

compassion. His acts exemplified the sentiment of Coleridge :

"He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things, both great and small."

After some years of faithful service in various fields, he took charge of the church at Straithkiness, a busy town three miles from St. Andrews. There he met and wedded Ann Aitkins, the youngest of James Aitkin's thirteen children, all of whom grew up. The father and several of the older sons were linen manufacturers of excellent repute. The mother, Annie Cameron, lived to be ninety-six and was eminent for piety and benevolence. The Aitkins were allied closely to Margaret Aitkins, mother of the renowned Thomas Carlyle. A grand nephew, Rev. Walter Aitkins, whose splendid diction has seldom been surpassed, was long pastor of the Free Church at Smith's Falls. Robust health, mental vigor, wonderful powers of memorizing, reverence for things sacred and thorough acquaintance with the bible characterized the brave sons and fair daughters of the Aitkins family. Eight girls and two boys crowned the happy union of its youngest member with the zealous ambassador for Christ. All had good constitutions and reached the years of maturity. Some were born at Straithkiness and others in Edinburgh, whither father had meanwhile removed. He was living in that city when the call from Beckwith presented an unexpected problem, which divine guidance alone could solve aright.

Surely the Presbytery had made no mistake in wishing such a man to become the first shepherd of the little flock in the Canadian wilderness.