

Oration

Delivered by Rev. Geo. J. Bond, B.A., LL.D., at Gower Street Church, St. John's, N.F., June 21st, 1915,
on the Occasion of the Centennial Celebration of St. John's Methodism.

NEWFOUNDLAND'S name stands out in history linked for all time with the proud word First. She is the Terra Prima Vista—the first land seen of the old navigator John Cabot; the first colony, the Most Ancient Colony of Britain—the first born of that glorious family of sister nations which the world knows now as the British Empire. True, she has been, as Lord Salisbury once said, "the sport of historic misfortune"; true, she has been, as some newspaper writer has called her, "the Cinderella of the Colonies"; true, her history has been marked by anomalies and abnormalities beyond that of any other land beneath the British flag; but it also remains for ever true, that on the stormy seas which beat upon her shores, where the old sea dogs of Devon fought for right to fish against all-comers—Spanish, and French, and Portuguese, and what not—four centuries ago were laid the first foundations of Britain's maritime power—the enterprise, the courage, the daring, the resourcefulness, that have made her the greatest colonising nation of all time, and—well for the world today that it is so—the undisputed Mistress of the Seas. The Motherland has often forgotten all she owes to her first born daughter, but that daughter has never forgotten all she owes to the Motherland. She has certainly not forgotten it in these stern and strenuous days that have come upon those glorious little islands across the sea, which every Newfoundlander, be his blood English, Scottish, Irish or Welsh, has been taught from childhood to call home. She has given of her best, her brightest, her bravest, in numbers far beyond what might fairly have been called for, to fight Britain's battles, to uphold Britain's honor, to save the hearths and homes of the dear old land from the murderers and ravishers that have desolated Belgium, and to keep the flag of Britain flying, at once the symbol and the safeguard of freedom, of civilization, and of religion—aye,

please God, not only to keep it flying, but to set it higher than it ever flew before, over a world redeemed for all time from the curse and the crime of war.

" Old England's sore with fright, they say,
Her day of strength's gone by,
O English blood that warms my heart,
Tell them back they lie!

For every British man at home,
Abroad are twenty-seven,
But who shall count the English hearts
Under God's wide heaven?

O eyes that have not seen, behold
What hosts around her stand,
The chariots and the horsemen wait
To guard our English land.

O lonely looks the little isle,
But not to those who see,
There's half a world would fight for her
Who taught them to be free."

Newfoundland is also the first mission ground of Methodism. That is something of which every Methodist among us may well feel proud. For Methodism has had a great history. Commencing from the day when John Wesley felt his heart "strangely warmed" in the little meeting in Aldersgate Street, and swept through the Three Kingdoms with his calmly stated yet intensely dynamic gospel of salvation by faith, it has carried that gospel, that glad, free, universal, unlimited offer of pardon, peace and power,—of new life and activity through simple faith in the Atoning Christ and simple obedience to the voice of His indwelling Spirit,—from one end of the world to the other. The handful of corn which he planted on the top of the mountain, amid the aridities and acerbities of eighteenth century England, has increased and spread by grace divine till the fruit of it has been made to shake like Lebanon and the field of it to become