

One hundred years ago, St. John's had a population of ten thousand. Of these, two thousand five hundred were Protestants. But there were only two Protestant places of worship, one Anglican, the other Congregational. Then, as now, in spring and autumn the permanent population was for the time augmented largely by the coming to the capital of vessels from all around the coast, to lay in supplies for the fishery, and to discharge its products. The principal English firms had wharves along the waterfront, with small shops facing on Water Street. There were the naval and military elements, as well as the mercantile element, in what, for want of a better term, may be called the society of the capital, the Governor and his entourage forming the court life of the aristocratic little community. The town was busy and bibulous. Drinking was almost universal, and manners and morals were regulated by no rigid standard. Anspach in his history of Newfoundland, written in 1845, says that Thomas Paine's most blasphemous volumes had more authority among the inhabitants of St. John's than the Bible. "Infidelity had taken full hold of the public mind, and the most detestable opinions upon these most solemn subjects were unblushingly expressed and advocated by individuals holding some of the most important positions in society."

Such then were the conditions in St. John's when Methodism began its work here one hundred years ago. Some Methodist families from Harbord Grace had removed to the capital, and their desire for a place of worship of their own had led to the erection of a little church in the spring of 1815. Prominent among them were the names of Jonathan Parsons, James Lilly, James Bailey, William Freeman, and Mark Coxen. In the late autumn of the same year, the appointed minister not having arrived from England, the Rev. John Pickavant was transferred from Port de Grave, and became the first stationed minister. This church stands today on the site of that first small sanctuary, and the preachers of today proclaim from the same position the same evangel that Pickavant first delivered. One can easily imagine the reception the good man met with, of affectionate welcome from those who had prayed for his coming, of curiosity and semi-apprehensiveness from those who had

heard of Methodism's struggles and successes "around the Bay," of covert or open hostility from those who hated the message and the man that rebuked their flagrant sins.

But welcome or unwelcome, Methodism had come to stay, and to succeed. St. John's was swept by three great fires within a year. That first little church went up in flames, and the whole town was laid in ashes. But the church was rebuilt speedily, and the cause of God through its agency grew apace. Within two years Captain Vicars, of the Royal Sappers and Miners, converted through the Rev. George Cubitt's ministry, and father of Captain Hedley Vicars, could be seen and heard in it, preaching in his uniform. "Vicars' saints" among the men of his command became as well known in St. John's as "Havelock's saints" forty years later in India—and for the same reason. The dynamic of that gospel which had stirred and saved the fishermen of the outports, stirred and saved the more polished but not less sinful dwellers in the town. History repeated itself. Methodism grew with the capital's growth, and developed with the capital's development. Another First must be credited to those earliest years, and a significant First it was. Newfoundland sent the very first contribution outside of Great Britain, preceding, in this instance, even generous Ireland, to the funds of the Wesleyan Missionary Society. That was in 1816, and the amount was \$154.44. By way of contrast, it may be noted that last year's contribution from Newfoundland Methodism to Missions was \$18,800. Of that amount, St. John's contributed \$5,800.

But it is not for me to attempt to tell in detail the story of the century of Methodism in this city, or to recapitulate the names of the men, the ministers and laymen whose devotion, whose liberality, whose enthusiasm, have contributed to its development. That story has already been told by those possessed of ampler and more exact information. Inside the portal of St. Paul's Cathedral, very inconspicuously, is graven the name of its great architect, Sir Christopher Wren, with only those significant words in Latin, "If you ask for his monument, look around you." The monument of those heroic, faithful, self-denying men is in the Methodism of