

THE EARLY LIFE OF THE BISHOP OF TORONTO.

(From His Lordship's recent Charge.)

In 1786, having finished my terms at King's College, Aberdeen, and proceeded to the master's degree, I removed to the vicinity of St. Andrew's, and while there I contracted several important lasting friendships, amongst others, with Thomas Duncan, afterwards Professor of Mathematics, and also with Dr. Chalmers, since then so deservedly renowned. We were all three very nearly of the same age, and our friendship only terminated with death, being kept alive by a constant correspondence during more than sixty years. After leaving St. Andrew's I was for a time employed in private tuition, but having a mother and two sisters in a great degree dependent on my exertions, I applied for the Parochial school of Keilie, in the county of Fife, and obtained it by public competition. And here, at the age of nineteen, I made my first essay in the great field of educational labour, commencing a career with a deeply rooted love for the cause, and with something of a fore-knowledge of that success which has since crowned my efforts. It was my practice to study and note the character of my pupils as they entered the school, and to this discrimination which gave correctness to my judgment many owe the success which they ultimately achieved.

Among my pupils at that time was Sir David Wilkie, since so well known as one of the first painters of the age. I very soon perceived Wilkie's great genius, and with much difficulty prevailed with his uncle to send him, still very young, to the celebrated Raeburn, then enjoying the highest reputation in Scotland. It is pleasing to remark, that after an interval of perhaps thirty years, the preceptor and scholar met in London, and renewed an intimacy so profitable to one and so honourable to both. They attended the meeting of the British Association at Birmingham together, and saw much of one another during my short stay in England. Often did Sir David Wilkie, at the height of his fame, declare that he owed every thing to his revered teacher, and that but for his interference he must have remained in obscurity. Commodore Robert Barclay afterwards so unfortunate on Lake Erie, from causes over which he had no control, was another of my pupils. He was a youth of the brightest promise, and often have I said in my heart that he possessed qualities which fitted him to be another Nelson had the way opened for such a consummation. While at St. Andrew's the Reverend James Brown, one of the acting Professors of the University, a gentleman of vast scholastic attainments, became so exceedingly attached to me as to take me under his kind protection. After some time he was advanced to the chair of Natural Philosophy in the University of Glasgow, to which place he removed. Still interested in my welfare, he proposed to me to become his attending assistant, but difficulties intervened to prevent this arrangement from being carried out when almost completed, and Dr. Brown was, as he intimated to me, reluctantly induced to retire on a pension. This to me was a very bitter disappointment. But I was not overwhelmed, for God had in his goodness given me a cheerful spirit of endurance, and a sanguine disposition as to the future, which it was not easy to depress, and a kind Providence, even before I had altogether recovered the shock, presented me an opportunity of removing to another sphere of activity, and in the frame of mind in which I found myself, I was the more disposed to accept employment in Canada.

Among the many schemes contemplated by General Simcoe, for the benefit of the Province, was that of establishing Grammar Schools, in every district, and a University at their head, at the Seat of Government. Anxious to complete, as soon as possible, so beneficial an object, the Governor gave authority to the late Honourable Richard Cartwright, and the Honourable Robert Hamilton, to procure a gentleman from Scotland, to organize and take charge of such College or University. These gentlemen whose memories are still dear to the Province, applied to their friends in St. Andrew's, who offered the appointment first to Mr. Duncan, then to Mr. Chalmers, neither of whom were yet much known, but both declined. Overtures were then made to me, and suffering severely under my recent disappointment, I was induced after some hesitation to accept the appointment.

I sailed from Greenock towards the end of August, 1799, under convoy; but such was then the wretched state of navigation, that I did not reach Kingston by the way of New York and Montreal, till the last day of the year 1799, much fatigued in body, and not a little disappointed at the desolate appearance of the country, being throughout, one sheet of snow.—But a new and still more severe trial awaited me. I was informed that Governor Simcoe had some time before returned to England, but of which I had received no information, and that the intention of establishing the projected University had been postponed. I was deeply moved and cast down, and had I possessed the means, I would instantly have returned to Scotland. A more lonely and destitute condition can scarcely be conceived.—My reasonable expectations were cruelly blighted—a lonely stranger in a foreign land without any resources or a single acquaintance. But my return was next to impossible, and I was more wisely ordered. Mr. Cartwright, to whom I had been specially recommended, came to my assistance, and sympathized deeply and sincerely in this, to me, unexpected calamity, and after a short space of time, proposed a temporary remedy. My case, he acknowledged, was most trying, but not altogether hopeless; and he submitted an arrangement which might be deemed only temporary, or lasting, as future events should direct. Take charge, said he, of my four sons, and a select number of pupils, during three years; this will provide you with honourable employment and a fair remuneration, and if, at the expiration of that period, the country does not present a reasonable prospect of advancement, you might return to Scotland with credit. He further added that he did not think the plan of the Grammar Schools and University altogether desperate, although it might take longer time to establish them than might be convenient or agreeable. In my position there was no alternative but to acquiesce, and I was soon enabled to return to a healthy cheerfulness, and to meet my difficulties with fortitude and resignation. In the meantime, a strong attachment grew up between me and Mr. Cartwright, whom I found to be a man of great capacity and intelligence, of the strictest honour and integrity, and, moreover, a sincere Churchman, from conviction, after deep enquiry and research. A similar-

ity of feelings and tastes tended to strengthen and confirm our mutual regard, which at length ripened into a warm friendship, which continued without the slightest change or abatement till we were separated by death. I was left the guardian of his children; the highest and most precious proof of confidence that he could have conferred upon me, and I feel happy in saying that under my guardianship they became worthy of their excellent father. At Kingston, I formed other friendships, especially with the Rev. Dr. Stuart, the rector of the parish, and the Bishop's Commissary for Upper Canada. From this gentleman I received the most affectionate and paternal attention and advice from the day of our first interview, and our friendly intercourse continued ever after without interruption.

At Dr. Stewart's suggestion, I devoted all my leisure time during the three years of my engagement with Mr. Cartwright to the study of Divinity, with the view of entering the Church at its expiration. Accordingly, on the second day of May, 1803, I was ordained Deacon by the Right Reverend Dr. Mountain, the first Protestant Bishop of Quebec; and on the third day of June, 1803, I was admitted by the same prelate into the Holy order of Priest, and appointed to the mission of Cornwall. On entering upon the discharge of the duties of my ministry, I adopted the rule enjoined on Timothy by St. Paul, to avoid needless discussions on religious subjects, and never to forget that I was sent to proclaim and to teach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Therefore, when any came who manifested a sincere desire to know the truth, it was my duty, as it was my joy to encourage and assist them in their enquiries; but if they came merely to dispute and wrangle for the sake of victory, I refused to indulge them. By such a course, I gradually acquired authority, and, notwithstanding my youth and inexperience, I was able to repress superciliousness and to expose ignorance. In the meantime, my walk and conversation, and friendly bearing to all around me, increased my influence not only with the young but with the elderly part of the congregation. Moreover, I endeavoured to be on all occasions prepared to give an answer with reverence to every one of my parishioners who asked me for a reason of the hope that was in me. With this view I made the study of the Holy Scriptures, from which all the formularies of our Church are drawn, my daily practice; and after no little enquiry, found her Book of Common Prayer, her Creeds, her Thirty-nine Articles, her ministrations of the Holy Sacraments, and her other minor offices in marvellous harmony one with the other. This conviction set my mind at rest, and enabled me at all times to speak with the boldness of conviction in favour of our beloved Church, and with an inward satisfaction and firmness of purpose which under the Divine blessing has never changed. Notwithstanding my careful preparation, and my knowledge from personal intercourse that my people were kindly disposed towards me, I felt exceedingly agitated on preaching my first sermon. Looking at my audience I was deeply struck with my own weak and slender attainments, and the awful responsibility I had assumed, and from which there could be no retreat. I was now, in the providence of God occupying a station, if faithfully employed, of great social and religious influence, and of vast consequence both to myself and my people; and if it should happen that the same congregation, or any member thereof, should take any hurt or hindrance by reason of my negligence, I knew the greatness of the fault, and also the horrible punishment that would ensue. More than fifty-seven years have passed away since that sermon was preached, and I still behold in the book of remembrance the whole of that scene as if it were of yesterday, and I am at times even yet similarly affected. My congregation in Cornwall was at first very small, and confined to the village and neighbourhood, consequently my clerical duties were so little burthensome as to leave me much leisure time. Thus situated, I was induced to listen to the solicitations of the parents of some of my pupils who had not finished their studies at Kingston to continue them at my new mission, and also to the urgent entreaties of many from Lower as well as from Upper Canada, to admit their sons to the same privilege, because there was not that time no seminary in the country where the Protestant youth could obtain a liberal education. I spent nine years very happily at Cornwall, my time was fully, and on the whole, usefully and pleasantly occupied. My congregation gradually increased, and the communicants multiplied year by year. I sought recreation occasionally from what I called missionary excursions. I considered my parish to extend as far as Brockville, about sixty miles, and within this area I made from time to time, as my avocations admitted, appointments for Divine worship, and for the administration of the sacraments. These services were delightful to myself, and gratifying to the people scattered through the wilderness. Hundreds are still alive who were baptized at these appointments, and many a mother's heart was filled with joy in beholding her child made a member of Christ, the child of God, and inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven. In 1812 I was transferred to Toronto, then York. I left Cornwall with deep regret, yielding only to the conviction that it opened to me a larger field of usefulness. In my new parish my clerical duties were very much increased. But I still contrived for many years to keep up my missionary excursions through the distant settlements, and I can still find many of my baptized children in the Talbot settlement, the townships of Tecumseth and Penetanguishene, Orillia and Georgina, Port Hope, Cobourg, &c.

The general progress of the Church during all this time was much slower than might have been expected. In 1803, we had only five clergymen in Upper Canada, and one Bishop for all Canada. In 1819 the clergy had only increased to 16, with two military chaplains. During the French revolutionary wars emigration was next to nothing, and they dropped in by single families. It was not till the American war of 1812, and after the peace of 1815, on the return of the troops to the Mother Country, that Canada became at all known, or that emigration began to commence in any strength from the United Kingdom of England and Ireland. It was indeed for many years very small and imperfect in arrangement, nor did it come to any greater strength till after 1831. Since then it has been at times somewhat fluctuating, but on the whole very large, and attended with a proportional increase of the clergy. In 1839 they numbered 61, and in 1857, just before the Bishopric of Huron was established, they reached 178, and at this time they are supposed to be rather more than two hundred, provided over by two Bishops, with the prospect of soon having a third. Looking at the progress of the Church through a vista of sixty years, I feel it most encouraging, and more especially because I can witness to its continued peace and moderation.