

A Retrospect



THE old saying that "stately oaks from small acorns grow" was never more exemplified than in the origin of St. James' Church, Guelph, which during thirty years has grown from a Mission Sunday School to one of the largest churches in the diocese of Niagara, with a steady record of progress. What the transition has meant in persevering effort, self sacrifice and unflagging zeal only the few can say who are left with us to-day of that small number who started out in the year 1890 with the determination to establish a second parish of the Church of England in this city, which would look after the spiritual life of the westerly portion of Guelph. God has indeed been with the Parish in all its ways, to bring it to the day when the Church erected for His praise and glory can be consecrated clear of debt for the great work that is yet before us.

Any attempt to record the history of the Parish of St. James' cannot but impress us with the bravery and faith of those who overcame many obstacles in their pathway, and with a broad vision of the future secured a division of the then Parish of St. George's, and founded the Church of St. James the Apostle. Few in numbers, but strong in spirit and faith in the Lord their God, with no endowment or large promises, they started with no thought of failure upon a \$16,000 undertaking.

Few of those faithful souls remain with us to-day. During the years that have gone, death has been busy, and removals to other spheres of influence have been numerous, but they left behind a memory of unconquerable faith that bids us of to-day go forward with the work and in our turn leave behind us a similar record of faith in God, and devotion to duty.

The minute book, that is used for the recording of the business transactions of this year's Vestry Meeting, is the same that records the successive congregational gatherings since the Parish was formed. It is replete with interest as the official record of the early days of St. James' and a barometer of its successes, and, in a few instances, its failures—for the past thirty years have not been without their disappointment in both the spiritual and temporal affairs of this congregation. A coincidence in connection with this book is that its pages will be completed when the record of this year's Vestry meeting is entered.