

usually emanates from one or other of about a dozen, who strive to make the debates worthy of the name. When there are so many speakers many of the arguments are repeated in a slightly altered form. If but three or four speakers were appointed on each side, with the understanding that care and preparation would be expected, the debates would assume a highly different character. In other literary societies this is the practice, and they can boast of addresses being delivered in their meetings worthy of publication. The freshman class this year exhibit more interest in the Alma Mater Society than is usually the case, and the present would be a good time to make a radical change in the manner of conducting the debates.

[Our correspondent is rather severe in his strictures. The debates of the Alma Mater Society this session, while furnishing much room for improvement, have yet been far from uninteresting. They have, in fact, been characterized by a liveliness and energy not witnessed in many previous sessions. With regard to the lack of interest taken in the debates by students of the Royal College, the writer of the above does not give an adequate reason for the same. Certain it is that if the medical students presented themselves in even moderate numbers at the time when the subjects for debate are chosen, they could easily secure a subject of debate which would satisfy the majority of those present. The question of limiting the number of speakers on each evening is worthy of consideration, although such a limitation would debar many inexperienced speakers from a means of improvement. We shall refer editorially to the subject in our next issue.—EDITOR JOURNAL.]

### REMINISCENCES OF A B.A. OF '56.

(CONTINUED FROM LAST NUMBER.)

IN those days the majority of the students had the Church in view, at least at the time of entering College, although, then as now, not a few fell away from their intention by the time their Arts' course was completed. It was one of the ecclesiastical regulations in force that every aspirant for matriculation had first to run the gauntlet of the Presbytery within which he resided, not only as to his moral fitness to become a student whose goal was the ministry, but also as to his knowledge of the subjects prescribed for the University entrance examination. This was an admirable provision, and it would be well for the Church even now to have some such regulation. Faithfully carried out, it would save college authorities the painful necessity sometimes laid upon them of refusing admission to imperfectly prepared candidates for matriculation—it would perhaps stop intellectually incompetent aspirants to the sacred profession *in limine*, the right stage to do it in—and it would relieve Presbyteries of the unpleasant and almost impossible task of rejecting candidates for license, because of their literary and mental deficiencies. I can vividly recall this first examination ordeal. It was with not a little trepidation I appeared before the grave and reverend seigniors, and exhibited my acquaintance with *Mair's Introduction*, *Cæsar*, *Virgil*, the *Greek Grammar*, and *Arithmetic*. The ministers did all in their power to put me at my ease; and I managed in spite of my nervousness to pass muster before them. No fewer than four can-

didates for admission to Queen's, with a view to the holy ministry, were on the same day examined by that Presbytery. One of them scarcely came up to the standard, and he was advised to postpone his entrance of the College for a year, advice on which he wisely acted.

In no respect has Canada made greater advances since '53, than in the means of locomotion which she possesses. Stage and steamboat were at that date the only public conveyances. The students from the London District got the mail boats at Hamilton, as well as those belonging to the country between the latter port and Kingston. The Glengarry students took the same line coming up to Kingston; while those hailing from the Bathurst District were accommodated by the little steamers plying through the Rideau Canal between Bytown, as Ottawa was then called, and the Limestone City. My first sight of a steamboat was at a port on this route. The little puffer was called "The Prince of Wales," and it had for alternate, "The Firefly." Its cabin accommodation was neither large nor attractive; but even had it been otherwise the extravagance of paying for a berth was something that an economically-brought-up youth could not dream of. So I, with the bulk of the passengers, hugged the furnace of the "Prince of Wales," with the view of keeping warm, throughout a cold October night. The route, especially from Newboro to Kingston, is not uninteresting; and the process of locking the steamer in order to raise it to a higher level, at different points, was witnessed with much wonder. But the height of excitement was not reached until the city, in which several years were to be spent, came in sight, with its tall spires, and little forest of masts. Cataract bridge seemed a marvel, spanning such a breadth of water! And then, how formidable to the rustic imagination did the Martello towers appear, rising in their stateliness out of the water, as well as the guns peering over the walls of the "market battery!"

Owing to the want of traveling facilities, very few of the students were able to leave for home at Christmas. The holiday time was rather dull in consequence, and there was no petitioning to have it extended. The inconvenience of being hemmed in by snow and ice was strongly felt on a painful occasion. David McDonald, a fine young Highlander from the Township of Williams, west of London, died of typhoid-pneumonia on the 21st of February, 1855, and his remains had to be taken over the ice to Cape Vincent, escorted by the students, and thence conveyed by the New York Central, and its connections, to the point in the United States nearest to London. The death of this promising student cast a gloom over the remainder of that session; a feeling which was greatly deepened by the death, a few weeks later, of a classmate and chum of his, Frederick Grierson Smith, son of the late Dr. Smith, of the High School, Quebec, and brother of the present beloved pastor of St. Andrew's Church, Kingston. He fell a victim to the same disease as McDonald. None of Smith's family were able to come to Kingston at the time, owing to the vast distance to be traveled by stage, and his remains were interred in the city cemetery. Navigation opened about the time of the closing of the College; but sometimes students had to wait a week or two to get steamers going east or west.

The population of Kingston, including the soldiers in the garrison, was then not much short of what it is to-day; and there was a mingling of awe and pleasure in landing in a place of such dimensions, especially as it was associated with the seat of learning to which my footsteps were directed.

There was a boarding-house in connection with the College in those days, presided over by Rev. Henry Byers, a superannuated Methodist preacher, who was, however, better known by an *alias*, and is, I believe yet to the fore. The experiment of having the students "in residence"