



✓ A GREAT NOVA SCOTIAN TEACHER.

Editor's Note.—Our motive in publishing a sketch of Prof. MacGregor is twofold: We think such success as his an inspiration and in setting forth the elements in his life of that success, feel that we are carrying out our idea of making the *BLUENOSE* a journal of inspiration as well as a journal of progress. Besides, the value of Prof. MacGregor to the province is not to be over-estimated, and we desire to make a suggestion as to how we may benefit to the full of the progress-making influence that it would be possible for him to exert under circumstances that unhappily do not now exist, but which might exist if our public-spirited citizens were to turn their attention to the needs of higher education in the province. We propose to follow this article in a future number with some timely suggestions. Meantime readers will appreciate the good fortune that we enjoy who have a man among us capable of doing so much for the progress of Nova Scotia if we would only let him.

THERE are three outstanding successes in Dr. MacGregor's career. The first, the Gilchrist scholarship, came to him shortly after graduating from Dalhousie in 1871. He had been studying for it under considerable difficulties. He had not like his successors, the accumulated experience of examiners' ways, and useful books and methods, but he had the additional work of his fourth year at Dalhousie. Yet he won, and won at an earlier age than any other scholar from the Maritime Provinces.

The second success crowned his five years of study in Great Britain and Germany. The Gilchrist scholarship required its holder to study at London or Edinburgh, and to take the examinations of London University. While at Edinburgh, Dr. MacGregor's health broke down, yet he persevered in his work, was successful in his examinations, went to Germany and returned to London to try the very difficult examination required by London University for the degree of D. Sc. Up to this time hardly a dozen had succeeded where many had failed. Five years of hard work brought him the coveted degree in 1876.

The third success was of yesterday. For twenty-one years he has been teaching at Dalhousie. Teaching, however, has not absorbed all his attention. He has written an excellent text book and has carried on several very important investigations in physics. From time to time he has published papers in the best known scientific periodicals at home and abroad. Last June the Royal Society of London, the oldest and greatest scientific society in Great Britain, elected him a Fellow. Admission to the fellowship of the Society is the most coveted of scientific honours, for it means that a man's scientific work has won the esteem of the highest authorities in Science. When a Lord Kelvin supports a candidate and a Lord Lister welcomes to fellowship a scientist because

of his contributions to scientific knowledge, the highest scientific tribunal in the British Empire has expressed approval. No other physicist in Canada has been fortunate enough to be admitted. To-day no other university professor in Canada has the right to add F. R. S. to his name. Canada has other members of the Royal Society, but they are geologists, whose



PROF. J. G. MACGREGOR, M.A., D.Sc., F.R.S.
GAUVIN AND GENTZEL, PHOTO.

work on the Geological Survey has merited the honor. Dr. MacGregor's honor came because of work done outside of the routine of university teaching.

The scientific world has estimated the value of the work done by Dr. MacGregor outside of the class room, but there has been no public recognition of his work as a teacher. It is hard to make the public realize what he has done. His students, in season and out of season, sing his praises. Those who return from studying abroad declare that they have never met a

better teacher, and have seldom seen his equal. Many of them have attained positions of great distinction in the scientific world, and they attribute their success largely to him. But it is at home where his work has had its greatest effect. There is hardly an Academy in Nova Scotia that has not been the better for the scientific training which some of its teachers have received from Dr. MacGregor. His thoroughness, his belief in intensive rather than extensive work, his insistence on reasons for every opinion given in exercise or discussion, his contempt for memory work, have done much to mould the opinions of the younger educationists in Nova Scotia. It is an open secret that no opinion on educational matters has more weight with those in authority than Dr. MacGregor's.

It is a matter of great regret that he has never been placed in a sphere adequate to his powers, where he could carry out his ideas of higher education—particularly of that scientific training upon which rests the future prosperity of the country in agriculture, manufactures and commerce.

Suppose it had been otherwise. Suppose that the public-spirited men of Nova Scotia recognizing, (as all men with a competent faculty of forming opinions in such matters do now recognize), that sound scientific training lies at the foundation of industrial prosperity, had provided Dr. MacGregor with a well equipped laboratory, what results might have been reasonably expected? As it is the Professor has a list of some fifty published papers to his credit—most of them embodying scientific research. One is amazed at the industry that has produced so much good work under such conditions; and we may safely assume that under the more favorable conditions we have supposed these researches would have been greatly extended both in number and character, that he would have gathered about him a band of capable young men, all imbued with the same scientific zeal as himself, whose united labors would contribute to make the name of Halifax as illustrious in the scientific world as the name of many an otherwise obscure German town now is; and, of vastly more consequence, that such a body of young men, thoroughly trained in scientific methods, would form just such a recruiting ground as this province sadly needs from which to draw men capable of directing its industries and developing its resources.

We already have our schools of law and medicine. These are necessary; for properly trained lawyers and physicians are necessary—a necessary evil, some would say. But there can be no doubt that these schools exercise, in one respect, a regrettable influence upon many young

(Continued on page 5.)