

seventh year. His parents—James and Elisa (McAdam) Burns—both natives of the Emerald Isle, emigrated to Canada in 1847, and during the succeeding three years they resided in Quebec. Mr. Burns, senior, was a carpenter and builder, and while in the old country he carried on an extensive business. On his arrival in Canada he followed with success the same avocations. In 1850 he removed to Toronto with his family, and there settled down in permanent residence. Before emigrating to Canada, young Alexander Burns had attended the national schools in his native land, there receiving a good primary education. On coming to Toronto he learned the trade of a wood-turner, which he followed for a number of years. During this period, while attending a series of revival meetings in connection with the Methodist Church, he joined that body, though he had been brought up in the Presbyterian faith. This was one of the most important events in his life. New impulses stirred the young man, and he felt that he had a future before him. He continued working at his trade until he earned enough money to enable him to enter upon a university course at Victoria College, Cobourg. Here he remained six years, during the greater portion of which time he was a tutor in the preparatory department of the college. In 1861 he graduated as valedictorian in his class and also a Prince of Wales Gold Medallist. For a year afterwards he taught in his *alma mater*, and then, on leaving the university, he spent a like period in Stratford. Thence he was sent to Drayton circuit, where he remained for two years, and in 1865 he accepted the professorship of mathematics in the Iowa Wesleyan University, at Mount Pleasant, Ia., having previously declined the Vice-Presidency of Mount Allison University, New Brunswick. He remained in Mount Pleasant for three years, when he was appointed President of Simpson College, Indianola, Ia., a position he held for ten years. During his residence in the United States, the study of International questions and lecturing on International Law developed a great fondness for the subject, and he was admitted to the Bar in the Supreme Court, although never intending to practise law. On the resignation of the late Rev. Dr. Rice, Dr. Burns was called to the Presidency of the Hamilton Ladies' College, over which he has since presided. He has always been a prominent figure in Methodist circles, and has been elected a delegate to the General Conference at every session since his return to Canada. He was honoured in 1870 with the degree S.T.D. (*Sanctæ Theologiæ Doctor*), which was conferred upon him by the State University of Indiana, and in 1878 he received his LL.D., from Victoria University. In the

latter institution the Doctor has taken a great interest. At the time Federation was being discussed he wrote a series of able articles in which, while not opposing the removal of Victoria to Toronto, he strenuously maintained that she should retain her independence. Twice he has been elected by the Alumni Association of the University as their representative in the Senate. Lately they elected him to the Board of Regents of Victoria, and more recently they again honoured him by electing him as one of the five to represent Victoria on the Senate of Toronto University under Federation. He is associate examiner in the President's department; has twice delivered the annual address before the Theological Union of the University; and once he gave the baccalaureate sermon. All these sermons have been published and very widely read. The Doctor has a high reputation both as a lecturer and a preacher. He has been heard in almost every city in Ontario and Quebec. In religion as well as in politics he holds very broad and radical views. He fully accepts the supernatural in revelation, but believes that true religion harmonizes with reason, science and common sense, rather than being based on a formulated theological doctrine; in politics he believes more in the man than in the king, looking upon the latter as the servant of the people instead of their master. In 1882 he was placed on trial by the London Conference for holding views contrary to the teachings of the Methodist Church on the scriptures, the atonement and future retribution, the trouble having arisen from some expressions used in a published letter which he had written to his old friend, Rev. Dr. Thomas, of Chicago. But the Doctor's defence of his views was so eloquent, logical and forcible, that he was almost unanimously acquitted on all the charges. In referring to this celebrated trial, the *Christian Guardian*, the recognized organ of the Methodist body, said it "never had any doubt that Dr. Burns was in everything essential soundly Methodist, though an independent thinker, and one who expressed himself with more than ordinary freedom of language." Politically, Dr. Burns has always been a Reformer and a free trader; he is an ardent Gladstonian, and takes a strong interest in the question of Home Rule for Ireland. In 1887 he was chosen one of the Reform candidates for the Commons, but was defeated after a hard and honourably fought contest. As administrator of the Hamilton Ladies' College, the Doctor has shown himself singularly fitted for the position. The institution is the oldest of its kind in the Dominion, and has even more than a Canadian reputation, drawing its students from constituencies stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and taking in all