

"THE ADOPTED DAUGHTER" IDENTIFIED. A 200-page autobiography was printed in 1858 by Hitchcock, Tillotson and Stilwell, of Ogdensburg, N.Y., in an edition of five thousand copies. It was entitled *The Adopted Daughter; or, The Trials of Sabra*. The identity of the writer was cleverly disguised, and nowhere within the covers of the book did an author's name appear. The Ogdensburg *Journal* announced the work as "being a story of real life". In the intervening years many libraries have obtained copies, but card catalogues and bibliographies invariably list the volume under title because of the author's continuing anonymity. The author's name may now be revealed; it was Sarah A. McDonald, and she wrote the book in the Ontario village of Lyn while she was teaching school there in 1857.

Born in Massachusetts on 5th August, 1809, at an early age Sarah was adopted by the Haynes family, whose name she took. Later she married a minister's son, and they moved to Ogdensburg to establish a business there in partnership with Sarah's older brother. Her husband died, and in 1840 she married Henry E. McDonald, a Canadian. As he was frequently in Canada on business, Sarah opened a school in Ogdensburg to occupy her time. It prospered and grew to 48 scholars. Later the McDonalds moved to Lyn, in Leeds and Grenville County, Ontario, and Sarah again taught school. During the winter evenings of 1857, she

— 11 —

wrote her story. Encouraged by her friends, she took her manuscript to Ogdensburg seventeen miles away, and ordered 5000 copies. Under the circumstances this was an inordinate number, and her neighbours were aghast; but the Brockville *Recorder* came to her assistance:

Sabra, or The Adopted Daughter. This is the title of a book laid on our table by the authoress, Mrs. H.E. McDonald of Lyn. ... We ... sincerely trust the work may be the means of freeing herself and family from the difficulties with which they are surrounded. ... All who can, should purchase it for they will not regret the investment.

Sarah closed her school and canvassed many of the towns in St. Lawrence County where she was known, and also in Canada. On one trip to Montreal she sold 400 copies. Within four years, all the copies were gone. She arranged for a second edition, revised and amended, to be printed in Montreal in 1863. A third edition followed in 1867, and a fourth in 1873. Sarah died in Lyn on 15th December, 1893, at the age of 84. She and her family are buried in the old Lyn cemetery, where a tall gray stone marks the grave of the Adopted Daughter.

Jack Brown,
Mallorytown,
Ontario.