

PRESBYTERIANISM IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

PREVIOUS to the discovery of gold in the sand bars of the Fraser River, about thirty years ago, this, then remote and almost inaccessible part of the Continent, was little known except to a few traders and the servants of that great pioneer of civilization in British America—the Hudson's Bay Company. At that time white settlers were found only in the near vicinity of the company's trading posts scattered at longer or shorter distances both on the mainland and Vancouver Island. In addition to the regular staff of officers and servants to be found at each of its trading posts, the company, with the view of cultivating considerable tracts of good agricultural land in the vicinity of Fort Victoria, which formed the nucleus of the present beautiful and prosperous city of that name, and of opening up the rich coal mines at Fort Rupert and Nanaimo, brought out on terms of several year's engagement, a large number of immigrants composed of practical farmers and miners, a large proportion of these as well as chief officers and other servants of the company, were Scotch. It is a somewhat curious and remarkable fact that although Scotchmen are found occupying, in such large numbers, the most prominent positions in the management of the vast business of this great trading company, that the practice has invariably been to appoint Episcopal clergymen as its chaplains to minister to the spiritual wants, both of its employees and colonists. This was the case in British Columbia as well as in the Red River country. The company's first chaplain was the Rev. Mr. Stains, a man of earnest piety, and apostolic zeal, who, it appears like the early Episcopal missionaries to Rupert's Land, wisely respected the conscientious convictions of his Scottish parishioners. After laboring in the colony for a number of years he perished by the vessel on which he was returning to England, being wrecked and going to the bottom of the Pacific. He was followed soon afterwards by the Rev. Edward Cridge, a man of similar spirit, who continued for a number of years like his predecessor, to supply the spiritual wants of all the Protestants in the colony. The absence of any other service than that of the Episcopal church had the usual effect of leading a considerable number of Scottish and Irish Presbyterians to seek