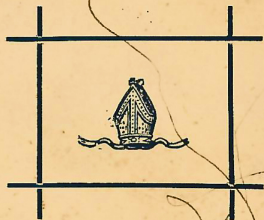
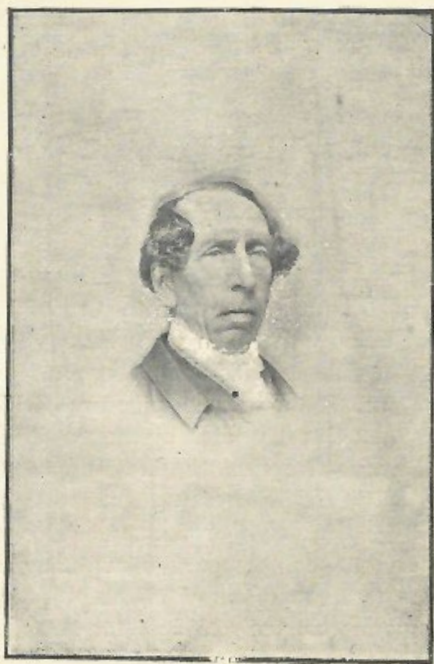


SKETCH OF A COUNTRY PARISH.
S. GEORGE'S, ETOBICOKE,
1844-1894.



" Once I saw a church,
Amid the trees it stood,
And reared its little steeple cross
Above the sweet green wood."

—COXE.



Rev. H. C. Cooper.

SKETCH OF A COUNTRY PARISH.

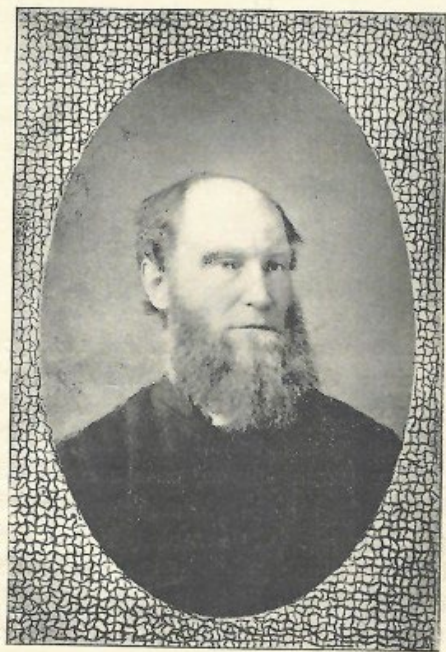


S. GEORGE'S, ETOBICOKE.

1844-1894.



ABOUT nine miles from the City of Toronto, midway between the little villages of Lambton Mills and Islington, from the midst of a clump of pine trees, which surmount a pretty knoll by the side of Dundas Street, there rises the cross-tipped spire of S. George's Church. For fifty years it has stood a landmark to all the neighborhood, and grievously indeed would the people mourn should aught of ill chance deprive them of this familiar object. What sacred memories cluster round it for them. What mingled thoughts of joy and sorrow does it bring to them; what changing, varying scenes has it looked down upon during those fifty years it has stood there unmoved. Fifty years, a short time in the life of



Rev. Canon Tremayne, M.A., D.D.

the nation or the church, yet how long a period in the life of individuals! But two or three of those who saw it built are now surviving to tell its history. In these few pages which follow I will endeavor to sketch briefly what I have been able to gather from them, and from the scanty notices in the vestry, of the history of this church and parish through those fifty years.

The township of Etobicoke is one of the earliest settled in Ontario, patents for lands in it dating back as far as 1798.

In the early years of the decade, 1820-30, John Strachan, then Archdeacon of York, commenced holding services in a small log school-house in the village of Mimico, and also at the village of Weston.

In 1832, the frame church, now used as a Sunday School-house, was built at Mimico, on land given for the purpose by Mr. W. Gamble. For a time this supplied the spiritual wants of the settlers between the lake and Weston, Dr. Philips discharging the duties of Rector in connection with his Incumbency of Weston. In one of the Church Records we read, however, that in 1837, in addition to services at Mimico and Weston, Dr. Philips conducted services at a third place in the township, and though we can-



Rev. H. O. Tremayne, П.А.

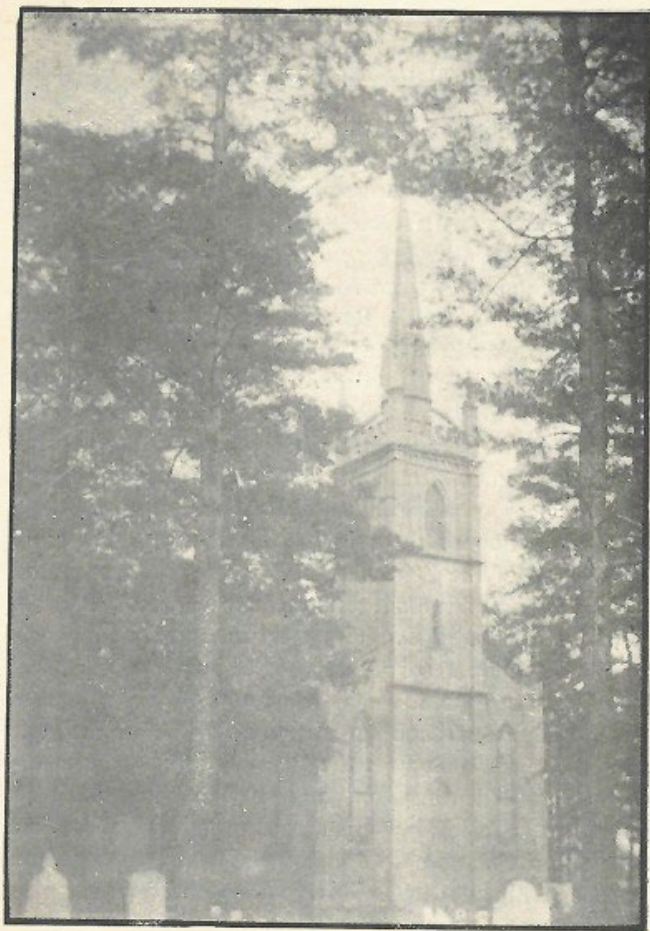
not say with certainty, yet it seems most probable that these services were held in the limits of the present parish of S. George's. At any rate, early in the forties, it was felt that some further provision was necessary for the spiritual needs of the township, and in 1844 it was resolved to build a church about the centre of the township, between the villages of Islington and Lambton Mills. A lot was given—the present site—a lovely situation, commanding from its summit a view of all the country round, by Mr. Wm. Gamble, and operations were begun some time in 1844. The contractors for the building were Messrs. Petch and Manning, the latter, the well-known Alexander Manning, Esq., of Toronto. Owing to some cause or another, the building does not seem to have been completed until 1846. It was of rough-cast, with the old-fashioned windows—in those days people believed in lots of light—but the most striking feature was the lofty spire rising up above the trees, in height a hundred feet, whose tinned sides sparkled and gleamed in the sunlight so as to be visible for miles around.

In that same year, 1846, the deed of the lot given by Mr. Wm. Gamble was executed, deeding the property, above an acre, to the Lord Bishop of Toronto,



Interior of Old Church of 1844.

and five years later an adjoining lot of over two acres in extent was purchased and laid out as a cemetery for the parish. For the first two or three years the Rev. Dr. Philips, assisted by his son-in-law, the Rev. C. Dade, discharged the duties of Incumbent. In 1846, the Rev. H. C. Cooper, of Essex, was appointed assistant. Mr. Cooper first resided in what was known as "Runnymede House," the homestead of the Scarlett family, but afterwards built himself a residence just behind the church lot, a charming place, where his widow still resides. In 1847, on Dr. Philips' death, Mr. Cooper was appointed Rector of Christ Church, Mimico, with the Incumbency of Weston. Early in the fifties, Weston became a separate charge. On June 5th, 1859, an event of great interest took place, namely, the consecration of S. George's Church, by the Bishop of Toronto. The request for the Consecration, which is preserved in the Synod Office, Toronto, bears the signatures of Dr. T. Beatty and Mr. Jas. Moore, as churchwardens. The next eighteen years are a record of the usual story of parish life, with its times of prosperity and of adversity. These years were the years when party feeling in the church was highest, and this parish was not exempt from its blighting effects.



Exterior of Old Church of 1844.

In September, 1877, the Rev. H. C. Cooper, after a Rectorship of thirty years, died, leaving behind him a record of a life of hard and faithful work in the Master's Vineyard. In October of that same year, the Rev. F. Tremayne, Incumbent of Newmarket, and Hon. Canon of S. James' Cathedral, Toronto, was appointed Rector, by the Rt. Rev. A. N. Bethune, Bishop of Toronto, and on Oct. 28th, 1877, was inducted as such by the Ven. Archdeacon Whitaker. The great growth of Toronto and its immediate suburbs so increased the work in the southern portion of the township, that in 1888 it was found necessary to engage the services of a Curate to take especial charge of the upper portion of the parish. The Rev. H. H. Johnston, now of the Diocese of Michigan, was appointed. He remained but a short time, however, and in June, 1889, the Rev. H. O. Tremayne, Incumbent of Shannonville, Diocese of Ontario, was appointed his successor. In 1892, it was deemed advisable to separate the northern and southern portions of the parish, and in January of that year the Bishop's mandate was received, constituting the congregation of S. George's Church a separate parish, and appointing as first Rector, the Rev. H. O. Tremayne. It had been for some time felt that the old church which had done duty so

long was no longer, without extensive repairs, a suitable building to be devoted to God's service, so it became the first duty of the new Rector to try and have the necessary improvements made. In the spring of the present year, 1894, it was decided to celebrate the Jubilee of the church by undertaking the work of renovation. Subscriptions were obtained, plans were drawn up by Mr. Ford Howland, of Toronto, and on July 29th was held the last service in the old building. On the following day the work of tearing down was begun, and from that time the work of improvement went on rapidly, until on Oct. 14th, 1894, the Lord Bishop of Toronto re-opened the church for Divine service.

A slight sketch of the improvements undertaken may be of interest here. The old building, which stood upon stone piers, was placed upon a solid stone foundation, which was built down sufficiently to give room for a fine basement Sunday school-room, the walls were bricked and the large windows—"seventy-two paners" as they were called—were replaced by smaller ones of Cathedral rolled glass in lead settings. The old gallery over the west door, recalling the days of the bass viol and the village beadle with his stick, was taken down, and the organ placed in a niche at the north-east side of the church, the old cumbersome

pulpits removed, and a more modern prayer desk and lectern substituted. The total improvements cost something in the neighborhood of \$1,600, and the church as it now is, is one of the neatest and most convenient country churches in the Diocese.

The re-opening services on Sunday, October 14th, were full of interest, and will long dwell in the memory of the people of S. George's Parish. His Lordship the Bishop, in his address at the morning service, referred to the fact that this was the fourth church in the Diocese he had been present at on its jubilee, and pointed out the great mission the church had before her in the cause of the Unity of Christendom.

At the afternoon service, the Rev. Canon Tremayne, under whose charge S. George's Parish was before it became an independent Parish, preached, taking as his text "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

In the evening, the preacher was the Rev. H. Bedford Jones, of Trinity University.

This slight sketch of the history of S. George's Church, would, indeed, be very incomplete were no mention made of the names at least of some of her most prominent sons. The name of Wm. Gamble will ever be associated with the history of the church, one of her most devoted sons and the donor of the

land on which the church stands. The Fishers, the Scarletts, the Howlands, the Moores, the Mussons, all in their time workers and benefactors of the church. At present the Churchwardens are Messrs. Jno. Strong and T. Musson, and the Lay Delegates to the Synod, Messrs. J. Scott, T. W. Musson and Wm. Lockett.

