

The Congregational Fathers of Canada.

MR. CHAIRMAN, FATHERS, AND BRETHREN:

All hearts that love the brave and true will beat in admiration for the Fathers of Congregationalism in Canada. In obscure papers and scattered reports their records for the most part are hidden, more than one name representing gifts, graces, and character such as would adorn a nation's councils, living only in the short and simple annals of a rural church.

One is not open to the charge of denominational boasting when he honors the toilers who braved the dangers and endured the hardships of the wilderness, nor is he partial if he desires that men who wrought well for the Cross of Christ and the cause of religious equality shall be held in loyal remembrance by those who have entered into their labors.

And appreciation of the Fathers' toils will not make us forgetful of the Mothers' services; for the history of early Congregationalism in this country is brightened and hallowed by the records of true Mothers in Israel. Mrs. Richard Miles, whose faithful work is a tradition on the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa; Mrs. William McKillican, whose earnest piety made her eminent in the early days; Mrs. Silcox, whose Christian character was a tower of strength amidst sturdy pioneers; these were representatives of a consecrated band, whose memories are a blessing to the toilers of to-day.

The "wild New England shore" saw the advent of men and women who sought liberty in the worship of God; the foggy coast of Newfoundland became the home of persecuted "separatists," banished by ecclesiastical bigotry and regal tyranny. These, with other victims of intolerance who willingly left the Motherland for safety in the New World, reared the sanctuary in the wilderness. When the curtain of 1645 rises it discloses a Congregational church on that Island, with the Rev. George Downing, the first graduate of Harvard College, Mass., as its first pastor. Considerably more