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## THE LIFE OF BISHOP STRACHAN,

FIRST PRESIDENT OF KING'S COLLEGE.

NOTE.—In preparing these articles on the lives of the past Presidents of the University of Toronto lack of space demanded that they should be only sketches. I have, however, endeavored to trace the history of our University from its inception under Bishop Strachan, through its development under Dr. McCaul, to the time of the death of Sir Daniel Wilson.

The facts as here presented have, to my knowledge, never been collected before, and it is hoped that these sketches will prove interesting.

The Right Rev. John Strachan was born at Aberdeen in Scotland on the 12th April, 1778. He obtained his preliminary education at the grammar school of his native town, and proceeded at the age of fifteen to take his university course at King's College, Aberdeen.

It was with great difficulty that his father sent him to school, for his position as foreman in the stone-quarries of Aberdeen was barely sufficient to support his wife and family of four; however, the father and mother saved and denied enough to allow their son to pursue his studies. An accident shortly after John Strachan's matriculation carried away his father, and the son was left to fight his own battles; and this he did with his characteristic tenacity of purpose so successfully that he obtained his degree of A.M. at King's College, and also took a course of study in theology in St. Andrew's University. All this he accomplished solely by his own efforts, and, moreover, he saved enough from his earnings by tutoring and working during vacation to at least supply the "staff of life" for his mother and her family, whose whole support he now was.

After completing his course at St. Andrew's, Bishop Strachan obtained a fairly remunerative position as teacher of the parish school at Kettle and was most successful there. He had the faculty of putting his whole life and energy into his work, and also the power of gauging his pupils' ability and capacity for work. This, he himself thinks, was the reason of his success as a teacher then and later. He had under his care at Kettle Sir David Wilkie, the great artist, and the latter affirmed that it was to his young schoolmaster that he owed his success, as he was induced by Dr. Strachan to seriously study art.

We will now leave the subject of this sketch at Kettle and consider the state of education in Upper Canada at this time.

After the American War of Independence a great number of U. E. Loyalists removed to Canada and settled in different parts. Upper Canada fortunately received its share of this welcome class of immigrants—welcome because of their firm allegiance to Britain, as well as their general superiority to the usual immigrants.

Many of the U. E. Loyalists had received a fairly good education and were anxious that there should be some provision made for the education of their sons, as well as the children of the community, without having to send them to the United States, as was then necessary. Indeed, it was this patriotic feeling that was at the root of the establishing of higher education in Upper Canada.

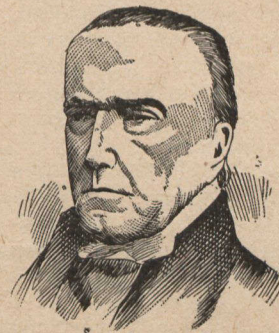
The U. E. Loyalists through Governor Simcoe, advised also by the government of Upper Canada as constituted under the Constitutional Act of 1791, secured a

Royal Charter which granted 500,000 acres of "the waste lands of the Crown" towards endowing grammar schools and a provincial university; this was in 1797.

When the Charter was granted it became necessary to obtain a suitable teacher, and with that object in view word was sent to a certain man in Scotland to obtain one.

Dr. Chalmers, the famous theologian, and Thos. Duncan, the mathematician, both received and declined the offer, which was finally accepted by Dr. Strachan, chiefly, we believe, because he was disappointed in not receiving an appointment in the University of Glasgow.

Dr. Strachan arrived at Kingston on the last day of the eighteenth century and found a very distressing state of affairs awaiting him. The head of the project of the University scheme, Governor Simcoe, had been recalled, to be replaced by a man who took no particular interest in higher education; and thus the bright prospects of this young fellow were dashed to the ground; and he himself was so disappointed that, had he had the means, he would undoubtedly have at once returned to Scotland, but his twenty shillings were hardly sufficient.



BISHOP STRACHAN.

He, however, obtained the situation as tutor to the children of a number of families and contrived to fill this office acceptably for three years, and at the same time he prepared himself for the ministry in the Church of England for which he was ordained in 1803.

He then removed to Cornwall to take charge of the English Church there. He also established his famous "Cornwall Grammar School," and taught his pupils as well as attended to his parochial duties.

At Cornwall he married the daughter of Dr. Wood, and had by her a numerous family. Before he left Cornwall he had conferred upon him the two degrees of LL.D. and D.D. by the two Universities of his native town.

In 1812 the rectory of York became vacant and Dr. Strachan received the appointment and removed to York in the same year. Here he found his services much in demand, for the war of 1812 had broken out and men of ability were somewhat scarce.

Dr. Strachan took a very considerable part in this war and contributed in no small degree towards the defence of his country. He was chiefly instrumental in the establishing of the "Loyal and Patriotic Society of Upper Canada," a society which is said to have aided as much in the defence of the province as half-a-dozen regiments. He