

## Our Contributors

### CHURCHES OF OTTAWA.

#### Dominion Methodist Church.

BY J. D. CLARKE.

Methodism in Ottawa dates back to the first year of last century. The fourth circuit formed in Canada, comprising the townships on both sides of the river, was set apart in the year 1800 and was known by that name. For long years the work of the itinerant pastors who sowed the seeds of Methodist doctrine was a most arduous task, as the labour of all pioneer preachers has ever been. Long and disagreeable were the journeys that these fathers had to undertake in order to supply the ordinances of the Church to the sparsely settled population that hewed the trees in the virgin forest and brought the soil into cultivation. It was a heroic task in those days to be a backwoods preacher, for the distances to travel were great, the roads were bad and often almost impassible, the flocks poor and ill able to meet the Scriptural injunction to bear in mind that the laborer is worthy of his hire. With the settlement of the country, however, and the growth of Ottawa from village to city proportions, Methodism made considerable advances, though for one cause or another its progress in Eastern Ontario was not nearly so rapid as it was in the Western part of the Province. It was not until the year 1855 that the city of Ottawa was set apart by itself as a circuit or charge, Rev. Jas. Brock being pastor. In the half-century that has almost passed away since that time there have been many changes in the Capital, but probably no more marked transformation has been witnessed than the progress of the Methodist Church in the city. In the interval, the several divisions of Methodism as they exist in Great Britain have been consolidated into one united Methodist Church of Canada, thereby greatly strengthening the communion. It has been especially advantageous in Ottawa, where in 1855 Wesleyan Methodism was represented by but one struggling congregation. Now, there is one great central church (the Dominion) and a number of other thriving congregations in various parts of the city.

I take the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the opening of the Dominion church to pen a few facts with regard to its origin, progress, and present standing. When in 1855 the Church first became a charge its members worshipped in a little frame structure and for a number of years it did not appear necessary to increase its pew accommodation. With the advent of Rev. W. J. Hunter, however, in the early seventies, new life was put into the work. Mr. Hunter proved a man of great courage and prescience. He saw that if the Methodist Church was to hold its own in power and influence in the Capital it must at least have a creditable central home—a headquarters as it were—and he at once set about providing it. The task was an arduous one, but Mr. Hunter and the officers whom he gathered around him faced it with a will, and in 1876 the present commodious stone structure was raised on the site of what up till then had been known as the Metcalfe Street Methodist Church, and dedicated to the worship of God in November of that year. It was with great

satisfaction that this heroic pastor was welcomed back to his old congregation to officiate at the semi-jubilee of the church opening and to rejoice with its members over the success which has followed the labors of the early days. Dr. Hunter, now aged yet well preserved and full of fiery zeal for the cause of the Gospel, had a warm greeting from many old friends.

During its existence the church has been privileged to have the services of some of the more noted of the leaders in the Methodist Church. Among its pastors have been Revs. Dr. John Carroll, Wm. Scott, E. B. Harper, Wm. Stephenson, Wm. Hall, Dr. W. J. Hunter, Ezra T. Stafford, Le Roy Hooker, W. W. Carson, Dr. E. B. Ryckman, Manley Benson, and Dr. Saunders. Its present pastor, Rev. Samuel Peter Rose, D. D., stands second to none in the communion to-day as a preacher and as a leader of thought. He was born at Mount Elgin, Middlesex County, Ontario, in 1835, his father, Rev. Samuel Rose, being then in charge of the Institute for Indians on the Muncey Reserve and also Chairman of the District, which office he held without interruption until appointed as Book Steward in 1865. Dr. Rose was educated in part at Upper Canada College and in part by private tuition. When he entered his twentieth year he was received as a candidate for the ministry and sent to Peterboro as the colleague of Rev. Charles Fish. The remaining three years of his probation were spent at Bridge Street Church, Belleville, the first year with Rev. W. Briggs and the remaining two with Rev. G. B. Harper. Then he became superintendent of the church at Newmarket and since then, according to the Methodist itinerant system, he has served the church at Orillia; Parliament Street, Toronto; Brant Avenue, Brantford; Dominion Square, Douglas, and St. James, Montreal; and now Dominion Church, Ottawa. Here he has already spent three years, and has been invited to stay another two. Five years is now the limit of the term which a Methodist preacher can serve a church without making a move, or it is no secret that the Dominion Church members would gladly have retained the services of this gifted pastor for an indefinite period. Evidence of this attachment was strongly exemplified when someone set on foot a story a month or two ago to the effect that Dr. Rose was likely to be appointed editor of the Christian Guardian by the General Conference next year. The Dominion congregation at once raised the point that they had bespoken his services till 1903 and that if he were to assume the editorship of The Guardian—a task for which he is eminently qualified, though a change of editors is hardly likely in the near future—it must be after the close of his five years, when Centenary Church, Hamilton, to which he has already been called, would have to settle the score. No doubt intelligent selfishness prompted this stand, but it shows the great esteem in which he is held by the congregation.

Dr. Rose is an ideal pastor. He lives to promote the welfare of his congregation and whether as a visitor in the home, as a conductor of week day services, or as a counsellor in his cosy study at the church, he has ever the same kindly, open heart, ready to sympathize with and to aid the ever increasing church family. In the pulpit he is at his best. A man of inspiring optimism, a fearless

investigator, of strong convictions, he never appears before his congregation with an ill-prepared message. With those who hold that a preacher should confine himself to abstract theological injunctions, he has little sympathy. He holds that a preacher cannot be too well informed with regard to the topic that he undertakes to expound, and for this reason he is an earnest reader of the best productions of the master minds of the past and the present, and very often a vital principle is exemplified by the quotation of the great thought of a master writer of prose or verse. In this way, he keeps in touch with the spirit of the times, and imparts to his hearers new found truths or illustrations of old truths, with a freshness and attractiveness calculated to arrest the attention of the most careless listener. Dr. Rose will never be charged with plagiarism; he illustrates his sermons with thoughts from other master minds, as opportunity demands, but he invariably credits the author and thereby aids his hearer to further research along the same lines. Having said this much of the pastor of Dominion Church, it hardly requires to be added that his congregations at Dominion are always large; and that every Sunday visitors at the Capital are attracted to the Dominion Church by his personality. The ability of Dr. Rose has been recognised by his brethren in the church to a marked degree. He was honored by being appointed President of the Montreal Conference last June. Again and again he has been the representative of Canadian Methodism in the adjoining republic; and at the great convention of Methodism in Great Britain this year he eloquently upheld the interests of the Church in the Dominion.

The Dominion Church from being a small, struggling congregation, has grown to be one of the leading places of worship in the Capital. It has a good choir, a bright, cheerful service, and a people inspired with the desire to give for the maintenance of their Christian privileges and the extension of the kingdom. This is exemplified in the balance sheet of the Church for the last two years, which shows the total receipts to be over \$31,000, of which \$6,438.30 is contributed to the Century Fund of the Church. The spirit of the people is well proved by the fact that the donors of the money expressed their desire that practically all this large sum should be handed over to the Committee to advance, as the church at large deems best, the great schemes by means of which she has been doing her share in promoting Christianity. A liberal church is a live church, and that undoubtedly the Dominion Methodist is. It enters on the new era of its history under the most favorable circumstances, and its success ought to be correspondingly great.

Presbyterian Standard: "Progressive bigamy" is one of several phrases which the Brooklyn Eagle has coined and which have become current. Bigamy is punished with a term in prison. But the same court which will sentence the bigamist will allow a man to marry, progressively, as many wives as he pleases, if he will only go through the form of obtaining a divorce between ceremonies. "Progressive bigamy" is good in that it well describes a thing that is very bad.