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HISTORICAL SKETCHES.

No. 66.—THE LATE DEAN OF NIAGARA.

IN the city of Hamilton, on Monday, the nineteenth day of November, 1891, the Very Rev. Dr. Geddes, first Dean of Niagara, passed quietly away to his rest, at the ripe age of eighty years.

John Gamble Geddes was born in Kingston, Ont., on the 29th day of March, 1811. His father was James Geddes, Esq., Assistant Staff-Surgeon in Her Majesty's service, and his mother, Sarah Hannah Boies Gamble, a direct descendant, on her mother's side, from a United Empire Loyalist family. When a girl, his mother ascended the River St. John with her mother and four sisters, in a bark canoe, travelling long distances on foot with but the primeval forests as her shelter.

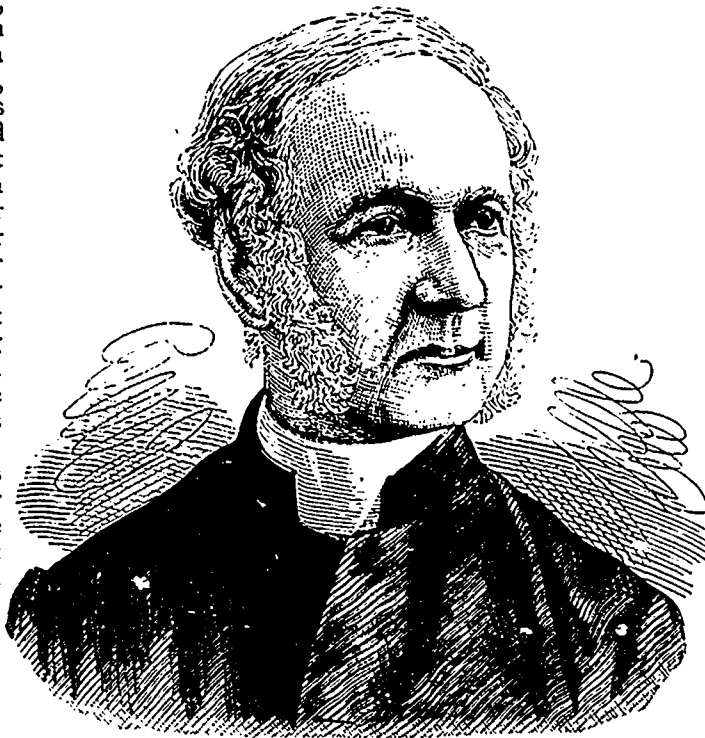
Young Geddes received his early education in the grammar school at Kingston, and at the age of seventeen years was appointed to a scholarship in divinity under the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. For six years he studied at the theological college at Chambly, and when twenty-three years of age, on August 10th, 1834, was ordained deacon. His father died of Asiatic cholera the day previous to his ordination. For three months he served as curate to Archdeacon Stuart in St. George's church, Kingston, and was then sent as curate to Three Rivers, in what was then Lower Canada. His next place of service was Hamilton. In March,

1835, when just twenty-four years old, he received the appointment of rector of Hamilton, Barton and parts adjacent. Fifty-six years have made a wonderful change in what was then his parish. When he entered upon his duties on March 10th he found there was no church building in which to worship. The jail and court house building was offered for Sunday services and the ardent young man gladly accepted. Hamilton was then an ambitious town of 1,500 inhabitants. Mr. Geddes' first congregation numbered only thirty-five people, but when the parish was organized in 1835, there were enrolled as members seventy heads of families, of whom one or two are living yet.

Up to this time occasional services had been held in the Court House by Rev. John Miller, rector of Ancaster, and by Mr. James C. Usher, a divinity student, afterwards Rector of Brantford; but in a few months after the arrival of Mr. Geddes a public meeting was held for the purpose of "furthering the erection of a Protestant Episcopal Church." The erection of the church, for various reasons, proceeded very slowly, its completion not taking place till 1839,

when on the 31st of July it was opened for Divine service. When finished, however, it was pronounced "one of the handsomest churches in British North America and a lasting credit to the piety and liberality of those who built it."

On September 23rd, 1841, Mr. Geddes was married to Susan Davidson, second daughter of the Honourable John Stewart, of Marchmont,



THE LATE VERY REV. J. GAMBLE GEDDES, M.A., D.C.L.
First Dean of Niagara.