

OTTAWA UNIVERSITY 1884 - 1890.

In 1884 Ottawa University had one small building. Its library consisted of perhaps a hundred books hung up against the wall. It had no scientific apparatus. It had no productive endowment. It had the 640 acres of land upon which the institution was planted. There had been upwards of sixty students the previous year. The Acting President was Professor Stewart. He had laid good academic and college foundations. From these foundations the university never afterwards departed.

Dr. M. L. Ward was the President in 1884. He had spent the previous year in the uncongenial task of trying to raise money. In the beginning of the school year 1884-5 he entered upon the more agreeable work of President and Professor. To one coming from another institution, the most striking feature of his administration seemed to be breadth and liberality. There was no jealousy or restrictions. Every teacher found a free field. There was afforded the opportunity for the exercise of every power of every person in the upbuilding of the university.

There were three teachers that first year,--Ward, Sutherland and Hamblin. They assumed full financial responsibility for the current expenses of the school. After paying the incidental expenses, they divided among themselves the residue of the income in the proportion of 12-10-10. The income consisted of tuition, which was supplemented by the proceeds of the farm amounting to about \$1000. The trustees promised in addition \$1500 more, but made no provision to secure it. What little of the promised amount came into the treasury was raised in consequence of an appeal made by the teachers to the Sunday schools of the state.

These three teachers, accordingly, undertook the task of giving instruction in all required academic and college subjects, laying down thoroughness of instruction in each and every study as their chief corner stone. There were intimations also, if not promises, that they would, if requested, undertake business and normal courses in addition. Fortunately for the instructors and instructed, there were few if any calls for other

than academic studies. Even within this limited range the studies of each teacher were sufficiently multifarious. For instance, my distinctive work was to be the teaching of Greek, but for the first term, in addition to my one class in Greek, I had Grammar, Arithmetic, Geography and Physiology. I was asked to take Bookkeeping also, but had the moral courage to decline to do so.

The second year the Faculty felt able to add to its corps of instructors two more teachers: Adelaide L. Dicklow, who came to act as Preceptress and Professor of Modern Languages and Literature, and O. C. Charlton, to whom was assigned the whole range of the natural sciences. Professor Charlton found no apparatus for his work, and therefore it was necessary for him to interest friends who would contribute funds for the special work of his department, and, in addition, to arouse his own inventive abilities in the direction of increased appliances. The Faculty found no serviceable library and no money in the treasury to procure books, and, therefore, they instituted an annual lecture course, which yielded them funds sufficient to provide several thousand volumes of serviceable books.

There are soon other changes in the teaching force; Frank S. Dietrich, who came to take the place of Professor Hamblin in Latin, History, Political Economy and Elocution; A. S. Olin, who came to develop the normal department; G. H. Crain, who gave instruction in business studies; while Miss Sue Sherer, with much heroism and fine artistic ability, endeavored unsuccessfully to build up, before the time, an art department.

These teachers worked on small and poorly paid salaries. They worked in the face of serious limitations, but these teachers were an asset to the institution more important than fine buildings, than great libraries or than enormous endowments. These teachers were superior teachers, and superior teachers are the greatest gift that can come to

any school. Look to the positions they subsequently occupied if you would know the exalted service they rendered you while they were here, Professor Hamblin occupying the chair of Greek at Bucknell University; Professor Dicklow for years the honored head of Moulton College; Professor Olin known from the Atlantic to the Pacific as the successful Dean of the School of Education of the University of Kansas; Professor Dietrich the able United States circuit judge with headquarters at Boise, Idaho; not to mention the venerable President of those earliest days, who now sits among us in his serene old age viewing with satisfaction this flourishing institution, which he nurtured so wisely and carefully in those early years.

The large amount of responsibility placed upon the teachers, while perhaps best under the circumstances, was not an unmixed good. It put the institution for a few years out of proper balance. The trustees lost their initiative and much of their authority. Advance movements were agreed upon in the faculty meetings and the trustees were expected to register their decisions. The Professors attended the meetings of the Board of Trustees, suggested the proper motions and took part in the deliberations. Once in a while a trustee might object to this invasion of his prerogatives, but it seemed to be entirely in keeping with prevailing conditions that the members of the only body connected with the school that were the burden bearers should take the lead and be endowed with the necessary powers. In 1886 the trustees gave the members of the Faculty definite and fixed salaries. In 1887 they borrowed money to pay arrearages in teachers' salaries, and thereafter they continued to come gradually into their own again.

The increase of students came largely by personal solicitation. The school was a partnership affair. It was to the interest of the teachers that they spend as much time as possible arousing the ambitions of young people, presenting to them in the homes, the teachers' institutes and the churches the attractive advantages of an education, and directing

their footsteps to Ottawa University. At first all of the teachers took part quite energetically in this work. Then, some took to it as they would to an unpalatable medicine. Some were very successful in securing students. Some were not worth their expenses for this purpose. Some knew when they had secured a student, some were less successful than they imagined, some were more successful than they feared. One young professor returned after a few weeks' trip and reported that he had secured fifty students. "Ah!" people said, "He is the one to send out. He will fill up our university." At the end of his second trip He reported that he was certain of one hundred students as the result of his summer's work. On the day of enrollment I asked this teacher how many of his summer's students he had seen that day. He replied that he thought they would arrive the following day. After several weeks had passed, this teacher brought me a scrawny little girl about fourteen years of age, who constituted, so far as I ever learned, the only trophy of his summer's work.

Another teacher, Professor Dietrich, took a trip of six weeks through the northern counties of the state. On his return he said he had no reason to expect a single student as the result of his summer's canvass. His judgment was correct, so far as that school year was concerned. But the next year there came from those same northern counties, several groups of students, as the direct result of Professor Dietrich's influence the previous summer.

The religious influence emanating from the college was quite strong. The most effective center of spiritual life was the students themselves. The students' prayer meeting was a place of deep spiritual interest. There was a good deal of personal evangelism. The day of prayer for colleges was for many a day of right decision. The influence of the church touched and changed many of the young people for good. the large class of young men, taught by that large-hearted and sympathetic

Who was this teacher?
I question this statement, would

instructor, doctor Ward, halted many a young man in his downward going. A Sunday afternoon class attracted, while it lasted, those who were willing to make the study of the Bible as serious a business as the study of the classics. For a time Bible study was a part of the curriculum, taught as an elective by one teacher. But the most ambitious attempt at Bible study was when on Monday mornings every teacher became a Bible teacher and every class became a Bible class. But not every teacher of Latin or History is a good Bible teacher. Accordingly, some classes were very much profited, while others termed Bible study irksome and unprofitable. Some teachers gave it as their opinion that Bible teaching as carried on did more harm than good. About the time of this difference of opinion Dr. Franklin Johnson appeared among us as President. All were ready to turn the perplexing problem of Bible study over to the new President. They did so, with the result that neither Bible study nor the vexed question concerning it, were ever heard of again.

There was much liberty given to students in matters of conduct. Rarely did they take undue advantage of their freedom. But in every school there will come a time when the decision must be made, and should be clearly understood, as to the proper bounds of liberty and license, obedience and disobedience, good conduct and bad conduct. The increase of students made the settlement of this question necessary. Perhaps it was with reference to the matter of discipline that in 1887 I was made president of the faculty with internal affairs under my jurisdiction. At any rate matters went from bad to worse. There were some that deserved to be severely disciplined, and would be properly punished when we could learn who they were. I did not want to strike until I could deal an effective blow to outlawry. Fortunately, the miscreants were discovered. The faculty stood together. Six students were expelled. Then they promised good conduct for the future if they should be reinstated. They were told that they were expelled. Then some of the better students

Bible instruction was discontinued by order of Faculty, South school, Dunderberg, Pickles, against Ward, Charleston, J. W. Dr. Johnson did not decide.

suggested a petition for the reinstatement of the expelled. They were told that such a petition would show that the law-abiding students did not yet appreciate the enormity of the offenses committed, and that serious measures might continue to be necessary. One of the trustees suggested that it might be well to take some of the boys back. He was told that if all the trustees would get down on their knees before us and ask us to take those boys back, we would not do it. Life would not be worth living here if we should now change our verdict. The trustees could, of course, turn us out and get another faculty to do their bidding, but we, at least, would not restore those boys. The storm was over, the air was cleared, there ensued a time of good order and good feeling. The public sentiment of the school and the community supported the faculty, and peace and good will thereafter reigned.

While on the subject of students, it may be well for me to mention an exceedingly important service rendered the institution by a distinguished man. For a student to remain in an academy three years and in college four years, with professional instruction still in the distance, seems to many a student a long a tedious prospect. This is so especially in the early years of a college when there are no examples of continuity in the student body to set the pace. A good many bright young men were found in the freshman and sophomore classes along about 1886-9. But they were becoming restless in view of the long road before them, and were considering short cuts. I stated the condition to Dr. E. B. Hulbert, our baccalaureate preacher for one of those years, and asked him to change, if he could, the attitude of the students. He preached a great sermon and afterwards met the boys in conference. In the strongest language he urged them to continue their college work to the end. He made a great impression upon them. I am sure that every one went from his presence determined to graduate from Ottawa University. I think that every one of that company did graduate from Ottawa University.

Quarterly meeting

Two graduates
there
Sawyer

1888
88
90

Doctor Hulbert's presence here at that time and facing those conditions was a great boon and benediction to this institution.

In 1884 the courage of the trustees seemed to be at a low ebb. The attendance had been small, although the scholastic standards were high. The income had not been sufficient to pay the running expenses, although those expenses were by no means unreasonably large. The trustees were quite ~~ready to give up~~ much of their authority into the hands of President and faculty as an offset to being relieved of administration ^{responsibility}. For a time there were no meetings of the local board, nor did the substitute committee composed of non-residents of Ottawa meet with any regularity. Gradually, however, after 1886, the trustees took again into their hands the reins of supervisory authority, appointing Presidents and teachers, standing by the administration they created, and becoming responsible personally and as a body for the obligations of the institution. Not many colleges have had more faithful and capable trustees than were the burden bearers of the later eighties. The names of Sheldon, Crawford, Boomer, Dobson, Willis and others stand for ability and faithfulness, much time spent for the university and many burdens carried. Happy is the college that ^{can} call the roll of such capable trustees.

Along about 1886, on account of an increasing attendance, there arose a demand for more room. The plan for more room, as first presented, contemplated an addition to the present building, costing perhaps \$5000. But this slight addition was by no means satisfactory to the hopeful and aggressive faculty.

~~The discussion~~ The discussion had not proceeded far before it was disclosed that there were serious obstacles in the way of any large movement. Ottawa University had been before the public for more than twenty years and had made little progress and received few gifts. Ottawa citizens claimed that the Baptists of the state had never rallied to the support of their school, and Kansas Baptists retorted that Ottawa had never,

like Topeka and Atchison and Winfield, made large contributions to their local institution. Kansas Baptists therefore insisted that Ottawa should take the lead by doing something large for their local institution, while Ottawa insisted that Kansas Baptists should at least measure up to Ottawa in educational gifts, before asking them to make further contributions. In this exigency there was evolved and announced the policy of "Concurrent Action." that is to say, that Ottawa be asked to give \$50,000 for a college building at the same time that the state be asked to give \$50,000 for endowment. This policy did not please either party, but it became at any rate the general working policy. The debate was cut short by the bomb that was hurled into the educational situation in the startling news that a new and larger university was being projected at Wichita. A meeting of Ottawa Baptists was held in the Baptist church to consider the critical situation. A good many short speeches were made, all of which ended with the words, "Something has got to be done." The upshot of the meeting took shape in the revival of the Board of Trade, which assumed the responsibilities of the situation. The Board of Trade appointed a committee to visit Wichita to protest against the actual creation of the proposed university. The committee was courteously received at Wichita. Matters were discussed in an amicable spirit. The committee was taken to view the site of the proposed university. On the way one of the Wichita brethren explained that they had not wished to start a new university, that they were in fact compelled to start a university, that every denomination in town had started a university, and that the Baptists would fall behand in the race and be utterly discredited if they also should not establish a university. Not to the eloquence of the members of the visiting committee so much as to the hard times that visited Wichita, and the collapse of the boom, does Ottawa University owe the good fortune that she has no Baptist rival in the Sunflower state.

The dread possibility of seeing another Baptist college in

born. Sheldon Atchison, head

Kansas aroused the interest of Kansas Baptists both at home and abroad. The Ottawa church, which in 1886 had subscribed forty dollars for the current expenses of the university, now gave seven hundred dollars for the same purpose. Without a solicitor in the field, with nothing but circulars sent out, the churches of the state gave practically, on one Sunday, more than \$2 500 for current expenses. The Board of Trade, inspired by the same spirit, appointed a committee to raise \$50,000 for a college building. Rev. O. W. VanOedel, the pastor of the Baptist church and the conspicuous moving spirit for larger things, was the chairman of the soliciting committee. To test the sincerity, possibly, of the generous promises contained in the impassioned speeches made at the public meetings, Doctor Van Oedel opened an office and advertised for subscribers. But the eloquent speakers of the public meetings rather avoided than sought the one they had appointed to solicit them. The campaign lagged, and Doctor Van Oedel resumed the active duties of his pastorate. At this point I waited upon Doctor Van Oedel and reminded him that he and I were probably the ones most responsible for the agitation for larger things, that I did not want to see the movement utterly fail, and that if there was any way in which he thought I could help him, I should be glad to render him such assistance. He said that there was a way in which I could help him a good deal, and forthwith went to the mayor's office, resigned his chairmanship, and had me appointed in his stead. chairman of the soliciting and building committees, a position which I held nominally ^{at least} until the dedication of the building.

It was very evident at the date of that appointment that the time had gone by, if ever it had been present, to raise \$50,000 in Ottawa for any educational purpose. \$25,000 seemed to be a more reasonable sum, but even that amount might be too large. Indeed, on account of the collapse of the canvass and the lack of confidence that had taken possession of the people, it seemed questionable whether more than a pittance

could be raised until people could have some assurance that something would actually be done. I had been made President protem of the university at a meeting of the Board of Trustees held in the summer of 1887, with the understanding that while my presidency might terminate at any time by the election of another man, I was, in the meantime, to have all the initiative and authority resident in any president. Soon after my election I took up the matter of the building, and provided funds, at first, for the building of the foundation. This was builded in the Fall of 1887. When Spring came we made another canvass for the superstructure and to enclose the building. Then we waited a while for the rest of the state to get a start toward the raising of an endowment. In the meantime the Education Society had come upon the field. The air began to stir with educational interest. The President, for whom we had been so long waiting, came in the person of Dr. Franklin Johnson, and the building, costing \$15 000, was completed, furnished and first utilized under his administration.

A part of the original plan called for \$50 000 to be contributed by the Baptists of the state for endowment. There had already been provided the beginning of an endowment in the 640 acres of land already mentioned. Doctor Ward had been a careful custodian of the land. He had surveyed it and platted a portion of it, and had placed that portion of it upon the market. The opportunity for investment in college lots appealed quite strongly to Ottawa people. On the Sunday before the lots were placed on the market the sidewalk on Cedar street resounded to the tramp tramp of eager would-be purchasers going to the college addition to make their selections. On the morrow they came in crowds. The salesmen were kept busy receiving money and executing papers. Upward of \$50 000 in cash and interest-bearing notes was at this time secured. But the amount was of course but the beginning of an endowment. There was as great need as ever to push the campaign for invested funds. To succeed in raising money a good solicitor is all important. In my A.S.

Judgment there was but one man in Kansas who possessed the requisite qualifications for a successful solicitor. Rev. A. S. Merrifield was that man. On two occasions I had visited him, and had urged upon him the financial secretaryship of the university, but he was not to be easily secured. At the State Convention in Clay Center in 1889 the policy of "Concurrent Action" was approved. It was understood that the university trustees should be called together to take measures for a state wide campaign for endowment. Yet there was still an element that insisted that Ottawa should first finish building ^{the}, and that then the state might be called upon for endowment. These men became so insistent that MR. J. M. Boomer, the President of the Board, declined to call, at my request, the Board meeting as agreed upon. I waited until the Christmas holidays. I then visited Mr. Boomer at Fairview, taking with me sufficient signatures of trustees to compel Mr. Boomer to call a meeting. I did not want to present these evidences of compulsion unless it should be necessary to do so. In conversation Mr. Boomer soon saw the reasonableness of a speedy meeting. He promised to call a meeting of the Board, and did so call a meeting. At this meeting plans for a state wide campaign were laid, and Mr. Merrifield was chosen to raise the money. He agreed to undertake the work provided that the sentiment of the leading Baptists should favor him. I thereupon corresponded quite extensively and received replies favorable to Mr. Merrifield, save in two instances. These two objectors claimed that Mr. Merrifield would be able to raise little more than his salary. I was glad to be able to tell them that Mr. Merrifield had more than met their objections by the gifts of two of his brothers, the one agreeing to pay his salary and the other his traveling expenses.

However, the opposition to "Concurrent Action" was not given up so easily. A short time after Mr. Merrifield's acceptance of the financial secretaryship there originated a movement to see whether another

city larger than Ottawa might not provide a more extensive and generous plant for the Baptist school. Awaiting the certain failure of this attempt and to conserve unity Mr. Merrifield was instructed to spend his time in securing money for current expenses, getting in touch with men of means, while awaiting, at the same time, the action of the American Baptist Education Society on the application that had been previously presented to them for aid. The effort to enlist the interest of another city failed. The American Baptist Education Society approved our application for aid to the extent of \$10 000 conditioned on the supplementary sum of \$25 000 being raised by Kansas Baptists. Dr. Franklin Johnson assumed the presidency. Doctor Merrifield raised \$33 000 in pledges to make good the \$25 000 required. Doctor Merrifield, while carrying on his canvass, aroused a deep interest in Christian education, which interest the university was able to tabulate because of the large number of new students that enrolled during the succeeding year.

While these undertakings were in progress another effort was projected, which culminated successfully. At a faculty meeting in 1888 the discussion turned upon the need of a well equipped cottage for girls. Mrs. O. C. Charlton had been pondering this same need. It appealed strongly to her convictions of duty that she should be instrumental in supplying this need. Therefore, without consulting any one or seeking the approval of anything but her conscience, she canvassed Ottawa and visited portions of Kansas, soliciting money from women, for the most part, but also from men. Her trips extended to New York City, where she interested some men and women of wealth who contributed to the object dear to her heart, and, who thus aided her in erecting the Charlton Cottage, a monument to her energy and faith, and a boon to Ottawa University.

During the greater part of the period under review, the income from tuition, farm and endowment was supplemented by meager gifts from the churches. Some ministers were opposed to contributing money for the

current expenses of an institution, but expressed themselves as being disposed to give liberally for ministerial education. There was no agent in the field to raise money for any purpose. Whatever appeals were made for any object were generally, though not always, made in writing by the President of the school, who was also chairman of the building and soliciting committees, educational secretary of the State Convention, and who in addition, taught five classes a day.

I have not spoken of the large and flourishing department of music, built up by the executive and artistic ability of Professor and Mrs. C. A. Boyle. Nor have I spoken of the various oratorical contests, in which representatives of Ottawa University brought high credit to their school, even though they did not win the prize. Nor have I spoken of the added courses of study, with the growing classes in those courses, establishing conditions where each teacher could limit his efforts to his own department, and where classes of good size would come to him for instruction. Nor have I spoken of the graduating classes of the various courses or schools, small at first, but growing more numerous as the years go by - goodly companies of young men and women, well equipped to battle with the world, able to win prizes in the contests of life, jewels in the crown of their Alma Mater.

George Sutherland