

years since its inauguration as the cradle of reviving Italian letters.

Compared with even the youngest of those centres of academic culture we are but of yesterday. Yet, if we study minutely their early history, it is unquestionable that our advantages have been greater than theirs; greater in a generous endowment, inadequate though we already find it; greater by reason of privileges due to a century so rich in scientific discovery, and to a period animated by a rare sympathy with education as the handmaid of constitutional freedom. The history of this university is identified with successive stages of progress, from the first settlement of Upper Canada to the federation of the provinces of British North America into the Dominion. The varied phases thus presented are indeed noteworthy, considering the brief term of our existence. The student who reverts to the Royal Charter given by the last of the Georges, in 1827, might fancy it to be venerable with the dust of feudal centuries. The spirit in which revision was undertaken in 1857 marks the rebound of an emancipated community in the first consciousness of constitutional freedom, while in more recent legislation we welcome the triumph of wise moderation, combined with the liberality of a people who have outgrown the restraints of narrow sectarianism, without lessening their hold on the moral elements essential to healthy national life.

The experience of a lifetime, in which I have watched the progress of higher education under diverse systems, both in the Old and the New World, has amply confirmed my early convictions in favour of national education in the widest sense. The universities of Europe were the nurseries of learning and their work is not yet done. The busy world is engrossed with the strife of politics, the preoccupations of industrial toil and the eager

pursuit of wealth. It stands as much as ever in need of such quiet retreats for the student and for the youthful learner in training for his share of its engrossing cares. I rejoice in the evidence which becomes yearly more apparent, of the appreciation of the influence this university already exercises on the thought and life of the community. It is not, indeed, to university trained men that we must wholly look for the fruits of that influence which radiates from such centres. Shakespeare "had small Latin and less Greek;" neither Gibbon nor Grote won a university degree. The names of Franklin, Watt, Faraday, Stevenson and many others who have achieved like triumphs, appear on no graduate roll. Nevertheless they could not have accomplished what they did, had it not been for the influence of those academic haunts where intellect is left free to accumulate the resources of learning and the fruits of experiment for the use of all. There moreover, the bias is given to many a bright intellect, ignorant as yet of its own powers, or of the wise uses to which they may be directed. It is, indeed, not the least among the grave responsibilities that rest upon the faculty, as each year we welcome the new entrants who crowd our halls, to realize how largely our influence may determine their future career. Returning from my summer holidays I noticed as we passed on to the track of the Canadian Pacific railway that it depended on the turning of a switch by only a few inches to right or left, whether we should continue our journey by the valley of the St. Lawrence to the Atlantic, or pass by the trans-continental line to its terminus on the shores of the Pacific ocean. Even so is it with you who are now welcomed to the privileges of undergraduates of this university. On a choice which may seem at the moment as insignificant as the inclining of the railroad.