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## HISTORICAL SKETCHES.

No. 43—ARCHDEACON McMURRAY.

BY THE EDITOR.

**I**N the quiet little town of Niagara, in the diocese of that name, once the capital of Upper Canada, but now left far behind in the great growth of the towns and cities of Ontario, there lives a clergyman who is said to be the oldest in orders, with the exception of the Venerable Metropolitan of Canada (Bishop Medley, of Fredericton, New Brunswick), from Vancouver to Labrador. Up to but a very short time ago scarcely a sign of old age was to be seen in his tall and manly form. His black hair, keen faculties, firm and rapid step, shewed him to be of the kind whose force was certainly unabated. That clergyman is the Venerable William McMurray, Archdeacon of Niagara, whose life is historic and inseparable from the annals of the Church of England in Canada.

He was born near Portadown, Ireland, on the 19th of September, 1810, and in the following year was brought to Canada by his parents, who settled at York, then a mere hamlet, now Toronto. At the early age of 8 years, he was received into the School of Dr.

Strachan, then held in a small frame building on King street, a little east of Yonge street, and is now supposed to be its only surviving pupil. In the year 1828 he was admitted, as a student in Divinity, by the late Dr. Stewart, Bishop of Quebec, and placed under the instructions and supervision of the late Dr. Strachan, then Rector of St. James' Church, and officiated as catechist in March, 1830, in which capacity he, with James Padfield and Adam Elliott, served several stations in the country around York, such as Mimico, Weston, Thornhill and York Mills.

In the month of August, 1832, though not of the age for Holy Orders, he was appointed by the Society for converting and civilizing the Indians, as

well as by Sir John Colborne, the Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, to Sault Ste. Marie, then a terra incognita, for the purpose of establishing a mission there, and also on the north shores of Lakes Superior and Huron, the Government at that time having had the selection of clergymen for the Indian Missions. Mr. McMurray left York for his unknown mission—for no information as to its exact locality could at that time be obtained\*—on the 20th of September, 1832, and reached Sault Ste. Marie after a perilous journey, on the 20th of October, having been conveyed part of the way by steamer, part by schooner, and the remainder by canoe. The Hudson Bay

Co. kindly gave him quarters in their agents' house, which enabled him to proceed at once with the object of his mission. Having obtained an interpreter, he at once established Divine service, and opened a school for the instruction of the Indian children.

In July, 1833, Mr. McMurray being now nearly of the age for Holy Orders, left his mission and proceeded to York (Toronto), hoping there to find the Bishop (Hon. and Rt. Rev. Dr. Stewart, then the only bishop in Upper and Lower Canada), but to his disappointment, was informed that His Lordship had left for Kingston. On reaching that place he learned that he

had gone to Montreal, and to his further disappointment on reaching that city, he was informed that His Lordship had gone to the Eastern Townships (Quebec) in the discharge of his episcopal duties. There being no alternative, he proceeded to St. Armand's, now Freligsburg, where he overtook the Bishop, by whom he was ordained, after examination by the Bishop's chaplain, the Rev. S. I. J. Lockhart, on the 3rd of August, 1833.

On returning to his distant mission, after a fatiguing journey, in those days, of some 1,100,

\*The best direction that he could get, and that was by the Governor himself, was that if he went by way of Buffalo and Lake Erie to Detroit, he might receive information as to the rest of his journey.



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