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EDUCATION.

THE COLLEGES OF CANADA.

I.

The Laval University.

(Continued from our last.)

Mr. Holmes was born at Windsor, in the state of Vermont, of a protestant family, he was studying for the ministry in the Wesleyan Church, when he became a convert to the catholic faith. He then went to the Montreal College, where he entered the highest class, that of philosophy, and was subsequently admitted to the study of the theology. He was a professor for sometime in the Nicolet college, and, after taking priest's orders was appointed Vicar, or assistant to the Curé of Berthier, which parish he left for a mission in the Eastern Townships. He entered the Seminary of Quebec, as a professor in 1828, and was soon after elected one of the directors of this institution. Striking originality and great talent, both in the pulpit, and in the professor's chair, attracted much attention towards the young priest, and he immediately became extremely popular. He was appointed director of the studies in the minor seminary, and among the principal reforms, he at once introduced into the system of teaching, were: the study of the Greek language, which had never previously been attempted; the teaching of geography in the junior classes on an improved principle, that of

history by means of lectures delivered by the professor, an outline of which, the pupils were required to give in writing, at the meeting following each lecture; also, Algebra and the elements of geometry, in the junior classes; a greater development of the study of natural history, and of natural philosophy in the higher classes, and the cultivation of vocal and instrumental music, and of drawing, which, had previously been much neglected.

He created a considerable sensation by the introduction of dramatic performances, music and dialogue, in public examinations thus rendering them more attractive and entertaining, contrasting most strikingly with the cold and formal *plaidoyers* which up to his time had been the only relief and compensation afforded to either the pupils or the public, for the length and tediousness of ordinary school exhibitions. The other colleges, and even the common schools adopted the same practice; but latterly, it became necessary to check it as it in some measure trespassed beyond its proper limits.

Every thing that could be done to create emulation among the students and to enliven and pleasantly diversify the monotony of a college life was studiously and successfully attended to by the new principal. During play hours in the long winter evenings he gave lectures which were more sought after, even by the youngest pupils, than any other kind of recreation. He accompanied them by illustrations with the aid of the magic lantern, and experiments in natural philosophy and chemistry; but no seasoning was more acceptable than the many humorous and interesting anecdotes which he would from time to time introduce in those lectures.

On a holiday he would take out the pupils on some botanical or mineralogical excursion which was always enlivened by a few good stories, and crowned by a little feast, the whole being conducted in that mysterious and almost surreptitious manner which, is so charming in the eyes of youth. His