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## HISTORICAL SKETCHES.

No. 31—ALEXANDER NEIL BETHUNE, D. D., D. C. L., SECOND BISHOP OF TORONTO.

By THE EDITOR.

**T**HE subject of the present sketch was born at Williamstown, County of Glengarry, Ontario, then called "Upper Canada," on August 28th, 1800. He was the fifth son of Rev. John Bethune, the first Pres-

byterian minister (old kirk) in Canada, who came to this country from North Carolina with the United Empire Loyalists in 1783. Facilities for education in those early days of Canada were exceedingly limited. The sons of gentlemen were almost entirely dependent for it upon the famous Grammar School at Cornwall of Rev. John Strachan, afterwards First Bishop of Toronto. Himself a Presbyterian, but embracing from conviction the Episcopal form of government as being in accordance with the constitution of the Church from earliest times, he was the means of inducing many others to take a similar step, and among them young Bethune, son of a Presbyterian minister, but afterwards second Bishop of Toronto. His first acquaintance with Dr. Strachan is thus graphically described by himself in his interesting and valuable "Memoir of Bishop Strachan":—

"It was one of those bright warm mornings in early May which our Canadian climate occasionally affords, that a lad about ten years of age was making his way to Cornwall on horseback. He was attended by a trusted servant man, across the saddle of whose horse was slung a pair of capacious

saddle-bags containing the youths modest wardrobe and supply of books. This was the only practicable mode of conveyance at that season of the year, and in some places floating "corduroy" bridges rendered the road rather hazardous, especially to so inexperienced a horseman. He was full of glee at the idea of entering the renowned school at Cornwall and allowed no gloomy presages to overcloud his bright hopes; but there was many a sad day to mingle with the joyous ones that came after; a monitor of

the future life,—a lesson conveyed thus early that even youth's hopeful season is not all serene and bright."

Arrived at the school he was soon under the care of the Principal, that sturdy and indefatigable Scotchman, whose name is so closely connected with the history, ecclesiastical and civil, of this country, and thus commenced between preceptor and pupil a life-long and never broken friendship till the former, as Bishop of Toronto, was called to rest in his 90th year, leaving the latter, himself in his 68th year, his successor.

In 1812 Dr. Strachan was appointed Rector of York (now Toronto), and in 1819 Mr. Bethune joined him there as an assistant in the Grammar

School (for the good Doctor still kept up his scholastic establishment), and as a student in Divinity. York was then "a little town of about 1,000 habitants with but three brick houses in the whole place". His journey from Montreal, where he was a student, to York occupied a fortnight. Now a business man can leave Montreal in the evening, get a comfortable night's rest on a palatial sleeping car and arrive in Toronto in time for business hours next morning. Young Bethune's journey was by lumber waggon, open boat, steamer and stage. A



RT. REV. DR. BETHUNE,  
Second Bishop of Toronto.