

II.—THE ANSWER.

"Here am I, for thou didst call me."—1 Samuel, iii. 6.

The spring of 1822 witnessed an anxious time in our Edinburgh home. The invitation of Presbytery must be answered. What decision to reach was a vital matter. Father, mother and the older daughters talked over every phase of the subject. Earnest prayers for wisdom from above went up from the closet and the family-altar. Many things had to be considered. Very naturally the welfare of the ten children entered largely into the question. Would it be prudent to give up the comforts of the chief city of Scotland for the privations—temporary at least—of pioneer life in the backwoods of Upper Canada? Of the proposed field not much of an encouraging nature could be learned, save its probable opportunities in the future. Beckwith was a bush, and the scattered settlers endured manifold hardships. Was it not flying in the face of Providence to think of exchanging comparative luxury in a metropolis for positive necessity in an uncleared township? On the other hand, might not the opening be most opportune? The new country offered a broader field for the girls and boys who must carve their own way in the world. Were the people of Beckwith to be denied the Gospel because their minister could not enjoy the conveniences of life incident to an old community? If missionaries to the heathen braved danger and death to bear the glad tidings to "the dark places of the earth," why not suffer lesser evils in a British colony? Was not self-denial often an imperative duty? Should not His disciples "endure hardness" for Christ's sake? Thus both sides were canvassed thoughtfully, with the result that father signified his acceptance of the call and his intention to start for Canada whenever needful arrangements could be completed.