

# The Passing of a Crisis.

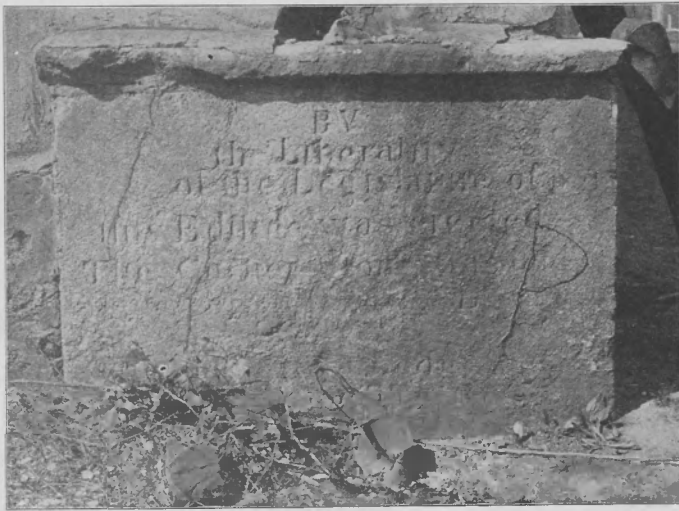
## A Study in the Early History of the University.



LONESOME and forlorn Freshman walked sheepishly down College Avenue and through the campus gate nearly six years ago. Other boys who looked and felt like they had been here for ages, they were so much at home, lounged on the terrace and the lawn in front of the Library and the Ivy Building; but anxiously as he scanned the crowd, no familiar face appeared. On the slope before the Chapel a group of students were chatting, but no attention was paid the homesick stranger,

who nevertheless felt painfully conspicuous. The space was free from students for some distance beyond the Chapel, and the only other groups to be seen were about the old benches under the locust-trees before the Yahoo.

By the time he reached the New College, the boy's heart failed and he eagerly sought some entirely concealed avenue of escape. But as he was about to turn back, his eye was caught by an old weather-beaten, moss-covered corner-stone almost at his feet, and in the interest which the illegible face of this rock aroused all feeling of lonesomeness was lost. An old wooden railing was there at that time upon which he leaned



CORNER-STONE OF "NEW COLLEGE."

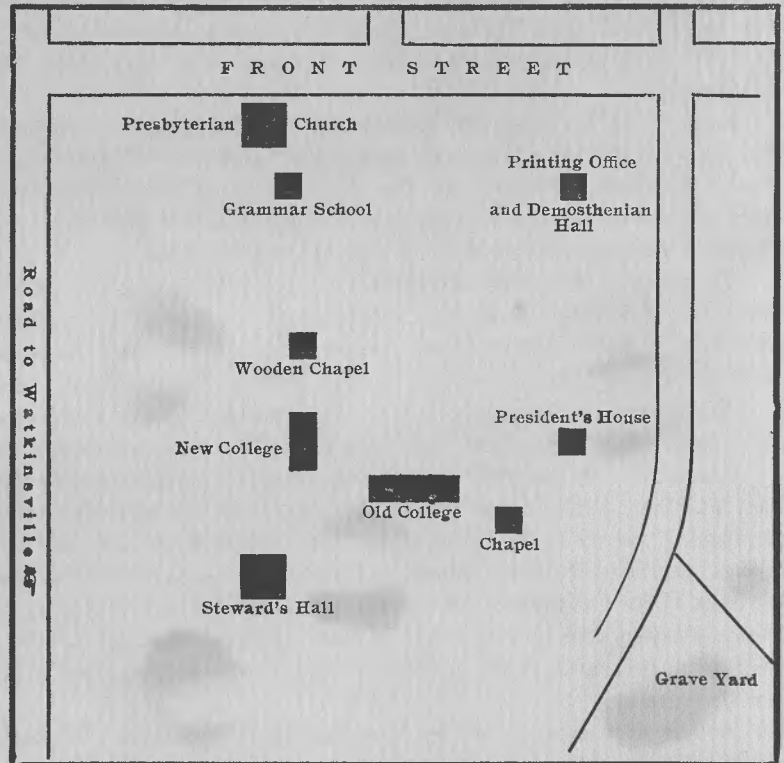
while he tried to decipher the characters on the block. The rusty gutter was pushed away, and some clinging vines he held aside, but the ravages of time prevented any of the letters being read but "By the Liberality of the Legislature of . . . this Edifice was erected. The

Corner Stone was . . .” But before our friend was fully satisfied that nothing more could be made of the inscription, he heard steps upon the gravel behind him, and was addressed by a student, evidently an upper-class man.

“I believe this is Mr. Phillips, of LaGrange; Jones is my name, Mr. Phillips; allow me to present my friend, Mr. Brown. I believe you are acquainted with Mr. Robert Smith, of your town; no, we are not personally known to him, but he has written us to take charge of you over here; oh, no, no, the pleasure is all ours; would you have us introduce you to some of the professors now, or will you stroll down toward our club-rooms?” I took a farewell glance at my friend, the corner-stone, and strolled, promising myself to look into its mystery some day. Several months after that I picked up the information that the stone had been laid thirty or forty years before the war, and that the building had been burned and rebuilt within the original walls.

Only a few months ago, while searching for material on the political history of Georgia, I found, in a copy of the *Georgia Journal*, July 9, 1822, published at Milledgeville when that town was the

capital of the State, a communication from Athens telling of the laying of the corner-stone of New College on June 24, of that year. “In the center of it,” the letter ran, “were deposited the following articles, viz.: 1. A small family Bible. 2. Several specimens of the current coins of our country. 3. A glass cruet containing a sample of some of the most elegant manufactures of the day. . . . On the exterior of the corner-stone is the following inscription engraved in legible characters, viz.: ‘By the Liberality of the



Legislature of 1821, this Edifice was erected. The corner-stone was laid on June 24, 1822, A. L. 5823, by the Mount Vernon Lodge, at the request of the Trustees of the University of Georgia.'''

My resolution had been carried out to find what was the original inscription and the circumstances of the laying of the stone ; but mere facts and dates are comparatively of little consequence to the historical student, and the completion of my old enterprise only stimulated me to further research. As far as my knowledge goes, I shall be glad to give the readers of the PANDORA the true significance of this piece of granite that has imperfectly withstood the attacks of earth, air, fire and water for nearly fourscore years. As I shall try to show, the laying of the stone marks the end of the period of very hard times in the early history of the University.

Away back in 1784 the legislature of Georgia, consisting, in the terms of the first State constitution, of "the House of Assembly" and the "Executive Counsel," made the first move toward the establishment of the University of the State, by appropriating forty thousand acres of land as an endowment for an institution of learning. At the session of the next year a charter was granted to the "University of Georgia."

The man to whom is due the credit of originating the plan of the University is probably not John Milledge, or James Jackson, as we have been taught to believe, but was a young lawyer and politician who had recently come to the backwoods State of the extreme South from the already classic village of New Haven, Connecticut. I find record of a toast given by Dr. Meriwether, at a dinner to Wm. H. Crawford by the citizens of Athens, September 3, 1822. "The memory of Abraham Baldwin, the father of the literary institution of Georgia."

One writer states that Baldwin came to Georgia as a preacher, but changed to the field of law ; another, that he was invited to remove to Georgia and accept the presidency of the State University about to be established, but found upon his arrival that the College could not at once be put into working order ; a third, that he came to the State as a lawyer, and originated the idea of its University. All authorities are agreed, and authentic records show, that he had been a student and then a tutor in Yale College, that he moved to Georgia in 1784, became of great prominence in State and national politics, and exerted a tremendous power in support of our University.

At the first meeting of the Senatus Academicus, in 1786, Baldwin was elected President of the University, but it was seen that the property of the institution could not be used to begin active work of instruction. The charter of the University vested the supreme authority in nearly all matters to the Senatus Academicus, which was composed of the Board of Trustees and the Board of Visitors. A second meeting of this body did not occur until November, 1799, when the Board assembled at the State-house in Louisville, then the capital of the State. It found itself in possession of nearly \$3,000 in cash, derived chiefly from the rent of some of its lands, and tried to select a temporary site for the University. Local politics influenced