

the Church a visit, received a call which he accepted, and in 1849 entered upon the duties of the pastoral relation. At that time there were 13 members in the fellowship, several of whom were advanced in life. In 1864 Mr. Stirling reported a membership of 57. Mr. S. remained pastor of the Church until advanced in old age, continuing his labours until called away from earth by the Master. His memory is cherished by the people in connection with the Church to which he ministered for upwards of 21 years.

In 1872 the Rev. S. Sykes, of Pleasant River, N. S., received a call to the pastoral office, and entered on his ministry with the Church in 1873. Since that time the Church has had general prosperity, and Mr. Sykes occupies several stations, at one of which, Douglas, a branch Church has been organized.

Messrs. Joseph Pickard, Peter Christy, and Samuel Clark, three of the present deacons of the Church; aged men, are sons of the early residents referred to who conducted the first meetings in their respective houses. Mr. Christy and Mr. Pickard are about 80 years of age, and Mr. Clark is about ten years their junior.

Since Mr Sykes became pastor of the Church, a new parsonage has been built, and, according to the last report in the year-book, there was a membership of 92, which has since been increased by a number of additions.

About the time of the organization of the Keswick Ridge Church, Mr. McCallum organized the Welsh residents of Cardigan, most of whom were Congregationalists, into a Church; but the writer could obtain no record of its members or history. This Church at Cardigan has never had stated preaching, depending upon occasional visits from the overworked minister of the Ridge, and upon meetings among the members. There is a neat Congregational chapel at Cardigan, but the membership of the Church is small.

There is a growing interest in Congregationalism in this section of York County.

THE ALMOND TREE.

In coming to a land so closely connected with and so like the seat of Bible history, there was, of course, the confident expectation that from the customs of men, from birds and beasts and plants, such facts would be noted as would greatly add to an intelligent interest in the Sacred Word, first on our own part, and then through us on that of the home friends. While we have not been wholly disappointed, yet our progress in this direction has been slow. We are a *band of missionaries*, rather than an *exploration society*; thus far to put business first has been to put nothing after it; with all this, yet by the way occasional observations have been made, and words of explanation received from others, that if put together might prove helpful in reaching the end referred to. My own tastes so naturally go out to whatever buds and blossoms and bears fruit, that I find myself at this the beginning of a second year's stay here, better able to speak of lily or pomegranate than of dromedaries or conies, camel's eyes or wedding-garments. I would like, therefore, at this time to undertake some sketches of biblical plants, not pledging myself, however, to attempt more than a beginning.

Among friends of this class long known by name, but never met by us until we reached here, I would give an important place to the almond tree. For some reason I always had a great respect for it; perhaps the excellent quality of its fruit was sufficient to commend it. In the esteem of men it has held, and must ever hold, high rank; its dignity of bearing, the solidity of its fibre, the beauty of its clothing and the worth of its fruit, entitle it to such place. Let us now turn to the few passages in the Bible that mention it, and perhaps in speaking of them all necessary description of the tree will be brought out.

Gen. xliii. 11.—Israel says to his sons as they are about to return to Egypt for fresh supplies of food: "Take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels—honey, spices and myrrh, nuts (pistachio nuts, says Dr. Riggs), and almonds." Here the high estimate put upon this fruit is the one point to be noted.