

It is now drawing near the tenth anniversary of your induction as our pastor, and although it is a little in advance of that date, yet we thought that seeing you are changing your place of residence at present, now would be the most practical time to contribute our share towards assisting Mrs. Hay and yourself in furnishing your new home

Kindly accept this purse of sixty-five dollars as a slight token of our esteem and appreciation of your and Mrs. Hay's efforts on our behalf.

Signed on behalf of the congregation, by the following committee :-- Margaret MacNachtan, Bessie M. Ferris, Jeanie Roddick, George Anderson, Margaret M. Burnet, Alice Johnston.

Rev. Mr. Hay responded as follows:--

Dear friends,-- any words I may say are only a partial expression of what I feel in thanking you on behalf of Mrs Hay and myself for this another mark of your appreciation. In many ways you have shown us kindness in the past, to-night I think you have spoken in much higher terms than merit deserves, yet to know that after nearly ten years among you the ties that bind pastor and congregation are stronger and more vital than when first formed, affords the highest pleasure and encourages a minister to better efforts in the future. On behalf of Mrs. Hay and for myself, I thank you one and all most sincerely and trust we shall so use your good gift as will give satisfaction to us all.

-- The Cobourg World, Friday June 9th, 1899.

St. Peter's Church.

Early days.-- The First Rector.-- Pioneers Worshipped in a Small Wooden Structure.-- A divinity School.-- New Church Built.-- A Mortuary Chapel. -- \$12,000 Improvements.-- Progress Marks its Life.-- Splendid Organization. -- Earnest Workers compose the Guilds.-- A Popular Rector.-- Boys' Brigade.

A small log cabin built in 1798, standing alone in the primeval forest, was the nucleus of the pretty town of Cobourg. Four years later the first store was erected having its site on or near where King street now is. Then settlers, men of stout hearts and strong arms, women of undaunted fortitude who bravely faced and endured hardship and privation, began to come in and rear for themselves homes in the unbroken wood. To us to-day theirs seems a formidable undertaking, going forth from their primitive dwellings day after day to war against the forest trees and hew them down, making for themselves and their children an abiding place where they could still dwell under the protecting folds of the flag for which they had borne and endured so much. The war of 1812-1815 was followed by several bad seasons especially the year 1816, which was unusually cold and during which old settlers say there was frost every month of the year. Wheat and corn did not ripen, fodder and provisions were scarce and dear, but amid all the deprivations and hardship and cruel necessities that marked the first years of settlement life, we find a people still clinging to the tenets of their father's faith.

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For when this pretty town was but a hamlet surrounded by primeval forest, the Church of England was ministering to the spiritual needs of the people, side by side with the foundation of commercial prosperity of these latter days; with the enterprising energy of a race of men who are doing their share toward building up a nation on the northern half of this continent; with the independence and stern adherence to principle and right that characterizes men of thought and action who are striving to bring this Canada of ours into the first rank among the nations of the world; with the nucleus of an educational system which is the pride of our land; was laid the foundations of principle and faith which has proven itself an indestructable basis upon which to build character and life and which has transfused its divine, converting, regenerating power into every age, teaching to all men the glory of the cross.

It is not known when the first Anglican service was held nor when the first church was built. This data may, perhaps, be found in the legendary lore that, although Canada is a young nation, is entwined around her history. The church registers, however, go back to January, 1819, and from that day until the present have been carefully kept.

It is altogether probable that the clergyman then in charge was a travelling missionary and had many other stations in his list among the names of members enrolled in those early days as active adherents of the church appear some still familiar to us, viz., Mr. James Bethune, Mrs. E. Jones, and Capt. and Mrs. Boswell. During the year 1825 we find the Register signed by Rev. A.R. Bethune, Minister of Grimsby, U.C., who was afterwards appointed rector of the parish in July, 1827, Rev. Samuel Armour of Cavan, father of Mr. Justice Armour, officiated in the Cobourg Episcopalian mission. Of the building where this people worshipped we know little, but the oldest preserved records show that it was a frame structure, built previous to the year 1820. When "by license and authority in the year 1827 Rev. Alexander Neil Bethune was appointed to the mission of Cobourg, district of Newcastle, Canada," the energy and business capacity of the devoted man of God began to make itself felt. The "burying-ground" of the church was immediately laid out and soon, too soon, that quiet "God's Acre" was marked by many a mouldering mound that told death had late been reaping. Soon after this a subscription was raised and the church painted inside and out. Not however until the year 1836 was Mr. Bethune formerly installed into the rectorate of the Town of Cobourg by the Venerable Archdeacon of Kingston pursuant to missive from His Excellency Sir John Colborne, to the Lord Bishop of Quebec.

As the short summer seasons came and went many important changes were brought by the ceaseless hand of time. The little patches of late sown wheat and barley that greened and goldened in the sunshine, the plots of Indian corn that proudly waved its plumes and put forth its silken tassels in clearings at the edge of the forest shade, gave way to broader fields; into the open glades, unlit before since forests grew or rivers ran, there leaped the sun's bright rays-- creative heat and light; where mighty trees for centuries had stood were reared thousands of homes and soon instead of an unbroken wilderness a vast Dominion stretched from sea to sea.

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"A land of labor but of sure reward--
 A land of corn to feed the world withal --
 A land of life's rich treasures, plenty, peace,
 A land of men to rule with sober law.
 This part of Britain's Empire
 Loyal as were their fathers and as free."

And as the sturdy Episcopalianism kept pace, with the progress and improvement everywhere evident, the quaint old wooden church that fronted the passing highway with its tiny tinned spire gleaming in the sunlight became inadequate for this people's needs and with enthusiasm the great work of building a new church was entered into and resulted in the erection of the nave of the present handsome, substantial edifice with side galleries in 1854, which on a memorable morning, the anniversary of which, is still held dear by our older residents, was dedicated to the service of God.

The organist on this auspicious occasion was the late Mrs. King Cameron, to whom a graceful tribute is paid in the church records acknowledging "the long and efficient services of their organist, especially the aid rendered by her in the choir." The presentation of the address from which this paragraph is taken was accompanied by a gift of ten pounds.

Notable among the educational institutions of those days was the flourishing Divinity School where many of the older clergy were educated. The building still stands in the Queen Street School.

Prominent among the names of the churchmen recorded at that time appear Messers. Asa A. Burnham, E.J. Boulton, D'Arcy Boulton, Wm. Graveley, H.L. Ruttan, Judge Boswell, J. Vance Boswell, Hon. G.J. Boulton and R.D. Chatterton. After a successful pastorate of 41 years, Archdeacon Bethune was elected second Bishop of Toronto in 1867. A brass tablet in the chancel informs us that the beautiful decorations of the Chancel are a memorial to the esteem in which their beloved rector was held, but sublime in its simplicity, more enduring than laboured epitaph or fulsome eulogy is the real monument of this great and good man of God existant to-day in the loving memories entombed in the hearts of his people.

Archdeacon Bethune was succeeded by Rev. Canon Stennett, M.A. Immediately the church gave evidence of fresh vigor. Strenuous and successful efforts were at once made to pay off liabilities and effect repairs. Undaunted by difficulties the present beautiful Chancel was erected, a grand new pipe organ, that is still the pride of the congregation, was procured and the choir brought down from the gallery to the chancel. Soon the west-end Sunday school room, a pretty useful little building standing on William Street, was erected principally through gifts and the energy of the Misses Ley.

Among the good works planned by the late Reverend Canon Stennett was the building of the present handsome and convenient mortuary chancel in St. Peter's Cemetery. But ere the building was erected, he who had spent much time and thought in devising ways and means for its construction was suddenly called to solve the last great mystery of death and cross the threshold of immortal life. Truly it might be said "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, they rest from their labors and their works do follow them."

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Canon Stennett's kindness to the poor as well as the many good works done by him will not soon be forgotten, not only by members of his own congregation but by people throughout the town. A beautiful memorial window bearing the figure of the Good Shepherd was erected to his memory.

But the success and prosperity that attended St. Peter's congregation in the past has been brilliantly eclipsed by the events of the past five or six years.

In March 1889, the scholarly, genial rector, Rev. Canon Spragge, M.A., who still presides over this people was appointed. If the energy, the liberality and spiritual advancement displayed by the congregation are correct criterions of a successful pastorate, and we think they are, then has that of Canon Spragge been successful in the highest degree,. The mortuary chapel was built and paid for. In it have been placed beautiful windows by Mrs. Crawford, Mrs. Hargraft, Mrs. Stennett and Mrs. Roe Buck. The church property has been much improved. The corner lot was acquired, and a more convenient, substantial and beautiful Sunday School building erected thereon. The unsightly side galleries were removed from the interior of the church, and the old pews were taken away and replaced by comfortable and handsome seats. Perhaps, however, the feature that adds most artistic improvement are the beautiful stained glass windows which are admired by all who see them. The memorial windows are very beautiful, each one in a grand work of art in itself. They are erected to the memories of the late R.S.Chatterton and his wife, the late Wm. Eyre and the late Mrs. Chambliss. Besides there is a window erected by a lady of the congregation as a thank-offering. Not only the church but the rectory also has been greatly improved. In all, over twelve thousand dollars have been spent during the past few years and the part most encouraging to the rector and most creditable to the church officials and congregation is that offerings for outside objects have not fallen off. Canon Spragge has not had the assistance of curates with which his predecessors were favoured excepting for a short time during the past year when the illness of the Rector made clerical help necessary. But although for the most part as far as the duties of the ministry are concerned, Canon Spragge has labored single handed, ever ready to assist him have been a devoted band of church workers.

Mr. E.H.Osler was the people's warden for about ten years and was always to the front where work had to be done. Messers. Burns, Boggs, and Black have at different periods acted for the Rector and done their part well. At present Mr. Wm. Black is the people's warden and Mr. D. Roberts the rector's warden.

One of the oldest societies in the church is the Woman's Auxiliary of Missions, which has been doing a good work for a number of years. The efficient officers are:-- President, Mrs. Spragge; Vice-President, Mrs. Barber; Secretary, Mrs. E.H.Osler; Treasurer, Miss Eyre; Treasurer of Parish Mission collection, Mrs. L.Woodcock.

A junior branch of this society is also among the successful organizations of the church. This is under excellent superintendence of Mrs. D. McNaughton, who is ably assisted by Mrs. J. Featherstone, Miss Caddy, and Mrs. Pyfrom. It is well officered with Miss T. Holland for President; Miss W. Pyfrom, treasurer, Miss H. Barr, Secretary.

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Another live society is St. Peter's Guild for parish work exclusively. They visit the sick, look after strangers and seek to assist the rector in any way that he desires or suggests. The officers are : Honorary President, Rev. A.W.Spragge; president, Miss Lizzie Weller, vice-president, Mrs. T. Niles, Secretary-treasurer, Mrs. C.B.Craig, The first work undertaken by the Guild was the purchase of a very fine organ for the Sunday School. They have since given large amounts to the wardens for different objects in connection with the church.

The Chancel Guild, as the name indicates, takes charge of the Chancel , sees to the arrangement of flowers for the services, looks after the linen and communion service and performs many other duties which willing hands can render in connection with the sanctuary. There are ten or twelve members presided over by Mrs. Buck with Miss F. Cruso as secretary-treasurer.

The Sunday School is well attended and the work efficiently carried on by faithful teachers. In the school next the church Mrs. Osler has for years conducted most successfully a young man's Bible Class, which has been largely attended. The young woman's Bible Class was in charge of the rector until the time of his illness, since which time Mr. H. Boggs has taken efficient charge. Mr. J.W.Bickle has superintended the west-end Sunday School for a number of years with great faithfulness and success.

The Choir has been trained and led by Mrs. C.H.Craig for the past six months and their singing shows abundant evidence of her great musical ability and painstaking effort. All regret the prolonged illness of the organist, Miss Davidson, who has been greatly missed. The church wardens , however, were fortunately successful in securing the services of Miss King, who has ably fulfilled the duties of organist for the past few months. Mr. James M. Dickenson, Drexel Institute, Philadelphia, will have charge of the organ and choir during the summer season.

It has been found necessary to engage a curate to assist Canon Spragge for a couple of months, while the congregation is so largely augmented by summer visitors.

Last but not least in the list of successful organizations is a Boy's Brigade instituted on the 20th of last May, at which time a goodly number of boys joined and every successive meeting has served to increase their ranks. The membership is not confined to boys belonging to the church but any boy who wished to join will be made welcome. The officers are as follows ; -- Warden Rev. W.A.Spragge; drill instructor, W.H.Floyd, Esq., Captain Wilfred Argue; 1st Lieutenant, Willie Henderson; 2nd Lieut, Sam Clarke; Sargeants, Wearman Gifford; Harry Oldham, Seymour Collings.

— The COBOURG WORLD, June 23, 1899.

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