

EARLY HISTORY OF PRESBYTERIANISM.

By Rev. James Farquharson, D.D.

This had its beginning when men and women from Sutherland and other northern countries of Scotland, driven from their native land by its rugged soil and heartless landlords, followed Lord Selkirk to this new land and settled in the historic parish of Kildonan. These brought Presbyterianism with them because it was engrained in them. It was years before there was a church, or even a congregation. In those trying days Episcopalianism firmly established on the confines of the parish tried to draw the Presbyterian Scots into its fold; and the Scots were thankful for the services they got from the clergy of this church, but they deemed them no match for the teaching to which they had been accustomed on their native heather. Presbyterianism was in the people and it had to take outward form. After many a vain effort to secure a pastor the Rev. John Black heard the call of this solitary land and followed it over lake and river and wide stretching prairie, till, arriving at Kildonan he found a church built upon the plan of the Scottish country parish church with bell swinging in the belfry ready to call the people to worship. There was a period of loneliness during which it took the pastor of Kildonan church weeks of travel to attend the meetings of Presbytery or General Assembly—a period when men in the east changed the Presbytery connection of the west's solitary minister from Toronto to London because his congregation lay nearer the latter. Better days dawned. In the later sixties a few of Ontario's daring spirits ventured to take a look at the west and pleased with what they saw, settled there. The period of political trouble and rebellion in which the province of Manitoba had its birth came and went. From this time onward congregations and ministers multiplied. Portage la Prairie, Gladstone, the Boyne, each in turn attracted settlers and gathered its congregation. Yet when in 188— the late Dr. Robertson, after ministering to Knox church, Winnipeg, seven years, began his work as superintendent of missions, the number that answered to the roll call of the Presbytery of Manitoba was terribly disproportionate to the immense country over which the Presbytery claimed jurisdiction. From Lake Superior to the mountains and from the international boundary line northward indefinitely, self-sustaining congregations were few indeed. Knox church, Winnipeg, which he had just left became two. Knox and St. Andrew's, to which Dr. Gordon, now principal of Queen's University, and Dr. Pitblado, ministered. Twenty-eight mission fields were all that required his supervision. But those were growing times and it taxed all the superintendent's energies and wisdom to gather the people of the different localities into congregations and find the men to minister to them, and the money to pay them. Nobly he did his duty. Never did his courage fail under the difficulties he met. Only once did the writer, who knew him well, hear a word from his lips that hinted that discouragement was pressing hard upon him. It was not the hardship of his life that troubled him, nor the difficulties he daily found in the west; but a struggle fiercer than usual and some of the others were bad enough, with the home mission committee in Toronto, and the discouraged word he then spoke was "I will never go back to that committee meeting alone again." That feeling soon passed and the next fall meeting of the committee again found him the sole representative of the west. His life of self-denial, of never tiring energy, of indomitable courage was not lived in vain. He saw the foundations of a church laid and was a mighty force in the work; he gave his life to the church and his memory is his priceless legacy.

It is needless to say that the growth

of these last years has been marvellous. The one Presbytery has become nineteen. On the division of the first Presbytery a synod was formed and the one has become three. For several years the church has been adding in the average almost a mission field with from three to six preaching stations a Sabbath, to its list. It is no wonder that the two superintendents are crowded with work. Hear you not the moans of the church, the cry of this needy west for preachers, men of heroic build, who are willing to live poor and die poor if only they are enabled to do a little to lead men toward nobler lives. It is a fine thing to find success in any honest calling; but nobler of the noble lives are those whose clear vision catches sight of ideals reaching ever upward, shining in the majestic splendor of the Christian graces till the lives themselves, radiant in the glory, become power to move others toward righteousness.

With the advent of Presbyterianism there came also a college; for how could Presbyterianism live without an educated ministry, or without a university recruited largely from itself? Like the church the college had its beginnings at Kildonan and there the first professors, Drs. Bryce and Hart, laid its foundation. But the attraction of the growing Winnipeg soon drew it from its first home. Since coming to the city it has been domiciled in at least three places. Some ten years after it was opened it found a permanent home in the older part of the present building. It was inevitable that it should have a struggle for existence. The west was too poor to support it; the east was too far away to feel the pressure of the need. When the late Dr. King was appointed as its principal its survival seemed in doubt. With surpassing devotion he gave his life to it. His power as a teacher was very great. Many of his students feel his grip on their lives to-day and with thankfulness acknowledge it. He was also the college financial genius. Step by step the debts were paid, the college was renovated and its accommodation doubled. Those who know the college to-day rejoice in the able man who presided in the lecture rooms and shaped its policy, and yet in all the rejoicings there are minds that look fondly back on a figure that is no longer with us.

Gradually the teaching staff grew. Dr. Baird and later Dr. Kilpatrick were called to professor's chairs. Dr. King passed away and the church was wisely guided to the choice of the present principal, Dr. Perry, a graduate of the college, is the latest addition to the professorial staff. Just now the college board is eagerly looking for a worthy successor to Dr. Kilpatrick, who recently chose to teach in Knox college, Toronto, in preference to Manitoba college, Winnipeg. Able men, some of them well worthy of a professor's chair, have served and are serving the college as lecturers.

The aim of the college is now and has ever been is to be a force working for intellectual, moral and spiritual progress in the church and in the country. It recognized from the first the advantages state aided universities possess, and yet strove to take advantage of its freedom from this connection to present Christian truths to the minds of the students so far as to awaken their faith and confirm it, and that without in the least weakening the force of the truth science and philosophy are teaching. Up to the measure of a well balanced, a perfect man, it seeks to lead its students.

God does not turn aside the cyclone from its path, but He walketh upon the wings of the wind. He does not dispel the storms, but He maketh the clouds His chariots. He does not turn back the floods, but His voice is as the sound of many waters. He does not take away the decert, but He leads His people through it. He does not remove the darkness and the shadow of death, but when His people cry to Him in their trouble He saves them out of their distresses.

NOTES ON NEW BOOKS.

Shaggycoat: The Biography of a Beaver, by Clarence Hawkes, (Mussou Book Co., Toronto.) This charming life story of one of the chief fur-bearing animals of our country, is as entertaining as it is instructive. Children who read this book will know how the beaver lives, how he builds his house and moat, how he escapes from his enemies, and all the other details of his natural history.

A Little Girl in Old Quebec, by Amanda Douglas. This story set in Champlain's time and introducing him to us, is very bright and interesting, and gives a good idea of the life of that time in old Quebec, showing us the Indians and the French in friendship and in war in the wild new country. The story is that of little Rose, a foundling, from the time of her childhood until her happy marriage after an eventful youth. The Mussou Book Company, Toronto.

The House Over the Way, by Alfred Wilson Barrett, is a mildly sensational book being the love story of a young man and the girl who came to live across the road from him with her guardian, who attempts to poison her in order to obtain her money, and being frustrated by the efforts of the girl's mother, herself a convicted husband-poisoner, drinks down the poison herself, in a thoroughly melodramatic manner. The book would probably appeal to the young and romantic. The Poole Publishing Co., Toronto.

In Pastures New, by George Ade. In his new book the author of "Fables in Slang" goes abroad and gives in his bright, witty, slangy style his impressions of things English and European. A good book of travels is always readable, and Mr. Ade's observations, together with their humor, show a good deal of commonsense and penetration. He is not merely a jester; he is a sharp-eyed clean-headed American, who brings equal penetration and good nature to the work of discovering the Old World. The Mussou Book Co., Toronto.

Among the recent publications of Harper & Brothers is Justus Miles Foreman's powerful novel, Buchanan's Wife. The story deals with modern life, the chief figure being a young and beautiful woman who has married unhappily. As a last refinement of cruelty the husband decides to evade his burdens and responsibilities, and disappears in such a manner that his wife cannot find out whether he is living or dead. The way in which the woman dares to face the cruel fate that mocks her, and to wrest to herself the happiness that should have been hers by right, combine to make a most interesting and thrilling romance. This book is handled in Canada by the Poole Publishing Co., Limited.

The Awakening of Helena Ritchie, by Margaret Deland, (The Poole Publishing Co., Toronto.) is probably the most popular book of this season—it is at all events the best we have seen. The writer of "Dr. Laverdard and His People," and "Old Chester Tales" needs no introduction. Mrs. Deland has been known for some time as the writer of very charming short stories which have appeared in the best American magazines; and all who knew them welcomed the publication of her first novel. The story works out the growth of character and sense of responsibility for sin awakened in Helena Ritchie by contact with a little child who comes to live with her; but in addition to this we have character sketches of several fine types of men and women which remind us of Mrs. Deland's previous work. Dr. Laverdard himself is one of the chief characters of the book, and we find him quite as lovable here as in the short stories.