

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

PROFESSORS AND STUDENTS :—

It is usual in older seats of learning, and on occasions such as the present, to recal the illustrious names of those, who, in other days, adorned their history. Were I addressing an audience in the metropolitan University of Scotland, I would, as a matter of course, cite the names of Stewart, Brown and Hamilton; Playfair and Robison; Cullen and Munro, as names of historical interest in Mental, Physical, and Medical Science, and, in the Western Seat of learning, it has often been my lot to hear from the most eloquent lips in England, the just tribute of honor bestowed on the names of Adam Smith, Black, Hutcheson, Reid, James Watt, and a host of others, who, as Students or Professors, reflected credit on the institution where the elements of greatness were developed, and where the treasures of matured wisdom were employed in the training of the youthful faculties. No student has ever listened to these appeals without having stirred within him a generous ambition to gain an honorable distinction. The spell of these illustrious names was great, and a presence was felt around the venerable walls which they once animated with living voice. I have no such venerable names to appeal to, our greatness is not in the past, but the future. The hoar of antiquity has not yet gathered round our institution. It is still in its infancy. There are minds that can derive stimulus and inspiration only from the past, but it is fortunate that others are so constituted that the future is their great animating principle. Reverence for the past is one of the deepest sentiments in our nature, and to attempt to obliterate it would be an injury to the best interests of mankind. We cannot subscribe to the sentiment "let the dead past bury its dead," for a man, though dead, may yet speak, and institutions now extinct, have not yet exhausted their moulding influence on society. The form may have perished, while the vital

influence still survives. But, as the wine-fancier sometimes prizes the oldest vintage, even for its decay, so many cling to old institutions, when their practical significance is gone. This institution has not, at least, the decrepitude of age, and there is ground to hope that it is possessed of the buoyancy and progressiveness of youth. An old tree may stand long after it is rotten at the core, and all its vitality gone, but a tender shoot soon disappears if there is a canker at the root; and the fact of the steady advance of this young institution is a proof, that its constitution is sound, and that an important future is still before it. When we look at the original foundation, and the languishing infancy of similar institutions in the Old Country, we have reason to thank God and take courage. The college of Glasgow may be cited as an example. More than a century after its foundation, the whole University body amounted to only 15 persons, and the whole available revenue was not more than the salary of a merchant's clerk at the present day. It was by a like gradual growth, that even Oxford acquired its overshadowing greatness. It is to be hoped that no such long minority is in store for this College, but that it will partake of the rapid growth characteristic of every other institution in this country.

In surveying the character of nations, it is interesting to mark how strikingly national characteristics are correlated to the physical conformation and susceptibilities of the country. How much of Scotland's love of freedom may be traced to her natural fortifications, her successive lines of mountain ranges, which have enabled her so often to defy the invader, and maintain her independence! How much of England's commercial greatness is due to her mineral wealth, and her command of the Ocean, affording means of communication with all parts of the World! If the future of a nation can then be estimated, in any measure,