

MATERIALS FOR OUR CHURCH HISTORY, NO. XVIII.

FORTY YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS OF CANADA.

BY REV. A. J. PARKER, DANVILLE, QUEBEC.

Some Account of my Early Life.

My father was one of the early ministers of North-Western Vermont. His grave was made in one of the frontier towns of that State, under the soil of what had been his missionary field, and where he, in company with the late Levi Parsons, afterward missionary to Palestine, had gathered and constituted a church of Christ.

That father considered that I was elected to be a business man, and at a proper age I rode by his side on horseback twenty miles, to the Village of St. Albans, and became duly installed as merchant's clerk. The term of my apprenticeship was fully served, and the time arrived when I must act on my own account. That year my father was laid in his grave, and the last words I caught from his lips were, "The Lord bless you, my son, and make you useful, somehow and somewhere." Proffers of no little promise were made to induce me to enter into business life, but I was moved to seek another vocation.

Call to the Ministry.

From that father's death-bed I went to seek a preparation, such as I could, for the Christian ministry. In the early autumn of 1828, by the Addison Association, embracing Rev. Joshua Bates, D. D., President of Middleburg College, Rev. Thomas A. Merrill, D. D., of Middlebury, and other men as good, I was "approved to preach the Gospel," and afterward "ordained as an evangelist."

I had obtained a horse and saddle, and on the reception of my "credentials," set away for the mountainous and newly-settled region of the State, partly to energize my physical system, and partly to visit the grave to which I have referred, within a league of "Canada Line."

There a young man had arrived a day before me to preach as a candidate for settlement as the pastor of the church; and when I had knelt at the hallowed spot, and thanked God that once I had such a father, I took an early leave of the only family who knew of my presence there. Not far away I met a trusty friend of my father's house, who immediately and urgently pressed me to go to the destitute church of Stanstead, just across the border of the State.

Introduction to Canada.

To me, the invitation appeared to be a call of God, partly on account of the condition of the church, and partly because I remembered that in my boyhood I had heard my late father tell how he had ventured into the foreign country, regarded then as the home of vagabonds and enemies,—and assisted in the organization of a Congregational church. For the father's sake, I was more willing to go. I crossed the imaginary line which marks the parallel of latitude 45 without perceiving it, and found myself on British territory.

There in an old unpainted school-house, I spent the first Sabbath of my public ministry, though with no expectation but to leave the next day. On Monday morning, however, I yielded to an invitation to remain and attend a Sabbath School anniversary to be held during that week, and to supply the church another Sabbath; and eventually my engagement with the church was extended to three months.

That Sabbath School gathering I ought not to forget. Till then I had no knowledge that there was a Sabbath School in Canada, but at the old Union Meeting House on the hill, in 1828, there assembled nine Sabbath Schools. It con-