

While the Colonial Committee of the Church of Scotland, and the Presbyterian Church in Canada, were discussing the advisability of taking up work in this far West, this province of "a sea of mountains," the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland took the initiative, and sent across the sea as the herald of the Gospel the Rev. John Hall, a talented young man from Belfast. He arrived in Victoria about the end of June, 1861, preached the first sermon under Presbyterian auspices on the last Sabbath of that month, and thus became the pioneer of Presbyterianism on the Pacific Coast.

The social and religious conditions of Victoria, at that time of Cariboo and Fraser River gold mining excitement, were such as to need a man of strong faith, resourceful and tactful, and such a man was the energetic, scholarly and optimistic young Irishman from Belfast. At once he gained the implicit confidence of the young Presbyterians far from home who loyally gathered around him. Some difficulty was experienced in securing a place in which to hold services. At last the little band secured Moor's Hall, on Government Street, thence they removed to the Police Court room, which much needed the Gospel, thence to Smith's Hall, and thus, like Noah's dove, they had much difficulty in finding a resting place.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed according to the rites of the Presbyterian Church for the first time in Victoria on the second Sabbath of January, 1862, when fifteen men and