

## OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

### BRIEF SKETCH OF THE HISTORY AND PROGRESS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN TORONTO.

A PAPER READ BY THE REV. WILLIAM REID, D.D., BEFORE THE PRESBYTERIAN MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION, 11TH FEB, 1884.

(Continued from last week.)

#### WEST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

The next Presbyterian congregation formed in Toronto was that of the West Church. A Sabbath school was begun under Presbyterian auspices in the building belonging to the Coldstream Division of the Sons of Temperance on Brock street in 1856; and the first sermon was preached by Prof. Young, then of Knox College. Sabbath school work was continued for some years, mainly sustained by the late Hon. J. McMurrich, and superintended for a time by Mr. J. L. Blaikie. The Hon. J. McMurrich and his son Mr. W. B. McMurrich, Ex-Mayor, acted in succession as superintendents until a recent period. Preaching was kept up in the hall for a considerable time. Among those who laboured in connection with the West Church district for a longer or shorter time, may be mentioned the names of Rev. P. McDermid, Rev. Jas. McDowall, Rev. W. McKenzie, afterwards of Ramsay (all of whom have passed away), Rev. Principal MacVicar, Rev. James Robertson, Dr. Constantinides, still a resident in the city, and Rev. Anthony Simpson, who came from the United States about 1864, and subsequently returned to the States. In 1861 a church was built on Queen Street at the corner of Denison Avenue. The first pastor was the Rev. James Baikie, who was ordained 12th September, 1865. The prospects of the congregation under his charge were very promising, but he was removed by death in little more than a year after his ordination. The present pastor, the Rev. Robert Wallace, formerly of Drummondville and Thorold, was inducted on the 6th November, 1867. The congregation has greatly increased, and has now a new, commodious and handsome church on Denison Avenue, a little north of the original site. The Sabbath school connected with the congregation has always been large and prosperous.

#### CHARLES STREET CHURCH.

The next in date is the Charles Street congregation. Even before the close of Dr. Burns' ministry in Knox Church, services were occasionally held in a room in a house at the corner of Yonge and Bloor streets. Some time after Sabbath school work was begun, the principal workers being Mr. James Brown, at that time an elder in Knox Church, and Miss Brown, a member of Cooke's Church. Mr. John Campbell, now Professor Campbell, of Montreal, Mr. James Bain, now Librarian of the Toronto Public Library, and Mr. Wm. Smith, who returned several years ago to Scotland, lent efficient aid in the Sabbath school work. Services were begun and carried on in the town hall, Yorkville, and in 1868 a church was erected on Charles Street, near Yonge Street, the Rev. John Campbell was called and, on the 3rd November, 1868, was ordained and inducted as pastor of Charles Street Church. On his acceptance of a chair in Montreal College in 1873, the Rev. R. D. Fraser, M.A., was in the early part of 1875 called and inducted. The state of his wife's health rendering it necessary for him to resign, the congregation was for some time vacant. The Rev. John Hogg, of Oshawa, was called, and was on the 2nd June, 1879, inducted as pastor. In May, 1883, Mr. Hogg was obliged in consequence of impaired health to resign his charge and to proceed to the North West. At the present time it is still vacant.

#### EAST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

This Church was organized in 1870. Sabbath school work was begun in the district sometime before, under the auspices of the Presbyterian Sabbath School Association. Services were also conducted by the students of Knox College. The Rev. J. M. Cameron was called and was ordained and inducted as pastor on the 23rd November, 1871. The progress of the congregation has been most satisfactory. The original church on King street, a little east of Sackville street, has been enlarged more than once. There is now a large and growing congregation, and a flourishing Sabbath school.

#### COLLEGE STREET CHURCH.

College Street Church was organized on the 24th February, 1874. It had its origin in a Sabbath school

carried on principally by members of the congregation of the Rev. John M. King, assisted by members of Knox Church and of West Church. The congregation called as their first minister the Rev. Alexander Gilray, who was ordained and inducted on the 5th January, 1875. The church built at the corner of College street and Bathurst street, has been enlarged from time to time to accommodate the increasing congregation; and at the present time the congregation are taking active steps for the erection of a more substantial and commodious building, such as their circumstances require, and their prospects warrant them to undertake.

#### CENTRAL CHURCH.

The Central Church was organized in 1875, being originally a portion of what was known as the Bay Street congregation, under the charge of the Rev. Dr. Jennings. On being organized, they called the Rev. David Mitchell from New York. After worshipping for some time in Shaftesbury Hall they took possession on the 6th May, 1877, of their elegant and commodious church on Grosvenor street, which occupies a part of the site of what was formerly Knox College. Mr. Mitchell having been translated to Belleville, the congregation called the Rev. P. McF. McLeod, formerly of Stratford, and previously of Liverpool, England. He was inducted on the 20th July, 1880. The congregation is growing in numbers and activity from year to year.

#### OLD ST. ANDREW'S.

Old St. Andrew's was originally a portion of St. Andrew's congregation, who found it not convenient to remove westward to Simcoe street, but preferred to remain in the more eastern part of the city. The congregation was organized on the 9th February, 1876. They occupied for a time Old St. Andrew's Church, but before long selected a site for a new building on Jarvis street at the corner of Carlton street, a handsome and substantial church was erected, which was opened in the early part of 1878. The Rev. G. M. Milligan, B.A., then of Detroit, was called by the congregation and his induction took place on 24th October, 1876. Although the congregation was originally not large, it has greatly grown and prospered. Recently they have completed their church by erecting a handsome spire and by the addition of very convenient and commodious rooms for Sabbath school and other congregational purposes.

#### BROCKTON NEW CHALMERS CHURCH.

A congregation was organized at Brockton on the 14th January, 1877, and a church in due time built. Within the last year the church, by permission of the Presbytery, was removed eastwards to the corner of Dundas street and Dovercourt Road. The name assumed by the congregation is "Chalmers Church." The Rev. John Mutch, M.A., has been recently ordained and inducted, and the prospects of the congregation are excellent. The population in the district around the church is rapidly increasing.

#### LESLIEVILLE.

The congregation of Leslieville was organized on the 16th November, 1877. A handsome church was soon after erected. The field was worked for some years as a mission station; but recently the congregation called the Rev. W. Frizzell, formerly of Newmarket, who has begun his work with good prospects of success. The congregation is at present united with that of York Townline; but ere long it will be desirable and necessary that Leslieville should have the undivided services of a pastor.

#### PARKDALE.

At Parkdale, outside the city limits, although closely adjoining the city, a congregation was organized on the 4th February, 1879. A small but neat church was erected. The Rev. W. A. Hunter, M.A., was inducted on 17th Nov., 1880. The population of this suburb is rapidly increasing, and a larger church is now required.

#### DEER PARK.

At Deer Park a congregation was organized on the 25th January, 1882. A Sabbath school had been begun sometime before in connection with Charles Street Church. Services and prayer-meetings were also held in a rented room. On application to the Presbytery by the residents of the neighbourhood, the congregation was organized at the date already mentioned. A neat and suitable church has been erected, and the congregation soon expect to be able to obtain the services of a settled pastor.

It may be stated in reference to all these more

recently formed congregations that they began with Sabbath school work, in connection with which services came to be established. Another fact is that the supply of services in the new stations and congregations has been mainly from Knox College, to the students of which institution the success of Church extension has been largely owing. It should be stated too, that several of the newer churches were erected under the auspices of the Church Extension Association of the city, and received from that association material assistance.

#### CARLTON STREET CHURCH.

Carlton Street Church was organized on 4th July, 1882. Its history and progress must be pretty well known. Of conservative, and, as they believe, of strictly Scriptural views on the subject of worship, the congregation will no doubt gather many who sympathize with them in their views. They have acquired a site on Carlton street, not far from Yonge street, on which they have erected a commodious and comfortable structure, which in the meantime accommodates the congregation, and which may serve as lecture room and school room when they can erect a permanent church. The Rev. Andrew Wilson, formerly of Brock Street Church, Kingston, was inducted on the 17th May, 1883.

#### REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

It should have been mentioned that there was formerly a church in Toronto in connection with the Reformed Presbyterian Church. The church was on Louisa street, in St. John's Ward. The last stated pastor was the Rev. Robert Johnston, who removed a number of years ago to Waukesha, Wis., U. S. The congregation was never large, and may be regarded as extinct.

#### PRESENT NUMBER OF CHURCHES.

We have thus within the limits of the city fourteen congregations. Deer Park and Parkdale being outside the limits, as at present defined, we do not include; although the former, and perhaps to some extent the other also, draws some portion of the membership from the city. As to locality, the churches of the city may be regarded as pretty well situated, being scattered in the different sections of the city, although it must be confessed that in what may be regarded as now the central portion of the city—the neighbourhood of Carlton street—there are more churches than might be necessary. The north-west portion of the city where the population is increasing very rapidly should be looked after.

#### MEMBERSHIP, ETC.

The combined membership, according to the returns of 1883 amounted to 4730. To-day it is at least 5,000, representing a Presbyterian population of probably 16,000. According to the census returns the Presbyterian population of Toronto in 1861, 1871, and 1881 was as follows:—1861—6,604; 1871—8,982; 1881—14,537. One thing worthy of notice is that whereas in 1861, and 1871 several distinct bodies of Presbyterians were mentioned in the census returns, each embracing a considerable number of adherents, in the returns of 1881 all, except forty-nine, return themselves as belonging to the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Outwardly the progress of the Presbyterian Church in our city may be regarded as satisfactory, and we have reason to thank God for the measure of prosperity which we have enjoyed. In many respects there has been progress. In the style of church architecture there has been advancement, although in this matter all changes may not be regarded as improvements. In Sabbath school accommodation there has been very decided progress. Basements are now generally set aside, and light, cheerful, well-lighted rooms provided. There is increased liberality in sustaining ordinances, and still more increased liberality in contributing for missionary objects and deeper interest in the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom in heathen lands. It is hoped there has been progress also in regard to vital religion. But higher advancement is needed. We have a goodly number of churches, and of church members, and of Sabbath schools, and of appliances of various kinds. But we need more of the Holy Spirit, that life may be infused into our means and appliances, that the hearts of professing Christians may be warmed and quickened, and that each may be as a living epistle known and read of all. May the Spirit be poured out from on high on all the pastors and on all the congregations, that all may be found walking in the truth, and with one heart and one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel.