STANLEY MACKENZIE OF DALHOUSIE

WALTER C. MURRAY

STANLEY Mackenzie was the last of the great Pictonians who became College Heads. The line began with Dr. McCulloch, the first President of Dalhousie. It continued with Principal Ross, his pupil, and President Forrest. It included Sir William Dawson of McGill, Principals Grant and Gordon of Queen's, and Principal Mackinnon of Pine Hill. It might properly include Sir Robert Falconer of Toronto who, although born in Prince Edward Island, is a great-grandson of Alexander Falconer who came over in the *Hector* and settled in Hopewell, where the grandfather and father of Sir Robert were born.

During the recent centennial celebration at Dalhousie, memorials to the first three presidents were unveiled by the fourth. All were Pictou County men, and each in his own way gave expression to the two great impulses, the scientific and the political, which issued from Pictou Academy and its founder. Dr. McCulloch was deeply interested in science. At Glasgow University he had taken courses in medicine as well as in arts and theology, and when he went as a missionary to Prince Edward Island he took with him a library and a telescope. It was the sight of this instrument on the deck of his vessel in Pictou Harbour which aroused curiosity among the townspeople and led to their invitation to stay with them. At Pictou Dr. McCulloch was responsible for starting the Natural History Society, which had a long and notable existence. He also established a museum, which had among its treasures two specimens of an extinct species of Labrador duck which Audubon copied for his monumental work on the *Birds of America*. The long line of distinguished men of science who were associated directly with Pictou Academy includes Sir William Dawson and Simon Newcomb; also, indirectly, Dr. Gordon Macgregor and President Mackenzie.

The political impulse first found expression through the pen of Dr. McCulloch, whose attacks on privilege in church and state ultimately led to the establishment of responsible government and the abolition of sectarianism in education. The later forms of the political impulse supported union, first of the

provinces, then of the Presbyterian Churches and of the colleges. Grant and Forrest were advocates of the first two, Mackenzie of the last. Like Dawson and Grant, Mackenzie was responsible for the transformation of a small college into a national university with buildings of great beauty. The outward beauty of the new Dalhousie, which arose on the fields of Studley, fitly represents the happy blending of the tradition of the old Dalhousie with the new spirit of the modern university.

To understand and appreciate what Mackenzie did for Dalhousie, one should recall the long and chequered history of its strong personalities, great difficulties, and high ideals. It began with Lord Dalhousie and Dr. McCulloch, who struggled against religious prejudice and poverty for twenty years to bring into being a college "open to all occupations and sects of religion" and "formed in imitation of the University of Edinburgh". After five years of troubled operation, the college lapsed into silence upon the death of Dr. McCulloch in 1843. During the next twenty years Sir William Young and Joseph Howe strove to prevent its extinction, until George Grant and Charles Tupper came to their aid. The college was reopened in 1863, with a staff of able professors who gave to its work that character and distinction which has persisted to the present day.

Within the next fifteen years the staff deemed it necessary to prepare a memorandum setting forth the needs and difficulties of the college, which was in imminent danger of being forced to close its doors because of lack of funds. This disaster was prevented by the Rev. John Forrest, who interested his brother-in-law, Mr. George Munro, in the college. This Nova Scotian, who had made a fortune as a publisher in New York, began in 1879 a series of gifts for new chairs, exhibitions, bursaries, and tutor-ships on a princely scale which, at that time, was without parallel in Canada. This was the turning point in the fortunes of Dalhousie. Its first sixty years had been years of heroic struggle against adverse circumstances, to attain the high ideals which Lord Dalhousie and Dr. McCulloch had set before it.

It is difficult to overestimate the important consequences of the Munro benefactions. The donor, doubtless with the approval of Dr. Forrest, decided not to spend his money on land or buildings, but to make provision for good salaries for new professors, more assistance for older professors, and a system of scholarships sufficiently large to attract good students. It is of interest to note that, a short time before this, President Gilman had decided to expend the income of the large endow-

ment of Johns Hopkins University not on buildings but on men. There was much discussion of Gilman's decision at the time, and apparently the policy appealed strongly to Mr. Munro.

In the selection of new professors for the Munro chairs, Dalhousie was particularly fortunate. It so happened that a number of young Canadians had gone to Germany for graduate study, had completed courses for the doctorate, and had returned for appointments. The first group were Pictonians who had taken their bachelor's degree at Dalhousie in the early seventies, and after a time had gone to Leipsic for work in physics and chemistry. In due course they received their degrees and returned to Nova Scotia, Dr. J. J. Mackenzie to become lecturer in physics and Dr. Bayne in chemistry. They were filled with enthusiasm for the new methods of research and teaching in science, but their period of service was short. In 1879 Dr. Mackenzie died suddenly from the effects of an explosion in his laboratory, and Dr. Bayne was appointed professor of chemistry in the Royal Military College at Kingston.

Another group who had won Gilchrist scholarships, Macgregor from Dalhousie, Alexander from Toronto, and Schurman from Acadia, went to London, Edinburgh, and finally to Germany. They all made brilliant records. On their return Macgregor became professor of physics in 1879, Schurman of English in 1882, and on Schurman's transfer to philosophy in 1884 Alexander was appointed to succeed him. Macgregor had been granted the D.Sc. by London University in 1876, a degree reputed to be the most difficult to secure in Great Britain. Schurman's course in philosophy in London was one of the most distinguished of his time. In Edinburgh and Germany his attainments rivalled those of his fellow students, Andrew Seth who afterwards became professor of metaphysics in Edinburgh, and R. B. Haldane who became Lord Haldane of Cloan. Alexander's course was somewhat different, though not less distinguished. In University College he took an excellent standing, with first class honours at graduation. He returned to Canada and later entered Johns Hopkins University, where he became fellow in Greek, received the Ph.D in 1883, and after spending a year in Germany was appointed to Dalhousie.

The subsequent careers of these Munro professors were equally brilliant. Macgregor left Dalhousie to succeed Professor Tait in Edinburgh in 1901. Schurman went to Cornell in 1886 as professor, became president in 1892, and was appointed president of the Philippines commission, United States minister

first to Turkey and later to Germany. Alexander left Dalhousie in 1879 to become head of the department of English in Toronto. When Schurman resigned from Dalhousie, he recommended James Seth, the brother of Andrew, for his successor. In due time James Seth received appointments in Brown University, and Cornell; he finally returned to Edinburgh to fill the chair of moral philosophy.

A third group returned to teach in the schools of law and medicine. R. C. Weldon, a graduate of Mount Allison, took graduate work in law and political science in Yale, received the degree of doctor of philosophy and spent some time in Germany. He taught at Mount Allison until 1883, when he was appointed Munro professor of law. In the public life of Canada as well as in the teaching of law Dr. Weldon attained an eminence not less distinguished than that of his colleagues in arts. Two Dalhousie graduates, John Stewart and Walker Lindsay, went to Edinburgh for medicine. Both were highly distinguished in their work. Lindsay specialized in anatomy under Turner, who had sustained the world wide reputation given to Edinburgh in anatomy by the Munros; Stewart became the favourite pupil of the great Lord Lister. On his return, Lindsay taught anatomy in the Medical College according to the best traditions of Edinburgh, and at a much later date Stewart began to teach surgery as his great master would have it done.

It is not difficult to picture the stimulating effect on the intellectual life of Dalhousie of these brilliant young professors. Macgregor became the leader of the group, not only because of the priority of his appointment and length of his service, but also because he represented the new spirit of the sciences. Adjustment between the old and the new education which President Eliot had begun at Harvard was not made without difficulty in Dalhousie, where the classical tradition was well represented. Macgregor was no mere revolutionary seeking change for the sake of change. He had come back from Europe convinced that knowledge could be advanced only by freedom of thought and scientific research. He succeeded more by the training which he gave his students than by the arguments which he presented to his colleagues. The space and equipment at his disposal for the teaching of physics were meagre in the extreme. He could give a sound training in theoretical physics, a few demonstrations of scientific experiments, and, to the chosen few, a problem of research to be carried out in the approved manner. The results were amazing. In time his students became known

far and wide as among the best who went abroad for graduate work.

The students of the Munro period were unusually able, ambitious, and well prepared. The bursaries and exhibitions were competitive, and large enough to attract promising men and to support them without regard to their financial resources. There is no doubt that competition made preparation more thorough and complete than had been possible previously.

Into this world of new ideas, eager students, and brilliant young professors Arthur Stanley Mackenzie entered in 1881. He came from New Glasgow with a Munro bursary, and during his course gave Dartmouth as his place of residence. Each year of his course he held a bursary or exhibition of the value of $150 or $200. In the last two years he was first in the competitions for exhibitions. He was also awarded class prizes in French, logic, and psychology as well as in his special subject, physics. He took classes under Johnson in Latin, Macdonald in mathematics, Schurman in philosophy, Alexander in English, Macgregor in physics and Lawson in chemistry—classes in which the standard of teaching was high, examinations severe, accuracy, thoroughness, and hard work essential. On graduation in 1885 he was awarded honours in mathematics and physics, and the Sir William Young gold medal. The next two years he spent teaching science in the Yarmouth Academy, and from 1887 to 1889 he was tutor in physics and mathematics in Dalhousie. At the close of the Munro decade he went to Johns Hopkins for graduate work in physics. His fellow students, D. A. Murray and Eben Mackay, who went to Johns Hopkins for mathematics and chemistry, in due time became his colleagues in Dalhousie.

Mackenzie was fortunate in entering Johns Hopkins at this time. The Graduate School was at the height of its popularity. President Gilman had enlisted the services of professors with international reputations, such as Sylvester and Cayley in mathematics, Rowland in physics, Gildersleeve in Greek, Remsen in chemistry, and Martin in biology. The scholarships and fellowships offered by Johns Hopkins attracted brilliant students from every quarter. The courses which were given and the students who attended were up to the standard of the best universities in Germany. Mackenzie was awarded a scholarship, then a fellowship in physics, and was given the Ph.D. in 1894. Before he received his degree he was appointed lecturer in physics by Bryn Mawr, and he continued to teach there until 1905, when he was appointed to the chair in Dalhousie which Macgregor had filled.

Mackenzie was no less fortunate in beginning his teaching at Bryn Mawr and at Dalhousie during the most glorious periods of their history. Miss Thomas, the president of Bryn Mawr, had succeeded in securing several brilliant young professors, such as Osborn in biology and Harkness in mathematics. At Dalhousie Mackenzie's stay as professor was short. In 1910 he was called to the Stevens Institute of Technology near New York, but in the next year the retirement of Dr. Forrest opened the way for his return to his *alma mater* as president.

Dr. Forrest's official connection with Dalhousie began in 1879 when he became a member of the Board of Governors, was deepened in 1880 when he became professor of history, and again in 1885 when he was appointed president. He was president for twenty-six years. He had to his credit the prevention of the financial collapse of the college through the intervention of Mr Munro. Perhaps the greatest service which he rendered was in his wise selection of professors. There is no doubt that but for his strong common sense and good judgment the Munro gifts might have accomplished much less than they did. President Forrest was responsible also for the transfer of the college from the Parade to the new building on Carleton Street now known as Forrest Hall, for the institution of the School of Law, for the return of the Medical College to the University, as well as for the strengthening and enlargement of the Arts faculty in preparation for a School of Engineering.

His great kindness and generosity to staff and students, his optimism and courage, and his delight in all that pertained to student sports and interests gave him a secure place in their affections, even when they disagreed with his disciplinary measures. Although President Mackenzie introduced new methods of administration, rebuilt the university in a new setting, and changed many things, the contribution of Dr. Forrest to Dalhousie has grown in importance with the passing of the years.

Dr. Mackenzie was singularly well equipped for the difficult duties of the office of president. He had a thorough understanding of the problems facing Dalhousie, and an instinctive comprehension of the temper and spirit of the constituency which he was to serve. At the same time he had a knowledge and mastery of methods of administration and of the objectives of a modern university, which enabled him to build in Halifax a great university maintaining the best traditions of the past and ministering to the varied needs of the future. His academic experience in the three universities with which he had been

associated as undergraduate, graduate student, and teacher had been most fortunate. He had seen these universities in their glorious periods, when they were grappling with new problems. He had been associated with young men, teachers, and students of unusual ability and promise, when hopes were high, new ideas were active, discussions were frequent and money was not lacking. With many of them he had formed life-long friendships, and upon their advice and loyalty he could rely. His friends were found not only in Canada and the United States but also in Cambridge and Germany. Very few knew as intimately and evaluated as wisely as he the newer movements in the universities overseas and on this continent.

On several occasions I had reason to consult him on university problems of which some were of major importance, such as the organization of a new university and its relations to the people and to the government; others relating to matters of administration, institutional and personal; and always I found him unusually well informed, sane in judgment, disinterested and wise in his advice. Never once did I have cause to regret taking his advice.

I am too far removed from sources of accurate and complete information to say much of the different features of his administration. The transfer of the major portion of the work of the university to Studley, and the erection there of beautiful and adequate buildings, could not have been accomplished without the leadership of Mr. George S. Campbell, the chairman of the Board and president of the Bank of Nova Scotia, nor without the loyal support of that host of public-spirited citizens and ardent Dalhousians whom President Mackenzie gathered about him. With the exception of Sir William Young, guardian and protector of the fortunes of the college from 1848 to 1884, no governor did as much for Dalhousie as Mr. Campbell. Yet upon President Mackenzie's shoulders fell the burden of discussing plans, materials of construction, and different uses of the new buildings, with architects, professors, and builders. He even supervised arrangements for the beautiful blending of stones in some of the buildings, and he won the confidence and respect of Mr. Pearson, one of the foremost architects in Canada, for his sound judgment and good taste.

To the inner work of the university, the reorganization of courses and schools, the appointment of staff and the adjustment of departments, the standing and discipline of students, he gave a personal attention that is surprising in view of the great demands made upon his time and energy.

For the large campaigns for funds, for interviews with philanthropic agencies and organizations of graduates, for negotiations with other universities regarding some form of union which would merit the support of the Carnegie Corporation, he assumed a personal responsibility that was equally exacting. We marvel that he was able to accomplish so much, when we remember that in the twenty years of his service as president he was called upon to bear a share of responsibility larger than usual for college Heads. Special services were demanded of him during the Great War, because of the importance of Halifax as a military station and the great explosion which wrecked nearly a third of the city. The demands which arose from these disasters led to the erection and development of a Medical Centre which may be regarded as the crowning achievement of his administration.

Of the quality of his service there can be no question. He made Dalhousie a strong and a beautiful university, with high standards of scholarship and public service. He developed a loyalty among its students and staff, a confidence and devotion among its friends, a reputation abroad and a respect for its organization and achievements that have made it great.

Dr. Mackenzie played a large part in the National Conference of Canadian Universities. He was one of the original members of the Canadian National Council of Research, and his service was longer than that of any of his associates. His special contribution was the administration of the scholarship awards, about which there has never been any serious protest or dissatisfaction during the long years of his service. His advice was sought by governments, national and provincial, and his services to his native province were particularly valuable.

A phrase applied to President Eliot of Harvard may be applied with equal justice to President Mackenzie. "He was a kingly man"—kingly in presence, outlook, and leadership, kingly in courage and conception of public duty, kingly in his sense of responsibility for his university and all associated with it, kingly in his reserve and detachment from all the mean and petty things of life.

"Know ye not that a prince and a great man has fallen?"

Far hence his body rests in peace, beside his wife in Indianapolis.