GEORGE RAMSAY, LORD DALHOUSIE

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THE founder of Dalhousie University was born on October 22, 1770, in the baronial castle at Dalhousie, the first child of the eighth Earl of Dalhousie and Elizabeth Glen of Loncroft. He was the ninth in a long line of Scottish earls who received their titles from James I of Scotland. George Ramsay, patriot, pioneer, visionary, came into possession of the titles upon the death of his father in 1787.

Little is known of Dalhousie's early childhood. He received his primary education from his mother, and later attended high school and the University of Edinburgh. In later years he borrowed the spirit of this institution when he founded Dalhousie University. At Edinburgh he was on intimate terms of friendship with Walter Scott (later knighted by George IV). Of him Scott said, "Lord Dalhousie has more of the Caledonian *prisca fides* than any other man now alive."

Dalhousie was destined to be more of a soldier than a statesman. As a young man of seventeen he made his first enlistment with the Third Regiment of Dragoon Guards, and was stationed as a coronet, an officer of cavalry who bears the standard. From this point in his life until he took over his duties as Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia, he was in almost constant activity with His Majesty's forces.

Dalhousie was promoted to captain in 1792, and later in the same year was appointed a major in the Queen's Regiment of Foot. With this company he set out for Gibraltar for active duty. He did not remain in Gibraltar long, for he was called to Martinique in the West Indies where the British and French were engaged in sanguinary warfare. Here he received a severe wound which caused him so much annoyance that he was forced to return to England.

For two years, 1796-98, Dalhousie held the post of representative peer from Scotland, but the Irish Rebellion of 1798 promptly urged him to return to active duty. At that early date, Ireland was anxious to throw off the yoke of British sovereignty and set up an independent state. Dalhousie distinguished himself for his understanding of, and mercy towards, the

Irish; and, although his views were not in accord with theirs, he conducted himself in a manner worthy of his rank and softened much of the bitterness prevailing between the peoples of Ireland and England. Ireland was not to his liking, for the bloodshed of the rebellion was distasteful to him, and he became anxious to return to England.

From 1799 to 1801, Dalhousie added distinction to his military career. He actively participated in the Dutch campaign at Helder, and received the brevet of colonel for his services under General Maitland. Later he joined the forces of Sir Ralph Abercrombie and journeyed with that detachment to Egypt. Here he retained his high post and on the 8th and 21st days of March, 1801, led his troops against Forts Aboukir and Rosetta, where he successfully maintained British supremacy. Always a soldier of the first rank, he returned to duty at Gibraltar only to be called to Scotland to take up the duties of brigadier-general. He remained in this post for three years and in April, 1805, was promoted to the rank of major-general.

The year 1805 was a happy one for Dalhousie. It permitted him to return to his estate, where he took up the peaceful art of farming. Under his judicious management, the estate improved greatly, for he was considered one of the foremost scientific and successful agriculturists of his time. His fondness for the soil never left him, and it has been said he was most concerned with his view of ground whether he regarded it as a general or as a farmer. He was a soldier by profession; a pacifist by nature.

This year, too, marked a milestone in Dalhousie's life. On the 14th of May, he married Christian Broun, only daughter of Charles Broun of Haddingtonshire. Christian was a woman well suited to his temperament, and she was to have a quiet bearing on his future actions. Sir Walter Scott speaks of Lady Dalhousie in his Journal and calls her "an amiable, intelligent, and lively woman." In his *Reminiscences*, Dean Ramsay writes of Christian's "acute observation, kind heart, and brilliant wit." Lord and Lady Dalhousie were married at Castlewigg, and from that time forward worked side by side.

For three years Dalhousie enjoyed the solitude of his fireside, but in 1808 he put aside his peaceful habits and returned to duty as part of an expedition to the Scheldt. He became first in reserve under Sir John Hope. This expedition was doomed to failure. It consisted of 35 ships under the command of Sir Richard Strachem, 200 smaller vessels, and a land force of 40,000

under the Earl of Chatham. Although the British successfully captured Flushing, the unhealthiness of the climate caused widespread disease and nearly annihilated the well-appointed expedition. Holland was evacuated, and Dalhousie was appointed to the staff in the Peninsular War. His life had been almost a constant series of expeditions, yet he welcomed each one with a new burst of enthusiasm.

The British, Spanish, and Portugese armies joined forces against the French armies of Napoleon in the Iberian Peninsula. Here Dalhousie was again to bring honor to his name. Napoleon was feeling the sting of defeat, and was making a brave attempt to stem the tide against him. Dalhousie took command of the Seventh Division of the British Army under Sir Arthur Wellesley (later, the Duke of Wellington). Wellesley mentioned the splendid service he rendered at the Battles of Vittoria and Pyrenees, and for this he received the repeated thanks of both houses of parliament.

At Saint Andrew de Cuhzac, Dalhousie met the French general L'Huiller in combat and drove him with such force that more than two hundred French prisoners fell into the hands of the Seventh Division. Under the Duke of Wellington, he gave brilliant evidence of his training, and at the Battle of Waterloo distinguished himself so greatly that parliament awarded him a clasp and medal. But for a prank of fate, Dalhousie himself might have brought defeat to Napoleon.

When the British Army occupied France, he was put in command at Bordeaux. Flushed with hard-won victory, his troops were feeling the breath of freedom; yet he maintained strict discipline over his men, and the protection he offered the French made him esteemed and popular. Touched by his noble conduct towards them, the authorities at Bordeaux presented him with a handsome gold-mounted sword as a token of their gratitude for his gentlemanly conduct.

Upon his return to England, Dalhousie set aside his life of a soldier and became once more a quiet, unassuming gentleman farmer. He was about to enter a new life, that of statesman. During this period of rest, he was created Baron and became a Knight of the Grand Cross.

The Prince Regent (later, George IV) was feeling the need of a man of strong character to take over the duties of governor in British North America. While France and England were settling differences on the battlefields of Europe, another war of lesser violence was taking place in North America between the

British and American forces. His Majesty's North American colonies felt a pressing need for guidance. Dalhousie's service to his country was duly noted, and on July 29, 1816, the Prince Regent appointed him to the lieutenant-governorship in Nova Scotia.

He was entering public life for the first time, and his position was not enviable. He had been always, first and last, a soldier. He was not fully prepared to assume a position as exacting as that of lieutenant-governor; yet he accepted the post without reservation. At that time, Nova Scotia was a separate and distinct province, not connected politically with Upper and Lower Canada. Dalhousie became the final authority in the affairs of Nova Scotia and, as such, was laying the foundation for his more strenuous duties as Governor of the Canadas.

His administration was a peaceful one. He was not hampered by great opposition, and consequently put into effect various measures that proved to be of inestimable value to Nova Scotia. His first duty was to his King, and he at once set out to ascertain the attitude of the people towards their sovereign and towards the struggling United States. Thus, in 1817, while speaking of the people of Nova Scotia and the neighboring States, Dalhousie said he was unable to detect "the most distant doubt of loyalty of this Province," and that, ". . the connection between the respectable inhabitants of this Province and the States is very intimate; scarcely a family has not fathers, brothers, and near relatives settled here."

As has been shown, Dalhousie was a farmer of note upon his Scottish estates during breathing spells from his military campaigns. It is not surprising to learn that considerable impetus was given to agriculture during his administration. In 1818 a series of letters was printed in the *Acadian Recorder*, and their appearance threw Halifax into a period of eager discussion. The letters dealt with topics of husbandry, drainage, soils, crops, manures, and were constructive rather than inflammatory. Public curiosity was aroused by the fact that the author of these letters was unknown. They were signed merely "Agricola." As a result of the interest in agriculture awakened by Agricola's letters, Dalhousie called a public meeting in Halifax, December 19, 1818. Before the close of the meeting, a provincial agricultural society was organized which had Dalhousie's enthusiastic support. The legislature granted 1500 pounds to the society for the importation of livestock, seeds, and farm implements. County agricultural societies were formed, and the legislature distributed further sums among them.

This was the beginning of a new era in Nova Scotia farming. At the North British dinner on Saint Andrew's Day, Dalhousie proposed the health of the unknown Agricola in very complimentary terms, and this led Agricola to reveal himself as John Young, a Scot who had come to Nova Scotia four years previously.

Young's zeal and knowledge of agriculture and Dalhousie's whole-hearted approval of Young's policies prompted the legislature to respond more generously. The farmers of Annapolis and King's counties were lent 10,000 pounds in individual sums ranging from 25 to 350 pounds, and the legislature further aided the agricultural societies that were sprouting throughout the Province. As a result, Nova Scotia farming enjoyed its greatest prosperity. The Trade and Navigation laws were stifling the trade of Halifax at this time. Dalhousie set out to correct the abuses that were prevalent, and he succeeded in breaking the yoke of improper management. Halifax commercial life was greatly benefited by this gesture, and more abundance was provided for the people of Halifax.

Dalhousie's foremost achievement when he was Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia was the founding of the College of Halifax which was to take later his own name. Using part of the Castine Fund, a purse collected during the War of 1812, he founded a College for the education of youth in Nova Scotia. In his speech to the House of Assembly, April 3, 1820, he opened the way for liberal education in the Province, and at that time predicted a brilliant future for the College. He said:

> I earnestly recommend to your protection the College now rising in this town. The state of the Province requires more extended means of education, and the College, open to all classes and denominations of Christians, will afford these means in the situation best suited to make them generally available. I am myself fully convinced that the advantages will be great in our time, but growing, as it will grow, with the prosperity of the Province, no human foresight can imagine to what extent it may have spread its blessings when your children's children compare the state of Nova Scotia then to what it is now.

A new stimulus in secondary education was felt throughout Nova Scotia as a result of Dalhousie's zeal. Other public-spirited men joined with him in this great undertaking. Prior to leaving Nova Scotia, he officiated at the laying of the corner-stone of the new College. The institution has flourished since that time. He had been chosen to succeed the Duke of Rich-

mond as governor of the British forces in North America, and he at once completed his administration in Nova Scotia and proceeded to the more intricate problems of the Canadas.

Dalhousie's administration in the Atlantic Province left its mark upon the people, and he was worthy of the esteem the people of Nova Scotia had for him. When it came time for him to take over his duties in the Canadas, the provincial Assembly voted a draft of 1000 pounds to purchase a sword and star for him as a token of their esteem. In his speech of acceptance, Dalhousie terms it "a magnificent testimonial of your regard." Some time later, however, when he was in the Canadas, he learned that the Nova Scotia Assembly had adjourned without commenting favorably or attempting to put into force certain measures he had proposed. . . an inspection of the militia, and a complete survey of Nova Scotia. . . and he wrote to the Speaker of the House withdrawing his acceptance of the gift. Here Dalhousie showed a flash of his Scottish temperament, and revealed his rugged personal code. "When I find," he wrote, "the leading measures of my administration rejected and suppressed in a manner disrespectful to the high station in which I am placed; at the very moment, too, when those gifts of approbration are tendered to me; my duty to my King, my duty to the Province, and above all, the sacred regard I have for my own personal honor, equally forbid the acceptance of the sum voted." His rebuff of the House did not lower him in the esteem of the people, and when he visited Halifax, on a journey to England in 1824, he was received with much warmth and entertained royally.

Dalhousie took over his duties as Governor of Canada on June 19, 1820. His first task was to unite the British and French Canadians in a bond of mutual understanding and respect. The French believed they were not properly represented, and the French-Canadian party of that day had as its objective the control of the Legislative Council. The Duke of Richmond had been completely under British influence, and had not secured any concession from the French. Dalhousie inherited the task of conciliation. He was not a statesman. He had some sympathetic French admirers, who recalled his splendid action at Bordeaux, yet his position was not to be envied.

Slowly he brought the two peoples under a common bond. Noteworthy in this effort was his interest in behalf of the proposed monument to Wolfe and Montcalm which to-day bears the inscription of his name, "Georgius Comes de Dalhousie."

Also, the main entrance of the fortifications of Quebec remains known as Dalhousie Gate.

While carrying out his normal duties as Governor, he was not idle in other respects. He was instrumental in founding the Quebec Literary and Historical Society. In union with Monseigneur Panet he endeavored to improve the educational laws, "in such a way as might extend the blessings of education to all His Majesty's subjects in this Province." In 1827, Dalhousie and Panet worked out a scheme of education much the same as is now in use in Quebec. . a general body, "whose work shall be more particularly concerned with the administration of funds and other purely temporal offices and such business as may be considered chiefly secular," and, "two independent committees, one Catholic, the other Protestant, under the head of the religious hierarchy, to regulate all the educational questions of the religious denominations that each represents." Dalhousie was again showing his deep concern over the youth of the Provinces and their proper education.

He found himself in a peculiar predicament. He was sympathetic with the French and their demands, but he was bound by the directions sent down to him by the British Government. He was in accord with the policy of the Colonial Office, and it was his belief that "His Majesty's Government must direct, and the more firm its rule, according to Constitutional Law, the better it will be found to answer the character and disposition of the people and the present circumstances of the country." His loyalty to his King made it difficult for him to carry out measures of conciliation that he himself wished.

The leader of the French-Canadian Party was Louis Joseph Papineau, a man of brilliant resources. Had he been in better understanding of Dalhousie's position, much of the forthcoming slander might have been prevented. Papineau was Dalhousie's arch enemy. In the provincial elections of 1827, Papineau gave voice to the utmost bitterness he felt. He pictured Dalhousie as a political renegade whose chief concern was robbing the public treasury and scheming to prostitute the language, customs, and religion of the French-Canadians, while at the same time deceiving the British Government so that he might subject an innocent people to the ruthless hand of tyranny. Papineau had splendid powers of speech, and his words were received eagerly by the French-Canadians. As a result, Papineau was elected to office and at once proceeded to rain further abuse upon Dalhousie. The members of the Assembly selected

Papineau as their Speaker, but Dalhousie refused to confirm the selection. The Assembly was firm in its choice, and argued that Dalhousie's sanction was, "merely a formal proceeding which the constitution of the Assembly does not require."

It was impossible for him to maintain the dignity of his office and carry out the duties imposed upon him when the friction within the legislature itself was of such a nature as to forbid any progress. Dalhousie could not be cajoled. He maintained the same code of behavior he had followed as a soldier. As he steadfastly refused to confirm Papineau, the constitutional machinery was brought to a sudden halt.

The Home Government decided to recall Dalhousie and appointed Sir James Kempt to succeed him.

His administration in the Canadas had not been wholly successful. This was due to conditions outside the man himself. Few men could have handled the impossible situation as ably as Dalhousie. Rebellion might well have burst out if a man of weaker character had been in office. He was hampered by misunderstanding on one hand and lack of co-operation on the other. He would give no quarter if it imposed a task beneath his dignity.

Dalhousie's career was not yet over. Upon his return to England he was overjoyed to learn he had been appointed Commander-in-Chief of India and was to return to his first love, that of soldiering. Once again he was on familiar ground. For three years he carried out his mission of strengthening His Majesty's East Indian empire, and found inestimable pleasure in his task. Unhappily, Dalhousie was not in good health, and in January, 1832, he retired as a soldier and returned to Dalhousie Castle.

His best days had been devoted to his King, country, and fellow countrymen. Now, frequent and violent sufferings shattered his constitution, and he found little repose in the quietness of his estate. Rather, he was wearing out the remainder of his life after a brilliant career worthy of his illustrious ancestry and high rank.

With his beloved wife at his bedside, Lord Dalhousie passed to his eternal rest on March 29, 1838, and thereupon ended a distinguished career in the service of mankind. His name has lived long after him, and his endeavors, particularly in Canadian education, have lived and will continue to live as a perpetual monument to his kindness, generosity, and consideration of his fellow men.

A BIRD ON THE WING

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THE speed of a bird in flight has always been an interesting speculation, one in which, by the nature of things, definite results have been difficult to arrive at, because controlled flights over anything other than very short distances have been impossible. Circumstances have, though, on occasions permitted of the lifting of the veil, and because of this the writer was, some eight years ago, given the opportunity of measuring with exactness the speed, not necessarily the maximum, of one of the fastest birds in the world over a reasonably long distance, the bird in question being the frigate.

In my schooner I had arrived at the southern tip of the 32 mile long reef of the Cargados Carajos Islands, some 300 miles north of Mauritius, exactly at noon, a fact which was verified both by the chronometer and by an observation of the sun, which, incidentally, proved the charted position of the reef out-crop to be three miles in error. This was what I had been out to discover—necessitating the use of the chronometer. The losing rate of this chronometer was a third of a second per day, so it may be said to have been keeping mean time.

I gave the order to strike eight bells, and at this moment there passed overhead, flying low down, a flight of frigate birds, which I could not have failed to notice because of two things; it was the first time in thirty years at sea that I had seen any number, more than three or four, and in this flight there were as many hundreds, of these birds in formation; and low down. In less than a minute, however, the flight was out of sight, making due north, directly ahead of the ship. The incident, I thought, was closed, but it had given me something to remember with pleasure, and in this spirit I mentioned the occurrence to the manager of Raphael Island when I arrived at his bungalow at four-thirty the same afternoon.

"Oh," he said, "that is strange, for I too saw a flight of the birds to-day just as I was striking eight bells." This made me "sit up and take notice".

"From what direction did they come?"

"From true south."

"How many birds, about, would there be in the flight?"

"Oh, perhaps five hundred."

"And how high up were they?"

"About five hundred feet."

"At what rate do you think the flight was travelling?"

"I have no idea, they were going at a great speed, but not nearly so fast as I have seen them fly."

"At what time did you strike the bell exactly, can you say?"

"I rose from my seat at four seconds to the hour, so I would have the lanyard of the bell in my hands two or three seconds past the hour" (a subsequent trial proved this to be correct).

"And the birds were then?"

"Directly overhead."

I now told the manager what it was all about, making him as much interested as I. We took his clock, an old chronometer that I had lent to him a month before when his American timepiece had refused duty, on board the schooner to compare it with my own; for, obviously, the difference between the two clocks, after applying a small error in the old one, would indicate the exact time to within a second that the birds had taken to cover 29 and eight-tenths miles.

The difference between the clocks was 7 minutes and 53 seconds, making the rate of travel 227 miles per hour.

Had I not that day discovered the correct latitude of the southern horn of the reef, the distance would have gone down as 32.7 miles, which would have given a travel speed of 247 miles per hour. The latitude of Raphael Island was correctly marked on the chart.

In the years that have passed since this experiment was made, I have questioned many men "knowledgeable" in the ways of southern ocean birds, without one of them disputing the result arrived at, while one island-manager, a close observer of Nature in every form presented to him (as such a man is, almost of necessity, living the life he does), expressed his conviction that these birds can travel easily at 300 miles per hour. In conclusion I may by personal observation over the better part of thirty years support the manager of Raphael in his statement—"not nearly so fast as I have seen them fly".