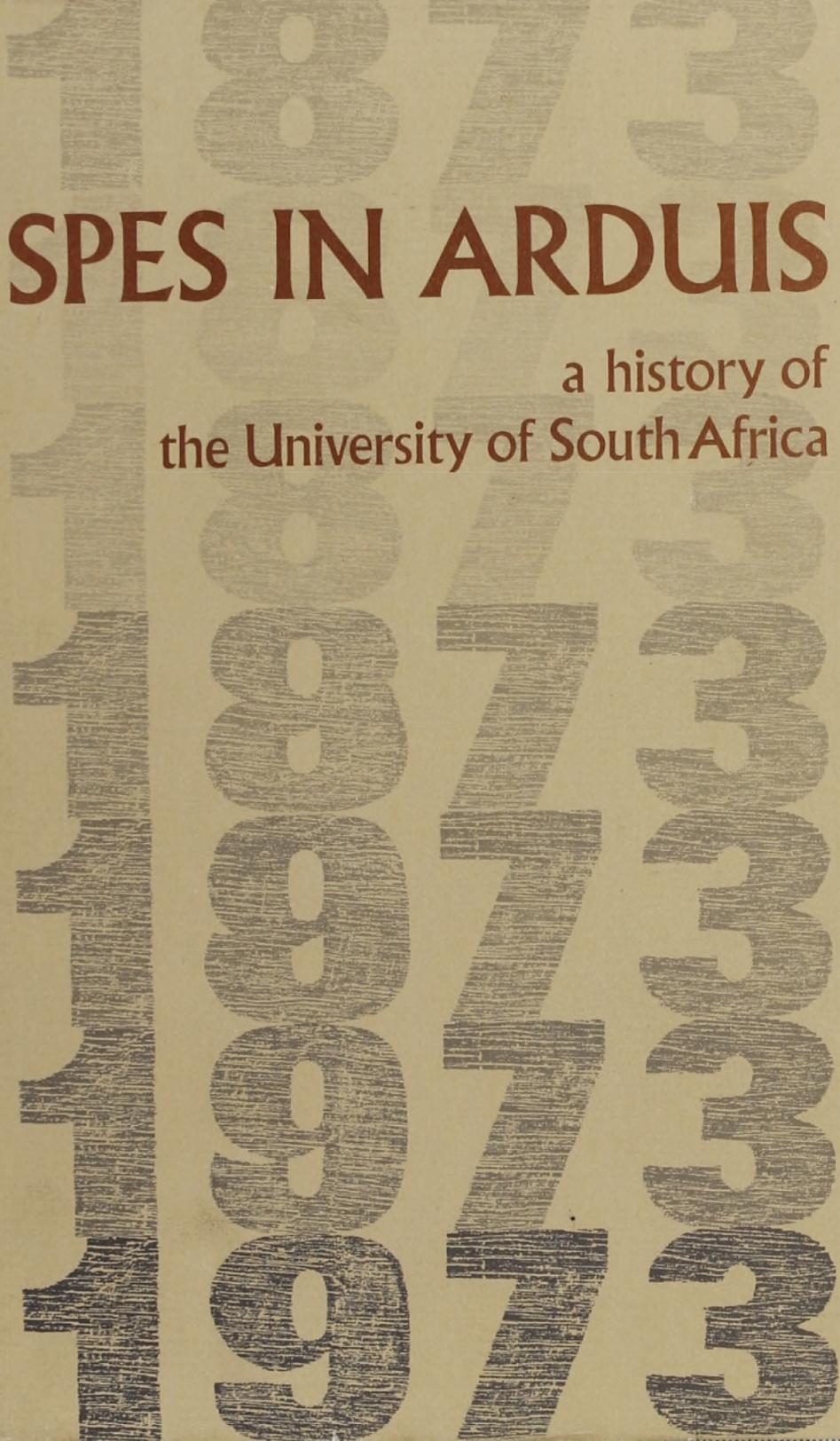


SPEES IN ARDUIS

a history of
the University of South Africa



To Establish and Incorporate an University at the
Cape of Good Hope.

WHEREAS it is expedient, for the better advance-
ment of sound learning amongst all classes
of Her Majesty's subjects in this Colony, to establish
and incorporate an University at the Cape of Good
Hope, and thereupon to dispense with the services
of the existing Board of Public Examiners: Be it
enacted by the Governor of the Cape of Good Hope,
with the advice and consent of the Legislative
Council and House of Assembly thereof, as
follows:—

Preamble.

I. An university, consisting of a chancellor, a
vice-chancellor, a council, and graduates, shall be
established at the Cape of Good Hope, and shall be
a body politic and corporate by the name of "The
University of the Cape of Good Hope," and by such
name shall have perpetual succession, and shall
adopt and have a common seal, and shall be capable

Of whom university
to be established
shall consist.

Its name and powers.

Unisa 1973





MAURICE BOUCHER

SPE IN ARDUIS

*a history of
the University of South Africa*

*Photographs, accompanying
biographical descriptive texts*

J.J. BRITS

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA
PRETORIA 1973

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Foreword

The University of South Africa has compiled this record of its history as part of its centenary celebrations.

It is really more than just its own history. The University of South Africa, formerly the University of the Cape of Good Hope, is the oldest degree-conferring institution in the Republic and until 1918 was in fact our only university. Its early history is thus to a great extent the history of higher education in South Africa as a whole. It will not therefore surprise the reader if the first chapters of this account reflect a wider view of educational developments than those which follow. On the other hand it must be remembered that as a modern university with a unique method of teaching the University of South Africa is of very recent date. For that reason considerable emphasis has been placed upon the rapid expansion of facilities in the last few decades.

It was our good fortune to have in Professor Boucher someone who had carried out exhaustive research at home and abroad into our history to 1946 for his D.Litt. et Phil thesis, *The University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of South Africa (1873-1946). A Study in national and imperial perspective*. The early chapters here are largely based on this study. For the additional chapters a great variety of official and unofficial sources have been used, enlivened by the personal reminiscences of past and present members of the teaching and administrative staffs. Mention must also be made of the generous co-operation of other people and other bodies. A special word of thanks is due to the Department of National Education for permission to consult the files in the government archives.

As this work is not primarily intended for the specialist, foot-notes and bibliography have been dispensed with. The earlier

thesis, which has now been accepted for publication in the *Archives Year Book for South African History*, contains a comprehensive list of sources for the period to 1946. Professor M.J. Posthumus is responsible for the excellent translation of the present text in the Afrikaans edition.

Professor Boucher was also fortunate in having Mr J.J. Brits as his collaborator. Mr Brits, through his long association with the University of South Africa and his deep interest in its history, particularly in the day by day events and human aspects, was able to provide biographical and other details, photographs and information otherwise difficult to track down. His knowledge and research have enriched a number of university publications.

For both, this study has been a labour of love. "Labours of love," Professor Boucher has written, "are sometimes uncharitably described as acts of piety, uncritical panegyrics in praise of those who make up a small society. It is indeed difficult to be dispassionately objective when events are seen from the inside and without the perspective which time alone can lend them. However, if approbation is the keynote of the story of this university since 1946, it can at least be said that the view is widely shared, particularly among the many students who have, over the years, enrolled for its courses. For whatever the shortcomings of the federal university and that at the Cape before it, the modern foundation has never lost sight of its duty to the peoples of South Africa. The long battle for full recognition has been waged solely in the interests of those for whom it was created."

This history of a university is offered with pride, and also with humility.

Theo van Wijk,
Principal and Vice-Chancellor

1 *The prelude*

University education in South Africa is only a century old. Through the years of Dutch East India Company rule at the Cape from 1652 until the first British occupation of 1795, higher educational development extended no further than the creation of a few private secondary, or "Latin" schools. Population growth was slow and the need for educated leaders could easily be supplied by the motherland itself. There had also been a steady drift into the interior of men and women who, by the close of the century, were living in areas remote from Cape Town, the main centre of colonial life. Before the Cape of Good Hope could begin to think of founding a university, a firm groundwork of elementary and secondary schooling would have to be constructed.

Not until the brief period of rule by the Batavian Republic from 1803 until 1806 were there signs of advance in this direction. Real progress had to await the resumption of British control. Improvement came slowly, but by 1839, a government education department had been established with a Scottish-born teacher, James Rose Innes, at its head. The new Superintendent General of Education inaugurated a system of state and state-aided schools throughout the colony. By this time, the movement which would at length open up the rest of southern Africa to white settlement was under way. It would, however, be long before adequate educational facilities became available to youth in coastal Natal or in the inland regions beyond the Orange and Vaal Rivers.

Even before the colonial government assumed a measure of

responsibility for education, there had been some who had dreamed of the provision of more advanced instruction than that which could then be obtained at the Cape. In 1817, a future Dutch Reformed (*Nederduitse Gereformeerde*) Church minister, Abraham Faure, who was at that time studying in the Netherlands, made suggestions for higher educational development in his homeland. A decade later, he was to take a leading part, with other prominent colonists, including James Adamson of the "Scotch" Church, in founding an "Athenaeum" in Cape Town – the South African College. The courses which this new institution proposed to offer gave promise of high standards of attainment and its staff were accorded professorial rank. The opening of the college in 1829 added new lustre to a small colonial capital. For Cape Town, though remote from the cultural centres of Europe, could at least boast a public library, an observatory and one or two promising schools, among them the academy of the *Tot Nut van 't Algemeen* society.

The example of the founders of the South African College inspired the Anglican Church to promote similar schemes. These culminated twenty years later in the establishment of a rival Diocesan Collegiate School. Sir John Herschel, one of the architects of the government education system of 1839, saw in the inclusion of more advanced studies in the Cape school curriculum the beginnings of future university development in South Africa.

The South African College was at best a secondary school in its early years and, in many respects, no more than a primary school. The reverend professors who presided over its first classes – Adamson, Faure and the Anglican, Edward C. Judge – discovered that before they could initiate their charges into the mysteries of metaphysics, trigonometry and astronomy promised in the prospectus, they had to teach many of them to read! A stimulus to further achievement was also lacking. The public oral examination which brought courses of study to a close was no doubt a dignified ceremony, but it was no searching test of a student's ability.

Already in distant Britain, the formal ritual of oral disputation

had begun to give way to written examination at the ancient universities of England. Soon, the idea gained ground that society was obliged to seek impartial means to select the best man for each post in an increasingly competitive world. The written test was found to be an excellent way of doing this and its suitability was clearly demonstrated in the work of the purely examining University of London. This institution was founded in 1836 to combat the religious exclusiveness of Oxford and Cambridge and to prevent continued hostility between rival colleges in the capital. At length, the system of written examination was introduced into the civil service, where patronage had long governed recruitment. The new tests were speedily extended to other fields and, after mid-century, came increasingly to dominate the school curriculum at all levels. Charles Kingsley wrote feelingly in 1863 of the unfortunate citizens of "the Isle of Tomtoddies", who were "all heads and no bodies". They worshipped the idol Examination with such devotion that only water on the brain could secure for their children a merciful release from ceaseless cramming!

Public opinion at the Cape of Good Hope was not unaware of these developments. Indeed, the introduction of written examinations in the colonial civil service coincided with British experiments in that direction. In fact, by extending the new method of recruitment to the entire service, the Cape was in advance of Britain. The efficacy of the system also led to its adoption in other educational fields, as was the case in the mother country.

The administration of the civil service examinations was placed in the hands of a Board of Examiners of Candidates for Government Service which was established in 1850. The schools of the colony were improving and the time had come, as the Government Secretary, John Montagu, observed, for the Cape "to exact higher qualifications, even for clerkships, than the mere discharge of clerical duty would require". In addition, therefore, to a simple test for the lowest class of recruits to the service, two further examinations were instituted, the more advanced one requiring a

knowledge of "Classics, Mathematics, and the Elements of Physical Science". In such manner was young South Africa launched upon the deep waters of written examination which were to engulf many an aspirant to intellectual honours in the years ahead.

The board consisted of three members and a part-time clerk, F.R. Jervis. The Superintendent General of Education, Rose Innes, an indefatigable committee man, was an obvious choice. His colleagues were the Auditor General, William Hope, and the Master of the Supreme Court, John Steuart. Hope, quiet-spoken and friendly of manner, seems to have taken precedence at early meetings, but fades from the picture some time before his death in the last year of the board's brief existence. The Cape judge, A.W. Cole, has left us a description of Steuart. Cole tells us that he was "a man of ancient Scottish lineage, polished and courteous", although somewhat reticent, except with his friends. He was, we learn, often convulsed with inward laughter, so that his face turned crimson, giving him the appearance of "a dissipated old Punch".

That these men grappled with novel problems appears from the minutes of their meetings and from their correspondence. They were given what today would seem quite superfluous instructions upon the way in which they were to carry out their duties; they also found it necessary to explain to government the method which they had adopted to mark scripts. Although it had been designed to do away with patronage in the selection of officers, the board evidently found difficulty in convincing the public that a new era was dawning. Indignant parents, among them the Rev. William Robertson of Swellendam, had to be pacified; disappointed candidates sought explanations. Robertson, a former teacher, should have known better, but there seems to have been a feeling that the new scheme operated with unnecessary severity. The members of the board would not make concessions, however, and stressed that under no circumstances could they be influenced "by the Birth or descent of the Candidates", but would be guided entirely by the results of the examinations. Patronage was on its way out at the Cape, although not

all newly appointed members of the public service in the fifties of the last century took the board's examinations.

The Board of Examiners was nevertheless a step forward in the direction of efficient administration for a colony which, in 1854, received the gift of representative government. It took its duties seriously, was prepared to conduct examinations at centres far from the colonial capital and provided an opening for many who would subsequently make their mark in the public service or in the wider world beyond. One whose name appears in the board's final list of successful candidates was Charles Bletterman Elliott. He was to contribute his services to the further development of higher education at the Cape before he began his long association with the government railways. The board deserves to be remembered in another connection. Although its members advocated no radical change in an exclusively English examination system, they stressed the need for a test in Dutch for those whose work would take them to the country districts. The suggestion fell upon deaf ears. It would be many years before the language of the white majority would receive fair treatment at the Cape.

The examinations of the Board of Examiners clearly demonstrated the value of such tests in determining academic ability, but they were not designed to meet the requirements of schools and colleges in the colony. Neither did the board issue certificates to successful candidates, while its highest test of learning found little favour. Few were the locally educated men at that time who could have attempted it. There was a call for a series of examinations specially designed to attract the interest of those responsible for the instruction of younger people. A new controlling body which would absorb the existing board and extend its functions was also needed. The Cape of Good Hope was fortunate in having as Governor between 1854 and 1861 Sir George Grey, an energetic supporter of educational progress. His interest encouraged others to press for a different approach in higher education and in 1857 a government commission was appointed to investigate the possibility of establishing an examining board



LANGHAM DALE was born on 22 May, 1826 at Kingsclere, Hampshire, England. He was educated at Christ's Hospital, London and Queen's College, Oxford and after graduating, was appointed Professor of English and Classics at the South African College, Cape Town.

He succeeded James Rose Innes as Superintendent General of Education for the Cape Colony in 1859 and became President of the Board of Public Examiners in 1867. In 1859, he received an honorary LL.D. degree from the University of Glasgow.

A leading promoter of the university ideal, Dale was Chairman of the government commission which recommended the establishment of the examining institution of 1873. Although he saw the advantages of a teaching university, his subsequent plan to create one was frustrated.

Langham Dale achieved much in his efforts to improve the colonial educational system and was knighted for his services in 1889. He did, however, clash with those who supported the use of Dutch in the schools. He retired as Superintendent General of Education in 1892.

Vice-Chancellor of the university for all but four years of the period from 1873 to 1889, Langham Dale was unanimously elected Chancellor by Convocation in 1890.

He died on 12 January, 1898 at his home, Montagu Cottage, Mowbray, Cape Town.

Sir Langham Dale, M.A., LL.D. (h.c.), K.C.M.G.

Member of Council 1873-1892

Pro Vice-Chancellor 1890-1892

Vice-Chancellor 1873-1877; 1879-1882; 1884-1889

Chancellor 1890-1898

with wider powers. Rose Innes was, not unnaturally, a member. He was joined by Langham Dale, the English-born professor at the South African College who was rapidly becoming one of the colony's leading educationists, and by Egidius Benedictus Watermeyer, a writer of distinction and early Cape historian who had recently been raised to the bench. Watermeyer, although born in Cape Town of Dutch-speaking stock, was thoroughly at home in an English environment and was keenly interested in the provision of improved higher educational facilities.

The commission reported in 1858 and proposed the appointment of an enlarged board with examiners in arts, science and law. Certificates were to be issued in two classes upon the results of examinations modelled upon those for degrees in British universities. Special attention was also to be given to examinations in civil engineering and in other professional fields. The carrot of bursaries, prizes and scholarships was to be dangled before the eyes of candidates for academic honours, as it was felt that the certificates proposed might not provide a sufficient inducement to further study. It is clear that the members of the commission were aware of developments in the British academic world, for they had in mind the eventual founding of a colonial university, "corresponding in powers and functions to the London University and the Queen's University in Ireland".

The examining institution of this kind had become a model for export. It had taken root in Dublin at mid-century and had since made its appearance at Toronto, Upper Canada, in 1854 and at Bombay, Calcutta and Madras in British India three years later. The cheapness of such a course carried much weight; moreover, all these foundations had been created on a non-sectarian basis in an endeavour to overcome the often bitter wrangling among colleges maintained by competing religious bodies. Already, an Anglican institution had been founded at the Cape in opposition to the South African College; other denominations might follow this example. A religiously neutral, or as some would have it, a "godless" examining board might lead the colony away from denominational strife in the field of education.

One proposal which could bring the day of full university status nearer was made by the commission. It was suggested that when the number of certificate holders reached fifty, they might form a sort of convocation, having the privilege of sharing with the Governor the right to elect a triennial educational council which would have the power to select examiners.

The findings of the commission were embodied in a draft bill which, with the support of Governor Grey, came before the colonial legislature in 1858. There was inevitably opposition from those who considered that the Cape needed to place more emphasis in education upon the three R's and less upon the classics. Certificates in technical subjects were felt by some to be quite unnecessary, since it was to the efforts of the self-made man that Britain owed her industrial supremacy. The measure was nevertheless passed with few changes. The Cape's first representative assembly refused, however, to institute the Queen's scholarships which had been proposed for study abroad. These would have involved a permanent grant and there was a strong desire to retain parliamentary control over the operations of the board by means of an annual vote.

The members of the Board of Public Examiners in Literature and Science were elected for five-year terms of office. Watermeyer, Dale and Rose Innes could not be overlooked for membership of the first board. Watermeyer was the law examiner and President until his untimely death in 1867. Had he survived, he might well have attained high office in the future university, which was to adopt the motto, *Spes in Arduis*, attributed to him. Rose Innes continued to examine in science after his retirement as Superintendent General of Education in 1859. His successor in that office, Langham Dale, examined in arts and became President on Watermeyer's death. Two other former South African College professors served on the board: the Rev. Edward Judge, then chaplain and private tutor at Simonstown, and A.N.E. Changuion, an early champion of higher education for the colony and at that time the proprietor of an excellent private school in Cape Town.

WILLIAM PORTER, the son of a Presbyterian minister who later joined the Unitarians, was born on 15 September, 1805 at Artikelly, County Londonderry, in the north of Ireland. He received his early education at schools in Limavady and Londonderry.

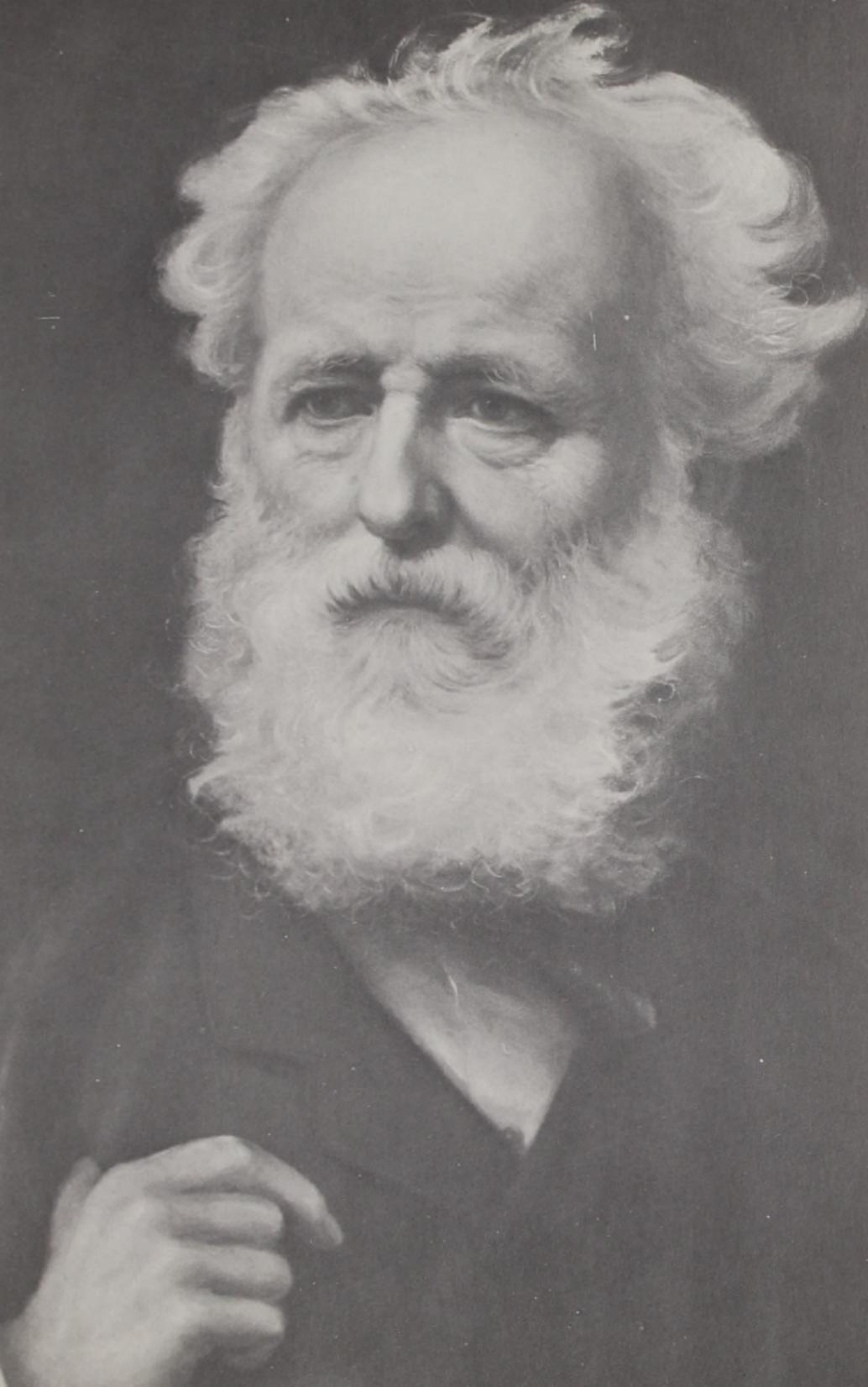
He was apprenticed to a Dublin merchant in 1819, but was unfitted for a business career. He therefore turned to the law and after studying in London and Dublin was called to the Irish bar in 1831. Eight years later, he was appointed Attorney General of the Cape Colony, where he also built up an extensive private practice.

Porter was closely involved in the constitutional struggle at the Cape between 1848 and 1872. In 1866, he resigned as Attorney General and three years later, was elected to parliament, of which he had previously been an *ex-officio* member. He also served on the Board of Public Examiners from 1867 until 1871 and vested a generous annuity in it which was subsequently transferred to the university. In addition to this fund, he has given his name to a reformatory and the village of Porterville.

A convinced Unitarian and a kindly, generous and unselfish man, Porter was keenly interested in the progress of the colony. He was awarded the C.M.G. for his services in 1872 and in the following year helped to pilot the university bill through the House of Assembly. He was nominated a member of the university Council and in 1876, after he had left the Cape, was elected by Convocation as the first Chancellor.

William Porter spent his declining years in the land of his birth and died in Belfast on 13 July, 1880.

*The Hon. William Porter, C.M.G.
Member of Council 1873-1874
Chancellor 1876-1880*



CHARLES ABERCROMBIE SMITH was born on 12 May, 1834 at St Cyrus, Kincardineshire, Scotland. He had a brilliant scholastic career at the Universities of Glasgow and Cambridge, specializing in physics, with particular emphasis upon the fields of heat, light and electricity.

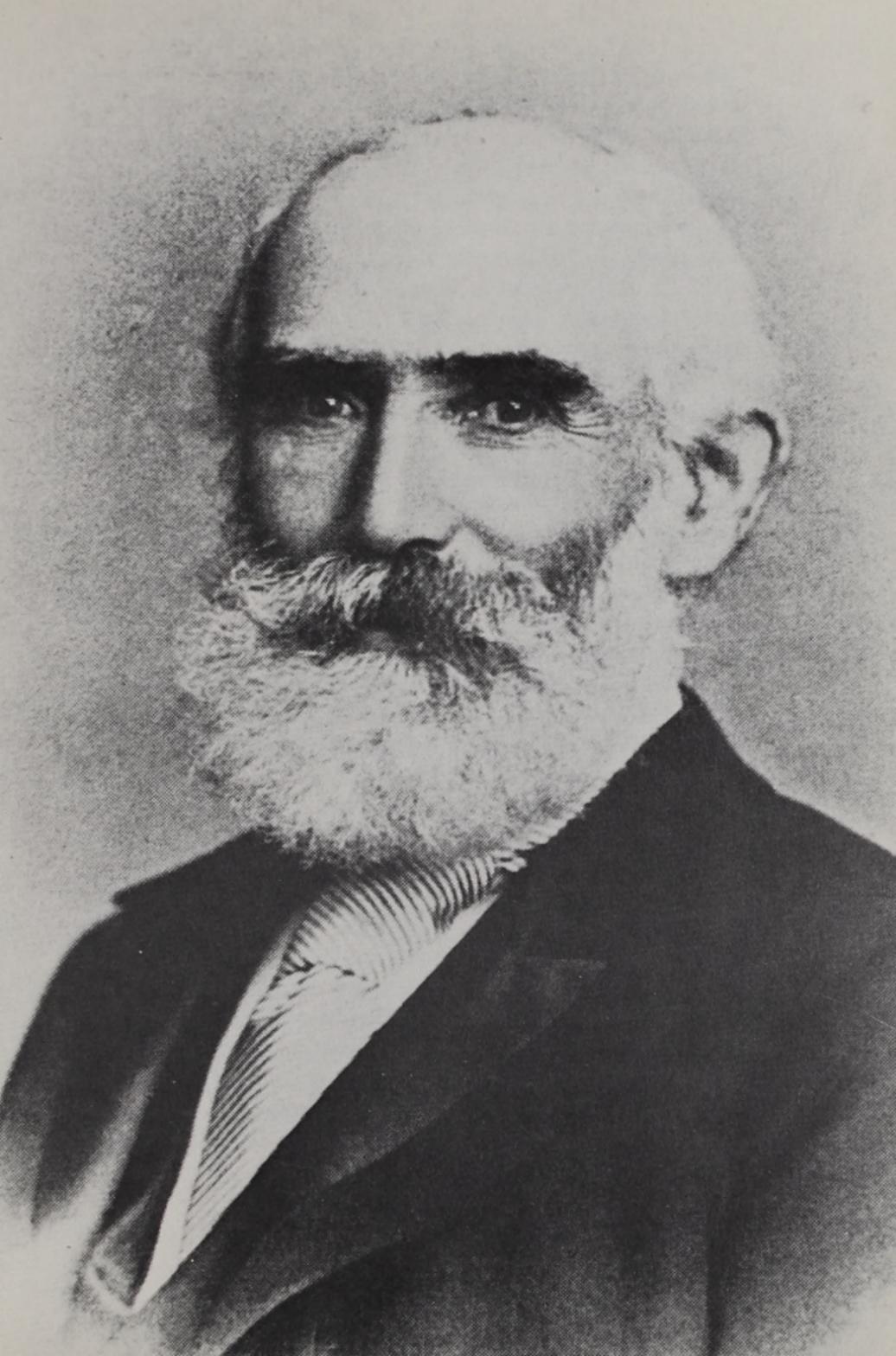
He came to the Cape for health reasons in 1860, where he practised as a surveyor. In 1866, he entered parliament as the member for King William's Town and rose to be Commissioner of Crown Lands and Public Works in the Molteno administration. In 1875, he accepted the post of Auditor General and served the Cape government in that capacity for 28 years. He was knighted for his outstanding services on his retirement.

A member of the Board of Public Examiners from 1868 until 1873, he was appointed to the first university Council, retaining his seat until 1916. Smith was Vice-Chancellor from 1877 until 1879 and for successive terms between 1905 and 1911. In 1917, the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred upon him by the university.

He made important contributions as a member of Council to the advancement of scientific studies and was for many years a moderator and examiner in science and mathematics. He also took a leading part in the affairs of the Diocesan College in the colonial capital.

Sir Charles Abercrombie Smith died on 1 May, 1919 at St Cyrus, his Wynberg, Cape Town home.

The Hon. Sir Charles Abercrombie Smith, Kt, M.A., LL.D. (h.c.)
Member of Council 1873-1916
Pro Vice-Chancellor 1892-1897
Vice-Chancellor 1877-1879; 1905-1911



Among the law examiners was another promoter of the university ideal. This was the Ulsterman, William Porter, whose generosity in vesting in the board the additional pension granted him on his retirement as Attorney General led to the creation of a major South African scholarship. Two men who distinguished themselves at the board's examinations, C.B. Elliott and Charles Abercrombie Smith, later became science examiners. Elliott also took over the secretaryship from Rose Innes in 1863. It was said of Smith, a Cambridge wrangler, that his answers in the survey examination showed that he was "a better man than his Examiners". Both were subsequently appointed to the Council of the future university, Smith serving as Vice-Chancellor for a number of years. The Rev. Professor G.F. Childe of the South African College, a brilliant mathematician, was a member of all three boards between 1858 and 1873, while the Diocesan College provided two examiners. One was the Rev. F.G. White, a descendant of the famous naturalist, Gilbert White; the other was the Rev. George Ogilvie, a much-travelled member of that breed of muscular Christians who figured so prominently in nineteenth-century British education. Ogilvie, like Smith, would later become Vice-Chancellor of the Cape's first university.

The Board of Public Examiners in Literature and Science assumed control of the public service examinations conducted by its predecessor and added to them first-class and second-class certificates. These corresponded closely with the M.A. and B.A. examinations of the University of London. Examinations in law, civil engineering, land surveying and navigation were also provided. The engineering syllabus was based upon that of the University of Glasgow, but in those days before large-scale industrial development in South Africa, the test only attracted two candidates! Navigation certificates were never issued. Examinations were at first held only in Cape Town, but were later extended to other centres. It is perhaps superfluous to add that, in an age of almost unchallenged British supremacy, English was the only language permitted for examination purposes.

Schools and colleges soon began to see in the board's tests a

convenient method of determining the ability of their pupils. There was therefore an early demand for examinations of secondary school standard, similar to those which were becoming popular in England. The board decided to introduce a Competition for Schools in 1864 and added a third-class certificate examination, not unlike the Matriculation examination of the University of London, into which the schools' competition was ultimately merged. The new certificate took the place of the main public service examination and a few years later the preliminary examination for the public service, designed to prevent the incompetent from attempting any further tests, was abolished.

Although there was some criticism of the emphasis upon mathematics and classics in the board's tests for schools – and many found compulsory Greek a difficult hurdle – teachers soon began to prepare their better pupils for the new examination. In this they were spurred on after the passing of the Education Act of 1865 by a combination of financial aid and inspection which had much in it of the English system of payment by results. Good instructors were in demand and Scotland continued to supply many of them. These dedicated men strove to raise standards and to give students a sufficiently thorough grounding to enable them to tackle more advanced work without trying, as a board report put it, to erect “a Corinthian capital upon a pillar of dust and ashes”.

There was, it may be added, no bar to prevent either women or non-Europeans from attempting the examinations of the Board of Public Examiners. Girls' schools were being established at this period, but our Victorian ancestors were by no means certain that young ladies were strong enough to support the strain of prolonged intellectual activity! Girls did not come forward for the board's tests and it was not until the early seventies, when the Rev. Andrew Murray's enthusiasm led to the founding of the Huguenot College at Wellington, that a move was made towards providing higher educational facilities for women. As for the coloured races of South Africa, they had a longer road to travel. There were, however, some promising signs. The Lovedale mis-

GEORGE OGILVIE was born at Calne, Wiltshire, England on 30 June, 1826 and was educated at Winchester and Wadham College, Oxford, obtaining the M.A. degree in 1855.

He took Holy Orders and became Vice-Principal of Bradfield College in Berkshire before accepting a similar post at Buenos Aires in the Argentine Republic, where he was also chaplain to the British community.

He came to South Africa in 1858 as Precentor of St George's Cathedral, Cape Town and Principal of St George's Grammar School. In 1861, he moved to the collegiate school, soon to be known as the Diocesan College ("Bishops"). Under his able guidance, this foundation rapidly rose to the front rank. Ogilvie was also appointed a member of the Board of Public Examiners in 1868, served on the university Council from 1873 until 1903 and was Vice-Chancellor for two terms in the period 1893 to 1897. His valuable contributions to Cape education were recognized by the university in 1906, when the honorary D.Litt. degree was conferred upon him.

In 1885, he succeeded Badnall as Rector of St Paul's, Rondebosch, where he remained until he retired in his seventy-sixth year.

George Ogilvie, who introduced "Winchester rules" football to the Cape, will long be remembered as a pioneer of South African rugby.

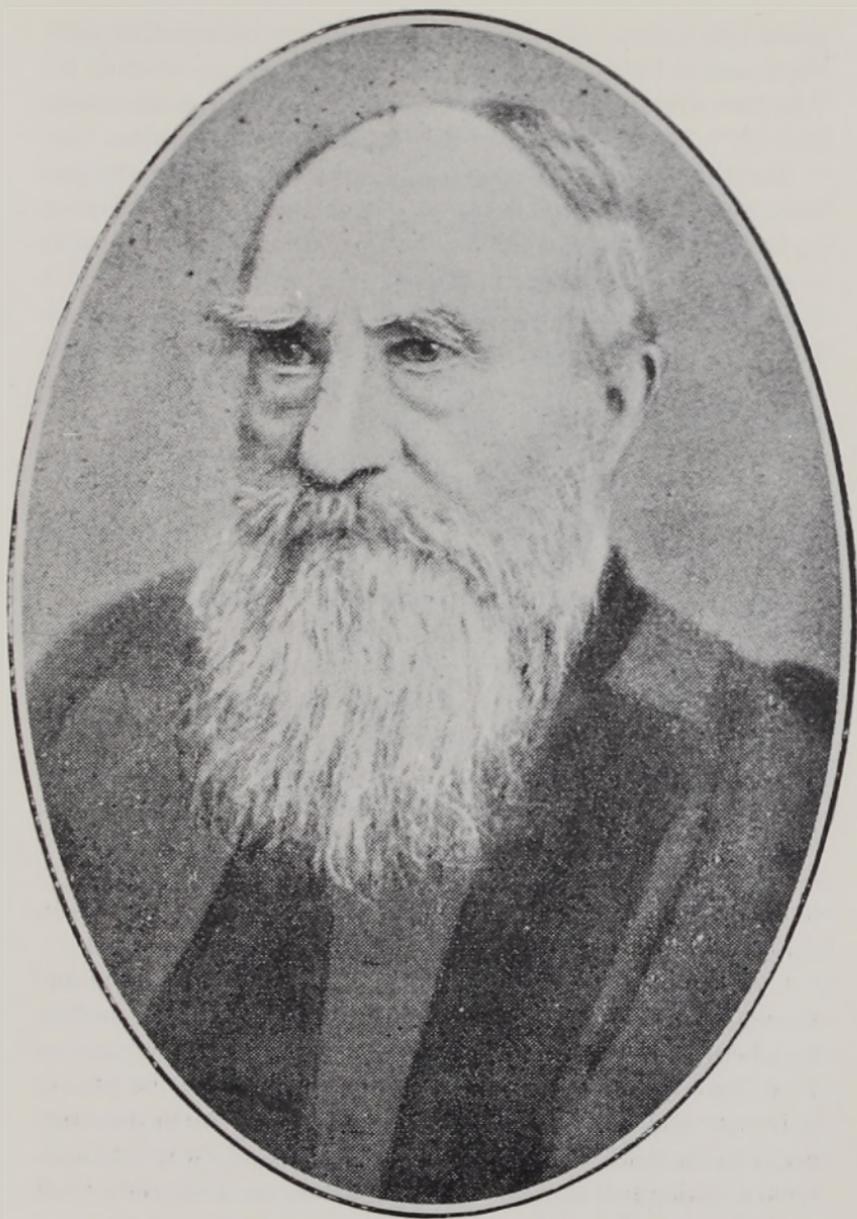
He died on 1 May, 1915 in Cape Town.

The Rev. Canon George Ogilvie, M.A., D.Litt. (h.c.)

Member of Council 1873-1903

Vice-Chancellor 1893-1897

President of Convocation 1890-1894



sionary institution was considering future expansion and, in 1867, the Board of Public Examiners also received an enquiry from the Anglican school, Zonnebloem College, about the possible admission of "a few Kafir lads" to the preliminary examination.

The third-class certificate was regarded by many as the pinnacle of intellectual achievement, but a few set their sights on higher things. The examinations of degree standard thus began to influence the teaching in the upper classes of the colleges in Cape Town. At the South African College, where written examinations finally replaced the surviving oral tests, academic work prospered under the direction of such able teachers as the versatile Roderick Noble, the Professor of English, James Cameron, and the mathematician, Childe. In 1859, J.H. Brand, later President of the Orange Free State, began law classes for the board's certificate. At the Diocesan College, no longer designated a school after 1867, Ogilvie reorganized the entire course of study so thoroughly that the Anglican institution became a serious rival to its older Cape Town neighbour.

The influence of the Board of Public Examiners was not, however, confined to the colleges of the colonial capital. Other institutions came into being – some of them inspired by Grey's interest in higher education. These began to prepare students for the new advanced examinations. Although not all of them lived up to the high hopes entertained at their birth, there is no doubt that, as Cameron was to say at a later date, "the scattered rays of intellectual light throughout the Colony were, to a great extent, concentrated and focused by the establishment of the Board".

Grey's influence is remembered in the Port Elizabeth and Bloemfontein schools which bear his name. Grey Institute in Port Elizabeth failed to make a success of its advanced work, but the Free State college at length became the nucleus of the present university there. In the Eastern Province, the Anglicans were active in the field of higher education and St Andrew's, Grahamstown was destined to retain its upper classes until the early years of this century.

In the Cape midlands, local action led to the founding of

Graaff-Reinet College in 1860. This institution made rapid strides in its early years under the guidance of James Gill, a classics teacher of considerable attainments, and Francis Guthrie, lawyer and scientist, promoter of railway development and inventor of a flying machine. The college, however, failed to maintain its position. Another foundation which, after strenuous efforts, was finally forced to withdraw from the higher educational scene was Gill College, established at Somerset East in 1869. It also owed much of its initial success to an excellent professorial staff. This included the Scotsman, John Brebner, a former teacher at Burgersdorp who was later to head the Free State educational services, and the eminent Yorkshire-born botanist, Peter MacOwan.

In the western Cape, the Dutch Reformed (*Nederduitse Gereformeerde*) Church realized a long-deferred dream by establishing a theological seminary at Stellenbosch in 1859, with Andrew Murray's brother, John, and N.J. Hofmeyr as its first professors. The Board of Public Examiners expected that some of its students would seek its higher qualifications, but the development of university education in the district came not from the seminary, but from the founding in 1866 of an Undenominational Public School at Stellenbosch. Within a few years, students there were to achieve success in the board's second-class examination. From this modest beginning the Victoria College, today the University of Stellenbosch, would arise.

Finally, the Reformed (*Gereformeerde*) Church opened a theological seminary in 1869 at Burgersdorp. Making little immediate impact upon the educational scene, this foundation was destined to develop an Arts Department, ancestor of Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education.

Langham Dale regarded the South African College as the intended "cope-stone of a public system of education in the colony". Although he came to accept that the college at Graaff-Reinet, remote from the colonial capital, served a useful purpose, he regretted the proliferation of small institutions. They, in turn, were jealous of the two Cape Town "giants", particularly as both of them had representation on the board after 1867. There

JAMES CAMERON, born on 19 July, 1831 at Tananarive on the island of Madagascar, was the son of a Scottish missionary. He came to the Cape at an early age and attended Dr A.N.E. Changuion's school and the South African College.

As a young man, he went to Manchester in England, where he trained for the Congregationalist ministry at the Lancashire Independent College and later studied at Owens College. In 1852, he obtained the London B.A. degree.

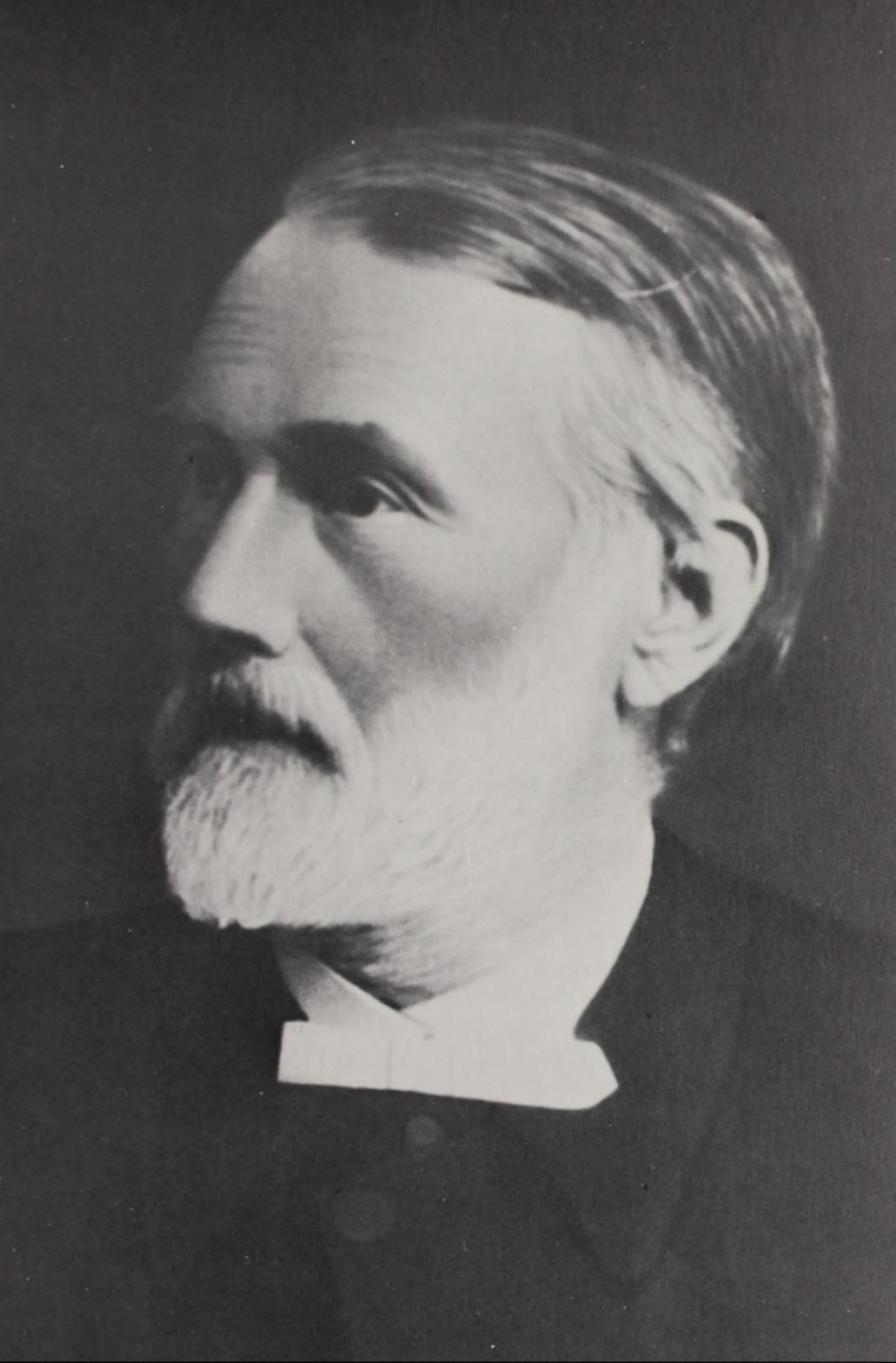
From Manchester, Cameron moved to Bournemouth in Hampshire, but soon returned to the Cape, where he taught under Dr Changuion and Langham Dale. He succeeded Dale as professor at the South African College in 1859. An excellent teacher, gentle and courteous in manner, he earned universal respect.

He was appointed to the university Council in 1873 and at its first meeting was chosen as Registrar, a position he occupied for 22 years. In 1878, he acted as Superintendent General of Education for several months. After his retirement, he again became a Council member.

Cameron received two honorary degrees: the LL.D. of the University of Glasgow in 1870 and a D.Litt. from the University of the Cape of Good Hope in 1901.

Long a regular Sunday evening preacher, he ministered to the Congregationalists of Sea Point from 1895 until 1902, when he left for England. His last years were spent at Bournemouth, where he died on 2 October, 1906.

The Rev. Dr James Cameron, B.A., LL.D. (h.c.), D.Litt. (h.c.)
Registrar 1873-1895
Member of Council 1873; 1896-1897; 1897-1902
Pro Vice-Chancellor 1897
Secretary of Convocation 1873-1876



was, at this time and later, widespread opposition to a system which permitted a teacher to examine his own students. Childe's appointment as an examiner had met with some disapproval on this ground, despite his acknowledged superiority in his field. A minor crisis arose when Ogilvie was appointed by Governor Wodehouse. It was alleged that the Diocesan College Principal had deliberately insinuated himself on to the board because the rival Cape Town institution had a member. Moreover, it was said with some justice that he had done so at the expense of another candidate for the honour, the Stellenbosch Public School Principal, W.E.W. Braid. The dispute hastened the end of the Board of Public Examiners and the university which was erected in its place was compelled to appoint, as far as was possible, "external" examiners. This, too, was to cause problems in days to come.

As the 1860's drew to a close and the colony emerged from a period of economic stagnation to move towards responsible government and new prosperity, the future course of higher education became increasingly a subject of earnest debate. Whatever shortcomings may have become apparent in its constitution, the Board of Public Examiners had undoubtedly helped to raise educational standards at the Cape. It was also attracting attention in Natal, where the Superintendent of Education, T. Warwick Brooks, considered that the younger colony should forge close ties with the board, since political federation with the Cape would probably be Natal's destiny.

On the other hand, the board lacked the standing of a full university and had largely failed in its quest to gain recognition for its examinations overseas. The University of London, for example, refused to contemplate the idea that other bodies could maintain the undeviating high standard of examining upon which it prided itself. The English institution, after acceding to a request from Mauritius in 1864, had transformed itself into an imperial university in the fullest sense, accepting individual examination entries from candidates in many distant territories. By 1871, its influence had extended to the Cape. In that year,

Josiah Slater, educationist of note and future newspaperman, began the series of examinations which would lead to a London B.A. degree. In 1872, F.C. Kolbe, in years to come a leading figure in South African life, both educational and spiritual, won the coveted Gilchrist Scholarship for further study in Britain. The award was made on the results of the University of London's Matriculation examination. Confusion was already beginning to arise between the English university and the local board, whose officers seemed likely to become reluctant agents for the greater London body.

When the creation of the Board of Public Examiners had first been discussed, there were some who had felt that the best course for the Cape to pursue would be to transform the South African College into a full teaching university with a medical faculty as well. It was then without doubt the Cape's leading academy and had that plan been adopted, the colony might have succeeded in avoiding the introduction of an examining university on the London pattern, as New South Wales had managed to do after the founding of the University of Sydney some years earlier. However, by the time the number of certificate holders approached the fifty needed to reconstruct the board, the college position was not so assured. It no longer enjoyed a monopoly and although its competitors were, like itself, simply secondary schools with a handful of mature students, they were fairly numerous and well supported.

There were, however, other reasons for refusing to entertain the idea of a teaching university. The Board of Public Examiners had done good work and had never been a drain upon the colonial exchequer. If it could be converted into a degree-conferring institution with a complete separation of the examining and administrative functions, it would, at low cost, enhance the prestige of a colony which in 1872 at last achieved responsible government. The London model had been a success in other lands and would soon be introduced into New Zealand and further extended in Canada. If the Cape of Good Hope did not found its own university of this type under charter from the

Queen, the University of London itself would probably secure an even firmer foothold in southern Africa. It would be regrettable if a self-governing colony were to remain subservient to the mother country in matters of higher education.

The old board had been a useful asset. Its examinations had set a high standard and its bursaries and awards had encouraged many to further endeavour. Its value was beginning to be appreciated by the general public and in the last year of its life it became the guardian of a special fund bequeathed by a wealthy widow, Sophia Jamison. This sum had been donated to enable students at the South African College who passed the second-class certificate examination with distinction to continue their studies in Europe. Many capable men had succeeded in the board's higher examinations; more still had obtained the third-class certificate. In addition to Elliott and Smith, others who would give their services to the administration of the future university had satisfied their examiners at various levels. These included E. A. Buchanan, J. H. de Villiers, J. I. Marais and J. X. Merriman. Holders of the higher certificates had to wait for more than twenty years before their academic successes were accorded degree standing in the University Incorporation Amendment Act of 1896. They may justly be called, however, South Africa's first home-produced graduates, worthy to be remembered beside those who qualified at a later date, when the Board of Public Examiners in Literature and Science had surrendered its powers to a greater examining machine.