

revolution has taken place in Italy, and it is pleasing to observe that the Presbyterian ministers occupying stations in that interesting country have borne no mean part in the movements which have been originated for the extension of evangelical religion. In Leghorn the Sabbath and week-day services have been well attended, and Dr. Stewart has been encouraged by seeing several truly converted through the word of truth. Mr. McDougall's labours at Florence have also been greatly blessed, and his church is looked upon as the rallying point for Christians of various countries and denominations. The season of prayer in January last was exceedingly interesting. Night after night ministers and members of various churches, stations, Swiss, British, and American, took part in the exercises. The station at Genoa under the superintendence of the Rev. D. Hay, has been in a state of growing prosperity.

It is interesting to notice the extent to which the church has been made instrumental in advancing the interests of religion on the continent, as well as in the British Colonies. But the chief feature of interest in the Report this year is the prominence which it gives to the question of Union. Viewed in this light it may be regarded as a historic document of great importance. It records the Union in Nova Scotia, and the proceedings in Canada which have now happily terminated in Union, and gives a full account of the proceedings in the Free Church Assembly with reference to the Union in Australia, including a report of the discussion in last Assembly, when Principal Cunningham delivered his telling and powerful speech, and when it was agreed, by a vote of 61 to 341, to approve of the Union and to reject the proposal to recognize the dissentient brethren in Australia as the "Free Presbyterian Church of Victoria." It contains the Articles of Union adopted in Australia, in Nova Scotia, and those now adopted in Canada; and also the deliverance of the General Assembly on the various points brought out in the Report. The following is part of the deliverance of the Assembly with reference to the churches in British North America:—"The Assembly rejoice in the continued prosperity and vigour of the churches in British North America, and regard with satisfaction the union now consummated between the Free Church and another Presbyterian Church in Nova Scotia, and the similar union into which the corresponding parties in Canada have resolved forthwith to enter." It is thus pleasing to find every church which may be regarded as standing *in loco parentis* to the Presbyterian Churches

here which are now united,—the Free Church, the United Presbytery in Church, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and the Presbyterian Church in England,—expressing through its supreme court, the most decided and hearty approval of the union lately consummated.

A PRESBYTERIAN MISSIONARY IN VANCOUVER'S ISLAND.

We subjoin the following extracts from a letter, or rather journal, from the pen of the Rev. John Hall, the missionary sent out to British Columbia by the Irish Presbyterian Church, copied from a Londonderry paper kindly forwarded by the Rev. W. McClure. The statements contained in these extracts certainly should have the effect of quickening and stimulating our zeal in carrying out the long contemplated idea of sending a minister to the same region. Mr. Hall has been exploring the land, and has found many Presbyterians, as well as others, as sheep without a shepherd. The extracts subjoined are necessarily brief. In other parts of his letters he gives lively and graphic descriptions of scenes witnessed by him in the course of his missionary tours.

MISSIONARY EXPLORATIONS.

To be able to report from personal observation, I went from Salt Spring to Nanaimo—a rising town, about 100 miles by sea from Victoria. It will, in all probability, become an important place, as it is the depot of our coal district. Were the mines worked with more energy, and did the authorities of California admit the coal at a smaller duty, the wealth of Nanaimo would increase rapidly, as the coal beds around are very extensive, while its harbour is about the best along the North Pacific. The mines have been worked for a number of years by the Hudson's Bay Company—the owners of the soil. To work them miners have been brought from Ayrshire, Stafford and Durham. They make from 10s to 12s per day, which they spend free of strong drink. The Scotch miners were at one time more in number than they are now. They have increased of late. There are now ten families, and fifteen unmarried men, a few of whom, it is to be feared, live with squaws. Ministers complain of the state of religion in the place. The crowd at one of the grog shops on Saturday night is greater than in the two places of worship on Sabbath morning. The Methodists have here a pretty little chapel. The congregation is composed chiefly of Scotch Presbyterians, for although the English are far more numerous, very few of them attend either place of worship. It so happened that a house for a minister had been erected here some six years before one arrived. An Episcopalian and a Wesleyan came about the same time, and the Wesleyan was chosen by a large majority, and so obtained the Church property. Acting on the principle, I presume, that every church ought to look after her own children, Bishop Hill has placed a minister here, and is about to have a church built, and doubtless, although the congregation is as small as need be, it is prudent to occupy the field as early as possible. There are three Colonial schools on Vancouver's Island, besides a large Colle-

giate institution, and a few private schools. One of the Colonial schools is at Nanaimo, and two at Victoria. The teachers of two of these schools should be Presbyterians, were the schools denominational, which they are not. At one of them I believe all the children are Scotch, and yet the teacher is an Episcopalian, and the superintendent a minister of the Church of England. The teachers receive £150 per annum, besides house and garden and liberal school fees; and they are by no means first class officials. So anxious have the people near one of these schools been for the Gospel, that they constrained the teacher, who was also a successful shopkeeper, to act as minister, till he left the colony. I am at a loss to explain the state of things that has obtained as regard churches and schools here. The churches at home are not blameless in this business. It must have been known to ministers and elders in the Orkneys and in Ayrshire that dozens of men and women were drafted out here by the Hudson's Bay Company; and had the matter been brought before the Board of Missions, we should not now be under obligations to the shepherds of other flocks, for following and folding our sheep in the wilderness. For my part I am thankful to them for so doing; but at the same time, I am of opinion that they are not able to relieve the Church of Scotland of the obligation under which they lie to their Great Head, and to one hundred families on this island.

A MIXED CONGREGATION IN THE WILDERNESS.

The whistle of the little steamboat in which we sailed brought to the beach half a score of settlers, robed, some of them, in red over-shirts, some in blue, and accompanied with dogs and guns. Two canoes carried passengers, provisions, and the mail bag ashore. Arriving at the hut of a Highlander—the first hut erected on the island, and about the humblest post office in the wide empire of England—the contents of the mail bag were exhibited on the rickety imitation of a table. The postmaster, unlike his official compeers, performed his part in presence of as many as the hut would hold. Not a word was uttered not a hand touched the table, till he had arranged some fifty letters and newspapers. Settlers from distant parts were first served. Letters were opened, and newspapers scanned with avidity for news from home. It was the Sabbath, and a Presbyterian minister being present, it was proposed to have a short service before separating; and as the hut was too small to accommodate all, we turned out, arranged ourselves on logs, and joined in the first religious service held by Christians on that side of the island. Among those present there was an organ builder from Ireland, a civil engineer from Scotland, and a Physician from England, who speaks half a dozen languages, besides two officers of the British army, and three or four others who have been once or twice round the globe. In short the small congregation was composed, chiefly of gentlemen in the garb of back-woodsmen.

SALT SPRING ISLAND.

This Island has obtained its name from the number of salt springs on it, which are supposed to percolate through latent rocks of that useful mineral. The climate is charming, so that probably, in a future age, people may repair to it, for such hygienic objects as bring invalids to Harrogate, and the Bridge of Allan. The soil is very productive, and deeply covered with vegetable decomposition. The forest is dense, the timber fine. The scenery is not so magnificent as that around Victoria, but it is as beautiful as wood and water, lakes and bays, and land-locked straits can render it. The absence of human aid and