

BIOGRAPHICAL RECORD

OF THE

OFFICERS AND GRADUATES

OF THE

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute,

1824-1886.

EDITED BY

HENRY B. NASON,

SECRETARY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATES, 1872-1886.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

BENJAMIN H. HALL.

TROY, N. Y.:

WILLIAM H. YOUNG.

1887.



Oliphant, Nott

with Mr. Van Rensselaer, the Founder, was such as led to his appointment and acceptance of the office of President on the 25th of June, 1828, which office he held, in the declining state of his health, for the period of only about six months. In 1821 he was honored with the degree of Doctor of Divinity by the corporation of Union College. He died at Philadelphia on the 12th day of January, 1829. He was an eminent divine of that day, of great learning and eloquence, and having the respect and love not only of the people of Albany but of all the Church. An eloquent scholar himself, and deeply convinced of the connection and dependence between science and religion, he was devoted to the cause of education. He married, in Philadelphia, the daughter of Robert Ralston. He was the associate and friend of Chancellor James Kent, and succeeded him as the president of the Albany Female Academy, of which he was one of the founders. He was also a patron and trustee of the Albany Academy. Dr. Nott preached his funeral sermon. He left a family. One of his daughters married J. L. Van Schoonhoven, Esq., of Troy.

ELIPHALET NOTT, D. D., LL. D., the third president of the Institute, and at the same time President of Union College, Schenectady, N. Y., was born in Ashford, Windham County, Conn., June 25th, 1773, and died in Schenectady, January 29th, 1866. He was to a great extent self-educated, having never received a college training. He studied divinity in his native county, and at the age of twenty-one was sent out as a domestic missionary to the central part of the state of New York, at that early day offering a wide field for evangelical effort. On passing through the old settlement of Cherry Valley, he was requested to take charge of the Presbyterian Church at that place, which call he accepted, and, in addition to his pastoral duties, he also became a teacher in the Academy. Two or three years later he was called to the Presbyterian Church at Albany, where he at once took a prominent position as a preacher, and was listened to by large congregations. Among his successful pulpit efforts while at Albany, was a sermon on the death of Alexander Hamilton. In 1804, he was chosen President of Union College, Schenectady, which place he continued to fill for sixty-two years, until his death, being the oldest head of any literary institution in the

United States and doubtless in the world. Probably fully 4,000 students graduated during his Presidency, and among them some of the most eminent men of the country. In the language of a well known publicist, "Union College is emphatically of his own formation; he came to it in its poverty and infancy, and has raised it to wealth and reputation." In 1854 occurred the semi-centennial anniversary of his Presidency, when there came together to do him honor between 600 and 700 of the men who had graduated under him. Dr. Nott was an earnest advocate of temperance, and published at Albany, in 1847, "Lectures on Temperance." Although he has written largely, and on many subjects, his publications are confined principally to occasional addresses and "Counsels to Young Men," (New York), and a discourse delivered before the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. He devoted much thought and attention to the laws of heat, and, besides obtaining some thirty or more patents for applications of heat to steam engines, the economical use of fuel, &c.; he was the inventor of a stove bearing his name and very extensively used. Dr. Nott stood pre-eminent as an educator, and was universally esteemed, venerated, and loved by the many who enjoyed his teachings and counsels. His labors in the temperance cause, both by voice and pen, and his many and long-continued experiments on heat, with the view of applying it to useful and economical purposes for human benefit, if not as successful as he had hoped, evinced the fertility of an intellect which loved to rise itself for the good of others. As a preacher, his style of thought, his manner, his elocution were all his own—the chief characteristic being his impressiveness. In 1805, the College of New Jersey conferred upon him the title of D. D., and in 1828 he received the title of LL. D. He married the daughter of Rev. Joel Benedict, D. D., of Plainfield, Conn., under whose instruction in early life he pursued his classical and mathematical studies.

NATHAN SIDNEY SMITH BEMAN, D. D., the fourth president of the Institute, was born in that part of Canaan, N. Y., which is now called New Lebanon, on Sunday, November 26th, 1785. He was a son of Samuel and Silence (Douglass) Beman, his paternal ancestors being of German and his maternal ancestors of Scotch origin. When he was four or five years of age his parents re-