

St. John's Presbyterian Church, Toronto

Twenty-five Years

November 22nd, 1888—November 22nd, 1913



HIS is not old, as the history of congregations in older Canada goes, but it is an important mile-stone for this congregation. The Quarter-Century period upon which we now look back has no extraordinary or outstanding features—at least from the view-point of human ministries and successes. It contains, however, the record of much serious labor, as also the record of uncounted blessings of God. Thanksgiving to God, sincere and unaffected gratitude—is the emotion that overtops all others in a meditative review of the past.

The Beginning

St. John's congregation acknowledges St. James' Square as its parent church. To the missionary interest and initiative of that congregation our beginning is due. In December of 1886, a small cottage on the east side of Broadview Avenue, and south of Gerrard Street, was rented, and in this, a Sabbath School was opened. This school was manned at first by teachers from St. James' Square Church, under the superintendency of Mr. George Laidlaw, then, as now, a member of the Session of that congregation. Three months later, in the early spring of 1887, a preaching service was started in this same cottage, conducted by Mr. Scott, then an under-graduate in College, and missionary in connection with St. James' Square Church. Interest attaches to this particular initial service from the fact that, except for those who came to take part, nobody came to it. At the next service the Sabbath following, two persons came, and never afterwards less. Thus began in humble fashion the work which has grown to its present proportions in the large and well-established congregation of St. John's.