

## WILLIAM A. HENRY, K.C.

### An Appreciation.

William Alexander Henry, died at Halifax on the eleventh of December last, at the age of sixty-four years. It was my privilege to know Henry very intimately, having been articled to him in the law office of which he was a partner, in addition to having been brought in contact with him socially, from my youth up. He was 'easy to know'—being of a most engaging personality. Some English writer has said that cricket is the 'social cement between the classes and the masses', and Henry had a large share of this cement in his nature, being as much at home in a ball game with 'the masses' on the north common, as he was at a mess dinner at Government House or on the Admiral's flagship. He used laughingly to say that he had been much embarrassed when, on going to the railway station to meet some of his aristocratic friends, the hack drivers would call out: "Hack, Billy!" . . . "Here's your cab, Henry!" He was known by everybody.

Henry's career naturally divides itself into two phases, his athletic side and his legal life. As to the former, it may be said that he was much above the average in the following sports: Football, cricket, baseball, lacrosse, badminton, tennis and golf; in addition to wonderful prowess in running and jumping. In indoor recreations he was also proficient—in bridge, billiards and music. He was sent early to Merchiston Castle School in Edinburgh—an institution formerly much patronized by the youth of Halifax, and noted more, I fear, for its achievements on the field than in its halls of learning. From Merchiston he went to Harvard, where after a noted football match with Yale, the *New York Times* said:—"The feature of the game was the playing of Henry, of Halifax, the equal of which has never been seen in American college football".

I once saw Henry—in a game between the Wanderers' Club of Halifax and Dalhousie University—kick off the ball gently, follow it up and catch it and then run clear through the fifteen husky Scotchmen who composed the college team for a touch-down. And this was when he was well over thirty years of age, and a 'family' man.

In cricket, he was on the international team many times, and when the first Canadian team visited the Old Country he came off

with top average for the entire tour. Playing against Gloucester county—captained by the immortal Dr. 'W. G.' Grace—Henry hit eleven consecutive boundary strokes—gaining from Grace the appellation of the 'Canadian Bonnor', after the great Australian slogger of that day.

In track and field events, he once carried off—on one afternoon—first prize for the 100 yard, 220 yard, and 120 yard hurdle sprints: the high jump, the broad jump and throwing the cricket ball. The strange part of his athletics was that he never appeared to train for any event. He was a teetotaler as to liquids, but a heavy smoker. On the whole, he was probably the greatest all round athlete ever produced in Canada.

Henry came naturally to the law. His father, Honourable W. A. Henry, after being Attorney General went to the Supreme Court of Canada Bench. His elder brother Hugh, adorned the Bench of Nova Scotia. Two of his cousins were lawyers—one now a county Judge. The firm of which Hugh Henry was head has contributed many eminent men to Canada. When I was studying in the office it was styled 'Henry, Harris, Ritchie, Weston and Cahan'. Of these, Hugh Henry went on the Bench, Honourable R. E. Harris is now Chief Justice of Nova Scotia, Thomas Ritchie was President of the Royal Bank, B. A. Weston was founder of the Eastern Trust Company—while C. H. Cahan is now a prominent M.P. in Montreal. In addition to these, Mr. Justice Rogers was afterwards a partner.

W. A. Henry was a careful, resourceful lawyer, specializing in admiralty work. He had a keen, discriminating mind and was much respected by his legal confreres. His firm represented the Crown in the memorable lawsuit over the great explosion in Halifax Harbour, during the war. They were also permanent legal agents of the Imperial Government, as well as the original solicitors for the Royal Bank of Canada, which originated in Halifax, and many other large institutions.

For the last twenty years of his life, Henry went through untold physical misery and pain, owing to abdominal trouble—during which he underwent no less than nine major operations. He bore it all with infinite cheerfulness, even gaiety. He received a great blow in the accidental drowning of his second son, while yachting. The sympathy of the entire city went out to him and scores of boats searched the harbour for the body—which, however, was never found. The father's open letter in the press—of gratitude—was touching in the extreme, and characteristic of the man. *Vale!*