

fully performed the duty assigned him, and at length requested Rev. Dr. Sparks, of Quebec, to name the place and day for the consideration of the subject. The doctor, though approving the object, declined to act, and Mr. Smart took upon himself to name Montreal, and, with Mr. Easton's consent, St. Peter's street church, as the place of such meeting, and to fix the time. Soon after, however, the urgency of "Mr. Joseph Johnson, a licentiate of the Synod of Ulster," who had recently arrived in the country, for ordination at Cornwall, and a "dreadful ferment on the question about the Kirk of Scotland" at that place, caused a change of programme. On a day late in the year 1817 or early in January, 1818, Mr. Smart, Mr. Taylor and Mr. Easton met at Cornwall and organized

"THE PRESBYTERY OF THE CANADAS."

Mr. Bell advised against this action as in unnecessary haste, in view of the limited acquaintance with Mr. Johnston, and the Scripture injunction to "lay hands suddenly on no man;" and declined to attend. Mr. Easton was chosen Moderator and Mr. Smart Clerk. Mr. Johnston was ordained, and Mr. Alexander Fletcher, "a young man of fine talents," who had spent "two years at Divinity Hall, but had not been licensed to preach," was present. A yearly collection for a Synod fund was provided for, and "an address to the Government of both Upper and Lower Canada, expressive of our views and designs" was adopted. It was also determined that "all the brethren in both Upper and Lower Canada—ministers whose character and academical education entitle them to respect"—be respectfully invited "to attend our next meeting," which "is to be held at Montreal on the second Thursday in July." "The great object," wrote Mr. Smart, January 24th, 1818, "will be to consult on the plan and best means of forming a union on a good foundation."

THE SECOND REGULAR MEETING.*

On Wednesday, July 8th, 1818, Messrs. Smart, Bell, Taylor and Johnston, found themselves floating down Lake St. Peter's and the St. Lawrence, in a "Durham boat." Stopping at Chataugua over night, where "a very good sermon" was preached to a congregation of villagers and raftsmen, they reached Montreal about noon on Thursday, and the sessions of Presbytery were formally opened in the evening. Besides the four just named and Mr. Easton, it is not known that any other ministers were enrolled as members, although, in some memoranda left by Mr. Smart, the names of Rev. Mr. Spratt, of St. John's chapel, Quebec, of a Rev. Mr. Graham, and of Elders Purvis and McIntosh are given, and it is on record that Mr. Spratt preached for Mr. Easton the next Sabbath evening, and that Mr. Graham was the preacher at Chataugua. In a letter written to Rev. Mr. Struthers, of Glasgow, Scotland, twelve years after, Mr. Smart gave that gentlemen some items about the formation of this Presbytery, one item being that Calvinistic ministers, whether Presbyterian or Congregational, were invited to unite in the movement. It is probable, therefore, that Messrs. Spratt and Graham represented the Congregational branch of the Calvinistic family, and did not become organic members of the Presbytery. Their names did not afterwards appear in connection with it, and no further trace has been found of Mr. Graham. Of the five ministers acting at this meeting, three were sent to this country by the Associate Church in Scotland (Mr. Easton in 1802); one, Mr. Smart, was a Scotchman by birth but educated at Gosport, England, and the other, as before stated, was from Ireland. The ministers of the Church of Scotland did not attend, and the hope of uniting all Presbyterians in one Canadian Church was, for the present at least, disappointed. Yet the members determined to persevere, believing that an organization on such a basis of union was "the only one adapted to the present state and future condition of Canada."

TWO ORDINATIONS.

The greater part of the second day was spent in discussing the propriety of ordaining Mr. Andrew Glen, who Mr. Easton desired to supply his pulpit, during a proposed absence on a visit to Scotland. Upon the vote being taken, the names of Mr. Smart and Mr. Easton, with Elder Purvis, were recorded in

the affirmative, and the names of Mr. Bell and Mr. Johnstone, with Elder McIntosh, in the negative. Mr. Taylor, being Moderator, gave his casting vote in favour of proceeding, and Mr. Bell and Mr. Johnstone dissented.

Monday, July 13, Presbytery visited Lachine, where, "after hearing all his trials," they ordained Mr. Hugh Kirkland, "a young man who arrived that year from Ireland," as pastor of the church at that place. Mr. Bell preached from Matt. xiii. 52; "Mr. Johnston ordained, and Mr. Taylor addressed the minister and people." The following day, Presbytery met again in Montreal, and "Mr. Glen was ordained at large by part of the Presbytery, but, some irregularities being connected with the transaction, Mr. Johnston and Mr. Bell declined to assist." It is not certain that Mr. Glen officiated for Mr. Easton, as proposed, but he appears to have assumed pastoral charge at *River du Chien*, where he had been preaching.

AN ADDRESS TO GOVERNMENT.

Before final adjournment, an address was prepared to the Governor-General, "respectfully informing him of the organization, and assuring him that the objects and aims of the Presbytery were not political, but moral and religious, seeking only the dissemination of the truth as contained in the sacred Scriptures, the promotion of education, and the peace and prosperity of the country in which the Providence of God had cast their lot to labour in the gospel of His Son." A courteous answer was returned to the address in due time, but it was noticed that Mr. Smart, the organ of communication, was addressed not as the *Reverend*, but as *Esquire*.

ARRIVAL OF MR. HENDERSON.

While some of the members of Presbytery still lingered in Montreal, Rev. Archibald Henderson, then late of the Associate Church at Carlisle, arrived, on his way to his new field of labour at St. Andrew's, bringing with him "authority and instructions from the Associate Synod of Scotland to form a Presbytery according to the application forwarded to them," one year before. What the result would have been if he had arrived sooner cannot be told. As it was, the signers to the petition felt considerable embarrassment, but, after consultation, by correspondence and otherwise, it was deemed still advisable to adhere to the independent union position they had assumed before the answer was received. Mr. Henderson was cordially invited personally to unite with the new Presbytery, and the invitation was repeated in a letter dated Montreal February 9th, 1819, a copy of which unsigned, in the handwriting of Mr. Smart, is still preserved. The following sentences are quoted:

"It is with much pleasure that I have to inform you that I am instructed by the members of the Presbytery of the Canadas which met in Brockville on the second Tuesday of January last, to invite you to a seat at their next meeting which will be held in this city (Montreal) on the second Thursday of July next.

"The importance, indeed the necessity, of some bond of union, or association, on a liberal foundation, must have appeared to you before this period. It is a circumstance highly favourable to the formation of such a union, and which forwards our views, that the unhappy causes of division which have torn asunder the Church of Christ in the mother country have no existence in these provinces.

"May I and my brethren in the ministry of the Gospel indulge the pleasing hope of seeing you at our next meeting at the time referred to?"

Mr. Henderson, though always working cordially and harmoniously with those who were the leading members of the Presbytery, declined to sever his connection with the Associate Church in Scotland, and remained independent of Church courts in Canada for many years.

A COMMISSION TO SCOTLAND.

In the spring of 1819, Mr. Easton took his contemplated trip to Scotland. To some extent, he went out as an agent of the Presbytery, commissioned to solicit contributions for its aid. He however, assumed a broader field of operations, and collected funds under a scheme according to which the Presbytery should receive one half and the other half should be divided among other Presbyterian ministers in Canada. "The result of Mr. Easton's exertions," says Dr. McKerron, "was that a considerable sum of money was collected chiefly among the Secession congregations, to assist in accomplishing the benevolent object which he and his brethren had in view." A difficulty in reference to settlement, after his return, caused an estrangement between him and his former brethren, and he was never afterwards actively associated with

them in Church work. Besides, while in Scotland, he made such representations as caused the Presbytery of the Canadas to be entered on the roll of the Associate Synod—an entirely unauthorized act which was promptly repudiated in Canada, the members of Presbytery still having "no wish to be connected with any religious body in Britain."

DIVISION OF THE PRESBYTERY.

The next meeting of the Presbytery of the Canadas of which information has been obtained was held at "Martin's Mills," or Martintown, October 28th 1819,* when Alexander Fletcher was ordained as pastor. He is understood to have been a Scotchman, educated at Glasgow, who "came to Glengarry as a teacher, at the termination of the war with the United States." At this meeting, a considerable accession having been made to the number of ministers, "it was deemed advisable to divide themselves into two or more Presbyteries,—that all the members might have it in their power to attend the meetings, which had hitherto been impossible on account of the great distance they had to travel." "It was, accordingly resolved that those in the Lower Province should be left to form a Presbytery by themselves, and those in the Upper Province should form three Presbyteries," all to be "under the inspection of a General Synod, to meet on the first Wednesday in February, 1820, at Cornwall." One of the Upper Canada Presbyteries was also to meet at Cornwall, one at Brockville or Perth, and one at York or Niagara.

THROUGH STORMS AND SUFFERING.

In consequence of the severity of the weather, the depth of the snow, and a misunderstanding in reference to the notices issued, but few ministers responded to the call for the organization of Synod on the day appointed. One of these was Rev. Robert McDowall, who, with the assent of his Classis and Synod, had now abandoned the project of organizing a Classis for Canada, and, with others who had been expecting to join him in such Classis, had arranged to unite with his Presbyterian brethren in Synod and Presbyteries. Messrs. Bell, Smart and McDowall journeyed together in a sleigh from Brockville to Cornwall, in the midst of a blinding storm, with the cold so intense that "after sunset we could not travel more than two or three miles without stopping to warm." Of Wednesday, February 2nd, Mr. Bell wrote in his journal: "The horrors we this day endured exceed my powers of description. The storm was violent and directly in our face. . . . We set out at ten in the morning and reached Cornwall at nine in the evening. The snow was deep and drifted to the top of the fences, so that the horses were to the belly and often deeper. We saw no travellers but ourselves, so that we had the road to break, and could seldom find the old track. We slept at Chesley's inn and found it miserably cold." Thursday morning, February 3rd, the three ministers from a distance breakfasted with Mr. Johnstone, at his residence, and "then

ORGANIZED THE SYNOD†

and proceeded to business." Mr. McDowall, having been longer in service in Upper Canada than any other Presbyterian minister then living (from 1798), was appropriately chosen Moderator, and Mr. Smart, probably the next in the order of seniority (1811), was appointed Clerk. Before the close of the meeting, the Moderator and Clerk were instructed to draw up, in the name of the Synod, an address to Sir Peregrine Maitland, the Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, pledging "loyalty and attachment to the king and constitution of Great Britain," appealing to history as "bearing an unbroken testimony of the attachment of Presbyterians to the king, the laws and the country," and reminding His Excellency "that the reigning family, of the House of Hanover, were greatly indebted to the Presbyterians for their throne and crown."

AGITATION AND DISCUSSION.

The formation of Presbytery at Montreal, without the sanction of Government, Synod or General Assembly, excited considerable attention, and was still the subject of much discussion in the newspapers and elsewhere. The press took opposite views. By some,

* The letter of invitation to Mr. Henderson indicates a meeting in January and another in July, 1819, and there was probably another in April, but no account of their proceedings has been found.

† The name of the Synod is not certainly known, but it has been alluded to in letters written by some of the pioneers, as "The Synod of the Canadas," and so it was probably christened.

* This was undoubtedly the second regular meeting, but in a letter written by Mr. Bell to Dr. Peddie, two previous meetings, "held during the winter," are distinctly mentioned and objected to, at which he was not present. At the second of these two meetings, Mr. Fletcher appears to have been "taken on trial for license to preach, without any certificate of character."