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HISTORICAL SKETCHES.

No. 81.—THE DIOCESE OF COLUMBIA.

THE retirement of the Rt. Rev. George Hills, D.D., first Bishop of Columbia, calls the attention of churchmen to that remote region of the Dominion. The first missionary effort made by the societies in England with regard to British Columbia was in 1856, when the Church Missionary Society sent out Mr. Duncan (a layman) to take charge of the Indians at Metlakatla. The experiment of sending a layman to a work of that kind was not found, in the end, beneficial to the Church, and the C.M.S. has since adopted the better plan of sending out bishops, if possible, as pioneer missionaries. On this plan the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel acted in 1859, when it sent out Bishop Hills to pioneer work in British Columbia. He was born in 1816 at Egthorne, Kent, England, and was educated at the University of Durham.

On the western coast of British Columbia, towards the south lies the beautiful island of Vancouver, the climate of which Dr. Forbes declares to be unsurpassed by any with which he is acquainted. It is about three hundred miles in length, with an average breadth of sixty miles, and contains an area of about 20,000 square miles. This island, with the smaller islands which naturally belong to it, forms the present Diocese of Columbia, the mainland being under the care of the Bishop of Caledonia in the north, and of the Bishop of New Westminster in the south. But when Bishop Hills arrived in Victoria, the capital (in Vancouver Island), the whole colony, with its mountains and vast forests, its miners and Indians, was under his sole charge. It comprised a territory as large as France and England put together, and was

enough to appal the energies of the strongest; but Bishop Hills threw himself heart and soul into the work. In every sense of the word he has been a missionary bishop. His mode of travelling from post to post was chiefly by canoe coasting, or sometimes by the Hudson Bay steamer which ran at intervals. The typical missionary of those days was, as the bishop describes him, "A man with stout country shoes, corduroy trousers, a coloured woolen shirt, a leather strap around his waist, and an axe upon his shoulder, driving a mule or horse laden with packs of blankets, a tent, bacon, a sack of flour, a coffee pot, a kettle and a frying pan." In this method, halting at intervals for rest and cook-

ing, which involved the making of his own bread, the missionary would travel for hundreds and hundreds of miles, preaching to miners and Indians as opportunity might offer.

From time to time the bishop received some missionaries to help him, but a great part of the pioneer work was done by himself. However, as time went by, quite a little staff of clergy was formed, and a Synod established. In 1879 this Synod passed a resolution representing to the societies in England that a territory so vast as British Columbia could not possibly progress under the superintendency of but one bishop, and the result of this was that the province was



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Bishop-elect of Columbia.

divided into three dioceses, consisting of Vancouver Island, Caledonia (or the mainland north) and New Westminster (or the mainland south). Two prelates arrived from England to take charge of the two dioceses on the mainland, Bishop Ridley for Caledonia in October, 1879, and Bishop Sillitoe for New Westminster in June, 1880; and Bishop Hills ever since has been in charge of the comparatively small territory of Vancouver Island. Why the diocese should be called Columbia is a little difficult to determine. It is to be hoped that its designa-