

RECOLLECTIONS OF FATHER DAWSON.

"Feed the flock of God, which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

1 PETER, V., 2.



HAVING been asked by the conductors of THE OWL, to furnish them, for publication in their popular periodical, with some of my recollections of our lately deceased and widely lamented townsman, the Very Reverend Dr. Dawson, V.G., I have thrown into the following pages, and now submit, the impressions left on my mind, after an acquaintance of over thirty years, with that eminent scholar and divine. I think I first heard of Father Dawson in 1863-4, when preparing for publication my *Bibliotheca Canadensis*. In that work will be found an account of his various literary undertakings from the time when as a very young man he made his first essay as a writer. I was then living in Quebec, but before the appearance of the book, being then as now, a member of the Civil Service, I came to Ottawa, on the removal hither of the seat of government, and on that occasion had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Dawson for the first time. It was in the autumn of 1865; and the friendship which was then formed between us, he, a man well advanced in years, and I but just come of age, remained firm and unbroken until the end. There were as members of the public service at that time, as there are at present, many ripe scholars and men of fine literary tastes, among whom I recall the late John Langton, the late Dr. Adamson, the late Dr. Alpheus Todd, the late Dr. Taché, the late A. Gerin-Lajoie, the late Fennings Taylor, the late Etienne Parent, the late R. S. M. Bouchette, Dr. E. A. Meredith, Mr. W. H. Griffin, Mr. G. W. Wicksteed and Mr.

Arthur Harvey, and it was to many of them, as it certainly was to the younger members of the fraternity, like myself, a matter of sincere pleasure and congratulation to meet among the residents of the new Capital one with Dr. Dawson's refinement and breeding and high claims to intellectual excellence. The opportunities however, were not many, for cultivating new acquaintances. Owing to a lack of accomodation, many of the public employees were unable as yet to remove their household gods to Ottawa, and there were few, if any, agreeable places of resort, beyond the Russell House and Pat O'Meara's eating-house across the Sapper's Bridge. But Father Dawson was a prominent member of the old Mechanic's Institute and Athenaeum, where he frequently lectured in company with the late Mr. A. J. Russell, the late Major Perry, the late Mr. Henry J. Friel, and our present distinguished townsmen, Dr. Thorburn and Sir James Alexander Grant; and it was in the reading-room and library of this venerable institution that the more serious minded of the new-comers accustomed themselves to foregather during the long winter evenings, either to discuss philosophy or talk over the events of the day.

Father Dawson made everyone at home, and was always much in request in this circle. He, as I have remarked, was a fine scholar, had read largely and diligently in general literature and in addition kept himself remarkably well informed on all that was transpiring in our daily world. He possessed also, what is so seldom seen associated with one from the land of Macallum More, a bright and ready wit, which was rarely if ever found to be out of place; but what, in my opinion, gave him so firm a hold on the affections of men was his broad-minded, liberal, Catholic spirit, so free from all manner of bigotry and intolerance. Such a man could not fail of impressing his personality most particularly upon the mind and heart of Thomas D'Arcy McGee, then in the zenith of his fame, whose especial mission in Canada seems to have