

From the Church.

UPPER CANADA COLLEGE AND ITS FIRST PRINCIPAL.

Foreigners often ask, "By what means an uninterrupted succession of men, qualified more or less eminently for the performance of united parliamentary and official duties, is secured?" First, I answer, (with the prejudices, perhaps, of Eton and Oxford) that we owe it to our system of public schools and universities. From these institutions is derived, (in the language of the prayer of our collegiate churches) "a due supply of men fitted to serve their country both in church and state." It is here, in the public schools and universities that the youth of England are, by a discipline which shallow judgments have sometimes attempted to undervalue, prepared for the duties of public life. There are rare and splendid exceptions, to be sure; but in my conscience I believe, that England would not be what she is without her system of public education, and that no other country can become what England is without the advantages of such a system.—*Canning.*

I shall always be ready to join in the public opinion, that our public schools, which have produced so many eminent characters, are the best adapted to the genius and constitution of the English people.—*Gibbon.*

STET FORTUNA DOMUS!

Whoever has visited Toronto and perambulated the principal streets in search of the most prominent and attractive objects, must certainly pronounce the College grounds the greatest ornament of a city, which,—though much decry by local jealousy,—contains a more exclusively British population, and presents a more British appearance than any other town in Her Majesty's North American dominions. Amidst surrounding objects, stamped with newness, the tourist cannot expect to meet with 'spires and antique towers' or 'porches with reverend mosses grey'; but he beholds a range of buildings, wearing an air of comfort, privacy, and commodiousness, and breathing all the freshness of careful preservation. Still, the houses of the masters, and the centre edifice, which is emphatically the College, do not constitute the charm of the spot. The thriving young plantations, with every variety of foliage judiciously interspersed,—the trim verdant lawn, which, but a few short years ago, was a stagnant morass—the playground to the westward enlivened by the moving forms of the young cricketers,—their cheerful shouts softened into music by distance,—and, if it be a glorious anniversary or a national festival, the white silken banner of the boys floating triumphantly from the lofty flag-staff—these are the external charms that arrest the footsteps of the passer-by, and tell him that there is at least one spot in Upper Canada, where English feelings and habits reign supreme, and the rising generation is trained up in those good old-fashioned ways that have conducted the youth of England, century after century, to the highest pinnacle of virtue and renown.

Yet grateful and refreshing to the casual observer as must be the sight of this classic spot, still if he be told how well the system of education pursued within those walls accords with the aspect of the scenery by which they are environed, and how thoroughly English, orderly, and harmoniously various it is, he will gaze upon each group of graceful trees with additional pleasure, and benevolently dwell on the social blessings that must flow from so excellent an institution. A marshy common reclaimed from sterility, and covered with the halls and abodes of learning is not a greater improvement to the landscape, than the course of instruction at that College, over that which, previous to its foundation, with a very few honourable exceptions, generally prevailed throughout the Province. The system pursued at Upper Canada College, in its essential features, is the same as that of the chartered schools in England. The Classics occupy a conspicuous place, but there is this improvement (for so in compliance with modern opinions, and not from conviction, do I call it) that mathematical studies form an integral part of the course while it moreover includes French, the higher branch-

es of Arithmetic, the principles of Land Surveying, the elements of Natural Philosophy, and the various odds and ends that the oracular voice of Utilitarianism has declared to be indispensable towards the formation of a man of 'useful knowledge.' It would here be out of place to maintain by argument that the strictly classical schools of England have produced men of the most general information, and that the vicious practice of getting 'a mouthful of everything and a bellyful of nothing,' though it may qualify a youth for undertaking the Editorship of a *Penny Magazine*, or a *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, can never fashion him into an Addison or Johnson, a Mansfield or Eldon, a Stanley or a Peel. Suffice it to say that in the College system due deference has been paid to popular innovation; and that a comprehensive education is within the reach of all at a very moderate expense that none but an endowed establishment could afford. If a boy will but enter at the lowest form, and gradually wend his way up to the highest rank, he will leave the College,—supposing him to be only possessed of moderate talents,—a respectable classical and French Scholar, familiar with the elements of practical mathematics,—furnished with a store of general learning that will at once enable him to enter with credit upon the study of any of the liberal professions—and, what will, be a pure gratification to every right-minded parent, well versed in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, of Oriental customs and geography, and of the leading doctrines of Christianity, uncorrupted by any sectarian or exclusive interpretations.

Of the young men educated at the College but few have arrived at such a standing in their various professions as to enable us to pronounce with certainty on the results of their education as tested by experience. Yet those who have already entered on the serious occupation of their lives, whether it be law, physic, or divinity, reflect no discredit on their Alma Mater, nay, worthily uphold its reputation, and stand living examples of its efficiency to accomplish the ends for which it was designed. Amongst those of the rising generation, who are preparing themselves for professions, some of the most promising are alumni of Upper Canada College. It would not be delicate, and it might be invidious to single out the names of any living, yet why should I refrain from borrowing an interest for my page, by dwelling for a moment on the memory of William Ruttan? He sleeps in the quiet churchyard of Cobourg, yet there is that surviving of him that belongs to the associations and recollections of the College. There was principally educated. From that haven he launched his frail bark, on the voyage that was destined to be but of a brief duration. His love for it broke out in the ejaculation 'God bless every brick of it!' and had his life been prolonged to a serene old age, and had he run a career as comparatively bright as that of Lord Mansfield, he would, I am sure, in his declining days have reverted with a placid delight to the nurse of his youth, and kindled with the feeling that spoke from the heart of that great and eloquent man, when he expressed a wish to be buried in Westminster Abbey, out of respect for the place of his early education,

"This fond attachment to the well-known place,
Whence first we started into life's long race,
Maintains its hold with such unfailling sway,
We feel it e'en in age, and at our latest day."

Peace to the ashes of William Ruttan! There are school-fellows of his, now buoyant with the first hopes and aspirations of manhood, who are equal to what he was in mere learning and scholastic accomplishments; but is there one whose manners are so winning, whose disposition so ingenuous, whose temper so sweet, whose taste so chaste, and whose virtues can be listened to with such a total absence of all envy?

To Dr. Harris, the first Principal of Upper Canada College, is to be ascribed the merit of having introduced and established a system of instruction, which has already produced such admirable results. Brought up at St. Paul's School in London, one of those munificent foundations which called forth the eulogies of *Canning* and *Gibbon*, and from thence removed to Clare Hall, in the University of Cambridge, he there,—on the foundation laid in his

younger years, not by the flimsy Hamiltonian system, but by that gradual and regular process which has matured the scholarship of our Bentleys, our Porsons, and our Monks,—established a high reputation for solidity of attainments both in learning and science, accompanied by a character conspicuous for moral excellence, and the faithful observance of religious duties. Thus eminently fitted for the task, he came to this Province to try the hazardous experiment of introducing a mode of education in England, although sanctioned by the test of centuries in England, was in many respects adverse to the habits of the youth, the opinions of the parents, and the existing scholastic customs, in Upper Canada. It is not then a matter of wonder, that many difficulties and much opposition should have impeded him in the commencement of his career. Gifted, however, with a tenacity of purpose, a consciousness of rectitude, and a firm conviction of ultimate success, he overcame many obstacles that at first appeared insurmountable. Sir John Colbourne lent him the sanction of his unqualified support, and the Council, whom the management of the College was entrusted to, consisting of some of the first persons in the colony, aided him with their cordial co-operation. With all these auxiliaries and appliances to boot, a man of less equanimity than Dr. Harris would frequently have been tempted to resign the thorny path in despair, and retrace his steps to those domestic haunts, where all is established by order, sanctified by antiquity, and where the shade of Colet, a Busby, or a Warton is never startled by the outcry of innovation or the discordant gabble of rational empirics, announcing the discovery of a railroad passage to the Temple of Learning. It has been generally supposed that Dr. Harris was of too impatient and phlegmatic a temperament to be ruffled by the annoyances to which he was exposed. But the very contrary was the case. He was a man of quick and keen sensibilities, which were only exceeded by the mastery in which he held his feelings, from the imperious sense of duty. Slowly and surely he reaped the reward of his patience and perseverance, the fruits, which his system bore, became more and more visible, until at length opposition to it gradually relaxed, and, before his resignation, subsided altogether. It is not necessary to enter at large into a nute delineation of his character to set forth his worth: the testimonies that he carried with him at his departure are the best vouchers of this. From the Masters he received a parting memorial of their respect for his virtues and abilities, and regard for his loss; from the Boys, a handsome tribute of gratitude and affection; and by those who, under his auspices, had completed their education at the College, and embarked in professions, he would have been presented with a similar valedictory token of regard had not the disturbed state of the Province scattered his old pupils in every direction, and rendered it almost impossible to procure their combination for such an object. A more general evidence of his worth is to be found in the spontaneous expressions of opinion, since his departure, by those at all interested in, or connected with the College. It is marked on all sides, by such persons, that they do not fully know his value, till his absence had manifested it.—That they are sure, taking him all in all, he will never be surpassed,—and, that they trust his successor, speedily expected from England, may equal him, and tread in the path he has marked out. And it should here be mentioned that Dr. Harris earned this high character by force of sterling merit, and not by the captivating arts of popularity, or bland and fascinating manners. On first acquaintance with him there was a reserve,—almost a stiffness,—that was often most unjustly attributed to pride, but which, on a closer knowledge of him, succeeded by a liveliness and frankness of conversation, untinged by pedantry, and seasoned by good sense and quiet humour. Even admitting that he was deficient in some of those minor amiabilities which are often but a cloak for sincerity, a worldly mindness, no body ever knew him long, who did not accord him his full and lasting confidence and esteem. He was, in the truest sense of the word, a gentleman. He never spoke flatteringly of a person before his face, or disparagingly of him behind his back. He never omitted any opportunity of serving those