

Written for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

The Presbyterian College, Halifax.

BY REV. ROBERT MURRAY.



SEVENTY-SIX years ago the Presbyterian Synod of Nova Scotia appointed Dr. Thomas McCulloch their first Professor of Theology. A native ministry was felt to be greatly needed. Pictou Academy, under Dr. McCulloch's able management, had trained a number of bright, earnest, and aspiring young men in Arts, and it was wisely resolved to give them such theological training as would qualify them for the ministry. Three of the young men thus trained under Dr. McCulloch, when licensed to preach, visited Scotland, where they preached in a way that reflected no discredit on their teacher. The University of Glasgow bestowed upon them the degree of Master of Arts. Pictou Academy unfortunately fell on evil times and formed for some years the battle-ground of political parties. It ceased to be available as a training school in Arts for young dominions. In 1838 Dr. McCulloch was appointed President of Dalhousie College, Halifax, where he laboured till his death in 1841. Shortly afterwards Dalhousie succumbed to financial difficulties.

In 1848 the Presbyterian Synod opened a Seminary at West River, Pictou, and appointed Dr. James Ross to conduct the instruction in Classics and Philosophy, while Drs. Keir and Smith had charge of the department of Theology. In 1858 the classes were transferred to Truro, N.S., where a suitable building had been erected—the Free Church Synod opened a College at Halifax in November, 1848—Rev. Dr. King taking the Theological classes, and Professor McKenzie the classes in Arts. Fifteen students attended the first term, three of whom were in Theology. Professor McKenzie died, deeply lamented, before the close of the first session. Rev. William Lyall, LL.D., was appointed his successor. Rev. Alexander Forrester, then minister of Chalmers Church, Halifax, gave lectures in Natural Science, and Dr. Honeyman taught Hebrew. Upon Dr. Honeyman's retirement from the Hebrew chair, Rev. Alexander McKnight was appointed to the position. An Academy was established to prepare young men for the College. In 1860 the two Synods in Nova Scotia united, and the Colleges were at the same time consolidated. Professor Lyall was transferred to Truro where, with Professor Ross, D.D., and Professor Thomas McCulloch (son of the Rev. Dr. Thomas McCulloch) to conduct the Classical and Philosophical departments, Drs. King, Smith, and McKnight taught the Theological classes at Halifax.

In 1863 Dalhousie University, Halifax, was reorganized, the institution at Truro was closed; the Presbyterian Professors in Arts were transferred to the University staff, and ever since that time the Presbyterian Church has given all her support and influence in Nova Scotia to the strengthening and development of the Provincial University. She at the same time sustained as best she could her Theological College. In 1868 Rev. James Smith, D.D., resigned, and in 1871 Dr. Andrew King resigned and retired to Scotland, where he died about four years afterwards. Rev. Alexander McKnight, D.D., was elected to succeed Dr. King in the chair of Systematic Theology, and Rev. John Currie, D.D., was appointed to the chair of Hebrew and Exegetics.

In the same year the Church of Scotland Synod in the Maritime Provinces united in the support of Dalhousie; and in 1875, after the Union, Dr. Pollok, D.D., was added to the staff of the Presbyterian College as Professor of Church History and Pastoral Theology.

In 1876 the Synod undertook to raise \$100,000, partly for a new building and partly as an endowment fund; \$80,000 were realized. In 1878 a beautiful property at Pine Hill, North-West Arm, was pur-

chased; and hence we often hear of our institution as "Pine Hill College." In 1892 the chair of New Testament Exegetics was instituted, to which Rev. Robert A. Falconer, B.D., was appointed. In 1894 Principal McKnight was removed by death. Dr. Pollok was appointed his successor in the position of Principal, and Rev. D. M. Gordon, D.D., the present Moderator of the General Assembly, was appointed to the chair of Systematic Theology and Apologetics. Rev. J. Carruthers has for several years, under appointment of the College Board, given valuable instruction in Elocution.

To most of our readers our earlier professors are but shadowy and distant names—well nigh forgotten. But Dr. Thomas McCulloch was a singularly able and accomplished man, a ready writer, a keen controversialist, a trenchant speaker, an effective and faithful preacher of the Gospel. He did much to create and develop a high educational ideal in Nova Scotia. Dr. Keir, of Prince Edward Island, who was one of our early Theological Professors, was every whit a saint as well as a scholar. Dr. James Smith was a student till the close of a long and laborious life. He was well read in Biblical criticism as it stood up till the "seventies." He

by appointment of the Colonial Committee of the Church of Scotland, and in April, 1853, he was settled at New Glasgow, N.S., where he remained as pastor of St. Andrew's Church twenty years. He did much to reorganize and consolidate the congregations connected with the Church of Scotland, and took a leading part in raising a fund of \$20,000 to endow a chair of Mathematics in Dalhousie College as the contribution of that Synod to University education. In 1875 he became Professor of Church History and Pastoral Theology; and in 1894 he was appointed Principal. From 1875 till the appointment of Professor Falconer he taught Gospel History and New Testament Greek. Dr. Pollok is remarkably well versed in the history of the Church of Scotland. Not a man of note, not a noteworthy incident, but he can familiarly recall. As a teacher of Church History he excels, for he traces underlying principles and the causes as well as the consequences of events. As a preacher he is thoughtful and instructive. As a teacher he holds fast that which is good, but is not inhospitable to new ideas. His influence, which is justly very great, is always on the side of peace and unity. Principal Pollok is still in the prime of life.



REV. PROF. CURRIE, D.D.



REV. PROF. GORDON, D.D.



REV. PRINCIPAL POLLOK, D.D.



REV. PROF. FALCONER, B.D.

REV. JAMES CARRUTHERS
Lecturer in Elocution.

was an excellent Hebrew scholar. Withal he shepherded faithfully a large and worthy flock in the lovely Stewiacke Valley. Dr. Andrew King was a typical Free Churchman of the most stringently orthodox and uncompromising school. Correct in everything, down to the minutiae of punctuation, he was intolerant of all bungling and inaccuracy; he was a painstaking teacher, a most affec-

tionate, gentle and faithful friend. He was self-sacrificing to a degree—liberal alike with his money and his labour. The Confession of Faith was his text book in Theology. Having borne a conspicuous part in the "Voluntary Controversy," as well as in the "Ten Years' Conflict," he devoted much time to those chapters in the Confession that relate to the duty of the Civil Magistrate "circa sacra" and "in sacris"—subjects in which young Nova Scotia could hardly get up even the faintest interest. It was no doubt heartbreaking to the good Professor to mark the indifference of his students to these "vital" points, but his students admired and loved him to the last. Dr. Lyall was a poet as well as a philosopher—a most lovable man, but too sensitive for this work-a-day world. Dr. Ross was a living, walking cyclopædia of the science of the first half of this century. Of Dr. McKnight one need say no more than that he was undoubtedly one of our greatest men.

With this inadequate tribute to the memory of those who sleep, let me give the reader a brief sketch of the present staff.

The Rev. Principal Pollok, D.D., is a native of Glasgow. In 1852 he was ordained to preach the Gospel. He came to Nova Scotia,

expressing their appreciation of his work. Some time ago Dr. Currie revised Dr. Green's *Hebrew Grammar*. The author and the publishers availed themselves of his revision. Dr. Currie was one of the editorial staff of the Standard Dictionary. He has been a contributor to *Harper's Old Testament Student*, and to the *Pulpit Treasury* and the *Homiletic Review*. What is Dr. Currie's attitude towards the Old Testament School of Higher Critics? He is careful to tell his students all the facts. He teaches them to look at the phenomena of the sacred text, and he guides them to conclusions in accord with the facts. He has no admiration for the cruel obscurantism that would depose a professor for seeing the hand of a "Great Unknown" in the later chapters of Isaiah or Zechariah. He can afford to be, as he is, wisely conservative.

Rev. Daniel M. Gordon, D.D., was born at Pictou, N.S., in 1845. He was educated at Pictou Academy and the University of Glasgow. He won his M.A. in 1863 and B.D. in 1866. In 1866 he was licensed and ordained, and preached with acceptance in various congregations in Nova Scotia. In 1867 he accepted a call to St. Andrew's Church, Ottawa, where he remained fifteen years ministering

by appointment of the Colonial Committee of the Church of Scotland, and in April, 1853, he was settled at New Glasgow, N.S., where he remained as pastor of St. Andrew's Church twenty years. He did much to reorganize and consolidate the congregations connected with the Church of Scotland, and took a leading part in raising a fund of \$20,000 to endow a chair of Mathematics in Dalhousie College as the contribution of that Synod to University education. In 1875 he became Professor of Church History and Pastoral Theology; and in 1894 he was appointed Principal. From 1875 till the appointment of Professor Falconer he taught Gospel History and New Testament Greek. Dr. Pollok is remarkably well versed in the history of the Church of Scotland. Not a man of note, not a noteworthy incident, but he can familiarly recall. As a teacher of Church History he excels, for he traces underlying principles and the causes as well as the consequences of events. As a preacher he is thoughtful and instructive. As a teacher he holds fast that which is good, but is not inhospitable to new ideas. His influence, which is justly very great, is always on the side of peace and unity. Principal Pollok is still in the prime of life.