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Title: Ad Multos Annos: A Tribute to Sir Charles Tupper on His Political Birthday

Date of first publication: 1900

Author: Henry James Morgan (Nov 14, 1842-Dec 27, 1913)

Date first posted: Sep. 18, 2013

Date last updated: Sep. 18, 2013

Faded Page eBook #20130916

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AD MULTOS ANNOS

A TRIBUTE TO

SIR CHARLES TUPPER

ON

HIS POLITICAL BIRTHDAY, 1900

**BY
HENRY J. MORGAN**

“Orator, statesman, scholar, wit and sage.”

M. F. TUPPER

**TORONTO
WILLIAM BRIGGS, WESLEY BUILDINGS
1900**

This article, which originally appeared in the *Ottawa Citizen*, is reprinted in its present form at the request of many friends of Sir Charles Tupper throughout the Dominion.

The proceeds from the sale of the pamphlet, if any, will be handed over to the trustees of the fund for erecting a monument, or other memorial, to the Canadian soldiers who have fallen in battle or succumbed to disease during the present struggle in South Africa.

H. J. M.

483 BANK STREET OTTAWA.
June 11, 1900.

TO
Lady Tupper
WHOSE VIRTUES AS
DAUGHTER, WIFE AND MOTHER
HAVE EMINENTLY ILLUSTRATED THE DISTINGUISHING
CHARACTERISTICS OF
CANADIAN WOMANHOOD

THESE PAGES ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR

AD MULTOS ANNOS.

(*Ottawa Citizen*, Friday, May 25, 1900.)

Sir Charles Tupper entered public life in 1855, having been elected in that year to represent “faithful Cumberland” in the Nova Scotia assembly over the most formidable politician of his time, the late Honorable Joseph Howe. Two years afterwards he accepted a place in the local government, and in 1864 he became prime minister of his native province. In the same year, the writer, then a law student and dabbling in a small way in literary and newspaper work, met him in Quebec. The object which brought him, with others, to the Ancient Capital was one of the utmost interest and importance—no less than to attend the conference which had been called there by the authority of the Governor-in-Council and of the parliament of the old Province of Canada, with the assent and support of the Crown of Great Britain and of the various other North American colonies, to discuss the feasibility of a political union of those then far separated members of the British family. As editor of the *Parliamentary Companion*, and otherwise, the writer had become personally acquainted with the leading Canadian statesmen of the time, but with the exception of Hon. Peter Mitchell, who had paid a brief visit to Toronto, while the seat of government, and where the writer was then living, he had had no opportunity of seeing or meeting any of the public men from the Maritime provinces. There were some fine men among the delegates to the conference from that portion of the country, which was then as a *terra incognita* to most Canadians, who, owing to this circumstance and to the patriotic cause which had called them together, were objects of no common interest. The writer recalls the figures of Adams Archibald, Leonard Tilley, Jonathan McCully, the two Grays, of Palmer, Mitchell, Pope, Chandler, Coles, Carter, Shea, Whelan, Henry, Fisher, Dickey, Macdonald, Haviland, Johnson and others of the group, as he observed them from day to day, most of whom have since paid the debt of nature. Dr. Tupper, the leader from Nova Scotia, however, as Thomas D’Arcy McGee informs us in his “Colonists in Council,” was easily the leader of all. “He spoke,” says the same authority, “probably oftener, though never longer, than any other member. Always forcible, keen and emphatic, with large stores of information, and an inexhaustible vocabulary, he made his influence felt in every branch of every subject.” At the banquet given to the members of the conference by the Quebec Board of Trade, he was the first and principal speaker, and he so impressed the writer by the lofty and patriotic ring of his sentiments that he was immediately filled with a desire to make his acquaintance. Accordingly, on the following day he called at the old St. Lewis Hotel, where the delegates were quartered, and, having sent up his card, was admitted to the presence of the present leader of the Liberal-Conservative party of Canada. Sir Charles Tupper was then in the very prime of manhood, and carried himself with great vigor and determination. Indeed, his every movement was instinct with mental and physical strength. Of good figure and commanding presence, with curly and almost raven black hair, and a pair of eyes singularly eloquent in expression, he was one who would attract attention anywhere. What the writer chiefly noticed, however, during their half-hour’s conversation, was his well-bred, courteous manner, and the faculty which he possessed, and which has grown with his further intercourse with men, of adapting himself to the capacity and line of thought of his company, for the time being. This is very agreeable to some people, and was so to the writer on the occasion referred to. It put him completely at his ease and led to much pleasant conversation. Dr. Tupper talked much of the proposed union and of the benefits which would result to all the colonies therefrom. He said he was simply appalled by the magnitude of the question which had brought them together, for not since the immortal Wolfe had decided on the Plains of Abraham the destiny of British America, had any event exceeded in importance or magnitude the one then taking place in the old Fortress City. Apparently, he had followed the trend of public affairs in our portion of the present Dominion very closely, for he referred in a familiar way to events and transactions occurring even in Lord Durham and in Lord Sydenham’s time. The writer did not meet Dr. Tupper again until after the accomplishment of confederation, when, after the general election of 1867 he, having been returned to the House of Commons for his old constituency, came to Ottawa to take his seat. The fates had not been kind to him in the recent contest, for he was sent to the national capital with only one follower. But he was not discouraged—he never is—and he faced the new condition of things, with the strength and fortitude of a brave man. The result justified his hopes and expectations, for before the close of the

parliament, Richard was himself again! At this period he performed one of the noblest acts of self-abnegation known to our political history, namely, that by which, for the sake of union and concord, he waived his right to a seat in the privy council in favor of another whose only claim to the position was, apparently, his national origin. After his return to Canada from the mission to England on the Nova Scotia question, in 1868, Dr. Tupper came to reside at Ottawa, and here he articulated his eldest son, Mr. Stewart Tupper, now of Winnipeg and a Q.C., as a law student to the late John Bower Lewis, Q.C., of the firm of Lewis and Pinhey, Elgin Street. In 1870 he entered Sir John Macdonald's administration as president of the council, and from the first, by his kind thought, courtesy and consideration won the good will, and one might almost say, the affection of the members of the civil service. The writer, being then and for a considerable period afterwards, a member of that body, was often brought in contact with him, and from this intercourse, and in other ways, had opportunities of observing his deportment as a minister of the crown. For one thing, he had no love for barnacles, and he perfectly abominated red tape. He took an especial interest in the "juniors," and many a case of tyranny and injustice was frustrated through his presence at the treasury board. The writer has good cause to remember him with gratitude in this connection. One of his kindest acts, at this period, took the form of the presentation of a valuable piece of plate from the members of the cabinet to the venerable clerk of the privy council, the late Mr. W. H. Lee, on his retirement from official life. C.M.G.'s were not so plentifully bestowed then as they are to-day, or we may take it for granted that the kind-hearted minister would have secured such a mark of Her Majesty's regard for this old and faithful servant of the crown. In another case—that of the late Sir George Cartier's baronetcy—he did move and with due effect, as Sir Edwin Watkin records in his interesting volume of "Recollections." As a minister, and also while still in the ranks, Dr. Tupper took the utmost pains with everything which he undertook. He left nothing to chance and but little for his private secretary to do which he could and should do himself. In this way, the most exacting labor was not infrequently performed by him personally. Withal, he and Lady Tupper, his amiable and untiring partner in life, found time to dispense a most generous hospitality, and it was during his residence in Daly Avenue, when first a minister, that the members of the press were given recognition in the higher walks of social life by being invited to his table. Nor were they bidden to the feast in battalions, as became the custom with members of parliament at Rideau Hall, but in due proportion to meet other gentlemen on equal terms. Excepting the late Hon. T. D. McGee, the late Hon. Peter Mitchell, the late Hon. Isaac Burpee, and the present Mr. Justice Baby, of Montreal, the writer cannot remember any public men who, when in office, were equally civil to a body of gentlemen from whom so much is expected and to whom so little is given. After the fall of the Macdonald government, in the autumn of 1873, Dr. Tupper, like his political leader, resumed the active practice of his profession. He leased the house in Metcalfe Street, formerly occupied by the Hon. Peter Mitchell, and subsequently, successively, by Hon. L. S. Huntington and Sir Albert Smith, and there quietly and unobtrusively "hung out his shingle" in the ordinary way. From Ottawa, after some months, he moved to Toronto, where he was fast securing a numerous and important clientele, when the political war trump called him back to fresh effort and exertion. To the serious detriment of his private interests, as the writer has learned, he obeyed the call, and from that moment he rested neither day nor night until he saw the National Policy, of which he was the framer, and his leader triumphantly endorsed at the polls. After the return of the Conservatives to office, his, after Macdonald's, was the master mind of the cabinet, and to him is mainly due the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which has done so much for Canada and is calculated to be of so much additional strength and benefit to the empire at large. But perhaps Sir Charles Tupper's most useful work as a Canadian was done as High Commissioner, during the many years he served the Dominion as such at the world's metropolis, in almost constant touch with the government and court of the Empire. The writer had some opportunity of knowing something of the nature of his duties in this position and of observing the consummate ability, tact and skill with which he approached the execution of the most difficult tasks, and he feels that no honor or reward which his country or sovereign could confer upon or extend to him could adequately repay Sir Charles Tupper for all the labor, zeal, patience and ability which he expended in the service of his native country while representing it at London. To be made a privy councillor now, as many think he should be, would be but placing one of the fathers of the constitution and one of the makers of the Dominion upon an equality with others whose claims to such a distinction are manifestly inferior to his own. A gentleman of the old school—one of the few of them now left to us—Sir Charles Tupper has always shown himself to be above the low and petty arts to which not a few politicians of the present day love to resort. To his political opponents he has never been known to extend other than fair and even generous treatment, and under no provocation has the writer ever discovered a desire in him to strike, in sporting parlance, "beneath the belt." Both politically and personally his friendships have been warm and sincere. Moreover, he has never, so far as the writer has observed, evinced any national or religious distinctions in the distribution of public patronage. One man has been as good as another to him, provided he were a faithful and loyal subject of his beloved sovereign. Viewing him with that respect and regard which are due to one of his advanced age, eminent service and exalted character—one of the few men in public life in Canada whose promises, when made, have always been faithfully

carried out—the writer of this imperfectly written tribute humbly lays it at his feet on the anniversary of his political birthday.—H. J. M.

[The end of *Ad Multos Annos: A Tribute to Sir Charles Tupper on His Political Birthday* by Henry James Morgan]