

EARLY DAYS IN THE FAR WEST.

The larger field of Victoria being occupied by the Rev. John Hall, sent out by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the first missionary from the Canada church to the (then) colony of British Columbia—the Rev. R. Jamieson settled at New Westminster early in 1862, and in December of the following year, opened St. Andrew's Church, a substantial frame building, now used as a lecture room and Sabbath school.

The history of the colony in those days, and for many years afterwards, was like the story of an April day—and such also was the history of the pioneer church. But the church in Canada stood manfully by its mission, and the missionary stood manfully by his work. It was work which made large demands on faith and patience. The reaction had set in after the first great "rush" to the colony; the beginnings of permanent settlement and sober going industry were slow and feeble; the nomadic spirit was still strong. Congregations gathered slowly and melted quickly.

After four years of arduous and trying work, Mr. Jamieson removed to Nanaimo, where the growing importance of the coal mines seemed to promise a field of larger usefulness, and the Rev. D. Duff, who had been appointed to Cariboo, and had laboured there for a year under many discouragements, took charge of the work in New Westminster, where he continued to supply acceptably for about eighteen months. At the end of that time, however, the many discouragements of the field—the overcast skies which, as the fluctuating population followed this or that new "excitement," so quickly and constantly followed each brief gleam of sunshine—proved too much for him, and he returned to Canada, leaving New Westminster unsupplied; and for some two years service was conducted once each Sabbath, and the Sabbath school kept up by Messrs. J. Robson (now Premier of the Province) J. S. Clute (now Collector of Customs at New Westminster), and other members of the Church.

Meanwhile, in Nanaimo, on Vancouver, Mr. Jamieson had planted the blue banner and rallied around it a number of loyal Presbyterians.

In Victoria, an unfortunate state of things had come about. The Rev. John Hall had gone to New Zealand, and Rev. T. Somerville, who came out from Scotland to succeed him, had withdrawn from the First Church, which was simply Presbyterian, and had organized St. Andrew's Church, in connection with the Church of Scotland, leaving the First (or Pandora Street) Church vacant and of course, much weakened.

This action was overruled for good, but it was regarded at the time as an act of schism, and the sympathies of the New Westminster and Nanaimo congregations were so strongly with the First Church, that they willingly consented to Rev. Messrs. Duff and Jamieson alternating in the work of giving it occasional supply—a work which was continued by Mr. Jamieson alone after Mr. Duff's return to Canada. Thus for some two years after the latter event, our pioneer missionary, aided by a few faithful laymen, struggled with the task of keeping alive three weak churches, each a day's journey from the other. It is needless to say the banner drooped a little—*nec tamen consumebatur*.

The year 1869 brought with it brighter days. The appeals from New Westminster and Nanaimo induced the Canada Church to send out the Rev. W. Aitken, a man of great attainments, but, as the result proved, of too intensely studious and retiring disposition for pioneer work. On his arrival, it was determined that he should take Vancouver Island, Mr. Jamieson returning to New Westminster, where he received a very warm welcome. Soon after his return he established preaching stations at the North Arm, fourteen miles below, and at Maple Ridge and Langley, twelve and eighteen miles above New Westminster, all on the Fraser, where were the beginnings of now prosperous agricultural settlements, then peopled chiefly by Scotch and Ulstermen. At these places Mr. Jamieson held service as frequently and regularly as possible, preaching also occasionally at Moodyville and Granville (now Vancouver) on Burrard Inlet.

In Victoria and Nanaimo, Mr. Aitken laboured for a little more than two years, winning a permanent place in the affections of many; but in the summer of 1871, he, too, retired from the field, and about the same time Mr. Somerville was succeeded in the pastorate of St. Andrew's, Victoria, by Rev. S. Macgregor, between whom and Mr. Jamieson a cordial friendship was at once established.

St. Andrew's, New Westminster, with the outstations already mentioned, and St. Andrew's, Victoria, with outstations at Craigflower and Cedar Hill, were now supplied, but the First Church, Victoria, and the Nanaimo Church were vacant.

British Columbia had been admitted into the Dominion, and the effect was soon felt in an increase of immigration, especially to the rich agricultural lands of New Westminster District. This increase of population made the work at Mr. Jamieson's outstations more important, and at the same time, by increasing his home work, made it more difficult for him to attend to them, so that, for some years, he lived in a condition of constant effort to overtake duties which grew heavier month by month; and was, of course, unable to give any help to Nanaimo. We all, therefore, hailed with joy the intelligence that the Colonial Committee of the Church of Scotland had been induced by Mr. Macgregor to make a grant of \$5,000 a year to the field, in order that the vacant places might be filled up, and new ground occupied.

In 1875 Revs. G. Murray, A. Dunn, W. Clyde, and A. Nicholson were settled at Nicola Valley, Langley (including

Maple Ridge), Nanaimo and Victoria District respectively, and Presbyterianism began to take something like its proper place in the province. About the same time, Rev. J. Reed, a Congregational minister, was called and settled in the First Church, Victoria, where he remained until 1881.

After the settlement of the above-named ministers, the Presbytery of British Columbia (Church of Scotland) was formed, which Mr. Jamieson, with the consent of his congregation, joined—it being understood, however, that the union was to be temporary, for mutual help only, and was not to be considered as severing the connection between St. Andrew's, New Westminster, and the Presbyterian Church in Canada, to which all congregational contributions for missions, etc., were to go. In November, 1877, Rev. B. K. McElmon joined the Presbytery and settled in Comox, north of Nanaimo, on Vancouver Island.

Thus, for a time, we were favoured with brighter days, and it seemed that the end of pioneer life and pioneer conditions was rapidly drawing near. But the time of April skies was not yet departed.

By the strife of local interests, the decision that the Canadian Pacific Railway should reach the ocean of the Fraser Valley, was, for a time, set aside, and years were spent in a fruitless effort to find another route. During these years the province practically stood still. All men were afraid to invest, as no one could say with certainty where the railway—the great artery of commerce—would run, and this stagnation, of course, told heavily upon the struggling missions. The missionaries were discouraged, and the home churches, called upon year after year to make heavy grants in aid of work which seemed to yield no return, were growing impatient under the burden. One by one, those who had entered upon the field, with high hopes, dropped away. Mr. Macgregor returned to Scotland and was succeeded in St. Andrew's, Victoria, by Rev. R. Stephen, a man with fewer qualifications for the position of leader, and without the prestige of pioneer work. Mr. Murray returned to Nova Scotia, Mr. Nicholson retired from the work; and Mr. Clyde went to the United States. Thus, early in 1882, Messrs. Stephen, of Victoria, Dunn, of Langley, and McElmon, of Comox, in connection with the Church of Scotland, and our pioneer, Mr. Jamieson, were the only ones remaining. After a little time, Messrs. Dunn and McElmon also left the province, and affairs came back to the condition of 1871, except that Mr. Stephen had taken Mr. Macgregor's place in Victoria.

Meanwhile, the question of route having been settled, the Canadian Pacific Railway—the real bond of union—was pushing across the continent, and this long isolated province was beginning to feel the pulse of a new life. Early in 1884, as we began to congratulate ourselves that solid and settled prosperity in Church and State alike was to be the rule, our pioneer was called upon to lay down his work. He had laboured long and faithfully and others were to enter upon his labours. Brought by severe illness to the very brink of the grave, Mr. Jamieson felt obliged to resign, and at a congregational meeting on the 17th of April, 1884, his resignation was reluctantly accepted, and a liberal retiring allowance voted him for life. At the same meeting, the congregation asked for admittance into the Presbytery of Toronto, and appointed commissioners there, to choose a minister for the Church. The choice fell upon the Rev. J. S. McKay, (so greatly loved, so early lost) and in the following August he was happily settled in the pastoral charge, in which he continued to labour earnestly and successfully for fifteen months, when the illness which in the May following terminated his life, compelled him to relinquish his work. His congregation, however, refused to accept his resignation, and he was pastor till his death.

Shortly after the settlement of Mr. McKay the First Church in Victoria (which Mr. Reed had left in 1881, and which in the interval had had two ministers, Mr. Smith and Mr. Gamble, both of whom had left), had joined the Canadian Church, and called the Rev. D. Fraser, who has been very successful in building up a strong congregation.

Rev. T. G. Thompson, first appointed to Granville and the North Arm combined, was the next addition to our strength, and his arrival was speedily followed by an application to the General Assembly to erect a Presbytery in the Province (to be called "Columbia," as the Presbytery of "British Columbia" in connection with the Church of Scotland had still a nominal existence), and in August, 1886, the Presbytery was duly constituted, the first meeting being held, appropriately, in St. Andrew's, New Westminster, under the Moderatorship of Rev. R. Jamieson, when the members received a very hearty welcome from the congregation.

Here this sketchy and imperfect record of early days must end. The history of the last few years is one of very rapid expansion. In New Westminster a new and stately St. Andrew's (under the pastoral care of Rev. T. Scouler, late of Hamilton) rears its mass of brick above the roof of the old frame church. St. Andrew's, Victoria, has joined the Canadian Church, and prospers under the ministry of the Rev. P. McF. McLeod, and its former outstations form a separate charge under the faithful care of Rev. D. McRae. The North Arm, Langley, and Maple Ridge, reap the fruits of pioneer struggle under the ministry of Revs. J. A. Jaffary, A. Tait and A. Dunn, (the latter having joined the Canadian Church and returned to the province. Old Granville has blossomed out into the fine city of Vancouver, where Mr. Thomson's church has thrown off two vigorous saplings—one under the ministry of Rev. E. D. McLaren, B.D., and the other in connection with the Presbyterian Church of the United States. At Kamloops, Donald, Revelstoke, up into the mountains where the

Presbyteries of Calgary and Columbia join bounds, are stations of our church, where doubtless much of the experience of early days—minus the isolation—is met with; while at Nicola Valley and Nanaimo, two able and faithful sons of the Old Kirk—Messrs. Murray and Miller—still labour.

Now bright, now sad, are the memories of the early days. Some of the pioneers are with us still, though many have removed to other lands, and many have fallen asleep. "It has been ours to plant the acorn where one day shall rise the tall and stately oak; and may God shield it in His mercy and defend it by His might."

JOHN C. BROWN.
New Westminster, Dec., 1889

DEGREES, WISE AND OTHERWISE.

MR. EDITOR,—Your remarks in a late issue re degrees were very opportune and call for more than a passing notice.

You have hit the nail on the head and given it a very good blow at the same time. Some may think you severe and extreme, but, as the old saw has it, "If the cap fits let it be put on."

The degree wave has been passing over us for some time and has its origin on the other side of the line.

The creation of so many Q.C.s of the Bar and so many D.D.'s almost threatens us with a deluge of that kind and is fast bringing honourable distinctions into contempt and ill-favour. The reason why these are conferred in many instances is, as you say, an inscrutable mystery. There can be only one opinion, that when a student takes a full course in one of our Canadian Universities and takes at last his Bachelor or Master of Arts he carries a well-merited distinction that will never disgrace him if he does not disgrace it—an honourable handle to his name that must be earned by close application, industry and burning of the midnight oil.

You remark in effect that men in all lines are being judged by what they are and what they have done and not by having a handle to their names. True, every word of it, and more true than first intended. A man who gains a degree, say at our Provincial University, shows what he is and what he can do. Some fail after repeated efforts. Some can scarcely pass a single examination with success or credit. A degree when acquired in this way means brains, push, industry, indeed all the elements of successful scholarship. Suppose, however, that a man is seized with a rabies to obtain a Master of Arts. He has not the training or scholarship to take a full university course so he quietly corresponds with some American factory where these are made and sold to order, then he flaunts the miserable hoax in the face of the public and palms himself off as possessing all the acquirements that such a degree implies.

I ask, does not such a course show what the man is and what he can do? His true inwardness is displayed. Such a course is, to say the least, cowardly and dishonest. A large number of our prominent ministers have no degrees. They could have procured them in the above way, if so disposed, but as men of honour and self-respect they would not.

But it is more than hinted that some have. Happily they are the exception and not the rule. The degree of D.D. is becoming very common in our Church. Every "closing" now sees an addition to its number. It is to be earnestly hoped that the senates of our colleges will be very careful to whom they distribute these favours. Very little fault can be found as yet. Having a friend at court should never be allowed to weigh the least in such an important matter, unless backed by real scholarship and merit. Neither should personal popularity. A minister may be very much beloved by his brethren and well worthy of regard and still not one upon whom the *toga virilis* of D.D. could be placed with satisfaction to the public. During our theological course we knew a student who obtained by vote of his fellow-students the prize for being the best public speaker. He was anything but worthy of the honour. He was presumably a great favourite and was an elegant scholar, but made no impression in the pulpit or on the platform. For years he tried to get a call but failed. It is to be earnestly hoped that our colleges will not confer D.D.'s on this principle.

What are the qualifications for D.D.—*causa honoris*? In general some signal, special service rendered to the Church. We use the words signal and special advisedly—otherwise the rank and file who do sterling honest work for Christ from day to day would merit this honour in a special manner.

The venerable and laborious clerks of assembly, our moderators, our professors are eminently worthy of the distinction. To be famous in literature, to have written books of great usefulness that take hold on the mind and mould the thought of generations present and to come, to be a recognized leader in Home and Foreign Missionary enterprise, sound services like these entitle a minister to any distinctions the Church can confer.

But, again, here is a minister who has spent ten years in a country charge which he found in good working condition and left it as he found it, having done faithful, honest work both in the pulpit and out of it. He is called to a city charge where he continues to work on the same line as before. He is not considered to be a brilliant preacher, but is scriptural, spiritual full of unction, at times truly eloquent and the means of doing much good. He is, moreover, full of magnetism to his brethren and so a great favourite. He is not eminent, however, and has rendered no special service to the Church more than has been done by hosts of others as worthy as he is and perhaps more so but not in such conspicuous positions. Does he deserve D.D.? We say most decidedly not. And if a sensible man he would not take it if offered. If he merits the honour so do hundreds of his brethren.

JOHN CALVIN.