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PRINCETON IN 1801.

In the spring of 1801 I passed through Princeton, on my way to New England, where I spent the summer. One object of my visit was to become acquainted with the flourishing colleges of the northern and eastern States; as many of the commencements as possible were therefore embraced in the tour. The failure of a horse in some degree frustrated the plan.

At Harvard, I had the pleasure of being introduced to President Willard, Professors Tappan, Pearson, and others. I was also able to attend the commencement at Dartmouth College. In passing from Massachusetts over the mountains of New Hampshire, I lodged within a few rods of the house of a farmer, the father of the Honourable Daniel Webster. The old gentleman came over to the tavern in the morning, and chatted for half an hour. Among other things he said that he had a son at Dartmouth, who was about to take his bachelor's degree. The father was large in frame, high-breasted and broad-shouldered, and, like his son, had heavy eyebrows. He was an affable man, of sound sense and considerable information, and expressed a wish that I might be

acquainted with his son, of whom it was easy to see that he was proud.

Arriving at Hanover, the seat of the College, a day or two before the commencement, I put up my horse and secured a room at one of the two public houses. On the morning of the commencement I presented my letters to President Wheelock, and was received with a profusion of ceremonious inclinations; for it was pleasantly said that the President suffered no man to have the last bow. This, it was reported, was put to the test by a person of some assurance, who undertook to compete with him in the contest of politeness. He accordingly took his leave, bowed himself out of the mansion, and continued to bow as long as he was upon the premises: but the President followed him to the gate, and remained in possession of the field. Dr. Wheelock was a man of learning, especially in the department of history. It was said that he had a great historical work in preparation, but none such ever appeared.

When I afterwards returned to the tavern, I was surprised to find the whole house filled with a strange and motley multitude. My own room was occupied by a company of gamblers, and the usual circle of lookers-on. I loudly asserted my claim to the room, threw myself on my reserved rights, and made appeal to the host. He declared himself unable to turn the people out: the Green Mountain Boys appeared to be good natured, but perfectly impracticable. At this juncture I began to consider my situation quite deplorable, when relief came from an unexpected quarter. A note was delivered to me from a gentleman of the village, inviting me to become his guest: by singular resolution he had kept exclusive possession of his house, the only one in Hanover exempt from invasion. I found ample room and hospitality. It appeared that a letter from Salem, Massachusetts, had named me to this worthy friend, as a clergyman of Virginia, making a first journey through New Eng-

land. In this house I made the acquaintance of the only other guest, the Reverend Theophilus Packard, now Doctor Packard; whom I accompanied to his home in Shelburne, and there spent a very happy, and as I think, profitable fortnight.

At the Dartmouth commencement, General Eaton, of eccentric memory, was marshal of the day, and was unceasing in busying himself about the order of the procession to the church; giving each graduate, of every college, the place due to his seniority. Among the speakers was young Daniel Webster. Little dreaming of his future career in law, eloquence, and statesmanship, he pronounced a discourse on the recent discoveries in Chemistry, especially those of Lavoisier, then newly made public.

Princeton was taken in my journey homeward. In this town, likewise, it was no easy matter to find a place to lay my head, so great was the concourse of strangers. But my friend Mr. Henry Kollock, afterwards distinguished as a preacher, and who had recently been a tutor in the college, kindly introduced me to the house of old Mrs. Knox, where the students of divinity had their abode.

The appearance of the Trustees and Professors struck me with awe. I seriously question whether such a body of men, for dignity and importance, as then composed the Board, could have been found in any part of the country. I need only name Dr. McWhorter, Elias Boudinot, LL. D., John Bayard, Esq., Dr. John Woodhull, the Hon. William Paterson, Dr. Green, the Rev. James F. Armstrong, the Hon. Richard Stockton, Governor Bloomfield, and Judge Wallace. The class then commencing Bachelors of Arts included the late Mr. Biddle, Mr. Robert Goodloe Harper, the Rev. Andrew Thompson, Mr. Henry E. Watkins, Professor Cook of Kentucky, the Rev. Dr. Johnson of Newburgh, and the Rev. Dr. John Mc Dowell of Philadelphia.

The President, Dr. Samuel Stanhope Smith, I had seen in

Philadelphia, six or seven years before; and certainly, viewing him as in his meridian, I have never seen his equal in elegance of person and manners. Dignity and winning grace were remarkably united in his expressive countenance. His large blue eye had a penetration which commanded the respect of all beholders. Notwithstanding the want of health, his cheek had a bright rosy tint, and his smile lighted up the whole face. The tones of his elocution had a thrilling peculiarity, and this was more remarkable in his preaching; where it is well known that he imitated the elaborate polish and oratorical glow of the French school. Little of this impression can be derived from his published discourses, which disappoint those who do not know the charm of his delivery.

On this occasion Dr. Smith appeared to great advantage, for though he had passed his acme, he was erect and full of spirits. The formality used in the collation of degrees does not appear to be of much importance, but with the sonorous voice and imposing mien of President Smith, it added dignity to the scene, and left an indelible impression.

The College of New Jersey at that time contained some young men who were far above the ordinary level of attainments; distinguished for a high sense of honour, which preserved them from the despicable courses in which misguided youth sometimes seek distinction. It was gratifying to observe, that these young men were the favourites of the President, and that, in their turn, they were strongly attached to him. Some of them still live, to reflect honour on their *Alma Mater*; but I will not name those who occur to me, lest I do an unintentional injustice to the rest. Some, alas, are extinct; but some may be found, shining as stars, with a mild but brilliant lustre, in the civil as well as the ecclesiastical firmament.

Doctor John Maclean, a native of Scotland, after pursuing the path of science with indefatigable zeal, so far as it

was open to him in Edinburgh and Glasgow, visited France, that he might avail himself of the increased facilities afforded for physical researches in the schools of Paris. After accomplishing this purpose, Dr. Maclean emigrated to America, in 1795, and became one of the most popular professors who ever graced the college. He was at home almost equally in all branches of science; Chemistry, Natural History, Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, successively claimed his attention. It is believed that he was one of the first to reproduce in America the views of the New French school in Chemistry: on this subject he waged a successful war with Dr. Priestley, the great champion for phlogiston. No one could attend a commencement at Princeton, without perceiving that Professor Maclean was, as it were, the soul of the faculty. He enjoyed the attachment of all the students, unless perhaps some of the idle and abandoned; it is these who, in all Colleges, display the opposite temper.

At the time of my visit, Dr. Maclean was in the prime of life, a gentleman of fine appearance, polished manners, and a disposition remarkable for kindness and cordiality. He is now remembered, as the students' friend, with sincere and tender attachment, by many of his surviving pupils. It is no part of these paragraphs, to follow any of the persons named into their subsequent life, but only to note these incidents of a day which was full of interest. After the other honorary degrees had been announced, the Trustees by a consultation at the moment on the stage agreed to confer on the writer the degree of Master of Arts; an act, which, it seems, was never entered on their minutes: and in the evening he was initiated into the American Whig Society.