

THE CANADIAN CHURCH MAGAZINE

AND MISSION NEWS

Published by the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada.

Vol. IV.

HAMILTON, ONT., JULY, 1890.

No 49.

HISTORICAL SKETCHES.

No. 49—TRINITY COLLEGE, TORONTO. PART I.

BY THE EDITOR.

HISTORICAL sketches of two of our Canadian Church Universities have already been given in the columns of this MAGAZINE; that is to say, King's College, Windsor, Nova Scotia, and Bishop's College, Lennoxville, Diocese of Quebec. In point of time the former is the oldest university of the Dominion, having already reached its hundredth year, its centennial having been celebrated with great *clat* in Windsor last month. After it Lennoxville was next established, and then Trinity University, Toronto, a brief sketch of which will, no doubt, be found interesting to many.

This noble university, which Prof. Goldwin Smith says reminds him more of Oxford than anything he has seen in Canada, with its magnificent landed endowment, every foot of which can command the highest city valuation, with its high reputation throughout the whole British Empire and the United States, had like most things its humble origin in the day of small things. It owes its inception to that man of remarkable zeal and energy, John Strachan, the first bishop of Toronto. In the town of Cornwall, Ontario, there stands a little weather beaten wooden building, now used as a stable,—what a pity it could not be purchased and preserved as a relic of early days—with boys' names carved on its outside boards, names which afterwards represented men of note in Canada, both in Church and State, and this was once the great educational institution for boys in this province, being Dr. Strachan's Grammar School.

That same love for education, that same full

appreciation of its value in all things, especially matters ecclesiastical, led him afterwards to see the necessity which existed for a Provincial university. On his removal from Cornwall in 1812 to York, then a small wooden town of about 1,400 inhabitants, he found better scope for pushing what he saw was a great desideratum. As Rector of York (Toronto) his influence was much stronger than that of the schoolmaster and Rector of Cornwall, and he used it to promote higher education. The Crown had granted land for the establishment of a university as far back as 1798,

but no advantage seems to have been taken of it till Dr. Strachan put forth his energies in favor of it. In 1825 he was appointed Archdeacon of York, and the idea of a university must have been prominent at that time, for a number of valuable books may now be seen in the library of Trinity marked as "Presented to the University of Upper Canada, 1827."

Dr. Strachan, having been appointed Bishop of Toronto in 1839, found himself in a position of still greater influence, and used it at once for the promotion of his much desired university. Many difficulties, however, were encountered, and it was not till 1843 that it was established. It was opened, with a full staff of professors, on the 8th

of June of that year, under the name and title of the University of King's College, Toronto.

About that time commenced the great outcry against ecclesiastical interference in matters educational, the result of which was that the new university was wrenched from the hands of the Church and the bishop and "secularized." This was a sore trial to Bishop Strachan, but Toronto owes much to him even in a secular way. The grounds known as Queen's Park, in which the noble University of Toronto lately stood, are the result of his energy and far-seeing policy.



THE LATE REV. GEORGE WHITAKER, M.A.,
First Provost of Trinity College, Toronto, Ont.