

REMINISCENCES.

To "*The Owl*." College of Ottawa :—



IN answer to your request that I should furnish *THE OWL* with an account of my impressions of the College, while I had the pleasure of being a student there I venture to send you the following. I fear, however, that the reading of these few personal reminiscences will be far less interesting to your subscribers than the writing is pleasant to me.

It was in September, 1874, that I found myself for the first time leaving the United States on my way to Ottawa College. Having crossed Lake Ontario, I landed in Kingston and there awaited another boat which was to take me to Prescott. Had I been subject to prejudice against the country which was to be my residence during my college life, I would have had a grand occasion for the exercise of that feeling on my arrival in Canada. The smoke from forest fires was so dense that no boat would venture to go down the St. Lawrence. We had to wait till the following day before it was possible to move with any chance of success through the tortuous channel of the Thousand Islands, and even then we had to proceed with the utmost precaution.

At Prescott another tedious delay of several hours before the train by which I was to reach Ottawa was pleased to set itself in motion, was no slight cause of vexation.

On both sides of the track for a considerable distance the woods were on fire. This explained the presence of the dense smoke for many hundred miles around, and I could not realize how difficult it is to avoid bush fires or, when kindled to extinguish them, in newly settled countries.

Ottawa, with its church spires and parliament towers, appeared to view only when very near, and in the dim smoky distance worked magically upon the imagination. Even in clear weather there is something mysterious in the first distant glimpse of the Capital. The traveller beholding for the first time those vast and imposing towers, with slender ones pierc-

ing through here and there like minarets, never for an instant doubts but that he is approaching an Asiatic city. Little does he think of the numerous dwarfed wooden structures that he will see when he enters the city, forming a striking contrast to the monumental Parliament Buildings and other magnificent public edifices.

I soon found my way to the College. For a student of to-day, who beholds the large proportions of the College as it stands now, it would be difficult to realize what it was in 1874. Even then, I was told, it had improved its size and looks three or four times. The first building, which by the way, is now transformed into a beautiful chapel, and a wing to the east, near St. Joseph's church, were the only parts built then. It was a little more than one-fourth of the present building. A low slanting tin covered roof shining brilliantly under the sun, topped the massive walls. An air of retirement seemed to hover about the place. As I approached, my first impression was one of pleasure and confidence. I walked up to the entrance and pulled the bell. While waiting for the appearance of some one, I cast a look upwards. I had been observed, for a youthful face drew back as my eyes wandered to one of the windows, which I found out soon afterwards was in the study room. Owing to my forced delay the studies had been resumed without me. This reminded me how little one more or one less would affect the running of the College, and of what little importance my arrival would be. The opening of the door soon recalled me from this philosophic strain, and cut short a thousand other thoughts not less wholesome about my insignificance. Before me stood a venerable man, not tall, somewhat bent, in a large black coat, with a lean face on which grew a neatly trimmed, thin white beard. He had an ascetic high forehead, with sunken eyes. Quite a character, I thought. Such he was. What old student does not remember "Pres?" Not the president of the College, but "Pres," the janitor, the witty, the fiery, the hard to please, the philosophical, the unique abridged Pres? He led me silently into a small parlor, and to my request to