

For several years before there was any regular medical school in Upper Canada—as early as during the “thirties,” Dr. John Rolph, who is deservedly known as the “Father of Medical Education” in the Province, was in the habit of receiving pupils into his house in York (now Toronto) from various parts of the country, to whom he gave a very thorough medical education—which he was exceptionally well qualified to do. Born and thoroughly educated in England, he was one of the most highly gifted of the many prominent men of that day, who in various walks of life made Upper Canada their home. Although a member of the legal profession, having been called to the bar in London, England, and a member of the Inner Temple, he was also a favourite pupil of Sir Astley Cooper, and a member of the Royal College of Surgeons of England. He loved the medical profession dearly, and was never happier nor more at home than when teaching its various branches to the young men whose good fortune it was to have so able and interesting a teacher. Some of his early pupils subsequently became distinguished, and many still occupy high positions as medical teachers and practitioners.

The Rebellion of 1837, which interfered with this work, however its occurrence may be regretted, proved to be an event which did much good to Canada in bringing about the peace, happiness, and perfect freedom she has now for many years past enjoyed. Dr. Rolph, who was a Hampden in his love of political freedom, was, as may be supposed, one of the leading reformers of the time, and sympathized with the movement in which he became more or less involved. The attempt at armed rebellion having speedily and fortunately failed, some of its promoters were arrested, and others fled the Province. Dr. Rolph was amongst the latter, and went to Rochester, U. S., where he resided and practised his profession till 1843, when the Canadian Legislature passed an act, of which he took advantage, permitting all exiles for political causes to return to Canada. Several Canadian students went to Rochester during his residence there in order to get the benefit of his excellent teaching.

Immediately upon his return to Toronto he resumed his favourite work, and formed a medical school which very shortly became famous, and did as good work in medical teaching as has ever been done in Canada. This school for many years bore the name of its respected founder. The late Dr. Joseph Workman, a man of great ability and an excellent and highly educated teacher, became, at Dr. Rolph's request, and continued for several years, his most energetic helper. The Medical School soon stood so high that its tickets were received everywhere, and its students were exceptionally successful in passing their examinations before the Medical Board. It may be interesting to recall here that when the number of students had increased so as to require more accommodation than an ordinary private house could furnish, the class-room first fitted up for them formed the end of a frame building in Dr. Rolph's yard. One part of this room had plain pine seats in it, ranged one above the other, while the table behind which Dr. Rolph and the other lecturers sat when they lectured, was the vat in use for anatomical purposes. The rest of this room was provided with dissecting tables on trestles, and this constituted the dissecting room where a great deal of good dissection was