

MR. MACKENZIE'S DEATH.

The saddest reflection about the career of the Hon. Alexander Mackenzie is that at an age when he might fairly have expected ten years of vigorous life he was struck down by an ailment which doomed him to an existence of comparative inaction. He was able to watch the course of public affairs closely and to judge clearly, but he was unable to work for his country and to fight against abuse with his old-time vigor. Otherwise his was a happy life in the best sense, for he enjoyed the satisfaction which is found not in the pursuit of gain or pleasure, but in cheerful toil, in the faithful performance of duty and the consciousness of deserving the respect of his fellow-men. He was a good example of the result of a kind of training that makes for sturdy independence. From the age of fourteen he had to fight the battle of life unaided. He managed not only to make himself an expert stoneworker and builder, but to fit himself by study for the important public duties which he afterwards discharged. And there were few men in public life whose knowledge of politics was so full and exact and so readily accessible, or who had so thorough a grasp of the sound principles of political economy. He was a true student of what Macaulay calls "that noble science of politics, which is equally removed from the barren theories of the utilitarian sophists and from the petty craft so often mistaken for statesmanship by minds grown narrow in habits of intrigue, jobbery and official etiquette." He came to Canada at an early age, and without influence, without friends, except such as he made by his own uprightiness and diligence, became a successful builder and contractor. Then he turned his attention to politics. Here again he had no aid from the accidents which sometimes bring inferior men into high places. He had no following, could command no "vote," was backed by no great interest. He worked his way into the front rank of Canadian statesmen by sheer force of talent, unwearying industry and stainless honesty. When he had gained that high place he did not escape the shafts of slander

and abuse, which, like the shafts of death, love a shining mark. But the voice of calumny has long been silent, and the sober judgment and conscience of the country now declare that he gave to Canada five years of exceptionally pure and honest government. His was a singularly unpretentious Administration, and its economy and quiet, effective work make it stand out in strong contrast with the noisy and extravagant regime which followed it. It is a fact worthy of the notice of the careful student of history that some of the very things which redound most to the credit of Mr. Mackenzie contributed to his defeat in the elections of 1878. He refused to delude the people. Canada, in common with the United States and other countries, was passing through a period of profound financial depression. The Conservative politicians were ready with a scheme for restoring prosperity, and, as it turned out, the people were ready to try it. It would have been easy for Mr. Mackenzie and his colleagues to cut the ground from under their opponents' feet by sacrificing their principles; and their refusal to do so, however opportunists may regard it, will always stand to their credit. It is also greatly to Mr. Mackenzie's honor that he made no attempt to entrench himself in power by any of those unfair means which have been so freely used in the last thirteen years. He laid his principles and the record of his work before the people and allowed them freely to pronounce judgment. The judgment was adverse; but the loss was not Mr. Mackenzie's but the country's. Harried by excessive taxation, burdened with debt, their money wasted in wild and extravagant schemes, their great resources lying almost idle and undeveloped, the air filled with scandal, the people have every hour cause to look back upon the five years of honest and rational government which they enjoyed under Mr. Mackenzie. No doubt he felt keenly the misfortunes which have befallen his country under the rule of his successors, but he had at least the satisfaction of knowing that he had never failed in his duty. Though he made no parade of his religious views