

axe is often the herald of civilization. Beneath its stalwart strokes the Beckwith woods made way for little clearings, which "enlarged their bounds," as seasons came and went. Fresh settlers arrived, fair crops were gathered, and the future of the township seemed assured. The time had come to take steps towards securing one who should go out and in among them and break the bread of life."

It was decided to ask the Presbytery of Edinburgh to select and send a suitable minister. A "call" was prepared, signed by nearly all the adults, and forwarded in due course. This important document stipulated that the man to be chosen must be "of godly carriage and conversation, well qualified to expound the Scriptures, gifted in prayer, skilled in the practice of medicine, and able to preach in Gaelic and English." If the petitioners thought their request would be complied with easily, they reckoned without their host. The Presbytery found it very difficult to find a competent minister willing to accept the position. Few of the ministers were physicians, and fewer cared to leave flourishing charges for the chance of missionary success in a distant land. Even to ambitious divinity students the prospect was not particularly alluring. Canada seemed a long way off. The age of steam and electricity had not been ushered in. Sailing vessels, slow, uncomfortable and unsafe, furnished the sole means of traversing the ocean. Popular imagination pictured the regions west of the Atlantic as interminable forests, through which wild beasts, and still wilder Indians roamed at will. Central Africa appeared less remote and more inviting than the land beyond the St. Lawrence. So Beckwith's Macedonian cry received no prompt response, weeks and months passing before it could be answered satisfactorily.

Eventually the Presbytery urged my father, the Rev. George Buchanan, M.D., then ministering to a church in the Scottish capital, to go to Beckwith. He possessed abundant qualifications for the responsible task. Although sixty years old, "his eye was not dimmed, nor his natural force abated." His ripe experience as a pastor and