

Davidson college, Davidson, N. C.

FIRST  
SEMI-CENTENARY CELEBRATION  
OF  
DAVIDSON COLLEGE.

Addresses,

HISTORICAL AND COMMEMORATIVE,

DELIVERED AT THE

ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT,

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13, 1887.



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AN HISTORICAL SKETCH  
OF  
DAVIDSON COLLEGE,

PREPARED AND READ AT THE

FIRST SEMI-CENTENARY CELEBRATION, HELD AT DAVIDSON COLLEGE, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13, 1887.

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BY JETHRO RUMPLE, D. D., OF THE CLASS OF 1850.

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The resolution of the Trustees providing for these semi-centenary exercises directs that they shall consist, in part, "of an historical sketch of the College for its first fifty years of life." This phraseology is well chosen, for it recognizes the important fact that Davidson College has a "life," and that its life has been prolonged through half a century of growth and usefulness, and that to-day its vigor and popularity give us the pleasing assurance that instead of decrepitude and decay there is a reasonable prospect of its life being measured by centuries of increasing power for good.

The life of the College is, first of all, that vital principle imparted to it by the faith, the prayers, the contributions and the nurturing care of its pious founders and

faithful guardians. A brief sketch of the devout and earnest Presbyterian pioneers who settled the Piedmont region of the Carolinas, had we time to record it, would give us an instructive insight into this primary animating principle.

The history of education in North Carolina prior to the arrival of the Scotch-Irish is very meagre and uninteresting. But upon the arrival of these immigrants, about the middle of the eighteenth century, a line of Presbyterian churches was established in the hill country from Virginia to South Carolina, and along with these churches there sprang up a number of classical schools and academies, furnishing educational facilities to the people in the wilderness. Account for it as you will, the Presbyterians have been the leaders in the great work of education in America and in the world. In the early days of Christianity, when the Presbyterianism of the New Testament was still vigorous, Alexandria, Antioch, Cæsarea and Jerusalem had their schools of learning. Tradition says that the Evangelist Mark was the founder of the Christian School of Alexandria. At all events, here taught, in the second century, Pantaenus and Clement, and in the third century, Origen. Icolmkill, on the Isle of Iona, and Lindisfarne, on the eastern coast of England, in the days of the Saxon Heptarchy, were not monasteries in the Romish sense of the term, but Christian universities, where learning was cultivated, whose



Abbots were college presidents and whose Monks were either teachers or missionaries. At the Reformation Geneva had her school, where Calvin expounded and Beza lectured. Scotland had, soon after the Reformation, not only her great universities, but her parochial schools for the education of her children. And though Protestant Ireland had no universities of her own, she freely patronized those of her sister, Scotland, for the education of her ministers and aspiring young men. And when the Scotch and Scotch-Irish immigrants settled in this country they soon came to regard schools as only second in importance to their churches. Whenever a preacher was settled over any of the churches there usually followed a good classical school, taught either by the minister or some one approved by him, where pupils could learn the Latin tongue—the language of Western Christianity—and the Greek—the original language of the New Testament, as well as the mathematics, philosophy and the liberal arts and sciences.

Prominent among these schools in North Carolina may be mentioned those of Sugar Creek, Providence, Rocky River, Poplar Tent, Centre, Thyatira and Bethany, in what then comprised Mecklenburg and Rowan counties. Further east were the schools of Dr. David Caldwell, in Guilford; Wm. Bingham, in New Hanover; Henry Patillo, in Granville, and David Kerr, in Cumberland.



In South Carolina the latter half of the eighteenth century produced a classical school in "the Waxhaws," from which ten or twelve ministers proceeded; one in Spartanburg, taught by Rev. James Gilleland; one in Bethel congregation, taught by Rev. Robert McCulloh; McMullen's school in Fairforest, Hill's school in Salem, the Williamsburg Academy and Rev. Joseph Alexander's school on Bullock's Creek.

In the midst of this region, but somewhat previous to the establishment of a number of these schools, was made the first effort to organize a college in western North Carolina. The Colonial Legislature, held in New Bern, in December, 1770, granted a charter to "Queen's College, in the town of Charlotte." This act was twice adopted by the Legislature and twice repealed by royal proclamation, probably because it did not provide that the master of "Queen's College" should be of the Established Church of England. But the College, or "Museum," got along for several years without a charter.

In 1777 the Legislature of the State of North Carolina granted it a charter under the name of "Liberty Hall Academy." This name has a peculiar significance when coupled with the tradition that it was in its rooms that Dr. Ephraim Brevard wrote the celebrated Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence in 1775. The Trustees named in the charter were as follows: Isaac



Alexander, M. D., President; Thomas Polk, Abraham Alexander, Thomas Neal, Waightstill Avery, Ephraim Brevard, John Simpson, John McKnitt Alexander, Adlai Osborne, with Rev. Messrs. David Caldwell, James Edmonds, Thomas Reese, Samuel E. McCorkle, Thomas H. McCaule and James Hall—all, I think, Presbyterians.

The Trustees elected Dr. McWhorter, of New Jersey, its first president, and upon his failure to accept, in 1778 they chose Mr. Robert Brownfield, of Mecklenburg county, to conduct the school for a year. The next year Dr. McWhorter took charge of the Academy, and a goodly number of students assembled for instruction. Owing, however, to the invasion of Lord Cornwallis in the autumn of 1780, the exercises of the school were suspended, and never resumed.

After the close of the Revolutionary war the General Assembly of North Carolina passed an act removing Liberty Hall to Rowan county, at or near Salisbury, with a new Board of Trustees. Prominent among these Trustees was the Rev. Samuel E. McCorkle, D. D., who about this time established a classical school near Thyatira Church, which he called Zion-Parnassus Academy, and which ran a successful career for about twenty years. Nothing more is heard of "Liberty Hall," and "Zion-Parnassus" was its most direct successor.



It was forty years after this when our people fully awoke to a sense of their error in allowing the advantages of a home college slip from their grasp. In September, 1820, a convention was held in Lincolnton, N. C., representing a large area of country in both the Carolinas, in which it was resolved to undertake the work of establishing a college in this region. That convention named the proposed institution "WESTERN COLLEGE," appointed a Board of Trustees, and applied to the Legislature of North Carolina for a charter, which was granted. The College was to be located "somewhere to the south-west of the Yadkin River." The reason for chartering "Western College" was declared to be that "the more western counties of the State are distant from Chapel Hill, which renders it inconvenient for their youth to prosecute their education there." The Trustees, who were to be a close corporation, without any ecclesiastical control or oversight, were as follows: Rev. James McRee, George L. Davidson, Thomas G. Polk, Rev. Samuel C. Caldwell, Joseph Pickett, Rev. John M. Wilson, Isaac T. Avery, John Nesbit, John M. Greenlee, Rev. John Robinson, John Phiifer, Montford Stokes, Robert H. Burton, Lawson Henderson, Rev. Humphrey Hunter, Rev. Henry Kerr, Meshack Franklin, Samuel Davidson, John McEntire, Rev. Robert J. Miller, Thomas Lenoir, Rev. Joseph D. Kilpatrick, James Patton, John Culpepper and Charles Stook.



These Trustees met from time to time until the summer of 1824, when they finally abandoned the project. Among the reasons assigned for the failure the following are prominent, viz.: "An endeavor to unite too many discordant interests," "disagreement about location," "fear that certain teachers of repute in the country would have a place in it," and "opposition on the part of the friends of the University to the foundation of another seat of learning."

But while the scheme in that form was abandoned, the hopes that were kindled, and the arguments by which they were sustained, slumbered still in many hearts, ready at any moment to awake to new life and bear precious fruit in another form. Quite a number of young men, full of hope and enterprise, had entered the ministry of Concord Presbytery, while "Western College" was trying to live, or within a few years after its untimely interment. When these young men had achieved position and influence, by a dozen years of experience, they determined to re-open and re-agitate the college building subject. Seeing the rock on which the former enterprise had been wrecked, they no longer proposed to unite discordant interests, or make room in the Faculty for prominent educators, but to promote the cause of sound education under such control as would insure, not only literary and scientific culture, but also pure morality, scriptural piety and orthodox faith.



This, it was confidently believed, could be assured only by placing the College under the control of a body that was responsible, not to a miscellaneous Legislature, nor merely at the bar of public opinion, but to the courts of an orthodox church. Other institutions may be sound in faith and morals, but an ecclesiastical college must be sound and safe as long as the controlling church is sound. In such a college it is impossible for a professor to teach doctrines undermining the foundations of morals and religion without speedy and summary ejection. Probably one of the most hopeless tasks in the world would be an effort to hoodwink, or bribe into silence or connivance, a select body of educated Presbyterian ministers and elders who recognize no earthly superiors, who give their supervision from love alone, and who hold themselves accountable to God alone for their official acts.

Accepting the leading idea of a denominational college, neither sectarian nor exclusive, but catholic in spirit, the friends of Christian education determined to found an institution at once accessible, reliable, cheap and thorough. It could be made accessible by choosing a site for it in the midst of the Scotch-Irish population residing between the Yadkin and Catawba Rivers. It could be made reliable by placing it under the control of the Presbyteries. It could be made thorough by electing to its chairs the most scholarly men that could



be obtained in the Presbyterian Church. It could, it was fondly hoped, be made cheap by adopting the "Manual Labor System" then so much mooted in educational circles, and put into practice in several Northern colleges. According to this "system" the students would be required to labor on the College farm or garden, or at some approved trade, for several hours each day, and receive compensation therefor by a corresponding reduction on their board bill at the Steward's Hall. In this way it was supposed that the hardy sons of small farmers could lessen the expenses of their own education, and the pampered sons of the wealthy would learn to practice, perhaps to love, useful labor. It was thus to be a kind of rudimentary Institute of Technology. Such desires, plans and purposes were silently seething in the public mind for some years previous, but the first ripple of the incoming tide that we can detect in the Presbytery's records is dated March 12, 1835. The Presbytery of Concord was convened at Prospect Church, in Rowan county, about seven miles from this spot, when the Rev. Robert Hall Morrison, as tradition asserts, offered the following paper:

"Presbytery, taking into consideration the importance of a more general diffusion of useful knowledge, and the expediency of adopting some system of sound and thorough education, that may be accessible to all classes of the community, and having heard with pleasure that the MANUAL LABOR SYSTEM, as far as it has been tried, promises the most happy results in training up youth to virtuous and industrious habits, with well cultured minds, unanimously



“Resolved, That this Presbytery, deeply impressed with the importance of securing the means of education to young men, within our bounds, of hopeful piety and talents, preparatory to the gospel ministry, undertake (in humble reliance upon the blessing of God) the establishment of a *Manual Labor School*; and that a committee be appointed to report at the next meeting of Presbytery the best measures for its accomplishment and the most favorable places for its location.” See *Minutes of Concord Presbytery, Vol. III, p. 107, copied edition.*

This was the germinal resolution. Mr. Morrison was made chairman of the committee. Various other committees were appointed and reported in due order, but nothing tangible was reached until the committee on the purchase of lands for a site reported, in August following, that they had contracted for four hundred and ninety-six acres of land, with William Lee Davidson, for which they were to pay him the sum of \$1,521 by the 1st of January, 1836. At the same time Rev. Mr. Morrison reported that he had obtained for the College subscriptions to the amount of \$18,000. Rev. P. J. Sparrow also reported subscriptions amounting to \$12,392, a total of \$30,392 obtained by these two gentlemen in the space of five months. On the next day, August 26, 1835, it was “resolved that the Manual Labor Institution, which we are about to build, be called ‘DAVIDSON COLLEGE,’ as a tribute to the memory of that distinguished and excellent man, GEN. WILLIAM DAVIDSON, who, in the ardor of patriotism, fearlessly contending for the liberty of his country, fell (universally lamented) in the battle of Cowan’s Ford.”



At the same meeting Rev. Samuel Williamson was directed to visit Bethel Presbytery, in South Carolina, and invite the co-operation of that body. In a communication dated October 10, 1835, he reports that Bethel Presbytery had accepted the invitation. In process of time Morganton Presbytery, then embracing the region west of the Catawba River, also agreed to co-operate, and under the joint care of these three Presbyteries the Manual Labor College, named Davidson, was launched upon the sea of trials and vicissitudes. It would weary, without edifying, to recite the resolutions and plans that were adopted, the committees that were appointed, the presidents and professors that were elected in these initial proceedings. Let us notice only those that proved efficient as factors in the grand result.

In the fall of the same year, 1835, arrangements were made to begin the erection of the necessary buildings in the summer of 1836. A site was chosen on the purchased tract of land in Mecklenburg county, within a half mile of the Iredell line, on a high wooded ridge; and so accurately was the College Chapel located that the rain-drops falling on the western side of the roof run into the Catawba River, while those falling on the eastern side are carried into the Yadkin, or Pee Dee River—the building thus standing in the very centre of the North Carolina Mesopotamia.



It is difficult to get an adequate conception of the zeal and enthusiasm that pervaded the country in regard to this College fifty years ago. The raising of over \$30,000 in the space of only five months, in a few surrounding counties, is a striking phenomenon. Many of the subscriptions were made by plain farmers, living on small plantations, and by ministers supported by meagre salaries. It is remembered by some still living, that Rev. Wm. A. Hall, of Mocksville, about this time was bereaved of a little daughter named Julia, and that shortly after her death he informed his family that he had subscribed one hundred dollars to Davidson College. The prudent wife remonstrated, saying that the sum was greater than they could afford. The devout husband replied that their Heavenly Father had relieved them of the expense of rearing and educating their darling child by taking her to Himself, and now they could give the cost of her support to the cause of the Lord. And it was as "*the cause of the Lord*" that this College was regarded by those earnest men. It may not be amiss to state that the sister of little Julia afterwards resided here a number of years as the wife of the professor of chemistry.

It is also remembered that some of the people, especially those of Third Creek Church, contributed labor instead of money, and taking their wagons, teams and servants, camped here in the woods, and spent several



weeks in clearing off the grounds, building fences and in making and hauling brick.

Rev. John Williamson, pastor of Hopewell Church, in Mecklenburg county, assisted by Rev. Messrs. Henry N. Pharr, Cyrus Johnston, Albertus L. Watts, Daniel A. Penick, Walter S. Pharr, James D. Hall, J. M. H. Adams, Andrew Y. Lockridge and several active Ruling Elders, constituted the building committee, drew the plans and arranged the position of the buildings. Precious is the memory of these devout and earnest men, and it is fitting that they should be held in everlasting remembrance. I see one of them, Rev. James D. Hall, on the platform to-day, and I tender him the thanks of all for his services fifty years ago, and our congratulations that God has spared him to see this happy day. Most of these men were ministers of the Gospel, who conceived, planned, endowed and controlled the infant college, laid its foundations in faith and prayer and invoked upon it the blessing of the covenant-keeping God, who kept it alive and flourishing while many other institutions were suspended. Under the direction of these gentlemen the Steward's Hall, the President's house—now constituting a portion of Professor Martin's residence—the language professor's house, now standing somewhat dilapidated near the Philanthropic Hall, and known by the *sobriquet* of "Tammany," with four blocks of brick dormitories along the road on the west side of the

campus, in a line with those still standing north of the Eumenean Hall, were erected. The "Chapel," still standing in the campus, was not erected till later on, and religious services were conducted the first year in the dining-room of the Steward's Hall. About the same time Rev. Walter S. Pharr erected the large wooden structure now known as "Danville," to be rented by suitable persons desiring to reside at the College.

With these accommodations, the exercises of the College opened with sixty-six students, March the first, 1837. The teaching force consisted of Rev. Robert Hall Morrison, President and Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy; Rev. Patrick J. Sparrow, Professor of Ancient Languages, and Mortimer D. Johnston, A. M., Tutor in Mathematics.

Dr. Morrison was a native of Cabarrus county, N. C., born September 8, 1798, and was graduated from the University of North Carolina in the class of 1818. He was ordained pastor of Providence Church, N. C., April 21, 1821, removed to the Fayetteville Church in 1822, and returned to Sugar Creek Church, near Charlotte, in 1827. The town of Charlotte was then comprised in the Sugar Creek congregation, and constituted a part of Dr. Morrison's charge. At the opening of the College he was elected, by the three Presbyteries of Concord, Bethel and Morganton, the first President, and he removed to the College in February, 1837, where he faithfully



and successfully accomplished the difficult task of organizing the infant institution. In 1838 the University of North Carolina conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity.

In 1840, in consequence of impaired health, Dr. Morrison resigned the presidency and retired to his farm in Lincoln county, North Carolina, where he still resides, beloved, honored and revered. His noble work in behalf of Christian education, begun more than fifty years ago, stands here to-day a monument to his wisdom and philanthropy. A grateful people will not soon forget his eminent services. More than this delicacy forbids us to utter concerning the chief agent in founding Davidson College.

Rev. P. J. Sparrow was Professor of Ancient Languages from 1837 to 1840, and was reputed one of the best linguists in the State. He was a native of Lincoln, N. C., born in 1802, and received his academic education, in part, at Providence Academy, under Rev. Samuel Williamson. Though Dr. Sparrow never enjoyed the advantages of college training, his wonderful talent and devotion to study more than compensated for the deficiencies of early instruction. His pulpit performances were of a high order, and on a wider plane would have given him a national reputation as a theologian and sacred orator. He resigned his professorship in 1840, and shortly afterwards became President of

Hampden-Sidney College in Virginia. After a few years in Virginia, he removed to Alabama, and died at Cahaba, in that State, November 10, 1867.

Mortimer D. Johnston, A. M., was a native of Rowan county, N. C., and was graduated from Jefferson College, Pa.; became first Tutor and first Professor of Mathematics in Davidson College, serving in that chair from 1837 to 1853. He was a good mathematician, a ripe scholar and a devout Christian. He was exceedingly modest and diffident—characteristics of which the students often availed themselves when they desired to escape the performance of unwelcome duties. Resigning his position in 1853, he spent the remainder of his life in teaching and other employments, in Charlotte, N. C., where he died.

These three constituted the first corps of instruction who were held responsible for the teaching and government of the College. But in these years there was another functionary almost as important as the President. This officer was called "Steward and Farmer." He not only managed the College boarding-house, but was superintendent of the College farm and garden, and had each one of the students under his control, as a laborer, for several hours each working day of the week. The first Steward was Mr. Abel Graham, of Rowan county, and after the first year Mr. Thomas H. Robinson, of Cabarrus county.



## THE MANUAL LABOR SYSTEM,

as already stated, was a component element of the College machinery for the first three or four years of its existence, and deserves a passing notice. According to this system some of the students who professed skill in the use of tools were allowed to labor in mechanical pursuits, especially carpentry, while the remainder were divided into three grades, as to proficiency and strength, and into two or more classes, as to time of labor on farm, garden or clearings. The first, or stronger grade, was to receive a reduction of three dollars per month on their board bills, and the second grade a reduction of two dollars and forty cents per month, while the feebler third grade got a reduction of only one dollar and eighty cents per month, for three hours of labor a day.

In 1840 the hours of labor were reduced from three to two hours a day, and the remuneration received a corresponding reduction. In 1841 still another change was made according to which each student was to receive an allotment of one-half acre of ground, or more if he were ambitious in that line, to be cultivated at his own expense and discretion, but only in hours of recreation. The Faculty, however, were to make a weekly inspection of the lots, criticise the style of cultivation and encourage the youthful farmers to high and noble efforts. The process, I presume, was somewhat analogous to the more

modern criticising of literary exercises, but I could not learn from the Records of the Trustees or Minutes of the Faculty whether the professors valued and marked the manual exercises or whether the grade mark of the half-acre lots entered into the final average in determining the student's rank; or whether there was a field monitor as well as a class-room monitor. The records are silent upon these interesting points, but perhaps some of the venerable graduates of 1842 or '43, now sitting before me, could throw some light upon this obscure piece of history. Nor do the archives of the College show whether any of the students selected their half-acres, how they cultivated them or how they disposed of the proceeds. The probability is that in this memorable term of 1841-'42 the Manual Labor System, like the famous "one-horse-shay," broke down in all its parts at once, and forever disappeared from view. And yet there are some traditionary fossils stowed away on the lower shelves of the memory of ancient graduates that may furnish a few minutes of entertainment to the newly fledged graduates of these busy modern days. For instance, say at nine o'clock A. M., the "Steward and Farmer" would step out of the hall door, or maybe on the front steps of the Chapel, and give a ringing blast of his trumpet, sending its reverberations through the leafy aisles of these grand old campus oaks, and penetrating to the inmost recesses of each quiet dormitory from



No. 1 to No. 16. Class No. 1, clad in working apparel, would assemble tumultuously on the campus, and file off, with many a merry jest or smothered anathema, to the shops, fields or clearings, there to kill time as best they could, until called from labor to refreshment at high twelve. At one P. M. another trumpet blast would burst upon sleepy, post-prandial ears, and forth from the shady room and musty tomes into the bright sunshine, and shimmering July atmosphere, Class No. 2 would saunter slowly forth. Later on Class No. 3 would emerge and labor in the lengthening shadows of the summer evening. As board at the Steward's Hall was only thirty or thirty-five dollars per session of five months, the proceeds of all this unwelcome toil amounted in the case of a first grade laborer to not quite one-half of his board bill. At the same time the reports of investigating committees showed that the College was sinking money by the operation, and so proving the system a financial failure.

Many causes combined to produce this result. Semi-compulsory labor, on a large scale, is necessarily unprofitable. To be remunerative, labor must be either skilled and voluntary, or else absolutely compulsory. But in this case the Steward was in a dilemma. He could neither chastise nor dismiss his laborers. And though they could not organize a strike for fewer hours or higher wages, it was soon discovered that the young men held



to the unproved theory that manual labor is a curse, with as much tenacity as modern scientists hold to the unproved theory of genetic evolution. They felt that they had come to college rather to learn how to escape the dusty toil of the fields and not to have the chain of hard labor riveted on them. Their experience proved that three hours of rough farm-work, in the morning, begat such fatigue and drowsiness as disqualified them for afternoon study, and the afternoon toil was even worse for evening studies. Between faithful labor and hard study life became a burden, the temper soured and the freshness and elasticity of youth crushed. The reports of the Faculty show that some of the town boys soon deserted and never returned to college again.

Nor could the high-mettled student help regarding himself as under the eye of an overseer, though the office was disguised under a more elegant name. To cheat the overseer out of their labor, if practicable, was almost as much an instinct on the College farm as it was on the cotton and rice plantations of the South, with the added zest that there was infinite fun in the thing, and it called for the exercise of superior adroitness. It could be made to appear a most natural thing, by an awkward stroke, to break the handle of a hoe, or a mattock, to drive the edge of a club-axe against a convenient stone, or to select an adjacent stump, green and tough, and drive a plow,



full tilt, against its stubborn roots. Then something was sure to break, and it lay within the range of possibility that the breaker would be sent to the shop to superintend the repair of the fracture. That was so much time gained for rest.

Now if there is any venerable graduate here to-day who can say *quorum pars fui*, and is disposed to dispute the literal accuracy of these statements, your historian can only say that these were the traditions current when he was a student here some six or eight years after the demise of the Manual Labor System—dim traditions whispered in the cool summer evenings under the umbrageous canopy of yon venerable oaks, at a time when a new generation of students rejoiced that the lines had fallen to them in pleasanter places, or that they had happened on more delightful times. Doubtless many bright bits of coloring, many little exaggerations and embellishments were required to construct a story that would make admiring Freshmen open their eyes with mute amazement. But such were the traditions current in the closing years of the fourth decade of this century.

The experience of four years sufficed to prove that the tastes and habits of the lover of knowledge cannot, as a rule, be harmoniously blended with the habits and tastes of the farm laborer. And of all persons in the world to detect the incongruity, commend me to the



bright, quick-witted, fun-loving college student, who would infinitely rather chop logic than wield the woodman's axe against tough post-oak trees. To extract the cube root of any quantity in an infinite series has something about it to stimulate the intellect and excite the pleasurable emotions that arise from a noble conquest; but to extract the roots of nettles, burdock, or of the ever-recurring sassafras sprout, is unceasingly and infinitely detestable to the aspiring mind. To dig out a Greek root from the remotest branch of a verb in *mi* is pleasant employment compared with the sensation experienced when a recalcitrant root of some tough hickory or hardy dogwood returns in full force against the unprotected tibia after its elasticity has been tested to the utmost by the advancing plowshare.

And yet, whatever may have been the practical defects of the Manual Labor System, in the providence of God it subserved a valuable purpose. Indeed it is questionable whether the College could have been established without it. The labor feature constituted an attraction and a watch-word, without which the first agents might have failed to gain the attention and the confidence of the original contributors. Many would be disposed to aid in the establishment of a college, where they fondly hoped their sons could work their way through, whose sympathies could not have been otherwise enlisted.



Nor was there any intentional deception in the advocacy of this system; for its authors were *bona fide* believers in its practicability. In fact, the popular mind, far and wide, was agitated about this system, very much as it was about the *Morus Multicaulis* tree and silk culture about the same time. Indeed, the silk culture industry came very near being engrafted into the College at one time, for the venerable Trustees directed the President to investigate the silk business and report upon the expediency of introducing it into the curriculum. And I am not sure that some of these ancient brethren did not spend their hours of labor in hatching and feeding silkworms and gathering cocoons, for I distinctly remember that a number of *Morus Multicaulis* trees were growing on the College grounds in my college-days, and one of them is standing near "Tammany" this very day.

But at all events the labor experiment successfully dissipated the popular dream of a cheap and at the same time thorough course of literary training, and taught the people that a finished education is an expensive privilege and a costly luxury. The expense must be met somehow—either by personal payment, by endowment, by founding scholarships, or by friendly or ecclesiastical beneficiary aid. Or in the absence of all these, the courageous youth who has in him the stuff that men are made of, may slowly and painfully push his own way by alternate labor, teaching and study, and be all the better man

for the effort. In point of fact, many have already done this, and with a suitable college accessible to him, any youth who deserves to be promoted to the grade of an educated man can win the privilege for himself, unless he is encumbered by burdens other than the care of himself.

#### THE CHARTER.

Though the College buildings were erected and the exercises commenced in March, 1837, it was not until December 28, 1838, that the charter was ratified by the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina. By direction of the Presbyteries of Concord, Morganton and Bethel, President Morrison went to Raleigh, and with considerable difficulty obtained a charter to run for fifty years, and allowing the corporation to hold real and personal property not exceeding in value two hundred thousand dollars. The difficulty lay in the unwillingness of the legislators to charter an institution under ecclesiastical control, and thus to effect a kind of combination between Church and State. They had not forgotten that a State Church once existed in North Carolina, and they did not desire to repeat the experiment.

The names of the original Trustees were as follows, viz.: John Robinson, Ephraim Davidson, Thomas L. Cowan, Robert H. Burton, Robert H. Morrison, John Williamson, Joseph W. Ross, Wm. L. Davidson, Charles



W. Harris, Walter S. Pharr, Cyrus L. Hunter, John D. Graham, Robert Potts, James M. H. Adams, David A. Caldwell, William B. Wood, Moses W. Alexander, D. C. Mebane, James W. Osborne, Henry N. Pharr, John M. Wilson, P. J. Sparrow, James G. Torrence, John L. Daniel, Pierpont E. Bishop, George W. Dunlap and John Springs—twenty-eight in all, with the privilege of electing twenty more by the three associated Presbyteries and by such other Presbyteries in the State of North Carolina as may hereafter be associated with them.

The administration of Dr. Morrison embraced the formative period of the College. A course of study was to be arranged, laws for the government of the Faculty and students were to be provided, the classes were to be formed, text-books were to be selected, and the College was to be projected on its course of life and usefulness. A glance at the first list of students shows that only twenty out of sixty-six ever reached the point of graduation. Probably few of these early students were adequately prepared to enter college or possessed the qualities of mind and morals needed to insure success. Many of them doubtless floated in upon the swollen tide of enthusiasm that was raised by the advent of the new, cheap and popular literary institution in Western Carolina. It was with such a mass of discordant and crude elements that Dr. Morrison was called to grapple, and, if possible, bring order out of chaos. Faithfully and

successfully did he perform his work, but it was by the sacrifice of his health. At the end of three years, in 1840, he had his first class of eleven prepared for graduation. The classes of 1840 and 1841 may be referred to Dr. Morrison's administration, and they numbered twenty-three graduates, with one hundred and eighty-five students matriculated—an average of eleven and a half graduates and forty-six and one-half matriculates to the year.

In 1841 began the administration of Rev. Samuel Williamson, D. D., which lasted till 1854, a period of thirteen years. During this time there were usually but two professors besides the President. For two years Thomas M. Kirkpatrick, a graduate of the College, acted as tutor, and during the last three years Rev. E. F. Rockwell was Professor of Natural Sciences. But for the greater part of these years Dr. Williamson taught Rhetoric, Logic, Natural Philosophy, Mineralogy, Geology, Chemistry, Evidences of Christianity, Moral Philosophy, Metaphysics, Political Economy, and International Law, besides officiating as President and pastor of the College Church, attending to all the correspondence and outside management of affairs. And to crown all, so meagre was the income of the College from its endowment that it was necessary for the President to get and to keep, at all hazards, every paying student that could be discovered, while from the very start of his administration he had



to contend with an influential element in the Presbyteries which was opposed to him and his policy. The bare contemplation of such a herculean task is sufficient to appall any man not cast in a heroic mould. But Dr. Williamson was cast in a heroic mould, and for thirteen years, nearly twice the length of the term of any other President, he kept up the College and held his opponents at bay. All honor to the brave old leader who taxed his matchless resources so long and so successfully in the unequal struggle. His former pupils have placed yon marble tablet in the wall to perpetuate his memory, with an epitaph written in the language we believe he would have preferred, as a slight token of the respect, reverence and affection with which they cherish his labors and prayers for their welfare.

In 1854 he resigned the presidency, and after a year or two he removed to Arkansas, where he died March 12th, 1882, at the advanced age of eighty-seven years.

#### THE SCHOLARSHIP SYSTEM

was the next scheme for sustaining the College, after the collapse of the Manual Labor System. During the latter period of Dr. Williamson's administration the Trustees devised the scheme of selling four hundred scholarships at one hundred dollars each, entitling the holder to twenty years' tuition in the College. This was for the purpose of raising \$40,000 for the endowment of two professor-

ships. According to this plan it was proposed to sell eight thousand years of tuition at five dollars a year in advance. In a business point of view it was a most disastrous proposition and has entailed untold embarrassment upon the College, especially as the entire proceeds of the sale were lost in the catastrophe of the late war, while the scholarships themselves, where not cancelled, are as fresh and lively to-day as they were in the first year of their existence.

It is, however, probably true that this device saved the College from extinction in 1852, by supplying an additional thousand dollars or more of annual income. The relief, however, was very transient, for within two or three years the College was in imminent danger of being swamped by these very scholarships in cutting off nearly the entire income from tuition. They were transferable, and each one allowed two students at the same time to enjoy its benefits. They could be, and actually were, rented out to students not owning them, at rates less than the regular tuition. The consequence was that the income of the College from tuition, which for a few years previous paid the meagre salaries of two professors, was reduced to a very small sum, while the income from the two hundred scholarships actually sold amounted to only about twelve hundred dollars. By this means the College was again upon the verge of financial ruin.



But in these dark days the God of Providence and Grace, in whom the founders of the College trusted, was preparing a friend whose ample benefactions were sufficient, not merely to relieve the present distress, but to raise the College to a higher plane than had been hoped for by its founders. This friend was

MAXWELL CHAMBERS, ESQ.,

of Salisbury, N. C. By a will dated November, 1854, Mr. Chambers bequeathed to the College a residuary legacy amounting to about a quarter of a million of dollars. This was the sum that Mr. Chambers intended the College to receive, but owing to a clause in the charter limiting the amount of its property to \$200,000, a considerable portion of the intended legacy, after tedious and expensive litigation, reverted to the testator's next of kin, viz.: Hon. David F. Caldwell, of Salisbury. The General Assembly of North Carolina, with the utmost liberality and promptitude, enlarged the power of the College to hold property to the extent of a half million dollars, and invested the College with all the claims which the State or its University might be supposed to have in the legacy that appeared to be forfeited, but it was too late. The Supreme Court, after protracted legal proceedings, decided, two to one, adversely to the College, and the Trustees were constrained to compromise by paying to Judge Caldwell about \$45,000 of the legacy. Thus the actual sum received was reduced to \$200,000.



The residue, however, was a wondrous relief, lifting the College out of all its financial troubles and furnishing the means for erecting this spacious Chapel with its connected dormitories, library, laboratories and recitation-rooms, at a cost of nearly \$85,000. The Trustees were also enabled to purchase valuable apparatus, cabinets and museums, as well as to give an ample support to a fuller corps of competent professors.

Mr. Chambers was a native of this region of country, and after conducting a prosperous mercantile business in Charleston, S. C., he removed to Salisbury, N. C., where he lived many years, and where he died in February, 1855. He was a man of great business sagacity, prudent, far-sighted and possessed of perfect self-control in difficult situations. He was kind to the unfortunate, hospitable and most liberal to the church of his preference; in principle a thorough Presbyterian, and died in the enjoyment of a comfortable hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ. His wife was a devout Christian, a member of the Salisbury Presbyterian Church, and for many years was a "Lady Bountiful" in her church and community. The portraits of this estimable pair adorn the walls of the library room of the College and also the walls of Manse parlor of the Salisbury Church. Being childless, and having a fortune of half a million, under the advice of the late Rev. Archibald Baker, then pastor of the Salisbury Church, and of that life-long



friend of the College, the late D. A. Davis, Esq., of Salisbury, Mr. Chambers, after making ample provision for his kindred and friends with half of his estate, was led to give the other half to the cause of Christian education.

In the meantime the presidency of Dr. Williamson having closed, the Trustees elected the Rev. Drury Lacy, D. D., of Raleigh, N. C., as his successor. Around him, as the third President of the College, were gathered a fuller corps of professors, consisting of Rev. E. F. Rockwell, Maj. Daniel H. Hill, C. D. Fishburn, John A. Leland, W. C. Kerr, Capt. C. B. Kingsbury and Alexander McIver. Some of these were successive, not contemporaneous. Under these energetic men began a rigid system of training and drilling and grading that was not possible in the older, poorer days. These were bright, hopeful, progressive times, with handsome new buildings and ample endowments and a full and able corps of professors, and the College began to matriculate over fifty students a year.

Dr. Lacy was a native of Prince Edward county, Va., born August 5, 1802, and consequently was fifty-two years old when he began his career as College President. He filled the office with honor to himself and profit to the institution. His great earnestness and sincerity of character, his uniform courtesy, his genial and winning manners, his deep-toned piety and elegant gen-

eral scholarship fitted him to conduct the affairs of the College with acceptance. But he had been too long a pastor to feel comfortable in the more rigid department of college administration and discipline, and as his years increased he looked back with fond regret at his abandonment of the regular pastoral work. Therefore after five years he tendered his resignation, having graduated fifty-five students and matriculated two hundred and seventy-one. For a number of years he resided in Raleigh, teaching in a private school for girls, and afterwards in Peace Institute. He died in Moore county, N. C., August 1, 1884, in the enjoyment of a blessed hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

REV. JOHN LYCON KIRKPATRICK, D. D.,

of Charleston, S. C., was elected in 1860 the fourth President of Davidson College, and there were associated with him during his presidency Rev. E. F. Rockwell, Washington C. Kerr, Alex. McIver, Victor C. Barringer, Wm. B. Lynch, John R. Blake, and Wm. N. Dickey as Tutor. Dr. Kirkpatrick's administration of six years embraced the exciting and gloomy years of the war between the States, during which time but two classes were graduated—that of 1861 and 1864. The number of matriculates was less than usual, and even after entering many of them would hasten from the quiet duties of college life to the stirring scenes of active cam-



paigning and bloody encounter. Few of these ever returned to college, being under the necessity, at the close of the war, of turning their attention to the repair of shattered fortunes, or to the duty of earning a living for themselves and their bereaved families by labors that promised the quickest returns. Still the College exercises were never suspended until within a few weeks of the surrender at Appomattox. From four to six professors and a small number of students too young for military service were at their work until the near approach of the Federal troops dispersed them.

In 1866, Dr. Kirkpatrick resigned the presidency in order to accept the Chair of Mental and Moral Philosophy in Washington College, afterwards Washington and Lee University, in Virginia. Here he labored with success until his death in 1886.

Dr. Kirkpatrick was a native of Mecklenburg county, N. C., born January 13, 1813, and was a graduate of Hampden-Sidney College in Virginia. He was a man of learning, accurate scholarship, fine literary taste, and of great dignity of character. He possessed excellent administrative ability, and under propitious circumstances the College would have flourished under his care. His leading characteristic, we should say, was wisdom, and in Boards of Trustees, in Presbyteries and Assemblies his voice was always heard with attention and profit whenever he chose to speak. The close of



Dr. Kirkpatrick's presidency was in the dark days of 1866, when the fortunes of the College were at the lowest point. More than one hundred and thirty thousand dollars of its invested funds was irretrievably lost in the ruin of the different banks of the State. The remaining one hundred and thirty thousand dollars of railroad securities was in great jeopardy, and was ultimately sold for seventy thousand dollars—its full market value. And this constituted the entire endowment.

But the old scholarships of 1851-'52 were legally as valid now as in more prosperous days, and in this emergency the impoverished holders were loth to forego their privileges, seeing that these afforded the only means of educating their sons. On the other hand, the Trustees were aware that the College could not be continued as a first-class institution under the burden of these scholarships. The alternatives presented were either to close the College, and thus fail to accommodate scholarship holders, or reduce it to a three-professor college, scarcely above a good high school, or to ask these scholarship holders to forego their legal rights. After mature deliberation the last alternative was adopted as the only method of continuing the College, in the hope that the income from tuition and from the invested fund would meet the expenses of an economical administration, provided no scholarships were pressed for redemption.



The Trustees then elected Rev. G. Wilson McPhail, D. D., LL. D., to the presidency and began a new career for the College, with such professors as E. F. Rockwell, J. R. Blake, Alex. McIver, W. G. Richardson, W. J. Martin and Charles Phillips associated with him. Under this administration the College began to prosper beyond the expectation of its most sanguine friends, not only in the number of its students, but in its grade of scholarship and its financial affairs. Admirable order and exemplary piety prevailed, and at one time all except two or three students were consistent members of the church. Dr. McPhail was at once kind, gentle, affectionate and firm, and, if need be, stern and inflexible. He was a thorough scholar, with peculiar attainments in Greek, Metaphysics and Psychology. He had been President of Lafayette College, at Easton, Pa., and had devoted much of his life to teaching. He was born at Norfolk, Va., December 26, 1818, and was graduated at Yale College in 1835. Naturally of a frail physical constitution, his health gave way under his severe methods of study and the accumulated responsibilities of college administration; and when the Trustees and visitors gathered for the Commencement of 1871, it was to find the President sick unto death. The next day, June 28, 1871, he peacefully passed into the unseen world. All unnecessary exercises were omitted; the diplomas were quietly delivered by the senior professor,



and at the hour when all would have been pleasurable excitement in the halls and the campus the Trustees sadly bore his body to the Chapel, and after solemn services there conveyed it thence to the College Cemetery. Under the shade of the trees he sleeps near by a little group of graves of students who have died here. His friends have placed yon modest marble tablet in the wall over the rostrum to remind us of his services to the College, and of his moral worth.

Including the class of 1871, sixty students—an average of twelve a year—were graduated under his administration. The class of 1871 was the largest ever graduated here. The matriculations numbered two hundred and one, including the largest number ever entered in one year—seventy-six in 1878-'79.

From 1871 to 1877 the College was conducted under the chairmanship of Professor John R. Blake, who had been Professor of Physics since 1861. With him were associated Professors J. Monroe Anderson, A. M., W. G. Richardson, A. M., W. J. Martin, A. M., Charles Phillips, D. D., J. F. Latimer, Ph. D., A. D. Hepburn, D. D., William M. Thornton, Samuel Barnett, R. L. Harrison, A. M. (acting), John R. Sampson, A. M., and Paul P. Winn, A. M. (adjunct). A number of these were not contemporaneous. Professor Blake's administration was characterized by excellent order, attention to study, harmony among the Faculty, and



thorough scholarship of the graduates. He governed by the Faculty, whose executive officer he was, and the College never had a more satisfactory or successful period than these six years. The only reason for falling back to the presidential method alleged was that the College might have a more imposing appearance, its head ranking with the Presidents of other colleges, and that by this means its reputation abroad might be enhanced.

One hundred and three students—an average of seventeen a year—were graduated under Professor Blake's chairmanship, and two hundred and five were matriculated—an average of thirty-four a year. Professor Blake served the College in his chair until 1885, a term of twenty-four years—the longest term of service in all its history. In 1885 he resigned his professorship and retired to private life in Greenwood, S. C. But he still serves the College as an honored Trustee.

Rev. Andrew D. Hepburn, D. D., LL. D., Professor of Mental Science and English Literature, was elected President in 1877, and served until the Commencement in 1885. Associated as professors with him were J. R. Blake, A. M., W. J. Martin, A. M., J. F. Latimer, Ph. D., John R. Sampson, A. M., William W. Carson, C. E., M. E., William D. Vinson, M. A., William J. Bingham, A. M., W. S. Fleming, A. M. (acting), with

Charles McGuffey Hepburn, A. B., B. L., and J. P. Paisley, A. B., Tutors.

Dr. Hepburn was a native of Williamsport, Pa., born November 14, 1830, and a graduate of the University of Virginia in 1852. He was Professor of Metaphysics in the University of North Carolina from 1859 to 1867; professor and afterwards President of Miami University, Ohio, till 1873, and professor in Davidson College from 1874 till his resignation in 1885.

Dr. Hepburn is a superior scholar, well-rounded and finished in many directions, and possessing such tastes and habits of study as lead to constant acquisitions of knowledge. It is probable that no instructor in Davidson College has ever been more successful in awakening the interest of students in the studies of his department than Dr. Hepburn. As a President, he was gentle, affable, charitable towards the failings, and appreciative of the virtues of the young. He possessed the unbounded esteem and confidence of his students, who were ever ready to defend him, honor him, and cling to him. During his term of eight years as President he graduated one hundred and twelve—an average of fourteen per annum—and matriculated three hundred and eighteen—an average of forty per annum, nearly.

In 1884, Dr. Hepburn, being satisfied that his views concerning the management of the College were not in harmony with the views of the Trustees, as he stated,



insisted upon the acceptance of his resignation, which was done early in 1885. Dr. Hepburn returned to Miami University, Ohio, and is now the honored President of that institution.

On the 4th of August, 1885, at a special meeting of the Trustees held in Charlotte, Rev. Luther McKinnon, pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Columbia, S. C., was elected to the presidency, and on the next day accepted the office.

Dr. McKinnon was born in Richmond county, N. C., October 31, 1840. He was prepared for college in the schools of his native region, and entered Davidson College in 1857, where he was graduated in 1861, sharing the first honors of his class with two others. He studied theology in Columbia Seminary under that eminent divine Dr. Thornwell, and his learned coadjutors. He was licensed by Fayetteville Presbytery in 1864, and at once entered the Confederate army as Chaplain of the Thirty-sixth North Carolina Regiment. He was ordained April, 1866, to the full work of the ministry by Fayetteville Presbytery. He was Principal of Floral Female College, in Robeson county, from January, 1865, to June, 1866, when he became pastor of the Goldsboro Presbyterian Church, which he faithfully served for four years. He became pastor of the Concord Presbyterian Church in December, 1871, and continued there for twelve years, until called to the Columbia Church, S. C.,

in October, 1883. In September, 1885, he came here as President of this College, which he has served now for two years. In 1886 both the University of North Carolina and the South Western Presbyterian University conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

Wherever Dr. McKinnon has labored success has crowned his efforts. Goldsboro, Concord and Columbia churches were built up and strengthened by his indefatigable labors. Without any experience or prestige as an educator, he was chosen by the Trustees as a man who always succeeded wherever he was tried, and around whom the Presbyterians of the two Carolinas could rally. And the result justified the hopes of the College, for the number of students that had fallen to ninety-eight the previous year at once rose to one hundred and fifteen the next year, and this year to one hundred and nineteen. The intelligent exponent of the purposes of the Trustees, from long service in the Board, and thoroughly acquainted with the sympathies, partialities and prejudices of the whole area of the College patronage, he administered discipline, maintained order, and, with his thoroughly harmonious Faculty, stimulated the students to ardor in their studies. The number of students matriculated the first year of Dr. McKinnon's administration was forty-nine, and the second year forty-five. If his health shall be speedily restored and he be able to do the external work proposed, it is confidently ex-



pected that the number of students will be greatly increased and a general interest in Davidson College be awakened.

Such is the outline sketch of the origin and history of Davidson College for the first fifty years of its life. In that period it has had eight Presidents, including the Chairman, of whom four have gone to their rest and four still remain, including the venerable first President. It has had thirty-nine regular and "acting" professors besides a number of tutors. The annual catalogue for 1886-'87 shows a teaching force of one President and six professors.

The total number of students who have been matriculated has been one thousand eight hundred and sixty-eight.

The total number of graduates, including the class of 1887, is five hundred and seventy-one. Of these one thousand eight hundred and sixty-eight students who entered College one hundred and ninety-three have entered the Christian ministry—a number equal to more than one-third of the graduates. Many of its alumni have entered the legal profession, and some have become Judges in the Superior and Supreme Courts. Some of them have been honored legislators in several States and in the Congress of the United States. Some have been, or are, missionaries in foreign lands, and many of them have been useful and skillful physicians. A few

of them have become editors and authors. And in the perilous days of civil war many of our College graduates and students were found in the camp and on the battle field bravely hazarding their lives and shedding their blood for the land that gave them birth and the cause they loved so well. And in the quieter walks of life hundreds of men who once thronged these halls and walked among these venerable oaks have been leaders among their fellow-men, moulding public opinion and diffusing abroad the light which they received from learned lips in these ever-memorable class-rooms.

Davidson College now has an endowment of one hundred and five thousand dollars, and this added to the value of its commodious buildings, libraries, cabinets, museums and grounds will aggregate about a quarter of a million dollars. Its annual income from invested funds and college dues amounts to about twelve thousand dollars.

But well equipped as the College appears to be, and large as its income may seem, the demands of the age are such that new and increasing facilities for instruction demand increased expenditures. If we would educate our sons at home we must approach as near as practicable in conveniences for instruction the great institutions of learning that are inviting our sons to their halls.

This is the era of centennials and semi-centennials and we might wisely imitate the example of other institu-



tions and raise a centennial endowment fund of seventy-five or one hundred thousand dollars in the three Synods, and thus either add several new and needed professors to our corps of instruction, or materially lessen, if not abolish, the expenses for tuition, or increase the facilities for mental and physical culture. To do this we need only revive the spirit of liberality and self-sacrifice that animated the founders of the College.

Fifty-two years ago those courageous young ministers, Robert Hall Morrison and Patrick J. Sparrow, obtained thirty thousand dollars of subscriptions for the founding of Davidson College in twenty weeks in the six thinly settled counties of Mecklenburg, Cabarrus, Rowan, Iredell, Burke and Lincoln, when Charlotte, and Salisbury, and Concord, and Statesville, and Lincolnton, and Morganton were insignificant little villages without railroad facilities, and before their merchants had accumulated the large fortunes that are now so common. The next year York, and Lancaster, and Chester and other districts in South Carolina contributed their proportion and the good work began in earnest. Such wonderful success betokened not merely the zeal and skill of the agents, but the faith, the readiness and the liberality of the contributors. This early success sounds the keynote of all future progress; nay, it is the condition of life itself. If the College would live it must grow. If it is to move on like a flowing stream, dispensing fresh-

ness and vigor and life in its course, if it must enlarge and meet the ever-increasing demands upon its resources, there must be a continual inflowing of other and fresher streams of beneficence, and the constant descent of the showers of divine blessing in answer to the constantly ascending prayers of its friends to Him in whose hands are the hearts of all men. The stream that receives no affluents is likely to end in a bitter and tideless sea, where no life is found, where no life can be. The college that is content with its present resources, its present facilities and its present grade of scholarship will soon be as dead and deserted as Lake Asphaltites. Stagnation is the dreary precursor of death, while activity, energy and progress are the only infallible tokens of indwelling life. I therefore confidently expect that we, brethren of the Alumni Association, and our children, and children's children, are to go on from year to year devising and executing plans for preserving the life and increasing the usefulness of our beloved *Alma Mater*.

An attempt to forecast the destiny of Davidson College would doubtless be presumptuous, since God alone can see the end from the beginning. Still we cannot help hoping and anticipating, and if we may judge from its past history and present condition, we can hardly help hoping that, as yet, we have seen only the handful corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains, and that in future and distant years others shall see the fruit thereof waving like Lebanon.



There is, less than one hundred miles from this place, a spot on the summit of the Blue Ridge where can be seen the towering peaks of many mountains. Near at hand the rugged features of the Grandfather are outlined against the western sky, and further on are the peaks of Hanging Rock and Beech Mountain. To the left and farther off are the sharp outlines of Hawk's Bill and Table Rock, while in the dim distance slumber the sombre sisterhood of the Black Mountain group. That spot, at Blowing Rock, is the towering apex of eastern America. And here are the head-springs of four noble rivers, the Yadkin, the Catawba, the Watauga and the Great Kenawha, streams that diverge towards the four quarters of the earth, whose waters flow on unceasingly because they are nourished by perennial fountains in the very heart of the continent. But these fountains themselves are nourished by the clouds that daily wrap their mantle around the mountain tops, and distil their liquid treasures into the bosom of the earth five thousand feet above the level of the ocean's restless billows. And in like manner we trust that this fountain of pure learning opened here by our fathers, endowed by their liberality, sustained by their prayers, and nourished for fifty years by the blessing of our Heavenly Father, shall continue to send forth streams of wholesome knowledge, sound morality and earnest piety to every quarter of our sunny Southland—

yes, to every quarter of this habitable earth. So it has done for one half of a century, and so by the favor of God it shall continue for a thousand generations.

Invoking the richest blessing of a covenant-keeping God upon our beloved College, we, her loving sons, gather around her altars, and with united voices utter the heart-felt prayer that we see emblazoned on her walls to-day by loving hands: GOD BLESS THE FIFTIETH YEAR. ESTO PERPETUA.