

Historical Memoranda

CONCERNING

"CRESCENT STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH," MONTREAL.

Looking over the present list of the members of this congregation, there appears to be at least five still remaining who have been connected with it from its beginning, and who no doubt can well remember the cause of its origin:—the memorable conflict in the Established Church of Scotland, on the non-intrusion question. This conflict lasted for about ten years, and culminated in the disruption of the Church, on the 18th day of May, 1843, when 474 of its Ministers and Missionaries, for conscience sake, severed their connection with it, and constituted themselves into a body called the "Free Church of Scotland," giving up their Churches, their manses, their livings, and risking every wordly prospect, going forth with their wives and families, not knowing what might befall them, but with a clear conscience, trusting in God for the future, whatever it might be; one of the noblest sacrifices for principle that the world has ever seen.

During all the time of the conflict, many of the members of the Presbyterian Churches of this City in connection with the Established Church of Scotland, strongly sympathised with the non-intrusion movement, and on the disruption taking place, considered it their duty to manifest their sympathy with the Free Church principles. At that time (1843-44) there were five Presbyterian Churches in this City, viz:—St. Gabriel Street Church, St. Andrew's Church, St. Paul's Church, Lagauchetiere Street Church, and the American Presbyterian Church, the first three of which were in connection with the Established Church of Scotland. The first concerted movement in this direction took place on the 10th day of January, 1844, when twelve ardent and good men, who might well be called the twelve Apostles of the Free Church in Canada, met together and called themselves the Free Church Committee, others joining them afterwards, their object being to extend and propagate Free Church principles. The ultimate result of the work of this Committee, was that in May, 1845, a new Presbyterian congregation was formed in Montreal, which worshipped for a time in a wooden building on Lagauchetiere street near the head of Côté street, which had been hastily and cheaply erected, being only intended to accommodate the congregation temporarily, until the projected new Church to be built on Côté street should be ready for occupation.

At this time (1845) this locality was most respectable and quite uptown, and the new Church which was proposed to be erected there, turned out to be the largest and finest Presbyterian Church building of its day in the City. It was opened for public worship, on Sabbath the 16th day of May, 1848, and the name chosen for it, was the "Free Church Côté Street."