

RICHARD CHAPMAN WELDON.

The advent of the late Dr. Weldon to the city of Halifax was indirectly the outcome of the movement initiated by the late Dr. J. Gordon MacGregor to consolidate the colleges of the maritime provinces. The direct results of that movement were to stimulate the denominational colleges to greater exertions for the maintenance of their individuality. Thus Sackville, the Alma Mater of Dr. Weldon, all its existing buildings being of wood, erected a central building of stone. St. Francis Xavier received a splendid endowment with which a new engineering building was erected in brick. Acadia sought the assistance of Rockefeller, whose purse was generously opened to such an extent that from this and other sources Acadia has become so prosperous that she is now more averse than she ever was to the surrender of her "splendid isolation." Kings made no move to leave Windsor for many years, nor until a disastrous fire inclined its governors to enter into association with Dalhousie in Halifax.

In this state of matters it was a brilliant conception on the part of the late Mr. Justice Sedgewick and a number of associated Dalhousians to bring Dr. Weldon from Sackville and make him the Dean of a Law Faculty in connection with Dalhousie, which would attract students from all the other colleges, incidentally enhance the prestige of Dalhousie and create a spirit of fellowship among the patrons and students of the various colleges, which was one of the purposes of the consolidation contemplated by Dr. MacGregor.

Dr. Weldon was well fitted to be the instrument of such a movement. "A boy's will is the wind's will," says Longfellow, and as a boy young Weldon was somewhat reluctant to enter upon the career of a student. He thought he would prefer to be a farmer, a taste for which wholesome occupation he never altogether lost. His father was a wise man and permitted him to choose his own career, prescribing, however, a morning's work with the scythe, with the use of which, as a country lad, his boy was quite familiar. But on this occasion he was not a volunteer, appointing his own hours of beginning and ceasing. It was now and henceforward to be the work of his life and he must go at it in earnest. The result anticipated by his wise old father was realized. After a single morning with the scythe the boy chose the vocation of a student and was at once sent to Sackville, where he was duly matriculated.

As an undergraduate at Sackville he was easily first in all his classes. One of his classmates was the late Dr. Flint, first a Member, and afterwards Clerk, of the House of Commons at Ottawa. Another was Samuel A. Chesley, now spending the evening of his life in London, after a long term as Judge of Probate for the County of Lunenburg and a practitioner of law in that busy and thriving section of the province. The late Mr. Justice Burbidge of the Exchequer Court of Canada was a year behind the two classmates already named, and the writer of these notes had only entered the Academy when Weldon, Chesley and Flint were seniors.

It cannot be said that at Sackville Weldon had any specialties. He was equally excellent in every department of his work. It was after he left Sackville and, having taught school long enough to save the money requisite for a course at Yale, that he began at that institution to develop a special taste for the study of International Law and Political Science. The President of Yale, Dr. Theodore Woolsey, it will be remembered, was one of the high authorities on International Law, and Weldon was one of his favourite students. He graduated at Yale as a Ph.D., the youngest but one, (named, I think, Nelson), to take this high degree from this famous University. From Yale as a Doctor of Philosophy Dr. Weldon came directly to Sackville as Professor of Mathematics and Political Science. As a teacher of Political Economy it was his method to change his text-book every few years, so that his classes and himself should become familiar with the variant views presented by the authorities on this bewildering subject. After some years at Sackville he crossed over to Europe to take a post-graduate course at Heidelberg, where he studied International Law under the renowned Bluntschli, a name familiar to every reader of this REVIEW; but he was not permitted to complete his post-graduate course, and not long after his return to this country a distressing and disabling illness suspended his intellectual career for a full twelvemonth or more. His recovery, however, was complete, and he thereupon resumed his work as a Professor at Sackville. Among his students at this time, if I am not mistaken, was Mr. H. A. Powell, K.C., now of St. John, who soon became a fellow-student with him in the subject of Constitutional Law, reading together, discussing and criticising the decisions on the British North America Act. He was the guest of the writer for several months before the opening of the Law School, and the valuable practice of reading and criticism just described was continued at Prince Arthur Park, where Weldon also prosecuted his studies in Conflict of Laws.

When Dr. Weldon came to Dalhousie as Dean his subjects were, therefore, International Law, Constitutional Law and Conflict of Laws, otherwise termed Private International Law. There was no difficulty in finding competent associates to teach the other branches required to fill out a complete three years' course of study. But it would not have been possible to fill the place that he occupied in the subjects on which he lectured. The late Sir John Thompson lectured on Evidence; the late Mr. Justice Sedgewick lectured on Equity, the late Sir Wallace Graham gave a course on Marine Insurance. After the school had been established a full year it became possible to appoint a permanent Professor of Contracts, who also lectured on Bills and Notes, Sale of Goods and Equity Jurisprudence, after the volunteer lecturers in some of these subjects became tired of their work.

The school attracted students from every section of the Dominion as far west as British Columbia and from British Colonies outside the Dominion, such as Newfoundland and the West Indies. Its graduates are to be found in the courts of almost all the provinces, all of them in fact outside perhaps of Ontario and Quebec. Of the Supreme Court Bench of Nova Scotia five of the seven judges now constituting the court were students in the Dalhousie Faculty, and all but one of the five are graduates.

It was while Dr. Weldon was a Teacher of Law at Dalhousie and Dean of the Faculty of Law, that the invitation came to him to accept a seat in the House of Commons for Albert County, New Brunswick. He was elected without difficulty for the sixth and seventh parliaments and in the earlier of these two parliaments he moved the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. Some of the phrases of his speech were so striking that they still linger in the memory of those who heard or read them. As a member of Parliament he was an independent Conservative. He had the highest possible esteem for the statesmanship of Sir John A. Macdonald, and hardly less high in his estimation stood the late Sir John Thompson, with whom he had been so pleasantly associated in the Dalhousie Law Faculty. When Sir Charles Tupper, Prime Minister, presented his policy of a Remedial Bill for Manitoba he was among the dissentients with Clarke Wallace and the rest. He greatly admired Edward Blake, describing him as a man of "regal intellect," and was glad to accept his assistance in promoting the private bill known to this day as the "Weldon Act," designed to prevent Canada from continuing to be a shelter for wealthy scoundrels from the United States. He actively engaged with Sir George Foster,

Dr. G. M. Grant, Dalton McCarthy, Alex. McNeil, Colonel Denison and Sir George Parkin in the Imperial Federation movement, and heartily supported all other measures that tended to consolidate the Empire and secure its position as the bulwark of freedom and order throughout the civilized world.

There was a time when it seemed as if he might become the Prime Minister of Canada. *Dis aliter visum*. His name and fame remain secure in the hearts and minds of the hundreds of graduates throughout the Dominion on the Bench and at the Bar, who will evermore cherish his memory and say of him with all the deep reverence and sincerity with which Hamlet said of his honoured father:—

“He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.”

HALIFAX.

B. RUSSELL.
