

Portrait Gallery.

OUR PROFESSORS—IV.

Last, but by no means least, comes the Reverend John Scrimger, M.A.—last and only preceded by three! Alas, that it should be so, and that we should be forced by regard for strict accuracy to confess that this is not a “chair,” but only a lectureship; yet we do most certainly cherish the hope that with the unconsciousness and faithfulness of a truly prophetic utterance, it is not altogether a misnomer to speak of our esteemed lecturer under the category of “Our Professors.” We feel keenly that this is a highly critical subject, lying so exclusively, as it does, within the domain of exegetical and hermeneutical sciences. It is the record of a quiet yet busy life. The subject of this sketch is not entitled to have a national monument raised to his memory for having fought the Fenians at Ridgway. Nor has he, in some mysterious way, gained the high prestige and transcendently superior intellectual “tone,” and highly polished “culture,” that seems to cling like a charm to an “extra session” in the Old Country! He is not even entitled to the gratitude of the present age for retailing a diluted German neology, or modern mysticism; for the truth must be told, however painful it may be, he never studied in Germany. What, is it possible? A professor and not taken an “extra session” in the Old Country, nor studied in Germany—not “done” the Rhine—not even been to Europe at all? Oh, shades of Ottawa, here is a triumph of the N.P. that even transcends the loftiest conception of Sir John A.! Think of it, ye votaries of fashion who worship with your faces toward the east. Here is no exotic, no curious plant from a distant clime. Yet we admire its beauty and praise its utility. Thrice happy Canadians are we, having risen so far above the envious maxims of the age as to be able to “speak of a man as we find him,” and thus become the glorious exception that proves the rule—a prophet is of no honour in his own country, for we have him in our midst, and esteem him none the less, but all the more, that he is one of ourselves, a genuine son of this great Canada of ours—to use a current if not highly classic phrase. Nor would we like to be misunderstood in thus speaking of one who is a Canadian, has always been a Canadian, and of whom we are proud as Canadians. This is not an obituary notice, else there had been no difficulty in understanding why it should be laudatory, but a sketch of a really living and

thoroughly live man. Sometime in the year of grace 1848, in the quiet and sequestered town of Galt, in Western Ontario, the subject of our sketch was born. In 1865 he entered the University College, Toronto, at the unusually early age of sixteen, taking a scholarship on entrance of \$120, and each year carrying off a scholarship and several prizes, graduating in 1869 with two silver medals. One for first-class honours in logic, metaphysic, ethics, and political economy, and the other first-class honours in modern languages, in English, French, Spanish and Italian. The University Literary Society also awarded him their prize for public speaking. Immediately on leaving the University he accepted an appointment to the Collegiate Institution, Galt, where he taught modern languages for one year under Dr. Tassie. In 1870 Mr Scrimger entered Knox College, Toronto, to study for the ministry. His career in theology was as successful as it had been in arts. He carried off all the bursaries and prizes that were open to him, in each year, respectively standing first in every subject at the final examination of the closing year. On the 2nd July, 1873, he was licensed by the Presbytery of Toronto. On the day following St. Joseph Street Church, Montreal, sent him a unanimous call, and forthwith he became one of our city ministers.

In 1874 he was appointed Lecturer in Exegesis in the Presbyterian College. Since then he has been a member of the College Board and Senate, and also of the Board of French Evangelization. Knox Church, Ottawa, and several other congregations have extended calls to him subsequent to his settlement among us. Mr. Scrimger has in no slight degree that rare combination of intellectual and moral qualities necessary for an exegete, thorough scholarship combined with calmness and impartiality of judgment, and thorough sympathy with the sacred writers and their themes. His classes from year to year have been increasingly popular, and are now as highly so as the character of the studies will admit. It is not to be forgotten that besides his lectureship in the Presbyterian College, Mr. Scrimger has had all the duties devolving upon him which belong to the care of an important and arduous city charge. If it be remembered that he entered upon all these immediately on leaving college, when about twenty-five years of age, we are safe in saying he has accomplished a work to which few men are equal, and which speaks more forcibly for his ability than any mere verbal description could.