

**REV. JAMES WILLIAMSON, LL.D.**  
**Professor of Mathematics.**

IN the year 1855 on the occasion of a presentation to the subject of this sketch the Rev. John McKerras (now Professor) used this language: "the name of Professor Williamson has come to be regarded as synonymous with the honored title of Students' Friend," and the quarter of a century that has since elapsed has only intensified this feeling. In presenting his portrait therefore to Graduates and Students we know we are presenting an acceptable gift and feel that the necessary bareness of the facts we advance will be well filled out by affectionate remembrance. Born in 1806 at Edinburgh the future Vice-Principal was educated at the High School of his native city and graduated as M.A. at Edinburgh University in 1827. His chosen profession was the Ministry of the Church of Scotland, and he was Licensed in '31. After being licensed he was for a time a Missionary in Kilsyth, a mining district, subsequent to which he was assistant minister at Drumelzier. While filling this position a body of men in Canada had succeeded in establishing Queen's University and College, and in the year 1842, the second year of the College, he resigned his position in Drumelzier and came to Canada, having accepted an appointment to the important chair of Mathematics. From this period dates his connection with Queen's, a connection marked by an intense earnestness to maintain and increase its reputation and by an unvarying interest in it and all connected with it. At the time of his appointment his associates were Dr. Liddell and Prof. Campbell, but soon (about 1844, we believe) the management of the infant institution was left entirely in his hands, Drs. Liddell and Campbell having accepted calls from Scotland. To this emergency the Professor was equal and successfully watched over the interests of the College until successors to these gentlemen were appointed. In spite of the immense work that devolved on him in these years he still had time for other matters, for the year 1845 is marked by his marriage with Margaret Gilchrist, daughter of John Gilchrist, Esq., of Edinburgh, Editor of the *Evening Courant* of that city. This lady, however, died in the year

1847, leaving one son, now filling a responsible position in Edinburgh.

In the year 1852 he married his second wife, so well known to many of our Graduates as the kind secondor of the Professor's constant hospitality to the students,—Margaret, sister of the Rt. Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald. In the year 1854, he in conjunction mainly with Dr. Dickson and Dr. John Stewart, successfully established a Medical Faculty in connection with Queen's and was for some time the Professor of Chemistry in this new institution. In the year 1855 he was the recipient of a valuable testimonial from former graduates, on which occasion (as mentioned above) an address was read by Rev. John McKerras, which only want of space prevents our trans-

scribing, so well does it express the sentiments of respect and love, which then as now were the prevailing sentiments in the minds of all students and graduates towards him. Shortly after this testimonial to his personal qualities, he received one which recognized his high intellectual attainments, viz.: the degree of LL.D. from the University of Glasgow, (a degree not so lightly given then as now). As an example of the work Dr. Williamson was now doing, we may quote from a writer to the Presbyterian in 1857: "The Vice-Principal lectures on Theology in all its branches, Natural Philosophy, Logic and \*\*\* Church History." And from what he says farther on Mathematics and Chemistry may be added to this. Truly Queen's has developed.

Shortly before this date in 1855, the Doctor's efforts were successfully bent towards the erection of an observatory, which was deeded to the University in 1861 and of which he is the Director. Since then an improvement in the funds has increased the staff of Professors, though not to their full complement, and Dr. Williamson—still a splendid specimen of health—now fills only the chair to which he was first appointed, that of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy. One other sad event only we have to record, the death of Mrs Williamson in 1876. And now we leave the Dr. to our readers, not because we do not desire to say more, but because we feel certain that the recollections of all must be as vivid and full as our own, and we feel that all of our readers will join with us in the wish that he may be long spared to fill his place.

