

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, TORONTO.

PRESIDENT WILSON'S ADDRESS AT THE ANNUAL CONVOCATION.

The annual convocation of University College took place on Friday afternoon, October 13, in the hall of the college, Dr. Daniel Wilson, the president in the chair. The proceedings opened with the distribution of prizes which had been won at the recent examinations, after which the President delivered his annual address as follows :—

On this our annual commemoration of our progress as a college, it is ever a pleasant duty to welcome our new entrants, the hope of the college and of Canada in future years, and to recognize the share which the various Collegiate Institutes and High Schools of the province claim in this evidence of progress. All the more willingly may we accord such recognition in the light of the fact that upwards of fifty of those Collegiate Institutes and High Schools have for their principals and headmasters men who received their training in these halls, while many more of our graduates are numbered among their teachers. Bearing in mind the fact that when University College began its work in 1853 it was almost assumed as indisputable that it was vain to hope for any fifty trained matriculant except from Upper Canada College, it is a gratifying proof of progress to be able to note that we have this year matriculating students entering from forty-six different colleges, Collegiate Institutes, and High Schools, the great majority of which are under the able conduct of masters trained in this institution.

This year, as a college, we enter under peculiar circumstances on the thirtieth year of progress, as reconstituted by the Act of 1853, which organized the older University into two distinct corporations, limiting the functions of the University, as such, to the direction and control of examinations, and the granting of scholarships, honors, and degrees, while University College was constituted a separate and distinct corporation, entrusted, as the Provincial College, with authority to determine branches of knowledge to be taught, and responsibility for all instruction in the arts and sciences. The endowments and property set apart for such purposes were anew vested in the Crown for the uses of the University and College, while provision was made for extending the benefits of the University to other colleges and educational institutions in Canada by admitting their students to compete for the honors, scholarships and degrees on precisely the same footing as our own students. The Senate, as then constituted under the

provisions of the Act, included, along with the president of University College, the principals of Queen's and Victoria Universities, the provost of Trinity College, and other representatives of the educational institutions specified in the Act, and the dream of one Canadian National University seemed, to sanguine educational reformers, to be on the eve of its accomplishment. The heads of the universities and colleges of Upper Canada had thus far been organized into a body, with full powers to appoint examiners, apportion subjects and text-books, determine all requisites for prizes, honors, and degrees, and so far as the requirements of the university were concerned, the students of every Canadian college were placed on an equality in the University hall. In one aspect, at least, the practical working of the university system thus organized compared favourably with what is now in force. The examiners were, with few exceptions, professors and experienced teachers. The professors of University College, selected by the Government of the province as those most fitted to be entrusted with the work of higher education, were appointed to examine, and anxious care was manifested to select at the same time, from the various other colleges, examiners to cooperate with them in the joint work. The professors of University College may now reflect with just pride on the fact that for years they fearlessly invited professors of Queen's, Victoria, Trinity, McGill, and Laval Universities, as well as those from other educational institutions, to examine and determine the ranking of their own students, while in no single instance were they accorded a like opportunity of testing the work in progress in other colleges. But it satisfied them that their students were subjected to a rigid and impartial examination on their actual teaching, and not on mere text-books or lists of titles, with the mischievous results which more and more tend to foster a system of cram—the acquisition of parrot-like answers to conventional questions, instead of a true mastery of the subjects taught. The highest educational authorities are nearly of one mind on this subject, that no system can lead to satisfactory results which divorces the examiner from the instructor, and so tempts the average student to exert himself with more zeal to an analysis of examination papers and the cramming of provisional answers than to the true work of the laboratory, the practical class, and the lecture-room.

Whilst, however, every honest endeavour was made to secure the hearty co-operation, on an impartial basis, of all the denominational colleges with this institution, the Provincial College was necessarily distinguished