

panies, two of which had their forts in the neighborhood, it occupied for trade purposes a position in the debatable land between the Blackfeet and the Cree Indians, who in those days carried on continual war with each other. There is not a hill or a bend of the river near the town that has not some story of bloody treachery or hair-breadth escape associated with it.

In the period between misty traditions of the past and the firm ground of history since the "boom," two jottings of ecclesiastical interest deserve to be made. In 1865, the Rev. James Nesbit, the first missionary sent by our Church to evangelize the Indians, visited Edmonton with some thought of making it his head-quarters. After looking over the ground he decided not to remain, but the fragrance of his endeavours to promote the spiritual life of some of the officers and men of the Hudson Bay Company remain to this day. He was the pioneer home missionary. When he left he carried off with him Mr. George Flett, whom he had found in the service of the Hudson Bay Company, and who, after helping him to establish the mission that has since been known as Prince Albert, became an Indian missionary himself.

In 1872 Principal Grant, on his journey from Ocean to Ocean, spent a Sunday in Edmonton, and preached the second Presbyterian sermon in the place. The third was not preached until nine years later when, in 1881, the writer, after plodding with horse and buck-board for seven weeks over the lonesome and toilsome leagues that separate Winnipeg from Edmonton, found a congregation "fit though few" waiting for his arrival. Most of these people were immigrants who had gone out during the preceding year or two. An organization was at once effected, morning and evening services established, plans laid for the building of a church, and in the months that followed, services—some on Sabbath and some on week days—were arranged for in four out-lying neighborhoods. On the north side of the river the standard was raised at Belmont and at Sturgeon—two farming neighborhoods settled mainly by Canadians. On the south side of the river, services were held at Fort Saskatchewan, a mounted police post eighteen miles down the river, and at Clover Bar half way between

that and Edmonton—the latter a little colony of farmers, mostly Scotch, and mostly bachelors. Exactly a year after the arrival of the missionary, the Edmonton congregation entered into possession of its new church—a neat and commodious frame building, costing when completed \$2,400. It was not completed, however, the first year. Each succeeding year saw a step towards that consummation which was long in coming. The plastering was managed the second year; the painting, the putting of a good furnace into the basement, and the clearing and fencing of the grounds marked, each one, an annual step. The outlying branches of the congregation emulated their bigger sister in Edmonton; and now the Sturgeon, Fort Saskatchewan and the Clover Bar, have each a comfortable log church. All these buildings were erected with the help of the Church and Manse Building Fund—a fund to which the Church in the North-West owes more than has yet been acknowledged. After three years of service as ordained missionary, I was called to be minister of the congregation. The Revs. Dr. Robertson and D. M. Cordon travelled 1,000 miles (200 of it being with horses) to perform the induction ceremony. With the third year the work had grown to such an extent that since that time a student has been sent each summer to assist in carrying it on; and when in 1887 I was summoned to Winnipeg, the Rev. D. G. McQueen, B.A., a graduate of Knox College took my place, and has quietly but successfully carried on the work, strengthening and developing, and winning for himself a secure place in the esteem and affection of the people. The congregation from this beginning made a good record for itself in the matter of liberality, and the average of its annual contributions for all purposes during its history has been \$31 per communicant—a sum scarcely exceeded by any congregation in the Church.

The future of Edmonton from a material point of view is not uncertain. Few places are more richly placed by nature. The wealth of forest and field, of mine and river, lies at the door. The soil is unsurpassed in fertility. Coal in practically inexhaustible abundance underlies the whole region, and the farmers dig it out of the nearest creek-bank for themselves. The sands of the river bed are gold bearing, and about a hundred men made good wages last summer gathering gold dust.