

## McMASTER UNIVERSITY.

BY E. P. WELLS.

MUCH interest was aroused in educational circles by the first Commencement of McMaster University, which took place in May last. Up to that time, few, perhaps, besides those immediately interested in, or connected with it, were fully seized of the fact, that in the midst of our older and well-established institutions of learning, another, and a vigorous one, if judged by its growth, had recently reared its head. The occasion of its first granting of degrees in Arts was one of joy and congratulation, and friends from all parts of the Dominion came together to celebrate it. Large audiences gathered on the three successive evenings of the Commencement exercises, the first of which was devoted to the reading of graduate theses, the second to a Baccalaureate sermon by Rev. George Dana Boardman, LL.D., of Philadelphia, and the third to the conferring of degrees in Arts and in Theology. Nearly sixty persons were also admitted *ad eundem gradum* in Arts from Toronto, Acadia, Victoria, Harvard, and other universities, who thus embraced the first opportunity of identifying themselves with the fortunes of the new university; while the first degrees granted for the prescribed M.A. courses were conferred upon two ladies, members of the Moulton College staff. The enthusiasm shown by the students, who sat massed in the body of the large assembly, at every turn of the proceedings, showed plainly that they were filled with a spirit of loyalty to their university. A stranger suddenly introduced to the scene must have been impressed with the fact that this infant among Canada's universities had already made good progress, and showed signs of possessing innate

powers of development, which promised to bring it early to a commanding stature.

The University Trust is vested in a corporation, whose members are chosen by the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, while educational principles and policy are committed to a composite Senate, in which all departments of the University receive due representation, and wide practical experience is encouraged to give a determinative voice.

One unacquainted with the history of the educational work of the constituency most directly influenced by McMaster University, might naturally ask, "How has it come to pass that in so brief a time, this new university, surrounded by older and well-established institutions, has attracted so large a body of students to its halls, and won praise for its methods and its work from leading educationists?" The answer to the first part of the question is largely found in the history of the origin and evolution of the university; to the second, in the character of its aims, and in its strong professoriate, and in the fact that an earnest and intelligent effort has been made to base its efforts upon sound and important principles of education.

A glance backward over the course of education under Baptist auspices in Quebec and Ontario is sufficient to show that McMaster University is no palace of Aladdin sprung up in a night-time. On the contrary, it has been the product of the slow and more or less steady growth of years, rooted as it is in the life and heart of the people by whom it primarily exists. It may be compared to an oak, which sent forth its first tiny leaf some fifty years ago, in the thought of half-a-