

The Pioneer of the Church in British Columbia

HERE are still some persons living who can recall to mind the immense amount of interest and enthusiasm which were evoked in England some fifty years ago when the Rev. George Hills sailed forth from this land to undertake the really colossal charge of leading the church in the vast and unknown colony of British Columbia, says the Church Times. By the time of his consecration, which took place in Westminster Abbey on February 24th, 1859, the expansion of the Church of England had commenced in full earnest. The lion-hearted Bishop Gray had already been at work for twelve years building up the church in South Africa. Bishop George Augustus Selwyn had long succeeded in impressing his forceful and lovable personality upon our possessions in the South Pacific ocean, while very nearly half a century had come and gone since the day when Bishop Middleton was consecrated in Lambeth Palace Chapel to the new Bishopric of Calcutta.

A New Colony

None the less, public enthusiasm was aroused to a remarkable extent by this new development of the organization of the church abroad, which will ever be associated with the name of George Hills. For many long years the fair land of British Columbia, today so full of abundant promise for the future, had remained entirely untouched by the approach of civilization. A few forts belonging to the great Hudson Bay company were the sole tokens of British power to be found anywhere on the Pacific verge of our North American possessions. Then, when the nineteenth century had about half run its course, wondrous tales came to the motherland of the marvelous mineral wealth lying hidden away in British Columbia's bosom. Needless to say, in a very short time the whole colony, from the Straits of Haro to the northern districts of lonely Cariboo, came to be overrun by adventurers of every sort and kind. The troubles experienced not so very far away down South in California were not by any means ancient history, and it was felt on all sides that a time had come when the old church must make a determined forward move, and, side by side with a civil administration conducted with magnificent integrity by men of the type of the late Sir Matthew Begbie, set on foot a vigorous effort to rescue British Columbia from the moral, social and spiritual dangers which were evidently threatening her.

To that good and great lady, Miss Burdett-Coutts, the first step was due. With splendid generosity she came forward, and though she had already bestowed one bishopric upon South Africa and a second upon Australia, she added that of British Columbia was provided, which was sufficient to endow both the new bishopric and also two arch-deaconries, the value of which latter to the Church in British Columbia, not only in its early beginnings, but still more at the present day, cannot be overestimated.

Thus the money was provided, and before so very long the man was forthcoming also. He was found among that splendid band of clergy trained by Hook, of Leeds. He had undergone a first-rate apprenticeship in the great northern manufacturing town, while for the nine years immediately preceding he had lived and worked among the hardy fisher-folk of our East Anglian coast. Under the firm and vigorous rule of George Hills, the parish of Great Yarmouth had become renowned throughout the length and breadth of England. In days when training grounds for clergy were few and far between, he had succeeded in carrying on a work in his Norfolk parish which placed it almost on a level with Leeds and Kidderminster. How much the Church in later times owed to his inspiring leadership and kindly tact may be gauged from the fact that it was here that such men as Bishop Gott of Truro and Canon Garry of Reading, to mention two names only, spent the early portion of their ministry.

Bishop Hills Chosen

So then the choice of the Church fell upon George Hills. He spent a few months in England after his consecration, during which he made a vigorous effort to secure men and funds, being backed up with a hearty goodwill by Bishop Tait of London and Bishop Wilberforce of Oxford. Nor must it be forgotten that among those young men to whom the call of God came at this particular moment was another Leeds curate, John Sheepshanks by name, who followed George Hills out to the distant West, and after nine years of unremitting toil at New Westminster on the banks of the Fraser river, returned to England, leaving behind him a name and a reputation in British Columbia second only to that of his great chief.

The obstacles which Bishop Hills had to encounter were truly enormous. Over and above those caused by the huge distances which he had to traverse in an area as large as France and Ireland put together, at a time when the railway was a wild dream of the future, there were other special difficulties calculated to appal the stoutest-hearted. For a time everything went smoothly. The new Bishop's fearless faith, his great powers of organization, and his unbounded industry, seemed to carry all before them, while the material prosperity which all had united in prophesying for British Columbia seemed to be within an ace of realization. The statement made at the great "send-off" meeting at the Mansion House the day before Bishop Hills sailed from England in November, 1859,

that the province would in all probability come to be inhabited by no less than half a million people in a very few years' time seemed destined to be realized with literal truth. But things were not so to be. A period of financial depression set in. The endowments of the diocese had been invested in the province itself, and anxiety for the future must have strained the faith and the courage of the chief pastor almost to the breaking point. Then, once more, internal troubles sprang up in the shape of a schism in Victoria itself. Still, in spite of all these difficulties, the good work grew and prospered. On commencing operations, Hills found only one solitary clergyman at work, but in twenty years' time he had succeeded in dividing up his great diocese into three portions, and when, in the evening of his life, he felt that the hour for his resignation had arrived, he departed for his motherland once more, to the same East Anglia where he had undergone his own early training, leaving behind him the vast territory over which he had been placed as spiritual leader and guide well-nigh thirty-four years previously, manned by no fewer than eighty-four clergy.

Three years longer remained to him of life, though the veteran Bishop was stricken, and his strength reduced to a mere fragment of what it once had been. The young Leeds curate to whom he had given his first pastoral charge in 1859 had by this time become Bishop

Passing across the Gulf of Georgia to the mainland of British Columbia, we reach that mighty hive of industry, Vancouver City, the most important centre, though not the ecclesiastical capital, of the diocese of New Westminster. In speaking of this diocese, it is impossible to forget the wonderful missionary career of the beloved Bishop Sillitoe, who, commencing work when Bishop Hills divided the original diocese in 1879, labored here for sixteen years, leaving behind him memories which will never be forgotten. Vancouver now numbers something like 80,000 souls, and like its smaller neighbor, New Westminster, "the Royal City," where stands the Cathedral Church of the Holy Trinity, is simply throbbing with vigorous commercial life. There is every likelihood that before so very long Vancouver City will become one of the strongest church centres to be found in the entire Dominion of Canada. But apart from these two places, the church life in this diocese will need to be strengthened from outside for many years to come. There are no large agricultural areas, while a considerable portion of the soil is covered with dense forests, which can only be cleared by slow degrees. The rich mines, which have rendered British Columbia so famous in the eyes of the world generally, lie outside its borders. Valuable and self-denying work has gone on for long years in this diocese among the pioneer settlers, while the devoted labors, up in the interior, among the

diocese of the quartz mines. It comprises an immense amount of gorgeous scenery, of dark forests and wild mountainous districts. The character of the diocese is wholly different from that of New Westminster. The people are not scattered in small settlements over the face of the land, but to a great extent they live in close proximity to one another. Hence Kootenay is characterized by a large number of small but compact communities. Combination is possible to a far greater extent than is the case in many other Canadian dioceses, and though the difficulties even here are great, yet the people in these small townships are placed in a far better position for the organization of church life. Kootenay, although quite one of the newest portions of the great Canadian mission field, is, nevertheless, one of the most self-sufficing, for of eighteen clergy, no less than half are entirely supported by their respective congregations.

The diocese came into existence in the year 1900. It was felt at the time very strongly that it was an unsatisfactory state of things for the organization of the church in a region promising such rapid developments to be controlled from a centre hundreds of miles away on the coast. When once this wonderful region has come to realize itself, as it were, its progress is likely to be phenomenally rapid. The magnificent scenery which we associate with such names as Mount Sir Donald and Mount Stephen and the great Glacier of the

work in this diocese has been conducted among the Indian tribes, and in the course of the last thirty years (for the diocese came into being in the year 1879) a bounteous harvest has been reaped. But Caledonia, like its sisters, is also on the eve of startling developments. Within its boundaries is Prince Rupert, the terminus of the new transcontinental railway, the Grand Trunk Pacific. Everything points to Prince Rupert becoming, at no short distance of time, a great commercial centre, second only to Vancouver. The west area today, sparsely inhabited by Indians, miners, and fishermen, will then become a land of thriving and populous towns.

There are other features, too, displayed by this great region where the foundations were so well and truly laid by the first Bishop of Columbia, upon which space forbids us to dwell. We must not omit, however, some reference to that spirited and romantic venture, entitled "The Columbia Coast Mission," in which a work is now being carried on by the Rev. John Antle, among the numerous logging camps on the islands and bays of the Gulf of Georgia, which sounds almost like a reproduction in miniature of the work of the Melanesian Mission and the "Southern Cross."

Important ecclesiastical developments affecting the province of British Columbia as a whole would also appear to be pending. At the recent General Synod of the Canadian church, held at Ottawa last September, permission was given for the formation of a third ecclesiastical province, to consist of the dioceses lying to the west of the Rocky Mountains, provided that the various constituent portions are willing. Such a development as this would indeed gladden the heart of good Bishop Hills, were he with us today. This and the other grand possibilities lying ahead of the beautiful country which he loved so well, and where he worked so faithfully, would have seemed to him fifty years ago one of the wildest dreams of the imagination.

The Church in British Columbia

Thus, for the time being, it is incumbent upon church people in the Mother Country to strengthen the hands of our brethren out there in the Far West to the very fullest extent, until the time comes, which will probably be not so very far distant, when the church in British Columbia will have become one of the strongest portions to be found in the great Dominion. There is, however, one great and crying need, for lack of which, the church in the West is sadly hampered. At the present moment there is no institution of any sort or kind in the province in which a young man who feels called to the sacred ministry may receive the needful training. The opportunity has, however, now at length arrived. The machinery has already been provided by the provincial legislature for the establishment of a great university for the whole province, while they have further set apart no less than 2,000,000 acres of land for the purpose of endowment. The University of British Columbia, when once it is started, seems likely to become one of the strongest educational centres anywhere in the North American continent. The leaders of the church have wisely decided to throw in their lot with the province and to establish an institution, which will be known as St. Mark's College, the main object of which will be the training of British Columbia's future clergy. It will be attached to the university as a self-governing hostel, and its students, though possessing their own chapel, and under the guidance of their own officer, will nevertheless, be enabled to participate in all the many advantages derivable from a great centre of higher education.

The establishment of St. Mark's College is the object which those in England who are responsible for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the consecration of Bishop Hills and the consequent founding of the church in British Columbia have set before themselves. The foundation of an institution, which cannot fail at no short distance of time to become one of the church's strategic outposts, is a magnificent goal to which to aim. It would be indeed difficult to find any object which should at once be a truer memorial or a nobler thank-offering for God's mercies during the past fifty years than this. It would be but the logical development, after all, of the magnificent pioneer work carried on at the cost of such labor and self-sacrifice by one who has been justly designated as "England's Apostle to distant Columbia."

"FORTY-EIGHTERS"

Mrs. James Hood, 1133 Fisguard street, sends the following, intended to correct an error in the article on "Forty-Eighters" published two weeks ago in the Sunday Supplement:

"Mr. Thomas Rabson came from San Francisco March, 1858, bringing the following children from that city: Sydney Thomas Rabson, dead; Mrs. Henry Cogan; Mrs. William Meachn, Comox, dead; Mrs. James Hood, following the occupation of nurse, 1133 Fisguard street. Seeing that the names are going to be hung in the Government building, I thought it wise to correct it."

"Do you find poultry keeping pays?"
"Well, no; I can't say that it pays me, but I think that it pays my boy Jim."
"How's that?"

"Well, you see, I bought him the fowls. I have to pay for their keep and buy the eggs from him, and he eats them."—Illustrated Bits.



of Norwich in succession to Hills' own diocesan, Bishop Pelham. Kneeling before him the great Bishop of Columbia was now instituted to the cure of souls in a little Suffolk village, and here, tended by those he loved, he continued to work, so far as strength was given him, until he was at length called home. Many there are today, both in England and in Canada, who, as they call to mind the striking personality and the fearless uprightness of this good man, will be heard to exclaim, "Verily the memory of the just is blessed."

The Growth of the Church

The structure, the foundations of which were so well laid by Bishop Hills, is year by year coming to assume more and more imposing dimensions. The one diocese is today represented by four. The Bishop of Columbia is entrusted with the spiritual oversight of Vancouver Island, and a number of adjoining islands. The original Sea City of Victoria, the provincial capital, with its many beautiful buildings, lends to the diocese a special distinction. The glorious scenery, with its great panorama of mountains and the perfect climate, attract, year by year, large numbers both of tourists and residents. The progress of the diocese, though substantial, has been slow, but it is on the eve of railway developments, and so soon as these have come into being Vancouver Island is likely to be tenanted by a great additional population. It may be said, without fear of contradiction, that the church over which Bishop Perrin presides today is marching towards a future of great and glorious possibilities.

Indians, of Archdeacon Small are well known to many. The excellent educational work, too, conducted by Sisters from the Community of All Hallows, Ditchingham, has been an immense boon to the whole province. Although the church in the diocese of New Westminster has been confronted with no small amount of difficulties in recent years, yet it has never slackened in its progress. Fifteen years ago there were only 18 clergy in the diocese, which at that time embraced Kootenay also. Today there are 18 clergy in Kootenay and 33 in New Westminster. Then, there was no, properly speaking, one single self-supporting church; today there are 18. The endowment of the bishopric, too, which for many years has been a fruitful cause of anxiety, owing to the serious depreciation of the property in which the funds were invested, has now been placed on a stable foundation once more, partly by reason of the excellent management of the property in question, partly by reason of a supplementary endowment fund of £5,000, raised mainly in England. With wise leadership and consistent support from outside, the church in the diocese of New Westminster, which owes so much to the missionary zeal of Bishop Sillitoe and the gentle rule of Bishop Dart, will be assured of a future no less full of promise than that of the mother diocese of Columbia.

The Youngest Diocese

From New Westminster we pass to Kootenay, the youngest of the quartette of dioceses which now cover the vast field over which Bishop Hills was called to preside single-handed. Kootenay has been described as the

Selkirks, with Okanagan Lake, Kicking Horse Pass, and Albert Canyon, attract year by year an increasing number of tourists. The material wealth of the diocese too is colossal. The cattle ranches of the Nicola Valley, the fruit ranches of Vernon, Summerland and Peachland; the mills of Cranbrook and the coke ovens of Fernie; the gold mines of Rossland and the coal mines of Michel, the smelters of Trail and Grand Forks, with the enormous pastoral and agricultural wealth of the smiling Boundary country—assure to this magnificent diocese at no distant time a vast and wealthy population, where church life should find one of its strongest centres anywhere in Canada.

The crying need of the diocese of Kootenay at the present time is a bishop of its own, for until the needful sum required, £10,000, for the endowment of the bishopric is secured, it remains under the oversight of the Bishop of New Westminster. Vigorous efforts have been going on for some time past, especially in England, for the attainment of this end, and at the present moment barely £3,500 remain still to be collected.

Diocese of Caledonia

From the fastnesses of the Rockies and the Selkirks we pass away northward to the immense diocese of Caledonia, which will always be associated with the name of Bishop Ridley. In its physical features, the diocese of Caledonia is largely a reproduction of that of New Westminster, with its indented coast, its excellent harbors, its heavily-timbered valleys and hillsides, and its glorious scenery. Up to the present time, the bulk of the church's

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rough the accidental discharge of
ball caliber revolver which he in
manner secured possession of
nine-year old son of George W.
h, caretaker at the Boys' Central
ol, was shot at Oaklands on Sun-
afternoon. The ball passed
ugh the upper portion of the thigh
ting a painful wound, but one
h is not considered very danger-
ous.
The wound was attended to by
Ernest Hall, who ordered the lad
to the hospital. Young Smith
be about again in a short time.