

Avonbank Presbyterian Church



EARLY SETTLEMENTS

FEW there are still in the flesh, who, standing on the vantage-ground of aged experience, are permitted to view with undimmed vision the scenes of long ago: to whom the contrast of the past with the present exists as a perfectly defined picture: who, living as they have in two distinct periods, are able to realize as none others can the onward march of time.

How meaningless to us, who now reap the benefits of the labors of our forefathers, are "howling wilderness," "blazed path," and "black salts," but how full of meaning to those who left their homes in Scotland, or later on Dalhousie, and penetrated the wilds of the "Huron Tract!" A hard-toiling, happy, contented people were these who "laid the axe to the root of the tree," and made for themselves a small clearance in which, around blackened stumps, to cast the seed, which by reason of the fertility of the virgin soil brought forth abundant harvest.

The Township of Downie—one of the earliest settled townships in the County of Perth—began to be settled in 1834. By 1839 the population had so increased, that in that year the