

THE QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY IN
IRELAND.

Queen's College Literary and Scientific
Society.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE ABOVE SOCIETY, ON
FRIDAY, DECEMBER, 13th, 1878.

BY

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MEMBER OF THE SENATE OF THE QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY.

(WITH REPORT OF MEETING.)

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At the request of the Queen's College (Belfast) Literary and Scientific Society, Mr. Hans M'Mordie, M.A., delivered a lecture on the above subject, on Friday evening, the 13th of December, 1878, in the Examination Hall of the college. There was a very large attendance, the spacious apartment, capable of accommodating one thousand persons, being crowded almost to inconvenience by a most enthusiastic audience. The company included many ladies. Dr. James Young, president of the society, occupied the chair. Among others on the platform we noticed:—Professor Everett, Professor Cunningham, Professor Park, Professor M'Kane, Barrister-at-Law; Professor Gordon, Professor Meissner, Rev. Samuel E. Busby, LL.D., T.C.D., Dean of Residence; Rev. Alex. Gray, LL.D.; Dr. M'Mordie, J. Lindsay, Esq., M.A.; T. Knowles, Esq., B.A.; Vere Foster, Esq.; W. E. Dawson, Esq.; J. D. Osborne, Esq.; Rev. W. Todd Martin, M.A.; Rev. Robert Montgomery, J. B. Sayers, Esq., B.A.; A. C. Moore, Esq., B.A.; J. Rainey, Esq.; S. Ferguson, Esq.; &c. Amongst those in the body of the hall were:—William Gordon, Esq., M.D., J.P.; James Carr, Esq., Ulster Bank; Robert Thompson, Esq., T.C.; J. T. Blackwood, Esq.; Nicholas Oakman, Esq.; E. Gardner, Esq., LL.D., solicitor (Downpatrick); Charles H. Ward, Esq., solicitor; William Baxter, Esq., B.A., solicitor; John Coulter, Esq., B.A., solicitor; W. Seeds, Esq., solicitor; R. J. M'Mordie, Esq., B.A., solicitor; Chas. Higginson, Esq., solicitor; John C. White, Esq., solicitor; H. C. Cronhelm, Esq., solicitor; R. H. Berryhill, Esq., M.A., solicitor; Omar C. Nelson, Esq., solicitor; Benjamin Haughton, Esq.; E. L. Lepper, Esq.; John Rogers, Esq.; Rev. James Young, Rev. Mr. Stephenson, Rev. J. A. Rentoul, M.A., LL.D.; S. Young, Esq.; Dr. Esler, Dr. Wheeler, Dr. Spedding, Dr. Lindsay, Dr. Whitla,

James M'Williams, Esq., Banbridge; James Wilson, Esq.; R. Thompson, Esq., jun.; R. Dickson, Esq. (Dromore); E. J. E. Addy, Esq.; Alderman Whitaker, M.D.; John Rea, Esq., M.D.; F. R. Lepper, Esq., Ulster Bank; &c.

The HON. SECRETARY of the Society announced the receipt of letters of apology for non-attendance from the following:—Sir John Preston, J.P., Mayor of Belfast; Thomas Sinclair, Esq., M.A., J.P.; Wm. Q. Ewart, Esq., B.A.; Rev. Dr. MacIlwaine, Thomas M'Clelland, Esq.; and Professor Nesbitt.

The CHAIRMAN, in introducing the lecturer, said—Ladies and Gentlemen, many circumstances have conjoined to render my duty for the present occasion comparatively easy. Yet I must confess that I attempt to perform it with feelings of diffidence natural to one who finds himself so prominently before his seniors. Our meetings here are usually composed of students immediately connected with the college and in actual attendance in the classes, and of graduates who have just completed their collegiate studies. But on the present occasion there is an enormous preponderance of those who have been away from us for years, and who have already made good use of the training given them here in their struggle with the difficulties of the outside world. This is a circumstance at which all must rejoice, as it shows that gentlemen ere leaving these rooms have become attached to the institution which they represent, and will be to the front when danger threatens their Alma Mater. (Cheers.) I observe here present representatives of the students of this college of every period from its foundation to the present time. In fact, this meeting seems a genial reunion of the past with the present, and I hope it will lead to an era in our history when the members of the university will regard themselves as bound together by ties of brotherhood and common interest. (Cheers.) The cause of the unusual concourse here now is not far to seek. Apart from the reputation of him who will address you, there seems to be a certain anxiety on the minds of many regarding the future of the university in which we are all so deeply interested, and which, if I read the significance of the present meeting, will, if endangered, gather to its standard a numerous and powerful body of defenders. (Cheers.) It were superfluous on my part to say anything as regards the qualifications of Mr. M'Mordie to discharge the duty that he has consented to undertake to-night. His ability to deal successfully with great public questions has been amply manifested on many occasions long ere now, and on this question in particular I am sure no one for the moment doubts his right to speak with great authority, seeing that in addition to his brilliant college career, and his prolonged study of the question in hand, his eminent and versatile abilities have already been fully recognised by the university,

which has conferred on him the highest distinction at present in its gift, that of Senator. (Cheers.) To the members of the society I introduce him as one of the most popular and efficient presidents it has ever possessed. His presence and my knowledge of his tastes command me to say no more concerning him, and so I shall merely call on him to address you on "The Queen's University in Ireland." (Cheers.)

Mr. M'MORDIE, on coming forward, was received with loud and prolonged cheering. He said—Mr. President, Ladies, and Gentlemen, the subject on which the council of this society have requested me to offer a few remarks is one of paramount importance to the students and graduates of the Queen's University, and is certainly at the present time not devoid of interest to the general body of the people of this country. I am well aware that the claims of the university and of its colleges upon the sympathy and regards of the students and graduates require no argument or advocacy on my part. They who have had the good fortune to study in our class-rooms know the advantages which these institutions confer upon the students, and indirectly upon the people of this country without distinction of class or creed. But in these days when so many misapprehensions exist among people who do not appear to be intimately acquainted with the history or the working of our colleges, it may not be inexpedient to recall a few matters which seem to have escaped the general recollection. It is possible that errors by frequent reiteration may wear the semblance of truth if no effort be made to correct them, and this may be said of the statements which are annually made concerning the history, position, and prospects of the colleges and university to which we are all so warmly attached. Only twenty-nine years have elapsed since the Queen's Colleges were opened for the reception of students. The president who delivered an eloquent inaugural address on the opening of this college still worthily and efficiently discharges the duties of his important office. Gentlemen who rocked the cradle of the colleges are still among us. Looking at the history of sister universities in these kingdoms, we are only in our childhood, but that childhood has already given promise of such a vigorous maturity as may well inspire us with admiration and hope. But short as is the period since the colleges were opened, it has sufficed to bring upon the scene a new generation who are, perhaps, not familiar with the circumstances under which our University was founded, nor the objects it was designed to accomplish. They who are familiar with the early history of this century can appreciate the difficulties which, in 1845, beset British statesmen who were desirous of addressing themselves to the advancement of the social and intellectual condition of Ireland. The insurrection of 1798 had been suppressed with rigorous severity. The lesser outbreak

of 1803 had ended in disaster for some who were prominently identified with it. A period of military law and penal legislation came to an end. The Tests and Corporations Acts were repealed, and Emancipation had been granted to our Catholic fellow-countrymen. The tendency was toward remedial legislation, But the embers of discontent still smouldered in the country, and in 1845 had been almost fanned to a flame by the breath of popular excitement. The land was inhabited by a teeming population. There were eight millions of people dwelling in the island, supported mainly by agricultural pursuits. Except in Ulster there were few industries and little manufacturing and commercial enterprise. The people were poor, and their poverty was made more bitter by the fierce religious contentions and political dissensions which prevailed. The fault lay not with the people themselves, but with a cruel and mistaken system of legislation, which had accomplished the social and intellectual ruin of a large body of the population. (Hear, hear.) In 1845 the penal laws were not in existence, but the evil effects they produced in the minds and habits of the people had not disappeared. Something had been done to bring the means of education within the reach of the poorer classes of the people. The National school system had been introduced with success. In the year 1845 there were about 3,200 schools in connection with the National Board, and in these schools 400,000 children were receiving education. But nothing had been done for the higher education of the middle class. Trinity College did not meet the wants of the great majority of the people. The system of religious tests which then existed excluded from the higher honours of Trinity College persons professing a dissenting faith. In 1810 a number of the enlightened and wealthy merchants of Belfast founded the Academical Institution to meet some of the wants of the people of this province. It was founded on the principle of non-sectarianism. Connected with it was the old College, at which so many famous and distinguished men received their training. The Academical Institution still performs with marked success the work for which it was founded, and remains a lasting memorial of the tolerant sentiments and intellectual worth of those who were associated in its foundation. (Applause.) The youth of Ulster, however, in many cases resorted to the Scotch Universities—universities which, I may mention, did not impose any religious test upon the students. Under such circumstances Sir Robert Peel—one of the greatest and most enlightened statesmen of the century—and Sir James Graham introduced the bill providing for the foundation of the Queen's Colleges. Sir James Graham, who had the carriage of the bill, stated that the object of the Government was to improve the social condition of the people of Ireland, and that the means were the diffusion of the benefits of education among the middle and higher

classes of society in this country. Sir Robert Peel, in supporting the measure, declared that he believed it would advance the moral, social, and physical welfare of the people of Ireland. It received the support of Mr. Wyse, Lord John Russell, and all the eminent statesmen of both parties. (Applause.) It was their hope and expectation that the youth of Ireland, of all creeds, meeting together in the halls of the colleges and in the generous rivalry of the class-rooms, would, under the influences of the tolerant and free air of non-sectarian institutions, learn to forget the enmities of race and class and faith, and become animated with feelings of mutual esteem, and inspired by the healthy promptings of a common and generous patriotism. (Cheers.) It was then believed that the alumni of a university such as was about to be founded would, when scattered over the towns and villages of Ireland, exercise a healthy influence on the unsettled social condition of the country, and give to the social organisation that cohesion and order which had been long wanting. Every graduate would become an important unit in the social fabric, exhibiting in his acts and in his life the lessons of the broad and tolerant culture which the college class-room had imparted. Under these circumstances, and with these objects, the colleges were founded and opened. But between the passing of the measure and the inauguration of the colleges Ireland had undergone a terrible visitation. The teeming population had been decimated by famine and pestilence. The churchyards were filled with the corpses of the famished peasantry; the workhouses were crowded by young and old, and in almost every home there were poverty and want. Public benefactions and private generosity were unable to cope with the widespread and terrible calamity. The emigrant ships were crowded with the young, and vigorous, and hopeful, fleeing from the land over which the Destroying Angel had passed. The country was sick at heart, weary, spiritless, and hopeless under the burden of the terrible affliction. The condition of the country was so grave, the occasion so unpropitious for new enterprises, that the Government seriously contemplated a postponement of the opening of the colleges. But Lord Clarendon had faith in the energies of the nation, and the friends of the colleges did not despair. They were opened under these discouraging circumstances, and the result has exceeded the expectations of statesmen, and more than justified the high hopes that were entertained by their friends. However the colleges were called upon to contend with difficulties which were not the result of physical disasters. A hostile prejudice had been excited against them by the attacks levelled against them. They were called "Godless" colleges. It is both curious and instructive to recur to the origin of the epithet and to the meaning which at first attached to it.

Sir Robert Inglis, member for Oxford, is the author of the phrase "Godless system of education." He used it in the course of the first debate on the Queen's Colleges Bill. Sir Robert was member for a university guarded by a system of religious tests, and he was of the opinion that any university founded on a different principle must necessarily be objectionable. But the only profession of religion tolerable to him in university life was that which finds its expression and form in the doctrines and formularies of the Established Church of England. (Applause.) If the Government had proposed to erect in Ireland colleges guarded and fenced, as were the colleges of Oxford, Sir Robert Inglis' scruples would have been satisfied. (Hear, hear.) Had they proposed to teach as a compulsory part of the system the doctrines of the Dissenting or of the Roman Catholic Church, Sir Robert Inglis in his alarm would have searched for a still more emphatic description of the system. The colleges would have been more "Godless" still. Sir Robert Inglis and the gentlemen who adopted his views lived to see the injustice of the aspersion. (Applause.) The opprobrious epithet, however, remained, and it has been caught up by others, who use it in a sense very different from that of the originator. I have spoken of the injustice of the phrase. When from time to time I have read attacks which were made upon our colleges and university I could not but come to the conclusion that the authors of them were singularly ill-informed on the matters with which they dealt. This, however, was not surprising, as there never has been any of the assailants of the colleges, with one notable exception, who ever had any practical acquaintance with the classrooms of the colleges. No graduate except one, so far as I am aware, has ever assailed the University or spoken evil of its colleges. They know that the religious faith of every student is safe, and that the most scrupulous care has been taken to provide the students with religious instruction and spiritual oversight. (Cheers.) I ask you to turn to the Charter, a public document, in support of the accuracy of my statement. You will there find that every denomination has a right to have appointed a Dean of Residence, whose duty it is to instruct and supervise the religious training and moral conduct of the students of his own denomination. No clergyman is competent to assume or continue to hold the office of Dean, unless approved of by the Bishop, Moderator, or constituted authority of his Church. Provision is made to enable the Dean to meet and instruct his students in a class-room within the precincts of the college. The registrar is bound to furnish him with the names of the students of his denomination, and the Dean is obliged, at the end of every collegiate session, to report to the President of the college on the general conduct of the students under his moral care and spiritual

charge. Then severe penalties are enacted against students who may neglect their religious duties. If the student habitually neglects attendance at the church or chapel approved of by his parents, or if he neglect attendance on the religious instruction provided for students of his denomination, he renders himself liable to expulsion from the college. These arrangements and laws seem to me to evince the scrupulous regard of the State for the maintenance of religious instruction within the walls of the college. (Cheers.) It would be difficult to conceive of a plan more wisely devised for religious instruction, and showing greater care to protect the rights of conscience. What reasonable ground is there, I ask, for any one, from any point of view, to say that the Colleges are "Godless?" We may then inquire whether in the twenty-nine years which make our history it has ever been found that violence has been done to the religious convictions of any student. I have never heard of a single case, and I do not know that it would be possible to find any place where sectarian feeling of any description is less known. As a student I have been privileged to sit under the lectures of Queen's College Professors—some Episcopalian, some Presbyterian, and some Catholic, and I am able to say that I never heard a word from one having even the most remote tendency to touch upon the questions of faith and dogma. Whatever part sectarianism may play in after days it finds no place in the studies, lectures, or pursuits of Queen's College life. It has been my good fortune to be intimately acquainted with a large body of students and of graduates—over a period extending now to thirteen years—and I never heard student or graduate say or suggest that any professor had ever been aught but loyal to his trust and to the principles of the university. (Loud cheers:) And I am free to say that political opinion has never been expressed in the class-room, nor has it ever, I believe, influenced any Government in the choice of professors. The best men have been selected, not because of their politics, but on account of their pre-eminent scholarship and attainments, and in support of this opinion I may appeal to the appointments of the present Government. I think I have proved to your satisfaction that the charge of "Godless" as applied to our colleges is destitute of foundation, and that the experiences of twenty-nine years show how thoroughly efficacious have been the provisions made by the State for the protection of the conscience and religious opinions of every student. The culture gained in our class-rooms can hardly be open to the charge. The toilsome worker who investigates the wonders by which in this universe we are surrounded—who unravels the secrets of Nature, winning knowledge for himself and wealth and happiness for the world—cannot surely be said to be engaged in a "Godless" work. The pursuits of

science—physical and mental—the study of the literatures of the Old World and the New seem to me to imbue the mind of the students with feelings of deep religious reverence and awe, and to give ennobling and elevating conceptions of the all-pervading power and perfection of the Deity. Sectarian passion becomes calm, and bitterness of feeling is mollified by the humanising influences of literary and scientific culture; and men of every creed and race in the sweet companionship of college life learn to respect the convictions of one another, and to form and cherish friendships which cannot be disturbed by the accidents of creed or of race. Hundreds of gentlemen who are now ministers of the Gospel have passed through our colleges, and it will be admitted that they at least are competent judges of the character of our colleges. So far from these graduates—men who are charged with the spiritual oversight of thousands—joining in the attack, they are among the warmest and best friends of our university. If the colleges had been “Godless” surely they must have detected it. Our class-rooms, crowded as they are to-day by the sons of Godly parents—Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Catholics—show that the colleges have never forfeited the confidence of the cultured classes of the country. (Cheers.) But notwithstanding all our difficulties, and in the face of so much and so ungenerous opposition, have the colleges failed in the performance of the work which they were set to do? During the brief space in which the university has existed it has conferred degrees upon 3,166 gentlemen. When we look at the course for a degree, whether in arts, medicine, engineering, or law, we can understand the high standard of literary and scientific excellence which they who won these distinctions must have attained, and in an imperfect manner, form an idea of the labours of the professors by whose assiduous care and scholarly guidance such results have been reached. In the session 1877-78 there entered the colleges of the university as freshmen 301 students, and during the same year there were in attendance at the three colleges 886 students. Of these, 226 were members of the Church of Ireland, 224 were members of the Roman Catholic Church, 348 were Presbyterians, and 88 belonged to other denominations. Does this look like failure or want of confidence on the part of any section of the people of this country in the system which our colleges represent? In 1866, when a much smaller number of students were in attendance, Sir George Grey, in reply to a memorial which alleged that the colleges were a failure, said, “Her Majesty’s Government are still of opinion that the principle upon which those colleges were founded—namely, that of offering such an education in common to the Protestant and Roman Catholic youth of Ireland—is a sound one, and they are unable to concur in the belief expressed in the memorial that these colleges have

been a signal failure. They have, therefore, no intention of proposing any alteration in the principle on which those colleges are conducted." I am not aware that anything has since occurred to cause any Government to alter the opinion that is here expressed. (Applause.) When we consider that in the South and West of Ireland, owing to the operation of unjust laws which once existed—and not through any fault of the people—there are few industries and little commerce, we might fairly say that 224 Catholic students are not an unsatisfactory representation of that Church. In truth, under all the circumstances, the fact that so many Catholic students were in attendance in the classrooms of the Queen's Colleges last session is marvellous and instructive. It disposes, certainly, of the charge of "Godless," as now preferred against the colleges. Need I refer you, in further proof of success, to the long roll of the names of those who are rising to eminence in the various professions, or are doing good service to the State throughout the wide limits of the British Empire? If any are disposed to depreciate the value of our academic training let them turn to the results of our home and foreign Civil Service examinations. If you select the Indian Civil Service you will find that Queen's College students have held their own in competition with the alumni of the older and more richly endowed universities. We find Queen's College men among the ablest and most eminent officials who represent our country in Japan. We find a Queen's College man head of the Customs Department in the Chinese Empire. Turn to India: in which city throughout that vast Empire will you not discover Queen's College men administering the law as judges and magistrates, or discharging the honourable and invaluable functions of the medical profession? If you travel through the wide spans of territory, where poor populations earn a precarious existence, depending even for life on the periodical rainfall—where, if there be drought, famine comes, and pestilence and death—there you will find Queen's College men constructing roads, railways, canals, and reservoirs, and, with consummate skill, developing the resources of that mighty Empire—bringing food and happiness to the homes of millions of our fellow-subjects. I do not know that any university in the Three Kingdoms has sent a larger proportion of able and devoted scholars to participate in the great civilising work which England is carrying on in her vast Eastern dependency. In Australia, in Canada, at the Cape of Good Hope, wherever the flag of England flies, there you will find the alumni of our university devoting their skill, their culture, and their energies to advance the cause of civilisation, to spread knowledge, to promote the happiness of surrounding populations, and to maintain the dignity and renown of our free England. (Cheers.) If we come

to our own island, we find others, able and worthy men, in every town and village worthily holding up the lamp of tolerant education, and practising in their lives the generous principles which they imbibed in the halls of their Alma Mater. It is hard to over-estimate the importance to the community and to the State of having able and educated men dispersed throughout the country, whether as members of the medical profession or as ministers of religion. In the North of Ireland contentions are less bitter; there is more social peace, more mutual forbearance and mutual esteem among hitherto conflicting sects and parties, and I attribute the salutary change in no small measure to the influence of men who were trained in the atmosphere of freedom and generous toleration which pervade every class-room of the Queen's Colleges. These are the ends at which enlightened statesmanship aimed nine-and-twenty years ago, and I am well persuaded that if time had spared Sir Robert Peel and Sir James Graham they would have been proud of the results, and would have confessed themselves more than compensated for all their troubles when introducing the Queen's College Bill. Their policy and plan were statesmanlike and sagacious, and no misrepresentations, past or present, can detract from the honour which we owe to their memory. (Loud applause.) And these results have been attained in a great degree by the force of character, devotion to duty, and intellectual pre-eminence of the gentlemen who are responsible for the training which our colleges impart. I confess that this country and the graduates of the university are indebted to them for their unfaltering resolution not only to deserve, but to command success. There were misrepresentation and active hostility on one hand, and chilling indifference on the other. In spite of all obstacles, seen and unseen, and in the face of many discouragements, they breathed into the Queen's Colleges a vitality and energy which render their position at present impregnable, and guarantee in the future a great and unquestioned success. And yet the various Governments have been scarcely just to our professors, and I must say they have certainly not been generous. Governments of all shades of opinion are, after all, composed of units which are mortal, and they were, no doubt, affected by the influences which rendered the labours of the professor so arduous. (Hear, hear.) I trust, however, that we are approaching the day when the State will be equal to its duties and the necessities of this country, when it will be prepared to deal fairly by the gentlemen who have developed so ably the policy of Sir Robert Peel, and have placed the university in a position of intellectual pre-eminence, and secured its foundations. Every Government, whether Conservative or Liberal, has given expression to its satisfaction with the Queen's Colleges. But I regret to say that among Treasury officials there seems to have been generated, after some

mysterious and, no doubt, spontaneous fashion, a zeal to cripple the energies of the colleges. It had been found that the stronghold would not yield to open assault, and so, as it appears to me, the plan of sapping and mining was adopted and put into execution. A Commission recently went the tour of the colleges. They did not appear to have any accurate conception of the ways and customs of university life. They seemed to hold that the success of a college and the duties of a professor were to be estimated by the avoirdupois weight of the students in attendance in the class-rooms. (Laughter and applause.) The object of the Commission was an economical one, and the plan by which it was to be put in practice was the amalgamation of chairs. To amalgamate chairs was to reduce the teaching strength of the college and impair its status as an educational institution. The next step would, of course, have been to issue a Commission to recommend the suppression of the college or colleges which had been previously crippled and rendered useless. I am happy to say that the mass of evidence was so overwhelming that the zealous and impartial Treasury officials were compelled to abandon the project. If another Commission be issued, I hope it will come with better claims upon our respect and confidence, and that it will be composed of men who understand university life; who can appreciate university training, and can sympathise with the great work in which our colleges are engaged. We have, however, no reason to complain; admiration was extorted from what were, in my opinion, reluctant witnesses. (Applause.) It was thought that influences unfavourable to Galway College had found expression in the appointment of the Commission. Some people think that Galway is the weakest point in the Queen's University, and, therefore, the weightiest battalions of the assailing forces have been directed against it. The number of students who from year to year enter the class-rooms of Galway College may not be equal to that which is found in Cork and Belfast; but I have yet to learn that the success and utility of a college must depend solely upon the number of those who may avail themselves of its advantages. Galway College, in the far west of this island, holds up the light of knowledge and culture, and exercises influences for good among the population of the Western province, which are not to be measured by an examination of the university calendar. The Galway professorial staff are men of rare literary and scientific culture, and they have upheld in a most praiseworthy manner the standard of education. It could at no time have been expected that Galway College would receive as many students as the sister colleges of the North and South. Connaught is sparsely populated, and the bulk of the people, living solely by agricultural pursuits, unaided by the industries which flourish in other parts of the island, have not the means to procure

for their children the advantages of collegiate training. And we must remember, when judging of the work which a college does, that we are not dealing with spindles or powerlooms, or a manufactory of small arms. (Hear, hear.) We must remember that the discoveries of science, which have added to the intellectual and material wealth of the world, and made life happier and better, have been the rewards of the labours of the few rather than the contributions of the many. (Applause.) Even the capacity to attain literary excellence and the profound knowledge of the records of the past and the creations of the present, which enable men to promote intellectual development, and give grace and beauty to thought and life, are not the heritage of every man who enters college. It may be found, as I believe it will, that in after years the testimony of posterity will award as high a meed of praise in all that concerns the progress of this island in knowledge, culture, and scientific attainments to Galway as to her sister colleges. (Loud applause.) Whoever may feel it their duty to oppose the Queen's Colleges, it is evident that a great body of the people, Catholic and Protestant, accept them as admirable educational institutions, and send their sons to them with confidence. I would, therefore, ask why should a policy of destruction be recommended? Why not leave our Queen's Colleges unassailed and unimpaired for those who are satisfied with the system, and who have received their benefits with grateful thanks? There may be many who have conscientious objections to enter our colleges, but that is no reason why they should coerce the consciences of those who hold other opinions, and who are content with the system as it exists. I do not like the system of destruction, especially when it is directed against an institution of which all who can speak from experience unite in commending. I have respect for the consciences of the parents, Protestant and Catholic, who sent 886 of their sons to study in the Queen's Colleges last session, and I claim for them the right of free action. (Applause.) There are enlightened consciences and unlightened consciences. We are all taxed for the construction of our streets and the keeping of our footways in repair. If in Glasgow, for example, any section of the population—say the Free Church denomination—declared they had a conscientious objection to walk on the footways which were used by the members of the United Presbyterian Church, the world would unite in declaring that the conscience which dictated this course was but ill-instructed. (Applause.) And I feel persuaded that the city authorities would not be prepared to construct a separate pathway for the Free Churchmen who held these conscientious scruples. (Laughter and applause.) This is a country of free speech and discussion, and I cannot understand why we are to speak of all that concerns our cherished university and our colleges with bated breath. Successive Viceroy's have commended our colleges, and

eulogised the services they were rendering to education in this country. I may mention Lord Carlisle, Lord Kimberley, the Duke of Abercorn, and Earl Spencer, noblemen who worthily represented their respective Governments in the administration of the affairs of this island. We had high hopes, from what each of these Viceroy's said, that long ere this our university would have had a home. Unfortunately, owing to momentuous affairs of State, and the absence of that pressure which is good for all Governments, our university is without a fixed place of abode. But I trust and believe the present Government will yet do something to remove the reproach, and will give it a home worthy of the cause to which it is devoted, and of the services which it has already rendered. And then we still want college residences for the students. (Applause.) Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, shortly after his appointment as Chief Secretary, promised at a meeting of the University, that Government would give this matter their early attention. The friendly words he uttered, the thorough appreciation which he showed of the value of our colleges, led us all to believe that his words would have a speedy realisation. There has been delay, but I trust he has not forgotten his pledge, and that he will secure our thanks and the gratitude of the friends of the colleges by yet persuading the Government of which he is such a distinguished member to carry out the promises he made. I fear I have been imposing too great a tax upon your patience. (No, no.) But I wish, before I conclude, to add only a few observations. I think it is time that we should profit by the lessons of experience. The annual assaults which have been made in Parliament upon the Queen's Colleges would have been impossible had our university enjoyed, as the sister universities, parliamentary representation. The misrepresentations would have been exposed and the misstatements corrected. There must soon be a measure introduced for the redistributions of seats, and when that time comes the graduates of this university ought to be prepared to take advantage of the occasion. It will be impossible to deny this great and cultured constituency the privilege which all the other universities enjoy. (Applause.) And for the due development of our colleges it is desirable that fellowships should be established. There are many able men passing through the classes whose tastes, habits, and abilities would find a congenial outlet in the learned leisure of the Fellows' life. They would be a permanent force of learned authority and of traditional excellence in connection with each college. They would be a nucleus for organising the forces of the graduates, and bringing their power to bear with effect on all matters connected with the interests of the colleges and the university. As matters at present are, many men of rare accomplishments, whose studious

habits and modesty of character stand in their way in fighting the rough battle of life outside the college walls, are lost to the service of education, and to the university of which they are distinguished members. But if these things are to be done, and our university is to advance in power and prosperity, the graduates must organise. They ought to remember that they are a power in the land if they only take the trouble of organisation. They have a great cause to support, and in surporting it they will feel that they are giving effect to the conceptions of enlightened statesmen, and thereby contributing to the social well-being and material progress of their country. We exist now as of right, and not by grace or sufferance. (Applause.) Our past history has not been all sunshine, but our colleges have, through good report and ill report, steadily maintained their course, and now their friends have the proud satisfaction of knowing that they have weathered the storm. They will soon be more prosperous than ever. The intermediate schools which are springing up over the country will be feeders for the Queen's Colleges, and students will come not only in greater numbers, but better prepared for their collegiate studies. I do not know what legislative changes may be contemplated in matters educational, but I am confident that no Government, whether now or hereafter, will mutilate or curtail the principles on which our university is founded, or do aught to bring discredit upon the system which the genius of Peel and Graham devised for the social and intellectual regeneration of Ireland. (Applause.) We students and graduates have our differences in religion and in politics, but we are united to a man in upholding the Queen's Colleges and in defending the interests of the university. (Cheers.) I have no doubt as to the future. It will be worthy of the past, and worthy of the cause. And when, as years go on, the prejudices of the present have given place to sounder conceptions of mutual rights and duties, I am confident that a unanimous testimony will be borne to the invaluable part which the Queen's Colleges have exercised in dissipating sectarian animosities, in healing divisions, in consolidating our social forces, and in promoting the intellectual progress, material prosperity, and happiness of this our native land.

“A brighter Hellas rears its mountains
O'er waves serener far;
A new Peneus rolls its fountains
Against the morning star.”

Professor M'KANE then came forward, and said—I have been honoured by the council of the Queen's College Literary and Scientific Society to move that the best thanks of the society and of this meeting be given to Mr. M'Mordie for the address we have

just heard. With his eloquent words still ringing in our ears, it requires no argument on my part to persuade the meeting to pass this vote of thanks with one unanimous voice—(applause)—but I cannot help expressing the personal pleasure I feel, as an old student of this college and an ex-president of the Literary and Scientific Society, in being present here to-night and listening to the burning words and sterling arguments of an old college friend, who has come to support the cause of the Queen's Colleges, and with no faltering voice and in no bated breath to advocate the interests of the Queen's University in Ireland. (Cheers.) However widely I and some of my friends may differ from Mr. M'Mordie on many public questions, as graduates of the university we are all as one, and proud of him as a staunch friend and a true representative of the great cause of united education. (Cheers.) I am glad that our graduates not long since did Mr. M'Mordie the honour of placing him the highest on the poll as their representative in the Senate of the Queen's University. (Cheers.) The graduates did Mr. M'Mordie honour, but I believe they did themselves honour also in sending a man to represent them who, in the advocacy of their interests, would speak with no uncertain sound. (Cheers.) As Mr. M'Mordie has stated, we have sometimes, perhaps too often, kept on the defensive, and did not attack those who but too frequently have tried to injure the reputation of the colleges; but we are now resolved, as members of the University, to hurl back these baseless charges, and determined that the often refuted statements with regard to our colleges will not be allowed to go abroad without meeting a determined opposition. (Cheers.) Again and again the epithet of "Godless" has been hurled against the Queen's Colleges by men who seem neither to understand the meaning of the opprobrious term in the use of which they are so liberal, or how that epithet first came to be applied. (Cheers.) Mr. M'Mordie has given us the meaning and history of that epithet to-night, and I think I may fairly ask you to say that no man of common sense, fairness, and reason, after hearing what he has said, could think of using it against the Queen's University. I trust that this address will be put in a permanent form—(cheers)—and placed in the hands, not only of the members of the College Society, but of enlightened men throughout the length and breadth of the land—and especially in the hands of the legislators of our country—so that the principles which it advocates may be made known and the great cause of truth be advanced. (Cheers.) I cannot help saying how proud I feel in knowing that Queen's College men are to be found occupying high and important positions wherever the British flag floats, over free communities in every zone; and I am confident that in whatever position they may be placed they will be found imbued with those tolerant

principles which Mr. M'Mordie has so ably expounded, and of which he is himself a living and a noble example. (Cheers.) For ages the talents of the youth of Ireland and the industrial resources of the country had been running to waste for want of the educational advantages which the Queen's Colleges now afford, and we might have thought that those who profess to be the friends, and seek to be the leaders of the people of Ireland, would have hailed these institutions with delight, as calculated to develop the intellectual and material resources of our country. But it was not so, Ireland's foes have always been those of her own household; and so we find that every form of opposition was given to the colleges with a view to cripple their usefulness, and if possible destroy the principles on which they were founded; but they have grown and flourished in defiance of every opposition. Like the wise man's house they were built upon a rock—the rock of religious freedom and intellectual enlightenment—and all the beaten waves of party and sectarian conflict have failed to shake the foundation. (Cheers.) The Queen's Colleges have grown and flourished, and they are yet destined to grow more and more, yet destined, I believe, to restore our beloved country to the high position she occupied in long past ages, when Ireland was the light of the nations, the school of the west, the peaceful home of sanctity and literature. (Cheers.) I have great pleasure in moving most heartily this vote of thanks—a pleasure as a personal friend of Mr. M'Mordie's, as an old student of this College, and as a graduate of the Queen's University, whose system of free and enlightened and united education is alike that of my associations, my convictions, and my affections. (Loud cheers.)

Rev. W. TODD MARTIN said—It gives me extreme pleasure to second the vote of thanks so eloquently proposed by my former class-fellow Professor M'Kane. I have listened with intense interest and with the greatest admiration to the able statement of the case of the Queen's University and Queen's Colleges which we have had this evening from Mr. M'Mordie, and I think if that case were weighed by any calm and unbiassed mind it must be pronounced unanswerable. (Hear, hear.) It is now some twelve years since an attempt was made by the then Government to change the constitution of the Queen's University. The graduates of that day did their utmost to defend their Alma Mater against that attack, and they succeeded. (Cheers.) There are indications now that we are approaching a time when the battle must be fought again, and I am sure I address in this vast assembly graduates, and gentlemen who will soon be graduates, who will give their utmost energy, their intelligence, and their influence in maintaining intact the foundation on which the college and the university have been formed. (Cheers.) I hope the time is

not far distant, as has been foreshadowed by the lecturer, when we shall have the privilege of voting for a member to represent our university in Parliament. (Cheers.) Clerical graduates can have no ambition in that direction, but we will do our utmost to gain for the cause of liberal education in this country so great an advantage. It is with a feeling of shame that I recall the fact that the only graduate of the Queen's University who has a seat in the House of Commons is the man who heaps on the university and its colleges every insult he can devise. (Hisses.) It is essential to the interests of the university that we should have one who has been cultured in its learning, and who has imbibed its tolerant spirit to take his place in that great assembly, and prove, as it can be proved to demonstration, that all these charges hurled against the Queen's University in Ireland are baseless—that no other school of learning in these countries, considering the difficulties which had to be encountered, and bearing in mind the wealthier endowments and more abundant resources of the older institutions, can compete with our colleges and university in the results which they have produced. (Cheers.) I cannot conclude without expressing my admiration of the ability shown by the lecturer in the course of his address, to which I have listened with no ordinary interest, and my concurrence with the mover of the vote of thanks in his suggestion that the address should be put in such form that it may be placed in the hands of all who are interested in the question of the *status* of the Queen's University in Ireland to inform them what the university has to say on its own behalf. (Cheers.)

The vote of thanks was passed by acclamation.

The CHAIRMAN, in conveying the vote of thanks, asked Mr. M'Mordie's permission to have the lecture published in pamphlet form.

Mr. M'MORDIE replied in appropriate terms, and acceded to the chairman's request.

The proceedings then terminated.

A distinguished medical gentleman still residing in Belfast, composed and published the following poem, on the occasion of the opening of the Queen's College. It was highly-appreciated at the time, and its re-appearance now will give much satisfaction.

L I N E S

SUGGESTED BY THE INAUGURATION OF THE QUEEN'S COLLEGE ON THE
20TH INST.

WHEN the last hour of dreary darkness flies,
And morning's radiant beams illumine the skies,
All nature seems exulting with delight,
And bounds to life, as fades away the night.
To man it should bring hope and tender joy —
Another day has dawned he may employ
In strenuous efforts to redeem the past,
And save the heart some bitter pang at last.
Even as the hope and joy that hour bestows,
When, in the East, effulgent morning glows,
So feels the bosom of each generous man
When some great effort—some ennobling plan—
Is seen, complete, and free, and unconfined,
Imparting blessings on all human kind.
And thus each heart which benefits inspire—
Each breast possessed with patriotic fire—
Thrilled with emotions deep, and hopeful pride,
When the Queen's College threw her portals wide—
Inviting all, of every creed and name,
To hear her Statutes, which aloud proclaim
Her non-sectarian course—that just decree
Which knows but man, and leaves the conscience free!
Oh! who could view that opening scene unmoved,

Where hundreds swelled the shout, and all approved
 There sat Divines, who point to Heaven the way,
 And try to guide the intellectual ray.
 There sat the noble ; there the man whose mind—
 Ennobling him among his fellow-kind—
 Has searched all Nature's depths. There sat the fair,
 Whose glance gives joy, whose smile can banish care.
 The men of war, unbending for a while,
 Became as citizens, and deigned a smile ;
 And solemn Councillors of Town and State
 Swelled the vast concourse of the wise and great.
 And learned Professors came, with thoughtful brow,
 And seemed to feel their deep and sacred vow.
 There were the youths—the students first to share
 The light supplied them by their country's care :
 On them were turned the hopeful thoughts of all
 Of that great throng which filled the spacious hall.
 Who could behold them, nor reflect that they
 Were destined for life's race, some future day—
 That contest whose results—its aim and end—
 On present efforts must so much depend ?
 And, thus reflecting, who, with generous heart,
 But hoped, for each, a yet distinguished part ?
 Joyous themselves, their hearts, of care yet void,
 Bounding with hope and pleasure unalloyed,
 Lit up each face, till the beholder caught
 The same expression, free from anxious thought.
 Loud were their plaudits when, with solemn air,
 The President approached, and took the Chair.
 Full and impressive was his learned address—
 Friendly to them—replete with tenderness ;
 Deeply instructive, when, in calm review,
 A picture of the past he clearly drew,
 And that contrasted with the present time,
 When light from darkness has appeared sublime :
 The future, full of hope, through circling years,
 Rose to the view, triumphant o'er all fears—
 Triumphant, also, o'er each narrow soul,
 That trammels learning, and would mind control.
 Honour to him—to them, the Statesmen wise,
 Who such a plan of learning could devise,
 Unshackled by sectarian creeds or pride,
 Diffusing useful knowledge far and wide.
 These scientific truths, each curious art
 That independence bring—expand the heart—
 These noble lessons, culled from Nature's lore,
 Which warm the soul, and teach the thought to soar—
 To soar from Nature's truths to Nature's God,
 And tread the paths the good and great have trod ;

