

In the interesting services of the communion season. Friday and Saturday had been appointed as the fast and preparation days. The attendance on both was very good, and a solemn seriousness seemed to pervade the congregations. The meetings of Session also for discipline, and for the admission of new members, were occasions of great interest, and nothing gratified me more than the proof thus afforded of the carefulness and conscientious impartiality with which the fount of the sacred table was guarded by its constitutional defenders, who appeared to be men of sound judgment and Christian discretion.

On the Lord's day, the whole English department of sacramental service devolved on me, while the pastor conducted the Gaelic part in a dwelling house adjoining. The church accommodation was inadequate, and much disappointment was thereby occasioned. But a large congregation waited on all the services, and we doubt not that the special presence of the Great Master of the feast was enjoyed by many. The associations of Scotland's Churches in their best days, were vividly present. The habits and experiences of older and holier times, were distinctly recognised, and the grave sweet melody of the heart-singing of the congregation, was an accompaniment which we do not always enjoy in this land of our adoption. Nor do we doubt that the prayer of faith ascended from many a heart, and that fellowship with the Saviour and with one another, was in the best sense enjoyed. The forenoon's meeting on Monday for special thanksgiving, and for the preaching of the gospel, was well attended also; and to show that matters of plain practical morality were not forgotten amid the sweets of the "upper springs" of Zion's hill, we had a "Temperance Lecture" in a large school-house in the evening, when 500 attended, and when a petition to Parliament in favor of the Liquor Prohibition Law was recommended and unanimously adopted. It is my decided opinion that, were the friends of the Redeemer always ready to embark in such things, the helm would be confided to proper hands, and exerecences of a questionable nature would thus be prevented from overlaying a cause otherwise commendable.

Sydenham has grown largely in size and population since I visited it in autumn, 1846. The town was then just in its commencement; now, it has a population of 1600—many goodly stores—a handsome stone court-house and prison—and three weekly newspapers. The congregation of our church embraced, till of late, two main branches—one in the town, the other at Leith, on the Lake shore. This last branch has of late been separated from that in the town, and in its new and independent form has connected itself with the United Presbyterian Synod. Assuredly, in a rising community like Sydenham, there is ample room for two Presbyterian ministers, or perhaps even more; and we know that cordial co-operation is not necessarily excluded by the want of an united organisation in externals. The impression, however, was strong on my mind, that the local position of our church in Sydenham was not altogether favorable to the desired concentration of its membership and influence in and over the town; and I am very happy to learn, since my return home, that the suggestions which were made and pressed by me on the people concerned, are likely to be carried out. The unsuitable location of a place of worship, has, in this country, often proved a source of great evil. Precipitancy in this as in the kindred but more important matters of calls and settlements, ought to be studiously avoided. The present "log-church" of Sydenham, is creditable to its founders seven years ago; but a neat brick erection, in a more central situation, is certainly desirable.

Of the week succeeding the sacramental one, Tuesday, Wednesday, and part of Thursday, were devoted to a mission tour with Mr. McKinnon to Holland, Artemesia, Gloneel, and adjoining

townships south of Owen Sound, and bordering on the Toronto, Durham, and Garafraxa Roads. These townships have all been lately settled, but they are now nearly all taken up by actual occupants, among whom Scottish Highlanders and Irish Presbyterians from Ulster preponderate. They seem all to be comfortably settled, and their desire to support a stated ministry among themselves, has been checked by nothing so much as by the seeming neglect with which they think they have been treated by our Church. We did what we could to assure them that nothing save the absolute want of men had stood in the way of the benevolent movements of the Presbyteries of Hamilton and Toronto in their behalf. It seemed to them, however, that other denominations of christians had moved more briskly, and had in some cases pre-occupied the field which would have fallen to our care had we been sufficiently on the alert. Our impression was, and is, that there is some degree of truth in this charge, and proofs are certainly multiplying everywhere; that a central Synod Committee of Missionary action is needed, not only for distribution and superintendence, but for actual, energetic, aggressive movement. Perhaps more than one such acting agency would be required, but assuredly one at least for the three Presbyteries of London, Hamilton, and Toronto, would be expedient. The first of these Presbyteries will very soon be divided into three if not four. London, Woodstock, Goderich, and Sydenham or Saugeen, will, in my opinion, soon figure in real action as seats of Presbyterial bodies.

In the places visited, five meetings for public worship were held. Besides the preaching of the gospel, with the ordinary exercises, addresses were delivered on the distinctive principles of our Church, as opposed to those of the old Establishment on the one hand, and the United Presbyterian church on the other. Generally speaking, the declarations of sentiment given by the uplifted hands of the hearers, were cordially in our favor. The attendance was good, and we trust that the presence of the Great Master was with us.

The importance of Durham, as a central station, was strongly impressed on our minds. Situated about midway between Sydenham and Ferguson, on an elevated portion of the Garafraxa Road, and in the midst of a very fertile and well peopled region; it promises to be a town of rapid growth and influence. During the Commission-ship of the Hon. J. H. Price, the district was surveyed by that gentleman, and ten acres of land in the centre of the town were appropriated by him in behalf of our Church, as the rising religious community of the place. A deed was granted; trustees named; and there the thing stopped. What the reasons may have been, I will not say, but the land is still there, and the Presbytery of the bounds will unquestionably look after it. The modest timidity of the Free Church in Canada has kept us back in instances not a few. The want of an "anticipative reference" to a rapidly advancing growth in the districts, has been painfully felt; while, possibly, the distribution of our mission supplies has been regulated by local considerations more than by an enlightened and comprehensive survey of fields already "whitening to the harvest." A congregation had here been organised years ago. The Holy Supper had been twice solemnized; but for two years past there had been a pause in our movements. A pious Gaelic missionary I found usefully employed in the district; but it is plain, that an officiant ministry, both English and Gaelic, is essential in this commanding locality of the west.

On Thursday evening we returned to Sydenham, and held a congregational tea meeting in the school-house. Upwards of four hundred were present, and ministers and members of different denominations attended. Many matters of common interest were touched on by different

speakers. The subject allotted to me was, "the Rise and Progress of the Free Church of Scotland;" with a view specially to its distinctive principles. A wish having been expressed, that the reasons which stand in the way of an union of Presbyterians in this country, should be clearly stated, I was necessitated to make a trial of drawing the line of demarcation between a national supremacy on the one hand, and an excessive individualism on the other. In this there does not appear to be any very serious difficulty, as our excellent friend, the Convener of the Synod's Home Mission, has clearly shown through the pages of the Record. We may not be able to define all the instances in which a recognition of God by the nations of the earth may become really a duty; but certainly we may be permitted to say, that for a nation as such absolutely to ignore God and the revelation of his will, *even in no circumstances* be a duty. The practical illustrations which were given in support of our views, were derived mainly from the instances of the weekly Sabbath, the obligation of vows and oaths, the abolition of slavery, and the marriage tie as a vow to God, to be solemnized by a religious rite. The question of enjoinment of religion by the State, we leave in abeyance, as on that point our Westminster standards are silent. These addresses we had occasion to make in various places as well as at Sydenham.

On the morning of Friday, the 16th, I left Sydenham for Southampton, a distance of thirty-two miles. Within the last three years this region was absolutely a desert, it is now marked out into townships, nearly all taken up, and the road pretty distinctly laid out. Three times a week, two public conveyances, the mail and a private vehicle, ply the road, and there is ample encouragement for them both. We got to Southampton in the afternoon, and I was kindly received by our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Reid, who, along with Mrs. Reid, senior, I found, to my agreeable surprise, had been at our meeting in Sydenham the night before. Here also I met with a number of old friends from Toronto and other places, now settled here, and the renewal of intercourse with them was very refreshing.

The river Saugeen is a beautiful stream, which winds through different townships, forming three branches, and in their united form, falling into the Haron at Southampton. It is not navigable to any great distance from the lake. The town of Southampton contains not more than 200 inhabitants; but the township in which it stands, is already sufficiently settled to bring in about £400 of taxes annually. Members of our Church were among the first to settle in the place, and for three years it has been a mission station. Several of the members of the London Presbytery, Mr. Scott and Mr. Ball, for example, have repeatedly visited in a missionary character, and Mr. Archibald Crawford was, I rather think, the first settled catechist. That excellent young minister, now in Scotland, met with a very narrow escape from death, amid the swelling waves of the Haron. On his way from Southampton to Kincardine, thirty miles from the coast, a storm overtook the small vessel in which he and a few other passengers were conveyed. On her being capsized, two of the passengers were drowned; Mr. Crawford, the master, and the rest, clung to the vessel, and were providentially saved.

Mr. Macnaughton, a preacher of the Free Church of Scotland, duly designated to Canada by the Colonial Committee at Edinburgh, has labored for nine months at this station, with considerable acceptance. He has received a call from the people adhering to our Church, and the ordination was fixed for Friday, the 22nd inst. It was matter of regret to me that I could not remain another week, so as to have taken a part with the brethren of the Presbytery in the solemn work, and to have formally introduced Mr. M. on the Sabbath following. All I could do in the circumstances was, to supply the pulpit twice on