all who then heard it will 23
remember how those two syllables rang out true and clear, their tone that of a coin of gold, pure from all alloy, and bearing the impress of sterling worth."

Of his triumph in the House of Commons the same author writes:—

"His début before the House produced a sensation. Who could be this young politician, not yet thirty years of age, who thus, in a maiden speech, handled the deepest public questions, with such boldness and authority? Whence had this new orator come—so fluent, so cultivated, and charming—who awed even his adversaries into respect by language so polished, so elevated in tone, so strong and yet so moderate, even in the heat of discussion?

"On the following day, the name of Laurier was on every lip. From this initial point of his stirring career, the future Prime Minister proceeded by master-strokes. 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 province, that which marked his entrance into the House of 24
Commons, in 1874, carried him at one bound to the distinction of being one of the chief English-speaking debaters of the Dominion. The occasion was a solemn one, and never to be forgotten by any who were present. The subject before the House was the expulsion of Louis Riel, the rebel of the Northwest; who, though under accusation for the murder of Thomas Scott, and a fugitive from justice, had just been elected member for Provencher. The question was a burning one, and the public mind was greatly inflamed over it. It required, in very truth, a master of eloquence to take the case in hand and thread his way without falling or stumbling among the masses and mazes of prejudice which rose up around the Metis chief. The debate, which was violent, and heated, had been going on for two days when at last Laurier took the floor.

"He was known to be eloquent. He had already addressed the House in his own tongue at the opening of the session.

"No one dreamed, however, that he would risk his reputation by attempting a speech in English under such hazardous circumstances. Great as was the general surprise, the revelation was greater. 25
In the belief of many who heard him that day, no orator—unless indeed it be himself—has since

achieved a like success in any of our deliberative assemblies. As in the elegance and academic language of which he is so thorough a master, the brilliant speaker entered calmly into the heart of his subject, a great silence spread itself through the chamber and the English members listened in amazement to this charmer who wielded their own language with such grace, and who dealt them such cold 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 over an hour. Not for a single moment did his eloquence fail him. He expounded the doctrines and elucidated the principles of legal and constitutional right 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 quick inexorable logic, that his conclusions seemed to flash out of their own accord, unfolded but irresistible. 26

"Every part of his speech, moreover, was linked to the rest in admirably reasoned sequence and the oration from beginning to end flowed freely, without hesitation, without a moment's groping for words, and at the same time, with never one useless sentence, with never one superfluous syllable. No less was the manner of its delivery; the resounding and vibrating voice, the wealth and variety of intonation, the chaste simplicity and appropriateness of gesture, and finally the attitude of the speaker, as full of natural self-command as it was of personal dignity. Everything contributed an indescribable enthusiasm. The outburst of applause which greeted the speaker as he resumed his seat continued for fully five minutes afterwards, while the Ministers of the Crown flocked around him, eager to offer their congratulations. It seemed as if every one realized that a future chieftain had just proclaimed himself and asserted his right to leadership by the *Ego nominor leo* that had rung through every sentence of his speech. The cause was a lost one, of course, but Laurier had won the day, so far as he personally was concerned. From that moment a place in the Cabinet was virtually assigned him; and he was called upon to fill it as Minister of Inland Revenue in 1877, on the retirement of M. Cauchon, who had been appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba. 27

"Then occurred a singular mishap, which furnishes a striking example of the aberrations of the popular mind, as well as the often unaccountable vicissitudes of political life. The new Minister, although he had been returned at previous elections by a majority of over seven hundred votes over a distinguished member of the legal profession, found himself unable to secure his re-election, and was defeated by a worthy and inoffensive village tradesman, who distanced him by a majority of 21 votes. This was one of the repulses 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 seesaw had begun to sway. The young Minister's popularity in the province at large was powerless to check it in any way. Nevertheless the crushing defeat which was suffered by the Liberals did not in the least degree affect Laurier's personal influence, as may be inferred from the fact of his appointment a few years later to the position of leader of the party for the whole Dominion." 28

An interesting account has been given of the first interview that Sir Wilfrid ever gave out. This was on the morrow of his great victory in 1896, which gave him a long lease of power, and the opportunity to impress the country with the policies which he had advocated so long and fervently. When asked for an interview he replied:

"I am never interviewed, you know."

"But, Sir," persisted the correspondent, "considering the magnitude of your victory and the unique place you now occupy, would it not be meet that you should say a word or two to the public, who are desirous of getting an indication from you of the policies you will carry out?"

He hesitated, yielded at last to persuasion, and gave a column and a quarter of copy, at once exceedingly interesting and valuable. He could not commit the party to any particular policy at the moment of victory. He would have to consult his colleagues, but nevertheless, he outlined in general terms what the party would stand for now that it had received the public mandate. He made it plain that he stood for the principle of harmony between the two great races in the Dominion. That had been his aim in life, and it would remain his aim as long as he lived. He had his principles which he considered those of progress, but he did not want any bitterness. He wanted co-operation and concord. It would be the realization of his life dream if he could bring the two races together. 29

At the time when the interview was granted the rotunda of the old St. Lawrence Hall was filled with his admirers. He was surrounded by young men full of ardour, idealists, many of them, disinterested and hopeful of great things for the country. The hardened political cynic was not absent either, but there was a whirl of emotion; the present and the future were enswathed in radiant hope and when the Chieftain came down to the rotunda—erect, with flashing eyes, the cheers were magnetic. Many eyes were wet. The tide of emotion swelled in every breast. He was lifted shoulder-high by his adherents, of whom there were hundreds present, all of whom believed that in the Liberal Leader they had a man who would save the country. It was after this tumultuous demonstration that the Premier gave out the interview. 30

The Liberal Chief all that day was followed by admiring crowds. On being reminded of the kind things which the English press had written about him from time to time, he said that he read every word of that kind of writing, not because of vanity, but because he loved to think that every kindly word written or spoken did something in bringing about a better feeling between the two great races. "I love England because she is the mother of free nations. I look up to her because she is the apostle of freedom. I admire her lofty ideals, her moral conscience, her high standards which she sets up. She is, it may be, a trifle Puritanic, but she is the greatest moral asset in the world, and I admire her statesmen intensely—John Bright has been my mentor and idol, and, of course, Gladstone, as the great apostle of freedom, both fiscally and politically."

Edward VII. and President Emile Loubet made the treaty which has now saved the world. That is true. They were the high-contracting chiefs of state. But Sir Wilfrid Laurier was credited by them both with a certain share in that wise, far-seeing and world-saving work.

President Emile Loubet, in January, 1906, was speaking at Le Madeleine, at the funeral of the Canadian Minister of Marine, who had died suddenly in Paris.

"I shall be happy," he said, "for having left in my career the one work, the great work of the entente cordiale, I had been convinced that the mutual interest of France and of England was that we should be united—first of all for our own protection, against the rest of the world; and then, after that, to protect the world as a whole.

"But do you know who it was that confirmed me in these ideas? Who implanted in my mind, irrevocably, that sense of duty to which I have responded with alacrity? It was that eminent statesman who directs the destinies of Canada to-day—Sir Wilfrid Laurier. For he was in a better position than I to appreciate the loyal and conciliatory character of Great Britain.

"He gave me proofs and views of it which, as he developed them, I could easily understand. So that, imbued with those ideas, on the day that I met my friend, Edward VII., and found him moved by the same sentiments, we arrived at that entente and agreement which I shall never cease to admire."

The phraseology of that frank admission proves beyond all doubt that the President was carried away by the suggestion, which was one, as he says, "Monsieur Laurier had put into his head, and that he never ceased to admire."

Probably Edward VII. would have said as much; for before making his campaign of education in France Sir Wilfrid had made it in England. And the picture he drew of the entente cordiale between the English and the French in Canada, at his first banquet in London, where the Prince of Wales—later Edward VII.—presided in 1897, in the Royal Palace of Buckingham, must have had the same effect on that able and sympathetic statesman, which Edward was, as it produced upon Monsieur Loubet in France. Sir Wilfrid expressed in Paris in the same year, before a great assembly of notabilities, the harmony that existed between the two races in Canada; and in the following terms he regretted that the same cordiality did not yet exist between the two shores of the English channel:

"Our English compatriots of Canada are frankly proud of the brilliant Montcalm and we, of our race, bow with respect before the memory and monument of General Wolfe. It may be that here in France the souvenirs of old feuds have not lost all their bitterness. But for us in Canada, of whatever race, those were glorious days when the colours of France and England—the tricolour and the Cross of St. George—floated in triumph on the heights of Alma, of Inkerman, and of Sebastapol.

"Now events have changed. Other alliances are imminent. But may it be permitted to a son of France, who is at the same time a British subject, to salute those glorious days with a regret that may find an echo in every generous soul on both sides of the channel."

And again Sir Wilfrid proposed the joint toast of Edward VII. and President Loubet at a notable gathering in Paris after the coronation.

"Messieurs, will you permit me in conclusion to take a liberty with your customs and while raising my glass to the chief of state in this country of my ancestors—to that sagacious man that France has selected for President—may I join another thought, not for you but for myself, and to couple with that toast, that of my own sovereign, the King of England, who is also, like myself, a friend of France."

That was not all that attached Sir Wilfrid to the history of the entente cordiale. On his return to London once more in 1907, one evening at a function in his honour at the Queen's Hall, where he sat in the Royal box, a messenger came to request him not to leave, as the custom is, immediately after "God Save the King."

Acquiescing he was surprised to hear the orchestra after the National Hymn, play the stirring strains of the "Marseillaise." It was the official recognition of what he had done for the entente cordiale.

In the work of reconciliation of race and country he had but one motive and that was the exaltation of Canada and the development of our national and Canadian spirit and the subversion of all petty and sectional antagonisms. He was the true imperialist, who saw this Empire as a voluntary confederation of free nations. Anything different and more centralized he regarded as a menace to this country and to the Empire as a free system. He left every man to his opinion.

In 1907, when the Imperial Conference of Premiers was meeting in London, (Sir Wilfrid being one of its outstanding personalities), Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was hesitating on the very threshold of granting complete self-government to the Boers. The Unionist party, particularly its high Tory wing, led by Lord Milner, and fortified by powerful influences, was fighting hard against such a measure. It was an open secret that members of "C.-B.'s" own Cabinet were not overly enthusiastic about the proposal. Lord Roseberry, although practically in retirement, was believed to be opposed, and had a powerful following among what was known as the Liberal Imperialists. Mr. Asquith, Sir Edward Grey, and Mr. Haldane, sometime followers of Roseberry, although in Campbell-Bannerman's Cabinet, were regarded as luke-warm and for a time it seemed as though Sir Henry himself might waver.

In the course of his participation in the Imperial Conference, Campbell-Bannerman was brought much into contact with Sir Wilfrid, and, being impressed with his wonderful comprehension and appreciation of the British Constitution, saw in him the fulfilment in Canada of what he hoped to do for South Africa, and invited him to a small gathering of Liberals to give his opinion upon the wisdom of self-government for the Boers.

Sir Wilfrid, as those who knew his ardent sympathy with small nationalities everywhere, can well understand, readily accepted the invitation. For nearly an hour he spoke with all his intense

eloquence upon what trust and self-government had done to build up an united and prosperous Canada, to win the loyalty and devotion of French-Canadians, and toward the close, in a peroration of moving eloquence, asked why trust in the Boers would not achieve in South Africa what it had achieved in Quebec.

That speech is said to have been the decisive factor in influencing Campbell-Bannerman. Mr. Asquith in the great tribute which he once paid to his departed chief, significantly told how, after a 37
certain event, Sir Henry said that in regard to his South African policy there would be "no surrender"; and there is little doubt as to the event he had in mind. Not long ago, a writer in the "Manchester Guardian," in paying a tribute to Campbell-Bannerman, referred to the support given him in regard to the Boers by an "overseas statesman," but apart from such meagre notice, Sir Wilfrid's noble part in this momentous drama is unknown to the world.

It is also known that in the possession of Sir Wilfrid there were a number of letters and documents dealing with this matter—letters from General Botha, and Campbell-Bannerman, and others—testifying to the great influence he exerted in such a far-reaching stroke of statesmanship.

It is to be hoped that they will soon be given to the world, if for no other reason than in justice to one who, was at all times, a noble interpreter and potent advocate of the blessings of human freedom.

Every once in a while during the past fifty years or more some one comes along with a new 38
scheme to reconstruct the British Empire and when each architect finds his plan not workable he charges those who do not support it with disloyalty.

A charge made against Sir Wilfrid Laurier is that in the Imperial Conference of 1911 he opposed a scheme of Imperial reorganization proposed by Sir Joseph Ward, of New Zealand. The truth that is suppressed is that the proposal was rejected by the unanimous voice of the conference, the only exception being Sir Joseph Ward himself. We quote Mr. Asquith, Prime Minister, and President of the Conference:

"It is a proposition which not a single representative of any of the Dominions, nor I as representing for the time being the Imperial Government, could possibly assent to. For what does Sir Joseph Ward's proposal come to? I might describe the effect of it without going into details in a couple of sentences. It would impair, if not altogether destroy, the authority of the Government of the United Kingdom in such grave matters as the conduct of foreign policy, the conclusion of treaties, the declaration of maintenance of peace or the declaration of war, and indeed all those 39
relations with foreign powers necessarily of the most delicate character, which are now in the hands of the Imperial Government, subject to its responsibility to the Imperial Parliament."

Mr. Asquith went on to say that the scheme would be absolutely fatal to the present system of responsible government. Sir Wilfrid Laurier was therefore attacked for defending the British constitution against a very grave danger.

The "Manchester (England) Guardian" in its Empire Number of March 20th., 1917, had the following:—

"In Canada, again, so soon as the causes of the war were fully apprehended, all discussion of Canadian obligations and of the limit of Canadian liabilities to the Empire gave way before a passionate determination to lend all possible aid in a just cause. The mind of Canada was well expressed in a speech on the outbreak of war by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, leader of the Liberal Opposition, and the greatest and most venerable figure in Dominion statesmanship. Throughout his career he had resisted with the utmost of his power and eloquence all suggestions for a mechanical 40
strengthening of the Imperial tie, and had the legal obligations of Canada at this crisis run counter to the mind of her people it would have been his part to make clear the discrepancy. On the first day of the emergency session of the Canadian Parliament he said:—

"It is our duty, more pressing upon us than all other duties . . . to let Great Britain know, that there is in Canada but one mind and one heart, and that all Canadians stand behind the mother country, conscious and proud that she had engaged in this war, not from any selfish motive, for any purposes of aggrandisement, but to maintain untarnished the honour of her name, to fulfill her obligations to her allies, to maintain her treaty obligations and to save civilization from the unbridled lust of conquest and power."

The secret of his great powers was not hard to find. Perhaps at the very foundation must be placed his broad tolerance and kindliness. He was first of all a Christian gentleman. Then following that must be placed his thorough mastery of the great writers in both English and French and a 41
complete understanding of the points of view of these two people. It was characteristic of the man that he should always remember with kindly feelings the influence and atmosphere of the Scottish home where he lived for a period. It was there that he got his first love for the tongue of Shakespeare and Milton, and where he made himself familiar with the struggles and achievements of Fox, Bright, Morley, Gladstone and other great Liberal leaders.

No matter on what occasion or what his subject might be, his audience was always sure to be treated to some striking phrase or bit of imagery that made a lasting impression. On his return from Europe a few years ago, he urged the young men of the Dominion in the words of Henry of Navarre: "To follow his White Plume and there they would find honour." Again when speaking of the Grand Trunk Pacific project he announced that "it would roll back the map of Canada and add depth to the country."

The princeliness of his bearing was that which impressed the British public most when he first went to Great Britain in 1897, as a guest at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Richard Harding 42
Davis, who described that event for "Harper's Magazine," said that in the procession to Westminster Abbey on that occasion, the two individuals, who, after the aged Queen herself, most aroused the enthusiasm of the myriad spectators, were Lord Roberts, the typical military hero, and Sir Wilfrid Laurier, whom most of them saw for the first time. He appealed to England as an

essentially romantic figure; typical of what British Imperial prestige stood for—a man of foreign race, whom Britain's wise colonial policy had made a distinguished servant of the Crown.

During the Royal tour of 1901, and at the Quebec Tercentenary celebration of 1908, one saw Sir Wilfrid in contact with the coterie of distinguished men that the present King, first as Duke of Cornwall and York, and later as Prince of Wales, brought with him to this country. To Canadians, whatever their politics, it gave a deep sense of satisfaction to recognize in their own Prime Minister, a man who seemed to embody the flower of civilization. Knighthood, though it be a bauble, never sat more fittingly on a modern man, than on him. Among all the men who constituted the Royal entourage, on both occasions, only one was his equal in this peculiar quality of high physical distinction, and that was Viscount Crichton, afterwards the Earl of Erne. 43

In so far as possible, Sir Wilfrid Laurier confined business to business hours. His habits did not vary. In the days of his premiership he rose each morning before eight o'clock, and after breakfast his private secretary would go to his library and the morning's mail would be opened. Replies would be dictated without delay. By pursuing this policy Sir Wilfrid left himself free to receive callers and transact other business when he arrived at his office. Sir Wilfrid's mail was large, but not so large as that received by many of his ministers. In his younger days he had an extremely large personal correspondence, but the passing away of many of his early associates reduced it considerably as years went by.

When he was Prime Minister, he usually arrived at his office at 10.30 a.m. Everyone in Ottawa knew Sir Wilfrid and his commanding figure always attracted attention. Once in his office there was usually a steady stream of visitors or deputations to be received. The deputations were usually heard after appointments had been arranged. In the afternoon the callers as a rule were not so numerous, and if the House was sitting there was frequently a meeting of the Cabinet Council before it came together at 3 o'clock. 44

In the late years of his premiership Sir Wilfrid avoided the night sessions whenever possible. Frequently he would occupy his seat for an hour after business was resumed in the evening and then go home leaving the fortunes of the Government forces in the hands of his ministers. When the House was not in session he usually left off business about 5 o'clock, sometimes being detained to a later hour by a meeting of the Cabinet Council.

The late leader as an English-speaking parliamentarian, was the wonder of his day and generation, and one had to be well acquainted with both languages to notice the least error in his English grammar. Sir Wilfrid always tripped up, however, in the use of the English verbs "to do" and "to make," which are one and the same "faire" in French, for very frequently he would make use of "do" when "make" was the proper English word, or vice versa. As a bilingual orator, it is safe to say, however, that Wilfrid Laurier stood alongside of such men as Real de la Valliere and ex-Premier Waddington of France, who spoke English and French. In the House of Commons Sir Wilfrid Laurier's English was simply magnificent, and, in fact, his models were John Bright, William Ewart Gladstone, Pitt, Earl of Chatham, and others of that splendid galaxy of British statesmen, whose names so brilliantly illuminate so many of the most fascinating pages of the Empire's history. He would, in fact, become so impregnated with English-expressed mannerisms that at the close of a long session of the House of Commons his English accent, when speaking his own mother tongue, would be distinctly marked. He was not always consistent, but was ever happy when pleading the cause of a minority or a lost cause, his speeches on the execution of Louis Riel, the Remedial Bill, and others, being amongst the most eloquent pages of the Commons Hansard. Sir Charles Tupper, when sitting opposite the late leader during his address on the amendment to reject the Remedial Bill, remarked to his desk-mate that if he had Laurier's facility of speech in the two official languages of this country he would willingly sacrifice whatever reputation he possessed as a public man. 45 46

Sir Wilfrid, it has often been said, had the distinction of an old world seigneur. His stature, his irregular but strong features, his dome-like forehead, his calm, wide eyes, his benevolent smile marked him down as the last seigneur of old French Canada. But about this distinction of his there was nothing put on or affected. He was above all things natural, and joined with this was a simplicity and a bonhomie essentially Canadian in its lack of all starched frills. He was one of the easiest men to see at Ottawa. With him red tape did not exist.

Pomp and pretence, decoration and display did not appeal to this great Canadian. He had no use for the sycophant, the bore or the grafter.

His clear eye, stately carriage, firmly compressed lips and general demeanour revealed the born leader of men, and in any gathering he stood out in picturesque relief from those around him like a Saul among his fellows. His dignified and courtly bearing as he walked to his seat was that of the French Empire period. Like Gladstone, Disraeli and other great men, his dress was always distinctive without being obtrusive. At all times he looked every inch the type of a statesman and a leader that appealed to the imagination of a people. His great strength as a leader lay in his personal charm and manner. Between Sir Wilfrid and his followers there subsisted the most intimate relations. To see him flit from seat to seat in the House for a quiet chat with some Liberal member was to discover one source of his marvellous hold on the affection of the Liberal rank and file. 47

When not engaged in debate or in conversation with his colleagues, Sir Wilfrid generally spent his time reading. There were three books that had a singular fascination for him—the Authorized Version of the Bible, Shakespeare's plays, and the Encyclopaedia. Like all great orators, Sir Wilfrid drew freely from the Bible for illustrations, and his speeches were replete with passages whose imagery suggested the sublime source of their inspiration. In the House he stood in a class by himself as a Parliamentarian.

When about to speak in the House he rose slowly, impressively. Proceeding with his argument, his gestures were not wasteful. He would point, perhaps, with the extended index finger of his 48

outstretched right hand. Sometimes, this finger he held rigidly straight, and at other times crooked a little. And somehow by this slight change Sir Wilfrid conveyed a wholly different significance to his gesture.

When Sir Wilfrid came to a climax he would square his thin shoulders, throw his head gloriously back and upwards and look out over the listening benches as from a conning tower. He would even perhaps cease his vibrant utterance for an instant to gain an added emphasis to his words.

When annoyed little fine wrinkles would corrugate his forehead. Otherwise the whole of his personality was absolutely under control. His voice, though slurring, was penetrating, and ate its way into your attention by reason of its peculiarly blurred timbre. It was marked by an even consistency. His speeches were always animated and winning, but the speed at which he travelled never changed much, nor did he go to extremes of inflection. Sometimes he would be quietly humorous. Where he shone was in repartee, for he was always mentally alert and keen. 49

Whether he spoke in English or in French, it was the same Laurier, the orator of the "grand style." And like all speakers of this type, Sir Wilfrid was a past master in the coining of apt phrases that stick in the popular imagination. For example, he once called Ottawa the "Washington of the North." Ever since then the label has stuck. And so, in a hundred other cases, Sir Wilfrid has given journalists and those that come after him the necessary turn of thought, the needful word. His "grand method" was simply the outcome of his own nature—a nature at once distinguished and noble. And consequently not even his bitterest enemies ever charged him with doing a "mean" or "shabby" thing. As soon as you set eyes on him in the House you recognized that there was a man above buying or selling, a man with a code of honour, a man with a dignity. So his "grand" manner was but the visible and outward sign of this.

But this "grand" manner had nothing ponderous, heavy or deliberate about it. Laurier was French in his vivacity and finesse, in the quickness and brilliance of his repartee. He was the master of the quick, swift way in which he slipped off into the heart of his speeches. A handful of compliments or a short, sharp, stinging sarcasm; a gentle musical phrase, to jog someone's memory, or a word of aroused dignity, and Sir Wilfrid was easily racing along at full speed. And in his speech he had Gallic lucidity. Everything served to strengthen his argument. He not only appealed to his auditors' reason, but also to their emotions—and that was the secret of his popularity. He had the gift of being able to charm, move and stir. And it all perhaps was achieved more by his personality than by what was actually said. His mere appearance could raise enthusiasm. 50

The extraordinary thing was that no one seemed to remember that he was not speaking in his own tongue. Indeed, few of the English-speaking representatives have ever attained to a vocabulary half as large as his.

Sir Wilfrid always looked his part. He was one of those few public individuals, whose actual appearance did not disappoint you. The striking face, with its broad, lofty forehead; its tufted crown of white hair, its long, prominent nose, indicative of dominance and power, its alignment of chin and mouth sent your mind irresistibly back to memories of other great statesmen. It was the face of an aristocrat, while the mind belonged to the aristocracy of democracy. His eyes were set wide apart and they gazed steadily out at you. As a rule, his face was immobile, but when his eyes half closed, it was quick to break into a smile, the wrinkles running upward on his face like little waves succeeding one another on a beach. When listening or following a debate, Sir Wilfrid would lean forward with elbows rested on his desk and one hand up to his ear to convey the sound better. 51

As a rule, he wore a black frock coat with vest, the lapels lined with a white frill. His collar was straight and high, while his tie was so big and broad that you could not see his shirt. It literally choked up the opening of his vest with its splendour. The creases of his trousers were always perfect. His boots were the old-fashioned elastic-sided ones. 52

Strangers coming into the gallery of the House of Commons for the first time always looked for Laurier. He knew it and rather enjoyed the limelight. It was his custom to enter the House just a moment before opening hour, and as he passed down the corridors of Parliament on the way from his office to the Chamber it was frequently through a lane of people, every one of them watching him intently. He would pass along straight as a guardsman, serene, dignified and quite unmoved.

In the Chamber he was much given to visiting. From his seat in the front row, immediately opposite his Parliamentary opponent, Sir Robert Borden, he would move back among his more humble supporters and spend hours in earnest conversation with them. He knew his men individually, as none but Sir John Macdonald ever knew a following. Laurier had undoubtedly learned much from his former great rival. There were little mannerisms and tricks of speech and gestures that old-timers around Parliament declared he got only from Sir John. 53

He loved to use that word "Grit," especially in rural ridings, where he knew its effect on old-time voters. And he took a sort of impish delight in always characterizing his political opponents as "Tories," rather than as Conservatives, or even as Liberal-Conservatives. He knew that in the minds of some of his hearers the use of the word "Tory" would convey an idea of class privilege and opposition to democratic ideas and movements. It was surprising, too, how he would adapt his utterances to his audience. It might be the same speech he had given elsewhere the day before, but he knew that his audience would differ, and little touches were added here and there that gave it individuality and touched responsive chords in his hearers. When stumping the country in an election campaign his stories and illustrations were always simple. The historical comparisons and the more subtle quotations were reserved for Parliament. When he spoke in Woodstock in the election of 1911, he told a story of an Irish friend of his, a conductor on the Montreal-Quebec train, for whom he brought a black thorn from Ireland in 1897. He had the conductor friend's name put on it and when they met, presented him with the shillelah. 54

"He was profuse in his thanks," said Sir Wilfrid, and he wound up by saying, "May Heaven be your bed, but may you be kept long out of it."

“Now I hope that some day heaven may be my bed,” added the Liberal Chieftain, “but I don’t think I am ripe for it yet. I hope Heaven won’t be my bed until I have one more tussel with the Tories.”

There were two Tory rural members of the House of Commons, for whom Sir Wilfrid always had a tender spot in his heart. One of these was the late Mr. Peter Elson, member for East Middlesex. The Liberal leader would frequently cross over the floor of the House for a chat. The other was Mr. Oliver Wilcox, member for North Essex, also since passed away. Mr. Wilcox had a rollicking manner in his Parliamentary debating that would at times convulse the whole House, and those who were there in those days, will long recall the way in which he would point a finger at the Liberal leader, refer to him always as “My honorable friend, the leader of the Liberal Opposition,” and endeavour 55
to convince Sir Wilfrid that he was a hopeless political sinner. Sometimes after one of these encounters they would meet outside in the corridor and walk away arm in arm.

Speaking to a young newspaper friend, he said, “Every young man ought to read the works of Gibbon.” He was enthusiastic, too, when he spoke of Parkman’s writings. “Read Parkman, and you will be proud of both races in Canada,” was his comment.

There were dull hours in the House of Commons when Sir Wilfrid had to remain on duty, ready for any emergency. Hours that were tedious, or would have been tedious, but for his little custom of sending to the Parliamentary Library for the English dictionary. The House used to smile when the page would come in with the big volume and place it on Sir Wilfrid’s desk. He would open it at a certain page and then begin to run down the columns carefully and slowly, adding to his store of English words. Is it any wonder that he possessed such command of the English tongue in public utterances? He rarely read anything but the dictionary in the House of Commons, not even the 56
newspapers; but it was very evident that outside of the House he looked over all the important dailies and read widely in general literature. A newspaper friend, who called on him the day after the landslide of 1911, found him seated comfortably in his room, reading a life of the Dowager Empress of China. She, too, had known the experience of power passing away, and perhaps, the Liberal Chieftain was finding some of the philosophy of the Orient applicable to his own situation.

In his Parliamentary addresses he was always apt in the use of quotations and historical illustrations. He had read widely in both British and French histories, and in American history as well.

His influence among his followers was due to his long Parliamentary experience, but even more to the grace and courtesy of his manner, and his actual kindness. He was never abrupt, never too busy to be polite, never forgot that without his most humble associates he would fail to accomplish his purposes. Those who think of political life as a continuous strife, would be surprised indeed, if they knew of the close friendship that existed between Sir Wilfrid and some of his opponents on the 57
opposite side of Parliament. He was elusive in many ways, difficult to measure by our accepted standards. For many years to come the recollection of his personality has impressed itself upon audiences and upon individuals in every part of Canada will remain to keep his memory green.

A member of Sir Wilfrid’s last Cabinet, who, as a boy, greatly admired his Chief, contributes these reminiscences:

When Sir Wilfrid first became prominent it was his custom, while Parliament was in session, to go for a walk on Sunday afternoons, in the winter, on the north side of Rideau Street, and a number of boys, whose fathers were Liberals, would hurry along Sussex Street, and crossing over to the south side of Rideau Street, would walk along that side in perfect decorum and happiness as they watched the progress of the man on the other side of the street, whose name was heard more frequently than any other in their homes. Sir Wilfrid’s appearance and dress on those Sunday 58
afternoons are still remembered. He wore a fur cap of plucked otter, a Persian lamb coat, and always carried a cane. His hair was wavy and dark, his face generally lit up by a smile, and his carriage was erect and dignified. He never seemed to be in a hurry. Usually, one of his Parliamentary colleagues was with him, and it was a matter of much interest for the boys on the opposite side of the street to watch the different ways in which Sir Wilfrid and his companion returned the salutes of passers-by. Needless to say, the companion, no matter whom he might be, always suffered in the comparison.

With the boys and young men who haunted the galleries of Parliament during the Franchise, the Riel, and the Home Rule debates, Sir Wilfrid was a hero. While charmed by his never-failing courtesy, they took him still closer to their hearts when, on a memorable night, in a later debate, he repelled the clumsy patronizing of an opponent with the withering phrase that “Quebec does not want his whining pity!” That flash revealed human nature that his youthful admirers in the gallery could readily understand, and they loved him all the more for it.

He was a great lover of birds, and on a beautiful day in September, 1911, just prior to addressing 59
a great outdoor meeting, he was sitting on a lawn with several friends. The weather was unusually warm, and there were a number of orioles, and other birds, flying about the grounds, and, occasionally, singing in the trees. Sir Wilfrid noticed them, and, taking off his hat, he laid it on the grass, and, as if he had no cares or thoughts in the world, except for the homely things of nature, he told about the birds that used to come each spring to the woods around Arthabaskaville, and described minutely their plumage. Then he recalled that from time to time certain kinds of birds would disappear, and others would come in their places, and that, after a lapse of a few years, it was difficult to find any of the birds with which he had been familiar when a young man. His whole conversation indicated how close to nature he must have been in his youth, and how keen his powers of observation always were.

In the same way, he was an intense lover of trees. He took great pride in the shade trees of the city of Ottawa, and was always hurt when he saw any of them mutilated or wantonly destroyed.

One night before the last election he engaged in a chat about world conditions as they then 60
existed. By degrees he became absorbed in the subject, and drew such a rapid and comprehensive

world-picture that one could not help regretting that the whole Dominion was not listening to him. Referring to Russia, he contrasted the condition of the people there with the condition of the people in the United States, and remarked that perhaps the most extraordinary thing that had taken place within his life time was the effect produced by the general spread of education in the United States. In illustration of this, he pointed to the fact that, while it was the custom for people, when he was a young man, to sneer at the college professor in the neighbouring Republic, the Americans now had in Woodrow Wilson a college professor for their President. He went on to describe conditions in Russia, and deplored the fact that, as there were at least one hundred millions of illiterate people there, it would be impossible to effect a change, except in one of two ways, namely, by the spread of education—which would take too long—or by the appearance of another Napoleon. Thereupon a guest remarked that, for the sake of ending the world war, it was to be hoped that another 61
Napoleon would soon appear. Sir Wilfrid made a slight gesture with his right hand, and, shaking his head, said, “No, it is not time. There were 1,000 years between Caesar and Charlemagne, and there were 800 years between Charlemagne and Napoleon. You see, it is not yet time for another Napoleon to appear.” Could anything be more graphic or concrete than this rapidly sketched picture?

In some respects, he was the most conservative of men. For instance, he was very reluctant to approve any changes in the rules or procedure of Parliament. He had found them sufficient for all purposes for nearly fifty years, and he looked up with a glance implying both surprise and a certain degree of opposition, when anyone proposed a change of any kind. Not that he would refuse to discuss it, or withhold his approval because a discussion of a suggestion of the kind usually wound up by his saying, “Well, I will be guided by whatever our friends may think.”

Another indication of his conservative inclination in matters of dress may be pointed out. Those who have been familiar with him for years, and even those who did not know him personally, but 62
who have seen his photographs, will have noticed that he usually wore a scarf pin in the shape of a horse-shoe. While it decorated his ties of different colour, it never seemed out of place. In the same way he never wore a chain on his watch, and this habit he continued down to the end of his days. Even in these little things there was proof of his being different from other men.

He was the embodiment of kindness, and his consideration for others was unfailing. These characteristics manifested themselves so naturally that they were part and parcel of the man. Perhaps one story, that illustrates this side of his character better than any other, was told by Lady Laurier. Occasionally, in later years, an impression would arise in the household that some of the servants were not as attentive to duty as they might be, and, at times, a suggestion was made that it might be well to speak to them about some oversight. Sir Wilfrid’s invariable admonition was, “Oh, don’t do that. It’s bad enough to be a servant.” At other times, disappointment would be expressed 63
at the speedy disappearance of some good things that had been provided for guests who were to arrive. If Sir Wilfrid chanced to hear any discussion on this topic, he would intervene with, “Well, after all, that is very natural; the servants are human like ourselves.” It was this constant regard for the feelings of others, and his lightning-like ability to adapt himself to any occasion, no matter how suddenly it might arise, that made him so different from other men, and constantly increased the love felt for him by those who were fortunate enough to be brought within the circle of his daily life.

His marvelous memory and his grip upon the Parliamentary proceedings of over forty years was unexpectedly instanced in the House of Commons on September 7th., 1917. Senate amendments in the income tax bill were before the House, and the point of order was raised that the Red Chamber could not amend a money bill.

Hon. Speaker Rhodes, after hurriedly consulting authorities, found a case in May, 1874, in which Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, then Premier, had moved to accept the Senate amendments to an act 64
respecting the appropriation of certain Dominion lands in Manitoba, stipulating that the action should not be accepted as a precedent.

“It so happens that I was a member of this House at the time,” said Sir Wilfrid, rising. “I was, of course, a very young member then, but I have a recollection of the debate that took place.” The veteran Liberal leader then recited in some detail the debate of forty-three years ago, differentiating between the land act then under discussion and the money bill now before the House. Meantime the Speaker had sent for the ancient Hansard, and subsequently placed the record before the House. It was in exact accordance with Sir Wilfrid’s memories, and both sides of the House paid its senior member the tribute of hearty applause.

Many stories are told which illustrate the wide range of his information and his remarkable memory. On one occasion Sir Adolphe Chapleau, who was a member for many years of successive Conservative Cabinets, was relating his experience as a captain in the Union Army at the Battle of 65
Antietam. A Union battery had taken a position in a corn field which masked its presence from the Confederates.

“When the proper moment came,” said Sir Adolphe, “the order to fire was given by General ——.”

“You are, I think, mistaken,” said Sir Wilfrid, apologizing for the interruption. “It was General ——, who gave the order.”

Sir Adolphe paused in amazement; then he said:—

“You are right. I was there, yet I had forgotten. You were not there, yet you remember. I will tell no more experiences.”

At another time, in Paris, in 1897, Sir Wilfrid and other Canadians, who had visited England for the Jubilee of Queen Victoria, were being conducted about the city. At the Arc de Triomphe, inscribed with the names of the great victories of the Napoleonic wars, an army officer undertook to give the dates of the different battles.

"Marengo," he said, "was fought in July 14th., 1801."
"Was it not 1800?" asked Sir Wilfrid.
"It was," replied the officer, abashed. "Evidently we must go to Canada to learn French history." 66

Sir Wilfrid Laurier in a very real sense was passionately fond of children. He relaxed to them, he loved them, and they loved him. Children seemed to get closer to "the Chief" than anyone else. There were times, in the stress of big events, when matters of policy were to be determined, when situations had to be gauged and met, when Sir Wilfrid seemed to shut himself behind an expressionless face to do his thinking. His friends and lieutenants sought counsel from him then without success. No premature intimations were forthcoming. He became to all associated with him a seeker—not a giver—of information. One left his presence, having gone for guidance, with the conviction that he had laid bare his whole mind and thought at the delicate prompting of the Chief's skilful interrogations, but realizing that the latter had communicated nothing.

At the time of the long naval debate and Parliamentary embroglio, when the threat of closures was in the air and all the strategy of statecraft was being brought into play by both parties, a 67
Liberal caucus waited anxiously one winter morning for the advent of the leader. Newspaper-men who proceeded to the main entrance eagerly watching for his coming witnessed the septuagenarian spending the valuable moments prodding in the snow with his walking-stick and seeking to locate a "lost mitt" of an all-alone baby girl, who was crying pathetically at her loss and the cold. It was only when the missing mitten was found and restored and the child had been comforted that Sir Wilfrid turned his attention to the waiting caucus and the problems of the moment.

Those who accompanied the then Prime Minister on his memorable tour of the West in the summer of 1910 will never forget an incident while he was speaking at Edmonton. So great was the crowd that had assembled in Alberta's capital that hot August afternoon to hear his message that all attempts to hold an indoor meeting were abandoned. Sir Wilfrid spoke from a balcony at the central corner of the main thoroughfare, and windows, balconies and streets were peopled with spectators. Suddenly, in the midst of his speech he paused, and gazing over the seething mass of humanity, 68
pointed to one of the upper windows in a block diagonally opposite to the balcony from which he spoke. A midget was seated alone on the ledge, swinging her feet over the street far below. Anxiously he inquired: "Is that little one safe?" Amid all the display and acclaim Sir Wilfrid's eyes were on the child in danger.

One of the most charming revelations of Sir Wilfrid's thought for children and his understanding of them occurred on the same tour during a public reception at a temporary stand built upon a Manitoba prairie. An eight-year-old maid of the harvest field, with unadorned straw hat and bare feet, stood, like the publican of old, afar off. She looked on with wide, wondering eyes while a more fortunate little lady, in the fluffy, beribboned, spotless daintiness so dear to all daughters of Eve, be they big or little, gave the great man a beautiful bouquet of roses. She had seen him stoop and kiss her. Then she separated herself from the cheering crowd. She strayed to a spot on the prairie where she knew they grew. She gathered them herself, a little ill-assorted bunch of wild weed 69
blossoms. Then she edged her way back through the throng. She had almost reached him as he was moving on, when a badged committeeman stopped her, and taking her by the sleeve of her patched print dress thrust her back. Tears sprang to her eyes.

For an instant the procession wavered. There was a break in the line. Sir Wilfrid turned. Unwittingly the little one found herself almost confronting him. Feverishly now she sought to squirm back into the oblivion of the crowd. But he had seen her. He stepped toward her, and the committeeman released his hold.

"Were you good enough to mean those flowers for me, little girl?" he asked with a smile. She thrust them toward him now half-frightened.

He bowed and took them. He kissed her. Then he drew a sprig from the bunch and fastened it upon the lapel of his coat. And when the great man mounted his car and waved his hat to the cheering hundreds there was one happy little girl who feasted her eyes upon a faded wild weed blossom still drooping on his breast.

Sir Wilfrid never lost a chance to "make up" to the little folk. He travelled on the first passenger 70
train over the National Transcontinental from Fort William to Winnipeg, when construction gangs were still at work and the primitive condition of the country caused the workmen to be housed in log and frame shanties along the line, and took a remarkable interest in the several children who had accompanied their pioneer parents to the wild and picturesque outposts of coming civilization. He was the earliest riser on the train, and one morning, when the call of breakfast found him missing, there was some anxiety as to whether he had lost his way in an early morning walk through the bush. "No need for worry," volunteered one, who knew his Chief well; "you'll likely find him outside somewhere with the youngsters." He was right. Sir Wilfrid was "playing catch" with a sturdy four-year-old behind a nearby shanty.

One day as the train lay in a switch near Humboldt a boy mounted the steps with a new birthday present, and explained that he wanted to take his first picture of "Mister Laurier." A few moments later the tall figure was standing patiently on the track till the juvenile photographer "got it right." 71
The little fellow secured first-hand what scores of correspondents and local photographers had for weeks been struggling with crowds and erecting pedestals to obtain.

The devotion of the habitant of rural Quebec to Sir Wilfrid Laurier was well illustrated by an incident during the campaign of 1911. The Liberal leader was leaving Bonaventure station, in Montreal, very early one morning to proceed, via Coteau, to accept the nomination for Soulanges. At the station he passed a little girl, the daughter of a basket-laden woman, on her way to market. He stopped to pat the child's head and exchange a greeting.

"Qui est l'homme?" ("Who is the man?") asked the astonished mother of a bystander.

"Sir Wilfrid Laurier," replied one of the group of newspapermen nearby.

The woman's face was a picture. "En vérité?" ("Indeed, truly?") she persisted, turning from one

to another for confirmation.

When she was convinced she ran after the departing figure and stroked the sleeves of his coat as if it were something holy. Sir Wilfrid turned and shook her hand, ere the poor woman fled in confusion. 72

His love of children was very sincere. On one occasion he was visiting a friend at his farm near Aurora. One evening he sat down to dinner, and after commencing, excused himself, went upstairs and shortly returned. Next day the little granddaughter of his host, who was also staying at the farm, said that, “Mr. Wilfrid” had forgotten to say goodnight to her the night before and that he had come up from dinner to kiss her goodnight and speak to her before she went to sleep.

A man who visits Ottawa from time to time tells of an unexpected interview with Sir Wilfrid. Word was brought to him that the Liberal Chieftain wished to see him. The remainder of the story may be told in his own words:—

The friend who brought me the message made an appointment for me to visit Sir Wilfrid at two o’clock in the afternoon. When I reached his home on Laurier Avenue, he was waiting for me, and although I had never met him before, his welcome was so simple and kindly that I felt at home at once, and felt as if we had been life-long friends. In a sense we had been, for I had admired him since I had first seen him on a platform over thirty years ago. The acquaintanceship was at least complete on my side. I felt that I knew him very thoroughly, and his welcome made me forget that his knowledge of me must be very casual. 73

But though his greeting made me feel not only at ease but flattered and happy, it was not long before I noticed something that aroused an old-time critical attitude. It so happened that many years ago I had served my time as a dramatic critic, and had learned to notice the little niceties by which an actor achieves his affects. Now I do not wish to accuse Sir Wilfrid of being an actor, but if his methods were spontaneous and merely happened so, they were still worthy of Booth, Irving or Belasco.

I was shown into his sitting-room, where a grate fire was burning. After a most cordial greeting, in which he referred to some of my activities, which had attracted his attention and pleased him, he motioned me to a chair and when I had seated myself he sat down beside me. While standing he towered over me in height, but to my surprise, when he sat down I was looking down into his earnest, attentive face. I instantly noticed that the chair on which he sat was several inches lower than the one on which I sat. The stage trick was so apparent that although I did not betray the fact that I had noticed it, it made me keenly alert for anything else of the same kind that might happen. For over an hour we engaged in a most animated conversation. I had information which he wanted, and by his shrewd questions, but even more by his absorbed attention, which never wavered, he made me tell everything I knew about the subject in hand. 74

During the hour that I spent with him I could not help feeling his magnetic personality. His wonderful graciousness and flattering attention to every word I spoke made me realize that he was more compelling and captivating when met privately than when seen on the platform. No outburst of eloquence could surpass the delightful persuasiveness of his ordinary conversation.

Finally, he rose as if some thought had suddenly occurred to him. He walked over to the open fireplace, and stood with his back to me for a few moments. As he rose from the low chair on which he had been sitting and stood erect his height seemed more than mortal. Standing with his back to me, he seemed absorbed in profound thought, but presently he turned and his whole manner had changed. Instinctively I came to attention and stood before him. With the smile which made his followers adore him, he began abruptly. 75

“Now, Mr. ——, what I want to know is what constituency are you going to contest in the coming election?”

“Why!” I stammered. “I never thought of such a thing!”

“Ah, but I have thought of it,” said Sir Wilfrid.

I protested that I had no political experience and would probably bring confusion upon myself and the party, if I attempted to take a public part in politics. With a magnificent gesture he brushed aside my objections.

“But I want you with me in Parliament. I need you there!”

This compelled me to speak somewhat intimately of my personal affairs, and to make it clear to him that it was impossible for me to change the whole current of my life and take part in politics. My explanations convinced him, and the subject was dropped. 76

Though I was deeply moved by the compliment implied by his request, the dramatic critic was still alert at the back of my head and chuckling with inward appreciation. The scene had been worthy of Booth at his best. Cardinal Richelieu could not have surpassed him. As a matter of fact, I have always thought of him since then as “the Cardinal,” and have used the title when speaking of him to intimate friends.

Though I had other interviews with him, none of them equalled the first in the exquisite attention to detail in the stage setting—the low chair, the open fireplace and the turning towards me with infinite suavity and appeal to make his request.

But I do not wish to leave the impression that he was consciously an actor. He naturally made use of his surroundings for dramatic effect. It was not so much that he put on a grand manner as that it was impossible for him ever to lay it off. It was part of the man.

The same man also said:— 77

One of the last interviews I enjoyed strengthened the impression of the “Cardinal.” On the day on which he started to Winnipeg for that triumphal tour which raised such high hope before his defeat in 1917, I had an hour with him in his home. He received me in his study on the second floor. He had just been taking a nap to prepare himself for the fatigues of the journey. He had on a dressing gown of which I remember that the predominating color was a decorative figure in dull

red.

The “Cardinal” received me with his customary graciousness, and for an hour we reviewed the chances of the campaign. When I was leaving him he followed me to the top of the stairs, and as he shook hands he said, with that peculiar serenity that was one of his outstanding characteristics in his later days:

“I may be defeated, but I will not be dishonoured.”

On one occasion Sir Wilfrid spoke in the pavilion of the Horticultural Gardens. During his address hisses came from the audience when he mentioned a paper that had taken issue with him. 78
Sir Wilfrid exclaimed, rebukingly, “How dare any man hiss when another has the courage of his convictions? I do not find fault with the paper because it does not agree with me. We Liberals have our differences, but that fact does not justify hisses.”

Mention has been made of a certain similarity of viewpoint between Laurier and Gladstone. It is true that the great English Liberal was born to large opportunity. His magnificent intellectual gifts were enhanced by all that wealth and culture could do to polish and prepare perhaps the largest mind ever devoted to the service of the State since Parliamentary government began. From his earliest years he had consorted with world-figures—with men who were playing a great part on the great stage of the world. He was admirably trained and equipped at all points to play the part of the public man.

With Sir Wilfrid Laurier it was otherwise. He lacked the adventitious aids of fortune and station which smoothed the path of Gladstone as, until the last ten years, they have smoothed the path of 79
every British Premier, with the solitary exception of Disraeli. The two great Liberal leaders were akin in spirit—and it is the things of the spirit that really matter. It is possible that there was in Sir Wilfrid Laurier, as certainly to the last there was in Gladstone, a certain strain of conservatism, using that word in no narrow party sense. Both belonged to the old school which valued fine manners, and, in the case of both, their fine manners were the outward and visible sign of minds that were rarely fine. But, in spite of this strain of conservatism, both were men imbued through and through with the spirit of genuine Liberalism. The life of each, to his last and latest moment, was a life of growth.

It is as impossible to set bounds to the growth of Liberalism as it is to set bounds to the aspirations of a nation. Those who would seek to reduce Liberal doctrines to formulae, to compress them into a creed, and who would say: “This is the Liberal faith, the whole Liberal faith, and nothing but this is the Liberal faith,” have small conception of the inherent function of Liberalism. That function is to keep abreast of the times, to be in harmony with the spirit of the times, and to be 80
prepared to face the problems of the times with high heart and high hopes, with unconquerable courage and unfaltering faith. Liberal beliefs are no effete and petrified dogmas. They are a living, energizing, vitalizing force. They are that—or they are nothing.

It was Sir Wilfrid Laurier’s distinction, as it was Gladstone’s to take this view of Liberalism. It is true that he belonged, as he himself often said, to the school of Gladstone and Bright. But he did not hold that the tenets of that school must necessarily comprehend all truth. He realized that it is the spirit in which political problems are approached that constitutes the great difference between Liberalism and its opposite. Even he approached those problems in a spirit of sympathy with the aim and ideals of the common people. His ears had caught the tramp of the marching feet of the New Democracy, and to his heart the sound brought not fear but lofty hope. Old in years, but young in heart, he had an unquestionable faith in the honesty of this New Democracy and in its ability to solve its own problems in its own way. Not long ago, speaking of the fuller life for the people which 81
might be expected as one of the outcomes of the war, he said that the England of the future would not be so picturesque or so dignified as the old England, but that it would be a far happier England for the masses of the people. It was the welfare of the masses which was ever nearest his own heart. He saw that all over the world the People’s Day was dawning. He saw it and was glad.

That Sir Wilfrid Laurier was a great, and will prove to have been a lasting, dynamic force in Canadian public life seems to us unquestionable. On the many years of material prosperity that Canada enjoyed while his hand guided the helm of State; on his great achievement in the realm alike of legislation and of administration it is beside our present purpose to dwell. These things are a part, an imperishable part, of the history of our country. But he did much, infinitely much, to give Canadians a sense of national unity and a sense of the dignity of nationhood. His efforts were often frustrated by the schemes of smaller men, with their appeals to racial prejudice and religious intolerance. But he himself steadily strove to weld the Canadian people into one harmonius whole. 82
He certainly did not live to see the consummation of his work in this regard. But there will come a day when the people for whom he laboured will surely remember it and not with ingratitude.

Whoever he may be, the successor to Laurier must take no smaller view than this. Appeals to classes, to interests, and to sections—whether to farmers, to labour, to the manufacturers, or what not—are not the appeals that Liberalism makes. For that appeal is to all good citizens. It is to the civic sense of the whole country.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier has not had an approach of an equal during the last generation. It is not easy to exactly define in what his personality consisted. Facial charm was certainly one of his greatest endowments. He had a remarkably fine and open countenance, with a finely chiselled and expressive mouth, and with a classic brow that was one of the gifts of the gods. No one ever forgot Sir Wilfrid who had the privilege of seeing or hearing him once. The late Sir George Ross once referred to him as “a picture gallery all in himself.” His voice was also one of his great endowments, and his gestures of hands and body were in perfect sympathy with the thoughts he had to express. 83
Behind all this was a finely cultured intellect, and behind this again was a burning French-Canadian soul that added warmth to all his words, gave action and gesture and fire, and made him from a

purely speaking standpoint one of the greatest and most finished orators of his time. But there was more even than this. No man can hold followers simply by words alone. Sir Wilfrid had a wonderfully sympathetic heart, a keen appreciation of the human qualities in man, and coupled with his own personal magnetism, there was a winsomeness that bound his followers to him as with hoops of steel.

He did not ignore the material side of nation-building. He realized the importance of the country's natural resources and the necessity for industrial development; but it was of the very nature of the man that he should think most of the happiness of the people. He saw in Canada the opportunity for a wonderful experiment in nation-making. He realized that wealth and prosperity and national glory are not everything. His ideal of a great nation was that of a free, contented, 84
united and intelligent people, living at peace with each other and with the world. He sought to break down the barriers of prejudice and bigotry and ignorance that those of different races and creeds and parties might live together on terms of harmony and good will. His love was for people rather than for material things, and he attracted the love of people in return. No man in Canada ever attracted a more generous or more genuine measure of love. This was shown by the spontaneous display of personal feeling which his death called forth. And he was loved by the people, not for any great thing he had done, but rather because of what he was.

It was Laurier's desire, too, that Canada should have an opportunity to develop according to the genius of her own people, free from entanglements with old-world feuds and passions. The nations of Europe were the victims of European history and tradition. They lived in an atmosphere of war and strife. So far as it was possible he would have saved Canada from the influence of this old-world spirit. He hesitated about participation in the early days of the South African war. He was thinking 85
of Canada and the Canadian people. When the present war broke out he saw that it was a struggle to the death between civilization and barbarism, and he did not hesitate for a moment as to Canada's duty. But he was not prepared to go to the length of supporting conscription. To him conscription meant militarism, and he dreaded militarism as he hated it.

The Canadian nation stood grief-stricken around that august bier. The hero of so many a gallant fight had succumbed to Death, the last great enemy of all—and even that enemy came to him like a friend.

"When a great man dies,
For years beyond our ken,
The light he leaves behind him lies
Along the paths of men."

So it will be with Sir Wilfrid Laurier. Intrinsically and essentially he was a great man—great in natural gifts, great in vision, great in heart, great in soul, and "as the greatest only are, in his simplicity sublime." Great men, it has been well said, are like great mountains. One cannot fully 86
judge of their real grandeur at close range. So it may well be that we shall have to interpose some distance of time between Sir Wilfrid Laurier and ourselves before we can gauge, with anything approximating to adequacy, how much a bigger man he was than any of his contemporaries.

To the end he was "the greatest fighter of them all." Forty odd years of strenuous public life brought no slackening in the vigour of mind or energy, nor any discouragement as to the ultimate triumph of the principle for which he always stood. There is an elixir of perpetual youth in a good cause and in a good fight.

"I have endeavoured to meet success without elation and reverse without discouragement," he said to his followers in Parliament in May, 1914, in acknowledging their testimonial to him on the completion of forty years of continuous membership in the House of Commons. The "father of Parliament," in point of length of service as in point of ripe judgment, oratorical graces and public experience, he remained, in Opposition as in power, an optimist and an unflagging worker. During 87
the fifteen years of his Premiership Sir Wilfrid Laurier, with the exception of his Imperial Conference trips and his western tour of 1910, and during election campaigns, was scarcely ever away from his post at the Capital. As leader of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition he was daily in his office attending to a large correspondence, looking after the details of party organization, receiving many callers who sought advice or assistance, and keeping abreast, through books and periodicals, of all national problems and world movements.

For half a century Wilfrid Laurier fought the battles of Canadian democracy—for responsible government, for social justice, for equality of opportunity, for freedom for the common people—the ordinary, everyday folk—in the age-long fight between entrenched and aggressive self-interest and altruistic common interest.

"The happiness of the masses of the people is the underlying consideration of government," he said to the students of the University of Toronto, in an address in December, 1913.

And in the policies which he advocated there was proof of his sincere belief in the ideal of 88
government he thus stated. He led the fight for the revision of the tariff downward, so that greedy men might be prevented from taking undue tolls from their fellow-men, so that combines and corporations should be curbed when they attempted "to fix prices one way to the producer and another way to the consumer."

Addressing a great gathering of new foreign settlers in western Canada as Premier, in welcoming them and bidding them partake of the advantages of British citizenship, he feelingly and significantly alluded to this step in his career.

"I live myself in this land," said he, "as an example of the breadth and freedom of British institutions. It is an illustration of that thing upon which the British system is based. I am not of

English blood. My ancestors were of the French race. Yet I am acknowledged as the leader of the Parliament of Canada, irrespective of the blood in my veins. Twenty-two years ago I took the leadership of the Liberal party. Friends came to me after Mr. Blake's retirement and offered me the leadership. I hesitated. I told them that I thought it was not fitting that I, coming from the race of the minority, worshipping with the minority, should accept it. In reply they told me that the Liberal party knew neither race nor creed. They said: 'Whoever is worthy of our land is worthy of our leadership.' And I accepted. 89

"The race is open to all. Any man may come to this land who is willing to work. It matters not who his father was or from what land he came, or at what altar he bows, he can aspire to the best and the highest this land has to offer. Whatever a Briton-born can claim he may claim. British institutions know no difference whatever."

He had great differences to reconcile, and he had more especially to meet and overcome the presumptions which would naturally bar the way to leadership and popularity in the case of a public man whose native tongue was French, but who aspired to rule a community predominantly English in blood and speech.

It is a tribute to the greatness of his character and to his memory to reflect that even in Opposition he was the great outstanding figure in the political life of the country. He did not need office to clothe himself with the dignity that came to a public man. And he was equally a political force in or out of office. There was a glamor that hung over him that attracted men to him. He was the very incarnation of the political aspirations of thousands of men and women, who never saw him in the flesh. To his own immediate followers and political friends he was the proverbial guide, philosopher and friend. 90

It was with great misgivings that Sir Wilfrid accepted the leadership of the Liberal Party, when Edward Blake gave it up. He realized that for a young man of French-Canadian extraction and a Roman Catholic in religion, the road would be difficult for him to traverse. And truth to say, not a few of the Liberals felt dismayed at the prospect. But Sir Wilfrid was not long in showing the people of Canada that they had in him a leader who was guided solely by a desire to do his best for his country no matter who would suffer.

When he took office in 1896, Canada was in a state of business stagnation. Factories were closed, thousands of men were walking the streets for lack of work, and thousands more were fleeing to the United States as from a pestilence. Soup kitchens were kept busy doling out food to those who could pay for none, and it is a fact that idle men in some cities, had to stay in the house for fear of being arrested as vagrants. This was the condition of affairs when Sir Wilfrid took the reins of office. 91

The change that came over the country was magical. People took new heart. Factories began to fire up. Men got back to work. The waste places of the Dominion became settled with thousands of families from the old lands, a home market was procured and the foreign market was again established. An impetus to the forging of the chains of empire was given when Sir Wilfrid in 1897, and again in 1900, granted the British preference. It is now a matter of history how his pilgrimages to England lifted Canada out of the darkness into the light, how this picturesque Canadian figure dazzled the British people and how under his guidance this Canada became a nation in the eyes of the world.

Sir Wilfrid was an optimist. In victory or defeat he never lost sight of his goal, and he never gave up. However, his opponents professed to doubt his loyalty, they had no reason to doubt it. Much misrepresentation of Sir Wilfrid Laurier arose over his action in connection with the Boer war. Yet it is to be remembered that he was the first Canadian Premier to send a Canadian contingent abroad to help the mother country against a common enemy. On this occasion the London Times said: Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the French Roman Catholic Premier, of a self-governing federation, in which British Protestants are in the majority, has expressed more faithfully and more truly than any statesman who has spoken yet, the temper of the new imperial patriotism fostered into self-consciousness by the South African war. 92

A Conservative who always recognised the worth of Laurier as a Canadian, requests the republication of some words of the Liberal chieftain during his last appearance in London, stating that in his opinion they take rank with some of the utterances of Lincoln and Gladstone:

"As for you who stand to-day on the threshold of life. . . . I shall remind you that many problems rise before you: problems of race division, problems of creed differences, problems of economic conflict, problems of national duty and national aspirations. Let me tell you that for the solution of these problems you have a safe guide, an unfailing light, if you remember that faith is better than doubt and love is better than hate. . . . Banish doubt and hate from your life. Let your souls be ever open to the strong promptings of faith and the gentle influence of brotherly love. Be adamant against the haughty; be gentle and kind to the weak. Let your aim and your purpose, in good report or in ill, in victory or in defeat, be so to live, so to strive, so to serve as to do your part to raise the standard of life to higher and better spheres." 93

These are not the words of a politician. They arise transcendent above the ordinary dogmas of strife and intolerance. They breathe moderation and kindness and therefore a perfect index of the character of their author.

"In the thirty years that I have led the Liberal party, my platform has always been Canada first. Whether on one side or another, on this question or that, my guiding star has always been my Canadian country. There is a crisis, and we must fight on as fought the pioneers of the early days in Canada, the strong, stern men who kept in sight their goal of Canada's best interests against all difficulties and obstacles. Let our motto be the same as theirs—'Fortitude in Distress.' There are 94

breakers ahead, but we shall reach the shore if we fight on. We can bring to pass in Canada what was prophesied by a distinguished American once—that the twentieth century would be the century of Canada."—Sir Wilfrid Laurier at Winnipeg, December, 1917.

The coronation of King Edward in 1902 was taken advantage of to hold another imperial conference, when the question of imperial defence came up. Prior to leaving England Sir Wilfrid discussed the invitation in the House. "If it is intended simply to discuss what part Canada is prepared to take in her own defence," he said, "what share of the burden must fall upon us as being responsible for the safety of our own land, certainly we are always prepared to discuss that subject. But there is a school abroad, there is a school in England and in Canada, a school which is perhaps represented on the floor of this parliament, which wants to bring Canada into the vortex of militarism, which is the curse and blight of Europe, I am not prepared to endorse any such policy." 95

This was the traditional attitude of Sir John A. Macdonald and that of Sir Charles Tupper in the speech made at Quebec in 1900. Sir Wilfrid stood by it at the conference, and was supported by Australia.

Many eloquent tributes have been paid to him since his death, but none have surpassed the beautiful tribute which Sir Wilfrid paid to the late Sir John Macdonald, when he passed away twenty-eight years ago. Speaking from his place in Parliament on that occasion, he said:

"The place of Sir John Macdonald in this country was so large and so absorbing that it is almost impossible to conceive that the political life of this country, the fate of this country, can continue without him. His loss overwhelms us. For my part, I say, with all truth, that his loss overwhelms me, and it also overwhelms this Parliament, as if indeed one of the institutions of the land had given way. Sir John now belongs to the ages, and it can be said with certainty that the career which has 96
just closed is one of the most remarkable careers of this century. It would be premature at this time to attempt to fix or anticipate what will be the final judgment of history upon him; but there were in his career and in his life features so prominent and so conspicuous that already they shine with a glow which time cannot alter, which, even now appear before the eye, such as they will appear to the end of history. I think it can be asserted that for the supreme act of governing men Sir John Macdonald was gifted as few men in any land or in any age were gifted—gifted with the highest of all qualities, qualities which would have made him famous wherever exercised, and which would have shone all the more conspicuously the larger the theatre. The fact that he would congregate together elements the most heterogeneous and blend them into one compact party, and to the end of his life keep them steadily under his hand, is perhaps altogether unprecedented. The fact that during all those years he retained unimpaired not only the confidence but the devotion—the ardent devotion—and affection of his party, is evidence that besides those higher qualities of 97
statesmanship to which we were daily witnesses, he was also endowed with those inner, subtle, undefinable graces of the soul which win and keep the hearts of men."

It will be generally admitted that Sir Wilfrid's graceful words, spoken in reference to the great Conservative leader, are singularly applicable to his own case.

"If there is anything to which I have devoted my political life, it is to try to promote unity, harmony and amity between the diverse elements of this country. My friends can desert me, they can remove their confidence from me, they can withdraw the trust they have placed in my hands, but never shall I deviate from that line of policy. Whatever may be the consequences, whether loss of prestige, loss of popularity, or loss of power, I feel that I am in the right, and I know that a time will come when every man will render me full justice on that score."—March 18th., 1900.

"I claim this for the Liberal Government, that we have endeavoured to carry on the policy of this country so as to make Canada a nation—a nation within the British Empire—A nation great in the 98
eyes of the world. For my part, I want to see her lands occupied, her mines developed, her forests cleared, her fisheries exploited, her cities growing, her population increasing, but above all, I want to see our people united.

"I do not know whether my political career or my natural life shall be short or long, but whether short or long, I cherish the hope that I shall have so lived that when deposited in my grave, every Canadian, be he friend or foe, be he English-speaking, or French-speaking Protestant or Catholic, will have to say:

"There rests a man who has given the best of his life of his soul, of his heart to make us an united people." Bowmanville, October, 1899.

"Even those who on principle do not believe in war, admit that this was a just war and that it had to be fought. That union of hearts which exists in the United Kingdom exists also in Canada, in Australia, in New Zealand, yea, even in South Africa—South Africa rent by war less than twenty years ago, but now united under the blessing of British institutions, with all, British and Dutch 99
together, standing ready to shed their blood for the common cause. Sir, there is in this the inspiration and the hope that from this painful war the British Empire may emerge with a new bond of union, the pride of all its citizens, and a living light to all other nations." August 19th., 1914.

"I am a Liberal of the English school. I believe in that school, which has all along claimed that it is the privilege of all subjects, whether high or low, whether rich or poor, whether ecclesiastics or laymen, to participate in the administration of public affairs, to discuss, to influence, to persuade, to convince—but which has always denied even to the highest the right to dictate even to the lowest, but Protestants as well, and I must give an account of my stewardship to all classes. Here am I, a Roman Catholic of French extraction, entrusted by the confidence of the men who sit around me with great and important duties under our constitutional system of government. I am here the acknowledged leader of a great party composed of Roman Catholics and Protestants as well, in 100

which Protestants are in the majority, as Protestants must be in the majority in every party in Canada. Am I to be told, in occupying such a position, that I am to be dictated to as to the course I am to take in this House, by reasons that can appeal to the consciences of my fellow Catholic members, but which do not appeal as well to the consciences of my Protestant colleagues? No. So long as I have a seat in this House, so long as I occupy the position I do now, whenever it shall become my duty to take a stand upon any question whatever, that stand I will take not upon grounds of Roman Catholicism, not upon grounds of Protestantism, but upon grounds which can appeal to the consciences of all men, irrespective of their particular faith, upon grounds which can be occupied by all men who love justice, freedom and toleration." Hansard, March 3rd., 1896.

"If, upon my death bed, I could say, that thanks to my efforts, one solitary error had disappeared, a single prejudice had been eradicated, that by my sheer exertion race hatred had been caused to disappear from Canada's soil—I should, indeed, die happily with the conviction and assurance that my life had not been lived in vain." 101

Sir Wilfrid Laurier was a true Canadian, a great British citizen. If he had one aim in life which stood high above all others it was to contrive a happy, a United Canada. "You are aware," he said, in that superb speech delivered at Quebec in 1894, "that in the eleventh century certain men started out from Normandy, Anjou, Brittany, and Angouleme to capture England. Duke William of Normandy was their leader, and our present sovereign is the last scion of a royal race that dates back to William the Conqueror. In the sixteenth century men started from the same province of Normandy, Anjou, Brittany and Angouleme to colonize the fertile lands on the banks of the St. Lawrence. In the next century the men of both races met here and you know what happened. Well, is it not permissible to hope that a day will come, when, instead of facing each other on hostile purpose intent, the men of the two countries, the descendants of the Britons, Angevins and Normans, who invaded England in the eleventh century, and the descendants of the Angevins, 102
Normans, and Britons, who peopled Canada in the sixteenth, will meet together, not to fight, but to hold the grand assizes of peace and commerce? I may not live long enough to see that day, but if my career should be sufficiently extended to allow me to take part in these assizes, it will be a happy day to me. I shall attend them bearing with me my Canadian nationality, and I believe that I shall continue the work of Mr. Lafontaine and Sir George Etienne Cartier, and that the result will be all to the advantage of French Canada. Gentlemen, our situation as a country is full of difficulties, and those difficulties are no doubt immense. Still, there is nothing desperate about them. What this country needs above all else is peace, concord, and union between all the elements composing its population. Let us show the world that if we reverence the past, we also have a regard for the future. Let us show to the world that union does not mean absorption, and that autonomy does not mean antagonism. Victor Hugo, recalling his double origin, used these fine words:

'Fidèle au double sang qu'on verse dans ma veine, 103
Mon pere, vieux soldat, ma mere, Vendeenne.'

("True to the double blood that was poured into my veins by my father, an old soldier, and my mother, a Vendean.")

"Let us also be true to our double origin, true to the memory and the reverence of the great nation from which we have sprung, and true also to the great nation which has given us freedom. And in all the difficulties, all the pains, and all the vicissitudes of our situation, let us always remember that love is better than hatred, and faith better than doubt, and let hope in our future destinies be the pillar of fire to guide us in our career."

England expects every man to do his duty! I am going to do my duty, not only by Canada, but by the Empire. Britain, thank God, does not require help from anybody, but if ever the occasion should arise when Britain is summoned to stand against the whole world in arms, she can depend upon the loyal support of Canada and the Canadian people. The Canadian people are free and loyal; loyal because they are free.

The "Old Chief" as he was familiarly, and lovingly called by his followers, occupied a very large 104
place in the affections of the British people. There was something romantic about this French-Canadian Prime Minister, who took the premier place at Imperial Conferences, and who argued that formal treaties, and hard and fast agreements were not necessary to bind the Empire together.

"What do you think of the English people?" Sir Wilfrid was once asked.

"The English are all right; they are good sports, good losers, and on the whole I have no reason to complain of their treatment during my long term of public life."

"Are they not somewhat arrogant?"

"All strong people are somewhat arrogant, but they are fair to a great degree," he replied.

"I was born a Catholic," he declared, "and I will die, of course, in that faith," and when I replied that he had had a pretty hard row to hoe in his lifetime with certain priests and prelates, he replied: "Yes, that is true, but others of the same cloth have shown me much kindness that it sweetens the bitterness of the pill which a few of them have administered. Here," he added, in the most earnest 105
tones and expression, "is the whole situation. Without taking as gospel everything that a curé may say, or even a bishop, I firmly believe in the principles of the Roman Catholic Church, and, as I have stated, I will die in the faith. In reply to your remark as to the difficulties which have from time to time beset me during the past thirty-five years, I may say that there are a good many people who have tried to drive me out of the Catholic Church, and the means which they have used have not at all times been fair and above board, but, thank God, they have not succeeded up to the present time, and they will have quite as little success in the future as in the past."

"I have no hesitation in saying that if the day should come when the supremacy of Britain on the high seas should be challenged it will be the duty of all the daughter nations to close around the old Motherland, and to make a rampart about her to ward off any attack. I hope that day will never come, but should it come, I would deem it my duty to devote what might be left of my life and 106
energy to stump the country and endeavor to impress upon my fellow-countrymen, especially my compatriots in the Province of Quebec, the conviction that the salvation of England is the salvation of our own country, and therein lies the guaranty of our civil and religious freedom and everything we value in life. These are the sentiments which animate the Government on this occasion."

"This session has been called for the purpose of giving the authority of Parliament and the sanction of law to such measures as have already been taken by the Government, and any further measures that may be needed, to insure the defence of Canada and to give what aid may be in our power to the Mother Country in the stupendous struggle which now confronts us. Speaking for those who sit around me, speaking for the wide constituency which we represent in this House, I hasten to say that to all these measures we are prepared to give immediate assent. If in what has been done or in what remains to be done there may be anything which in our judgment should not be done or should be differently done, we raise no question, we take no exception, we offer no 107
criticism, and we shall offer no criticism so long as there is danger at the front. It is our duty, more pressing upon us than all other duties, at once, on this first day of this extraordinary session of the Canadian Parliament, to let Great Britain know, and to let the friends and foes of Great Britain know, that there is in Canada but one mind and one heart, and that all Canadians stand behind the Mother Country, conscious and proud that she has engaged in this war, not from any selfish motive, for any purpose of aggrandizement, but to maintain untarnished the honour of her name, to fulfil her obligation to her Allies, to maintain her treaty obligations and to save civilization from the unbridled lust of conquest and power.

"We are British subjects, and to-day we are face to face with the consequences which are involved in that proud fact. Long have we enjoyed the benefit of our British citizenship; to-day it is our duty to accept its responsibilities and its sacrifices.

"If my word can be heard beyond the walls of this House in the Province from which I come; 108
among the men whose blood flows in my own veins, I should like them to remember that in taking their place to-day in the ranks of the Canadian army to fight for the cause of the Allied nations, a double honour rests upon them. The very cause for which they are called upon to fight is to them doubly sacred."

Sir Wilfrid Laurier was one of the chief speakers at the great musical festival given by the American residents of Toronto under the auspices of the American Aid Society, on Thursday, September 10th., 1914. The concert was held in the Arena, and the entire receipts were donated to the Canadian Patriotic Fund. The Liberal leader said:

"Some few weeks ago Canada deliberated upon the situation, the stupendous struggle in which Britain is engaged, and the part which Canada bears. All vestiges of political differences were eliminated. We found in comparing our views that we stood exactly upon the same platform. Without a dissenting voice it was the unanimous opinion of the Canadian Parliament that the war in which England is engaged to-day is a sacred war, and that Canada must help to its last man and its 109
last dollar.

"We must face the situation as it is, and as Lord Kitchener told us some few days ago, we must have more men. There is a difference between the British nation and the nations of the continent. The nations of the continent get their soldiers by law; by conscription, and the enforcement of authority; the British nation get their soldiers not by law, but by appealing to the patriotism of men. Lord Kitchener tells us he wants more soldiers. If he wants more soldiers from Canada let him say the word and we will respond to meet him. We are behind the Mother Country, and let us send them a message that this war must be fought to a finish, and that arms must not be laid down until the principle which it has been fought for is vindicated, and until the day has come when right takes the place of might."

From Laurier's great speech in the Academy of Music, Quebec, June 26, 1877, in which he declared himself a Liberal of the English school, and an opponent of clerical intimidation:

"The constitution of the country rests on the freely expressed wish of each election. It intends 110
that each elector shall cast his vote freely and willingly as he deems best. If the greatest number of the electors of a country are actually of an opinion, and that, owing to the influence exercised upon them by one or more men, or owing to words they have heard or writings they have read, their opinion changes, there is nothing in the circumstance but what is perfectly legitimate. Although the opinion they express is different from the one they have expressed without such intervention, still it is the one they desire to express conscientiously, and the constitution meets with the entire application. If, however, notwithstanding all reasoning, the opinion of the electors remains the same, but that, by intimidation or fraud, they are forced to vote differently, the opinion which they express is not their opinion, and the constitution is violated. As I have already said, the constitution intends that each one's opinion shall be freely expressed as he understands it at the moment of expression, and the collective reunion of the individual opinions freely expressed, forms the government of the country.

"I am amongst you to-day, not as a politician, but only as a Canadian, and, I may add, as a 111
French-Canadian, as a Canadian of my race, and when I go to the English Provinces I am quite as proud to call myself as such. I am here to tell you all that we owe to England and to France. What we want before everything is equal rights for everyone, the rights for which England and France have fought, the respect of minorities and the respect of justice and loyalty, so shamefully outraged by Germany.

“Do not forget that the fact that Britain was at war constituted for Canada a new condition of things, which imposed new duties upon the Government, upon the Opposition and upon the whole Canadian people. The moment that Great Britain was at war, Canada was at war. This is a truth which, while we were in office, we had not only to proclaim, but for which we had to provide in a manner consonant with the new condition, a new situation created by the development of Canada, not as a colony, but as a nation within the British Empire.

“These truths were not accepted by all. It was the occasion of a great deal of misrepresentation; 112
it contributed very much towards the defeat which we suffered in 1911, but for my part let me say here that I have no regrets. Better be it ten times over and more that we should stand here defeated for having had the courage of presenting to the Canadian people new duties which have had effects, rather than to still be in office by having shirked the duty which was incumbent upon the administration.

“But at that time it was easy to appeal to prejudices, but the truth that when Britain is at war, Canada is at war also, came in only too concrete a manner, for, after the declaration of war, right here in the city of Montreal you had your harbour full of ships loaded with the produce of the land ready to take to the sea, still remaining here owing to the war, because if they had taken to the sea they would have been liable to seizure by the enemy. They did not and could not take to the seas until the ocean had been swept by the British Navy, and until the British Navy was ready to escort them, until the duty was forthcoming by the British Navy, which, in my conviction, it behooved the Canadian people to do themselves.

“We are a free people, absolutely free. The charter under which we live has put it in our power 113
to say whether we should take part in such a war or not. It is for the Canadian people, the Canadian Parliament and the Canadian Government alone to decide. This freedom is at once the glory and honour of Britain, which granted it, and of Canada, which used it to assist Britain. Freedom is the keynote of all British institutions. There is no compulsion upon those dependencies of Great Britain which have reached the stature of Dominions such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and such Crown Dependencies as India. They are all free to take part or not as they think best. That is the British freedom which much to the surprise of the world, and greatly to the dismay of the German Emperor, German professors, and German diplomats caused the rush from all parts of the British Empire to assist the Mother Country in this stupendous struggle. Freedom breeds loyalty. Coercion always was the mother of rebellion.

“I was asked by someone why should I support the Government in their policy of sending men to the front. Why should not the Liberal party have remained quiet and passive and let all the worries 114
be left to the Government? My answer was, ‘I have no particular love for the Government, but I love my country, I love the land of my ancestors, France. I love the land of liberty, above all, England, and rather than that I in my position of leader of the Liberal party, should remain passive and quiescent, I would rather go out of public life, and life altogether.’

“When the Prime Minister announced his intention of placing all available forces at the disposal of the British Government, what was the policy of the Liberal party? There were three currents of opinion at the time. There was first of all the Imperialist who would have Canada take part in all the wars of the Empire. There was the Nationalist who would not have Canada take part in any war of the Empire at all, and there was the Liberal position. What was our position? We stood for Canadian autonomy. We upheld the sovereignty of Canada. I have several times on the floor of the House sustained that position. I claimed for the Parliament of Canada, the right which John Bright claimed in the Imperial Parliament in the Crimean War. Time has shown that he was right. It has been 115
established that the Crimean War was without result and had no cause. So I claimed for the Parliament of Canada the same right that John Bright claimed for the Imperial Parliament. And I should add that by doing so I scandalized both the Imperialists and the Nationalists.

“Neither of them challenged the position. No one denied that the Canadian Parliament had the right of pronouncement on the question of participation or non-participation. But the Imperialist wanted Parliament to close its eyes and to fight in any war. The Nationalist wanted Parliament to close its eyes and to fight in no wars. We Liberals asked for nothing more than the liberty which had been guaranteed to us.

“If I state our position now, it is not because I wish to raise a discussion on these questions. So long as the war continues, so long as the soil of Belgium is occupied, so long as the last German has not been kicked out of France, so long is this not the time to discuss these questions. All our attention should be directed to the prosecution of the war and to the bringing about of that final victory which we hope to secure. But when the war is over we shall have to take up these questions 116
again. And the people of Canada will be called upon to decide between the opposing parties. If I mention the questions now it is merely because I wish to indicate the motives of our actions.

“I have given you the reasons which made me take the attitude I took in this war, and though I am free to admit that I preferred to fight rather than support the Government in a case of this kind all other considerations should disappear. To complete my thoughts, so that no one may misunderstand me, I will declare that had I been in power I should have followed the same policy myself, though in details of administration I should have tried to do better. Had we been in power we should not be reproached with faults, errors and the friends which now hang everywhere. But I will not talk of that in this discussion. I did not come here to-night for that reason. It is not the time to discuss these questions; they will be discussed later, do not fear.

“What are the rights and duties of the Liberal party? In my opinion, the party should stand for one thing alone, for public good and general interest; its spirit should be such that it can approve or 117
condemn accordingly as the public good and general interest demand condemnation or approbation.

“We maintained that spirit in power, and we maintain it now. When we lost, we were beaten, but we were not subdued.”

From a speech before the Quadrennial Conference of the Methodist Church of Canada, at Ottawa, Sept. 23, 1914:

"The sword will not be put back in the scabbard," he said, "until this Imperial bully has been taught that this 'scrap of paper' is a solemn obligation, and that solemn obligations between nations, as between individuals must be observed. There can be no peace until heroic Belgium has had her rights and her lands restored, and her wrongs repaired. There can be no peace until the world knows that it is to be governed, not by brute force, but by truth, liberty and justice, for which the British flag stands."

As for his own record as statesman, British and Canadian, he remarked only a few weeks before his death: 118

"Well, I think that when all facts are reviewed in their right perspective, history will not deal unkindly with me, I am content to leave my record to the judgment of men's thoughts, and to future generations of Canadians."

Fifty-five years ago he graduated at law, and on that occasion said: "Two races share to-day the soil of Canada. The French and English races have not always been friends; but I hasten to say it, and I say it to our glory, that race hatreds are finished on Canadian soil. It matters not the language the people speak or the altars at which they kneel."

The advice he gave the young men of a Liberal Club in Montreal reveals his philosophic temperament: "Let me give you a word of good counsel. During your career you will have to suffer many things which will appear to you as supreme injustice. Let me say to you that you should never allow your religious convictions to be affected by anything which appears to you an injustice. Let me ask of you never to allow your religious convictions to be affected by the acts of men. Your 119 convictions are immortal; your convictions are not only immortal, but their base is eternal. Let your convictions be always calm, serene, and superior to the inevitable trials of life, and show to the world that Catholicism is compatible with the exercise of liberty in its highest acceptation."

In a speech which he delivered in Quebec in 1894, he gave expression to his religious ideals in the following passage:

"In religion I belong to the school of Montalembert and Lacordaire, of the men who were the greatest perhaps of their age in loftiness of character and ability of thought. I know of no grander spectacle than that of Montalembert and Lacordaire, two adolescents, two children almost, undertaking to conquer in France freedom of education, and succeeding in their object after many years of struggle. I know of no finer spectacle than that furnished by Montalembert confronting the French bourgeoisie, impregnated, as they were, with that dissolving materialism, the Voltairean skepticism of the eighteenth century, and exclaiming: 'We are the sons of the Crusaders and shall not retreat before the sons of Voltaire.' I know of no greater or more beautiful spectacle than that of 120 Lacordaire proclaiming from the pulpit of Notre Dame the truths of Christianity to the incredulous crowd, and teaching them that life is a sacrifice and is only rendered worthy by duty accomplished."

Sir Wilfrid Laurier's last appearance in London was at the Imperial Conference in 1911, and it was at this gathering that he made the notable statement,

"I represent a country which has no grievances."

All his hopes and aspirations are contained in his inspiring message to the Acadians of Nova Scotia:

"Thank Providence," he said, "that we live in a country of absolute freedom and liberty. Let us always bear in mind our duties, for duty is always inherent in right. Our fathers had to labour to secure these rights. Now let us fulfil our part. Three years ago, when visiting England at the Queen's Jubilee, I had the privilege of visiting one of the marvels of Gothic architecture which the 121 hand of genius, guided by an unerring faith, had made a harmonious whole, in which granite, marble, oak and other materials were blended. This cathedral is an image of the nations I hope to see Canada become. As long as I live, as long as I have the power to labour in the service of my country, I shall always repel the idea of changing the nature of its different elements. I want the marble to remain the marble; I want the granite to remain the granite; I want the oak to remain the oak; I want the sturdy Scotchman to remain the Scotchman; I want the brainy Englishman to remain the Englishman; I want the warm-hearted Irishman to remain the Irishman; I want to take all these elements and build a nation that will be foremost among the great powers of the world."

Sir Wilfrid Laurier's message to the students of the University of Toronto in 1913 is recalled as one of the most inspiring utterances of his long career. On that occasion he said:

"My young friends, go out into the world to service. Make the highest thought of service your 122 inspiration. Problems there are—big problems. To-morrow and the day after to-morrow, it will be your turn to grapple with them. Serve God and your country. Be firm in the right, as God gives you to see the right. You may not always succeed. Progress is often punctuated with reverses. You may meet reverse—but the following day stand up again and renew the conflict for truth and justice shall triumph in the end."

When a man becomes satisfied he becomes a Tory. The life of a Liberal is one of unceasing effort towards progress and encouraging development in all that makes for the betterment of mankind. It is easy to read articles of appreciation upon a man when he is gone, but if anyone is so poor in reflection as to overlook the fact that Laurier worked hard all his life he does an injustice to himself and to the record of Sir Wilfrid. Before he became leader of the Liberal Party about 32 years ago, Sir Wilfrid had visited many portions of the Dominion in support of his leaders, Mackenzie and Blake, upon all occasions advocating the Liberal cause, not only in Quebec, but in the Maritime 123

Provinces and in Ontario. His first election as leader was in 1891, and he all but carried the country, for in the previous three years he addressed many meetings. In 1893, after the National Liberal Convention he toured Ontario for months. In 1894 he took a series of meetings in Ontario before going West right through to the Pacific Coast, addressing over 60 meetings and taking part in numerous smaller gatherings. The effect of this tour was that whereas he had but one supporter in 1894 west of the Great Lakes, he in 1896 carried the West by a majority of three. In the fall of 1895 Laurier spent nearly two months in Ontario, and addressed 56 large gatherings besides taking part in smaller assemblies and receptions. The effect of all this was that in the session of 1896 Laurier had a commanding knowledge of the conditions of the country, and the people not only admired him but trusted him. In 1896 he carried 48 seats in Ontario, and the average number of seats he carried in 1896, 1900, 1904 and 1908 was 40. As the years stole over him he could not carry on with his former vigour, but he had to carry on without the support that should have been 124
accorded him by those who sat in Cabinet with him. In 1910 Laurier took a grand tour of the four Western Provinces, and in all general elections never spared himself. The efforts in this regard in 1917 were the wonder and admiration of supporters and opponents alike.

In 1918-19 he took up the task of supervising the Liberal reorganization in Ontario and of urging the Liberals in all the other provinces also to get together. He died in the midst of this work.

These outward manifestations of Laurier in action are mentioned to remind each and all who may desire a place in the galaxy of Liberal leaders that they cannot lead merely by praising the dead and wishing to be hailed as being born to something for which they never laboured to qualify. Volumes will be written on Laurier's mental and other qualifications, but the author should not forget to record his struggle to give to the people the benefit of his endowment enlarged by practical application and consultation with them.

The first and most wise step was the selection by Sir Wilfrid Laurier of the strongest possible 125
colleagues to form his Cabinet. No abler body of men ever presided over the destinies of Canada—a fact admitted, even by opponents. It was truly a great combination which instilled much needed confidence in the people. To form it Sir Wilfrid had to go outside the ranks of the men who had fought the battles of the party in Opposition in the Dominion House, and who no doubt expected preferment. But the wisdom of his choice has never been questioned, and the record of his Government is the most ample justification of it.

The Customs tariff was properly the first problem to be tackled, as it is the hub of the wheels of industry and commerce. The Liberal party had taken office upon a declared policy, to substitute for the Conservative tariff, a sound, fiscal policy, which, while not doing injustice to any class, would promote domestic and foreign trade and hasten the return of prosperity. They had also declared that the tariff should be reduced to the needs of honest, economical and efficient Government, that it should be so adjusted as to make free or bear as lightly as possible upon the necessaries of life and should be so arranged as to permit freer trade with the whole world, particularly with Great 126
Britain and the United States.

The first step taken by the Government was the eminently practical one of appointing a committee of its members to ascertain with exactitude the precise situation of all classes and sections of the country and their actual needs. No hole and corner methods were adopted by the committee, and there were no private meetings between Ministers and manufacturers in the Windsor Hotel at Montreal. Everybody was invited to give expression to his views. To meet the convenience of the public, meetings were held in most of the principal cities and towns.

The result of the labours of the committee, and subsequent daily meetings of the Cabinet for months, was the promulgation of a tariff, which judged by the best possible test, actual results, created a revolution in the industrial life and activities of the country. Briefly stated the new tariff.

1. Materially reduced the duties on many necessities and staple commodities used by consumers generally.

2. Placed on the free list certain articles of prime necessity to the farmer, the miner, fisherman 127
and manufacturer.

3. Reduced the duties on iron and steel which constitute the staple raw materials for many industries; duties on other raw materials were also lowered.

4. Simplified the classification of articles for duty purposes and thereby assured more uniform administration.

5. And, by no means least, gave a substantial preference to the products and manufactures of Great Britain over the rest of the world.

6. Obtain a Reciprocity Agreement Act with Canada and the United States, but which the people of Canada refused to accept.

The Liberal tariff was the first serious attempt made in Canada towards equality of treatment and reconciliation of conflicting interests. No class or interest was singled out for undue favouritism. The needs of all were considered. Herein lies the difference between the Conservative and Liberal attitudes on the tariff. The formula of the Conservatives for tariff making always has been the simple one of giving protection to the manufacturer without reference to the rest of the 128
community. The Liberals on the other hand believe in being fair all round and in distributing the burdens of taxation as much as possible. Consider the situation for a moment. We have five great sources of national wealth. The farm, forest, fisheries, mines and manufacturing industries, on the income of which we keep our national house. It will be obvious that the interests and needs of these various producing branches are not identical. They conflict in some instances very strongly. The farmer for instance has to pay higher prices for his articles of necessity and comfort by reason of customs duties imposed thereon, whereas the prices for his produce are largely determined in the markets of the world. The miner, too, could buy most of his supplies and machinery cheaper if they were free from duty. The fishermen, who are chiefly located in the provinces forming the extreme boundaries of the Dominion, are unable to supply the markets in our principal centres of population

by reason of the great distance separating them therefrom, and are consequently obliged to export the bulk of their catch to foreign markets easier to reach, but where they have to encounter stiff competition. The lumberman also is affected by the tariff on his commodities. Manufacturing 129
industries are of immense benefit to the country, but not more so than the agricultural industries, indeed if we take the population engaged and the capital invested in farming and ranching the agricultural interests bulk greater in the national wealth. Everybody recognizes that manufacturing institutions are necessary to build up a great nation and acknowledges that it would be undesirable to devote our attention purely to pastoral pursuits.

The Liberal Government recognizing all these salient factors endeavoured to strike a fair balance and thereby promote the utmost development in all industrial pursuits. The principal thought in their minds was to provide the maximum of profitable labour for the people in all spheres of activity which surely is the truest and highest duty of statesmanship.

The extent of the reduction in taxation brought about by the tariff can be best arrived at by taking the average rate of customs duty imposed by the Conservatives during the last years they were in office, and applying it to the imports under the Liberal rule. In 1896, which was the last 130
year of Conservative administration, $18.28 was on the average collected on every $100 worth of goods imported into the country. If the same rate had been collected during the time the Liberals were in office, instead of collecting duty to the amount of $605,000,000 they would have collected $685,000,000, so that there was an actual reduction of $80,000,000 in fifteen years. This is at the rate of about $5,500,000 per annum. In addition to this saving one has to consider the reduced price of Canadian manufacturers to the consumer by reason of the reduction in protection, because undoubtedly as a general rule, although not in every case, the selling prices of Canadian manufacturers are based upon the amount of protection they enjoy.

Again there is the indirect saving to the people in reduced prices on foreign exports to Canada, by reason of the operation of a British Preferential tariff. The United States exporters to Canada, for instance, had to reduce their price to Canadian buyers to off-set the reduction in duties in favour of British goods. This is an undoubted fact.

Another way of arriving at the extent of the reduction in taxation brought about by the Liberal 131
Government, is to take the average rate of duty imposed by Conservatives during the eighteen years they were in office, which was $19.10 on every $100 worth of goods imported into the country. If the same rate had been applied to the imports during the fifteen years from 1896 to 1911, the additional taxation which would have been imposed would have amounted to $110,000,000, so that there was a saving to that extent to the people of the country under Liberal rule.

Perhaps the most outstanding feature of the new tariff was the adoption of a preference in favour of British goods, and it was probably the most popular step ever taken by any Government in Canada. Judged by results, it has been highly beneficial alike to Canada, Great Britain and the Empire. This preference at first consisted of a reduction of 1-8 from the general tariff rates. A year or so afterwards the reduction was increased from 1-8 to 1-4 and later to 1-3. Subsequently the flat reduction of 1-3 was abandoned and a specific preferential rate provided for each item or article in the tariff. Such specific rate, however, on the whole averages a reduction of 1-3. The benefits of the 132
preference were given not only to Great Britain but by successive steps to nearly all the British colonies.

The preference granted by the Liberal Government was exactly the tonic that was necessary to stimulate British trade. From the moment it became law the trade started to boom and it has steadily and rapidly increased ever since. But the increase in British trade was not the only beneficial result. The preference substantially reduced duties to the Canadian consumer on the most important staple commodities, and thereby further implemented the pledge of the Liberal party to reduce taxation.

Having dealt with the preference feature of the tariff we will now resume the consideration of the general subject. Well as they believe they had wrought in the creation of their tariff, the Liberal Government were not content. They knew that a great deal more was needed to bring about a betterment of conditions. They felt that the most vigorous and progressive measures were necessary to put Canada in its proper place on the map of the industrial world, and to afford scope 133
for the exercise of the natural ambition of its people. They realized that the farmer could not be benefitted much by protective duties on his produce, but they saw that they could benefit him by enlarging the means, and cheapening the cost, of transportation, and they devoted their best energies towards improving and extending transportation facilities all over the country. They saw also that the manufacturer could be benefitted by enlarging the home market, and they instituted an aggressive immigration policy which developed the great North West in a marvellous way. Step by step in the most vigorous manner and without let-up the great work of building surely and strongly was undertaken, and concurrent with it the country grew more prosperous.

The finances were so handled as to show a substantial surplus each year instead of the era of deficits in Conservative days.

The great canal system of the country was rushed to completion.

The Crows Nest Pass Railway was built, thereby facilitating the development of the immense 134
mineral resources of interior British Columbia—in the Kootenay District.

The Intercolonial Railway which had its Western terminus in what was then a comparatively small town, namely Levis, was badly handicapped in securing traffic from the West, and was extended to Montreal, the commercial metropolis of the country.

Later on the construction of the Transcontinental Railway was entered upon and was well on towards completion, when the Liberals went out of office in 1911.

By means of Government guarantees and subsidies a third Transcontinental Railway, the Canadian Northern Railway was made possible.

Immigrants to the number of nearly 2,000,000 were brought into the country in fifteen years, a large number of whom went on the land resulting in a magnificent development of the West and North-West.

Free land grants to railways were discontinued and the public lands were reserved for the actual settlers.

Ocean ports, harbours and rivers were vastly improved. A 30-foot clear channel was provided in 135
the St. Lawrence from Montreal to Quebec.

Postal rates were reduced substantially, and the Money Order system simplified and extended.

Free Rural mail delivery was established.

Canal and steam boat duties were abolished in the interest of promoting cheap transportation by water.

A Railway Commission was appointed which admittedly was one of the best pieces of constructive legislation ever adopted in Canada. That Commission became practically the master of the railways.

A Labour Department was created which has done splendid work in averting and settling strikes.

Agriculture was aided in a hundred and one ways.

Cold storage facilities of an excellent character were provided for the products of the farm and fisheries.

Commercial agents were appointed in the principal countries of the world.

A Canadian Mint was established.

The resources of the country were splendidly exhibited at every Exposition held throughout the world.

From time to time the tariff was modified to meet changed conditions, and in 1907 a complete 136
revision was made, again by a committee of the Ministers, after consulting with the people.

The French Treaty was extended so as to comprise our principal productions instead of as formerly only a few articles of comparatively trifling importance.

A treaty was entered into with Japan whereby we got most favoured nation treatment in that country.

As a result of our institution of preferential trade we got a preference in New Zealand. As a direct benefit from this the British Columbia fishermen captured the import trade of that country.

An intermediate tariff was established as a standing invitation to other countries to reciprocate in trade, and Holland, Belgium and Italy were admitted to the benefits of that tariff for corresponding advantages given to us.

Through the efforts of the Liberal Minister of Agriculture the vexatious quarantine regulations that existed for some years between the United States and Canada were abolished.

A sur-tax was imposed upon Germany by way of retaliation for Canadian products being placed 137
on the maximum tariff of Germany.

To prevent the slaughtering of manufactured goods in the Canadian market a law known as the Anti-Dumping Act was passed, which effectively operates against such unfair trade warfare.

A Commission of Conservation was appointed, the object being to conserve our natural resources and to disseminate full information in regard to them.

Dominion Government securities were placed on the favoured trustee list of Great Britain.

An Assay office was established at Vancouver which materially aided in retaining our Yukon trade.

Substantial financial assistance was given towards the construction of a Pacific cable, Canada bearing its full share of this expenditure.

Throughout the career of the Liberal Government the revenues were buoyant, notwithstanding considerable decreased taxation and the financial situation was always of the best.

In a word, the men at the helm knew their business and attended to it, in a thoroughly 138
workmanlike manner. Their successive acts of genuine, constructive statesmanship along practical lines filled the people with hope, and made them gird up their loins for supreme individual efforts in industrial life. The wisdom of their legislation and administration and its accompanying prosperity of the people attracted the attention of the whole world, particularly the Mother Country, and started a flow of much needed capital to develop our great natural resources, a flow which went on unceasingly throughout the Liberal regime, increasing and increasing all the time as our needs were made manifest. Canada was then the favourite investment field of the Empire.

Under Sir Wilfrid Laurier a new Canada arose. The country found itself and for the first time realized its immense possibilities. It was an era of the full dinner pail, the first golden age in Canada’s history. Every legitimate industry from the Atlantic to the Pacific, speaking generally, prospered. Manufacturing institutions were enlarged and enlarged again and again to meet the demands. The farmers shared in the prosperity probably better than any others. The price of farm 139
products increased materially and the home and foreign markets were greatly extended, the results being seen in the increase in farm land values and a more rapid payment in full of farm mortgages than ever before. The much deplored exodus under the Tory regime was practically stopped. The young Canadian found Canada quite good enough for him.

When the Laurier Government took office Canada had not yet “found herself.” For years progress had been slow and there appeared to be an almost entire absence of the snap and vigorous aggressiveness which soon after became the characteristic of Canadians. Deficits were annually recorded in the national finances; foreign trade was practically stationary; manufacturers were making little or no headway; the great Northwest was undeveloped; immigrants came in comparatively few numbers, and, what was worse, the country seemed unable to retain her own people. The situation which confronted the new Prime Minister was one calculated to discourage a 140
man whose Canadianism was less confident and sure, whose vision was less clear and whose zeal

for service was less imperative.

On the evening of the day upon which the Earl of Aberdeen, then Governor-General, summoned Wilfrid Laurier and entrusted him with the task of forming an Administration—even before the personnel of his Government was announced—he was called upon to make his first public utterance as Prime Minister. It was on the evening of July 8, 1896, at Montreal, and the occasion was, by strange significance, the Canadian reception to the officers of the British warships "Intrepid" and "Tartar."

"I appreciate to-day," was the first word of the new Prime Minister, "in the presence of the representatives of the naval forces of our Empire, and occupying the position I do, having just been called a few minutes previously by his Excellency the Governor-General to assume the duties of First Citizen of the Dominion—I appreciate to-day more than ever the strength and significance of that order by Britain's greatest Admiral on the day of the battle of Trafalgar: 'England expects 141
every man to do his duty.' I am going to do my duty, not only by Canada, but by the Empire. Britain, thank God, does not require help from anybody, but if ever the occasion should arise when Britain is summoned to stand against the whole world in arms, she can depend upon the loyal support of Canada and the Canadian people. The Canadian people are free and loyal, loyal because they are free."

With this pledge Wilfrid Laurier took office as Canada's Premier. The boy of St. Lin was still preaching his growing conception of Canada and her place in the Empire.

The task of this first French-Canadian Premier was not an easy one. Had he been merely a son of his race, had he been merely a convert to the English-speaking conception, had he been merely the champion of a cause or the balance-wheel of politics, his influence might have maimed the national progress of the Dominion for a century. As it was, he conceived for himself the rôle of a Canadian. He felt that the great need of Canada for Canada—and for the Empire, too—was Canadians. There were plenty of French Nationalists—he had known them in his youth; he found them again in his 142
maturity. There were plenty of Anglo-Saxon ultra-imperialists—he had already become familiar with fire-brand jingoism. There were plenty of indifferent materialists—he realized the danger of their disease to a young and growing country. But Canadians could unify, Canadians could build, Canadians could become great and strong. A Canada of Canadians "free and loyal; loyal because they are free"—was to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the most potent Imperial asset the Dominion could provide for the motherland. He had studied his history. He knew the fate of empires bound by bonds of brittle iron. He dreaded a crumbling Imperium. He dreaded, too, the idea of a hobbled "sub-nation." But he had a strong and enduring faith in the assured permanency of an Empire of "free and loyal" daughter Dominions knit together by ties of common interest, common endeavour and common devotion to the cause of democracy and the advancement of Christianity and civilization.

The Liberalism or the Conservatism that continues to be founded on the accident and the prejudice of birth, that believes in "my party and my father's party, right or wrong," is the real 143
cause of the discouraging inertia of public opinion that often allows the self-interested few to practically control elections and governments, that prevents or retards reform and makes of a free democracy a bureaucratic tyranny. Liberalism is a positive reasoned belief and every Liberal should be able, apart from opinions as to the Government or the issues of the day, to justify his faith according to cardinal principles of good government.

What are the fundamental distinctions between Liberalism and Conservatism? The words themselves embody the respective historical attitudes of the two parties toward the main function of government.

Liberalism is in essence the problem of realizing liberty. It seeks the setting free of the mass of the people in regard to self-government, trade, religion, education, industry, in all the manifold ramifications of society. Conservatism, on the other hand, means at bottom restriction. It means the conserving of vested rights, the centralization of government in the "governing classes," setting the balance on social progress.

The function of government is to define the rights of the individual in terms of the common good 144
and to think of the common good in terms of the welfare of the individual. In the case of Liberalism the emphasis has usually been on the "common good." In the case of Conservatism the emphasis is usually on the "individual." Historically the particular "individuals" have belonged to the authoritative or vested interest classes. That motto has been "what we have we hold." Liberalism has found its main support in the masses. The natural result has been that legislation with each party, has been mainly for the classes their leaders represent.

Liberalism recognizes that the teaching of history shows that progress is more continuous and secure when men are content to deal with great reforms piecemeal than when they seek to destroy root and branch in order to erect a complete new system which has captured the idealistic imagination. But its grappling with reforms is continuous. Conservatism, while believing in "the good of things as they are," has usually grappled with reforms under the stimulus of an increasingly feared and potent democracy. Liberalism has had to wrench from Conservatism responsible 145
government by the people, manhood suffrage, equal taxation, the right of like opportunity for all classes of the community. Conservatism has clung to precedent, the established order, the old authoritarian basis of government, and has yielded but slowly and as a rule only on compulsion.

Liberalism is ordained of the common people and sprang from a common resistance to the oppression of arbitrary and self-centred rule. Conservatism had its birth in the doctrine of the divine right of kings. The "governing classes" were ordained of God because they themselves arranged the ordination. Liberalism has its principles embodied in the human heart. Conservatism finds its well-springs in its own pockets.

The main battlements of privilege and vested authority have been won by Liberalism through centuries of struggle. The fight of democracy for freedom, for equality of opportunity and for

substantial justice, to all individuals of the commonwealth still goes on. There are still inequalities of taxation to be righted, the oppression of vested interests in trade and industry to be overcome, monopolies and trusts to be regulated, the rights of society as a whole to be asserted to the wealth 146
that depends on its own collective enterprise. The increase of the well-being of the masses does not appear to be by any means proportionate to the general growth of wealth. In the sphere of economic legislation, Liberalism still has perhaps its greatest work to do. The welfare of the common man at the common task is its first consideration.

Government of the people, for the people, and by the people is the essence of Liberalism.

The application of these principles to the problems of Canadian politics in relation to provincial, national, imperial and world-wide interests is the work of the Liberal party in Canada.

On the evening of Tuesday, January 14th, 1919, Sir Wilfrid Laurier delivered his last public address. The occasion was the formation of the Eastern Ontario Liberal Association for about twenty ridings in Eastern Ontario. It has been stated that the resolutions adopted upon that occasion and the speech of Sir Wilfrid Laurier clearly set forth the Liberal policy to date.

A report of the proceedings of that eventful day has been published and Sir Wilfrid's speech in 147
endorsement of the resolutions adopted may be summarized as follows: Fair treatment of soldiers and sailors, generous care for dependents of the fallen, maintenance of British preferences restored and unimpaired, reciprocity between Canada and the United States in foodstuffs, gradual progress toward freer trade, democratization of labor, abolition of Government by order-in-council, abolition of press censorship, repeal of the War Times Election Act, and for a League of Nations.

Sir Wilfrid's acceptance of a Knighthood in 1897, came as a big surprise to all his followers, because his views had been clearly defined on the subject; and it was common talk that he had been offered a knighthood on attaining the Premiership. In the first year of his ministry as such, he went to England to attend the Jubilee of Queen Victoria. The reception accorded him by the British people was remarkable for its warmth. The handsome, distinguished young French-Canadian statesman took London by storm; the press and public acclaiming his talents, and Queen Victoria bestowing upon him particular attention and respect. One evening the Queen gave a dinner for the 148
overseas Prime Ministers. When the young Canadian Premier, who was again honored by being seated next to Her Majesty, took his seat at the banquet table, he found a card upon which Queen Victoria herself had written, "Rt. Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier." There was no way out of such a situation. The aged Queen had taken this means of honoring him, and Sir Wilfrid's chivalry and gallantry, as well as his genuine affection for the great good monarch, triumphed over his democratic views.

At the time of his death a Canadian poet wrote, "When I was a boy at Woodstock College, I heard a phrase that floated upon the air, like the magic carpet of the Arabians. It contained the simple news that 'Laurier is coming.' He came, we heard him, and in my boyish heart that night was born a new Canada. I was no longer a Conservative or a Liberal. I only knew a white light had passed that I must follow. I had exchanged my knight of arms in history for a crusader in life. The years that poured the first strength of youth into my heart came to the crusader with her gift of silver. One day 149
I walked the streets of London with an unsold story in my pocket, and a four days' yearning for bread in my soul. Suddenly the white light shone. Laurier had passed me in his carriage upon Piccadilly. I forgot my hunger and cheered, and the multitude, seeing not the light in its brightness, wondered over my joy."

"Big John Canadien," Canada's most famous guide, made this following curious prediction:—

"When I die you shall be frightened," he said to Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

The death of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and of Big John at one day's interval brings to mind a scene witnessed in 1884. They were preparing to celebrate the national holiday, St. Jean Baptiste Day, and the late Mr. A. Corriveau, one of the most zealous organizers of the great national celebration, was conversing with Wilfrid Laurier on Notre Dame Street, near Place D'Armes in Montreal.

When big John arrived with a band of his braves, M. Corriveau, who was acquainted with "Big John," introduced him to his friends. After a few words of conversation, Sir Wilfrid Laurier asked 150
the Indian how old he was.

"I am 43 years old," he replied.

"We are almost of the same age," said Mr. Laurier, "I will be 43 at my next birthday."

"Well," replied Big John, "when I die, you shall be frightened."

Everybody nearby had a good laugh on hearing the Indian's words, and Big John went away.

Big John died on Sunday, February 23rd., and Sir Wilfrid on Monday, February 24th.

Some years ago a retired Baptist minister told the following story: "When I was a young man I lived in a small town in Eastern Canada, and about the only well educated men in the place were a lawyer and a doctor, both Roman Catholics. We used to meet almost every afternoon in the lawyer's office and discuss the affairs of the nation, and almost every subject from religion to politics. One day the young lawyer made a certain statement, when the doctor asked: 'Where did you get that idea?' and the lawyer replied (pulling open a drawer in his desk and bringing forth a well-worn 151
Bible), 'Why, from this Book.' The doctor said, 'Why, you don't read that Book, do you?' 'Yes,' replied the lawyer, 'I have had this with me since I left home. I promised my mother to read it every day, and I have never broken my word, because, no matter where I am, I have read a portion of this good Book every day of my life since I gave that promise.'" Mr. Richardson asked me who I thought the young lawyer was, but I could not tell, so he said, "It was Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and we have been close friends ever since, although he is a Roman Catholic and I am a Baptist minister. Does this not in some manner account for Sir Wilfrid's broad-mindedness in matters of religion?"

A gentleman brought a friend in to lunch at the Reform Club. On that particular day Sir Wilfrid happened to be there, lunching. The friend's name was Mr. Lambe and he expressed a desire to be introduced to Sir Wilfrid, so, after luncheon in the clubroom, he was presented. When shaking hands with the "Chief" he started to explain that he was not a supporter of the Liberal party. Sir Wilfrid continued shaking hands during the short explanation, and then reached over with his left 152
hand, and, placing it on Mr. Lambe's shoulder, said:

"Well, never mind, Mr. Lambe, you know there is more rejoicing in Heaven over the return of one lost sheep," etc.

In 1906, when Sir Wilfrid was returned to power, the Liberals gave him a reception at the old Horticultural Gardens. The "Chief" arrived, accompanied by quite a party, and, as a prominent supporter was about to shake hands with him, a little man who had been imbibing, pushed him aside, held out his hand, and said in a loud voice:

"Welcome to 'Taranta,' Mr. 'Larier'."

This was momentarily embarrassing to those assembled, but the "Chief" shook hands heartily with him and asked his name. The little man gave his name as Lynch, whereupon the "Chief" exclaimed:

"A good Irish name, and a good Irish welcome," and thus passed off lightly what might have proved embarrassing.

A very illuminating incident occurred at the Union Station on one of Sir Wilfrid's last visits to 153
Toronto which reveals the manner of his appeal to his people. Two young ladies spied the old statesman walking up and down the platform by his private car. One of them insisted that it was Sir Wilfrid, the other that it was not. A newspaper reporter overheard the argument and settled it by answering them that it was, indeed, the dean of the House of Commons.

"I wonder if we could shake hands with him?" enquired the girls, excitedly.

The reporter approached Sir Wilfrid and said:

"There are two young ladies who would esteem it an honor to shake your hand. May I bring them to you, Sir Wilfrid?"

"You may NOT, my young friend!" said Sir Wilfrid, "But you may take me to them."

Which he did, and so gracefully added to his legions.

Much has been said of his affection for children, another expression after all, of that same kindness and dignity. A Toronto newspaper editor when a boy of fourteen, wrote a long letter to Sir Wilfrid from the boy's point of view, referring to politics and to Sir Wilfrid's stand on prohibition 154
and other reforms. Deep as he was in the work of Parliament at the time, Sir Wilfrid did not neglect to reply promptly, and in a fine, courteous letter, said that he would be glad to discuss the questions at greater length when he should happen to visit the lad's home-town. And when Sir Wilfrid passed through that way, the lad was invited to dinner with him. The politically "kind" man couldn't do that. It required Sir Wilfrid's genuine emotions towards the young.

While humor did not abound in Sir Wilfrid's speeches and debates, he had a shrewd wit, equal to all occasions. In a debate twitting Sir Charles Tupper on Sir Charles's reminiscences of his political services, Sir Wilfrid said that between Sir Charles and Sir John A. Macdonald they had sailed the ship of state pretty successfully, Sir John supplying the brains and Sir Charles supplying the wind to fill the sails.

Campaigning through the country Sir Wilfrid was always master of the situation. There was withal, something of the "grand seigneur" about him. He had a keen sense of dramatic values. 155
While he yielded to the worship of those who crowded his car to shake his hand, he did not show himself to the public one moment before it was necessary. Sometimes the clamor of admirers forced him from his bed at midnight. With all the love for applause, characteristic of his race, and of the dramatic temperament, his common sense never deserted him. During his last tour of Nova Scotia, one morning his boat barely landed when an enthusiastic young woman crossed the gang plank and handed him an armful of flowers. Such is to be expected as part of every meeting, but there on the bare deck of a steamer the chieftain was nonplussed. As he laid the gift on the hatch he turned and said over his shoulder: "Is a man ever so helpless as he is with a bouquet?"

On one occasion an excited supporter telegraphed:

"Report in circulation here, that your antagonism to religion is so strong, that you have never had any of your children baptized. Very damaging to party. Telegraph me if untrue."

Sir Wilfrid's reply was characteristic:

"Statement is unfortunately quite true. I have never had a child to baptize." 156

Sir Wilfrid Laurier's ability to remember faces which had presented themselves to his view, perhaps, years previously, was something to marvel at. Many men possess this power but few have ever held it in greater proportion than did the late statesman.

A Brockville man relates that on being introduced to Sir Wilfrid, not long ago, the "old chief" looked at him intently for a moment and then said: "Just a minute, let me think where I have seen you before." He thought for a brief period and then exclaimed: "I have it. You are one of —— ——'s bad little boys and you sat in the front row at my meeting in Cornwall in 1912." Such had been the case.

His first appearance in public life revealed the qualities that were to make him famous. His 157
début in the Legislature is said by those whose memories go back to that time, to have produced a sensation, not more by the finished grace of his oratorical abilities than by the boldness and authority with which he handled the deepest political problems. The effect of his fluent, cultivated

and charming discourse is described by Frechette, the poet, as magical. On the following day, he writes, the name of Laurier was on every lip, and all who then heard it will remember how those two syllables rang out true and clear, their tone that of a coin of gold, pure from all alloy, and bearing the impress of sterling worth.

The Royal tour of 1901 at times put the serenity of Sir Wilfrid to a severe test. He was a man who enjoyed manifestations of popular good-will as well as anybody; and as a politician was not oblivious to the necessity of avoiding offence to any well-meaning supporter. He accompanied the Heir-Apparent and the future Queen across the continent, and was sometimes embarrassed by the efforts of coteries in remote settlements to play the political game by making him the hero of the occasion. On one occasion, a Liberal association, learning that the Royal train was to lie on a 158
railway siding for half an hour, sought to improve the occasion by presenting him with an address. The annoyance of Sir Wilfrid at so notorious a breach of etiquette, was undoubtedly great, but he managed to send the deputation home without ruffling their feelings, though preserving the decorum of his position as an official host of the future occupant of the throne.

Political leaders receive a great deal of honor, particularly while they are the custodians of power, but they have also much to put up with from indiscreet followers. In such cases, they have to display an unfailing tact, for they never know but that the gad-fly may have sufficient influence in his bailiwick to swing an entire township to the opposite party, if affronted. Twenty years ago, in the old station dining room at Palmerston, Ont., one saw Sir Wilfrid deal with such importunities. It was at a time when there was a great hullabaloo about the supposed attitude of the late Mr. Tarte toward the South African War. The room was thronged with spectators anxious to see whether a Prime Minister really ate like ordinary mortals; and a local Liberal magnate undertook to inform Sir 159
Wilfrid that the “boys around here” did not like Tarte, and asked what he was going to do with the then Minister of Public Works. Sir Wilfrid first ignored the question and tried to change the subject, but the henchman did not take the hint. The Premier’s secretary was beside himself with rage at the bad taste of the interlocutor, but the leader himself betrayed no annoyance. “Oh, you don’t understand Mr. Tarte,” he said, genially, and suddenly bethought himself of a funny story illustrating misunderstandings. Nevertheless, he was a very relieved chieftain when the whistle blew and the brakeman cried “All aboard.”

Another tribute to Sir Wilfrid Laurier has been paid by L.-Col. Johnson Paudash, now in Lindsay, who served for some time overseas with a Central Ontario battalion. The late Premier, it is stated, presented Col. Paudash with a service of silver, and also wrote to him several times while he was on active service in France. Col. Paudash had interviewed Sir Wilfrid several times, while he was Premier, on behalf of the different Indian tribes, and states that he at all times found him courteous 160
and kind, and a good friend of the Indian. He and others of his tribe sincerely mourn the passing of the great “White Chief,” as they affectionately called the late Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier maintained his pride and interest in Ottawa to the last. It is understood that a clause in his will dedicates to the Capital City all the tokens of honor bestowed on him during his distinguished public career.

Many of these are almost of priceless value. They include the testimonials conveying the freedom of cities in the United Kingdom. The casket containing the freedom of the city of Edinburgh, one of the most beautiful of the collection, is solidly encrusted with diamonds.

The intention is that these souvenirs shall find a place in the war memorial building which will doubtless be erected in Ottawa before long.

In his early days, at a campaign meeting, a Mr. Mousseau, a man of gigantic bulk, accused the Ministers of the Government of fattening on the sweat of the people. Sir Wilfrid, tall, slender, and 161
frail, rose, pointed to his huge and bulky accuser and asked: “Who is fattening on the people?”

His hold on the hearts of his countrymen in Quebec was tremendous, and is best illustrated in the famous yarn of the old habitant, who on hearing that Queen Victoria had died and the Prince of Wales was now to become King, said:

“By gar, dat Prince of Wale must have a good pull wit’ Laurier!”

His visit to the Queen’s Jubilee in 1897, was greeted with a reception that was almost regal. He was made a member of the Privy Council, appointed a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, and received in audiences by the Queen. The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge conferred honorary degrees upon him, and the Cobden Club admitted him to honorary membership, and awarded him its gold medal, in recognition of his exceptional and distinguished services to the cause of international and free exchange. The new departure in Imperial policy, the 162
Preferential Tariff, which Sir Wilfrid was able to arrange during this visit, caused the London Times to say: “Laurier’s name must live in the annals of the British Empire.”

A few years later, 1902, he again visited Great Britain to be present at the ceremonies in connection with the crowning of His late Majesty King Edward VII., the Sovereign of the British Empire and British Dominions beyond the Seas. Again in 1907, Sir Wilfrid attended with a number of Ministers upon the invitation of the Imperial Government, a Conference of all the Premiers in His Majesty’s possessions. In 1911 he attended the ceremonies in connection with the crowning of King George V. Upon this, as upon other occasions, he was admirably received by the press and people wherever he went throughout Great Britain. In 1904, the London Daily News of September 14th., of that year, remarked that “Sir Wilfrid Laurier is easily the first statesman of Greater Britain.”

The following are some of the Press comments on Sir Wilfrid during the Imperial Conference of

1907:—The Daily News of London in a review of “The Race Question in Canada,” declared “Sir Wilfrid Laurier has won his title to be considered as a true statesman because, although always a faithful Catholic, he has declined to be dominated by the forces of Ultramontanism. The hope of the fusion of the races, Sir Wilfrid Laurier once declared, into a single one is Utopian. It is an impossibility. The distinctions of nature will exist always. But he went on to say, if we remember rightly, that the two races would none the less form a great nation under the British Flag, and it is, of course, the supreme achievement of Sir Wilfrid Laurier’s political career that he has devoted himself to the attainment of this ideal.” 163

The Western Daily Press of Bristol, England, stated:—“Sir Wilfrid Laurier is in himself an excellent illustration of the success of the British plan of making various great parts of the Empire responsible for the control of their own affairs. There was a time when the race problem in Canada was one affording cause for gravest anxiety; that belongs to the past; and the world is familiar with the fact that Sir Wilfrid, the first French-Canadian who has been Premier of the Dominion, is a man probably without a rival in the confidence felt in him in this country.”

The London Times of April 15th., 1907, editorially stated:—Sir Wilfrid Laurier, whom we welcome as probably the best known of all Canadian statesmen, comes of French-Canadian stock, but he has shown by his career that this is no disqualification for doing valued service to the Empire. 164

The Tribune of London, referring to Sir Wilfrid Laurier’s stirring speech at the Guildhall in 1907, characterized the Canadian Premier’s deliverance on that occasion as:—A speech that will certainly find a place in future histories of the British Empire.

The Daily News of London stated:—The destinies of Canada were not settled by the war which made England instead of France supreme in North America. There came the second crisis, and if that second crisis had not been faced with the courage, genius, and imagination of Liberalism, there would have been no men of Sir Wilfrid Laurier’s race and blood at yesterday’s lunch, and the Colony which is proud to count in its ancestry the heroism of a Montcalm as well as the heroism of a Wolfe would have sent no representative to the capital. For the distinction of the British Empire consists not in the conquests of its arms, but in the reconciliation of its statesmanship, in the generous wisdom which has shown that the British flag can shelter and respect the traditions, the sympathies, and the consciences of races that are not British by blood or history. This is what was in Sir Wilfrid Laurier’s mind when he pointed with pride to the great British act of the present government. (The Great British Act was the Constitution granted to South Africa, or the Transvaal.) 165

A few days after the coronation of their Majesties King George V. and Queen Mary, a thanksgiving service was held in St. Paul’s Cathedral. The high place which Sir Wilfrid Laurier occupies in the esteem of the British people of all classes is indicated by the manner in which he was greeted on his way to the cathedral and received there. The cable message reproduced below from the Montreal Star (Conservative), of June 29th., 1911, gives a brief summary of this grand cordiality:—

Sir Wilfrid Laurier, as he passed through the crowded streets from the Palace to the Cathedral (St. Paul’s), had, perhaps, the greatest reception of his entire visit. In his full levee uniform and cocked hat, he sat alone in the first of the State carriages, looking every inch of him a great personage. 166

Upon the box of the carriage were two magnificently attired Royal servants, whose brilliant scarlet coats flashed all down the line of route, and as the prancing steeds drew the carriage along the broad centres, between strictly kept lines of police and soldiers, the London populace, who crowded the sidewalks, cheered again and again.

“That’s Laurier,” they cried. “That’s Canada. Give them a cheer,” and they did it right heartily.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier was obviously delighted. He kept his hand moving up and down to and from his cocked hat, thus giving a military salute of the Royal pattern and not raising his hat as lesser mortals might do.

When Sir Wilfrid reached the Cathedral, another honour awaited him. The Lord Mayor of London and other dignitaries, no matter how gorgeous their attire, were sent around to the smaller north or south doors; but Sir Wilfrid’s carriage was directed by the police to none other than the Royal and crimson carpeted entrance at the main west door, where the Bishop of Ripon received him on behalf of the Anglican Church. As he passed up the steps into the Cathedral, his uniform, slashed with the blue band of a Knight of the Grand Cross of St. Michael and St. George, came into full view, and made him a most notable figure. 167

Some of the notable expressions regarding Sir Wilfrid’s achievements in 1907, in Great Britain were penned by the late Sir Charles Tupper, ex-Premier of the Dominion of Canada and formerly for some years High Commissioner at London, England. Writing in the Nineteenth Century, May, 1907, Sir Charles expressed himself as follows:—“My distinguished successor in the Prime Ministership of Canada has during these past few memorable days asserted with a persuasiveness all his own that the British Empire ‘rests upon foundations firmer than the rock and as endurable as the ages.’”

A noted English writer has said: “I have seen and heard many colonial public men, but Sir Wilfrid is the only one who would have become a national figure had he been transplanted to Westminster. I have never seen him in the Canadian Parliament without wishing that instead he was at Westminster, for then it would be easy to decide as to the leadership of the Liberal party.” 168

In office or out of office, he is the most considerable figure in Greater Britain. Such was the estimate of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, made by one of the premier political observers of England, Mr. John L. Garvin.

On the occasion of Sir Wilfrid’s sixty-sixth birthday the London Morning Post said: “No other statesman could have accomplished so much in the short space of a life-time as the great French-

Canadian who combines an imaginative eloquence unsurpassed in British history with the charm and courtesy of a cultivated Frenchman."

The above writer enumerated some of the outstanding measures of the Laurier administration and added: "Measures wherein a business capacity was not less necessary than imagination and courage."

Moreover, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the French Roman Catholic Premier of a self-governing federation 169
in which British Protestants are in the majority, has expressed more faithfully and more truly than any statesman who has spoken yet, the temper of the new imperial patriotism fostered into self-consciousness by the South African war.

His visit to the Queen's Jubilee in 1897, was greeted with a reception that was almost regal. He was made a member of the Privy Council, appointed a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, and received in audience by the Queen. The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge conferred honorary degrees upon him, and the Cobden Club admitted him to honorary membership, and awarded him its gold medal, in recognition of his exceptional and distinguished services to the cause of international and free exchange. The new departure in Imperial policy, which Sir Wilfrid was able to arrange during this visit, caused the London Times to say: Laurier's name must live in the annals of the British Empire.

The Tribune:—Among Canadian statesmen of our day Sir Wilfrid Laurier ranked first. The 170
Canada of the present is in a large measure his work. His horizon was spacious. His loyalty to his own race, religion and section did not prevent him from pursuing a broad national policy.

The Sun:—Sir Wilfrid Laurier's public life of nearly half a century, covers the development of Canada from a colony into something very like an independent nation. The 15 years in which he served as Premier saw the greatest growth of the Dominion in railroads, trade and agriculture for any period in its marvelous history. It has often been the subject of comment that Sir Wilfrid being French by race and Catholic by religion, should have been able to remain so long the dominant figure in Canadian politics, but his qualities enabled him at all times to rise superior to matters of personal preference.

The World:—His name is one of the greatest in the history of the sister republic.

The New York Times:—Sir Wilfrid's culminant hour abroad was at the Diamond Jubilee of 1897,
or at the coronations of Edward VII., and George V. No other colonial statesman so impressed the 171
English. This French-Canadian, this first French-Canadian Premier, this bilingual orator, this personage of authority, suavity, dignity, and distinction, has not left his like behind. Resourceful, subtle, a master of debate, the unmatchable leader of the Liberals, he seemed to belong to the generation of Disraeli and Palmerston and Gladstone. If on conscription he was opposed to prevailing public sentiment, so he had been on reciprocity; and he should have the credit of honesty of opinion on the one as on the other policy. In 1896 he fought the Quebec bishops on the question of Separate Public Schools in Manitoba. He had almost too much talent. He always had courage enough. And he earnestly supported the Entente in the war.

To most in Ottawa the end had come with dramatic suddenness because his distinguished figure, striking face and debonair smile were familiar to all residents. Never for a moment did he relinquish his keen interest in life, in people, and in all the various events which make up the life of the Capital, and so he was to be seen regularly at meetings of the Canadian Club and gatherings of
various associations which made Ottawa their headquarters. In public he displayed no sign that 172
time had yet weakened his physical edifice, and public men to-day say that in private conversation up to near the end he displayed the same acumen, charm and ready wit which had always distinguished him. Very near friends, however, say that he realized the end could not be delayed many years, chiefly because of the growing weakness and lassitude which he felt on rising in the mornings. During the day it always wore off, and he fought courageously against the weakness, rising always at his regular hour, day after day getting the better of his weakness, and never under any circumstance showing anything but a cheerful countenance.

On Sunday morning when he had his first fainting attack of some minutes' duration he himself felt it to be the realization of the premonition which he had experienced and occasionally mentioned to close friends. For the moment, entirely oblivious to all but the attack, he said quietly to Lady Laurier: "It is the end." Later, however, when he had partially recovered and was able to talk he did
not speak as though he expected the end so soon. He seemed to think that, after all, he had 173
weathered the attack, for when the gong rang for luncheon he rose with the intention of appearing at the table. His courageous habit of always combatting weakness, in this case was his undoing, as it brought on a second stroke, or the first one, if the fainting fit in the morning is not regarded as the result of a slight stroke.

"Every farm house and every village within twenty miles is empty to-day," said one who knows Ottawa well, on the morning of the funeral of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. Although the dead Leader was buried with all the civil pomp of a State funeral and all the high ceremonial of an ancient Church, the plain people also bore their part. If you are a day laborer, there were just such workmen as you showing their respect and mourning; if you are a farmer, there were just such farmers as you standing with uncovered heads when the hearse went by. No matter who you are or what your station in life—high or lowly, rich or poor, proud or humble—you were truly represented at the funeral of this man who, because he was so chivalrous and so human, belonged to all classes and to all the people.

Before Ottawa was stirring, the city was already being filled with the gathering crowd. To the 174
ordinary passenger accommodation of the railways many special trains had been added to bring visitors from other cities and distant provinces. While the gathering crowd was pouring in from the stations, the streets approaching the city were filled with people coming in all manner of vehicles, and even with thousands coming afoot. By the time the Capital was awake it was already in the

possession of what was perhaps the greatest crowd it has ever known. As the day was mild—a grey day, frosty but kindly, with snow under foot and the sun shining through a thick haze—the visitors were able to stand about in the streets without discomfort. The route of the funeral procession having been announced, every available point of observation was crowded long before the proceedings began. All was orderly, as was to be expected, but the prevailing air was one of cheerfulness. Their hero had lived to the fullness of time, and they had come to show their respect, rather than to mourn. Everywhere groups were engaged in low-voiced conversation, and at times even hushed laughter might be heard. This would be when someone told a treasured story about 175
the dead Chieftain.

But as all the stories told illustrated the other world and other time courtliness of manner, which often made him appear in startling contrast with crude surroundings, there was no disrespect in telling or appreciating them at such a time. Those who told them and those who heard them only loved him the more for graces they admired but could not emulate.

Those who had been favored by the Government with invitations to the State funeral began to assemble early at the Museum, where the body lay in state in the room that is now being used by the Commons. Every walk of Canadian public activity was represented. Besides the high officials of the State, men eminent in the Church, education and social life of the country were represented. Mingling with these, who were mostly young or still in the full vigor of life, were many grey-haired veterans, colleagues of the dead statesman in early campaigns, whose faces were once familiar in the Capital. By 10 o'clock the corridors were crowded. There was much handshaking, and introductions back and forth, while they waited to take their part in the formal farewell to the dead. 176

Presently officials began to call out instructions, now in English, now in French, and the procession began to form. Following the hearse was a display that would have amazed anyone who thinks of Canada as a land of ice and snow. Half a score of sleighs bearing huge terraced floats that had been built for the occasion were piled high with the floral offerings that had been sent from all parts of Canada or ordered by cable and telegraph from all parts of the world. Banked against a background of flowing purple and funereal black, these many-colored flowers made summer in the midst of winter and brought the seasons in mourning behind that sable hearse. Slowly and with fitting majesty the long procession wound through the white streets with their unbroken guard of citizens. At no place between the Museum and the Basilica, where High Mass was celebrated, was there a spot where anyone could stand or crowd in that was not occupied. As the hearse passed, bearing what was mortal of him who had put on immortality, the watchers uncovered their heads, 177
and their eyes were dimmed by a sudden gust of tears.

In the Basilica, which was draped in black, purple, and gold for this Imperial mourning, the coffin was placed in a golden catafalque crowned with lighted tapers. High overhead was suspended a huge crown with streamers of black and purple looped away into the dim distances of the pillared cathedral. High dignitaries chanted the Mass, while the choir responded to the full music of the great organ. Nothing was lacking to add state and awe to the passing of this simple citizen, who in life needed nothing beyond his native dignity to make him first among the peers.

When the funeral service was over and we passed out of the dim aisles of the Basilica I looked up and saw with sudden exaltation that the sun had broken through the mists and clouds and was shining down as if mourning had been turned to rejoicing. So it seemed, and so I shall believe it to be. I, who had come in from the fields and the open spaces, felt that a great work was ended and that a greater had begun. I felt that all that had raised this man above his fellows and apart from them was now put away. The last ceremonial was ended. Now that his body had been laid in death 178
with the Kings and counsellors of the earth, the spirit of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, a man of the people, had passed into the wide spaces, golden sunshine and open air of the land he loved, to be an inspiration to all Canadians as long as chivalry, courtesy and high achievements are prized among men.

APPENDIX "A." 179

Chronology of the life of Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

1841—Born at St. Lin, Quebec, November 20, of Acadian descent on his mother's side.

1847—Went to school in New Glasgow, 1850 to L'Assomption College, and in 1857 to McGill University.

1860—Became a law student.

1864—Took degree Bachelor of Civil Law at McGill. Called to Quebec Bar.

1866—Served against Fenian Raid.

1868—Was married to Miss Zoe Lafontaine.

1869—Ensign in Arthabaska Infantry Co.

1871-4—Member of Quebec Legislature for Drummond and Arthabaska.

1877—Elected to Commons for Drummond and Arthabaska. 180

1877—Sworn in as Privy Councillor and appointed Minister of Inland Revenue in the Mackenzie Cabinet, but was defeated in the bye-election.

1877—Elected to House of Commons for Quebec East.

1880—Made Queen's Counsel.

1887—Elected leader of the Liberal Party.

1889—Bâtonnier of the Bar (Arthabaska).

1889—Spoke in Toronto for the first time.

1896—Came into power as Premier of Canada.

1897—Established the British Preference. Knighted at Queen Victoria's Jubilee. Visited

Washington in the interests of seal fisheries and better trade relations.

1898—Member of Joint High Commission to Consider Trade with Britain and U. S.

1899—Made an honorary Colonel. Despatched the Canadian Expedition to South African War.

1900—Inaugurated the Western Canada Immigration policy.

1901—Received the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall, and accompanied them across Canada.

1902—Attended the Colonial Trade Conference.

1903—Introduced the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Scheme.

1904—Elected Member for Wright, also for Quebec East. 181

1905—Established the new Provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta.

1907—Attended the Imperial Conference.

1908—Elected Member for Ottawa. Received the Prince of Wales at Quebec Tercentenary.

1909—Voted with the whole House on the “Unanimous Resolution” re Canadian Navy.

1910—Passed the Canadian Naval Service Act.

1911—Represented Canada at Coronation of King George and Queen Mary. Liberal Government defeated at the polls on Question of Reciprocity in Natural Products with the United States.

1912—Toured Ontario.

1913—Led the Opposition forces in the “Naval Blockade” in Parliament.

1914—Co-operated with Sir Robert Borden in the “Councils of War.”

1915—Maintained a Parliamentary Truce in House during War session.

1917—Was asked by Sir Robert Borden to enter a Union Government, but declined.

Led the Opposition forces in the general election in opposition to the conscription issue. 182
Opposition was defeated, and Union Government elected by large majority. Sir Wilfrid personally was elected in his old seat of Quebec East, but was defeated in Ottawa.

1918—Led the Parliamentary Liberal Opposition to the Union Government in the House of Commons.

1919—Died in Ottawa, February 17.

APPENDIX “B.” 183

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