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THE

MANITOBA COLLEGE LITERARY SOCIETY.



EARLY REMINISCENCES

OF MANITOBA COLLEGE.

BEING THE PRESIDENT'S INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

— BY —

REV. GEORGE BRYCE, L L. D.,

Honorary President of the Society.

GIVEN BEFORE THE SOCIETY OCTOBER 22ND, 1891.



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MANITOBA COLLEGE.

PROGRESS OF THIS INSTITUTION IN TWO DECADES.

Address by Rev. Dr. Bryce before the Literary Society—The several Buildings which have sheltered the Students.

At the open meeting of the Manitoba College Literary society, held on the evening of October 22, 1891, in the lecture room of Knox church, the following interesting paper was read by Rev. Dr. Bryce on "Early Reminiscences of Manitoba College":—

A scene of twenty years ago comes vividly to the writer's mind to night. It was in Kildonan (October 1871), and in the study of the Presbyterian pioneer of Manitoba, the Rev. John Black. Frasers, and Sutherlands, and others of the clansmen of Kildonan, a dozen or so, had gathered together at what may be called the first board meeting of Manitoba College. The writer had but lately come from Toronto commissioned by the General Assembly to begin the new college, and the represen-

the honored names of the settlement, such as Selkirk or Kildonan would be appropriate, but the writer's suggestion that the name of the new province so lately established would be very suitable was at length adopted, and the infant institution was called Manitoba College.

PRECEDING STEPS.

Kildonan, established as a separate parish on the arrival of Rev. John Black in 1851, had not been slack in the matter of education. For the greater part of the twenty years following this beginning the parish, had by subscription maintained a good school. Among its teachers had been the Rev. Alexander Matheson, who has lately returned to this province, Adam McBeth and Alexander Ross, both now



MANITOBA COLLEGE (1871-2).

tatives of the Selkirk settlers were assembled to set agoing the enterprise. The Rev. Mr. Black, who was a man of fervor and hope, now saw what he had desired for many a year about to be accomplished, and was in high spirits. The prospects of obtaining students were discussed, and the probability of eight or ten young men coming forward for the first class seemed good. The necessity for pushing on and completing the half finished building was admitted, and arrangements were made for temporary class rooms. A considerable discussion arose as to the name to be given the college. Some of the true-blues insisted on the word "Presbyterian" being in some way incorporated, others thought one

dead, James Harper and James Murray. The school had become the best parish school in the settlement. In the year before the rebellion, the Rev. David Whimster, at that time a student, had come to Red River as teacher of this school, and had given educational matters in Kildonan a decided impulse. Local complications had led to a number of the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company encouraging the people of Kildonan to begin an institution of higher learning, and a subscription—liberal for those days—was begun for its establishment. An energetic committee had been chosen, and at the time of the arrival of the writer in October, 1871, the building (plate 2) was half erected. The college was of log, built in Red

River style, and was beautifully situated, looking out on the sweep of the river at Kildonan. As will be seen from the plate, Kildonan church, the cyrcure of the Selkirk settlers, afforded a substantial background. It was a log college. Perhaps as the "old log college," which was an historic land mark in American Presbyterianism, became the great Princeton college, so this may be the presage of the futuae greatness of Manitoba College.

WORK BEGUN.

On the 10th of November, 1871, classes opened and seven students were enrolled. The first recitation in Manitoba College was made by Mr. John Macbeth, a well known citizen of Winnipeg to day. Dr. W. R. Sutherland, of Stony Mt., Mr. James Black, of Shoal Lake, Mr. Hugh D. Fraser, of Grassmere, Mr. Francis Heron, and Mr. F. H. Knipe, now deceased, were members of this first class. Instruction had been given in classics for two years before by Mr. Black, and Mr. Whimster had assisted in other branches. For a short time at first the class met in a room of the Kildonan schoolhouse, but as the accommodation became too small a change was made to the comfortable stone residence of Mr. Donald Murray, Kildonan (Plate 1), and this may be called the first Manitoba College building. At the end of the session seventeen students were in attendance. The staff of this first session consisted of the writer, the only regular professor, Rev. Mr. Black, who took several classes in Latin and Greek, in which department he was well versed, and Mr. John Bell, afterwards M. P. P. for Springfield, teacher in commercial subjects. The conditions were somewhat against the young college, in the unsettled state of the country, and the imperfect appliances for teaching, but the "perfidium ingenium Scotorum" of both teachers and students brought the session to a close with a hopeful feeling for the future.

A UNION COLLEGE.

At this date (1872) Presbyterianism in Canada was divided. The maritime provinces were occupied by two distinct Presbyterian churches, and in Ontario and Quebec the Canadian branch of the Church of Scotland and the Canada Presbyterian church were yet separate. The Presbyterian work in the Northwest had, up to this time, been done by the Canada Presbyterian church, but the other branch was anxious to be represented in the west as well. It was the good fortune of Manitoba college to be an example of brotherly love several years before the union of 1875. This came about in the following way: The Canada Presbyterian Assembly was meeting at Hamilton, Ont., in June, 1872, and the Church of Scotland Synod at the same time in Kingston. Though the two bodies were negotiating for union, yet they were coy in taking any steps toward co operation. With the advice of a number of the leaders of the Canada Presbyterian church, the writer went down to Kingston and met with the committee of the Church of Scotland. The result was that the Synod very generously agreed to become responsible for the support of an educational

missionary, who should co-operate in the College. In pursuance of this action Rev. Thomas Hart, M. A., was appointed, and even before the time of union was made a regular professor. The result of the wise and statesmanlike action on the part of the two churches was that Presbyterianism was never divided on the prairies of the west, and this fact played no unimportant part in hastening on the union which took place three years after.

THE NEW BUILDING.

In the autumn of 1872 the college opened in the new building (plate 2), and during the second session 24 students were in attendance. The work of laying out a curriculum was now undertaken. The general line of study was that followed in Upper Canada College, Toronto, along with a somewhat fuller course in the natural sciences. Three written examinations were held in the year, one at the end of each college term. The boarding department of the college was begun in 1872, but the new building in which it was accommodated was not in a well finished condition. While the salaries of the professors were paid from the east, yet the work of building and furnishing taxed heavily the few people then in Manitoba. The college at this time knew the meaning of the expression "angustas res."

INCORPORATION.

In the General Assembly of 1872 steps were taken to fully organize the college. A committee was appointed, of which the present Chief Justice of Manitoba, then of Toronto, was convener, for the purpose of drafting an act of incorporation. The act prepared was introduced in the Legislature of Manitoba in the spring of 1873 and passed. In the following June the Assembly appointed the first board of management. It may be of interest to give the names of that board: Hon. A. G. B. Bannatyne, chairman; Rev. John Black, Rev. Professor Bryce, Hon. Wm. Fraser, Hon. Donald Gunn, Hon. John Sutherland, Rev. Alexander Fraser, Rev. Samuel Donaldson, Rev. John McNab, Duncan Macarthur, Gilbert McMicken, John F. Bain, John Fraser, John Sutherland, M. P. P., Duncan Sinclair. Of this board of fifteen of eighteen years ago seven members are now dead and only three of the survivors belong to the board to-day. In this year (1873) the General Assembly passed the code of by-laws for the college, and Manitoba college was recognized as one of the regular institutions of the church, though having her course open to all, and respecting the religious tenets of all her students.

REMOVAL TO WINNIPEG DISCUSSED.

Winnipeg was now becoming a place of some importance. In the first year of the writer (1871) it had contained only 300 people, in the second year it had increased to 500, and in 1873 it numbered 1,000. In the last named year action had been taken for its incorporation as a city; and as being the centre of government, law, education, religion and business, its people were ambitious to have as many progressive agencies as possible placed within it. A petition of leading

Winnipeg people was made to have classes in connection with the college opened in the city, and financial assistance was promised. The petition awakened strong opposition in Kildonan, as was most natural. It was stated that this would injure the college at Kildonan, and lead to its entire removal to the city. The Presbytery of Manitoba took up the matter, and by the casting vote of the moderator forwarded the proposal to the General Assembly with approval. The battle raged fiercely, but the scene of conflict was transferred to the Assembly meeting in Cooke's church, Toronto, where the Rev. Mr. Black was present. For Kildonan, which had made such strenuous efforts, much sympathy was expressed, but it was felt that important issues were at stake, and so

A DEPUTATION

was appointed to visit Manitoba and report. This deputation consisted of Rev. Dr. Ure, of Goderich, Ont., and Rev. Dr. Cochrane, of Brantford. In the course of the summer the visitors arrived in Manitoba, looked over the whole ground, met with the various bodies

now no longer standing, on the southeast corner of Main and Common streets, Winnipeg. Here the fourth session of the college was undertaken with vigor, and 39 students were in attendance. The country was at this time passing through the most severe ordeal by which it has been tried. This was the grasshopper plague. The crops were devoured, the fields lay idle, the homesteaders in the new settlements were near starvation, and but for the expenditure of Government money living would have been impossible. This was a serious financial trial for the college in the first year of its Winnipeg existence, but it safely weathered the storm.

A NOVELTY IN WINNIPEG.

Early in January (1875) during the session the first public educational meeting ever held in Winnipeg took place under the auspices of the college. The "Daily Free Press" of January 9th devotes two columns and a-half, its whole editorial space, under the heading "Collegiana," to an account of the meeting. The meeting was held in the court house, a building on Main street, near where Ryan's



MANITOBA COLLEGE (1872-4).

interested, and departed convinced that Winnipeg was to be the future centre of the west, and that it would be well to move the college thither. The delegates recommended that the college should remain another year at Kildonan, that the building free of debt be handed over to the Kildonan people, and that more assistance be rendered to the institution than had hitherto been given. This decision was, especially in the case of Dr. Ure, one of regret, as the delegates had a high admiration for the struggles which Kildonan had made for education and religion in their parish.

FIRST WINNIPEG SESSION.

In the autumn of 1874 the removal took place, and the college was begun in a building

block now stands. This gathering was thus described by the Free Press: "Although the weather was intensely cold and not at all favorable to a general turnout, the attendance was quite large and respectable, and it evidenced the fact that Winnipeg, young and unpretentious, can boast of a considerable number of ladies and gentlemen, residents of the city, who have a keen interest in and a warm appreciation of matters of an educational and an intellectual character." The meeting was a notable one. The chair was taken by the late Col. W. N. Kennedy Mayor elect of the city. About forty students were present, the more fortunate to receive the Governor-General's medals, and the several bursaries. Addresses were given by the late Chief Justice Wood, Consul

Taylor, Rev. James Robertson and the professors. It was reported that two students of the college, Messrs. William Black and Alexander Sutherland were taking their courses successfully in Toronto university.

A PROVINCIAL UNIVERSITY MOOTED.

As the result of some previous consultation on the matter, Consul Taylor, Rev. Mr. Robertson and others, at the meeting referred to the importance of the province considering the establishment of an university. It was pointed out that St. Boniface and St. John's colleges had long been engaged in higher educational work, and now that the young Manitoba college had been incorporated and removed to Winnipeg, the prospects for advancement in higher education were good. The project of giving each of these colleges university powers was scouted, and the speakers prophesied that the generous Manitoba spirit would lead to co-operation. Whether Manitoba College originated the university idea or not, it is certain that in this and the following year (1875-'76) Governor Morris discussed it with those interested in collegiate education and took steps as we shall see for the establishment of a provincial university.

THE COLLEGE IN WINNIPEG.

During the first session in Winnipeg arrangements were made for obtaining a permanent abode for the college. A site of two acres was purchased where the Vulcan Iron Works now stand for the sum of \$500, and the building (plate 3) was bought from Mr. W. G. Fonseca at a cost of \$4,000. This, now called the Franklin House, may still be seen at the northwest corner of Main and Common Sts. The year of occupation of this building (1875) was that of the union of the Presbyterian churches in Canada. At the first meeting of the new body in Montreal the Assembly with enthusiasm voted the amount required for its purchase. The period of six years from 1875 to 1881 spent at this point was one of great effort on the part of both teachers and students, and a writer in "Ten years in Winnipeg" says: "The institution has become one in which the citizens of Winnipeg have reason to feel proud. It is at present (1879) in a very flourishing condition. At the close of this period the attendance of the college had increased to 60, of whom 17 were in the different university years. The library had grown to 3,000, being largely augmented by books obtained by Rev. Dr. Paterson, of Nova Scotia, on a visit to Britain. The college has already taken hold upon the sympathies of a wide circle of friends in Manitoba.

THE UNIVERSITY FORMED.

Governor Morris had a great desire to mark his governorship by legislation for higher education. No formal conferences were held with the existing educational bodies, but means were taken to ascertain the views of some of those interested in education. Friends of Manitoba College had already, as we have seen, expressed their views on the matter. From certain correspondence laid before the

university early in 1890, it appears that the governor conferred with the Bishop of Rupert's Land. Archbishop Tache also states that Governor Morris urged upon him the advisability of joining with the two other colleges to secure a provincial university in Manitoba. At first the archbishop declined, but was at length induced to allow St. Boniface College to join the university about to be created. Accordingly in 1877 Hon. Joseph Royal introduced a bill in the legislative assembly to establish the university of Manitoba. Thus was begun very quietly and unostentatiously an institution which has greatly advanced higher education in the province, and at the same time benefitted the colleges. Most of those who assented to the legislation thought the new creation only likely to be a provincial university on paper, and its subsequent success has been a great surprise even to its most ardent promoters.

MAY THE UNIVERSITY TEACH ?

A most important question, depending somewhat on individual recollection has been raised in connection with the desire to make ours a teaching university. The words in section XI. of the University Act, "There shall be no professorship or other teachership at present in the University," have been the subject of much controversy, especially the phrase "at present." There is a dispute as to the accuracy of the words of the bill as passed. Archbishop Tache claims that he would not have permitted St. Boniface college to have entered the university had teaching in Manitoba university been contemplated; while the recollection of others is that the words "at present" were a part of the bill. The archbishop states that he was informed that "The bill was discussed and adopted at the meetings of the representatives of the three colleges." This, the Bishop of Rupert's land has said, "did not take place at St. John's; and we are quite clear also that Manitoba college never discussed it. Hon. Mr. Royal, in a letter dated November, 1889, to Archbishop Tache says: "I remember that I consulted Your Grace upon this matter, and I arranged to have several conversations with His Lordship of Rupert's Land. I afterwards submitted the translation in English to the Lieutenant Governor, which was slightly modified after some discussion with both Your Grace and the Bishop of Rupert's Land. I finally introduced the bill in the Legislative Assembly during the season of 1877. I cannot now remember whether it was after the introduction of the measure in the Assembly that I received the visit of Rev. Dr. Bryce and Mr. Biggs on behalf of Manitoba college, and that the views of these gentlemen were submitted to the executive council. Be that as it may I am most positive in stating that to my knowledge it was never understood at that time by any one interested in the passage of the measure that the university was ever to become, at any period of its existence, a teaching body." Now the recollections of most of those strongly interested in the university is quite otherwise. The Bishop of Rupert's Land has from the first, again and

again in the hearing of the [writer, stated that he looked forward to the time when teaching in a number of difficult subjects would be given by the university. The visit of Mr. Biggs and the writer had only to do with the establishment of convocation in the university, which suggestion was adopted. This is made the more certain by the fact Mr. Biggs never had any connection with Manitoba College. Whatever the origin of the discrepancy in memory there is no denying the fact that a Free Press report at the time states that Mr. Royal said in the house "that the university might eventually become a teaching body." That Archbishop Tache thought the words "at present" were not in the bill seems beyond all question, but the case with others being different it is not strange that they should have reached the opinion that teaching in the university is now a necessity.

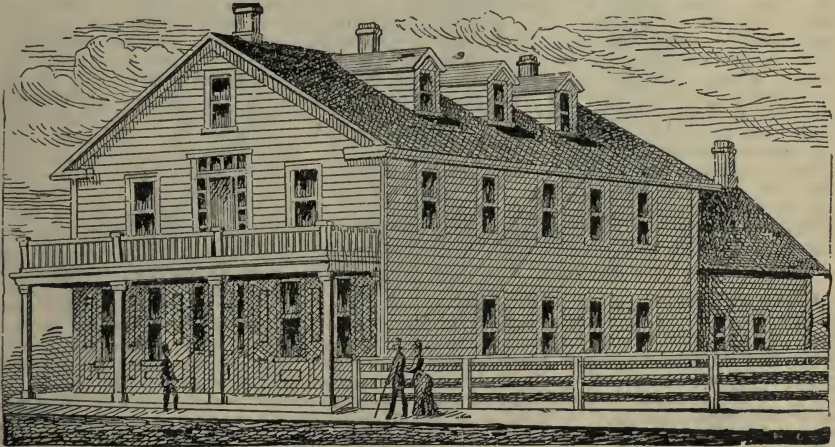
UNIVERSITY ORGANIZATION.

The first regular meeting of the University Council was held at the Court House, Winnipeg, on Oct. 4th, 1877. It was a rare sight to

enjoyable of all the pleasant meetings that have taken place in preparing the now wide curriculum of our provincial university.

THE FIRST UNIVERSITY DAYS.

The first examination held by the university took place on the 27th of May, 1878. At this examination seven candidates appeared, and they were all from Manitoba College. Their names and standing were as follows: Previous examination, W. R. Gunn; preliminary examination, J. B. Polworth, C. M. Stewart, L. McPhillips, O. H. Clark, D. R. Sinclair and A. E. McPhillips. The thoroughly cosmopolitan character of Manitoba College may be seen in the fact, that of these seven, three were Presbyterians, two Methodists and two Roman Catholics. It has been so with Manitoba College ever since the first. Religious opinion is no barrier to the highest distinction being rewarded in its classes. The early lead in the university by the college has been maintained ever since. The first graduate of the university was Mr. W. R. Gunn, of this college. Our students usually make up



MANITOBA COLLEGE (1875-81),

see representatives of opinions so diverse meeting together and deliberating for the common good. Steps were immediately taken to prepare a curriculum. Difficulties arose on account of the difference of British university customs from those in Canada, on account of the divergence between the French Canadian system of Lower Canada, and that of Ontario, and on account of the importance given by specialists to their own departments. A "juste milieu" was however at last obtained. This was largely accomplished by a committee of half a dozen of members including the chancellor, the bishop of Rupert's Land, the late Father Forget, of St. Boniface and representatives of Manitoba College. The committee usually met at St. John's college, and many an evening was spent in laying down the lines of the university of the prairies. Those early gatherings were among the most

fifty or sixty per cent of those passing university examinations. It is pleasing to be able to state that while there has been keen competition between the colleges there has always been the best of feeling. The seal of the university adopted in its early days is a symbol of its composite and unique character. In one quarter is the Provincial Arms; in another beside it representing St. Boniface College is an open Bible with the appropriate words upon it: "Pueris his Scientiam dedit Deus," Dan. I. 17. Below the Provincial arms representing St. John's College is St. John with his eagle and pen, while on the right lower quarter is the Manitoba College device, a vine with the motto, "Floreat." Around the border are the words "Universitas Manitobænsis," while surmounting all is the crown in token of the protection and interest of the state. In regard to

the university Manitoba College is at all times most ready to apply its own motto, "Let it flourish."

THE OLD MAIN STREET BUILDING.

As being the abode in which for three years (1878-81) our institution took the position of a college of the university, the old Main street building (Plate 3) has many interesting memories twining round it. Its exterior was plain, but it was fairly comfortable and was the scene of a surprising amount of hard work. Notwithstanding the facts that the staff was small and that all the years of the university were going, along with honor work in the different courses, the men educated at that time have held their own in scholarship, and are found to day occupying leading places in the several professions. Dr. A. H. Ferguson, a leading city physician, was for several years preparatory tutor, and a student of the college. Among the graduates educated in the Main street building are Mr. J. B. Polworth, B. A., a successful lawyer on the Pacific coast; Messrs. George Munroe, B. A., and R. R. Sutherland, M. A., lawyers of this city; Neil McCallum, B. A., and Rev. R. G. Macbeth, M. A., the well known young minister of Garman. With us from that building came two of our present college staff, our genial tutor, Mr. A. M. Campbell, M. A., one of our own graduates, who for years filled the post of resident tutor; and besides, our present matron, who has rendered the college great assistance, and whose department of the "commisariat" is one of the most difficult to manage. In the two cases just mentioned, more than ten years of faithful and unselfish service demand recognition of us to-night.

THE NEW BUILDING.

In 1881 and '82 Winnipeg and Manitoba passed through marked changes in their history. The prospect of a transcontinental rail way called attention to us, and the city and province lived ten years in one. Manitoba College had thrown itself at its beginning into the rising tide of Canadian life flowing to the west, and was sure to feel such an impulse as that of 1881. The desire to meet more effectively the growing university demands, and to prepare for the influx of new settlers led the College Board to plan for a new building more centrally situated and more convenient. The old building and site which had cost \$4,500 were sold for \$11,000, and the nucleus of a building fund was thus formed. A subscription list of some \$11,000 was obtained in Winnipeg, and this turned out on account of failures in the boom worth about \$6,000. The present valuable site of four acres was purchased from the Hudson's Bay Company for \$6,000, and the contract for the building was let for a little above \$33,000. In August, 1881, the foundation stone was laid by the Marquis of Lorne, Governor-General of Canada, in the presence of a large assemblage, and the building (plate 4) was ready for occupation by the time of the opening of the autumn term of 1882. The building which can accommodate 35 or 40 residents, is taxed to its utmost capa-

city, and its class rooms are too few and too small for the large classes, now summing up annually about 120 students. The total number of students prepared for B. A. by Manitoba College in our short history has been nearly 90, i. e., nearly sixty per cent of all the arts students educated in the province.

THE STUDENT IN THE COLLEGE.

Our purpose in giving an account of the earlier days of the college is nearly accomplished. It would, however, be incomplete without a reference to the other faculty of the college—the department of theology—"the queen of the sciences"—"notitia divinarum rerum." Ever since the foundation of the college there has been such a sympathy in it for the work of evangelizing the west that efforts have been put forth to obtain and educate students for the gospel ministry. In the first class—that of 1871—there were two students in attendance, who had the ministry in view. In 1874 the General Assembly decided, "whilst in no way sanctioning the establishment of a theological seminary at Manitoba, yet in view of all the circumstances agree to instruct the Presbytery of Manitoba to direct the studies of the young men in the meantime." The superabundance of theological colleges in the east made the Assembly very cautious in advancing in this direction in Winnipeg. Yet for ten years in its early history, classes in theology were regularly maintained. Rev. Dr. Black and Rev. Dr. Robertson, though overwhelmed with pastoral work, gave valuable assistance, and the two professors of that time had regular classes in New Testament Greek, Hebrew, and Homiletics. But the influx of people in 1881 and '82 made advance in this direction a necessity. The Presbytery of Manitoba was so impressed with this need that it approached the General Assembly in 1883 with a guarantee to raise the extra amount required for the support of a theological professor, and the Assembly responded by appointing the Rev. Dr. King, of Toronto, principal and professor of theology. Dr. King has, since coming to the college, not only taken the bulk of the theology, but has been an arts professor, especially aiding in mental and moral science and German. In our statement of the finances of the new building it will be remembered it was shown that there was a heavy debt resting on the new college building at the time of its construction. The commercial depression following the "boom" affected the college expectations as well as those of the people of Manitoba. With remarkable energy and success Dr. King grappled with the financial situation, and largely by personal solicitation obtained the means for clearing off the debt. Through legacies and otherwise the college is not only free from debt, but has an endowment fund of about \$25,000. During all the years a number of able and devoted assistants have been teachers in the college for longer or shorter times, among them being the pastors of our congregations in Winnipeg and the vicinity. The latest appointment to our staff is that of Rev. A. B. Baird, B. D., who for several years

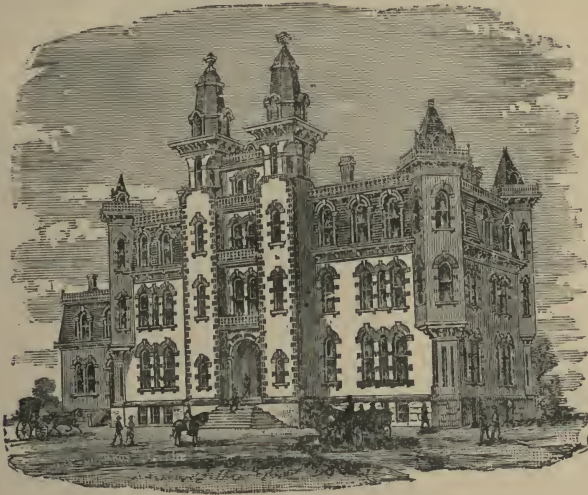
has rendered valuable assistance as a teacher, but who will, on November 3rd, be formally inducted to the chair of Hebrew, Apologetics and Church History. In theology, as in arts, our graduates are now reaching a goodly number, there being on that list as theological alumni, 34

THE TWENTY YEARS' RETROSPECT.

As we recount these facts the impression is brought home to us that very much is crowded into the first years of the history of a province or an institution. Many who began the race with us are now lying in the silent tomb. We desire to keep before us the memories of the departed founders. We lament that some of

times of discouragement; but we have also been happy in rejoicing when she rejoiced. All connected with the college can look back and see a struggle with difficulties, poverty, overwork, and many adverse circumstances. We have yet many struggles to make before a permanent system of higher education can be reached in Manitoba; but there is the hope that all our efforts will help to build up a free, intelligent, and God-fearing people.

"Shall it then be unavailing
All this toil for human culture?
Through the cloud-rack, dark and trailing,
Must they see above them sailing,
O'er life's barren edge, the vulture?"



THE PRESENT COLLEGE ERECTED (1882).

them were cut off so soon that they never saw our present substantial buildings occupied. Especially do we feel this in the case of the Rev. Dr. Black. Another name presses itself upon us to-night—that of the Hon. A. G. B. Bannatyne, who from the first was chairman of the board up to the time, two years ago, when failing health compelled him to give place to the present efficient chairman, Chief Justice Taylor. In first place among the founders will ever remain the names Black and Bannatyne. The progress of Manitoba College is an exact register of the advancement of Manitoba. It has often been our lot to weep with our province, when she wept in her

Surely not! Members of Manitoba College Literary Society, the law of life for a college organism, is the same as that for each of us individually. We "rise on stepping stones of our dead selves to higher things." In whatever capacity we speak of ourselves, to us come the words of Ruskin, spoken in thoughtful tones, "He only is advancing in life, whose heart is getting softer, whose blood warmer, whose brain quicker, whose spirit is entering into living peace." Let us reflect on the words spoken by the poet already quoted:—

"Only those are crowned and sainted,
Who with grief have been acquainted,
Making nations nobler, freer."

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MANITOBA COLLEGE, WINNIPEG.

(Also Author of Articles "Manitoba" and "Winnipeg," in Encyclopædia Britannica, and of "Canada," in "Narrative and Critical History of America.")

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