

# BOOKS and NOTIONS

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### METHODIST BOOK & PUBLISHING HOUSE, TORONTO.

*Its rise, progress and present standing.*

The *Methodist Book & Publishing House*, whose premises are situated at 78 & 80 King St. East, Toronto, extending through to Court St., and whose influence extends from the Atlantic on the East to the Pacific on the West, its publications entering the homes of all classes in every portion of our Dominion, began its existence in a very humble manner.

The late Dr. Ryerson feeling that the Church which he so much loved, and in which he took such an active and influential interest would be better able to obtain those liberties and privileges to which she was entitled and which she did not then possess, drew the attention of the Conference of 1829 to the question, and so embued his hearers with his views, that the Conference gave Dr Ryerson permission to raise funds for the purpose of establishing a newspaper which should uphold the views of the Church. The official document appointing Dr. Ryerson to this duty was found among the papers of the late Doctor and was handed by his son Mr. C. E. Ryerson to the present Book-Steward who has it framed and hanging in his office. The Conference authorized the raising of stock to the extent of \$2,000 divided in 100 shares of \$20 each, the amount so raised to be repaid with interest as soon as the avails of the concern would permit of it. The amount was raised solely for the purpose of publishing a newspaper but co-incident with the commencement of the paper a small Depository for the sale of books was opened and from this small beginning the present "*Christian Guardian*" newspaper and *Methodist Book & Publishing House* have grown to the prominent position it now holds.

For some years after the enterprise was started the Editor of the *Guardian* fulfilled the duties of Book-Steward also, but in 1843, owing to the volume of business in the book department which necessarily occupied more time and attention than the Editor could bestow, the offices were divided and a Book-Steward into whose charge the entire business management of the concern was placed, appointed. Many men whose names the Church and world hold

in high esteem have held the position of Book-Steward or Editor in days gone by, and many of these have long since entered into rest.

Up to the year 1865, when Rev. S. Rose D. D. was appointed Book-Steward not much had been done in the way of publishing except the weekly paper and pamphlets such as Catechisms, Tracts and other small works treating on subjects then being discussed, but an opening appearing for a Sunday School paper for use in the schools of the Church, the *Sunday School Advocate*, an illustrated semi-monthly paper was started which at once grew into favour. Another periodical also, the *Sunday School Banner*, issued monthly and intended to assist the Teachers in the preparation of the International Series of Sunday School lessons as well as a lesson paper for the scholars, the *Berean Leaf* was commenced. These were received by the public with such favour that the *Banner* was in a few years changed into Magazine form which form it retains at the present time. A demand having arisen among many of the Ministers and Laymen of the Church for a literary Magazine the "*Canadian Methodist Magazine*" was begun under the able Editorship of Dr. Withrow. The publication of this Magazine, it can safely be affirmed, has done good work in elevating the tone of Canadian literature and stimulating literary work among the members of the Church. About this time also the Establishment began the publication of books in bound form, in which branch of business it has rapidly grown until at the present time it probably publishes more books than any other house in Canada.

In September, 1878, the Rev. William Briggs was elected to the position of Book-Steward and under his efficient and careful management the establishment has made wondrous strides.

The *S. S. Advocate* which had been changed in form and name at the beginning of the year was again remodeled under the name of *Pleasant Hours*, and a new paper, *Home and School* issued in the alternate weeks with *Pleasant Hours* was commenced. By thus combining the two publications, Sunday Schools can supply themselves with an illustrated paper with choice letterpress, every week and at a price far lower than any imported paper. A smaller illustrated paper "*The Sunbeam*" for primary classes and a Quarterly lesson paper *The Berean Quarterly* were also added to the list of regular publications. These *S. S.*