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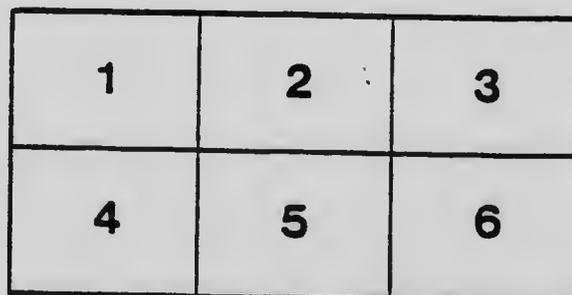
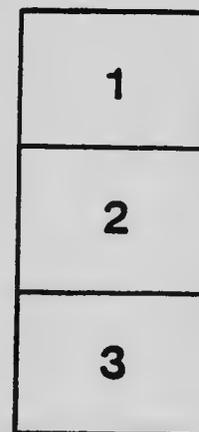
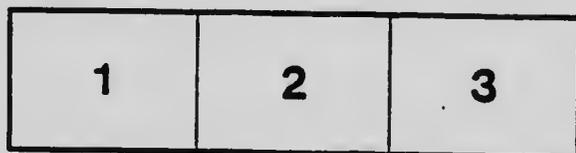
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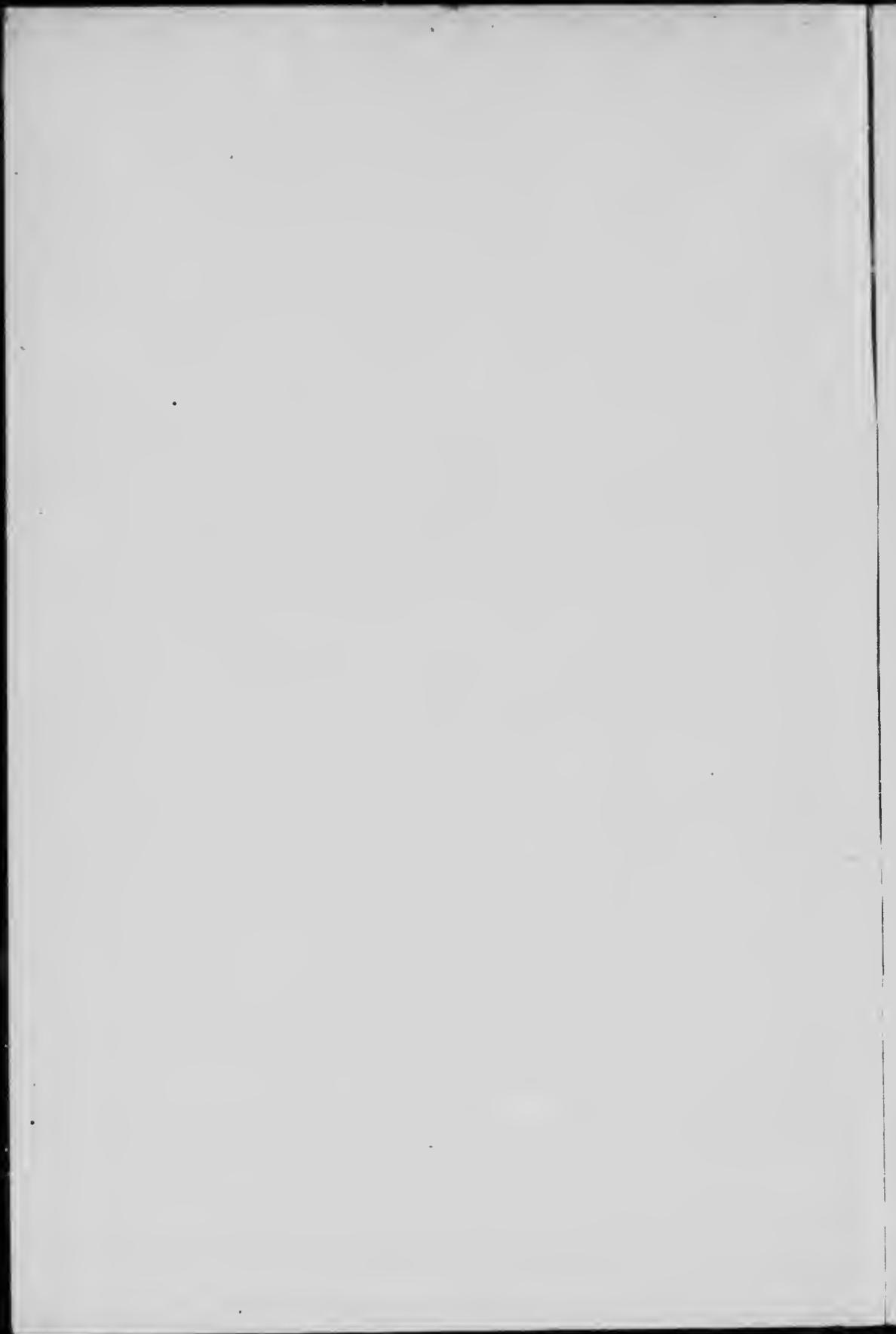
With Principal Grant's Compliments.

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**Thanksgiving and Retrospect ;--
an Address to the Students of
Queen's by the Principal, on
January 6th, 1902, in the Convo-
cation Hall of the University.**



THANKSGIVING AND RETROSPECT.



THANKSGIVING AND RETROSPECT.

(An address to the Students of Queen's, delivered in Convocation Hall on the opening of the second term of the Session, 1901-2.)

MY address this evening is to be so personal and autobiographical that to some outsiders it may savour unduly of self-consciousness. My only answer will be that it is addressed primarily not to outsiders but to you ; and that you constitute, in a real spiritual sense, my family. This has always been so to a certain extent, and it is more so now than ever, because the recent illness which threatened to end our earthly relations brought out on your part a warmth, strength and delicacy of affection that affected me profoundly and will leave a lasting impress on my nature. The same cause brought out from the churches and from the people of Canada and especially of Kingston so generous a recognition of services which had never seemed to me anything but commonplace duties, that it at first bewildered, and then—after emotion had given way to introspection—strengthened, humbled, and I trust purified me. It seems, therefore, due to the public, next to you, that I should express, on the first possible occasion, my grateful obligation for the earnest prayers, loving inquiries, messages and gifts of all kinds appropriate to a sick bed, which were sent to my ward from far and near, and often from unexpected quarters. The only return I can make to you and to those known and unknown friends outside, —after giving hearty thanks to the Giver of all good, to faithful physicians and nurses and to all whose sympathy sweetened the cup I was drinking,—is to narrate honestly—so far as it is possible for an interested party to be strictly honest—how I was led to take the interest in educational, civic and public affairs which has received such wide and unexpected approval, and to state the principles which guided me and which shall guide me to the end of life's journey. Of failures and shortcomings I may not speak. Confessions of weakness and sins are not for the public. Possibly, this retrospect of the past thirty or forty years may be helpful to some, inasmuch as it teaches that neither great scholarship nor brilliant parts are needed to gain the confidence of others as well as a reasonable

measure of success in one's undertakings ; that nothing is needed but the possession of old-fashioned qualities which our fathers cultivated and which made them strong ; and that above all, the indispensable requisite is that we shall be true to ourselves, that is, to the highest self, true to the light given us in our best moments, regarding right ideals of duty. public and private.

" To thine own self be true—
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

1863-8, were stirring years in the Maritime Provinces, especially in Nova Scotia. Large questions almost simultaneously occupied the public mind. At first they were, shall we provide free, common schools for all our children or not? and shall our little Province encourage the establishment of a University governed by an independent board of different denominations, or remain content with a number of small and sectarian institutions? But these questions, important in themselves, soon became dwarfed by the infinitely more important one, shall our three Provinces remain separate or shall they form a Maritime Union or even a Confederation with Upper and Lower Canada, and so aim at the formation of a British North American nation? This issue forced every man to whom country was dearer than self to think and to think with all his might. It soon became evident that vested interests were imperilled ; that the immediate prosperity of Halifax, the good old city I loved well, was threatened ; and that local feelings, all over the Province, were in favour of our remaining simply Nova Scotians, instead of trying an experiment, the outcome of which no man could foretell. A big country is seldom opposed to uniting with a little one, because it instinctively feels that it can always take care of itself. The opposition always comes from the little state. It was Scotland that objected to union with England. It was Ireland, or Britannia Minor, that objected to union with Britannia Major or Great Britain. Rhode Island was the last of the "o' thirteen" B. A. Colonies to accept the Constitution of 1787. Perhaps, the unofficial threats which were freely made to divide it up between its two nearest neighbours helped to obtain ratification in 1790.

The opposition to the formation of the German Empire came not from Prussia but from petty Kingdoms and Duchies. Anti-Confederation sentiment was therefore to be expected in Nova Scotia. How should that popular sentiment be met, and on whom did responsibility rest? My friends said, "Leave the fight to the politicians, for it is their business." No doubt, this does fairly well in ordinary cases. As long as we have the party system, the evolution of a free country is best determined by the wrestling of opposing parties, and what is then most needed is the formation of a quiet, independent vote which expects nothing from either side, but thinks only of the country's interests, and how these are likely to be best promoted by this or that party at different times. But, there are exceptional times and seasons, and each man must judge for himself and at his own risk when one of these has come, and whether or not he is called on by imperative duty to speak, write or otherwise act. The proposed Confederation of hitherto independent Provinces, separated by hostile tariffs and many serious natural obstacles was indisputably such a crisis. Every citizen is unconsciously moulded, in his innermost fibres, by the life of the state of which he is a member. It is hard for the average man or woman to rise above the general level. Clergymen have too often been blind to this great social fact. To preach that men should live noble lives and cultivate heroic characters, while the preacher himself is satisfied with belonging to a dependent, ignoble community that has no thought but of selfish pleasure or money-making and no passion save for party triumphs, is not to fulfil the function of a prophet of Israel. Convinced that the time had come for bringing to the birth a nation, with all the potentialities of a great state, and that we dared not let the time go by, I wrote a little and addressed one or two public meetings on the subject; having first counted the cost and come to the conclusion that it would be much less than any man worth his salt should be willing to pay. Of course, if you go down into the arena and fight with wild beasts, for that is the state to which men are reduced when drunk with party spirit, though they may be total abstainers from strong drink, you must expect some scratches, more or less. But,

"He makes no friend who never made a foe," and if men become angry because a friend speaks out what seems to him—after long pondering—to be vital truth, they—not he—are surely the ones to be blamed. Of course, what increased the difficulty in my case was the general opinion that it did not become a clergyman to have anything to do, publicly at least, with a party question, and more particularly that as leaders of both parties belonged to my congregation it would "lessen my influence" to take a side. That was impressed on me, as well as the fact that the feelings of many in the congregation were hurt by reading attacks made on their pastor in the daily and weekly press, and that those natural feelings should be considered. In all this there was truth and consequent duty, but duties are relative, and the less must give way to the more binding. While it would be unfair to speak, on a subject on which there could be honest difference of opinion, from a pulpit or platform where no one had the right to reply, it is always different with public meetings or the public press. Not that this is acknowledged by angry men. "Mr.—is not coming to church," one of the elders said to me in an icy tone, "because he is offended at you for having spoken in Pictou in favour of Confederation." "Has it not occurred to you that I may be offended, because he has spoken against Confederation?" I replied. This point of view was so novel that a puzzled look was the only response. "Tell him," I resumed, "that I am not at all offended, and that he has too much good sense to deny me the freedom which he himself takes." Both men, it may be added, remained members of the congregation. But I experienced then what I have experienced since, that good men often deny liberty of expression on subjects, on which they feel keenly, to those whom they profess to esteem and whom they would admit to be as wise and as unselfish as themselves. To submit to this intolerance by always keeping silent in face of it is sheer cowardice, and unfortunately most men are cowards; not physically, so far at any rate as our race is concerned, but morally. Fear of taking the unpopular side, fear of the press, fear even of poor old Mrs. Grundy, is the bane of democracy, whether the democracy be an ecclesiastical or a political community. You will never know how little real harm man's breath

can inflict, until you disregard it and do your duty. This does not mean that the minority is always right or that you may not be deficient in common sense, though possessed of courage. To be always in the minority may only prove that you are a crank or what our neighbors call, "a fool reformer." Nor does it mean that you may not suffer temporary and possibly serious loss for doing your duty. But better suffer loss, even of all the kingdoms of the world, than lose yourself. You are of more value than anything external, for you yourself are eternal heaven or hell. A soldier ought to fight as a private, when fighting is going on, if he cannot get a commission; and fight on foot if unhorsed. Like Widdrington, he will fight "on his stumps," when he can do no better. And he will do all, not of constraint, but in the spirit of Chaucer's "verray perfight gentill Knight," or Wordsworth's "happy warrior." As regards myself, if the peace of the congregation required it, I resolved to go back to the charge I had regretfully left, and where on a salary of \$500 nothing had been lacking; or—should that door be closed—to some other of the dozen places where honest work is called for. I had not sought my position. It had sought me. Indeed, suffer me to say that I have never sought any position, place, preferment or honour; though when offered, I considered whether there might not be greater pride in refusing than in accepting; just as the pride of Diogenes in trampling on Plato's carpets with his muddy boots was infinitely greater than Plato's. But, money or place is never for one moment to be put in the scales against self-respect.

What though on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hoddin gray and a' that,
Gie fools their silks and knaves their wine,
We dare be poor for a' that.

Burns did not object to silks or wines. He only objected to paying too much for the one luxury or the other. My resolution however was not known to any one. There was no need; for my Halifax congregation never threatened my independence for a moment. So has it been my fortune ever since. For which, *laus Deo!*

The main elements in the Confederation question were simple, provided it was borne in mind that it may be more sin-

ful to do nothing than to take risks in doing something. If we were to rise into nationhood, what could we do but unite with our sister Provinces? What else could the old thirteen colonies do, when political and social chaos, after the Revolutionary War, forced the Convention of 1787 to meet? Dual races and languages presented a difficulty in our case, but similar difficulties had not proved insuperable elsewhere, while unity of language and race had not prevented civil war in England, in Germany, in France, and in the United States. Welshmen generally speak Welsh, while Irishmen speak English, but which of the two countries presents a grave political problem? Three languages on the same footing in Switzerland do not hinder the Swiss Confederation from being effective. It may be, too, that as a Celt myself I was more attracted than the Saxon is likely to be by the history and the character of the *habitant*, and felt that he would contribute to the common stock picturesque and even heroic elements that Upper Canadians needed. But, the one decisive consideration was, what else could we do? There the *habitant* was, there he had been from the first, there he intended to remain; and the more generously his rights were recognized the sooner would fusion take place. Further, the entering on such a union meant that it must be preserved, and that politicians trading on provincial prejudices must always be considered enemies of the Commonwealth. There was my first principle of political action;—British North America must unite and must resolutely and patiently cultivate a union of hearts and of interests. The Maritime Provinces had no more right to deny to the interior Provinces an ocean frontage and a maritime element to their population than Quebec, because it held the mouth of the St. Lawrence, would have the right to deny to Ontario freedom to freely navigate the river. Each for all and all for each, must be our motto. The time for action, too, had come, and though party and selfish interests demanded delay, these had to be subordinated to the common good. So I stood against my old political mentor, Howe, and on the side of Tupper, for Confederation, as I had stood by him in his common school and University policy. The Opposition, naturally enough, explained my action by calling me a dyed-in-the-wool Tory!

My second fundamental political principle flowed from the first. For the good of Canada and its own and the world's good, the British Empire must form an effective union. Here too difficulties which seem to pessimists insuperable present themselves, for the nobler the organism the more formidable its enemies and dangers. All life is a battle, but only in overcoming these is character formed and life made complete. Separated from Britain, Canada would necessarily be always dependent on the United States, and wishing to honour and admire our neighbors—as well we may—we must meet them as equals. But, we shall be their equals, only when we share the burdens and responsibilities as well as the privileges and glory of the Empire. It may take long to bring this about, although it has come so much nearer of late that you, young men, need not despair of seeing the full realization of the glorious ideal.. At the present moment our position is not one to be proud of. From a war,—to the justice of which our Parliament had unnecessarily pledged itself, while both sides were engaged in peaceful negotiations; the justice of which has been repeatedly affirmed by the Prime Minister and Parliament; and in which we took active part enthusiastically at the outset,—we have quietly withdrawn, leaving the enormous cost in blood and treasure to be borne by the senior partner. True, we are permitting a few hundreds to be recruited for service, but on conditions that make our position more deplorable than ever. We are not to pay a cent of the cost! We give the bravest of our children to die by the bullet or still deadlier enteric; but some one else must pay their wages. We do not grudge the blood of our sons, but with a treasury so full that we go on paying millions for bounties and bonuses to develop resources which are said to be the richest in the world,—we grudge food, clothing and transport for them. Let “the weary Titan” bearing on her back all the common burdens of the Empire in peace and war be at this charge also. Let Canada accept the blood money without a blush. This state of things cannot continue. The Empire must be practically as well as nominally united. That principle I continue to hold as axiomatic, if we are a nation in any sense; I might say, if we are honest men, in any sense.

In 1872, Sandford Fleming—now Sir Sandford—our Chancellor,—best of friends even then—invited me to accompany him from Ocean to Ocean across Canada, as secretary of the expedition he was forming to ascertain the feasibility of a Canadian Pacific Railway. The rugged wilderness to the north of Lakes Huron and Superior had been declared “impracticable for Railroads” on maps executed by enterprising Down-Easters and bought by ourselves, because there were no other maps of our own country to buy; Captain Palliser had declared that there was no Pass through our Rocky Mountains fit for a Road; and the testimony as to “The fertile belt” was most conflicting. This journey resolved the uneasy doubt in my mind as to whether or not Canada had a future; for, from the day we left Collingwood till we reached Victoria, the great possibilities of our great North-land impressed us. Not only was a route found for a Railway, better in many respects than the one subsequently adopted, to save a few miles in distance, at ten times the cost in short curves, steep gradients and semi-arid districts, but the resources of the boundless “lone land”—for New Ontario and British Columbia as well as the North-West were entitled to that name—could fairly be described as illimitable. My first book gave Canadians my impressions concerning our inheritance, but it and some lectures on the subject aroused the wrath of those who saw in them an insidious attempt to “boom” Confederation, and saw in me simply an agent of Sir John A. Macdonald. This was rather hard on Sir John; for whatever his sins, he knew nothing of me. We were perfect strangers, and his past career was quite unknown to me; for prior to Confederation we had no relations with Upper or Lower Canada. But “party is war,” declared Sir Richard Cartwright, and “war is hell,” said General Sherman. If we are doomed to live for ever under these conditions, it is rather a poor look-out for humanity. But, it is some alleviation to reflect that there are many hells. Sherman himself preferred the inferno of war to the inferno of a divided country.

I shall always be grateful for that journey of 1872. I have had faith, especially in the North-West, ever since, although high authorities in Winnipeg then assured us that the country was “no good.” Some of the inhabitants, Americans in part-

icular, told us they had been there five, ten or twenty years, and had never seen a good crop. Archbishop Taché—one of the best of men—had no faith in its future. He told us that when Sir George Cartier urged him to direct the overflow of Quebec to its rich valleys and plains, he had refused. “How could I advise my countrymen to come,” he said to me, “against my own convictions?” The half-breeds, who were then the bulk of the population, depended for a living on the buffalo and on freighting, and the buffalo were being rapidly exterminated by Winchesters. Cereals! Ah! think of the early frosts, the floods, the droughts, the grasshoppers! To all which tales we turned deaf ears. In what country are there no difficulties, which resolute pioneers must overcome?

Since that journey, I have never doubted the future of Canada. Sorely despoiled in the east, the centre and the west by treaties, it is notwithstanding a land bounded on three sides by three oceans and on the fourth by the watershed of the continent. Room there surely for expansion! Of course, the treaty-makers, acting for us while privately professing absolute scepticism as to the possibility of our remaining a country distinct from the United States, received peerages and such like rewards for their services! Fortunately, since the treaty of Washington, we have entered on a new era. The responsibility on our part is all the greater; for, as George Washington told his countrymen, “the nation, that is not prepared to resist aggression, invites it.” While assured of the future of Canada, let us always deprecate “raw haste” in its up-building. A country is great, not from the number but the quality of its people. Let our governments recall the agents who are paid to bring to us any and every kind of immigrants. We have as many people of strange languages as we can digest. Our best settlers are our own children, and those who come to us from the south of their own accord. We should, however, always welcome those who have suffered for conscience sake. They are sure to be a good stock.

In 1875, the union of the four churches which constitute the Presbyterian Church of Canada took place. Here, also, the opposition came from the smaller churches, and most violently from the smallest, the one to which I belonged.

No principle was at stake ; no question now of tariff or possible financial disturbance; and evidently the work of establishing the ordinances of religion over half a continent could be done better by united action than by continued dissipation of our feeble resources. But these considerations availed nothing against timidity and the memories of old feuds, and we had either to abandon the proposed union, or to see our Synod broken into two and to part from old friends and fellow-workers, some of whom regarded us as traitors to them and to our past. Sorrowfully we chose the latter alternative, the hours of decision being perhaps the bitterest some of us ever knew. In this case, too, time has vindicated the principle of union. There are no anti-confederates to-day, though, in Nova Scotia at any rate, it was the popular creed in the sixties. Imperial union was scoffed at then, every where. It was "a fad," and its advocates dreamers or "a lawn tennis party." Now every one in Great Britain and in all "the British Dominions beyond the seas" is an imperialist of some kind. The most statesman-like words on the subject have been uttered by the Premier of Canada. So with the union of the four churches. We have celebrated our Silver Jubilee, and the only notes heard were of thanksgiving, congratulation, and a larger hope. But, if it was so difficult to effect the union of churches having a common ancestry and history, the same confession of faith, the same discipline, rules and ritual, how long will it take to effect the union of Christendom, or to create an organized church of Canada! We must have patience, patience, patience, always of course combined with faith. The church of Canada will come. In the things of the spirit, however, a thousand years are as one day but, also, in the fullness of time, one day is as a thousand years. Time has no place in the vision of the Eternal. All that we have a right to ask for now are non-interference with each other's work, mutual and cordial recognition and co-operation wherever practicable. Along these lines resistance will be least and eventually union will come, and in its great day our descendents will marvel that their fathers were so wedded to prejudices, so blind to the perspective of truth, and so deaf to the command of their Lord.

In 1877, I was invited to leave my native province and to come to Ontario as Principal of Queen's. This unexpected call demanded careful consideration of my position. As a practical man, I had always contended that it was waste for Nova Scotia to spend on half a dozen small colleges the little it gave for higher education, instead of concentrating its efforts, so as to have an institution fit to compete with McGill, Toronto or Harvard. I also believed that the highest University ideal was not government by a denomination but self-government, and that on Boards of Governors only public and educational interests should be represented. But clearly Ontario needed more than one university, were it only to save the one from the blight which Napoleon's centralized university of France with the suppression of the old universities, brought upon higher education in that country; and Queen's, from its location, traditions, and freedom from denominational control seemed peculiarly fitted to be the second, and of all the more value to the province from its distinctiveness of type. Another consideration influenced me powerfully. Vehement discussions over a so-called "heresy" case had deepened the old lines of division in the church; and had Queen's been obliged to close its doors from lack of sufficiently generous aid, the union, from which so much spiritual good was anticipated, would have been imperilled. Duty seemed to me clear, though it was hard to pull myself up by the roots, and though many of its friends assured me of their doubts whether Queen's could survive, without visible means of support, against the overwhelming competition to which it would be subjected from the east and the west. I accepted the call, keeping my own doubts to myself; and before twelve months had passed, all doubts had vanished. Surely never was Principal blessed with a Chancellor so true, a staff so rich though then few in number, a body of students so animated by zeal for Alma Mater, and trustees, graduates and benefactors so willing—often out of deep poverty—to make sacrifices as often as called upon.

As the silver jubilee of the Church drew near, the conviction grew strong within me that the work of the university in helping to preserve the union was no longer needed; that its nominal connection with the General Assembly was of little

or no service to either ; and that the time had come to make Queen's by statute as completely national as it had been in fact for many years. I presented this view to the trustees who generally concurred with it, and instructed me to submit it to the Assembly. That venerable court, without a dissenting voice, also concurred in the principle; and appointed a committee to assist in every way as regards details. The corporation was summoned, by advertisement in the *Record* of the church, to meet and pronounce on the question. The University Council and it were of one mind. The Assembly's committee presented its report last June, and it was unanimously adopted. The way is now clear for legislative action ; and the trustees at their next annual meeting will consider carefully what changes in the Constitution are needed to adapt Queen's to its new position as the public and undenominational University of Eastern Ontario in particular, and of Canada in general.

Of my work here for more than twenty-four years I need say nothing more. It has been done in the public eye, and my recent illness has enabled me to learn that in the estimation of the public it has not been wholly unfruitful as regards the country's best interests ; while your action this very session shows your view of my aims and endeavours in a light so clear that all men will see, and shows at the same time your consciousness that the University has inspired and enriched your virtues, so giving you what money can neither give nor take away.

This rapid sketch of my career for nearly forty years has been made to impress upon you who are beginning life this one lesson, that the road to the only success which satisfies is through singleness of eye and from a deep-rooted conviction that we owe to the community unselfish service, altogether apart from the question of whether the community is or is not grateful. If I have done any good, this is the explanation :—

"For in me there dwells
No greatness, save it be some far-off touch
Of greatness to know well I am not great."

You have now the secret, and God grant that many of you may turn it to good use.

The outer frame-work of the Canadian nation has been almost completed, but the question presses on us, 'what kind of a nation is it to be'? Is it to be a huge "city of pigs," to use Plato's phrase; or is it to be a land of high-souled men and women, and so a land to be loved wherever its people roam. Judging by the general tone of the public press, I for one am often saddened beyond the power of words to express. The ideals presented to us are increase of population—no matter what its quality or what the general standard of living and thinking, and increase of wealth—no matter how obtained or how saved, whether by sponging on the Mother Country or grovelling at the feet of multi-millionaires. It is little wonder that the average tone of our people corresponds to these ideals. What threatens the life of Canada most seriously? Not, as many suppose, the drink traffic, the evils of which have been intensified by the remedies zeal without knowledge urges and by immoral proposals to abolish it without compensating those who under the sanction of law have invested their all in a lawful business. No! rather the uncleanness, which does not show itself on the streets; the vulgar and insolent materialism of thought and life, which is eating into the heart of our people, and which expresses itself even in language used at school-boards and in an aggressive commercialism which penetrates to the innermost courts of the sanctuary; contempt for and evasion of law, which is aggravated by "brass mouths and iron lungs" demanding laws which are in advance of, and hinder, instead of furthering, the growth of law within; slavery to and self-seeking in party machines, and the corruption and insincerity of political leaders who plead in their defence that they dare not go too far in advance of the people; haste to be rich; mutual distrust instead of hearty co-operation between employers and employed; a readiness on the part of labour to take unfair advantage of capital when it sees a good chance, and a still greater willingness on the part of capital to treat the labourer as a "hand" and not as a partner; a growing distrust of the church by the masses, and a growing tendency in the church to put its trust in external things which can always be measured by statistics instead of in those spiritual ideas of which it is the professed custodian, and the influence of which no statistics can measure; these and kindred evils

threaten the life of the soul, and were essentially the evils denounced by Him who saw into the heart and who ate with publicans and sinners as a friend and brother. Wealth may ruin but it cannot save a nation. A nation is saved by ideas; inspiring and formative ideas; and in these Canada is barren, even as compared with the United States. A story—true or false—has recently gone the round of the newspapers. According to it, General Gordon told Cecil Rhodes that the Chinese Government offered him a room full of silver, as a reward for suppressing the Tai-ping rebellion, and that he had declined to take anything but his regular pay. On the latter expressing astonishment, Gordon asked what he would have done? "Taken it of course; what's the good of having big ideas, if you have not the means to carry them out?" was the answer. Probably, nine out of ten Canadians would agree with Rhodes; and yet his view of things was superficial and fundamentally false. It may be asked, what then did Gordon accomplish? He convinced Chinese statesmen that a man is unpurchaseable, and that there are spiritual forces beyond their horizon; so convinced fanatical Soudanese and Arabs that the christian faith is something beyond the faith for which they rush on death that for him, alone of all "unbelievers," prayers were recited in Mecca; and given an uplift and inspiration to countless numbers of the English speaking race, the effects of which cannot be computed. This was the work of one whom the world called "a failure." Which of the two attracts you, my young friends? The power of wealth or the power of ideas? The seen or the unseen? Which are the true foundation and forces of national life? Which will you serve? According to the answer which the mass of Canadian students give will be the future of Canada.

I have spoken of thanksgiving and retrospect. But, the past is behind us. May I speak of a vision which has been given to me of the future? I see our University, strong in your love, an ever increasing power for good; our country purging itself of dross and pressing forward to be in the van of the world's battle; our Empire, as of old, dispenser of justice to all under its flag, and champion of liberty, civil, religious, intellectual and commercial, every where; and our common humanity struggling up into the light, slowly but surely, realizing its unity and accomplishing its mission to establish the Kingdom of God upon earth. This is my hope, and one thing I ask of you—Never despair of the triumph of truth and goodness. To despair is to deny God.

