

CANADIAN CHARITIES.

No. 1.—THE MONTREAL GENERAL HOSPITAL.

In 1872 the Corporation of the Montreal General Hospital attained its fiftieth year. As one of the longest-established of Canadian charities, as well as one of the largest, it may fittingly take the first place in our series of sketches and papers on this subject.

From the records of the society it appears that in 1819, owing to the increase in the population of the city and the great influx of emigrants from the United Kingdom, some of whom suffered from contagious fevers and other diseases not admissible into the Hotel Dieu nunnery, that institution was found inadequate to the reception of the indigent sick, and in consequence four rooms were hired in a house in Chaboillez-square as a temporary hospital by a number of philanthropic persons, conspicuous amongst whom were the Rev. John Bethune, the Rev. Henry Esson, and Staff-surgeon Dr. Blackwood. After a year's experience of the new institution, it was thought highly desirable to erect a building which might give permanency to the establishment, and provide for a larger number of persons.

Accordingly, on the 25th April, 1820, a meeting of subscribers for the establishment of a General Hospital in the city was held in the courthouse, the Hon. John Richardson in the chair, for the election of officers.

The next day Isaac Winslow Clarke was elected president, and the Hon. John Richardson, the Rev. John Bethune, the Rev. Henry Esson, the Rev. Mr. Hick, Thomas Blackwood, and Horatio Gates, vice-presidents for the year. A sub-committee, "to provide for and superintend the household economy of the institution," was appointed, and a short code of rules and regulations was agreed upon. A moderate-sized house on the north side of Craig-street two doors east of De Bleury-street, was hired as a temporary building, and to it the patients were removed from the primitive institution in Chaboillez-square.

In November, 1820, the land upon which the hospital now stands, and which was known as Marshall's nursery, was purchased, and the citizens of Montreal, with a liberality that gave promise of future munificence, immediately subscribed over £2,000 to erect a suitable permanent building to be called "The Montreal General Hospital."

The corner-stone of the body of the present building was laid on the 6th June, 1821, and it was ready for the reception of patients the following May. It was considered capable of receiving seventy patients, and 421 were treated within its walls the first year of its existence. The building and land cost £5,856, and a debt of £3,688 remained upon it, which was advanced



COUNT VON ARNIM.

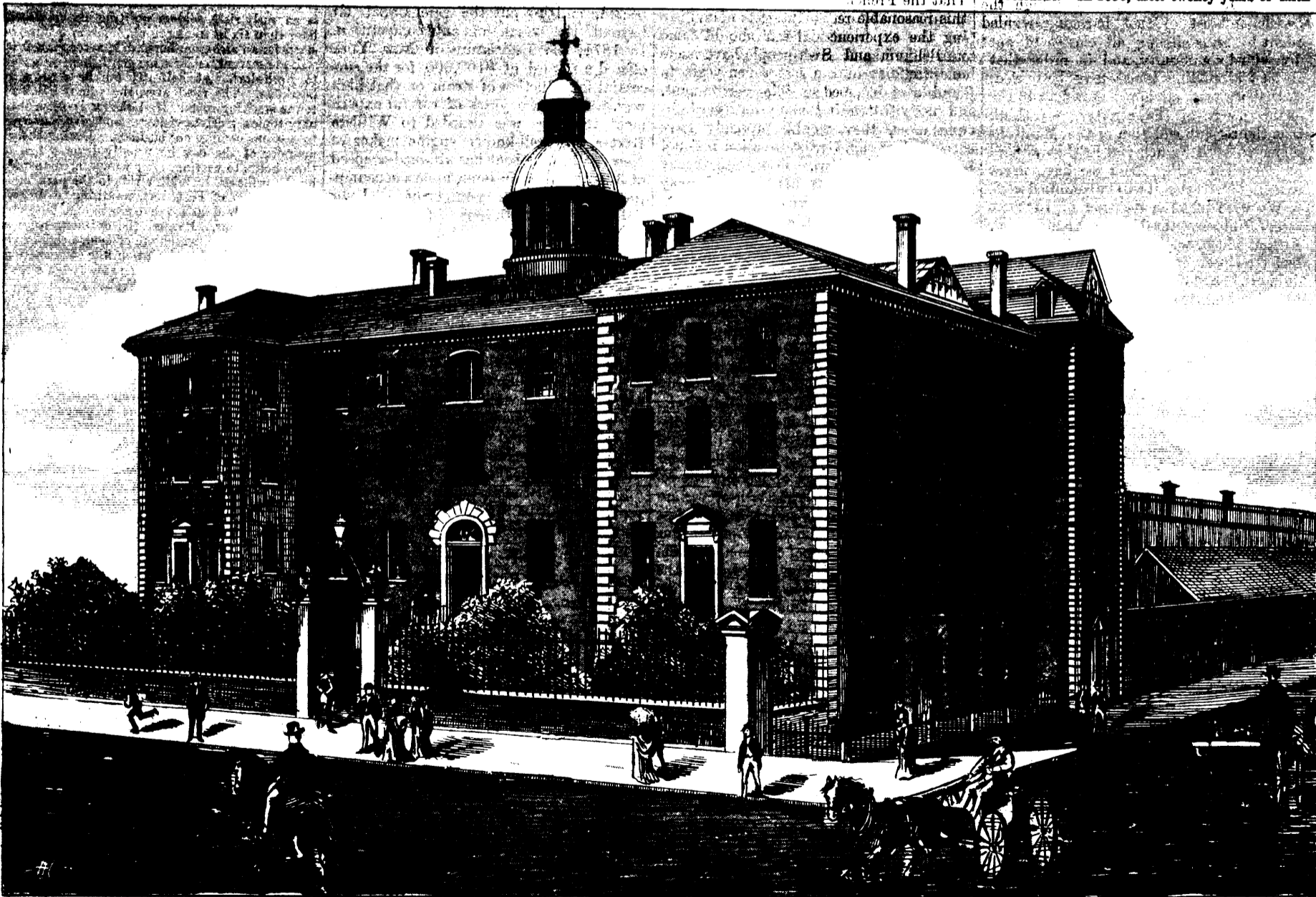
by three gentlemen, the Hon. John Richardson, Hon. Wm. McGillivray, and Samuel Gerrard, Esq.

In January, 1823, His Majesty George IV. granted a charter to the institution, and thereby secured it upon a permanent basis. At this early period of its history, the hospital was chiefly maintained by the subscriptions of the citizens, by collections in the Protestant churches, and by a small annual grant from the Provincial Legislature. During the first five years the sums subscribed by the citizens ranged from £416 to £700 per annum, amounts which compare favourably with the handsome subscriptions now received, when the comparatively small population of those days is taken into account. In the year 1831 an important event in the history of the institution occurred. The number of patients admitted annually had been steadily increasing, so that the building had become inadequate to their accommodation, and the death that year of the Hon. John Richardson (who had from the beginning of the benevolent work taken an active personal interest in its promotion, and had been president of the governing body from 1821 to 1831) furnished the occasion for extending its capabilities of usefulness.

The governors were so sensible of the services rendered to the hospital by their president, that they resolved to record their recognition of those services by erecting a permanent memorial to commemorate them. At first it was proposed to erect a monument in the hospital, but it was afterwards unanimously decided to perpetuate the memory of their distinguished colleague by building a wing to the hospital, to be called the Richardson wing—than which no memorial could have been in greater harmony with the character of the man.

In a short time the sum of £2,232 14s. 7d. was collected for the Richardson Memorial Fund, of which £1,885 1s. 3d. were contributed by Montreal, £220 by the city of Quebec, and £127 13s. 4d. by friends in Upper Canada. The Richardson wing was completed in 1832, and toward the close of that year two of its wards were occupied by convalescent patients. It proved a very necessary addition to the institution, for, strange as it may appear now, 1,853 in-door patients were treated in the hospital in the year 1831-32, before the Richardson wing had been built, and 1,717 in the year 1832-33, which was the first year of its occupation; and these numbers have been but twice attained since, viz., in 1842-43, when the in-door patients numbered 1,735, and in 1847-48, when they reached 2,061.

The Hon. John Molson, who had been vice-president of the institution from 1823, succeeded to the office of president in 1831, on the death of the Hon. John Richardson, and held it till his own death in 1835, when Samuel Gerrard, Esq., was made president and John Molson, Esq., vice-president. In 1856, after twenty years of faith-



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