

ed this first room, which was our bed-room, from the room adjoining, used as a sitting-room, did not reach the top; this left free course for the fire to set both rooms ablaze at the same moment. We had no water. The village well was a quarter of a mile off. At a glance we saw there was no hope of saving the place. The first I seized upon was the money. Our Bibles were the next; one of them was a little scorched. Our fur coats are both destroyed, but we are thankful to find the most of our wearing apparel safe, also all the bedding and most of the cotton and linen. Our stationery is in ashes. The books are mostly burnt. Alford is safe but damaged, but one loss we lament very much is that of the scrap-book prepared for us by the Boys' Own Mission Band of Erskine Church, Toronto. My wife's watch is gone. It was a wedding gift. She feels this most of all. Our loss will total about \$300. Our boys worked nobly. We would not have saved half as much had it not been for them. They would rush in for things and drag them out though dozens of tiles were crashing down from the roof. Our cook, at great risk, took a Chinese pick and smashed a large space of the roof in just ahead of the fire, which prevented it from reaching the last room in the row. We all feel the effects of the smoke and heat to-day. The boys are laid up with cut hands and sore chests. (You may wonder at the word *servants*. The division of labour here makes it a necessity. We can't complain of the cost. The total wages given 'e three per month equals \$8.50, besides they board themselves.) We have taken a new house. "All things work together for good." J. G.

## The General Assembly.

THE FOURTEENTH SESSION of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, was opened auspiciously in St. Matthew's Church, Halifax, on the evening of the 13th of June. This church is the largest of the Presbyterian Churches in the city, being seated for about 1250, and although less ornate than some of the modern churches, it is both commodious and comfortable and well adapted for the accommodation of the Assembly. The congregation is a large and influential one, and traces its history back to the first European settlement of Nova Scotia, in 1749. Its first pastor was the *Rev. Aaron Cleveland*, great-great-grandfather of the present president of the United States, who seems to have been settled here about the year 1750. After him there was a succession of able

ministers from the United States, until the appointment of *Rev. Andrew Brom*, the first minister from the Church of Scotland, who, after a ministry of six years, was recalled to Scotland and eventually became Professor of *Belles Lettres* in Edinburgh University. The *Rev. John Scott*, also from Scotland, was many years minister of St. Matthew's Church. The *Rev. George M. Grant*, now principal of Queen's College, became assistant and successor to Dr. Scott, and was about fifteen years pastor. He was succeeded in 1878, by the present minister, the *Rev. Robt. Laing*, a native of Aberdeenshire, who received his theological education at the University of Edinburgh and Morrin College, Quebec.

Owing to the great distance of the place of the Assembly's meeting from centre of the churches field of operations, not to speak of its western limit, some 3500 miles off, a number of the delegates were not forward in time to take part in the opening services, yet there was a good average attendance of ministers and elders, and of the citizens a very large number, so that the spacious church was filled to its utmost capacity. The opening sermon by the retiring moderator, the *Rev. Dr. R. F. Burns* of Fort Massey Church, Halifax, was a master-piece of pulpit oratory, and at the same time, a comprehensive and interesting resumé of the growth of Presbyterianism in the United States and Canada, and of the progress of Home and Foreign Missions through the agency of these churches. His text was from these words,

"Then they said, one to another, we do not well; this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace; if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us; now, therefore, come that we may go and tell the king's household."—II Kings, chapter 7, verse 9.

Among other things, Dr Burns said :—

The progress in literature and philosophy in science and art that has marked the Victorian era, makes this emphatically to us as free-born Britons "a day of good tidings." These fifty years of beneficent rule—for whose completion we have recently held so joyous a jubilee, have conferred untold blessings within and beyond the limits of our empire. The triumph achieved in almost every department of human investigation, though in certain aspects adverse, have turned out the rather unto the furtherance of the gospel. The number of those rescued from the beleaguered strongholds of sin and Satan, and who have taken seats at the table spread in presence of their foes, is larger than at any