

HISTORY OF W. N. L. S.

BY THE HISTORIAN.

Although our fair province already had two progressive Normal Schools, the increasing demand for more professional Public School teachers led to the establishment of another Normal in the western peninsula. Much discussion arose as to where such an institution should be located. In this particular, Col. Leys, M. P. P. for London, and the present Premier, Hon. G. W. Ross, took a prominent part, and so forcibly did the worthy member extol the advantages of his native city as a favorable as well as central position that his labors reaped the harvest which the citizens of London so much desired. So amid the sylvan groves of the Forest City there now stands the most modern Normal School in Canada.

That the right city was chosen in which to erect such a magnificent building no one can dispute. The site of the building is certainly a beautiful one, and when time permits of the united labors of man and nature, the grounds also shall be a type of the symmetrical and beautiful.

The building was opened for work on the first day of February, in the year nineteen hundred. This was more than two weeks after the regular date fixed for the opening, and even then the students had to have their entrance examination in the Assembly Room of the London Collegiate Institute. How many were successful at this examination our teachers alone can say. It suffices the students to know that all, numbering 101, were allowed the privilege of becoming the foundation stones of The London Normal.

Here the students assembled on the following Monday morning, to begin their short term as Normal students. When I think of the many who appeared as "strangers in a strange land," I feel that I was one of them. There were present students from all parts of this western peninsula. Some came past the doors of our elder sister, another saw fit to quit a Normal College to join us, while yet another comes from the missionary fields of darkest Africa. They have all found it good to be here.

Two students, however, on account of sickness, were compelled to give up their profitable studies. We were sorry to have

them leave, but we were pleased when news reached us that both had regained their former strength and were coming to Normal in the near future. We wish them all possible success and a pleasant time.

Before commencing the work in which we found ourselves so far behind, we were greeted with addresses of welcome in neat and appropriate language by our Principal, F. W. Merchant, M.A., and our Vice-Principal, J. Dearness. They welcomed us as friends, and assured our nervous beings, for many appeared to be so, that we would find them and the citizens of London ever willing to make our short sojourn both pleasant and profitable. The Principal and his excellent staff of teachers have spared no time or pains to be of service to us, and to make up for all the time we lost owing to the non-completion of the building and its necessary equipments.

More than once the kindness of the citizens has been remarked by the students, and we take this opportunity of thanking them, one and all. Several of the churches have given us special receptions, and in many private homes we have been welcomed and treated as honored guests. To these social gatherings we are chiefly indebted for acquaintances formed among ourselves as well as among the younger people of the city. Among the many forms of amusements provided—the excellent programmes, the short addresses, and the delicious refreshments—I feel that special reference should be made to the very interesting and profitable address on "Education," delivered solely for our benefit, at the London South Baptist Church, by Professor Farmer, of McMaster University. For forty minutes every Tuesday afternoon, Revs. Stuart, Holmes, Walker, and Davis taught their respective denominations, keeping ever before us our higher duties as teachers. For these and many other favors we desire to thank the citizens of London, and trust that our successors may carry away as pleasant reminiscences of the city and its citizens as we do.

Soon after the commencement of the term we felt that an "up-to-date" educational institution must have some special means for training the literary faculties of the mind. Before long our feelings