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Literature.

An Historical Sketch of Columbia College, in the State of New York.—By A. F. Moore, Esq., President of the Institution.

Although the volume in question has been handed to us by Mr. Moore purely as a testimony of regard, and without any view to a notice of a publication which has been printed solely for the College, the foundation and history of which he has been at some pains to trace, the subject bears too much analogy to the disputed question which has long agitated, and still continues to agitate this country, not to be of interest to the generality of our readers. We will, therefore, take the liberty of quoting, from this well-written volume, the learned author's account up to October, 1754, when the Royal Charter of what was then King's College passed the seals, giving the first scientific institution of the kind to New York.

And here it is worthy of observation, that, while the City of New York had not a printing press until seventy years after its first settlement, or a college in twice that period of time, Boston possessed both in little more than six years from its first settlement. After this, it will not be wondered that the Bostonians should boast of that superior polish and refinement which strangers so usually, and we believe justly, ascribe to them. The feelings, opinions, prejudices, and even the sensibilities of men are received in a great degree from the manners and example of their forefathers.

"The settlement of New Amsterdam, under the auspices of a trading company, by men chiefly occupied in the pursuit of gain stamped on the City of New-York, even from its origin, a character which, though determining its destiny, favoured as it is by various circumstances, to become, what it seems fast tending to be, the greatest emporium of the world, was ill-suited to advance the cause of science or of letters, except in so far as the former, by its subservience to useful arts, might seem calculated to promote the utilitarian views of men devoted to the acquisition of wealth.

This colony, it is true, was founded by Holland during the most glorious period of her history; but there was nothing about it of a nature to invite the statesmen, philosophers, scholars, and artists of the parent state; nor was there anything in the political or the religious condition of the now free and prosperous republic, to compel her citizens to seek elsewhere an asylum. With the exception, therefore, of civil and religious functionaries—and among the former Governor Stuyvesant is entitled to especial notice—our Dutch ancestors were almost entirely absorbed in trade.

The English, who, on the transfer of the province in 1674, came in, were for the most part as indifferent to learning as the Dutch

had been; and even sixty-seven years afterwards there were, in all the province, to be found but ten men who had received a collegiate education. The Huguenots, and the Germans of the Palatinate, who fled hither from religious persecution, were men who might, like our eastern brethren, have turned their thoughts to the foundation of a seat of learning; but their comparatively small number, and difference of language, made them, for a long time, strangers, as it were, in the land which afforded a refuge.

This diversity of language—for Dutch, English, French, and German, were all spoken in the province—and a corresponding difference of religion, either as to doctrine or external forms, were no doubt among the causes which so long retarded the establishment of a college in New York. For a college was, by our ancestors, rightly regarded as a religious, no less than a scientific and literary institution; and they may have found it hard to combine the heterogeneous elements of their social system in any harmonious action on a subject of such near concernment. It appears, too, that a further reason for this delay was a diversity of opinion as to the most eligible situation for a seminary of learning. The author of a pamphlet written, as is thought, not long before the establishment of our college, says: "It gives me pleasure to understand, that the founding of a college in this province begins now to be seriously considered; and as this great work seems chiefly retarded by the difficulty of agreeing on a proper place for fixing it, I beg leave to submit my impartial thoughts on this head to the consideration of the public. As to the situation, then, I cannot help being surprised to hear it disputed; some retired corner, either within, or close by, the City of New York, being certainly the only proper place in this province for erecting a college."

It was not till 1693, about seventy years after the settlement of our city, that its first printing press was set up, and sixty-one years later still before its college was established. How different in this respect the course of Boston! Its first settlers being men who understood and felt the importance of education—who were, moreover, of one nation, one language, and as to religion, mostly of one mind—we find them, only six years after the first settlement of their city, adopting measures for the erection of a college; at which, two years later, in 1638, the regular course of academic studies was commenced; and in the following year, 1639, the first, and which for many years continued to be the only printing press in these provinces, was set up at Cambridge as an appendage to its college.

At what period the design of establishing a college in New York was first seriously entertained does not appear. The earliest intimation that has been discovered of any such design "is contained in the records of Trinity Church. From them it appears, that as early as the year 1703, the Rector and Wardens were directed to wait upon Lord Cornbury, the Governor, to know what part of the King's Farms, then vested in Trinity Church, had been intended for the college which he designed to have built."

Some such plan was thought of again, it

seems, in 1729, during Berkeley's residence in this country; and when disappointed as regarded Bermuda, he sought to transfer the establishment which had been intended for that island to "some place on the American continent, which would probably have been New York."

But Berkeley's benevolent design having altogether failed, we find no mention of this subject until near twenty years afterwards, when several laws of the colony were passed for raising moneys by way of lottery, towards the founding of a college therein; and Bishop Berkeley, in a letter of August 23, 1749, to Dr. Johnson, who resided then at Hartford, in Connecticut, says: "For the rest, I am glad to find a spirit toward learning prevails in those parts, particularly New York, where you say a college is projected, which has my best wishes."

The earliest of the laws just now alluded to, received the Governor's assent on the 6th of December, 1746, and was entitled "An act for raising the sum of two thousand two hundred and fifty pounds, by a public lottery for this colony, for the encouragement of learning, and towards the founding a college within the same."

Other similar acts followed, and in November, 1751, the moneys raised by means of them, amounting then to £3,443 18s., were vested in trustees. Of these trustees, ten in number, two belonged to the Dutch Reformed Church, one was a Presbyterian, but seven were members of the Church of England, and some of these seven were also vestrymen of Trinity Church. These circumstances—the known sentiments of this large majority of the trustees, their well understood and very natural desire, that the proposed college should be connected with their church—might sufficiently account for the offer made to them by Trinity Church, not long after their appointment, "of any reasonable quantity of the Church farm (which was not let out), for erecting, and use of a college." From what has been already stated, however, respecting the first mention of a college in the province—from the inquiry addressed by Trinity Church to Lord Cornbury, in 1703—it may not unreasonably be inferred, that the then recent grant of the King's Farm to that corporation had been made with a view to the advancement of learning as well as of religion; that some condition to that effect had been at least implied, on occasion of that grant.

If such were the case, the present offer from the church was but the carrying out, after a lapse of fifty years, of this original design.

As regards the offer now made to the Trustees, it seems highly probable that some such conditions as we find afterwards expressed in the conveyance from the church to the college, when actually made, were, from the first, in contemplation of the parties, and understood between them; but neither in the proposal from the church, on the 8th of April, 1752, nor in the report made thereof by the trustees to the Assembly, more than two years afterwards, is there mention of any conditions whatever. The natural inference, however, which has been suggested, as to their existence, and the jealous apprehensions entertained of any, the smallest, approach to a church establishment within the