

UNDERGRADUATE LIFE AT TRINITY UNIVERSITY.*

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THOSE who are familiar with the early history of education in this Province of Ontario will not need to be informed as to the foundation of Trinity University, Toronto, which, indeed, together with the very interesting attendant circumstances, forms its most important chapter. I say the most important chapter, because the Trinity of to-day is the direct outcome of that movement to which we owe the existence in Ontario of any degree-conferring university. The men of that time recognized, as is more strongly realized now, that—apart from the offensive expression of recent growth, “the commercial value of a degree”—the progress in higher education is the effectual sign of a broadening national sentiment, and that a university in a new country is a necessity to those who have formed high ideals in the matter of self-culture.

To give a detailed account of those stirring events which led to the foundation and suppression of King's College, and the subsequent foundation of Toronto University and Trinity, is not the purpose of this article. The facts, however, are briefly these: A royal charter was granted in 1827 to the University of King's College, to instruct the youth of the province in “sound learning and the principles of the Christian religion”; in the year 1843, King's College was opened and lectures commenced. Almost the entire credit for its foundation, and for the success which attended its seven years of existence, is due to that remarkable man, John Strachan, first bishop of Toronto. King's College, however, was not destined to continue in its original name and style for very long. Almost from the granting of its charter, and with increasing vehemence from its inauguration, it was beset by the attacks of enemies and disturbed by denominational quarrels. Without going minutely into the question, suffice it to say, that the

religious character of the institution and the predominance in authority of the Established Church of England and Ireland formed the basis of contention. The attacks continued, with the result that on January 1st, 1850, a bill became law secularizing, or, rather, suppressing, King's College, and confiscating its endowment, which was vested in a new corporation of a new university, to be known by the name and style of Toronto University. Thus the fruit of John Strachan's labors was destroyed and his life's hopes blasted. He was, however, made of sterner stuff than that which despairs, and in April of the same year a petition was addressed to Queen Victoria for the granting of a charter to Trinity University, “in which instruction in the sciences may be combined with a sound religious education.” This petition, signed by 11,731 persons, was ultimately successful. In the summer of this year Trinity Medical College was projected, or organized, by Drs. Hodder and Bovell. In April, 1851, the cornerstone of the new Trinity University buildings was laid. On Jan. 15th, 1852, the ceremony of inauguration was performed and the university formally opened for the business of instruction. Thus Trinity was founded; and it has gone on and prospered. Its *modus operandi* purports to be fashioned, as far as may be, along those lines that have, in the “old country,” been subjected to the test of time and not found wanting. Not the least of the universities of this continent in its equipment for the study of the arts and sciences, Trinity takes its stand not on class-room work *alone*, but on the excellence of its corporate life. The Hon. J. M. Woolworth, Chancellor of the Diocese of Nebraska, in the course of an address delivered in Toronto, thus in part expressed himself: “A visitor from our side in Toronto, passing a day or two in the precincts of Trinity, has

* See *Frontispiece*.