

DALHOUSIE COLLEGE.

A Paper of Information.

AS it was possible for such an embodiment of wisdom and knowledge as a Minister of Education to place us officially in the wrong town, in the wrong Province, some three hundred miles away, it may be as well to tell plainly where we are. Be it known then to all and sundry that "Old Dalhousie," as her sons and daughters love to call her, is the chief ornament and saving grace of the famous garrison town of Halifax, the capital of Nova Scotia. Both Province and city have a long and interesting history. This is the land of Evangeline, the home of the Acadians, a land of most varied and charming scenery, from the hills about the blue reaches of the Arm of Gold, that recall the glories of the Scottish highlands, to the rich, pastoral plain of the Annapolis Valley, "The Happy Valley," that Johnson only dreamed of. In the spring it is "a hundred miles of apple blossom," and at all times it is tenderly beautiful. To western eyes our city looks shabby and out at elbows. Errant Torontonians even suggest that our buildings want paint. One adventurous person advised beginning with our "Province Building." The suggestion strikes the true Haligonian like the proposal of the humorist in Black's novel, to whitewash Westminster Abbey. But which is preferable—to be spruced up with pigments and oils, or to pass into literature crowned and immortal?

Into the mist, my guardian prowls put forth;
Behind the mist, my virgin ramparts lie;
The Warden of the Honor of the North,
Sleepless and veiled am I.

But time would fail me to allude to a tithe of the charm of Our environment.

Our history is surely the strangest of all college histories. What other college sprang directly from a great war? When England was fighting for the dear life against all Europe and the greatest war-lord of all times, one little, forgotten, minor operation brought our College into being. In the last three years of the great Napoleonic struggle America "jumped on our back," and made war upon the loyal colonies. Here, in the Maritime Provinces, there were captures, reprisals, expeditions and sea fights that have never passed into history. At the end of the war, in August, 1814, a small squadron set out from Halifax to punish the privateers of Castine, a naval base in the State of Maine. The town was taken and held until the Peace of Ghent, and our forces brought back to Halifax the sum of £11,596 18s. 9d. Customs dues, which nobody proposed to spend at once. This was our first endowment, the Castine Fund.

The year after Waterloo, the black year, 1816, brought Nova Scotia a new Lieutenant-Governor, Lord Dalhousie, the ninth earl of that name. He was a soldier from boyhood; he had served in Ireland after '98, in the infamous Walcheren expedition, he had been desperately wounded in Martinique, he commanded the Seventh Division in the Peninsula; but perhaps his best title to fame is the fact that the great and good Sir Walter, friend from boyhood to old age, has recorded his worth in his priceless journal, and that he founded our college. His portrait hangs in the college library under two Boer flags our soldiers brought back as trophies to their Alma Mater. It is a fine portrait. "Fondator Noster" was every inch a soldier. Although over sixty years of age, after exposure and hardship in every quarter of the globe, he looks little over forty. His face is firm, frank, well-balanced, the face of a man.

Being a Scot and a Presbyterian, Lord Dalhousie was inclined to democratic and liberal ideas. The situation he found in our Province was singular. The one institution for higher education was based on Oxford ideas, and Oxford ideas of the Dark Ages before Oriel began to lead the way to reform. King's College was consistently Anglican. It required residence, it was supported by public money, largely con-

tributed by "dissenters," and yet no "dissenter" could obtain an education without subscribing to the Thirty-nine Articles on matriculation and again at graduation, and, in the period between, refrain from frequenting "seditious gatherings," Roman Catholic chapels, or the "meeting houses" of Presbyterians, Baptists or Methodists. This constitution, it is fair to state, was forced on King's, by an Oxford man, Sir Alexander Crake, who is enrolled with other worthies in the Dictionary of National Biography. He was a fine specimen of the "ultra," and tried to put in force here the ideas of Castlereagh. No one seems to have perceived the humor of the situation. Soon after his arrival, the new Governor suggested many reforms, and among them the foundation of a college at which no religious test would be demanded of professor or student, that would be open to all ranks and classes of the community, that could be entered without examination. The new College was modelled on Edinburgh. It stood and stands for liberal and democratic ideas. To this day the constitution of the College bears the impress of Lord Dalhousie's strong common sense. To put into play such educational ideas in the teens of the nineteenth century implies a breadth of mind, rare anywhere, and most of all in a soldier of the time. It amounts almost to genius. To endow this new venture, Lord Dalhousie used the greater part of the Castine Fund. The residue went to found another useful civic institution, the Officers' Garrison Library.

Our history has been chequered. The corner stone of the old building on the Grand Parade, where our civic offices now stand, was laid by Lord Dalhousie, in May, 1820, with elaborate Masonic honors. The building was not completed until some years later. It was a plain, solid stone affair, with a Greco-Georgian portico and three huge slabs above it, bearing a pompous Latin inscription. These are now imbedded in the wall of our museum. The building had a history. It was an art studio, a cholera hospital, a post office; it was used for almost every purpose except that for which it was erected.

The reason is plain enough. The poor nurseling of a college was entrusted to the care of the men who did not want to see it grow up. Part of the governing body, the corporation, were also the Governors of King's. How could the poor thing live? But live it did, in spite of everything. From 1838 to 1843, Dalhousie was in actual operation under one of our educational pioneers, the Rev. Thomas McCulloch, and a staff of three professors. On his death, no successor was appointed, and from 1849 until 1859, the Governors used the funds to support a high school. And still Dalhousie College lived.

In 1863, the College was reorganized and began its present remarkable career. The aim of the friends of the College was to unite all the colleges of the Province in one strong central institution. Dalhousie has always stood for college consolidation. Only the Presbyterians came to the rescue. The second president was the Rev. William Ross, the staff consisted of six professors. The strength of the College lay in the departments of Classics and Mathematics. The Professor of Classics was a Graduate of Trinity College, Dublin; the Professor of Mathematics was from Aberdeen. Their exact scholarship, high standards of attainment and teaching power established the Dalhousie tradition, and has made us a working College. In 1894, Dalhousians learned with deep regret that increase of work, due to the growth of the College, compelled the veteran Professor of Classics to resign his chair. This was followed by a heavier blow, the death of our beloved Professor of Mathematics, who died in harness only last year. He was to Dalhousie, much what Young was to Toronto, a unique personal influence.

The year 1879 is our *annus mirabilis*. Then it was that Mr. George Munro founded the first of the Munro chairs, in Physics. It was held by Prof. J. Gordon MacGregor, Dalhousie's most distinguished Graduate, Gilchrist Scholar, Fellow of the Royal Society, and now successor of the great Tait, in the chair of