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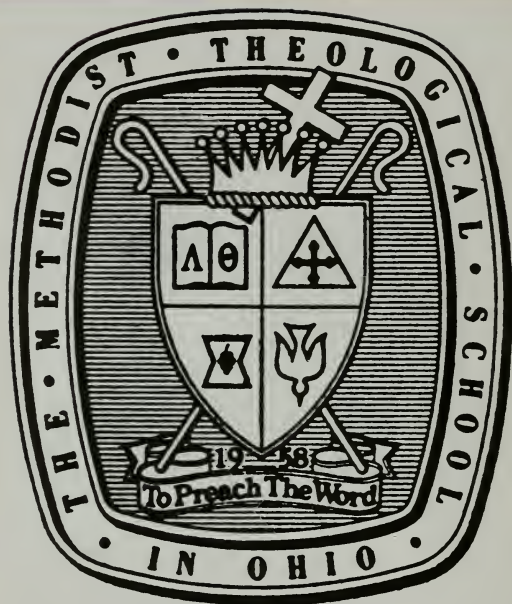
NORTHERN  
PRIMITIVE  
METHODISM



W. M. PATTERSON

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NORTHERN  
PRIMITIVE METHODISM.

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A Record of the Rise and Progress of the  
Cause in the Old Sunderland District.

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By W. M. PATTERSON.

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1909.

LONDON: E. DALTON, 48/50 ALDERSGATE STREET.



W. M. PERRYMAN

# NORTHERN PRIMITIVE METHODISM.

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METHODIST THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL  
STRATFORD, OHIO



## FOREWORD.

This book is not what is called scientific history. It is just a simple statement of the rise and progress of Primitive Methodism in the North; in truth, it is but a summary of a great story, for the compiler could have filled several volumes of this size. There are sections, indeed, of the old Sunderland District—such as the Dales, Cleveland, and the original Darlington, Carlisle, Hexham, Sunderland, Newcastle, and North Shields Circuits—which could each supply a bulky book of engaging interest.

The severity of the condensation which had to be pursued to get the present work into the allotted space may have made it bald, scraggy, lop-sided, inartistic in places; and from the very nature of the recital the frequent use of the same terms and phrases was inevitable. Descriptive writing and character sketches being impossible, an earnest effort has been made to save the volume from being a mere compilation of statistics. For want of space also—as well as for other reasons—the critical element had to be excluded, and everything which men and movements have contributed to the general flow of connexional expansion has been brought into prominence.

Many correspondents will be disappointed. They have the compiler's fullest sympathy. It may be, however, that opportunities will occur before long when some of their contributions will be given to the world.

As is generally known, this work was undertaken at the request of the Sunderland and Newcastle District Committee; and while it would be invidious to name any of the host of the compiler's helpers here, the energetic services of M. T. Pickering, and the editorial oversight of H. Yooll should, in bare justice, have appreciative recognition.

With all its imperfections, this record of noble achievement is issued in the hope that the generation now in service may be stimulated to use their superior acquirements in education, political freedom, social status, and church equipment with the same consecration of time, opportunity, and spirit which characterised their splendid spiritual ancestry.

W. M. PATTERSON.

Rathgar, Monkseaton,

*April, 1909.*

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# Northern Primitive Methodism.

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## CHAPTER I.

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### MOW COP.

**T**WO events occurred on Mow Cop, a spur of the Pennine Range, dividing Cheshire from North Staffordshire, which will claim no small position in the religious history of England, and which will be dear to the hearts of the "people called Primitive Methodists" for all time. A hundred years lay between the first and second of these events, but they were vitally related. Had the first one not transpired, the second would not have been possible.

To state the first event briefly, on Sunday, May 31st, 1807, a camp meeting was held on the Cheshire side of Mow Hill. It was the first meeting of the kind held in England, and it was an epoch-making gathering. Not that open-air meetings were previously unknown, but never had a properly organised camp meeting been attempted hitherto. This assembly was promoted by Hugh Bourne, a carpenter, of Bemersley; his brother James, and other ardent Methodists, who had heard an American evangelist named Lorenzo Dow, when the latter was on a visit to this country, tell what great things had been done on the other side of the Atlantic by means of these services. Some years previously, Hugh Bourne had "passed from death unto life," in his father's farm-house, while reading Fletcher's "Letters

on the Spiritual Manifestation of the Son of God," and was associated with the Burslem Wesleyan Circuit. In many respects he was a remarkable man, shy,—some-what "dour" Scotch folk would have called him,—certainly not a little peculiar in aspect and action, a man of massive convictions, a born organiser and administrator. Brought into close contact with the godless colliers and potters located in the region around Mow, he was moved to seek their salvation. One of the first he got "to start for heaven in earnest" was Daniel Shubotham, a kinsman of his own, who was a notorious poacher, boxer, gambler, drunkard, and blasphemer. The fact of "Swearing Dan," the profligate, becoming "Praying Dan," made a great impression upon the locality; and when Hugh Bourne was prevailed upon to preach on a certain Sunday afternoon, people travelled for miles to hear the young carpenter who had the reputation of "driving people crazy," by his earnest wayside religious talks. A place big enough to hold the assembly could not be got, so the meeting was held in the open-air, and the preacher called it "a camp meeting without the name," and added that "the mountain was that day consecrated to the Most High." The meetings were continued, the converting work went on, and eventually the worshippers wanted the services to be continued longer than the limit which had been prescribed—an hour and a quarter—whereupon, on one memorable occasion, Daniel Shubotham exclaimed: "You shall have a meeting on Mow some Sunday, and have a whole day's praying, and then you'll be satisfied." It was a prophetic utterance; "the head-spring of the mighty camp meeting river that has flowed to thousands," Mr. Bourne christened it. And when the Dow spell came upon him, he "at once, and without conferring with any living man, formed a plan for commencing camp meetings in England."



Speaking of that memorable May Sunday in 1807, the carpenter says: "Although the rain fell, the Lord moved on the Cheshire people, and they came—some from great distances—and began the meeting at six o'clock in the morning, the time for which it had been published." The mode of publication was "a few notes" written by Bourne, and sent to friends at Macclesfield, Congleton, and the villages adjacent. The attendance was roughly estimated at 4,000 to 5,000. Four "stands"—heaps of stones piled up—were erected, and from these rude "platforms" the gospel was preached by men who were neither illiterate nor fanatical. Hugh Bourne was commander-in-chief. A busy worker was Captain Edward Anderson, from Holderness, who hoisted a flag on the hill to guide the people to the rendezvous. Two Irishmen were prominent preachers—one of them a Knutsford lawyer, and the other Dr. Paul Johnson, of Dublin, the personal friend of Lorenzo Dow; Eleazor Hathorn, "the wooden-legged preacher"; Peter Phillips, the founder of the Quaker or Independent Methodist Church; Peter Bradburn, supposed to have been a kinsman of "the Methodist Demosthenes"; and others of local note. William Clowes, a converted potter, who had been a dandy, a prize dancer, and boon companion of pot-house revellers, delivered his first open-air address that day, and practically began his distinguished career as an evangelist.

"It was a great day!" Hugh Bourne could write that sentence with a fuller meaning in the years that followed than he could on the May Sabbath of 1807. Great as had been his expectations, the outcome of that day's services were vaster than he had ever conjectured. Other gatherings of a like complexion were subsequently held, by which it was hoped to counteract the moral evils of the drunken revels at the annual wakes, or feasts;

and by their success it was made plain to the promoters "that it was the Lord's will that the English camp meetings should be continued," notwithstanding that the Wesleyan Conference had issued a decree against them. Because they persisted in holding these meetings, Hugh Bourne, William Clowes, and their associates were expelled from the Methodist Church. In the light of after days, Bourne fully believed that when the Methodist Conference adopted their resolution discountenancing camp meetings, a mandate went forth from the throne of the Highest:—"Let there be another community whose ministers will take up the Cross, and lift up the blazing torch of gospel light in the dark corners of the land, and raise up a people to the Lord from the humblest walks of society." And it was so. Camp meeting Methodism was born on May 31st, 1807. And by Camp meeting Methodism, Primitive Methodism came to be.

#### A HUNDRED YEARS AFTER.

The second notable event—or, more properly, a series of events—connected with Mow Cop occurred on May 25th, 26th, 27th, 1907—a hundred years after Hugh Bourne held his first camp meeting. What a change! Who shall adequately tell the story of those celebrations? But can it be told? Not a few tried at the time, and the best failed to fully grasp and express in its broadest and deepest meaning the significance of this magnificent demonstration. Every scribe ran into superlatives. Even a war correspondent, whose report astonished the community by its insight and sympathy, considering the print in which it appeared, wrote of the camp meeting as "an amazing religious gathering"; and a humorist in another London daily spoke seriously of it as "a world-wide gathering," "a noble prospect," "the heartiest, frankest, most hospitable, best-humoured people I ever met."



It was, indeed, an imposing throng which laden trains from all directions landed at the little wayside station of Mow Cop on Saturday, May 25th, not to speak of the thousands who reached the hill by road, after a long ride or toilsome tramp. But it utterly paled before the spectacle of the following day. Taking the computation of an expert, one hundred thousand persons were on the slopes of old Mow on the Sunday afternoon. How soon after daybreak the arrivals began it would be difficult to tell, but there were thousands at the early morning prayer meetings. From thence until three o'clock in the afternoon the hosts trooped up every roadway and pathway. Continuously the trains discharged their loads; every conceivable description of vehicle jogged along the turnpikes to the base of Mow, and cycles sped and motor-cars whizzed. As far as the eye could reach, men, women and children were on foot. Of the organised processions, that from Tunstall was reputed to have been a mile long, and to have had 5,000 people in its ranks. Standing on the eminence, and looking downwards, then giving a sweep from the mimic castle ruin to the huge rock locally known as the "Old Man," what a mass of human beings greeted the vision! In mere numbers the magnitude of the occasion left the expectations of the most sanguine of the promoters far behind. Optimists had prophesied that it would be the greatest camp meeting the world had ever seen. Cautious men smiled their scepticism. As it happened, the realisation was greater than even the most hopeful had conjectured.

Then, too, the composition of the multitude was a feature of special interest. Industrial captains were there and wage-earners of every sort; colliers and coal-owners, farmers and hinds, potters and their overlookers and employers, factory hands and factory masters; old men and matrons, youths and maidens, parents and their offspring; men in hodden grey and well-groomed men in

broadcloth; ladies in faultless, tailor-made costumes, and their less favoured sisters in home-made winseys; the bluff, breezy, bustling man, his hat at the back of his head, and the stately man, his shining silk headgear in correct position, wearing his placid smile, and pacing with measured tread; the last representative of the pitman of another day, attired in cap and jacket, coloured shirt, spotlessly clean and well mangled, blameless of a collar, huge black and red neckerchief coiled round his neck, hands in pocket, and by his side the spic and span tradesman, three generations removed from the bottom rung of the plebeian condition; men of culture from the high places in the schools, many of them the mental fashioners of the coming race, and men who had struggled, after the light of heaven had risen upon their souls, to master the alphabet so as to read the Word and tell the message to their fellows, some of them taught by their own children. All these diversities mingled together on that triumphant day, and sang one common song of praise—bowed before one common Father, obeying one common call, having been made partakers of one common salvation through one common Saviour—paid one common vow of whole-souled consecration—and on the Mount of our Beginnings exalted one common King, the Man of Nazareth, the King of Glory. “Hail! all hail!” a ransomed people cried; an enfranchised host made free from sin; ay, and free from the political, economical, industrial, and social serfdom of their fathers. And Jesus has been at the root of it all.

And who can record the emotions, the revelations, the humiliations, the heart-searchings, the penitences, the pardonings, the deliverances, the ecstasies of that hallowed season? It was a time of worship. People hastened to the altar on that mountain from all parts of the homeland and from far over the seas with their sacrifice of praise, of contrition, and of dedication. And

the God of Elijah sent the fire. Four preaching stands were placed in the very field where the first camp meeting was held in 1807, but four times four would have been barely sufficient. So in the adjoining fields, and even up to the ruins independent meetings were going on. The word was with power, prayers were fervent, and the singing went joyously. Nor did an occasional shower damp the enthusiasm of the worshippers ; indeed, when Arthur T. Guttery preached to 15,000 or 20,000 people in the evening, though it rained for twenty-five of the thirty-five minutes of his discourse, comparatively few left the stand. Salvation through the Cross was the theme of the messengers ; pardon free, full, and now ; the conscious implantation of the seal of God upon the human spirit by the Holy Ghost, and holiness of life and personal illumination of soul by the same Spirit ; the inspiration of a new song to the tune of a dancing heart, and a through passage to the heavenly Canaan. It was the old-time religion. The setting might be different ; the essence was the same, as was the earnestness of the presentation.

Characteristic Primitive Methodism was in full evidence at the lovefeasts. Two went on in Mow Cop Chapel, which was packed upstairs, where a centenary baby had been christened by the only travelling preacher sent out by Mow Cop—and downstairs in the school-room. Tents were also utilised for lovefeast purposes ; and when the crowds found themselves unable to get under cover, they began testimony meetings “ on their own ” in the open. Almost every dialect in the United Kingdom was spoken in the assemblies, and the great lands of the West had their representatives testifying. How many souls entered the kingdom that day and night will never be known. It is a notable fact, however, that one at least was from the United States, the country whence came Lorenzo Dow, a century before, and

inspired the holding of the first English camp meeting. The 1807 meeting was an experiment; the 1907 event was a mammoth demonstration of the utility and success of the camp meeting system, declared by a London journalist to be the largest ever held in the history of any Christian Church.

Of the numerous public meetings held in various Cheshire and Staffordshire towns on the Saturday and Monday evenings, those at Hanley and Tunstall were striking occasions. A short while before Victoria Hall, Hanley, had been decorated and illuminated in celebration of the jubilee of the incorporation of the town, and the display was repeated in honour of the Primitive Methodist centenary. Three thousand people were packed into the Hall on the Saturday night, the vast audience being addressed by six Primitive Methodist Members of Parliament. That latter fact alone was enough to grip the imagination of even phlegmatic men. Here was a sample of the products of the century. Some of these legislators had been sent down coal-pits when little more than children, and now by the voice of their fellows, and the acquiescence of citizens in higher social grades, were members of the Mother of Parliaments. And the men from the middle class vied with the representatives of the toilers on that platform in thanking God that they were Primitive Methodists. A great united choir filled the orchestra stalls; "but in point of fact," remarked a journal in surprise, "the entire gathering was one gigantic choir. Not a single one in the multitude but could sing, and did sing. The hymns chosen needed no restraint on the part of the singers, no delicate tone painting; they were the old, full-bodied psalms of praises, resonant and triumphant. So this magnificent gathering threw restraint to the winds, and the deep swell of the great organ led them in such pæans of praise as it refreshed one to hear."

It was fitting that Tunstall should have a large space in the historic occasion. That was the case with its Sunday's procession; it was no less the case on the Monday night with its mass meeting in the Jubilee Church—the mother church of the denomination—and the overflow meeting in the large Lecture Hall close by. "All that was best and greatest in the church was assembled there," an enthusiastic reporter wrote. Well, this was the platform:—Sir W. P. Hartley (chairman), Professor A. S. Peake, D.D., the Venerable James Travis, William Beckworth, J.P., A. T. Guttery, and George Armstrong. Truly representative of all that is best in our Israel. Every man gave his own message in his own way. As one has said: "The ideal of Mow Cop, 1807, could be expressed in one word—evangelism. The ideal of Mow Cop, 1907, finds expression in two words, the second added not for enlargement but for emphasis—cultured evangelism."

And who shall ever adequately depict the contrast between the meeting on Mow Cop on May 31st, 1807, and the meeting on the same hill on Sunday, May 26th, 1907? Such a task as that would mean the presentation of the social, economic, industrial, political, and religious condition of our England and Scotland by eyes that saw it and hearts that felt it a hundred years ago, side by side with our Great Britain of to-day—eyes and hearts conscious of and acquainted with all the mighty revolutions which have taken place in the century and with all the agencies which have produced and guided those revolutions—eyes and hearts, too, which followed with sympathetic and intelligent interest the evolution of Methodism, its expansions, its transitions, its upheavals, its upliftings, and its transformations. That task is impossible of accomplishment. The tale of the earlier day has to be taken second or third hand.

Great in the eyes of the promoters as was the "whole



day's praying" on the spur of the Pennine Range a hundred years ago, it was then a purely local affair. The 1907 assembly touched the hearts of thousands upon thousands in both hemispheres. A century ago, the leaders were "little and unknown," poor and despised, snubbed and cast out by their pastors and guides; now, they gathered as honoured schoolmen and applauded orators, as civic dignitaries and members of the Legislature, as representatives of capital and also of labour. Then, all, save the moiety of the four thousand hearers who were driven in antiquated conveyances, reached the slopes of Mow on foot from the surrounding towns and villages of Cheshire and Staffordshire; now, the thousands arrived from places near at hand in modern vehicles, and swept from the Scottish Lowlands and Borders and the remotest parts of England and Wales in well-upholstered railway carriages, and from across oceans in stately steamships. Then, the working classes were ignorant, oppressed, down-trodden serfs, liable to be seized by press-gangs, mute, because voteless, dumb-driven cattle in reality, whose only outlook was grim, ill-paid, exacting toil from dawn till eve, whose food was scant, and coarse, and dear, and whose only goal was an early grave or the workhouse; now, all the tokens of human betterment were made manifest by the multitude—in their speech, in their deportment, in their apparel, in their countenances—*free men*, representatives of men who had won their right to worship without let or fear, their right to full recognition of citizenship, their right to open bargaining with their employers and to combine with their fellows, their right to possess an unfettered press, and their right to a national diffusion of feeless educational facilities down to the child of the poorest man in the realm, and to the opening of the doors of the ancient seats of learning to every British-born subject. Immediate representatives, too, of a com-

munity which had had its actual birthplace on that Hill, and which now had upon its roll over 210,000 members, after it had given tens of thousands to Methodist union in Canada and Australia, and to other Churches in the homeland, while through its instrumentality hundreds of thousands had gone to join the Church of the First-Born above; a community which had nearly half-a-million children in its Sabbath schools, and which directly affected week by week, through its eleven hundred regular ministers and sixteen thousand local preachers, in its five thousand places of worship, something like a million people, and which had church property of the estimated value of five millions sterling.

What part the English Border Counties have played, in the good providence and abounding grace of God, in this stupendous work of soul saving and human amelioration it is the purpose of these pages to show.

## CHAPTER II.

---

### THE GENESIS OF SUNDERLAND DISTRICT.

FROM Staffordshire and Cheshire the revival work proceeded with force and rapidity through Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, and Lincolnshire. It was through Nottingham Circuit that the Primitives went to Hull, and it was Hull which sent the missionaries northward. For all time this "Thessalonica of Primitive Methodism" will hold a distinguished place in the record of British evangelistic enterprise. From this centre proceeded men and women, "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," and they seized Yorkshire for the Lord. North to Durham and Northumberland, west to Westmorland and Cumberland, away in Cornwall, in Kent, in London, on both sides of the Solent, and even in the United States of America, men who owned allegiance to Hull Circuit laboured for souls. A spirit-inspiring past, which tens of thousands in other lands as well as at home reverence, Hull has denominationally a splendid present, and widespread is the desire that it may have a magnificent future. So prays the North, for it is Hull's grateful debtor.

William Clowes entered Hull as a Primitive Methodist missionary in January, 1819. People there with prepared hearts were ready to receive him, and in less than six months Hull became a circuit. Heroic projects of expansion were entered upon. Every week new territory was gained, new triumphs achieved, until by way of Hutton Rudby, in Cleveland, and Ingleton, near Dar-



lington—both of them small villages, and Darlington itself was little more than a village at the time—pioneers of Primitive Methodism took the gospel to the dales of the Wear, the Tees, the Eden, the Allen, and the Tyne; to the busy hives of industry and the sea-going populations on and near the north-eastern coast; and to the fells of Westmorland and the moors and coast of Cumberland—awakening the people from their stupor and degradation to a purer, sweeter, larger life here, upborne with “a hope blooming with immortality and eternal life” in the world to come. Over the great tracts indicated, what was known as the mighty, capable, and commanding Sunderland District held rule for many years.

It is true that the first group of circuits in the North, when the representatives met for business purposes, was not called the Sunderland District. South Shields was the meeting-place for conference; but it cannot now be claimed that South Shields was a district in the technical sense, any more than it can be claimed for Brompton, at which a similar assembly gathered in the same year. Both were purely provisional arrangements, arising out of the phenomenal success of the missionaries in the tracts of country specified. It had been intended that the Tyneside and Wearside region should have come within the controlling scope of the Brompton meeting. The minutes, however, of 1823, decreed that no district was supposed to comprise more than six circuits, yet five new northern circuits had been formed in the course of the following year; consequently, if Hexham, Carlisle, North and South Shields, Newcastle, and Sunderland had sent representatives to Brompton, where the District Meeting was held that year, there would have been eleven circuits instead of six. To obviate this the six northern circuits were grouped into a new district, which had its initial meeting on Easter Monday, 1824, at South

Shields. No mention is made of the interesting historical fact in the Conference minutes. It is supplied by an entry in the journal of Nathaniel West, which, as Mr. Kendall says, in his splendid "History of the Connexion," is worth quoting, as it brings before us in a vivid way the progress made by the Connexion in the North-Eastern Counties in two short years:—

"Monday, April 19th.—Went with Brothers Anderson and Peckett (delegates from Sunderland) to South Shields District [Meeting], where we met the delegates from North Shields, South Shields, Newcastle, Hexham, and Carlisle. The District Meeting lasted till Friday, the 23rd. Much peace prevailed. The state of each circuit was prosperous; the whole number in the district amounted to twenty travelling preachers, 61 local preachers (not including exhorters), and 3,632 members. We have great reason to thank the Lord."

That the Brompton and South Shields meetings were mere temporary expedients soon became evident, for the Conference of 1824, imbued with spacious ideas, formed the whole Connexion into four districts—Tunstall, Nottingham, Hull, and Sunderland—and out of these the twenty-six British Districts of to-day have been carved. Each district was then permitted to send nine delegates—three travelling preachers, and six qualified officials. Now, the representation of a district to Conference is determined by its numerical strength, but the "two to one" principle is still maintained.

It was a singular composition, the Sunderland District of 1824, for it had Silsden and Keighley on its list of stations, while Darlington and Barnard Castle were still branches of Hull, and these operated in the Dales, Cumberland (except Carlisle), and Westmorland. Indeed, Westgate was a branch of Hull until 1834, Alston until 1835, and Barnard Castle and Whitehaven until 1840. In the course of the years Glasgow, Paisley, Motherwell, Edinburgh, Alloa, Ripon, Pateley Bridge, and other distant places have appeared upon and disappeared from the stations of Sunderland District. But

in its days of consolidation, when it rose to the wielding of great power in the councils of the Connexion, the territory over which the Sunderland District had governance extended from Berwick to Whitby, west to Kendal and Whitehaven, and thence to Carlisle, with all the opulent area within that outline.

There is one circuit, however, which disappeared from the stations of the Sunderland District in 1847, it would be unpardonable to pass too quickly. Ripon and its Middleham and Thirsk branches occupied ground on which men and women trod and wrought whose names have become inseparably interwoven with the formative period of the Connexion in the North, and some of whom, in the course of time, held high office and distinguished positions in the Connexion. William Clowes, of course, John Lightfoot, John Branfoot, William Lister, William Dent, John Day, Joseph Spoor, C. C. McKechnie, Thomas Southron, and William Fulton were among the stalwarts; and Mary Porteus, too, travelled there from 1828 to 1830. What an array! It was a notable prayer meeting, held on the evening of the first visit of William Clowes to Ripon on March 4th, 1820, when fourteen persons professed to find the Saviour. Moses Lupton joined the infant society which was formed, and he became in time the General Missionary Secretary and President, and was known as the "law-giver" of the Connexion. In the same circuit, also, a lad was converted who afterwards became a man of mark in the denomination. Thomas Dawson gave himself to the Lord when he was only fifteen years of age, and before three years had gone over his head he left "a good home to endure the hardships and trials of a Primitive Methodist preacher." But the rough experiences were too much for him; nevertheless, his great gifts of mind and heart, which he used without stint, made him a famous figure in the church courts as

well as in the pulpit, and he was elected a Deed Poll member in 1856.

It was at Ripon where Joseph Spoor and William Fulton were arrested while they were holding a service in the Market Place. As they were conveyed to gaol, accompanied by an immense crowd, they were very happy, and when Mr. Spoor heard that they were to be sent to prison, he shouted: "Glory be to God! The Kittie for Christ! Hallelujah! the Kittie for Christ!" That was in 1838, but Mr. Spoor had been two years in the circuit then. "In three years," says Mr. Lister, "I walked 2,400; Mr. Spoor would walk as many. He was strong to labour, and labour he did; not only taking his allotted work on the plan, but rushing into every open door. Never was huntsman more intent on his game than he was in arresting sinners and leading them to Christ." Such was the testimony of his superintendent. During this period of the intrepid Tynesider's evangelism one very striking event, among many others, occurred. Mr. Spoor had made up his mind to capture for his Lord and for Primitive Methodism the small village of Langthorne, near Bedale. The attempt seemed likely to end in failure, and an old lady imparted the information to him that he would never get on there until he got John Hobson, who was the tallest man in the township. Spoor told the story to William Dent, and the two entered into a compact to pray for the conversion of John Hobson. In a short time the huge villager appeared at one of the meetings, and never did truer conversion take place. The old lady's prophecy was fulfilled. A powerful society was established, a chapel was built, and a Sunday school formed. John Hobson was in the forefront of it all.

Mr. Spoor was a ministering angel to a distraught Scotsman—a mere lad—while he was in the Ripon Circuit. The lad had left Paisley to become a Primitive

Methodist preacher, travelling three hundred miles to the Yorkshire city, and the reception he received and the impressions he had got after his tiresome three days' journey had chilled him. Next day he regarded his future with dismay, and in his dejection Mr. Spoor entered his room. The dejection gave place to hope and courage. "Mr. Spoor exorcised the evil spirit, and left me a new man. . . . I felt ashamed of my cowardly fears. No; I would not succumb to the difficulties of my lot. I had come out into this field of labour in response to what I believed to be a divine call, and I would, by the help of God, prove myself worthy of it." So wrote Colin Campbell McKechnie; and that he did prove himself worthy of the call his whole career is evidence.

In 1828 Ripon had five travelling preachers on its station; in 1847, in the circuit and its two branches, seven travelling preachers and two "to be obtained." From the early revivals it sent out five travelling preachers and provided five Deed poll members. The original station covered the ground now occupied by the Harrogate, Knaresborough, Pateley Bridge, Thirsk, Ripon, Bedale, and Middleham Circuits, and was served by men whose names are fragrant until this day. The Ripon of the present is but an attenuated shadow of its olden self, but the memory of its traditions, heroisms, sacrifices, and achievements will never die. From this circuit, it will be for ever remembered, William Clowes went to Darlington, and Darlington and Barnard Castle branch became the base of missionary enterprises which can never cease to evoke feelings of wonder and joy. Nor will it be forgotten that from Darlington Clowes first went on a "flying visit" to Tyneside.



### CHAPTER III.

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#### SCARTH NICK CAMP MEETINGS AND AFTERWARDS.

YORKSHIRE was first traversed and practically secured by Hull Circuit, then "the North was almost simultaneously reached by two distinct lines of advance—the one *via* Brompton and Guisborough, the other *via* Ripon and Darlington." While on a missionary tour, William Clowes arrived at Hutton Rudby, a village near the market town of Stokesley, on the slopes of the Cleveland Hills, on Thursday, July 20th, 1820. He was an absolute stranger, yet he made the place the objective of his mission. One of the first chapels in those parts was built in the village, which became the head of a circuit; and though it only retained the position for one year, being superseded by Brompton, it has the proud honour of having been the circuit which missioned important towns and powerful circuits in the Border Counties.

Before starting out for the Hull September quarterly meeting, after being in the wild and beautiful country eight weeks, Clowes had opened many places, travelled four hundred miles on foot, his whole expenses amounting to thirty shillings; won the hearts of the people, and laid the foundations of three circuits. Ten days after reaching Hutton Rudby, he conducted the notable camp meeting on Scarth Nick, a wild mountain gorge between Swainby and Osmotherley. A numerous company assembled—two thousand, it was supposed—and in the

afternoon, when the prayer meetings were being held on different parts of the ground, "the power of God attended the prayers of His people. There was soon a crying out for mercy, and, thanks be to God," exclaimed Mr. Clowes, "four or five got set at liberty. One man jumped up and down praising God, and crying to the mountains and hills and everything that had breath to join him in praising God for what He had done for his soul. Indeed, the Lord's arm was made bare, and signs and wonders were wrought."

The farmer who got so ecstatically happy afterwards hastened home, and told his wife and servant what the Lord had done for his soul, and they also sought and found the salvation of God. At this camp meeting Mr. Clowes received invitations to visit Ingleby and Brompton. Thomas Ramshaw (grandfather of Thomas Ramshaw, of Sunderland), who had been converted while a militiaman in Ireland, was the man who invited the evangelist to Brompton, having been so struck with the converting power which attended the preaching. One of the first members of the Brompton society, Ramshaw became a class-leader and local preacher, was effectual in the salvation of souls, and was particularly active in the erection of new chapels.

Thirty years afterwards—when Joseph Spoor was superintendent of Brompton Circuit, and Henry Kendall (uncle of our Connexional historian), afterwards a Congregational minister in Darlington, was his beloved and trusted colleague—another memorable camp meeting was held on Scarth Nick. It is thus spoken of by Henry Kendall:—

"Spoor—a worthy successor of Clowes for power and zeal—was the leader. He was seen to advantage that day—he was in his glory. This is the record in my journal:—'Saturday, July 5th.—I joined Mr. Spoor at Chopgate, and we proceeded to Swainby, where we had a hearty camp meeting. Sunday:—A day to be long remembered. After holding a prayer meeting in the chapel at Swainby, we proceeded to Scarth Nick. The weather

was favourable all day. The services were attended by a most gracious influence. One sincere young man was so moved that he jumped repeatedly in the ring. His somersaults annoyed no one, as everybody knew him to be a good young man and of excellent family. One man, quite ignorant of camp meetings, asked Spoor if he always had some one to leap that way at such meetings. The population is sparse, but people came from many miles. Spoor had his team well in hand. He showed no desire to be prominent. All he cared for was to use every man and means to bring about the desired result—the conversion of sinners. The lovefeast that night, at Swainby, was very powerful, and six persons found pardon. When the prayer meeting commenced, Spoor was as fresh as if it had been morning. The thunders were let loose; he went about amongst the people like an inspired man. The desire to save souls was with him the one absorbing passion, and it made his life beautiful. The three bright spots in Spoor's station at Brompton were: 1st, the camp meeting I have named; 2nd, the establishment of the Swainby society—ever since a vigorous and flourishing cause; 3rd, the missioning of Osmotherley, which we took by storm. We soon got the Friends' Meeting House for our services there, and the work went on vigorously.' ”

George Stanger, who lived until 1907, was the man to whom reference is made by Mr. Kendall as being eccentric in his movements. Matthew Trewett, a very noted character, led the singing that day.

Brompton was an old-time weaving village, the weavers then working their looms by hand in their own cottages, when Clowes opened his campaign there in the open-air, and it is said that his congregation numbered 1,500 persons. A society of seven members was formed, and the cause flourished so much that in the following year a galleried chapel and cottage were built. These premises are still in use, but the seatage in the chapel has been largely increased by taking in the cottage.

At Northallerton, the thousand hearers in front of Clowes were “as tranquil as if they had been in a chapel.” It was in a room near a tan-pit where William Carver, James Foster, and the few others associated with them worshipped; but, in 1834, when Joseph Spoor was labouring in the circuit as a hired local preacher, the theatre at Northallerton was closed as the result of a revival, and the Primitives bought it, and transformed it “from being a synagogue of Satan to be a house of



God." Now a fine block of church and school property is used by a flourishing society. Many a time of refreshing has been experienced at Northallerton, not the least blessed being in 1902, when Charles Pettler had the felicity of being instrumental in leading many young people to Jesus. An ex-Deputy Chief Constable (Mr. Hutchinson) also declared himself on the Lord's side, and became a devoted worker in the society.

A victorious campaign was opened at Appleton Wiske by Mr. Spoor, who was so powerfully moved and controlled by his sublime passion to save souls that it interfered with his eating and sleeping. Sometimes he became "so filled with the glory" as to be rendered unconscious, "falling on forms and chairs, and once even falling on the fire. But in no case, however violent the fall, has it been known that he sustained any bodily damage or hurt." While having breakfast at a house, Spoor, at family prayer, "laid hold upon the Most High." The inmates fell upon the floor, and cried aloud for mercy, and the neighbours were attracted by the strange noises. All the village became excited, and those who went into the house were overmastered by the mighty influence. At noon a messenger was sent for Robert Walker, who assisted Mr. Spoor, and this couple carried on the meeting until two o'clock, when it was found that thirteen souls had got liberty.

Good societies were formed at Scugdale and Hearsley, as well as at Swainby, which now have nice chapels. But omission must not be made of the conversion of Henry Hebbroon in his father's barn at Potto, as another outcome of Clowes's mission. He was barely eighteen when he became a travelling preacher, and the old records of the circuits from Tyneside to Teesside tell of the success of his labours for nearly two-score years. Of Hexham "Hebbroon Memorial Chapel" something will be said hereafter. It is of interest to know that Henry's

mother joined Potto society, became its leader, the mother of the little church in her own house, and the instructor of the villagers in the way of life. He provided a neat little chapel for the village, which is two miles from Hutton Rudby. Unfortunately, the society became extinct, and the chapel got into a dilapidated condition. While, however, the revival breath was upon the circuit during Mr. Pettler's term, the place was re-missioned, and by the assistance of Jeffles (East Cowton), Lamplough, Armstrong, Foster (Northallerton), and others, a fine little society was established and the property renovated. Cowton was also quickened, and, by the help of the Meynells, a new chapel was built.

Amongst the men who served faithfully in Brompton Circuit have been the brothers Hood; Robert Walker, who went to Sunderland; and the generous and hospitable Joseph Wrigley, of Northallerton. Mention of Northallerton recalls the name of John Tweedy, whose name, personality, and home were familiar to almost all the ministers of the Sunderland District at one time. He was the father of Sir John Tweedy, ex-President of the Royal College of Surgeons; of Mr. James Tweedy, solicitor, Stockton; of Dr. Charles Tweedy, and of Mrs. Smithson, Northallerton; and of another daughter—Mrs. John Walton, Newcastle—whose name, it may be said without exaggeration, is known throughout the Connexion, and who has vied with her equally well-known husband in liberality, hospitality, and devotion to Primitive Methodism and the interests of humanity generally. And there was John Delafield, the intellectual evangelist, the sturdy Nonconformist, the student of solid books, who at eighty-two discussed the latest productions of the highest theologians with avidity.

## CHAPTER IV.

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### MORE OF CLEVELAND.

**G**UISBOROUGH, renowned in history for once having been the resort of Franciscans, was made into an independent station from the Hutton Rudby (or Brompton) Circuit as early as 1822, the same year in which, according to Mr. Petty, John Branfoot was sent "as a missionary to South Shields." In the previous year, Messrs. Branfoot and Farrar, apparently the pioneers in Guisborough and the neighbourhood (though William Clowes had held a camp meeting at Moorsholm in 1820, and may have preached in the Priory town), had met with great success, founded a large society, and secured a chapel accommodating over four hundred people. The prosperity had not continued, however, for four years afterwards Guisborough was united with the Whitby Circuit. It was in a parlous condition when Mary Porteus went upon the ground. The united circuit then included as boundary places Robin Hood's Bay, Whitby, Redcar, Guisborough, and Stokesley, and extended nearly to Pickering. From January, 1826, until July, 1828, the godly Tyneside woman, whose preaching was a delight to even the travelling preachers of that time, exercised her useful ministry in this spacious field. A snatch of her earliest experiences is contained in this sentence:—"Two hundred and sixty miles I travelled on foot—frequently through deep snow and over high mountains—in eight weeks, and spoke sixty times each round."

But the union did not last long, for the name of Guisborough soon disappeared from the stations, and for nearly six years the place was abandoned altogether. In 1847, however, when Moses Lupton, Joseph Spoor, and Edward Barrass were on the Stockton Circuit, the latter was sent to work Guisborough. Mr. G. J. Brown, of Hartlepool, lent an old chapel rent free for two years, and here and in the villages around a better prospect soon appeared. Guisborough became a branch of Stockton, and a permanent footing was obtained at Marske, Skelton, and Redcar. It became the head of a circuit again in 1863, and it has now one of the finest places of worship in the locality, opened in 1907, and in which a handsome organ has been placed. The first formal service held in the new sanctuary was in connection with the death of John Hill, a respected local preacher. In 1908 the society consisted of 134 members, fourteen of whom are local preachers.

Skelton had a chapel built in 1865, and has a vigorous society, though its loss was great in December, 1907, by the death of the faithful Thomas Clapton. In a house at Slapewath in 1866 Margrove Park society was first established, and to-day it is the second strongest in the circuit, with a fine chapel and school. Lingdale, which languished for years, was lifted into power by the gifts and labours of Joseph Calow and other friends, and in recent years the success has been remarkable. Boosbeck, Stanghow, and Dunedale are healthy societies. The total membership of the circuit is 340, and the quarterly income £52. Miles Harding, who holds the premier position as a local preacher on the plan, is a man of pronounced individuality, and a devoted servant of the church. Mission work is prosecuted in the circuit with heartiness, and conversions are frequent.

There died at Codhill, in the Guisborough Circuit, on February 8th, 1858, Elizabeth Bowe, in her seventy-first

year. For more than thirty years she was a member at Ellerton-on-Swale, in the Brompton Circuit, and she and her husband had opened their house to the first Primitive Methodist missionary who visited that village. They had four sons and two daughters. Two sons, one daughter, and a son-in-law were local preachers, two grandsons exhorters, and other two members—all in the Primitive Methodist Connexion—when Mrs. Bowe died in the house of her daughter, Mrs. Mary Barker. Thomas Barker and his wife were in labours more abundant, and in much request for special services. George and William Bowe were the two brothers of Mrs. Barker who were local preachers. Both went to Consett, and a son of the former went into the ministry in the early sixties. And in the great ramifications of our Connexional business, as well as in the educational outfit of candidates for the ministry and in probationers' examinations, William Bowe has played no small part.

#### UNDER ROSEBERRY TOPPING.

In the little market town of Stokesley, under Roseberry Topping, in the beautiful vale of Cleveland, William Clowes preached in the summer of 1820, and three years after his memorable work in the Brompton Circuit, he was sent by the Leeds Conference to the same district to repair the damage done by Thomas Johnstone, a Hull Circuit preacher, who had resigned "because he could not meet certain grave charges which had been preferred against him," and who had entered the Brompton Circuit and sought, with some degree of success, to alienate the societies, and get hold of the Hutton Rudby Chapel, which had been willed to the Connexion. Brompton Circuit was saved, and soon "regained its feet." The classic village of Hutton Rudby was included in the Stokesley Circuit when it was granted autonomy in 1854. It is interesting to note that



the society founded under such stirring auspices kept up the vigorous tradition, and more than once the old chapel had to be extended. It was recorded of them in the early fifties : " Our friends sing through the village every time they have preaching, and it is pleasing to see that as soon as they commence their vocal music, the people flock in all directions to the little chapel." And, we here take leave to ask, has there been a better style of advertisement invented by the Primitive Methodists during the century? In Queen Victoria's jubilee year, Maurice A. Drummond had the high honour of building Hutton Rudby Jubilee Chapel, a beautiful structure costing £950, and seating 180 worshippers. There is an excellent society of sixty-five members, and many fine families and capable young people are connected with it.

As far as Stokesley itself was concerned, chapel contraction rather than expansion was the case in the later forties. That was while it was a mission of Brompton Circuit. Up till 1851, a writer plaintively observes, no body of Dissenters seemed to thrive in Stokesley. The trustees were crushed with debt, and they made the bottom part of the chapel into cottages, the rents therefrom relieving the strain ; and there seems to have been a more cheerful outlook over the whole station in 1856, the barren soil of Stokesley not excepted. After the labours of a further half-a-century, Stokesley society remains small ; but it is of fine quality, and more flourishing days are believed to be in store for it. The valiant few erected a new chapel and school in 1903, at a cost of £1,300, and a new manse was put up in the same year by the circuit, costing £600.

The strongest society in the circuit is in the pretty little village of Ayton. Some munificent members of the Society of Friends took a pride in the place, and fostered educational facilities. The present church, which seats 262 persons, and school were built in 1896, at a cost of

£1,459. There are 71 members on the roll, a fine staff of local preachers, and an ardent people, who are devoted heart and soul to the church which has, for four-score years or more, done so much for the locality. Unlike Guisborough, Stokesley has not felt the effects of the ironstone mining industry. Benefit from that source may yet arise, and should the attempts at Roseberry and elsewhere be successful, it is thought that Ayton, which at present largely depends upon whinstone quarrying, may in time rival Guisborough. There has been many a bright day at Ayton since the invasion, nearly sixty years ago, of the annual feast on Roseberry Topping.

The courage of the Broughton band of two dozen members is remarkable, and ought to bring them great reward. Their old chapel, built in 1859, has been superseded by a good village sanctuary. It will seat 160, and £540 of the cost (£800) was raised when the doors were opened in November, 1907.

Despite struggle, Faceby, Scugdale, Greenhow, Betterby Junction, and Newby are keeping their witness clear. Greenhow has been nurtured in the farm kitchens of Messrs. Mellanby and Bainbridge. Isaac Bainbridge, who died in the summer of 1908, was a remarkable man. Born in Weardale in 1821, converted when he was twenty-one, put on the plan a year later, he took appointments until five years prior to his death. Over two years before his death, he and his wife celebrated their golden wedding, when their descendants totalled 124 in all. The family has been a blessing to Primitive Methodism in Stokesley Circuit. The wife of the late Featherstone Watson is a daughter of Mr. Bainbridge.

There is a long line of men and women of distinction in service who have passed away: Thomas Hugill, Thomas Sadler, Thomas Seamer, Edward Bainbridge, Edward Wilks, Edward Cook, Anthony Smith, and Matthew Myers, among others; Mrs. York, of Hutton;



Mrs. Annie Garbutt, who established the society at Scugdale in the time of Clowes ; George Stanger, whose somersaults at Scarth Nick camp meeting showed his joy, and who died as recently as 1907. Of the living, the Garbutts, the Bainbridges, Wilks, Myers, Johnson, Barr, Smith, Hall, and many more are all doing good work. The most notable lady of the circuit is perhaps Mrs. Calvert, who is eighty years of age, and puts in a full Sunday every week.

The membership of the circuit, which was 165 in 1854, at present stands at 236.

#### BY THE SEA.

Saltburn-by-the-Sea, as it is known to-day, is very modern, and modernity has also changed the older town of Redcar. These North Yorkshire seaside resorts are increasing rapidly in popularity. As the circuit was formed as recently as 1898, with Saltburn, Redcar, Marske, New Marske, Brotton, Moorsholm, North Skelton, and New Skelton societies, whatever there may be of romantic interest of the hoary sort connected with the area it covers belongs to the time when it was under Guisborough and an older regime. Young as it is, however, it has already become a parent. At the start Saltburn Circuit had 322 members, and its yearly revenue for circuit purposes was £173. It has now 429 members, and its circuit revenue reaches £300 per annum—that is to say, these were the figures in 1908, just before Brotton Circuit was created, with Brotton, Moorsholm, North Skelton, and New Skelton as its societies, 199 members in all. A second preacher was called out in 1904, by Saltburn, and Thomas Shaw went to the new circuit to be its first superintendent.

Long before the Saltburn of the present could have been dreamt about, evangelistic work was done in the old village, a work which goes back to the days of the

pioneers. At that time, the grandfather of Andrew Latimer, our highly respected minister now in the afternoon of his life, was an innkeeper in old Saltburn, and he granted the use of his long room to the missionaries for preaching services. It is a very remarkable thing that tavern people in villages, in so many different counties, showed special kindness to the fathers of the Connexion; and it is a further remarkable thing that not a few of the children and grandchildren of innkeepers have taken a prominent place in Primitive Methodism.

The first attempt failed, as did another in 1848, but in the creation and expansion of the new Saltburn, the cause took a firm root, and the present chapel was erected. The arrival of Michael Hornsby into the town in the sixties was an event of great significance to the society and the Guisborough Circuit. He prospered amazingly in business, gave royally to the cause of God, and was devoted to every interest in the church. He was a man of strongly marked characteristics, a strong will, and a kind heart, and was very gentlemanly in bearing—altogether a striking man. He died in 1905, after living a full and beneficent life. His sons, W. Hornsby, B.A., formerly a teacher in Elmfield College, and C. M. Hornsby, are workers in the circuit. J. Gilbertson was also a tower of strength in the society, and it should be mentioned that Mrs. Maria Baker, who died in the house of Mrs. Stone, her daughter, on Christmas Eve, 1900, aged 87, had been a member at Saltburn and at her Norfolk home 75 years. In the near future Saltburn is likely to have a church worthy of the place and the society. A splendid site has been secured, and the late Mr. Hornsby gave £700 and Thomas Rawlings £100 towards the ground and church.

In the early days Redcar was missioned by the pioneers, and as far back as 1851 the village was spoken of as "a celebrated watering-place, which, in a few

years hence, will probably contain some thousands of inhabitants." The work of the missionaries from Guisborough often met with reverses; but in 1849 Lord Zetland provided the faithful few with a suitable place wherein to worship, which gave them some status, and which became the birthplace of many souls. Subsequently, a more commodious connexional chapel was built. Primitive Methodist development in Redcar, however, found its latest expression in 1905, when a large block of property in Station Road was bought, consisting of two large halls (one of which has been transformed into a church), four shops, two houses, and a large number of class-rooms. Including fitting up, the property cost £3,260. The late George Armstrong gave £500, the society raised another £500, and the old chapel realised another £500. A few years hence, it is intended to pull down part of this block, and build a church to seat about 700 people, the halls being retained for school purposes.

Brotton, with a membership of 105, a fine church which cost £2,500, and a capable band of workers, is a strong mining society. The building of the church was a daring venture. When it was finished the trustees had a debt of £2,000. Many a time they have been in sore straits, but by their strenuous labours, helped by Joseph Faulkner, who has been circuit steward, they have brought down the debt to £500. Often since 1849, when the village was first missioned, there have been special manifestations of saving power thereat, and many souls have been won for Jesus through the agency of the Primitives. Much credit is due to the work of William Dunn. Miss Bulmer (now Mrs. Leuty) had a memorable mission at Brotton; and on June 18th, 1892, at the close of a service conducted by her, Julia Faulkner was converted. After a beautiful service of sixteen years, Miss Faulkner was translated to the higher sphere.

Moorsholm, where the founder held a camp meeting, is a typical moorland village, in which we have a chapel which seats 300 worshippers. Miles Harding and Newrick Ditchburn are moorland Methodists of the most undiluted kind, having all the flavour of an older generation. It was one of these, who, after a brother had delivered himself with equal fluency and complacency, remarked aloud to the preacher as he left the pulpit, and quite in the hearing of the dispersing audience: "I hear thou reads Talmage, then!"

The society at New Skelton, where there is an iron chapel and 36 members, is the product of the Saltburn Circuit.

Marske and New Marske make a good testimony for the Lord, and not a few have been led to consecration thereby.

Services were held for many years at Upleatham and other villages, but were given up for various reasons. The following figures, however, will show the progress made on the ground covered by the original Guisborough Circuit:—In 1863, when made into an independent station, there were 248 members, with £22 13s. 10d. quarterly income. In 1895, when Saltburn Circuit was formed, there were 532 members in all, with £76 15s. 10d. income. In 1908, when Brotton Circuit was created, the reports of the three show 790 members, with £134 18s. 1d. income. Apart from those already named, Stephen Wilson, John Atterton, Willie Knox, Charles Woodward, Leonard and John Ascough, Thomas Calvert, Robert Wallin, Manuel Russell, Thomas Catron, Robert Gilbertson, James Ackroyd, and Cuthbert Collings did magnificent service in their day; and among the living W. Ward, John Hull, William Allenden, James Thompson, James Pigginn, William Lobley, John Dixon, E. Sayer, H. Caley, and Joseph Toyn, sen., are zealous promoters of the Kingdom of

God. The latter is the father of the superintendent minister at Guisborough, and was the first Labour J.P. to be appointed in the North Riding.

Henry Pratt, the well-known and highly esteemed Tyneside minister; W. J. Ward, the first Principal of Oron Institute, Africa; T. E. Currah, and Joseph Toyn, were sent into the ministry from Guisborough Circuit. J. W. White, who died at High Wycombe in 1900, after a brief ministry, was a native of the ancient town; and J. E. Richers, M.A., Congregational minister, Grimsby, was a scholar in Skelton Sunday School.



## CHAPTER V.

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### ST. HILDA'S COAST.

**F**URTHER south is the great stretch of coast which William Clowes commenced opening up in the early months of 1821. The stretch spoken of reached from Bridlington to Sandsend, north of Whitby, and now embraces several flourishing circuits. It is bleak in wintry weather, and that was the season Clowes began his campaign. On Tuesday, January 30th, 1821, three days after he first preached at Scarborough, the pioneer left that place for Whitby; but as he passed through Robin Hood's Bay, the fishermen got wit that a "Ranter preacher" was amongst them, and they got him to stay and preach. The sudden excitement among the fishing people may be surmised when a congregation was gathered which filled three houses opening into each other. He preached with power, and when, soon afterwards, he and John Branfoot paid a return visit to the Bay, and held a service on the beach, there was a young schoolmaster, named William Harland, of Stainton Dale, in the audience. Then and there the young man resolved to lead a Christian life. The value of that life the Connexion now knows. For forty-three years he was in the active ministry, was President in 1862, filled the editorial chair from 1850 to 1862, made a Deed Poll member in 1870, and passed to the higher service ten years later. From a village near Whitby, it may be here noted, John and Thomas Nelson went out to their splendid service, the traditions of which are gratefully treasured in Northumberland and Durham.



Multitudes assembled to hear Mr. Clowes preach in Whitby Market Place, on February 4th. Some of the baser sort endeavoured to create a disturbance, but the Chief Constable, whose friendship he had won in York, was there, and not only protected him, but made him "welcome to his house and table." On Sunday, February 18th, Mr. Clowes formed a society, "and the work broke forth like a mountain torrent. In a short time we had upwards of one hundred persons in society, and a new chapel erected." Cloughton, Fryup in the Dale, Lyth, Moorsholm, Hainsthorp, Sandsend, and Ayton were also successfully visited; at the latter place a society of twenty members being raised up, and a chapel speedily erected.

Five weeks after the founder, Nathaniel West was on the ground, and mighty things were accomplished. Since the commencement of 1821 therefore, an organised Primitive Methodist Church has existed at Whitby. For a little while services were held in a cottage in the old chapel yard, and subsequently a school then standing on the site of the chapel was rented and soon purchased. The school did duty for some twenty years, but it was much too small, seeing that the church then numbered 300, so in 1841 what is now called the old chapel was built. And in what was recently called a dismal and dilapidated place many souls "started for the kingdom," and large numbers of young people were influenced for good in the Sunday School. When the old members left it in July, 1903, for the handsome and up-to-date premises in Church Street (erected at a cost of £4,056) hallowed memories and associations would fill their minds. That would be the experience of Mrs. Clifford, a nonagenarian, who had been a member for over seventy years, and who lived to see the opening of the new church. In the early sixties, when the western part of the town was developing, a cause was started

there, and in 1866 a chapel was erected to accommodate 300 persons. Simon Horner and his wife took great interest in the work, upon which was expended £900, and "God honoured the place with His saving power and glory." The responsibilities of both places are not light, but the members—particularly the women—work with courage and self-sacrifice.

Whitby became a circuit in the connexional year 1823-4, and shortly afterwards Guisborough was united with it, but, as we have seen, the union was of short duration. When William Howcroft and his brother Robert travelled in the circuit, it was then (1825) thirty miles long and twenty wide, and there was a revival at that time, resulting in the conversion of over 600 souls. Jonathan Clewer, John Lightfoot, Mary Porteus, Jeremiah Gilbert, and Henry Hebbroon were also among the early preachers. The terms of Hebbroon's engagement were "two pounds a quarter, bed and breakfast." Dinner, tea, and supper were not in the bond, which meant that the young preacher had to forage for them, and which accounts for so much being said about the hospitality of the members in the biographies. Crowds attended the ministry of Mrs. Porteus; and her ability as a preacher, her constant fellowship with God, and her passion for souls contributed largely to the financial and spiritual improvement of the circuit.

Twenty years afterwards the circuit was in a languid state, but prayer and toil were rewarded in quickening and prosperity. In 1847 there died a native of Breckon Hill, between Glazedale and Fryup, who had made a mark in the ministry. When a young man Mr. McKechnie became acquainted with James Watson, and set him on a high place. A deep and earnest thinker, his learning and literary attainments were very considerable, and in public work as well as in private intercourse he was acknowledged to be a man of exceptional power.

As a lad he was a "living flame" in the Whitby Circuit, and was converted, made a leader, a local preacher, and a travelling preacher in twelve months. He laboured in North Shields, Sunderland, Alston, Newcastle, Westgate and Darlington Circuits, caught cold in an exciting meeting at Middlesbrough, and shortly afterwards died at Thirsk.

Alfred Stabler, Thomas Weatherill, William Weatherill, William Barker, Jackson Harding, and George Langley were also given to the itinerant ministry by Whitby Circuit. And there is yet another the circuit claims, for Staithes, Loftus, and the other places had not gone from it when Andrew Latimer was called to the ministry, which he has adorned. Amongst the prominent workers at home William Estill is not likely to be forgotten, nor John Sanderson. During the past thirty years (and previously at Staithes) the most outstanding figure in the circuit has been George Gray, a man well known and greatly esteemed throughout the old Sunderland District. In the summer of 1906, in the village chapel of Goathland, Mr. Gray had the well-known J. H. Jowett as a hearer. Mr. Jowett afterwards told his people in Carr's Lane Chapel, Birmingham, how his spirit had been refreshed in the service, and the local preacher received an appreciative letter and one of his recent books from the large-hearted Congregational minister. Other earnest workers, such as J. G. Cawthorne, W. Fishpool (of Castleton), T. Hall, and J. T. Ross, have served their generation well; and the settlement in Whitby of William Robson, whose labours in North Northumberland especially will be held in everlasting remembrance, has been a blessing.

At Runswick, where in 1854 the bulk of the stones, sand, and lime used in the erection of the chapel was carried on the heads of the wives and daughters of the fishermen; at Goathland, where E. Howarth did good

work in the building of a chapel in 1861, at which R. Vasey took a prominent part in the foundation-stone laying and opening proceedings; at Castleton, and other villages elect souls have borne a good witness and received their reward.

#### A PICTURESQUE PEOPLE.

Staithes and Runswick fishermen were quickly susceptible to the methods of worship and evangelisation pursued by the early Primitive Methodist missionaries. Staithes is a striking example of the failure of the in-shore fishing, and the population in recent years has become strongly mixed with ironstone miners, which, of course, is an advantage to the village in many respects, and the miners share the fellowship and responsibilities of the society with the fishermen. The names of the fishermen indicate that they have sprung from a few families—Meakers, Fells, Verrills, Coles, Porritts, and Crooks—and the present members of the church show that they are descendants of a hardy race—a picturesque people in a picturesque region, as artists and novelists have attested.

John Branfoot is credited with having been the first Primitive Methodist preacher in Loftus (Lothouse, it was then called); and there is a record of J. Hutchinson having preached in the open-air at Hinderwell in 1821, when a notorious character named Sarah Smith was converted, and of a society having been established in Staithes that year. Gross ignorance, superstition, and godlessness had previously prevailed. Mr. Latimer says he had heard old Robert Verrill say when they first heard that the "Ranters" were coming, the young men turned out of the village to meet them, not knowing whether they were men or something else. But the fine nature of those fishermen responded to the hearty singing and preaching of the missionaries, and a trans-

formation took place in the village. John Seymour, one of the early stalwarts, who toiled hard at camp meetings and in ordinary services; Richard Verrill, better known as "Ranter Dicky"; Robert Verrill, generally called "Little Bob," quaint and good; Alice Harrison, known to all the village as "Auld Aunt Ailsie," with her sunny face; Helen Leng, afterwards Mrs. Richard Verrill, with many others whose names are written in the "Lamb's Book of Life," had hold of God and men. "Was it any wonder," asks Mr. Gray, when recalling the fidelity and heroism of these chosen spirits, "that in the winter of 1851-2 a powerful revival broke out, and a number of men (mostly fishermen) were soundly converted and added to the church?" John Britain is believed to be the only one now living of that goodly band. The work then extended to Loftus and other places, and hundreds of souls were converted.

In 1881, when Charles G. Tetley and Thomas Elliott were in the circuit, the present Staithes Chapel was built, and the men and women of the society did a great amount of rough, hard work in connection with its erection, carrying great quantities of earth and stones in buckets on their heads. Other revivals took place, and additions and improvements have been made in the chapel.

Primitive Methodism at Loftus owes more than can be said to the Latimer family; and it gave not only Andrew Latimer, but William Raistrick also to the ministry of the Word. The favour William Adamson (Mr. Latimer's grandfather) showed to the "Ranters" did not please his re-religionists (the Wesleyans); but he was a man of great force of character, and he allowed the services to be held in his joiner's shop—his son George and his eldest daughter (Mr. Latimer's mother) cleaning it up on the Saturday evenings—and, in the face of much opposition, built a chapel in 1823. From



that time onward the Adamsons and Latimers were the devoted friends of the cause; and a missionary box, which has had as much as £10 or £12 in it, is still kept in the family. Loftus has become the centre of an important iron industry. While Thomas Southron and D. Gates were in the circuit, in 1853, another chapel was erected, and the present one, which cost £2,166, was built in 1870, and was renovated in 1903 at a cost of £400. The debt is only £200; but then there is a vigorous society of 128 members, a good Sunday School, and two Endeavour Societies. Joseph Tyerman, of Street Houses, did yeoman service in the fifties. Another Joseph Tyerman has for many years travelled round the district, visiting, preaching, delivering tracts, and helping the people in a material as well as in a spiritual way. Robert Patton's work at Runswick before he was called hence cannot be over-estimated.

There are chapels and small societies at Hinderwell and Street Houses, and a preaching room at West Loftus, where a useful mission is being carried on. Skinningrove is a healthy society, and Carlin How is regarded as a pattern to many in its methods of work. At both places good chapels exist; and while Skinningrove is fortunate in having such a secretary as Arthur Swales and a treasurer like unto Thomas Egglestone, Carlin How is the home of the circuit steward, John W. Hardy, and some of the oldest and most useful local preachers.

Staithes attained circuit rank in 1868, with William Bowe as first superintendent. It then had 185 members, one minister, twenty local preachers, and four chapels. In 1907-8 it had one minister, a hired local preacher, thirty local preachers, seven chapels, one preaching-room, and 386 members. Many ministers still living have done fine service in the Staithes Circuit, not omitting Martin Cuthbert, who removed in 1908.



## CHAPTER VI.

### INDUSTRY'S WAND.

IT was an easy matter for John Branfoot to get to the Tyne from Guisborough in the second decade of the last century, in that his attention would not be diverted by encountering many towns of importance on his way. To-day all that is changed. Industrial enterprise has packed the ground with a teeming population, and ere we hie westward we must tell what has befallen Primitive Methodism in the territory now known to us connexionally as the Stockton, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool, West Hartlepool, and Eston Circuits. These active centres of the iron trade, and some of them considerable shipping ports, have experienced an amazing growth. Science and labour have surpassed the dreams of the most sanguine, and baffling manufactories, networks of railways, and mighty towns on land and argosies on the waters have taken the place of pastoral plains and a few fishing cobbles.

Stockton was a very small town, Hartlepool an insignificant seaport, and Middlesbrough and its adjuncts *non est*, when Samuel Laister arrived in Stockton from Darlington, and preached on Sunday, May 13th, 1821. Though there was no society at that time, it is not clear that Mr. Laister was the first Primitive Methodist missionary who officially visited Stockton, for there is a local record that on January 26th, 1821, "the Ranters commenced preaching," but the name of the preacher cannot be discovered. Not much had come of the initial attempt, as Mr. Laister, four months afterwards,

describes Stockton as "a cold, hard place." It was still hard when a camp meeting was held in the July, but it had softened soon afterwards, for souls were saved; and when, on January 9th, 1822, George Lazenby preached the funeral sermon of Laister, who had died on the preceding Christmas, he says the congregation was well-behaved and attentive, and "appeared sensible of the loss of so valuable a friend of the Church of Christ."

Decided progress had soon been made, for in March, 1822, Stockton and various places round about it were made into Hull's "Stockton Mission," and reported seventy members. Services were held in the Green Dragon yard, and at the September quarterly meeting of 1823 the Sunderland and Stockton branches of the Hull Circuit were formed into what was called the Sunderland and Stockton Union Circuit. Thus Stockton remained for thirteen years—the southern limit of the Sunderland Circuit.

"The Lord is reviving His work at Stockton," wrote William Taylor (described by Nathaniel West as "a son of thunder") in his journal on May 9th, 1824. At the end of the same month a great camp meeting was held, conducted by West, Taylor, and Morris. There was opposition, but they fought on, and good was done at the lovefeast. While they were holding the quarterly meeting next day, news was brought to them that the man who had lent them the field for the camp meeting was concerned about his soul. "W. Taylor and R. Donnington went to pray with him; and while they were engaged in prayer, the Lord spoke peace to his soul." Persecution continued at Stockton and at Norton, yet in spite of it a permanent hold of the town was obtained; and in 1825 the members managed to secure a new chapel, capable of seating 350 persons, in Maritime Street, the premises being known until this day as

“Ranters’ Buildings.” At the March quarterly meeting of that year there were no fewer than seven travelling preachers in the united circuit—Gilbert, Simpson, Spencer, Sleightholme, Harrison, Oliver, and West—and the members numbered 1,674, an increase of 291 for the quarter.

When Stockton was formed into an independent circuit in September, 1836, it had fifteen places on its plan and three travelling preachers. A year before that, it is interesting to note, “Bro. Greenfield was given his credentials as being called out by Westgate Circuit.” It is furthermore interesting to read this entry in the circuit documents of 1834:—“Decided that if a request came from Middlebrough for preaching, to attend to it as best we can.” In the following March Middlesbrough reported six members on trial, and sent 9s. 11d. to the quarter day. But the day of small things was fast passing away. Commercial activity was drawing great numbers of people to Teesside, some of whom were active Primitive Methodists, and railways were being constructed in different directions. Meanwhile, men of commanding personality had been exercising their ministry in the locality, men of the stamp of Hebborn, McKechnie, Lupton, Spoor, Russell, and William Clemitson. The latter had an exciting experience. For years, on Sunday afternoons, preaching had been conducted at the Market Cross, in High Street. Mr. Clemitson took up this work with such vigour that a spirit of opposition was exhibited by the High Churchmen of the town—Puseyites, they were then called. They appealed to the Mayor, and Mr. Clemitson was warned that if he persisted in preaching at the Cross he would be summoned before the magistrates. This got bruited abroad, and Mr. Clemitson ascertaining that there was no local act of Parliament against open-air preaching, went to the Cross on the Sunday succeeding

the date of the warning. There was a great crowd, but no interruption. Next day he got a summons, and the public excitement became intense. Many influential townsmen, especially Quakers and Wesleyans, stood by him, and Mr. R. Walker, a wealthy Wesleyan, wrote a letter of remonstrance to the Mayor, declaring his determination to defend to the utmost religious liberty and the rights of conscience. The authorities were cowed by the storm of indignation which had arisen, and Mr. Clemitson was informed that he need not attend the Court. But he went, only to find the Court doors closed. He, however, received the cheers and congratulations of a large crowd of sympathisers. The incident did the society considerable good. Mr. Clemitson was stationed three times at Stockton, and his ministry there was greatly blessed.

During the superintendency of Moses Lupton the missionary meetings were phenomenally successful. One year it reached £107 16s. 5¼d., an advance of £47 1s. 4¼d. over the previous twelve months, and the circuit's regular income improved the while. Of the total, Hartlepool contributed £51 10s. 8¾d., Stockton £24, and Middlesbrough £21 10s. 7½d. When the cholera was raging in 1849, Thomas Russell, the man who had known toil, privation, persecution, and imprisonment, travelled at Stockton, and to him the decimation of the societies by the pestilence was a call for increased zeal. As a week's specimen of how he was "keeping pace with the disease," he "preached thirteen times, conducted eleven prayer meetings, met three classes, and visited a hundred families; and nearly twenty souls joined our societies." Leaving his own motherless children at home, he went with his splendid daring, his strong trust in God, and impelling enthusiasm to those stricken with the pestilence, and saw many die very happy. This all aided in a revival of God's work.

Between 1850 and 1860 Stockton Circuit made considerable advancement, and the building of Paradise Row Chapel, in 1866, was the beginning of a new era in the history of Stockton society. The work of the circuit made steady progress. Norton has often been the scene of much blessing. In the early seventies prosperity was also experienced during the ministry of James Jackson, that prince of preachers. He was alone, for by that time Guisborough had long been a separate station, and so had Hartlepool, while Middlesbrough had likewise bid the parent adieu; but the success warranted the circuit in calling out a second preacher. Depression in trade and other causes some years subsequently brought the station low, and it had to be relieved of a second minister; yet a year was not allowed to pass by before Robert Clapham, of Yarm, agreed to maintain a hired local preacher for the circuit. John Atkinson, that notable man of affairs, was then superintendent, and he led the circuit to undertake a great effort for the reduction of chapel debts. Mr. Clapham at once promised £700 on condition that the circuit raised a like sum. This was done, and from that point Stockton was lifted to a higher plane. Bowesfield Lane Chapel was built in 1892, at a cost of £4,255, towards which Mr. Clapham and his son gave munificently. About this time a second man was called out, and four years afterwards, on Emerson Phillipson entering the circuit, a great chapel-building campaign was entered upon. In six years no fewer than four chapels were erected—Yarm, Eaglescliff, Thornaby, and Victoria Avenue, each with ample school accommodation.

Since then the progress of the circuit has been remarkable. During the fifteen years prior to 1907, £16,205 was spent in the erection or purchase of new property, including three ministers' houses, and at the end of 1906



the debt was £4,414. Three married ministers—M. P. Davison, T. Barnes, and F. Humble—and a hired local preacher—Joseph Trevvett, whose salary was paid by J. R. Clapham, were the ministerial staff. The membership was 638—it was 386 in 1891—and the schools had also flourished. Even Thornaby, where there is a fine property, but which was at one time the forlorn hope of the circuit, has now quite another aspect, thanks to the liberality of Mr. Clapham and the wise zeal of brother Trevvett.

Robert Clapham of Yarm! How familiar the words used to be to all officials in the old Sunderland District. In his young manhood eight years in the itinerancy; located at Yarm, he prospered in business; laboured enthusiastically in the local ministry; was Vice-President of Conference in 1891; gave freely of his substance, in which he inspired Sir W. P. Hartley; and "went home" in 1901, aged 82. J. R. Clapham, his son, has made the prosperity of the circuit the great concern of his life, both from a financial and spiritual point of view, and several of his children are actively engaged in church work, one of them being the wife of George J. Lane, a popular minister in the District. John Marwood has left behind him a fragrant memory. One of his daughters is the wife of R. Spark, the generous superintendent of Paradise Row Sunday School, and another is the wife of J. W. Ladley, one of the principal officials in Leeds Ninth Circuit. John Tweedy, too, had some share in the upbuilding of Stockton Circuit. The men of to-day are worthy of their spiritual ancestry—Joseph Smith, J. W. Gargett, Joseph Robinson, C. Marwood, H. C. Lawson, Howcroft Riley, the famous choir-master, and others who might be named. We are reminded that that beautiful spirit—H. O. H. Richardson—who has recently passed to his crowning, was reared at Stockton; and that Bowesfield Lane Church



lost a devoted supporter in the autumn of 1907 by the death of Mrs. Jacques, through whose influence E. E. Jobling, one of our ministers, became connected with the Sunday School.

### THE HARTLEPOOLS.

The younger generation residing in the Hartlepoons will be quite unable to realise that a little more than eighty years ago their large and bustling towns consisted of a village of 1,500 inhabitants. Such was the case when the first Primitive Methodist preachers visited the "rocky ledge which runs far into the sea," in the early twenties of the last century. George Lazenby was the pioneer in 1822. George Coulson, afterwards a useful member, lent him a chair to stand upon when he preached in High Street. Preaching subsequently took place in a cottage, and in that humble place for three years Thomas Oliver and other preachers from Sunderland successfully built upon the foundation laid by the pioneers. Then John Cambridge, a churchman, who lived at the Blue Anchor, Sandwell Chare, assisted the members in fitting up the spacious building known as the Granary as a chapel. Mr. Cambridge was the owner, and his interest in the work of the few poor people was transmitted to his family, for three of his sons (if not more) early allied themselves with the infant cause, and some of the descendants of John Cambridge are associated with the church until this day.

In this rude sanctuary the work of God prospered. The Granary was crowded with attentive hearers, and marvels of grace were witnessed. In a few years a determination was made to build a chapel, and the erection of a place of worship in the Croft, in 1830, was an event of first-class importance in the town. The fishermen brought the stones from Blackhall Rocks in their cobbles, and the women and girls assisted in carrying

them up from the beach to the building site. The chapel had only been completed three years when side galleries had to be put into it, for the population of the town was growing, and the congregations were so large that the people had to attend early to get a seat. This congested condition of things lasted until the present Brougham Street Church was built in 1851. Though only occupied twenty years, the work done in the Croft Chapel was extraordinary. The congregations were largely composed of seafaring and fisher folk, and it is related by ex-Principal Johnson that "Captain John Bulmer, a member of the church, told the story that on one occasion, during divine service, a rough seaman unceremoniously opened the chapel door, and with a loud voice called out: 'Above or below, is the mate of the Grange here?' A vessel named the Grange, having received her cargo, was ready for sea, and as a likely place to find the mate, the sailor went to the Croft Chapel."

When the site was selected for Brougham Street Chapel, the greatest fear was that it would be too far away from the people, but that fear was soon dissipated when the town continued to swell in its proportions. The original trustees — James Whitelock, Francis Bulmer, Mark Harrison, Thomas Watt, Joseph Swan, Isaac Swan, Charles Cambridge, Thomas Carter, John Hunter Robinson, Matthew Hunter, Robert Wilson, John Bulmer, Joseph Bruce, Joseph Hodgson, Robert Grimshaw, Joseph Leeming, John Barrass, and John Watt—were all men of considerable force of character; and the women, too: Mrs. Joseph Swan, Granny Watt, Mrs. Harrison, Mrs. Hodgson, and others, who in previous years had worked the missionary basket with such success as to inspire other societies, used the same means to swell the chapel fund. The working spirit of these mothers continues in the spiritual daughters until this day. Brougham Street Church, capable of accom-

modating a thousand worshippers, was opened in December, 1851, amid great rejoicings. The sermons were preached by William Harland and Mrs. Hallam, the charming mother of the greatly esteemed John Hallam. The membership was then 150, and notwithstanding the various hivings-off during the half century, there are about as many now on the Brougham Street roll. The Brougham Hall and the present school premises are a standing evidence of the enterprise of the sons and daughters of the enthusiastic men and women of the past. At the jubilee in 1901, when the debt was £600, it was reckoned that the total cost of the property in the fifty years had been £5,437.

How popular Hartlepool was in the old Sunderland District was shown by the fact that the District Meeting was held there in 1850, while it was still in the Stockton Circuit, and four thousand persons attended the camp meeting. Another District Meeting of a striking character was that held in 1873; but the climax was reached twelve years later, when for the last time the delegates of the old and mighty district assembled in their undivided strength. How affectionately Joseph Spoor among o'her preachers, used to speak of the Hartlepool people! At few places during his long ministry did C. C. McKechnie experience greater freedom than the few months in 1841 he preached in the Croft Chapel among the sympathetic Hartlepool fishermen. While taking his appointments in Maritime Street Chapel, Stockton, Mr. McKechnie frequently saw a tall, fair-complexioned gentleman in the congregation, whose thoughtful and devout manner impressed him. The young preacher sought the acquaintance of the tradesman, visited him often, but did not prevail upon him to openly confess Christ. But Thomas Carter, that was the gentleman's name, went to Hartlepool, began business there, joined the society, and was for many

years a consistent and generous member of the church. Mr. McKechnie was visiting an old colleague at Hartlepool years afterwards, and went to see Mr. Carter, who was then within a few days of the end of his life. The old man rose up in bed, stretched out his hands, and said, with tears of thankfulness streaming down his face: "Oh, Mr. McKechnie! I am so pleased to see you again. It was you who led me to Christ, and now I am going to Him." The following little quarterly account will be read with interest:—

Bro. Colin C. McKechnie's salary	...	£4	0	0
Do. Meat Bill and Lodgings		3	11	6
Do. Travelling expenses	...		5	4
Do. Present	... ..		10	0
			<hr/>	
			£8	6 10
			<hr/>	

That was the salary—or, more precisely, salary and gift, for the 10s. is carefully stated to have been "a present"—of the youth who captivated the hearts of the fisher people, and who afterwards became renowned in his own communion, and held in high regard by persons of all denominations and parties.

Mighty prayer meetings and open-air missions were prominent characteristics of the Hartlepool society. That was the case from the earliest days. It was at one of those occasions of power, conducted by John Petty and William Lister, when William Hunter Cambridge was converted, and when he made his home in Filey he became a tower of strength to the society there. "Prayer meetings," says William Johnson, "with men in them like Joseph Hodgson, and women like Betty Horsley and Jenny Boagey, were bound to bring good." Joseph Hodgson, Tommy Pounder, Mark Harrison, James Whitelock, John H. Robinson, Thornton Bulmer, Matthew Hunter, James Cambridge, and others of that type in a camp meeting procession made an impression

not easily shaken off. There are still at Hartlepool Harrisons, Pounders, Cambridges, Carters, and Bulmers, and others with different names, but possessing the same spirit as the fathers. The centenary camp meeting in 1907 was proof; not the least active processionist on that day of spiritual stimulus and salvation being Ald. Mark Harrison, an ex-Mayor of the borough, who had the satisfaction of seeing at least a dozen of the young men and maidens he and his associates in the school had taught and prayed for consecrate themselves to the service of the Lord. At the head of the same procession that day was the veteran J. V. Longstaff, known throughout the old District.

The Hartlepoons were made into a circuit in 1864, with Ebenezer Hall as superintendent, and the vigorous and flourishing West was created an independent station in 1885. But, cramped in area though the old circuit is, led by that capable and zealous minister of Jesus Christ—Charles Humble—it has a fine forward movement in hand, the erection of a new church in what is called the Central Estate. Four or five years ago that growing district had a feeble society. With characteristic zeal, Mr. Humble commenced mission services, and about forty persons professed conversion in one week. Miss McKenzie, who was converted under Joseph Ritson (now Connexional editor) at Motherwell, was secured to assist him, and evangelistic work proceeded for three months. In the late autumn of 1907 F. Humble, of Yarm, conducted another successful mission there, and the society became the dominant religious force in the new working-class locality. When its new premises are ready, it may be expected to grip the neighbourhood with increased power.

West Hartlepool has far outgrown the old town, and its extension has not ceased. The coal and iron trades, iron shipbuilding, and timber imports have made it a



centre of industry, a busy seaport, and a thriving municipality. Primitive Methodism has grown with the growth of the town. It is stated that the first Primitive Methodist service held in West Hartlepool was conducted by Charles Cambridge in the house of Mark Harrison, father of the present alderman, who for a short time resided in Stranton before settling in the old borough. Mrs. Harrison, a hale nonagenarian, told the writer of visits paid to her house in Northgate, Hartlepool, by Hugh Bourne, where "he wrote his first teetotal address," she said, "gave it at Nelson Street, Newcastle, and then came back to our place." "He took a fancy to my husband," she added, as an aside. The listener could not resist the thought that her own hospitality had something to do with the return visits. It was a joy to the old lady, as it was felt to be a special honour to Hartlepool, when her noble son was elected Vice-President by the Conference of 1908. Alderman and Mrs. Harrison's service during the year of office will be hard to surpass.

Stranton was a tiny village in the near neighbourhood of Hartlepool when the vicinity was first missioned by the Primitive Methodists. It is now swallowed up by the new town, but it was not until 1852 that any reference was made in the Stockton documents to West Hartlepool. In telling the story of Whitby Street Chapel, J. P. Langham has unearthed some illuminating items from the old records. This one shows how carefully the revenue of the Stockton Circuit was administered:—"That the young preacher's meals be lowered from sixpence to fivepence a meal." This reduction would be a grave concern when a whole quarter's collections at one of the chapels did not amount to a sovereign. In 1842, in respect to the housing of the preachers, the quarterly meeting resolved, after selecting a house, that "the superintendent have the two front rooms, and the second preacher the two back ones."



Quarterly meetings and leaders' meetings watched preachers and members most jealously in the thirties, and the disciplinary powers extended to courtship and associating with Oddfellows.

The Primitives were the first Nonconformist community who gained a footing in West Hartlepool, and when the Darlington and Stockton District Meeting assembled in Whitby Street Chapel in 1906, the oldest Sunday School teacher in the town—William Pallin—was still doing good work there. He entered the school as a scholar in 1850. Mrs. Jane Pallin, William's sister-in-law, who remembered Hugh Bourne preach at the first Sunday School anniversary, and whose interest in the school never flagged, died November 16th, 1907, after a fruitful life. West Hartlepool lost a superior soul in the death of Mrs. Stubbs, daughter of the late Solomon Eades, of Middlesbrough. She was a class-leader of the highest type, and a deep sense of the divine presence fell upon the Sunday evening prayer meeting when she engaged in prayer. Her generosity to the church organisations and to the poor was considerable. She fell asleep in the spring of 1908.

At the inception of the West Hartlepool society, the few members originally had their spiritual home in what was then known as "The Tripe Shop," in Ann Street. Prior to that some of them attended the old Church at Stranton. James Harriman (father of Mrs. Jane and Mrs. W. Pallin), though a Primitive, played a bass fiddle in the Church choir. In 1847 a Sunday School was started, with R. Longstaff as superintendent, James Harriman, Michael Nodding, and Thomas Foster being amongst the earliest teachers. The first anniversary services were held in "Gentleman Smith's Coach-house," and Hugh Bourne was the preacher. From "The Tripe Shop" to "The Navvies' Tommy Shop" was a step up, and perhaps it was towards the rent of

this larger place, Stockton Circuit, in 1852, contributed 15s. From that time until now the record is one of cheering success. In the year named the population of the town was computed to have reached 3,000, and Dock Street Chapel was built at a cost of £300. Four years afterwards sanction was obtained to build a larger chapel, but 1861 had arrived before a commencement was made. William Lister was the superintendent (of Stockton Circuit) when the great step was fully taken. Thirty years before that he was travelling in the Stockton branch of the Sunderland Circuit, and attended a notable camp meeting at Hartlepool on July 24th, 1831, at which his friend John Petty and Henry Hesman took part. What a succession of noble men have served the Hartlepoons since then? Even from the sixties, the names of such men as John Atkinson, Hugh Gilmore, John Watson, William Gelley, and R. G. Graham stand out. The mention of the last-named reminds us that his son went to West Hartlepool in 1907 as colleague of J. P. Langham. In the days of Atkinson and Gelley there were phenomenal seasons. But think of the combination! A king as administrator, counsellor, conservator, having as a co-worker a man with the courage, passion, and abandon of an apostle. Some then converted are doing good work until now in the church of their choice. One of the trophies—James Middleton—was called upon by Mr. Gelley to testify of the change in his life opposite the public-house where he had wasted both time and substance in riotous living; and, trembling in every limb he told his old companions of “the better way.” When he had finished, the landlord, with tears in his eyes, went up to him, and bade him be faithful to his new Master. And he has been, for James Middleton is still on the plan. George Read, another godly man, was converted about the same time. But has not M. H. Groves, in his service of song, “Sixty

Years of Grace," lovingly described the fine array of men and women who have been associated with Primitive Methodism in West Hartlepool? The Corners, the Pallins, the Spoons, the Bunns, the Winships, the Harrisons, R. Thompson, Atkinson, Laidler, Carr, Hunter, Calvert, Dryden, Garbutt, Gibbon, Peacock, Foy, Bulmer, Redcliffe, Brock, Horn, Turner Henderson, Metcalfe, Sutton, Stoodwell, Robinson, Howlett, Easterly, Wilson, Flower, Stamp, Smith, Henry, Taylor, Clement (who became President of the New Zealand Conference), Stafford, Stephenson, Gowland, Howey, Barnes, Frazer, and many others, who are cherished in kindly thought and reverent love.

The Hartlepool Circuit, which was formed in 1864 with 258 members, two travelling preachers, two chapels—Brougham Street, Hartlepool, and Whitby Street, West Hartlepool—and one other preaching place at Middleton, is now two stations. West Hartlepool started on its own account in 1885. To-day the West has five societies, four chapels, and a mission hall of the estimated value of over £12,000, all within the town, served by two married ministers and over a score of local preachers, a total membership of 575, and officers, with Clement H. Wyld at their head, of the calibre of Groves, Howlett, Walton, Hodgson, Hunter, Robinson, Bunn, Taylor, Pallin, Fletcher, Coleman, Smith, Henderson, Delafield, Smithson, Usher, Storr, Thompson, Gotts, Elderkin, Laurie, Peel, and other worthy men and women.

The now growingly-powerful society in Grange Road, with its fine church and excellent suite of premises, was formed about thirty years ago in a cottage in Talbot Street by four men, Wilks Metcalfe, James Middleton, Watson Rowley, and George Read, sent from Whitby Street to commence the mission. They were all members of the late John Robinson's class, and it was not long

before they had to remove into a larger house in Grosvenor Street, where also a Sunday School was started, the anniversaries of which had to be held in a tent. In six years thereafter a school-chapel, costing £1,000, was built in Milton Road; and still their numbers swelled and the work prospered until they eventually launched on the great scheme in Grange Road. October 4th, 1904, saw the foundation-stone laying, one of which was laid by the school, which contributed £250, and the commodious church and schools, worth over £6,000, has a debt of only £1,850. The achievement is the joy of many, and not least of Jacob Harrison, whose devotion to the interests of the place many tell. While this off-shoot, and Hart Road, Elwick Road, and Barnard Street flourish with the flourishing town, the mother church in Whitby Street "shows much vitality, and still maintains the first place in the hearts of a host of people who were won to God through her consecrated labours."

## CHAPTER VII.

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### MORE OF THE MAGICIAN.

**N**OWHERE in Cleveland has the magician Industry shown his transformation so brilliantly as in the creation of the town on the Yorkshire side of the Tees. Middleburgh, a farm-house surrounded by marshy land in 1829—Middlesbrough, a great town of 100,000 inhabitants in 1907, with huge manufactories and ship-yards, busy quays, and strenuous merchants. To find a parallel to such growth it is necessary to go to the Western States of America. And from a denominational point of view the progress has been as marvellous. In its excessively humble beginnings, a pensioner upon the bounty of Stockton Circuit; in its opulence, the possessor of well-equipped churches, increasing in number, the almoner of bounty in directions of need, the parent of another vigorous station, and abounding life throbbing through all its arteries.

There is a supposition that centuries ago Middlesbrough was a flourishing seaport. Be that as it may, it is with the modern town we are concerned; and from the very nature of the spirit and methods of the early Primitive Methodist preachers and members, it may be taken for granted that whenever signs appeared of people gravitating towards the "marshy country," they would be there to "call sinners to repentance." It has been said that Middlesbrough was missioned in 1832, and in all likelihood the statement is correct; but, as has been seen, the first recognised society is not mentioned in the Stockton Circuit documents until the March quarterly meeting of 1835, when six members were reported and a contribution of 9s. 11d. to the quarter day. Presumably meetings had originally been held in



cottages, Stockton branch of the Sunderland Circuit supplying the preachers "as best it could." However, the "as-best-it-could" air soon gave place to a fostering spirit, for within a month from the quarterly meeting referred to, the infant cause was helped to get a chapel, in Davison's Yard, Dacre Street, and within fifty yards of where the historical farm-house stood, and also assisted in the formation of a Sunday School. Thomas Davison provided the "shell of a chapel," and was guaranteed a rent of £6 a year. The two rooms he made into one was used as a chapel for two or three years, and "his wife, Dorothy, and their two sons, George and William, were the first members of the Primitive Methodist Church in Middlesbrough." John Dickinson, writing in the August "Aldersgate," 1907, says:—

"Mrs. Davison, the widow of George, is still living, and is the oldest Primitive Methodist in the town; and to hear her tale of the preachers and the grand meetings they had in those far-off days is an inspiration. Our sister remembers Hugh Bourne preaching in the Richmond Street Chapel; and when he came down out of the pulpit, he put his hand upon the heads of some of the children, and told them to be good and love Jesus."

Growing with the growth of the town, the Davison Yard Chapel was given up by the young society for a chapel which had been vacated by the Unitarians, in West Street. Here the converting work continued, and the congregations became so large that in 1840 the leaders were compelled to seek for a site on which to build. Mr. Joseph Pease, M.P. for South Durham, gave them a plot of ground at a cheap rate, and the famous Richmond Street Chapel was opened in 1841. And what an opening that was! But during the Christmastide of 1842, when John Flesher was the preacher, was the great accomplishment of that period. Winter though it was, a large booth, capable of accommodating a thousand people, was put up, and in it Flesher preached, and four persons professed to obtain pardon. Therein also a well-attended tea meeting was held on the



Monday, and a great meeting at night. A shadow hovers over the auspicious event, for it is believed that the promising James Watson, after giving a powerful speech in the booth, caught a chill, from the effects of which he never fully recovered.

For fifty years the society dwelt in Richmond Street, during which "the hand of the Lord was upon them for good," and extensions had taken place and new societies were formed. Hundreds were converted within its hallowed walls, glorious manifestations of the power of God were witnessed again and again, the fame of salvation encircled it, and outsiders from the country round went to see the grace of God and be made glad. Godly and fearless leaders took their flock into the open-air, and immense gatherings assembled in the Market Place on Sunday nights to hear the word. But they did more. John Dickinson tells us that they fasted on a Friday. Thomas Calvert, who was converted under the preaching of Joseph Spoor, was the leader in this fasting movement :—

"We often had all-night meetings, generally from ten o'clock on a Saturday night until about three on the Sunday morning. Brother Calvert was also the leader in this, and, in fact, was always to the forefront in anything which was employed to get on the work of God. The Sabbath evenings following those fasting days and nights of prayer were times of refreshing. Sinners were converted and backsliders reclaimed. . . . At some of those all-night meetings [attended by seven or eight] the presence of God was so manifest and so powerful, that we were helpless, as it were. Praying or singing was out of the question. All we could do was to weep. Sometimes some of us were filled with laughter."

Missionary meetings and chapel anniversaries were the great events in Richmond Street, the special preachers including some of the most popular men in the Connexion. Thomas Penrose was there, and while leading a procession from the Market Place he gave out "Let earth and heaven agree." When he came to the last verse, "Oh, for a trumpet voice," the words rolled out in thunder-tones, and the listening people were

amazed. William Clemitson, C. C. McKechnie, and Joseph Spoor were the speakers at one of the missionary meetings. The collection had been taken before the latter got up, and "Spoor had not been long on his feet before money was thrown on to the platform from all over the chapel. Mr. McKechnie, who sat on a chair, covered his face with his hands to protect himself from being hurt. Mr. Clemitson ran into the pulpit and hid himself from the shower of copper, silver, and gold. Mr. Spoor stood his ground, crying out: 'Heave away, my lads; heave away!' Presently a sovereign rolled to the feet of Mr. McKechnie; he at once laid hold of the coin, went to the front of the platform, and held it up before the audience, shouting: 'Marra me that!' Mr. Spoor quickly remarked that when the yellow canary came chirping up on to the platform, and fell at Mr. McKechnie's feet, his Scotch blood was roused, and he could sit no longer. Of course, the second collection was much larger than the first." William Saul, writing of 1866, indicates the condition of the society by saying that he saw between two and three hundred at the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and a similar number on the renewal of the tickets. In the next decade there was another visitation. Over ten years afterwards a commanding site in Linthorpe Road was acquired, and a church was built to accommodate 750 worshippers. The members did not leave their revival fire behind them when they sold old Richmond Street Chapel to the Salvation Army; and when the eventful work broke out in Gilkes Street, Linthorpe Road soon caught the fire.

As has been hinted, the energies of the enthusiastic people in the original society were not confined to Richmond Street all the years they were in it. Societies were planted in new neighbourhoods, which, before Middlesbrough was formed into a circuit, became centres of activity and spiritual force. The story of Gilkes

Street, for example, is a romance. The society had its "day of small things," but it had its men and women who attempted great things for God. That their zeal was wisely directed has been manifest, and the erection of the capacious church to seat 850 people, in 1878, after worshipping for a few years in the large school-room they had put up on a portion of the land, was speedily attended by one of the largest congregations in the rapidly-growing town.

But it was the remarkable revival which began in the summer of 1897, and went on for four years, which attracted the attention of the religious world to such an extent that an ardent spirit has declared that the fame of Gilkes Street has gone out "through all Christendom." John Dickinson, in simple terms and from a glowing heart, has told the tale of the marvellous upheaval in a booklet. From this recital we learn that for some time prior to the outbreak a few in Gilkes Street had been pleading with God for a revival. The ministers—Robert Hind and William Younger—shared the anxiety, and on Sunday night, June 6th, 1897, one soul was converted at the service conducted by Mr. Hind. "This," exclaims Mr. Dickinson, "was the beginning of a revival which will never end." During the week James Flanagan preached and lectured two days, and the fire rose to white heat. On the following Sunday, Mr. Younger preached like a man inspired, and seven young men and maidens surrendered themselves to the Lord. Pentecostal seasons followed in the church and in the school, as many as twenty-four penitents being at the communion rail at the close of a Sunday evening service. The united camp meeting in July was declared by a veteran, who had been at some notable meetings of the kind, to have exceeded any he had ever known in the past for spiritual power and influence. The lovefeasts at Gilkes Street and Linthorpe Road baffled all

description, twenty-four seeking the Lord at the former place and fourteen at the latter. And so the work went on, young and old entering the fold at the morning services as well as the evening. Upon one meeting the power of the Lord was so mighty that the people were almost lifted out of their seats, and Mr. Hind declared that he had never felt anything like it in all his life. Tom Sykes, while at Manchester College, spent such a day at Middlesbrough as he will never forget. Penitents were sought out in their homes. Young men, after leaving the services, and walking some distance away, would turn back, and march straight to the front for forgiveness. Drunkards and gamblers became willing disciples of Jesus. On a day of special prayer on behalf of the children, J. G. Soulsby and Richard Stork visited the school, and over seventy voluntarily dedicated themselves to the Lord. "Though it is four years since the revival began," says the writer of the pamphlet in 1901, "we are still in the midst of a grand work." And let it be noted that the visitation began in the summer-time, that no extra human agent was engaged, and that there was never a special meeting held apart from the ordinary work on the plan. "The Holy Ghost did the work, and did it effectively."

Names of men and women of power crop up in connection with Primitive Methodism in Middlesbrough. Robert Knaggs, known throughout the District for his loyalty, labour, and generosity; John George Knaggs, his son, who died in January, 1908, a man of transparent character; Thomas Weatherall, another fine spirit; R. G. Ryder, the indefatigable; George Watson, J. G. Ryder, Mr. and Mrs. Coates, the Thompsons, the Berrimans, Hunt, Hunter, Naitby, Bell, Firby, Robinson, Walton, W. Sykes, Miss Mudd, and many another disciple have done, and those who remain are yet doing, rich service for the Master. John Dickinson demands

more than passing mention. Kirkby Stephen has given Middlesbrough a useful, fervent man. Through his labours great numbers have been induced to embrace the truth, and he was largely instrumental in the formation of three societies—Grangetown, Newport, and Haverton Hill. He is a famous cyclist; and John G. Bowran, who knows him well, says he possesses the secret of perennial youth, though he has more than once been picked up for dead.

From 1837 to 1851 visits were paid to Eston by Primitive Methodist preachers, and many efforts made to secure a foothold in the place. No members were reported, however, until March, 1851, when eight names were sent to the quarterly meeting—Thomas Williams (leader and local preacher), William and Hannah Watson, Elizabeth Shakeshaft, Robert Banks, Robinson Wilson, John Dobing, and Thomas Watson—and the quarterage was 8s. The little flock found a home in the cottage of William and Hannah Watson, and a faithful shepherd in Thomas Williams. Soon an adjournment had to be made to a larger cottage, thereafter to a room over the Mines Offices, and the population swelled so rapidly, and the congregations concurrently, that a chapel had to be built in 1857. It seated 250 persons, and the "California Chapel," as it was called, was not long in being crowded, and the membership rose to sixty. In ten years another one to accommodate 600 had to be built, Mr. Williams, as in the previous case, enlisting the practical interest of the mine-owners in its erection. But there had been other strong men drawn into the society in the course of the years, and they in turn became prominent in action and generous in gift—James Beacham, T. Calvert, John Mills, John Bell, William Harvey, G. Williams, T. Seymour, W. Seymour, J. Bowman, and Elijah Beacham, for example. "Mr. Williams is still living here," remarked E. W.



Gibson, the superintendent minister in 1907. And, by the way, it is an interesting fact that Mr. Gibson, who travelled his probation in Stockton Circuit, was the first probationer in the Darlington and Stockton District. Elijah Beacham, whose widow is a class leader at Eston, was a man who stood out above all his fellows in the place—that is, in a connexional sense, and in a civic sense, too. He was a man of power in the pulpit, in the church's representative assemblies, and in the public affairs of the town and county, being an urban councillor, county councillor, and magistrate.

Again and again this community of ironstone miners has been moved mightily by the Holy Ghost. When John Welford was one of the preachers in the Stockton Circuit, there was a great spiritual movement at Eston. Many men, women, and youths were converted, and the whole region seemed to be transformed. Instead of swearing and drunkenness, singing and praying went on everywhere, down the mines as well as in the homes and streets. Men and lads were so eager to know the truth that the old Bibles were taken from the school into the mines. Through the sixties the work at Eston and Lazenby was nothing short of extraordinary.

South Bank was started in much the same way as Eston, and the chapel built in 1860 was soon too small. The present edifice, which accommodates 720 worshippers, was erected in 1880, at a cost of £2,985, and there is a strong church and school at the place. In November, 1881, John Dickinson was commissioned to go to Grangetown, and services were held in a joiner's shop. Seven years had not passed before a creditable church, to hold 400 persons, was built, and a vigorous society established. At Lazenby and Normanby there are also chapels and good causes.

In addition to the powerful church in North Ormesby, there are also in and around Middlesbrough living



societies at Ayresome Street, Southfield, Newport, and Haverton Hill, and the two former should be places of commanding force in the near future.

So we have skimmed over the story of the work in Ironopolis and its environs, which had its origin in a society of six members contributing 9s. 11d. to the Stockton quarterly meeting in 1835, which became a circuit in 1872, and the parent of Eston station in 1890. Robert Walton, the first superintendent of Eston, saw revivals at all the places and subsequent destitution produced by a coal strike during his term. In 1907 the membership was—Middlesbrough, 861; Eston, 475; the former having three ministers and forty local preachers, and the latter two ministers and sixteen local preachers. Middlesbrough Circuit has church property which cost £17,127, and Eston's property is valued at £8,422. The officers have been—and are—a splendid set of men; while, as to ministers, a sample in the old regime and the new need only be named to show their quality: Joseph Spoor (whose mortal remains were laid in Middlesbrough Cemetery), Ralph Fenwick, Andrew Latimer, John Hallam, H. B. Kendall, W. A. French, R. G. Graham, Robert Hind, William Younger, J. G. Soulsby, and John G. Bowran. The latter, during whose virile term Ayresome Street and Southfield were started, did a magnificent work in conjunction with his colleagues, in carrying forward the revival movement and in the gathering in and the training of those who had been previously converted. Linthorpe Road Church will always have a sacred place in his heart, for it contains a striking mark of the affection of the Middlesbrough people for his late wife as well as for himself.

Middlesbrough has given to the ministry William Spedding, Walter Duffield, W. Sutton, T. Allison Brown, W. R. Nelson, and J. Clark—a goodly quota. Connexionally, of course, from his position in the

Endeavour movement, William Spedding is the best known of the six, and he is proud of his northern origin and full of gratitude to Messrs. Kendall and French and to the circuit which did so much for him. Eston sent out as travelling preachers John Rayner, George Parkin, and George Feaver. There was another—George Warren, an able young man—but he left us, and went to the Congregational Church. John Rayner was a man on fire—a mighty evangelist—and was used of God in adding much people to the church. And who in the Connexion does not know personally or has not heard of George Parkin? Eleven years in one station, graduating M.A. and B.D. in the schools of learning, chosen to be Principal of the College, and elected President of the Conference of 1906, are surely proofs of ability and honour. Encouraged when a youth, by Thomas Catron, with whom he started to preach “on note,” he vividly remembers the first appointments, and has the identical sermon he preached in that period at Middlesbrough camp meeting. During his presidential year it was said of him:—“For high character, scholarly attainment, catholicity of spirit, and noble service rendered through a long series of years to the church of his choice, Mr. Parkin will in no respect suffer in comparison with the men of connexional worth and fame who have preceded him in this high and onerous position.”

It only remains to be added that the stewards of Middlesbrough Circuit are J. Meredith and F. Knox, and of Eston, Samuel Rudge and A. Fines.

## CHAPTER VIII.

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### BEGINNINGS IN DURHAM COUNTY.

TWO tradesmen—William Young and John Emerson—in the village of Ingleton, eight miles from Darlington, heard of the fame of William Clowes as an evangelist, while the pioneer was engaged at Knaresborough, and they earnestly invited him to visit their village. That visit was paid on Sunday, June 4th, 1820, and in that simple way began the conquest of the great coal counties for Christ and Primitive Methodism. But Clowes passed through Darlington on his way to the historic village, not, however, before he “stood forth out of doors in Northgate, and addressed a very attentive congregation, many of whom appeared much affected.” As our connexional historian observes, the situation selected was not without its significance, for in a house in this street, “not far from Bulmer’s Stone and the new Technical College, Edward Pease lived, and in a room in this house occurred a memorable interview between George Stephenson, Nicholas Wood, and Edward Pease, which resulted in the construction of the first railway—the Stockton and Darlington line.” When Mr. Clowes reached Ingleton, he and his friends sang up the street, and he delivered a short exhortation. A prayer meeting was next held at the home of William Young, where much good was done, and on the following evening a society of fifteen members was formed. On the Tuesday night, the evangelist “preached abroad” at Cockfield, and again at Ingleton, where another person joined the society. The next Sunday was

“ a day of much labour, but of great delight,” the labour part consisting of preaching to large audiences in the open-air at Darlington, morning and afternoon, walking eight miles to Ingleton, preaching again in the evening, and then leading a class. In the subsequent fortnight Cockfield was twice visited; Evenwood also, where a society of four members was formed. At Shildon God was powerfully felt, and at Long Newton the word was clothed with power. The Sunday between was spent at Darlington and Ingleton, tickets being given to twenty members at the latter place.

So the pioneer occupied the first two or three weeks he spent on his initial entry into the county of Durham. He makes no mention of having formed a society at Darlington, but one was soon made, of which William Richardson was the first steward. About this time—it was after his marriage in 1820—Jonathan Clewer, a conspicuous worker, arrived in Darlington, laboured there as a local preacher, and “ rendered great help towards establishing the infant cause,” two years subsequently going into the ministry, in which he bravely toiled until 1851. In a short time foundations of a new basis of operation were laid, Darlington was created a branch of the Hull Circuit, and Samuel Laister entered upon it on May 6th, 1821. He literally gave his life for it, for, after a few months of unremitting toil, he died on Christmas Day of the same year. William Evans, and subsequently George Lazenby, had been sent as colleagues of Laister, as the branch quickly extended from Wolsingham to Stockton, and it was not long before Barnard Castle came into prominence. In six months 273 souls were added. On July 8th, Samuel Laister conducted a camp meeting at Darlington, the first held in the county of Durham. “ It was a blessed time, many souls were saved, and the Lord watered His people.”

At first Laister and Evans preached in the Market Place, Darlington, then in a room in Tubwell Row, and afterwards in the Sun Inn Assembly Room, at the corner of Northgate, where most of the important meetings of the town were held at that time. But soon the congregations outgrew the capacity of the Assembly Room, and the young society was speedily committed to the building of a chapel. While the discussions were going on about the chapel, the evangelists thought they would make a push to "take Barnard Castle." And they took it, as we shall see.

When the foundation-stone of Queen Street Chapel was laid on October 16th, Messrs. Laister and Evans had only been five months in the branch. They had found favour with the people, and it may be assumed that members of the Society of Friends had taken kindly to our early preachers. A hint of this is given by Henry Hebborn later on, when a Sunday School was started in 1822. From all points of view, the building of this chapel was a heroic achievement. It was the first in the county, and was a capacious structure for the town, considering that Darlington then had under 6,000 inhabitants. At the opening on Sunday, March 3rd, 1822, upwards of a thousand persons were present. William Clowes preached in the chapel, and F. N. Jersey had an overflow congregation of two hundred outside the building. The collection is given as £17 2s.

Samuel Laister preached at the foundation stone-laying, but he did not live to see the great day of the opening. Mr. Clowes was sent to Darlington in January, 1822, but his stay was short, "amounting to not more than eight Sundays, three of which were devoted to an evangelistic excursion to North Shields." "My appointments in the Darlington branch," says Mr. Clowes, "were filled up while I was away by F. N. Jersey, a sailor, who undertook to travel with me one



quarter for nothing, that he might have my company. He, however, had but little of it, for I left him, and made this excursion to North Shields, and it has not been in vain."

At the March quarter of 1822 there were 508 members in the branch, and more money had been raised than paid the missionaries' salaries. Shortly after Mr. Clowes left Darlington, Barnard Castle was separated from it, and, with Wolsingham, was formed into a new branch. In June, 1826, Darlington became an independent station, with 274 members. Clowes visited Darlington in 1828 and in 1832, going in the first-named year to hold a missionary meeting, on which occasion there was "much freedom from heaven, many able speeches, and a collection of £60." John Oxtoby was stationed in Darlington in 1825. He went "expecting to meet the devil," but God opened his way, and many received a full salvation, and numbers were blessed with a sense of pardon. While there, Bishop Auckland, Brough, and Barnard Castle had the benefit of his ministrations, and many were the number of the saved. Two years before Oxtoby went, John Hewson and John Flesher were on the ground, while John Garner did good work as Oxtoby's colleague.

Hugh Bourne made his itinerary in 1831 of what became the western section of the old Sunderland District, in the course of which he visited Darlington, Ingleton, Staindrop, and Hurworth, and in his laconic way tells of having preached with liberty and power. He also attended missionary meetings in 1835 and 1837. Throughout the whole decade of 1831-40, Darlington Circuit enjoyed much prosperity. New societies were formed, and most of the old ones were so much improved that in 1840 the membership was 633, above double the number reported seven years before. The decade named included the first appearance of Joseph Spoor in the



circuit as a minister, during which the late Ralph Shields, a native of Cockfield and one of Mr. Spoor's many sons in the gospel, says the revival spread through the entire circuit, which is now covered by six flourishing stations. The very name of Joseph Spoor had an effect almost magical at that time, and it only needed to be known that he was going to preach to ensure large congregations. The most extraordinary scenes were witnessed. "Fallings" were common, as many as fourteen being seen on the floor at once. At a lovefeast at Bishop Auckland the people fell in all directions, and "there was a strange mingling of cries, shouts, groans, and hallelujahs." During the revival at South Side, "centres of gamblers were broken up; confirmed gamblers burnt their dice, cards, and 'books of enchantment'; drunkards, hopeless, incurable sots, were freed from the dread tyranny of fiery appetite; pugilists, practised and professional, and cock-fighters of terrible experience, turned from their brutalities." The miracle of grace was repeated at Evenwood, West Auckland, and elsewhere, and at each place the converts became church workers and several of them local preachers.

#### NOTORIOUS COCKFIELD.

But nowhere was the change more apparent than at Cockfield. It had a most unenviable notoriety, and at one time was the rendezvous of the worst characters for miles around. The report in any of the adjacent villages that "the Cockfielders were come," was the signal for the people to look after their poultry, to make their property safe, and to put the constables on the alert. William Clowes, as we have seen, preached there three times in June, 1820. Almost a year afterwards Samuel Laister was there, and on July 29th, 1821, held a camp meeting on Cockfield Fell—the third assembly

of the kind in the county—and was greatly cheered by the fact that twenty persons found peace with God that day. George Pierson held services in the village in 1823, but there is no record of any society having been formed until 1824, when Hewson and Flesher were in the circuit, Martin Durham, who founded a cause at Staindrop, and his wife being among the first members. Of the camp meeting conducted by Pierson on the Fell in 1823, he says there was a great number of people, “and several persecutors, but we came off tolerably well. Lord, have mercy on them.”

Including a few from the country, Cockfield congregation never exceeded more than eight or nine persons when Mr. Spoor entered the circuit in 1835, and the place was as low in morals as it was in religious feeling. The good old leader, J. Raine, was much distressed. In such a condition was the cause that William Young, of Ingleton, had often tried to get it taken off the plan. That was the plight of Cockfield when Joseph Spoor “stormed” it. When he arrived in the village he accosted the first person he met, and asked him where Mr. Raine lived. “Are you the new preacher?” questioned the man, who happened to be a member, and receiving a reply in the affirmative, invited the newcomer to tea, remarking at the same time that there would be few at the meeting. “Will there not?” quickly responded Mr. Spoor. “Glory be to God, the place will be full!” After again shouting “Glory to God!” the man took fear, and bolted, leaving the preacher to find his way to Mr. Raine’s house. The latter, though apt to despond, was one of those faithful souls who stick to their posts in the dark days as well as the bright, and to whom Primitive Methodism owes more than has ever been acknowledged. As he left the house to open the chapel doors, he told Mr. Spoor not to hurry, as there would not be many at the service.

“ I tell you the chapel will be full ; glory be to God ! ” shouted the young enthusiast in reply, and the leader went his way thinking the preacher an “ odd chap.”

Mr. Spoor tucked his hat under his arm, put on a black velvet cap which he used at open-air services, and taking out his hymn-book, started from the door, singing down the street, frequently kneeling to pray, exhorting the people, and announcing the service. All this he did without a soul to help him. Presently he came upon a number of men collected near a brewery for sport, gambling, or annoying passers-by. He sang right into the middle of them, and knelt down and prayed most earnestly. “ There’s going to be a grand sale to-night at the Primitive Methodist Chapel,” he cried out, when he rose from his knees. “ We are going to sell the devil up, and leave him neither stick or stool ; and I am the auctioneer. The sale will commence as soon as I arrive at the chapel. You are all invited ; come every one of you.” He then sang away to the chapel, with a crowd following him. The place was packed, and as he prayed and preached strong men trembled, and many were the slain of the Lord. It was the turning of the tide in the moral and spiritual condition of that village, and the fruitage was influential for all time. There was persecution, but the attempt of a mad woman to blow up the loft in which a service was proceeding, and the conspiracy of some young men to knock away the prop supporting the upper apartment of a dwelling when it was crowded, were frustrated, and many of the conspirators and interrupters were converted. A number of the converts in the revival became able local preachers, and the famous Cockfield camp meetings are spoken of until this day.

The reproach of Cockfield has been wiped away. A small chapel was built in 1826, and some years afterwards another was secured in Draft Yard. Then one

was built in Front Street in 1882, which was enlarged in 1905 to provide accommodation for 500 persons, and an organ put in, and a spacious schoolroom and C.E. hall were added. A year afterwards a fine manse was erected, and in this colliery village the Primitive Methodists now have property estimated to be worth £3,000. The society consists of almost a hundred members, has fourteen local preachers (one of whom—G. Dixon—has the premier position on the plan), and a resident minister. The officials are men who wield a strong influence upon their fellow-workmen. New houses are being built in good numbers, and there is every indication that in a few years there will be a new Cockfield surrounding the spiritual home of the people who, under God, were the means of making it new in character.

#### GENERAL PROGRESS.

While Mr. Spoor was at Darlington, his sister Jane (afterwards Mrs. Ralph Cook, of Newcastle) was his companion and colleague in the ministry, as a hired local preacher, for nine months, and several allusions in his journal tell of the joy he had in her fellowship. But the work was too great a strain upon her, and she was compelled to retire; nevertheless, she did a good work in her lifetime in Newcastle. When excited, Mr. Spoor did some extraordinary things—feats he was completely unconscious of performing, and when shown what he had done, shuddered to think of the dangerous position he had been in. Artlessly, naturally, and effectively, Joseph Spoor said and did things which would have been intolerable and unwarrantable in anyone else. In 1841, after recovering from a breakdown at Middleham in 1839, Mr. Spoor was again in Darlington, this time as a town missionary, and the year he spent in that work was as remarkable as was any portion of his strenuous and successful career. Atheists, blasphemers, drunkards,

and harlots were sought out, reasoned with, and prayed with, many of whom are his crown of rejoicing to-day. Mr. Spoor returned to Darlington in 1857, and at the Shildons and other places the revival work went on apace.

In the intervals good and faithful men laboured hard and successfully, as the records show. During 1848, when Moses Lupton was stationed in the circuit, blessed waves of saving power rolled over the Shildons, Cockfield, Gurney Villa, South Church, Staindrop, South Side, and Toft Hill. Moses Lupton was then in his prime, and had some wonderful experiences.

Mr. Petty, in his history, makes a feature of the considerable progress made in Darlington Circuit from 1850 to 1860. Camp meetings in the summer-time and revivals in the winter were the rule during the decade. The erection of Greenbank Chapel in 1879 was an epoch-making event in the career of the church in the town. This scheme was inaugurated and consummated during the regime of Hugh Gilmore, that strong and fascinating personality who enjoyed the friendship and fellowship of Mr. McKechnie, then in partial retirement at Darlington. In the course of the years a strong society was also established at Rise Carr, which has grown in robustness and power. Subsequently Haughton Road, Bank Top, and Harrowgate Hill were added. These, with Aycliffe and Hurworth, constitute the Darlington Circuit of to-day, having in all 654 members, two travelling preachers, and thirty local preachers. There are also three superannuated ministers—C. T. Coulbeck, Andrew Latimer, and William Bowe. It was at Darlington Mr. McKechnie died. After his long term as Connexional Editor, he returned thither in 1887, and passed within the veil in 1896. The sudden death of H. O. H. Richardson, the superintendent of the circuit, in February, 1908, was mourned by the whole Connexion. He lived a beautiful life. As one of the



originators of the "Primitive Methodist Leader," and a prolific writer therein, he was widely known and greatly loved. In March of the present year Darlington was again deprived of its superintendent by the lamented death of George F. Johnson.

The Hurworth and Aycliffe societies go back to the earliest days. Before there was a chapel at the latter place, services were held in a room, up a narrow passage. William Nelson, a shoemaker, was the leader at one time, and Thomas Dixon, a blind man, took a leading part in the singing. As far back as 1825 a society was formed at Hurworth, and one of the first members, Margaret Maynard, subsequently became leader, which office she held for over thirty years. Thomas Tiplady, at one time station steward, was twice born at Hurworth. T. Searle and J. Hugill are the leaders in the respective places at present.

In the past (as well as in the present) Darlington has had its notable officials. Seventy years ago, John Richardson (who died in Australia) and other three, who had "a roving commission," missioned and occupied colliery villages as they sprang up. In the pulpit and on the platform Thomas Robson was a great force, and had a connexional reputation. To the present generation no man is better known in the Darlington and Stockton District than William Heslop. He has been nearly thirty years circuit steward, and over fifty-five years a choir-master. His outstanding achievement is his association with the District Psalmody Association, which he has directed from its inception, and which has had a unique career. He has also rendered valuable service on the Chapel and Sunday School Hymnal Committees. Other men of position and superior gifts work with zeal and fruitfulness within the limited area of the modern circuit; and some of them—notably C. H. Leach—are not unknown outside the bounds of their district.



## CLASSIC GROUND.

Ingleton, Cockfield, South Side, Evenwood, Staindrop, and Hamsterley are to-day within St. Helen's Circuit. Their origins as societies have been dealt with, as they stand on ground trod by the pioneers. Ingleton must be for ever regarded with peculiar interest by Northern Primitive Methodists because of its being the first place in the county of Durham in which a society was formed, John Emerson, Richard Fryar, and William Young having the premier positions in the original class-book. Soon it will have completed ninety years of its existence; and whatever may have been its changing fortunes in that time, Primitive Methodists of spirit and enterprise compose the society now, for in 1907 an artistically designed new church, of which T. E. Davidson and Son, Newcastle, were the architects, was erected in the centre of the village. Men and women planned on a generous scale have been nurtured in Ingleton society. Such in a conspicuous degree were the men already named. Margaret Raine also holds a high place on its roll, and it gave M. Hornsby to Saltburn, than whom the district has had few better men.

How the first missionaries nourished the little flock William Clowes collected at Evenwood on June 20th, 1820! Fifteen years afterwards, when Joseph Spoor was so greatly used of God in the Darlington Circuit, Evenwood shared the revival glory. Unfortunately, the chapel was lost to the Connexion, and early in 1853, when John Bowman, an Allendale man, went there, the means of grace had been withdrawn. He and two or three others, however, re-started operations, conversions took place, and mighty things were speedily accomplished. A loyal people still witness for the truth at Evenwood, and they are engaged in a project for the enlargement of their borders.

Though much has already been said about Cockfield, there is much more that could be narrated. That first camp meeting in the "amphitheatre" on the Fell was attended by crowds—thousands, it is said—from Darlington, Barnard Castle, Bishop Auckland, Shildon, Crook, and other places. Some fine whin bushes in bloom served as a shelter from a strong wind that was blowing; and while the service was proceeding, and the spirits of the worshippers were rising, clouds of smoke and flames of fire arose behind them. There were "followers of the devil" present, and they set fire to the whins, expecting to disperse the congregation. But they were discomfited. "In answer to prayer, the wind changed its course, almost immediately turning in the opposite direction." The change turned the fear of the multitude into joy, and God gave them a marvellous day. Primitive Methodism at Cockfield owes much to the Dixon family. Originally Quakers, some of them became Primitives, the present representative, George Dixon, having been a local preacher over fifty years. Women such as Sally Liddle, Betty McFlatling, and Betsy Linsley, though dead, still influence those who remain. In 1854 Peter McKenzie held a mission at Cockfield, which perhaps paved the way for the mighty movement conducted by Thomas Russell and Peter Clarke—a movement which spread to South Side, Toft Hill, and Shildon, and in which hundreds were added to the Lord.

The Ingleton men—William Young and Richard Fryar—have the distinction of having formed a society at South Side, of which Joshua Dawson was the first member. That was in September, 1820, between the flying visit of William Clowes and the arrival of Samuel Laister in the locality. Under the latter, John Oxtoby, and many others, the converting work went on, and in 1829 a chapel was built. This little sanctuary was the

scene of many a great manifestation of the power of God. Here is the description of a service, held on July 19th, 1835, as told by Joseph Spoor :—

“ I could scarcely get in for the pressure of the crowd in the chapel. In prayer I had great power with God, and it is hardly an exaggeration to say that every bone in my body was shaken. The converting and sanctifying glory ran through the congregation. Many have to bless God, both in time and eternity, for this day.”

Martin Durham spent his labour and his means in establishing the cause at Staindrop, where he obtained a room and fitted it out for worship in 1827. He acted as leader for a time, and was succeeded by Thomas Railton, Jane Railton and Jane Rowe being amongst the first members. Hugh Bourne and William Clowes both spoke in the room a few years after it was opened. It was the meeting-place until the present chapel was built. There are now a good society and a useful band of local preachers at Staindrop. The late R. Greenwell, of Gateshead, took a great interest in the chapel, and at the anniversary in 1868, when £45 was paid off the debt, the society and Sunday School presented him with a tea and coffee service.

Hamsterley has bravely kept the faith since Samuel Laister preached there on July 10th, 1821. Many trophies have been won for the Lord, and a strong society to-day renders efficient service. On entering the St. Helen's Circuit in the early eighties, Andrew Mein and his family worshipped at Hamsterley. Seeing the need for a better building than the old structure in which the meetings were held, he interested himself in securing a new chapel, and the cost of the neat edifice was rapidly extinguished.

Toft Hill is a remarkable society, with a hundred members and a dozen local preachers. The change is astounding since the time, before the building of the little chapel in 1829, when Isabella Stephenson opened

her house for service. Toft Hill is wealthy in men. What was Howden-le-Wear's loss was Toft Hill's gain when Henry J. Mein, one of the family mentioned above, took up his abode at Toft Hill Hall. The village was not the place it is today when Bryan Hodgson went there sixty years ago, and the progress made during his lifetime must have cheered the heart of the veteran society steward before he fell asleep in 1908. As we have seen, there were many visitations of power in the society. John S. Stephenson, who died quite recently, was converted in the revival of 1855, and served as Sunday School teacher, class leader, and local preacher for over fifty years. He celebrated his jubilee as a local preacher in 1905, when the circuit presented him with an illuminated address, his portrait, and a pair of gold spectacles. Miss Bulmer, accompanied by her friend, Miss Walton (now Mrs. T. E. Ridley, of Newcastle), as soloist, went to preach the chapel anniversary sermons in the early part of 1892. Five seekers for pardon went to the communion rail on the Sunday night, and it was resolved to have another meeting on the following night. The harvesting lasted for five weeks, and large was the ingathering. Old Bryan Hodgson was among the harvesters, so also were Joseph Raine, Robert Atkinson, Albany Moffatt, and Robert Hodgson.

It is related of Thomas Firbank, of Etherley, who was converted in 1826, and became an earnest propagandist, that he missioned St. Helen's. Joseph Spoor was there in 1835, we know, and there were then praying men and women in the society. The way of the evangelist was prepared by prayer, and "the divine glory came rushing down among the people," several being "brought to the ground." Thenceforward St. Helen's seems to have progressed until it became the head of the circuit. Conspicuous for intelligence and heavenly-mindedness was Ralph Punshon, who joined the society in 1838, and was

a valuable local preacher for many years. The generous and devout John Stephenson, who served the church with efficiency and enthusiasm as a class-leader, local preacher, and circuit steward, was comparatively a waif in his youth, and rose to be manager of one of Pease's collieries. A native of Westgate, and converted there in a revival in 1880, Peter Thompson was fully equipped for service when he landed at St. Helen's, and as society steward and class-leader that service was faithfully rendered for a considerable time. A long line of godly ministers spent themselves freely for their Master in West Auckland Circuit, one of the more recent being George W. Moorsee, a lovable soul, who took some part in the jubilee of the Connexion, who was one of the appointed preachers at the centenary camp meeting on Mow Cop, who died in Leeds Infirmary while the London Conference of 1908 was sitting, and whose remains were interred at St. Helen's beside those of his wife, a daughter of the veteran Moses Lupton.

Places now on the plan, and at some of which there are vigorous and growing churches, were not in existence in the dawning days. Wind Mill, Copley, Phoenix Row, Ramshaw, Bildershaw, and Tindale Crescent have wells of healing and refreshment. William Teasdale, who died June 19th, 1908, was a pillar of strength at Copley from the days of the small band of workers at Lane Head, where a chapel was built in 1864 (now used for school purposes), and the society growing so lustily another one had to be built in 1885.

A branch of Darlington Circuit in 1861, St. Helen's soon afterwards obtained autonomy, and in 1907 had 759 members, and a quarterly income of £92. Glancing over the names on the plan, the Raines—male and female—stand out with prominence, thus linking the prosperous present with the glorious past of struggle and conquest. Alderson, Dickinson, Tarn, Sangster,



## A COMMANDING STATION.

Ramsden, Wilson, Hall, and other names occur more than once. As to chapel and school building, this circuit can present an almost unparalleled record.

Shildon Circuit, carved out of Darlington station in 1869, embraces much of the territory covered by the first missionaries, though, through the enormous development of the coal industry, it is a very different region to-day from what it was ninety years ago. Adam Dodds was the first superintendent, and in the course of its existence it has been fortunate in having very many men of grit and devotion as officials. With its 17 places, 896 members, 65 local preachers, and three ministers, Shildon holds a commanding position in the Northern field.

As we know, Shildon was one of the places visited by William Clowes in 1820, but did not succeed in forming a society. That took place some years afterwards, when, it is stated, Thomas Firbank, of Etherley, "took part in opening Shildon." A friend of William Clowes, named Thomas Burton, lived at Middridge, and a society was gathered in that village in 1824, the latter being amongst its first members and helpers. The founder was again in Middridge in 1828 and 1832. While he and F. N. Jersey were in the Darlington Circuit in 1822 they preached at Eldon and Heighington. Samuel Laister was at the latter place before them, however, and had a cheering service in July, 1821.

John and Mary Stephenson and Mary Whitfield, who were among the first-fruits of Primitive Methodism thereabouts, became associated with the cause at Old Shildon. The old chapel was opened on May 11th, 1834, and there were then about forty members. The original structure is still to be seen in what is called "Ranters' Yard," and in that place a son of the couple named

above was converted, who became a highly useful man at home, and in after years at Binchester. It was a very different edifice in which the District Meeting of 1875 met, when William Graham, that masterly mind, was superintendent. Supplementary to the coal trade, the " railway shops " sent the population of the Shildons up by leaps and bounds, and though the old society is largely composed of miners, there is a sprinkling of railway people. New Shildon society, which is only three-quarters of a mile away, consists principally of railway hands, though there are not a few miners there as well. Old Shildon society numbers 164 members, 13 being local preachers.

Many and powerful have been the revival movements in Shildon and the circuit generally. One of the early missionaries was the cultured John Delafield, of Appleton Wiske. In after years, William Booth, a Barnard Castle quarryman, and subsequently to that, Mrs. Coates (*nee* Miss McKinney) were greatly used of God. It has been stated that about 600 persons professed conversion in the later upheaval, as many as forty or fifty being at the altar rail in one night. But even that must have been but a prelude to what took place in 1883-4, when Miss Weeks conducted services, and the whole neighbourhood was moved. The scenes were the daily theme of conversation everywhere, many of those most noted for wickedness in Old Shildon especially being renewed, and some of them are preachers of the word to-day. And the evangelistic spirit still abides in the circuit, 1908 providing evidence of mission fervour.

In 1855 there were eleven members at New Shildon—Christopher Heslop, Ralph Featherstone, Christopher Lamb, John Maddison, and their wives; W. Smith, James Smith, and Thompson Bainbridge, the two latter being the leaders. Joseph Martindale, converted at South Church, joined the society that year, and he and his wife have worthily served their Master for over half-

a-century. Christopher Heslop, a man of untiring zeal, was the father of William Heslop, of Darlington, whose genius in the elevation of the service of praise has made thousands his debtor. The first chapel at New Shildon was built in 1842, and was opened by Hugh Bourne. It was afterwards doubled in size, and eventually the present spacious church was built at a cost of £4,500. Unfortunately, disagreeable circumstances arose, by which seventy members were lost to the society; but the lost ground was regained, and the membership in 1908 reached 196, fifteen being local preachers, and the Sunday School, with John Bowman as superintendent, is doing good work.

Of the other noble men associated with the Shildons, Henry Brown held a prominent place both in the church and in political life. John Stephenson, a native of Nenthead, gave himself unsparingly to the furtherance of the Kingdom of God; also Walter Shenton, John Peacock, Andrew Mein, and John Boddy. By the death of the latter in the spring of 1906, aged 84 years, a striking figure was removed from Shildon. Teaching himself to read and write after his conversion, and while pursuing his work as a pitman, he rose to become one of the principal tradesmen in Shildon and a leader in its religious, civic, and political life. He was elected a Deed Poll member in 1900. Writing of Thos. Dixon, Thos. Davidson, Val. Hindmarsh, of Shildon; Lewis Proudlock, of Leasingthorne; Charles Cox and Jonathan Southern, of South Church; John Slee and James Mitchell, of Close House; Thomas Martindale, and John Kipling, of Coundon Gate; Nicholas Lamb, of Coundon; Joseph Graham, of Middridge; James Paley, of Middlestone; Joseph Chipchase, of Auckland Park, and others, William Eales (now of Berwick) says:—"As I write the names of these men, my heart is stirred within me with the remembrance of happy fellowships."

Middridge is a place of interest. The first missionaries preached there; then, Mrs. Burton left £200 to build a chapel in the village, and after it was erected the foundations gave way, another one having to be put up. For thirty years Thomas Alderson was superintendent of the Sunday School, and his son John, after a useful life in the ministry, has now located at Gateshead. There were two public-houses in the village; out of one came two local preachers, and out of the other the wife of a local preacher (William Hull).

A society formed years ago in the cottage of George Atkinson at Simpasture still exists. Whatever may have been the result of the preaching of the early missionaries at Heighington, it had to be re-missioned by Sildon Circuit, and W. A. French and Joseph Martindale transformed a dwelling-house into a chapel. A Sunday School at Old Sildon and a chapel at Eldon village were also built from Mr. Martindale's designs. At Middlestone a ruined cottage was fitted up for a preaching place. Close House, Eldon Lane, Auckland Park, Leeholme Mission, and Chilton Lane Ends are also pushing forward.

In a dwelling-house at Coundon, occupied by Joseph Branson during the week-days as a school, services were held, and a chapel was subsequently built. A temperance hall, which was larger than the chapel, was afterwards acquired by the enlarging society, and fitted up for worship. Flourishing causes now pursue a good mission at Coundon and Coundon Gate. Under James Whiteman, a local preacher, Richard Robinson was converted at Coundon Gate in 1870. He was in the ministry in 1876, did well in the Manchester and Liverpool Districts, and had just commenced his superintendency of the Stanley Circuit in 1899 when he died from pneumonia.

Primitive Methodism at Leasingthorne and the name

of Lewis Proudlock are inseparable. There was no place of worship in the village when he and his wife entered it in 1847. They were both converted at North Biddick in 1823, and had the missionary fire. He laboured with courage in the face of great difficulties, and he lived to see two chapels built, a society of over forty members established, and a Sunday School of over 160 scholars. There is still a Lewis Proudlock at Leasingthorne and a healthy church, fostered by the Barrons and others. Many a strong character has been nurtured in South Church meeting houses, and with a society of 45 members much can be done in the future. More than threescore years have sped since Joseph Martindale and other two went to the penitent form there. Joseph has lived a fruitful life, and has seen four generations of Primitive Methodists at New Shildon, and his children have risen up to call him and his partner blessed. His son is a local preacher and circuit steward (jointly with G. Stabler), and is nourishing the Shildon Road mission, which promises to become a powerful church.

Matthew Barron went as missionary to Fernando Po from Shildon, and the same place gave John K. Ellwood to the ministry—a man greatly beloved, and who is doing Christly work among the poor at Clapton, London. William F. Todd, whose services in Seaton Delaval Circuit will not soon be forgotten, went out from Eldon Lane; and one of the ablest local preachers in the North of England—indeed, Joseph Longstaff is earning a front position in the Connexion—is a Shildonian.

#### AN ARENA OF POWER.

First allied with the Darlington mission, Wolsingham was next mated with Barnard Castle, when the Barnard Castle and Wolsingham branch of the Hull Circuit was



created, afterwards associated with Weardale, subsequently made into an independent circuit, and last of all (so far as the name of the station was concerned) overshadowed by the busier town of Crook. In all these changes, however, Wolsingham has been connected with men and movements which have lifted the north country from spiritual apathy and moral degradation.

William Snowball and two others, hearing of the wonderful things transpiring in and around Darlington, went to Cockfield to see Samuel Laister, and invited him to visit Wolsingham. The missionary complied with the request, and on August 9th, 1821, spoke near the bridge to a very large congregation, and formed a society, of which William Snowball, who lived to become the steward of Wolsingham Circuit, and Robert Smith (one of the original trustees of Cutlers' Hall Chapel, Shotley Bridge) were among the first members. Colin C. McKechnie had a high regard for William Snowball's character, and his generosity was known to all men. A chapel was opened in 1825, which became a centre of power. Three years before that, William Clowes preached at Wolsingham, and renewed the tickets to about fifty members. Jersey was there, too, and Thomas Batty, Jane Ansdale, John Oxtoby, William Summersides, and other flaming spirits. Camp meetings and lovefeasts, as well as the ordinary services, were seasons of extraordinary power and grace, and Wolsingham was a living church. At a prayer meeting, held in a cottage at Swinhope Burn, on October 8th, 1824, one of the persons converted was Emerson Muscamp, who afterwards took up his residence at Redgate House, Wolsingham, and was a blessing to the neighbourhood. Wolsingham's connection with Westgate gave it all the advantages and exalted experiences arising from the glowing ministries of the men and women who led the marvellous Weardale revivals.

When it was made the head of a circuit in 1848 it had such places as Bishop Auckland, Crook, Tow Law, Witton-le-Wear, and Witton Park attached to it. The continued vitality of the societies is seen from the fact that the 174 members at the start increased to 270 in 1850 and to 600 in 1860. But it had not been all smooth progression, for, when Mr. McKechnie entered the station in 1856, he had to face an utterly disorganised condition of things, occasioned by the deposition of a junior minister. Two unfriendly factions existed; but the prudent action of the new superintendent and his colleague (William Alderson) succeeded in allaying the bitterness and restoring public confidence, and the jubilee camp meeting at Mount Pleasant, on May 31st, 1857, completely turned the tide. Conversions and restorations took place on every hand; a mighty work broke out at Tow Law, where the chapel had to be enlarged; chapels had to be built at New Hunwick and Byers Green; Escomb was missioned and a chapel erected; and a permanent society was established at Willington.

In 1871, when Bishop Auckland Circuit was formed, there were 952 members in the undivided station (showing an increase of 778 in the 23 years of its existence), together with eleven more places, and 37 additional local preachers. Bishop Auckland took 444 members away, and in 1892 Waterhouses Circuit (which had 336 members in 1908) became another offshoot of Crook, yet the latter at the end of 1907 had 698 members. "Conversions," said Robert Hind in the 1903 "Aldersgate," "do not take place at rare intervals, but are almost a constant occurrence at one or other of the churches. . . It has always been a healthy and progressive station, and probably its best work has been done during the past two or three years." Thomas Elliott and Charles Humble were the preachers in the years referred to.

When Robert Clemitson was superintendent in 1871, the Sunderland District Meeting was held at Crook, just two or three years after the new and commodious church was built. Nearly thirty years afterwards, the annual meeting of the Darlington and Stockton District was held in the same mining centre, which is surrounded with village chapels, separated from each other by a mile only, or less in some instances. In addition to the gradual improvement, there have been special seasons of abundant ingathering. One marked occasion occurred as recently as 1902, when Mr. and Mrs. Harrison held a mission in the town, and when the capacious chapel was so crowded even on week-nights that standing room could not be obtained for the people. So has grown the little society of seven, instituted by F. N. Jersey on January 30th, 1822. When James Wilson, a "victim" of the pitmen's strike of 1844, settled in Crook, the few members worshipped in a cottage. Through his labours and those of other worthy brethren, the membership multiplied; a chapel was built, which had to be enlarged in a few years; and in the erection of the more recent handsome premises, the victimised pitman had a principal hand, he having risen to be one of Crook's foremost citizens. Nor can the name and work of Henry Whitfield be omitted. Hodgson is an honoured name in the Crook society, being one of the oldest and best respected Primitive Methodist families in the district. Bryan, a tradesman of repute, died in the spring of 1907. J. R. Hodgson, J.P., is one of the circuit centenary fund treasurers. A Sunday School must have been established about 1846, for there is a record for 1853, signed by G. Calvert and T. Heslop, superintendents, of the seventh anniversary having been held that year.

Though having no part in the original heroic days, Tow Law has been the theatre of some of the most remarkable revivals known in the North of England.

When Matthew Davison and Thomas Bottom took up their residence in the village in 1844, whence they had gone from Blackhill, it was a new place, created by the erection of ironworks and the opening of collieries, and the people were rough. There being no Primitive Methodist society, the loyal pair commenced singing and preaching in the streets, held services in a house, then got a chapel in 1846, and before Davison died in 1877, "the Bishop of Tow Law," as he was called, belonged to a society of over two hundred members. All along abandoned sinners had been converted—in 1850, when William Saul was there, in the great movement in 1858 already referred to, and at the close of the last century, while Mr. and Mrs. Harrison were there, when the place was moved in such a way as to remind us of some of the stories in the Acts of the Apostles. Numerically, it is the strongest society in the circuit, and is still full of evangelistic ardour.

There was a class at a place called Fir Tree, the residence of Joseph Rutter, in 1845 and up to 1855. Nicholas Pattison, a prominent Sunday School teacher at Durham, started business as a joiner and cartwright at Mumby Hill in 1852, commenced services in his own house, and had a chapel up in three years. Bowden Close had a chapel as far back as 1855. Anxious men and women whose record is on high won trophies for Jesus at Roddymoor, Sunnyside, Mount Pleasant, and Billy Row. At the latter place, dear to Henry Green and to many another zealous worker in the county, a fine new church was opened in 1908. Among the founders of that society was "Jackie" Foster, a strong man in every sense of the word, a man of faith and prayer, and a true type of the old-time Primitive Methodist. When M. P. Davison preached "Jackie's" funeral sermon, he related that the veteran pitman, put into prison for being the ringleader in the formation of a branch of

the Miners' Union, refused his breakfast one morning. He said the Lord had told him that he was to be liberated, and he really walked out that day, a gentleman having paid his fine. Another well-known character was Matthew Willan, of Crook, whose quaint expressions often provoked a smile. He and other members of his family died during the cholera scourge in 1853.

Perhaps Howden-le-Wear, still a vigorous society, was in the zenith of its strength in the eighties. There were men and women of sterling worth in it. "Jackie" Robson was a father in that Israel. John Raine, brother to Joseph of Toft Hill, was another venerable saint. David Calvert, a man of position, made the choir famous, and also trained other choirs for the Middlesbrough festival. Henry J. Mein, then manager of Howden Colliery, excelling as a local preacher, and still a commanding personality in South Durham, was a great force in the society, especially in the training of young men. In this work he was succeeded by George Robson, now of Whitley Bay, and nearly all the twenty-five young men in the class were converted in the mighty mission conducted by young Grady, one of Joseph Odell's men. Four or five of them became local preachers, and one of them, Ernest Barton, entered the ministry in Canada.

While engaged in his second term in Crook Circuit, James Taylor finished his ministry on earth in 1907. Rugged by nature, scorning conventionalities, he was a superior preacher, and those who knew him best speak in warm terms of his kindness of heart.

#### A COMPACT CIRCUIT.

The compact Waterhouses Circuit, with its six places, has done well since it was divided from Crook in 1892. It is an interesting fact that in this little area there are to-day nearly twice as many members as there were in



the whole of the wide expanse of Wolsingham Circuit, including Bishop Auckland, when it was created in 1848.

James Wilson arrived at Waterhouses from Edmondshay in 1860, and began services in his house. He was joined by William Robinson, who became another of the pioneers there, and shortly afterwards the colliery hay-loft was secured for services. When the day school was built, the Wesleyans and Primitives were permitted to hold their meetings in it on alternate Sundays; but in 1872 the Primitives built a place of their own, which was subsequently enlarged to contain 322 sittings, and a commodious school was added.

In March, 1869, a Primitive Methodist went to live at Cornsay Colliery, and found no chapel at either Cornsay Colliery or Quebec. There were three members, however—Charles Lumsden, his sister, and William Orden, a coke-burner. The newcomer and the Lumsdens got services planned at Orden's house, then an empty cottage was got, subsequently the machine-shed, then came the building of the chapel at Quebec in 1875, and it has since been so improved and extended as to be worth over a thousand pounds, while the society numbers upwards of a hundred members. The newcomer was the father of the well-known, hospitable, and zealous Joseph Harrison, of Esh Winning.

Converted in a revival at South Church in 1849, William Walton, a native of Brotherlee, became a local preacher. On his removal to Esh Colliery years afterwards there was no Primitive Methodist cause there, and he opened his office for preaching and his house for the entertainment of the preachers. A society was established, but it had no permanent place of abode until 1899. In the interval the development of Esh Winning and the locality had been considerable. Joseph Harrison shifted his residence from Quebec to Esh in 1894, when the society there numbered but twenty members.

Many attempts were made to get a site for a chapel, but in vain, as the ground belonged to Roman Catholics. Eventually, however, the late G. W. Moore, who was then superintendent of the circuit, and Joseph Harrison, succeeded in getting a plot, and a useful country chapel and school were built, with a folding partition between the two, thus providing accommodation for 500 or 600 hearers when required. A new organ costing £200 has been put in, and the whole debt is £300. As a matter of fact, the total chapel debts in the circuit do not exceed £550. Esh has now more than a hundred members.

Small chapels were put up at Hedley Hill and Lymington Terrace in 1897, and there is no debt upon them. The mission at the latter place began in the previous spring, with John Stephenson, a local preacher, as leader. "The Cookery House," a workman's cottage used for teaching cookery to the school-girls once a week, was the preaching place, and when the mission started Lymington Terrace had an evil reputation. There were then four Primitives in the Terrace—John Stephenson and John Johnson and their wives. Not much progress was made at the start, but one Sunday night, when Mr. Moore was preaching, five women and several young people in their teens were converted. That was the beginning of a new day, the saving work went on, and the chapel soon followed. Jack Bennington and his mother were among the saved. The former is now a useful local preacher and evangelist, doing good work in the Midlands.

There has been a society at East Hedley Hope for over a quarter of a century, and great things have been accomplished by it, many faithful members now serving in different parts of the Connexion having been saved there. The meeting-house was the day schoolroom, and though the idea of a chapel was long cherished, the great event did not take shape until the autumn of 1907.

The colliery owners and Mr. W. H. Telford, the manager, took a practical interest in the project, and the loyal society has entered upon the new era with joy and hope.

From first to last, men of prominence have been on the ground at Waterhouses, including Joseph Ritson, Robert Hind, and Peter McPhail. Thomas Stephenson, T. A. Young, and J. W. Richardson have gone into the ministry from the locality. Popular local preachers have served the churches there. John W. Winter, who died at Whitley Bay in 1906; Ned Brown, of Willington, who lost his life at Brancepeth; George Patterson, who was killed in the Elemore explosion, and the eccentric Emerson Featherstone. Under the superintendency of R. H. Anty, the enterprising spirit now prevailing augurs well for future prosperity.

#### AMAZING VITALITY.

From a loft in a yard behind Newgate Street, and next in a hay-loft over a dilapidated stable in Mundell's Yard, in Fore Bondgate, to the palatial Central Church, with Tenters Street Chapel still in active service, is a most eloquent and material declaration of the progress in many directions of the Primitive Methodist community in Bishop Auckland. With the permission of Edward F. Herdman, who has collected a great mass of facts to tell the tale fully, free use has been made of his material concerning this station.

John Emerson, William Young, and Richard Fryar, of Ingleton, are credited with having been the first to hold a Primitive Methodist service in Bishop Auckland in 1820, and they made a commotion, opposition not being absent. The little company collected after this visit gathered together in the first-named loft, but they were only there a fortnight. In the second loft Samuel Laister formed the first class in 1821. William Clowes

preached in the same room in the following year, and the weight of the dense audience being too much for the old props supporting the loft, they were felt to be giving way. A rush was made for the stairs by the alarmed people, and a catastrophe was only averted by the coolness and courage of Clowes. Happily, not one was injured. Being first of all in the Darlington branch, many of the pioneers were heard in the streets of Bishop Auckland. John Oxtoby held a memorable lovefeast there on April 24th, 1825. "It was a good time," he says; "many were sanctified, and filled unutterably full of glory and of God." Other societies must have been well represented at that lovefeast, for the class in the town had only six members then. From that service, however, a revival must have proceeded, for in June there was a membership of fifty; and Oxtoby tells in glowing terms of a service in September, where the sanctifying and converting power was present. The first recorded camp meeting at Bishop Auckland was held on the Batts, on Whit-Sunday, May 18th, 1823. People gathered to it from Darlington, Barnard Castle, Durham, Stanhope, Stockton, and elsewhere. Both men and women preachers took part in the services, and it is specially mentioned that "a Miss Teasdale preached well."

As the society gathered men of purpose and character it became stable. One of the earliest of these was Christopher Trotter, a butcher. "Kitty" also owned the Black Bull Inn, standing on the site now occupied by the old Provincial Bank, but when he became a Primitive he would not have anything to do with it. His wife, however, held to the inn. "Kitty" was a staunch member and generous supporter until the day of his death, and gave a substantial donation to the building fund of Tenters Street Chapel.

From 1826 to 1842 the society worshipped in a room

at the back of Newgate Street, their second residence in the same locality, and not at all a desirable place; but in that rude sanctuary many a life was made better. A movement was made in 1836 to build a chapel, and two or three years afterwards a site was bought in the back-way behind William Street, what was then a beautiful garden and orchard. Not until Whitsuntide, 1842, however, was a place erected. The trustees were Robert Powell, John Robinson, Edward Blair, Thomas Man-kin, Joseph Petty, Joseph Graham, William Thompson, and Thomas Firbank. The plain structure was only capable of accommodating a hundred worshippers, yet it was a great advance upon their previous "tabernacles," and they entered it with joy.

Trouble came with the pitmen's strike of 1844, and serious financial and other consequences confronted the society. Several of the trustees and members were evicted from their dwellings, and their furniture thrust into the streets. A year before Bishop Auckland had been made into a branch, with twenty preaching places, including Ingleton, Shildon, St. Helen's, Toft Hill, Cockfield, and Staindrop, and John Snowdon was appointed resident minister, but in the strike year the society reverted back to the mother circuit. For years struggle and difficulty were grappled with by a few, and had it not been for outside assistance, the probabilities are that the place would have had to be abandoned. New trustees were elected in 1853, and their names are full of interest:—James Wilson, Ralph Boddy, and George Calvert, all of Crook; John Dent, Benjamin Spoor, and Ferdinand Spoor, of Witton Park; John Palphraman, George Brown, and W. Wright, of Bishop Auckland. Solid progress was made; a gallery was put into the chapel in his spare time by Mr. Wright, a joiner as well as local preacher; a string band became an important feature in the services, the principal per-



formers being John Smith, John Brown, and John Robinson's three sons; and there was also what has been called the "Auckland Local Preachers' Training College," held in the farm-house of William and Nathan Race—now the Welcome Inn—where young men were encouraged to pray and exhort. John Binks, who occupies the premier position on the plan as a local preacher, whose term of labour is close upon half-a-century, and who is still hale and zealous, was one of the students.

The building of Tenters Street Chapel in 1868 was a bold step, but it was soon justified, and as the years went on improvements were effected. It had the honour of having as its first District Meeting the initial assembly of the Darlington and Stockton District in 1886. The development of the town created in the minds of the members the feeling that they ought to have a new and larger building, and during the ministry of George R. Bell, in 1900, a large site was bought at Cockton Hill. When William Younger became superintendent he suggested a more ambitious undertaking than had been at first proposed, and a stupendous forward step—church, school, lecture hall, class-rooms, etc., costing £6,734, and designed by Mr. Davidson, of Newcastle—was begun in May, 1902, and completed in October, 1903. The great thing attempted for God has been a success; and the Spoor, Anthony Heslop, N. Holden, Henry Curtis, Edward Keen, and many others, were successfully led by the brave, cultured, and popular William Younger. Whole-hearted enthusiasm still marks the service rendered in the Central Church by devoted members and ministers. When William Street Chapel was opened in 1842, the membership in Auckland was 12; on the erection of Tenters Street Chapel, in 1868, it stood at 66; when the Central Church was opened, in 1903, there were 139 members in the town, which rose to 263 in the

autumn of 1908, the two societies contributing £39 10s. to the quarterly board. Visitors from far and near have admired the church, and the new Congregational Church at Whitley Bay is one copy of it at least. The stately building accommodates 600 worshippers.

Along with other loyal spirits, fruitful service is being done in Tenters Street by the veterans John Binks and John Brown, who were connected with the society in William Street. Of those who have walked through the valley, supported by the rod and staff of the Shepherd, John Palphraman, John Robinson (affectionately called "Little Jackie," and whose wife was one of the most interesting characters in the early days), George Brown (at one time the mainstay of the society), W. Wright, and Andrew Mein and his devout wife, out of a host of others, are tenderly named for their abundant labours and fine characters.

While all this was proceeding in Auckland itself, great expansions were taking place in the surrounding country. It will have been gathered that Auckland had been made the head of a circuit. In 1847 the society was transferred from Darlington to Westgate Circuit, and in the following year formed part of the Wolsingham station, where it remained until 1871, when it received autonomy, with Charles Goodall and George A. Reilly as ministers, 27 local preachers, 13 preaching places, and 444 members. The first quarterly meeting was held at Wellington, and Ferdinand Spoor was appointed circuit steward, which office he held until his death in 1894.

Witton Park, by reason of the ironworks started there, became a place of note. Benjamin and Ferdinand Spoor went thither from Walker when they were young men, and in their lives played a commanding part in Bishop Auckland Circuit and far beyond. Another generation has worthily sustained and spread the fame

of the name, which to-day stands for much in Northern Primitive Methodism. Richard Turner and his wife, from Darlaston, and John Dent and his family, from Sunderland, were also leading figures in the young society. A chapel was soon in evidence, and these stalwarts revolutionised the place. A larger place of worship was erected in the later seventies, and many souls have been born in it. Unfortunately, the closing of the works terminated the days of opulence, but two-score and more yet bear their testimony in the village.

Witton-le-Wear, an enchanting village at the time, was amongst the places visited by the first missionaries, and not without fruit. It is noteworthy that at a powerful service conducted by F. N. Jersey, on May 12th, 1822, a young man found peace, John Snowdon by name, who went to Berwick in 1830 as a travelling preacher, and in the course of his forty years' ministry saw many hundreds of souls converted. William Littlefair and a few others were the original members of the class formed by Samuel Laister on August 10th, 1821, and the Snowdons subsequently joined them, the society holding services for a time in the house of the latter. Messrs. E. Muschamp and Co. began brickworks and coal operations at the village about 1846, and additional members were obtained. The first chapel was built four years afterwards, and in it many souls were saved. A beautiful church, costing £1,750, has been recently erected. Etherley and the district were also the scene of missionary labour by the first preachers, and were rendered famous by a mighty awakening when John Flesher and John Oxtoby were in the region in 1826. One of the trophies of redeeming grace at that time was Thomas Firbank, whose evangelistic zeal has been already referred to, and who so overcame the disadvantage of want of early instruction by the force of self-application and industry, like many thousands more of

his class, as to attain considerable proficiency in intelligence, piety, and usefulness. The chapel now at Etherley Dene was built in 1869. There is also a chapel, with a small society, at Escomb. But a vigorous community has been gathered at Toronto, which was missioned somewhere about 1861, and a fine village sanctuary is the spiritual home of the 77 members.

Hunwick, according to old plans in the possession of W. Wilkinson, of Aycliffe, was put on the Darlington plan in 1836, and in 1839 services were held at Hunwick on Sunday mornings and at New Hunwick in the evenings. Four years afterwards, however, the former was abandoned, and in the following year the latter also. The cause was re-started in 1847, but the turning point dates from a camp meeting held there in July, 1852, at which time a class of seven members was formed in the house of John Raine, Quarryburn, subsequently meeting in the house of John Tulip, butcher. After numerous "flittings," the society managed to build a chapel at New Hunwick in 1857; and the locality growing in population and the society in numbers, another chapel had to be put up eighteen years afterwards. At present there is a good society of 56 members.

#### AUCKLAND'S CHILD.

When we come to deal with Willington we have to bear in mind that it gave its name to a new circuit made from Bishop Auckland in 1906. The growth of the society in the village has been satisfactory. It had to fight hard for an entrance into the place, as well as at Sunnybrow, because of the reluctance of the chief owner to allow any other church than the Methodist New Connexion to have services there. For example, there was a class of thirty members in the village in 1848, conducted by James Wilson, of Crook, but in the following

April the colliery officials refused to "bind" any Primitive Methodists unless they joined the New Connexion. The class was thus broken up. About five years afterwards James Johnston, a native of Beckfoot, Shap, in Westmorland, and his wife arrived in the village and were soon joined by Christopher Holmes and his wife. All four were Primitives. Holmes started business, and being independent of the colliery, allowed services to be held in his kitchen. From this they went to a joiner's loft, and pentecostal seasons followed. Ralph Worrall had been previously converted, and he erected a set of stairs for this "upper room" and made a pulpit. Those were the days when C. C. McKechnie and John Atkinson were in the Wolsingham Circuit, and the word "ran and was glorified." Men and women of strong individuality and high character were converted in the joiner's loft—William Wilkins, John Mould, Jane Stones and her son Harry; George Maddison and Hannah, his wife; Ralph Henderson, of Oakenshaw, who was the first scholar in the Sunday School; and numbers more. In 1862, after some delays, a chapel was built, and here hundreds were converted under the ministry of William Clémentson, Joseph Spoor, Henry Yooll, Henry Pratt, Edward Rust, James Dawson, Thomas Southron, and many another faithful travelling and local preacher. The late Cornelius Ferguson, of Lemington; William Matthews, of Glasgow; Jonathan Baxter and his wife, of Oakenshaw; James Coughlin, the present society steward; Henry Fleming, who became a minister; J. P. Johnston, R. Guy, and G. Brown, were among the number. Over twenty years ago the present church, capable of seating nearly 500 persons, was erected, and the glory of the former house has been excelled in some respects. Other names occur of persons who have laboured zealously in this vineyard, such as T. Bottom, the Masons, Spence, and Halstead. And



James Johnston is as young in heart as ever, though in his eighty-second year.

A cause was started at Binchester in 1873, and success was immediate, a chapel soon being obtained. Thomas Stephenson, who died in 1897, after being twenty years manager of the colliery, was a man of great force of character. Converted in the old chapel in Ranters' Yard, Shildon, he became a successful missionary, and after his removal to Binchester he took an unflinching interest in all the affairs of Bishop Auckland Circuit. One day, the late Henry Pratt, hearing that the Spennymoor Circuit proposed missioning Binchester the next Sunday, went home, got his tea, and hied off to the colliery. Securing a house, he preached the same night, which was on a Thursday, and established the claim of Auckland Circuit to the place. A living church and thriving school tended to sweeten the life of the village, and the saving power was felt—in nearly every house some one or other being associated with Primitive Methodism. For years the church was famous for the glow of its services and the munificence of its members; but the closing of the colliery in the beginning of 1908 compelled the majority of the members to remove, and a blight has fallen upon the place. Fortunately, the buildings have no debt upon them. The blow, however, was a severe one to the young circuit as well as to the flourishing society. Its weight will be felt with peculiar force by Robert Russell, a respected local preacher, who has been in the village for many years.

Oakenshaw has an honoured place in the circuit, as also has Sunnybrow. At each village a new chapel has been built since the formation of the circuit, at a cost of £1,150 and £900 respectively. A fine suite of school buildings has been erected at Newfield, where a thriving institute has drawn in a number of young people.

Byers Green and Todhills maintain their loyal testimony.

There have been special visitations from on high, in addition to those named, throughout the area now covered by the two circuits. One of the grandest was about 1860, in which George Whitehead was a leading conductor, and in which John Slee and others were active workers. Some of the vilest men in Sunnybrow were converted in 1878; and in the early eighties, Joseph Ritson, the present editor, did splendidly, the societies being lifted to a high plane. During William Younger's superintendency, the membership rose from 771 to 922, and the value of the property from £9,618 to £18,768. When the circuit was divided, in 1906, the membership stood at 906, 420 being drafted to Willington and 486 retained. The income at the March quarterly meeting was £133 17s. 9d. The present income is £80, and the membership 502. The Willington income, in spite of the Binchester collapse, is over £60, and the membership is 374.

Apart from the start given to Stockton and Barnard Castle, we have seen that seven circuits are now strenuously operating in the spacious area originally traversed by the preachers of the Darlington Circuit, which was formed in 1826, with 274 members. The figures stood recently:—Darlington, 654; St. Helen's Auckland, 759; Shildon, 896; Crook (formerly Wolsingham), 698; Waterhouses, 336. Bishop Auckland, 502; Willington, 374—total, 4,219 members. Fourteen ministers serve the circuits. Great as has been the progress in mere numbers, however, the upward march in intelligence and social status and influence has been on a vaster scale, of which the numerous churches erected, and the position of trust and honour occupied by hundreds of the adherents in commercial, civic, and industrial organisations, are striking public proofs.

## CHAPTER IX.

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### “O’ER CRAG AND TORRENT.”

**I**N the early autumn of 1821, when Samuel Laister and William Evans, while discussions were going on at Darlington about the building of a chapel, went to “take” Barnard Castle, they made an easy capture of the place. Hundreds of well-behaved people listened to them, and a society of nine persons was formed on September 9th, 1821, by Laister. Such was the immediate success of these pioneers that on February 22nd, 1822, when William Clowes was there, he found 120 members. Barnard Castle then became a base for extensive missionary effort, and soon the Barnard Castle and Wolsingham branch was created. The society first worshipped in a room in Thorngate, but afterwards removed into the Gray Lane. Trials quickly beset the infant church, however, the indiscretions of a preacher named Hempson having caused a division. William Summersides was sent to superintend the circuit in 1828, and under his ministry the numbers increased, a chapel also being built. To say nothing of the Wolsingham side, the branch then included Middleton-in-Teesdale, Kendal, Brough, and Penrith, the roads being over mountains and through rough gorge, ghyll, and valley.

In a few years “the Barnard Castle men,” which would mean the men of the entire branch, acquired a reputation as being “pre-eminent labourers in a revival prayer meeting.” There were four preachers in the station in 1836, and, in order to go their rounds, it took each six weeks away from headquarters. They seldom

saw each other, except at the quarterly meeting, to reach which a journey of twenty to forty miles had to be taken on foot. At this period showers of blessing fell upon several places, including Middleton-in-Teesdale. In twelve months there was an increase of 200 in the branch, and there was more money than paid the preachers' salaries. Five years previously Hugh Bourne had an itinerary through the Dales, and he visited Middleton, Brough, and Barnard Castle, preaching to large congregations. "In this branch," he says, "there is a great spirit of prayer, and the work is in a good state." Of Middleton he says:—

"Many from this place have emigrated to America, and among the rest twenty-one of our members, seven of whom were local preachers. One of these, of the name of Raine, is now a travelling preacher among our people in America. His mother showed me a letter she had received from him, written in July last. He is stationed at Pitston, in the Pennsylvania State, and he gives a good account of the work in general in America."

After the service at Brough, Mr. Bourne narrates that he "went with Bro. Hilton to his house at Mouthlock, four miles," where a chapel had been built, and in which he preached.

In the early days Barnard Castle and Middleton camp meetings were the occasions of the year. The place of meeting was often enough away from the village or town; Swinhope Foot, Dufton Pike, Barnard Castle Moor, and Middleton Fell, witnessing many a splendid gathering in the years that are gone. "The memory of some of these magnificent meetings" (says William A. French, in a service of song, published in 1889), "supported by the presence of notable ministers, such as the gifted John Flesher, the eloquent William Sanderson, or the popular William Harland, and crowned with conversions, was a blessed inspiration to many." The two places often helped each other on the camp meeting day, and neither has yet lost its ability in open-air evangelism. Barnard Castle camp meeting is to-day of

the old order, and is looked forward to and largely attended by the people, who regard it as one of the Sabbath institutions of the summer. As a native warmly puts it :—" Then the quaint old streets and the Market Place ring again, as they have rung for eighty years or more, with the clear, resonant, far-reaching voice, which is one of the gifts of the locality, the band of brave men and women and children sing, and march as they sing, the unsurpassed battle-song of the Connexion, ' Turn to the Lord and seek salvation.' As in the old days, they are true to their training, and halt at well-known points for prayer and exhortation. The inhabitants know who they are, and forthwith an outer circle appears of interested listeners, well-dressed men and women, and men and women with bloated faces and torn garb, but all of whom listen respectfully and reverently. Hark ! Thomas Berry prays, and all know he has grip of God ; Mrs. Borrowdale leads in song, ' Depth of mercy, can there be ' ; George Elliott exhorts in fervent tones, and all impromptu. Power descends from heaven ; every breast heaves, and every eye is moist, for sincerity sweetens and makes fragrant prayer, and song, and appeal. On the camp ground a well-behaved company, including all classes and representatives from all churches in the town, assembles, and crisp, terse discourses are naturally and therefore effectively delivered. A powerful lovefeast in the chapel is held in the evening, which seldom closes without conversions."

When it ceased to be the capital of an extensive missionary territory, and after Brough, Kendal, and Middleton Circuits had been carved out of it, Barnard Castle, like all agricultural stations, suffered seriously and constantly for a generation and more from migration, and scattered up and down the Connexion are capable officials who were reared and trained in the old and historic circuit. The inevitable effect has been the



giving up of the little causes at Barningham, Ox Pasture (opened in 1850 in the house of John Dixon, who was converted in a revival at Cross Lane), Barnard Castle Moor, and Cotherston. The station has dwindled till it now consists of only two places—Barnard Castle and Boldron—with a hundred members. After much anxiety, a new chapel was built about twenty years ago in Newgate, and is one of the ornaments of the beautiful old-world town—a monument of prayer and benevolence. It is understood that the late Thomas Welford secured the land and certain favours to the trustees if they decided to purchase. His son, G. L. Welford, of Lymm and Manchester, solicitor to the Hartley College, the Primitive Methodist Insurance Company, etc., did the legal work gratis. Stalwarts like William Parker, George Graham, Charles Fieldhouse, and Thomas Welford were amongst those who took part in the erection. The latter, by his optimism, enthusiasm, and liberality, did much to give Primitive Methodism the position it holds in Barnard Castle to-day, and was four-score years old when he passed over the stream in May, 1900. And what shall be said of the family, and their work in the Connexion? Who in the whole community does not know or has not heard of John Welford, who stands in the front rank of our ministry as a preacher and administrator, owning as his tutors Thomas Southron, Andrew Latimer, and John Hallam, and who is completing (in 1909) his five years' term as General Committee Secretary? And there is William, too, who will not only be known hereafter for his dramatic experiences in the island of Fernando Po, where the Spanish Government put him in prison, but also as a successful circuit minister. A. W. Welford, another minister, is cousin to John and William. The Berrys, the Elliotts, the Borrowdales, the Coopers, White, Coates, Moore, and other families uphold now the best traditions of the

past. Mrs. Pratt and Mrs. Lynn were consecrated women in days past, and the sisterhood of to-day, in addition to those families already referred to, includes Mrs. Watson and Mrs. Marshall. That they all work and give as well as pray is shown by this small circuit of wage-earners maintaining a minister and meeting other financial liabilities.

The cholera epidemic in 1849-50 made severe incursions upon Barnard Castle society. Mr. Welford, tailor; Mr. Pratt, carpet manufacturer, and his eldest daughter; George Blenkinson, Thomas Oliver, Thomas Simpson and his wife Susannah, are named among the victims. The two latter were included in the first-fruits of Primitive Methodist toil in Barnard Castle. Simpson was an intelligent and laborious local preacher, in cases of emergency taking the rounds of travelling preachers. He was once sent to Conference. While the cholera was raging he was untiring in his attendance upon the sufferers. Eventually the scourge claimed him and his wife as its victims. Another worthy who joined the society in 1823, and died about the same time as Simpson, though not of the cholera, was Thomas Grainger, who left a small property to the society. Thomas Dalkin was also a prominent man.

It was a high time when the Sunderland District Meeting was held at Barnard Castle in 1876. In the front were Southron, Fenwick, McKechnie, Atkinson, Antliff, and Greenfield. Bastow was also there, and Drummond, Gelley, Snaith, Waite, and Saul; while the "locals" were represented by such Trojans as Davison of Dean Raw, Nightingale of North Shields, and Pickering of Newcastle. The record tells of the departure of three heroes—Sampson Turner, Moses Lupton, and Ralph Shields; and that five young men were received into the full ministry—Benjamin Moody, William Shipley, R. G. Graham, John Richardson, and Martin

Cuthbert. It will be remembered that James Jackson was superintendent of Barnard Castle Circuit when he was elected President in 1897.

“SEED DROPPED BY THE WAYSIDE.”

Upon the rugged and engaging beauty of the hills, the dells, the waterfalls of Middleton-in-Teesdale and its neighbourhood—theme of many a romance and many a song—we cannot linger. We are concerned for the moment about the fashioning of obtuse and unlovely characters into saints of God and heralds of salvation, accomplished there in a manner almost miraculous. An autumn day in 1823 was the beginning of a new era in the town and locality, when a bright and pleasant-looking man stood with others upon a mount stone, near where the Wesley Manse now stands, and published salvation for the lost. The name of Thomas Batty is enshrined in the annals of the Connexion, but nowhere does it glisten with greater lustre than in the opening days of Primitive Methodism in the dales of the Wear, the Tees, and the Eden. Upon his head as a boy had been placed the hand of the sainted William Bramwell, and from the anvil at Mapleton, near Hull, he went into the ministry, one of the earliest seals he had being no other than John Petty, so that Thomas Batty had been approved of God before he received the title of “the Apostle of Weardale.”

The formation of the Westgate branch having set Batty at liberty, Barnard Castle commissioned him to go to Brough and other places in that direction on a missionary expedition. It was when on his way thither that he “opened” Middleton. Numbers of the inhabitants were “out of the way” people, but when they knew that the strangers who sang and prayed in their streets with such liveliness and earnestness from time to time had “walked over those lonely fells, oftentimes

with weary limbs and blistered feet, to do them good, they were at least disposed to hear what they had to say." First a few of the natives were drawn to the preachers, and then to Jesus.

The original class contained some members whose names the Middleton society will never let die. Such were Thomas Watson, Cuthbert Collin, Joseph Grieves, and John Leckley, the latter of whom had also been known by the name of Golightly. They were leaders of men from the start, and at once became home missionaries. Their old companions in sin went to hear these unlettered men pray and talk about religion, and the rough Teesdale lead miners were the means of promoting a gracious work in the place. Thomas Watson was the first convert won by the Primitives in Middleton, then not long afterwards his wife found peace, and then pleasure-loving Cuthbert Collin entered into the joy of believing after a season of distress for sin and wrestling for deliverance. Watson and Collin were subsequently joined by a man who was destined for high service in the early years of the Connexion. Joseph Grieves, before his conversion, had long been the subject of religious impressions, but he became profane, a drunkard, and a poacher. The preaching and singing of the Primitive Methodist missionaries produced great mental anguish in Joseph. Hearing that a lovefeast was to be held at Westgate, he, with Watson and Collin, resolved to walk over to Weardale to attend it. In the course of the prayer meeting, he says : " The Holy Ghost went through my heart like a burning flame. I cried, ' Hold, hold, hold ! ' and attempted to stop the praying. The preacher, John Hewson, came out of the pulpit, and cried : ' Believe ! believe ! ' I shouted, ' I do believe ! ' and from that hour I never doubted my acceptance with God." Grieves, who had had the advantage of a fairly good education, was straightway used of God in bring-

ing many sons to glory. He began his ministry at home, thereafter going to Westgate, then to Alston, and then to Cornwall. At home he was a soul-winner; abroad, he was no less honoured in the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. As for Jo'h'n Leckley, who was brought to the Lord by Grieves, he became the founder of Primitive Methodism in the Western States of America.

Consecrated bands of men and women have carried on the work of God since it began in Middleton, and the savour of their names is still sweet: Raine, Race, Wearmouth, the Bells, Robert Grieves, Sedgwick, and Jackson among the immediate successors of the first members; not forgetting Mrs. Ezra Lome, Joseph Godling, John Cameron, Robert Dickinson, Joseph Walton, Joseph Kidd, John Thompson, T. P. Gowland, Jonathan Bowron, Ralph Bell, John Parmley, and John Coatsworth, men great in fervour, fidelity, and self-sacrifice. Of the men of the intermediate and present period first place must be given to John W. Allison, who went into the ministry from Lunedale, and whose sun went down while it was yet day, and when a brilliant future had just been entered upon. Then there were William Dowson, of Harwood; G. T. Tarn, who was brought up in Middleton Sunday School, and who entered the Baptist ministry; Joseph Bowron, who laboured in London and Ireland, and became a Congregational minister in America; Robert Allinson, of Forest, who is connected with the London City Mission; J. W. Robson, presently engaged as a temperance missionary in Bishop Auckland; Thomas Robson, the senior circuit steward of Sheffield Second Circuit, local preacher, class-leader, and so forth; and Jacob Scott, now in the South of England, and who was remarkable as a local preacher.

Middleton became the head of a circuit in 1876. It is claimed that the Middleton chapel, school premises,



caretaker's house, and minister's house adjoining form a block of property excelled by few places in village Methodism. And the buildings are debtless. As a matter of fact, upon all the chapels of the circuit, built at a cost of £5,870, there is only a debt of £297. The first preaching place was provided by an innkeeper, Thomas Hindmarch by name; and the foundation-stone of a chapel was laid by John Oxtoby on November 20th, 1824, which was a royal day. The town has known its times of depression, and has suffered much from migration and emigration. Nevertheless, it has witnessed occasions of power and uplift. After searchings of heart regarding the lean condition of their Zion in 1836, and having sought counsel of the Lord, the members and officials held "travelling prayer meetings" in the open-air. A great awakening followed, and in eight weeks the society rose from forty to one hundred and forty members. What the influence of that work of grace was on the lives of thoughtless—and in some instances godless—young men was illustrated in the heroic death of William Collinson, who was killed in a mine, and whose brother, the well-known Joseph Collinson, of Frosterley, was converted in the same revival. Just before the accident, William saw the danger, and, quick as thought, urged his mate to spring for his life, crying: "You are not saved!" The man had no sooner left the spot than Collinson was killed, yielding the one chance of life to the man he thought not fit to die.

In 1851 a revival at Bowlees went on for thirteen weeks. The revival of 1867 had such a commanding hold upon Middleton that services were held simultaneously in the Wesleyan and Primitive chapels, and two hundred souls professed conversion. Thomas Raine went from Mickleton to Lunedale to preach on the second Sunday of 1868, and while engaged in prayer a mighty power fell upon the place, people trembled and cried for mercy,

and for eleven successive weeks the late Henry Yooll, John E. Carmichael, Joseph Coatsworth, and others held services, through which the dale was powerfully moved, and in every house one or more were converted. John W. Allison was then brought to the Lord, and out of eighty conversions six became local preachers, four of whom were still on the plan at the beginning of 1908, forty years afterwards—J. Kipling, J. Stokeld, T. Sayer, and J. Brunskill. Many souls were converted in the dale two years afterwards through the labours of Barnabas Wild and Francis Purvis. In the early eighties the Misses Thompson had much success at Middleton and Lunedale; and in 1895 W. Swales, now a successful minister, had abundant fruit at most of the places in the circuit. At Harwood a whole family named Anderson was converted through the instrumentality of a girl. In his eagerness to get to the penitent form, her brother vaulted over the pew back. That youth is now a respected evangelist. At Forest a vicar's dancing party was broken up, and "Tom o't Deal" and Jake, his companion, led the way to the cross. Though a town of only about 2,000 inhabitants, the picturesque capital of Upper Teesdale has entertained the Darlington and Stockton District Meeting. That was in 1897, when about fifty delegates and others had to be provided with homes.

Bowlees the beautiful has its attractive story to tell. A village some three or four miles from Middleton, it has a chapel capable of seating 500 persons. How Willie Wilkinson, the sturdy and characteristic dalesman, after a course of earnest prayer, resolved to interview the Duke of Cleveland in person regarding a chapel site, how he went about the business, and how he succeeded to the chagrin of the agent, is a cherished local tradition. The first chapel was opened in January, 1846, and the little society was soon more than doubled.

The present edifice is the third. For twenty-one years Bowlees was blessed in having in Joseph Collinson an exemplary Sunday School superintendent.

Much more could be written of Lunedale (from the days of Henry Allinson and his associates), as well as of Harwood and Holwick (where great missionary meetings were held in marquees), Forest, Mickleton, Egglestone, and Lunehead. To tell of the saints who have gone from these scattered villages and hamlets to swell the chorus of the skies would be impossible. One, however, whose death took place only a few years ago—Ralph Featherstone Race—must be mentioned. Bella Race, his mother, was "a woman of a thousand," and Ralph, the earnest student, the commanding preacher, the striking personality, owed to her influence an unspeakable debt.

#### "THE ONCE NOTABLE TOWN OF BROUGH."

The entrance of Thomas Batty into Brough in the autumn of 1823 made a commotion. He commenced his campaign in the open-air, of course. A horse-block in front of a public-house was his pulpit, permission for the use of which had been granted to him by the landlady. There was a considerable assembly—the bellman had been about—and at the close of his sermon he informed his hearers that he was a Primitive Methodist missionary, and announced his object in visiting the place. A friendly woman at Brough Sowerby, a village about a mile away, entertained him for the night. His kind hostess was soon afterwards brought to God, and a society was established at her place of residence. A chapel stands in the village now.

"The gentry" offered strong opposition to the newcomer, but many souls were turned from darkness to light, and an old gentleman, William Jackson, a farmer and joiner, placed his barn at the disposal of the mis-

sionaries, for Thomas Webb was sent to assist Mr. Batty. The meetings were interrupted by several of the principal men of the town, and a rumour got afloat that if Mr. Batty attempted to preach at the Cross, on a given Sunday night, he was to be pulled down. The day arrived. At seven in the morning his spirit was refreshed at a prayer meeting, at nine he preached and led a class at Brough Sowerby, and he walked to Kirkby Stephen, where he preached and led another class in the afternoon. A bodyguard from these places accompanied him to Brough, and they were met by about a hundred persons half-a-mile out of the town. Singing one of their favourite hymns, they proceeded joyously to the appointed place. Some of their opponents were standing on the Cross, and declared that no such proceedings should be allowed there. Taking no notice of their threatenings, Mr. Batty gave, as Mr. Petty styles it, "a prudent address" on the religious privileges of Englishmen and the protection afforded by the laws of the land, showing the gratitude owing to the Government and to God on these accounts. Expecting to see the preacher hurled from the Cross, a large congregation had assembled; happily, the service terminated without disturbance. As the people were flocking from the green to the barn, where a prayer-meeting was to be held, Mr. Batty was asked to show his licence. It was produced under protest, and the gentlemen "scrutinised and fingered it, as though it had been a bank-note of doubtful antecedents and value." "Was it counterfeit or genuine? If good for Yorkshire, did it hold good for Westmorland?" "For all England," replied Mr. Batty. At this point the ire of a respectable tradesman—Mr. Langmire, a draper and a Wesleyan—was roused by this high-handed procedure. "You think to run them down, a parcel of you!" he said, hotly. "You think they are poor people, and cannot stand up for themselves; but I

have plenty of money, and I'll back them!" And he was as good as his word.

" This is to give notice, that a vestry meeting will be held this evening, at seven o'clock, to put down all midnight revelling and ranting"—thus the bellman next morning, at the instigation of the " gentry," who had held a meeting at the head inn, and decided upon a plan to stop the preacher. But the same bellman was soon " crying " the town again. This time the proclamation ran :—" This is to give notice, that the laws against tippling and riotous midnight revels at public-houses, gambling, buying and selling, and other evil practices on the Sabbath day, cursing and swearing, and other laws for suppressing vice and immorality, will be put in force, and notice duly given to churchwardens and constables, who, in case of neglect, will be presented at the Bishop's Court or Quarter Sessions." The town-folk listened, then laughed and said : " That's right ; that's right." The second proclamation was the work of Mr. Langmire and his brother, and the persecution by the " gentry " was ignominiously laughed down by the inhabitants. It is said that William Jackson and Mr. Langmire's brother gave some of the opponents a good thrashing. The Langmires were uncles of Bishop Perceval (the present Bishop of Hereford).

The vestry meeting was never held, a glorious work was done in Brough and in the surrounding country, and William Jackson joined the persecuted Primitives, and gave the land for the first chapel. The deed, which is in the possession of William Jackson's grandson, is dated April 6th, 1825, and the parties to it are—Vendors : William Jackson and Isabella Jackson, his wife. Trustees : William Raine, Thomas Snowden, Thomas Cleasby, Richard Dobson, William Dobson, Thomas Ellwood, John Dargue, Benjamin Blackett, Robert Bell (all residing at Brough or on Stainmore).



Witnesses : Joseph Weightman, James Swall. Joseph Weightman's daughter was married to the late Henry Yooll, and that witness to the signatures was therefore the grandfather of the President of 1907. A new and much more commodious sanctuary was erected in 1877. Unfortunately three years afterwards it was struck by lightning and burnt down. The energetic members, however, had it speedily rebuilt, and subsequently a good school and class-rooms were added.

As far back as 1849 Brough was made into an independent circuit, and to-day, in spite of the continuous drain occasioned by young people leaving their native dales for industrial centres at home and wider opportunities abroad, it has a network of societies extending from Spital to Tebay, a distance of 24 miles, and from Kirkby Stephen to Dufton, about 16 miles. William Fulton was the first superintendent of the circuit, and he did much for the development of Sunday School work. In the winter of 1849 and the following spring there was a great spiritual upheaval throughout the whole county, and it is estimated that 400 souls were added to the various sections of the Church of Christ in Westmorland at that time. There was another revival in 1863-4, when James Warnes was there, and the whole circuit was stimulated to a remarkable extent. In some districts the religious needs of the people are solely provided for by the Primitive Methodists. Referring to the Dale of Stainmore, William Watson (in his "By Eden's Lovely Vale," in the 1900 "Aldersgate"), says of the five places of worship there, three belong to the Primitive Methodists, "and in them will be found the greater part of the dale's worshippers. Many absentees would acknowledge themselves Primitives, just as elsewhere such people call themselves Churchmen." The sacrifices made by these leal-hearted folk in the outlying spaces are beyond all praise, and the worth of the sturdy sons

and daughters they have given to town societies is incalculable.

The well-known John Dickinson, of Middlesbrough, is a striking example of the men from the country who have kept their faith and their fervour in the crowded towns. On February 16th, 1864, he was converted at Kirkby Stephen. For several years previously the little society had met in a loft above a stable. John Dickinson (who died a few years ago), cousin of the Middlesbrough John, was the only young member at that time. Then the revival broke out, and the man who migrated eastward was converted. John Hilton, of Mouthlock, bought some cottages in the front and presented them to the society, and a new chapel was erected in 1865, the minister—James Warnes—and the young convert having a hand in the building of it. Two or three years ago, splendid premises, consisting of church, schools, lecture hall, and caretaker's house, and costing £2,200, were put up, thus showing the advance made by the society.

Isaac Bayliffe, now of Shap, was one of the founders of the Appleby society, and his son, J. B. Bayliffe, now an honoured and successful connexional evangelist, was trained in the Sunday School there. Appleby is the head of a branch, though it is a small place, and though Primitive Methodism was late in getting a footing in it. The wrecking of the chapel by the bursting of a water main, not long ago, was an unfortunate affair, but it may end in good.

George Stansfield, one of the early preachers, was journeying from Kendal to Penrith, when he was overtaken by a thunderstorm at Rownthwaite. Isabella Coupland invited him into her house for shelter, and gave him a cup of tea. That led to preaching services being held at Rownthwaite. As time went on, Tebay became the principal centre for services, George Jackson

being the leader, and a chapel was built in 1865. The second one was built exactly twenty years afterwards, and the society is numerically by far the strongest in the circuit.

Among other names which stand out in the interesting tale of this rural field of labour are Jeremiah Jackson, Brough; Stewardson Jackson, Belliker; Joseph Watson, Kaber; John Hilton, Mouthlock, and "Aunt Peggy"; George Graham, of Dufton; Mary Idle, of Milburn; and Benjamin Blackett; all of whom laboured, prayed, and gave on a scale worthy of imitation. There is still a Stewardson Jackson (son of George) in the Brough Circuit; indeed, he is the circuit steward. The local preachers are stalwarts in mind and physique; and have ably supported, as their fathers did, the many noble men who have served in the circuit as travelling preachers. It was in this circuit where James Jackson sought retirement while his silver tongue was partially silent, and it was at Kirkby Stephen that he fell on sleep on the last day of 1907.

In Brough Circuit and Appleby branch there is chapel property which cost close upon £7,500 (which will be speedily increased by a new church at Mouthlock), and the membership at the close of 1907 was 467.

#### " KITTLE " KENDAL.

Kendal was a special independent mission which Hull Circuit began in the late spring of 1822, and Francis N. Jersey, the first missionary, had immediate success in the ancient town, at Sedbergh, Cockbeck, Garsdale, and other neighbouring places. No fewer than 189 members were reported in 1823; yet, in a short time, the cause languished so much that Hull Circuit abandoned the mission for a time. Richard Cordingley, however, when he travelled in Preston Circuit, took it up again in 1829, and John Flesher must have been upon

the ground about that time, when it and Penrith were connected with the Barnard Castle branch. On the latter becoming a circuit, Kendal was its mission, and so continued until it attained circuit rank in 1857.

Kendal Circuit, as it is now constituted, has five societies—Stricklandgate (the mother church), Staveley, Beckfoot, the Memorial Hall at Fellside, and Whinfield. There is no debt on any of the chapels, and the present membership of the Circuit is 205. At the Sunderland District Meeting in 1872 it was reported that a chapel had been opened at Kendal free of debt. It was Stricklandgate Chapel, which cost over a thousand pounds, and William Fulton, the superintendent, begged over £600 himself. Many a sorrow assailed Mr. Fulton in his lifetime. Death had often visited his homestead, but at Kendal he experienced the severest visitation when his beloved partner was taken from him.

In 1860, there were three preaching places on the further side of Windermere Lake, Coniston being one of them. There was a creditable place of worship at Coniston, but, unfortunately, it became the cause of internal strife in the circuit, and the chapel and cause were abandoned. Notwithstanding the many places from which it has retired from first to last, and its great struggles, a healthier tone pervades the circuit now. In the course of the decades there have been seasons of prosperity, of course, and Kendal has supplied the church and the world with worthy sons. That which seems to have been always spoken of as “the great revival,” began in 1848, and evidently continued until 1850, the first manifestation taking place at Staveley. In the 1907 “Aldersgate”—almost sixty years afterwards—in the memoir of John Lupton Hayton, a prosperous tradesman in Carlisle, we read:—“His earlier years were associated with the late Revs. John Atkinson and John Taylor [at Staveley], the latter being his

closest companion and fellow-apprentice in wood-turning. He was converted in the great revival of 1849-50, and with Bro. Taylor was among the first of a large number of young men converted. Nine of these entered the ministry. Among the last to yield was John Atkinson." The ministers named were giants. Edward P. Almond, a local preacher, conducted the service at which Atkinson was converted, and it was the singing of the hymn, "Depth of mercy," which brought the young man to his knees. "Ned" Almond held a class at his house for the study of grammar, etc., the hour being generally 5 a.m.; and Almond, who had no qualifications as a teacher, but who was put into the chair to ask the youths questions out of the book, was dubbed "the Doctor." The names of all of those who became ministers were—James E. Balmer (U.M.F.C., late of Blackpool), Daniel Jackson (who went to Australia), John Atkinson, John Taylor, his brother William (Congregational), James Lupton, and John, George, and Jeremiah Peill. John Atkinson's son William is in the ministry in Australia, and the scholarly John Harryman Taylor, M.A., of Manchester, is the son of John Taylor.

The present Staveley Chapel was built in 1866. The cause was feeble when Matthew Taylor (the father of John and foster-father of John Atkinson) and his young wife settled there. Converted in his youth, possessing a clear voice, combined with a pleasing appearance and address, his labours as a local preacher were highly successful. The cause at Staveley grew, and it was one of the joys of his life when the beautiful village sanctuary now standing superseded the plain old meeting-house.

Beckfoot, situated about nine miles from Kendal, verging on the river Lune, has both a chapel and a house for the chapel-keeper. The last chapel built in the circuit was at Whinfield, the land for which was



given (through the good offices of Mr. R. T. Pennington, of Kendal), by Mr. Henry Goodwin, son of the late Bishop of Carlisle. Then there is the Job Pennington Memorial Mission Hall at Fellside. For many years the late Job Pennington conducted a mission in that locality, one of the poorest districts in the town, and many of the roughest characters in Kendal were drawn to the Saviour through his labours. There was a powerful work of grace at Fellside during John Atkinson's ministry in the later eighties, and most strongly did he urge the building of a mission hall at the place which should bear the name of Job Pennington. It was built in 1899, when Charles Pettler was superintendent, and the society continues to flourish. During its existence the mission has been the feeder of other churches. An extremely interesting wedding took place in the Mission Hall, on September 4th, 1907, the first ever celebrated on Fellside. It was the marriage of Job's granddaughter, a further peculiarity of the occasion being that the wedding breakfast was served in Kendal Prison, which building was bought by the bride's father a short while before from the Government authorities.

The other prominent men of the past were William Airey, William Hayes, and Thomas Hadwin; and among the present are included James Wharton, George Clayton, William Hill, Ben Thompson, Edward Ward, Thomas Farran, and C. Pickles, the circuit steward.

A story of supreme importance concerning Kendal will be given in the Carlisle narrative. Uncertain at the start, Kendal has done splendid work during its career.

#### LOVELY PENRITH.

Primitive Methodism in Penrith—lovely Penrith—has had more than the common run of vicissitudes, and many a heartache has been experienced by earnest spirits

who have laboured in the town and district so fascinating to visitors.

From the Connexional History we learn that "Penrith was taken up as a mission by Hull, and united to Kendal in 1831. Afterwards Kendal became a mission of Barnard Castle Circuit, and so continued until it attained circuit independence in 1857, while Penrith became a branch of Alston, until it, too, became a circuit in 1876." On its coming into the Sunderland District as a circuit Luke Stafford and Emerson Phillipson were stationed to it, but between its branch existence and 1876 it had been "on the missions."

While engaged in his enterprise in Carlisle and the neighbourhood in the winter of 1822, William Clowes paid visits to Penrith, and, Mr. Petty says, "preached there several times with apparent success." Seven years afterwards the founder had been there again, and a letter he wrote to John Flesher from Tunstall, dated November 17th, 1829, gives a doleful picture of the condition of affairs. He says:—

"My dear Brother,—I write to inform you relatively to the things at Penrith. After you left me that day, I went and looked at the place where our people preach. It is a room above a bakehouse, full of dirt. Besides, I could see the sky through the roof; in short, I think it a very improper place. After I had talked with the preaching woman Bessy, I found there was thirty shillings to pay by the next Thursday, or the pulpit and forms were to be sold. I saw they were worth far more money, and I concluded with Bessy that they had better beg what they could towards it, and if they fell short, she must write to me at Hull quarter day, and I would endeavour to beg something there, so that the pulpit and forms might not be sold, but might be ready to put in another place at the spring of the year, for we concluded that nothing could be done till then with Penrith. I therefore think you must give up Penrith at present, and take in Kendal, and draw up as good a plan as you can for it, and send it to the quarter day."

Whatever may have been the result of Mr. Clowes's counsel, Penrith was one of the stopping places of Hugh Bourne in his 1831 itinerary. He travelled thither from Workington by coach, arriving about seven o'clock,

“ met with Bro. Featherstone; a congregation was called, and at eight I spoke with good liberty.” That is all he says about Penrith. Nevertheless, in the earliest days of mission work in and about the town, permanent good was done. John Fairweather, who travelled in the Carlisle Circuit in 1825, made this note:—“ Attended camp meeting at Kirkoswald. Brothers Johnson and Boothman and Sister Furness appointed to speak. Some fell as if shot, and souls were saved.” Kirkoswald gave Elizabeth Allen (who became Mrs. Vernon) to the work of the ministry, and she laboured with marked success in various counties in the United Kingdom. In Scotland she was obliged always to preach in the open-air, there being no place available sufficiently large to hold the people who flocked to hear her. So great was the revival at Louth that for six months she scarcely ever retired to rest until after midnight. Thomas Batty recorded that her name was embalmed in the memory of many who sat under her ministry at Macclesfield. She died in the Ramsor Circuit, on January 8th, 1850, in her forty-seventh year.

The year following Mr. Bourne’s visit, James Laidlow, a devout man and acceptable preacher, found the hardships of the ministry too much for him, and he located at Penrith, where for eighteen years (until he was killed on the railway) he stood by the interests of the church when it was beset with difficulties. Thomas Yates speaks gratefully of the Divine favour upon the circuit in 1853, after he had laboured for eighteen months in the station with apparently little success. In the course of Penrith society’s career, after the place above the bakehouse was abandoned, a lease for twenty-one years had been taken of an old barn, and £120 had been expended in forming it into a house of prayer. Its situation was not good, and, worse still, there was a stable underneath. In 1855 few people attended the

chapel, the members were depressed, and as the lease would soon expire, they had to face the prospect of leaving the place; but "the Lord marvellously opened their way," and in two years they had a chapel built in one of the best positions in the town.

A footing was obtained in Lazenby, a village about seven miles from Penrith, by a revival in 1841. Frequent unsuccessful attempts had been made to establish a cause there until Adam Dodds re-missioned it in the year named, and a healthy village society was formed. Its success, indeed, was the perplexity of the members, for there was no place large enough to hold the congregations. Clerical influence (according to John Abbott) frustrated their efforts to secure ground on which to build a chapel for years. At length they did succeed, and a neat sanctuary was reared. Mention has been made of the sainted Adam Dodds. It was in Penrith that his promising son, James, was born, and it was in Penrith Circuit where that son began, in 1866, his short ministry of a few months.

The quiet and secluded village of Catterlen got a new chapel in 1867. It was designed by W. R. Widdowson, superintendent minister, and the achievement was altogether a great matter in the locality. Much of it was due to the liberality of Thomas Birbeck and his family, who gave the ground and a handsome donation. He was converted through the influence of his brother George, and under the ministry of William Alderson, and for twenty years preaching services had been held in his house, where the preachers were always welcomed as guests.

## CHAPTER X.

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### CARLISLE THE FRUITFUL.

**R**OMANCE clings to the Western Borders as to the Eastern. Even the origin of Primitive Methodism in Carlisle was strange and romantic. An aged woman, residing near Kendal—it ought not to be altogether impossible to get her name—was converted in 1822 under the ministry of Peter Ludlam, one of the pioneers in the Westmorland town, and she bought a copy of the “Small Hymn Book,” issued in the previous year by Hugh Bourne, of Bemersley, for the use of the people called Primitive Methodists. To her it was a treasure, and she became so consumed with a desire to share it with her brother-in-law, John Boothman, a hatter, at Carlisle, and to tell him of the wonderful doings of the “Ranters,” that she set off one summer’s day to walk forty-four miles to the Border city to place the book in his hands. What he heard delighted Boothman, and set him on fire of curiosity. He got his son-in-law, also a disciple, to go to Kendal with his kinswoman to see whether these things were so, to inquire into the modes and laws of this new sect, and to bring back a report. What James Johnson, the son-in-law, saw and learned he gave to the older man on his return, and they were led to give themselves to this people and to adopt their methods. That woman had the honour of being the first Primitive Methodist missionary to enter Carlisle, and the story will be told of her for a memorial.



With a zeal which must have astonished the easy-going citizens, the hat manufacturers named held meetings in the streets and cottages, headed on more than one occasion (according to Samuel Nettleton) by a preacher from Kendal, and crowds of people were attracted by the lively singing and unusual proceedings. During the winter, Mr. Boothman provided a room in his factory in Backhouse Walk for services. Visits were also paid to Brampton, where they were received with great favour, and many converts were made. William Clowes, while on Tyneside, heard of the Carlisle revival, and he made his way westward, beginning a month's memorable services in and around the city at Brampton, on Friday, November 1st, 1822. He preached in the house of William Lawson, a tailor, a fact of some significance, for this same William Lawson became the pioneer of Primitive Methodism in Canada. Clowes found on his arrival in the city a ready-made society of fifty-five members, and the next week at Brampton there were twenty-five to be formed into classes including William Lawson's parents as well as himself and wife. It is safe to assume that there were other members in the adjoining villages and hamlets, as, when the evangelist preached at Little Corby, on Sunday, November 10th, he found a society of four members. The first missionaries had therefore done a good work in the summer and autumn. Under Clowes the excitement rose to a great pitch, and some persecution was encountered. On December 3rd, when he set out for Hull quarterly meeting, 180 miles distant, he notes in his journal :—

“ The ground is all broken up between Hull and Carlisle. Through the mercy of God, I can preach my way from Newcastle to Hull, night after night, without intermission, on ground which I have broken up or missioned myself. During the quarter the ground has been broken up between Newcastle and Carlisle. Our (Hull) Circuit extends from Carlisle, in Cumberland, to Spurn Point, in Holderness, an extent of more than 200 miles. What is

the breadth of the circuit I cannot tell; it branches off various ways. From Carlisle the work seems to spread two ways; one towards Whitehaven, and the other towards Gretna Green, in Scotland."

A year after William Clowes visited Carlisle it was made into a circuit, and in 1824 it duly appeared on the list of stations of the newly-formed Sunderland District, with John Branfoot, William Devlin, and J. Bell as preachers. John Branfoot had a cheering report to give in 1825. The northern part of the circuit was doing particularly well, and a strong appeal had been made from some residing on the Scottish side of the Border who had been converted. "The cloud of God's presence," says Branfoot, "appears as if it would move into Scotland." Precisely a year afterwards—March, 1826—when John Coulson was superintendent, this minute was entered in the records:—"That Bro. James Johnson be called out to preach, and that he be stationed to Scotland." In the following July James Johnson began a mission in Glasgow. Three months later saw a hundred members on the roll, and a preaching room capable of seating 600 persons taken. In September, 1827, Glasgow was made a branch, and in 1829 was one of the stations of the Sunderland District. During the superintendency of John Lightfoot, in 1831, Carlisle sent Johnson, at a salary of 12/- a week, to mission Paisley, and among the first converts was a man named Daniel McKechnie, and also a girl called Bella McNair. Daniel, who was a married man, was a tower of strength in the infant church; and Bella, who was a servant in his parents' house, was used of God in singing a youth almost into the Kingdom who became the greatest man of his time in the Primitive Methodist Connexion. Here are Colin Campbell McKechnie's own words:—

"Bella McNair was a thorough Primitive—devout, zealous, and with an excellent voice for singing, which she freely used. Aware of her rare gift of song, and of its power as an instrument of usefulness, she often—I might almost say she incessantly—used it in singing the charming hymns so commonly sung by our

people in those days. Some of them were very touching—so at least I thought and felt. They acted upon my religious nature like the quickening influences of spring, and evoked in my heart strong yearnings after God and goodness. I was led to talk to Bella about her pretty hymns, and the kirk to which she belonged, and she very warmly and earnestly invited me to the services.”

Colin went, and again went. After mental struggle, he received a sense of forgiveness, and joined the society. That was in 1834. Four years afterwards—the same year in which Paisley was made a mission—he began his remarkable ministry at Ripon. How deftly Mr. Kendall, throughout his History, links this and that chain together, and in the foregoing connection he remarks :—

“Those who are interested in tracing the strange interdependence of events, may see how the aged woman, who carried the small hymn-book from Kendal to Carlisle, was an essential link in a peculiar chain of Providence, which reached to Glasgow and Paisley, and back again to Wolsingham, where C. C. McKechnie and John Atkinson met as colleagues on ground won by the North-West Mission. Had that link been missing !—but it is needless to speculate. With the plain facts of history before us, the Kendal Mission can hardly be pronounced a failure—though the history-books may say it was—since, as one of its direct and indirect results, two such shapers of the old Sunderland District were brought together.”

And what is the presentation of Glasgow and its surroundings at this hour, after eighty years of labour by zealous ambassadors, including some of the ablest men the Connexion has known, and some of whom—such as James Young, Robert Clemitson, Henry Yooll, George Parkin, Joseph Ritson, and A. J. Campbell—are, we are thankful to say, still in the vineyard, most of them producing their ripest and most abundant fruit? Thomas Robinson, of Hurlet, maintains that no district in the Connexion has made such progress, *pro rata*, in recent years, as the North British. Well, including Paisley, Motherwell, Wishaw, and Greenock, there are nine vigorous circuits in and around “the second city of the empire,” and the most enterprising and successful of them all has a Cumberland man—P. Oliphant Hirst—at its head.

Another phase of the fruitfulness of Carlisle is to be found in the West, across the seas. William Lawson and Ann, his wife, went from Brampton to Canada in 1829, and they pitched their tent in a village then commonly called "Muddy Little York," now the beautiful city of Toronto. In the old-fashioned way—singing and preaching in the open-air—they at once lifted up the banner of the Cross, and the first class was formed in their house in September, 1829. Robert Walker, "that excellent man," also from Brampton, was assistant leader, and John Elliott, another Cumberland man, was soon associated with them. In this simple way Primitive Methodism had its beginnings in British North America, and Robert Walker lived to see the union of Methodism in the colony in 1884, to which his church contributed 8,223 members and 99 travelling preachers. William Lawson became the founder of the town of Brampton, in Ontario, the name being given to it by John Elliott. Here the first Primitive Methodist Conference in Canada was held, and here also the last. Mrs. Lawson died in 1873, in her eighty-second year, and her husband followed two years afterwards, just a year succeeding the opening of Carlton Street Church, Toronto, which cost fifty thousand dollars, and of which the revered Thomas Guttery was pastor. A tablet to the memory of Mr. Lawson has been put into the chapel at the homeland village of Brampton. His descendants are numerous, and some of them have risen to high position and affluence in Canada and in the United States.

But the stalwarts at home also did a great work. At one time or another not less than 130 places in Cumberland were missioned in the early years, including Whitehaven, Penrith, and Wigton. The pedestrian feats were prodigious, and the hardships severe. "Traditions linger of preachers in the West who were glad to get potatoes and salt, and a crust; not because the members

were lacking in hospitality: they had nothing better themselves." In the stress of struggle or the pleasure of prosperity, John Lightfoot, Mary Porteus, John Parrott, Robert Lyons, Moses Lupton, Barnabas Wild, John Watson (who died "a martyr to street preaching"), John Snaith, Henry Yooll, sen., William Saul, and other worthy workers toiled during the half-century, 1832-82. Five years were spent in the Carlisle hat warehouse; then Willow Holme Chapel was built, where for over twenty years much blessing was experienced and much physical discomfort was endured. After years of well-nigh desperate financial struggles, it was sold in 1850 for less than the debt upon it. Unfriendly prophets said: "They will never get another in Carlisle." The prediction proved false, for Cecil Street Church was built and opened in two years; and the improvements and developments of this property as the years have sped have put Carlisle society into possession now of a useful and commodious suite of buildings, and the debt is nominal. During Mr. Saul's second term a revival caused it to be said: "It was then that Cecil Street first became a young people's church." Two years afterwards (1881) a further extension was made by the erection of a school-chapel in Graham Street.

Edwin Dalton's cheery optimism, strenuous exertions, and administrative skill instituted an era of prosperity in Carlisle Circuit, which has been carried forward without a break until the present time by James F. Sherman, M. P. Davison, George E. Lloyd, Daniel McKinley, and William Watson, a succession of leal-hearted, gifted spirits. The last-named is "a son of the West," a native of Stainmore, above Brough, and has now in front of him, as his circuit's centenary engagement, the raising of £1,000, in which is included the centenary chapel at Warwick Bridge, opened by Alderman Mark Harrison, Vice-President of the Conference, on Novem-



ber 12th, 1908, two days after the eighty-sixth anniversary of the founding of the society by William Clowes. For several years Warwick Bridge alternated with Little Corby as the place of meeting for the society, and eventually the members found a resting-place in "Joseph Owen's Cathedral"—a room over the village carpenter's shop—at Warwick Bridge. Powerful revivals took place, during which Matthew Smith, "a terrible man," and other notorious characters were brought to the Lord; and the village tea parties and camp meetings became famous for miles round, while for almost two years it was the largest society in the circuit, even Cecil Street having to take second place. But land could not be got for a chapel; and the stoppage of the works, removals, and other causes brought the society so low that its name eventually disappeared from the plan. In 1890, however, Messrs. Waddell and Son, cloth manufacturers, from Otterburn, took possession of the mill, preaching was resumed, and presently a church of nearly fifty members was gathered. Cranston Waddell has bravely led the people forward, and the families in the place have responded loyally to the call of God.

With affectionate sympathy, William Watson, the present superintendent, in his delightful "Centenary Souvenir of Carlisle Circuit," tells of the heroism of the dead and the fidelity of the living. Of those not hitherto named, John and Nancy Maughan, of Brampton, claim a place in our record. They did much in getting the society out of the room over the stables in the Scotch Arms Yard, and in the building of the first chapel, in which marvellous revival scenes were witnessed. The present chapel was built in 1879, and the society worshipping there is now the head of a circuit. James S. Nightingale was the first minister when Brampton was formed into a branch, and he made a good beginning:

Joseph Rutherford finished its career as an adjunct of Carlisle in 1906, and left it a circuit, with a beautiful new manse, with a trifling debt on the chapel trusts, and with healthy societies and Sunday Schools.

Than Edward Brougham, few men in East Cumberland were more highly respected. His rugged, earnest face, and big, burly frame, clad in close-fitting velvet shooting jacket, were very familiar at camp meetings; and his trenchant preaching caused the steward of an estate to say to a clergyman, who asked that a study might be added to the vicarage: "What do you want with a study? Neddy Brougham can make better sermons than yours behind the dyke backs." The hospitable Frances Reed, whose frills, when she went to the penitent form, were torn off by Nancy Maughan, is now conspicuously represented by her grandson, Thomas Reed Smith, musical enthusiast and local preacher. The young and saintly Elizabeth Routledge, of Longtown; Mr. and Mrs. Bryden, of Roadhead in Bewcastle; Deborah Hetherington, of Cumrew; John Pears, of Upperby, the founder and leader of the society in the village in 1828; Joseph Creighton and his son John, Robinson Barclay, Robert Irving, William Short, Richard and Mary Byers, of Burnriggs; Thomas Boustead, who wore his hair "in the natural manner," an efficient local preacher; William Harrison, who had an unbroken connection with the circuit for seventy years; Thomas Smith, a gentleman, a scholar, and a popular preacher; Joseph Owen, the Wilsons, and the Waddells, of Warwick Bridge; William Bell, who formed a society at Newton, on the Scottish side of the Border; Peter Fletcher, John McLennon, and John McMillan, who strove, in company with Eleanor Forrester, to keep Dalston society going; John Forrester, for whom Thomas Hetherington prayed so earnestly; the zealous William Noble, who gave the site

on which the Walton Chapel is built ; Peter Thirlwell, of Clesket, from which place Johnstone Dodd went into the ministry ; John Holmes, who repeated at Calees what William Noble did at Walton ; Thomas and Ann Atkinson, of Moral Hill, and Mr. and Mrs. Simpson, of Denton Mills ; James Hawkins and his wife Elizabeth, who nourished the society at Cummersdale before removing to Carlisle, and whose son Joseph holds a high place in the affections of the people as a minister, and is about to produce a " History of Cumberland Primitive Methodism " ; Henry Miller, a striking personality, and a man of Connexional repute ; Robert Graham and John Wilson, his friend and " fellow local " for over half-a-century ; William Foster, an ideal circuit steward, and T. V. Rutherford, one of the best known men in the district ; J. G. Atkinson, of Brampton ; Alderman Wardle, William Clark, J.P., William Matthews, J.P., Joseph Watson, M. Brown, and W. Wallace ; John W. Ladley, now of Leeds ; John C. Kilvington, one of the greatest yet named, the devoted superintendent of Cecil Street Sunday School, who has closely associated with him in his work of youthful culture John Johnstone, Benjamin Nichol, Frederick Doidge, Fred Briggs, and others. Nor can the work of Robert Dalton be forgotten, for he rendered service to Cumberland Primitive Methodism which will never die. And in addition to the ministers named who have gone from this circuit, there still remain to be mentioned Robert Harrison, an ex-President ; William J. White, who died in the third year of his ministry ; Jeremiah S. White, who was reared at Glasson ; Irving Graham, and William Rutherford.

Magnificent Carlisle ! From it men went with the evangel over an area on which eight circuits now stand—Carlisle itself, Brampton, Whitehaven, Maryport, Wigton, Workington, Cockermouth, and Penrith ; it sent out pioneers to Clydeside, around which and upon whose

banks circuits flourish in two or three Scottish counties ; and it was her sons and daughters who first raised the flag in the immense young nation in the West.

“ THE THROSTLE NEST.”

Wigton, in Cumberland, called “ The Throstle Nest of all England,” was missioned by the Carlisle Circuit as early as 1823, William Devlin, an Irishman, being the first missionary. A resident minister was placed there in another year, and three years later seven places had regular preaching services—Wigton, Bothel, Glasson, Ireby, Torpenhow, Hesket-New-Market, and Caldbeck ; but in other three years they had all been abandoned, except Glasson and Bothel. Had they possessed, like Bothel, members of the calibre of William Hogarth and his excellent wife, Elizabeth, familiarly known afterwards as Mother Hogarth, and John and Ann Barwise, there would have been no cessation of preaching services at any of them.

After Robert McCreary had gone to Wigton in 1831, the estimable Mary Porteus had the honour of re-establishing the cause in the town. In fear and trembling, this lone woman preached in the Market Square to hundreds of people. Further visits were paid, a kind friend took a school-room and engaged to pay the rent, and a society was formed. Slowly the mission grew, and the camp meetings attracted great numbers, amongst them many enthusiastic Primitives from Carlisle and elsewhere. There were men and women in the region whose individuality was most distinctive. Thomas Hogarth was one sample, Eppy Steel and Mary Scott (sisters) were others, and there were not a few more.

Wigton, Bothel, and other places were transferred to Whitehaven Circuit in 1852, and in ten years afterwards were included in the new Maryport Circuit. It was to this period that a pamphlet—“ In Memoriam, James

Scott and Mary, his wife"—refers, where it is stated that the East End of Wigton at that time needed the help of the sons of Primitive Methodism indeed, for it was noted for many miles around for drunkenness, Sabbath breaking, and evil living. A true son of God, Joseph Jopling, of Weardale, then visited Wigton. On the spot known as the "Clay Dubbs," in the East End, a strange figure walking about one day attracted the attention of John Scott, a resident in the locality. Wondering what he was after, Scott entered into conversation with him. The stranger was Joseph Jopling, who told his questioner that he would like to have a camp meeting there on the following Sunday, and asked him for the loan of one of his carts. The request was granted, and the meeting was held. Addresses were given by Tom Dobson, of Ellenborough; Alfred Hine, of Maryport; John Brown, of Prospect, and others, Mr. Jopling being the conductor. It was an impressive meeting, the result being the beginning of a series of evangelistic services in George Street, where a room had been taken. John Scott had five sons, and his second son (John) was one of the first to be converted. Being the only one of the sons who could read and write, the evangelist soon made him his "curate," to give out the hymns and read the Scriptures, Jopling showing these unlearned people that unless they repented they would perish. It was no uncommon thing to see ten or a dozen persons nightly crying for mercy; and the elder John Scott, his wife, five sons and five daughters were converted. Of these sons, James stood out prominently, and those who knew him marvelled at the tremendous change in his life and conduct.

A strong society was built up, and then a chapel was erected, James Scott and the preacher carting the stones. James and Thomas were put on the plan in 1863; and though no scholar, the former was made a



great blessing, people in many places in the circuit looking forward to the day when he was planned. On a renewal of the chapel trust in recent years the sons of James and Thomas were placed as trustees. The revival in which Mr. Jopling was the prominent agent had far-reaching effects, and many of the class of dealers to which Scott belonged have reason to be thankful for all time, such as Joseph Scott, a well-known figure in Wigton and neighbourhood; James Winter, of Dearham; Henry Miller, of Carlisle; Mr. and Mrs. Stewart, of Bothel; and Mr. Young, of the Abbey.

The East End of Wigton was truly a notorious place. It has been affirmed that, previous to Joseph Jopling's mission, it was neither prudent nor safe for a female to go to that quarter after dark. Adam Dodds and John Taylor were the ministers in Maryport Circuit when Jopling appeared on the ground. He had given up all his material interests at Frosterley, and went out with some hundreds of pounds in his pocket to mission West Cumberland. In a few years he had literally spent himself, and all he possessed in connection with his work. "The folk in the East End of Wigton," says one who laboured amongst them years afterwards, "never wearied in reciting the heroic deeds done by Mr. Jopling. How they loved him, and revered his memory! Throughout the whole of West Cumberland the two names more honoured than all others are those of Adam Dodds and Joseph Jopling. During Mr. Dodds's term new chapels were built at Wigton, Aspatria, Keswick, Crosby, Ellenborough, and other places."

Another minister, now in retirement, who knew Jopling, gives an interesting account of the man and his work. He declares that he never met with a more unworldly, devout, generous, self-sacrificing, and laborious Christian. His only concern was to seek to convert men from the error of their way. Apart

from the Bible, other books were of little account to him.

“It may be truthfully said,” remarks this witness, “that the Wigton Circuit owes its existence to the strenuous and self-denying labours of Joseph Jopling. Perhaps his greatest triumph was the conquest of the colony of potters and tinkers located at the East End of Wigton. They were a terror, not only to the people of Wigton, but to all the villages for many miles around. After their conversion, their district became the quietest part of the town, and instead of drinking, fighting, and cursing with awful oaths, prayers and singing of hymns were heard in almost all their houses. It was a real transformation.”

Mr. Jopling—of whom Adam Dodds testified, “I dare not say I have met with his equal”—made Wigton the centre of his operations, and from thence he visited Oulton, Abbey Holme, Kirkbride, Silloth, etc. James Little, farmer, Oulton Hall, became a member, opened a room for preaching, and was an ardent admirer of the evangelist. Mealsgate and Aspatria were also missioned. The work in the latter town, which had been entered several times in previous years, prospered more than in any of the others, and ultimately Aspatria became the chief place in Wigton Circuit.

Wigton attained circuit rank in 1883, and Ralph Shields, who had had charge of it three years before that, while it was a branch of Maryport, was its first superintendent. There were thirteen places, and in the four years he spent in the area the quarterly income rose from £15 10s. to £28, the membership from 153 to 228, an iron chapel was put up at Blennerhasset and almost paid for, and Silloth Chapel debt was reduced £150. At Kirkbride there was a revival in the winter of 1880, and several families joined the society, from one of which Thomas Sowerby went into the ministry.

At the beginning of 1908 there were still thirteen places on the plan, but no services were held at one of them—Harriston—and the total membership was 262. There has been a gradual decline in the Wigton society for years, though the preachers get good congregations

on the Sunday evenings. Bothel and Glasson are also low. Kirkbride, Silloth, Blennerhasset, Mealsgate, and Thursby are healthier. At the former and latter places new chapels were built in 1906. There are nine chapels in the circuit and four preaching places, the estimated value of the chapel property being £4,594, and the debt on same £796. A beautiful church was built at Aspatria in 1895; and as the superintendent has resided there for over a dozen years, a manse was put up in the town ten or eleven years ago. Aspatria is a strong church of 115 members, and the congregations are good. It is the native place of Robert H. McFarlane, who is stationed at Preston Second Circuit. T. Watson is circuit steward, and T. Holiday, circuit secretary, the other prominent officials being T. I. Davison, Wigton; J. Tate, R. Foster, T. J. Hillary, Aspatria; W. Hodgson, Prospect; J. Stormonth, Kirkbride; W. T. Armstrong, Bothel; W. Law, Silloth; J. Thompson, Brayton, W. Serginson, Allonby; and R. Little, Thursby.

#### GREAT HEARTS AND GREAT DEEDS.

Near the close of 1822, William Clowes saw that Primitive Methodism was moving in the direction of Whitehaven. Whether any prospecting visits had been made between then and the advent of William Summersides and James Johnson upon the scene is not stated, but during 1823 Carlisle sent these two missionaries to Whitehaven, thirty-eight miles from the Border city, and they met with cheering success. Clowes himself was upon the ground from August 14th until November 9th. He began at Egremont, and "discoursed with effect, and a good interest was soon established at Whitehaven, though 'the devil roared.'"

A most memorable camp meeting was held on Harris Moor, near Whitehaven, in October. As this was the

first meeting of the kind held in that part of the country, there was some stir. During the afternoon, a great number of partially intoxicated men disturbed the service, whereupon "Clowes transfixed them with his eye, and solemnly warned them that, ere twenty-four hours should pass away, many of them might be hurried into eternity." Next day there was an explosion in the pit, and many of the disturbers were killed. This startling event had such an effect upon the minds of a young man named Hugh Campbell and others that they joined the society. This "truly honest man," as Mr. Kendall styles him, became an efficient minister of the Connexion. He began his ministerial work at Hexham in 1830; he lost his life as the result of a street accident in Scarborough in 1861. But he had done great service, and was regarded as one of the conspicuous chapel-builders in the Hull District. David Beattie, too, converted at St. Bees, was one of the fruits of Clowes's mission. He also became a travelling preacher, and "was one of the earliest of that small but distinguished band which Scotland has furnished to our ministry."

Andrew Sharpe, a man of local note on account of his physical prowess, was another product of the mission. And Andrew had a grandson named John, who gained for himself a high reputation. John Sharpe entered the ministry in 1848, and seven years afterwards went out to Australia, where he spent two decades of the best part of his life. "A splendid Borderer of clear and decided convictions, held with Spartan firmness; a man of vigorous and well-stored mind," as a preacher, controversialist, and writer he takes a prominent place amongst the early labourers in the Colonies. On his return home, he travelled in various circuits for a number of years, superannuated in 1890, and died in 1895.

Another notable camp meeting was held on Harris Moor on May 23rd, 1830, conducted by William Har-

land. While a brother was preaching, he saw in the crowd the proprietor and editor of the "Whitehaven Gazette"; and thinking that his mistakes would furnish matter for ridicule in the next issue of the paper, he became nervous, for the journalist was an able man, and had held anti-Christian views. However, while a number of the leaders were gathered together in a house in the neighbourhood for refreshment after the morning service, the gentleman rushed into the room, crying: "Brethren, pray for me!" This they did, and Mr. Harland assisted the penitent to rest his soul on the atonement. In the course of the afternoon, the journalist related his conversion, publicly recanted the delusive opinions he had previously held, and urged his hearers to draw near to Christ and abide in Him for ever. "The effect was glorious," says Mr. Harland.

Trouble was caused by a deposed minister in 1824, who remained in the branch after his deposition, and tried to foment mischief. He set up a rival community, but in the end his friends forsook him, and he was compelled to quit the country. John Garner and John Oxtoby had a powerful time, notwithstanding this untoward episode, and they took a large church to worship in, called Mount Pleasant Church. It had been built as an Episcopal Church, but its consecration being refused, it fell into the hands of Dissenters, and for more than thirty years it was used by the Primitive Methodists. From 1826 to the beginning of the following year John Flesher and G. W. Armitage were in the branch, and the converting work proceeded. William Garner was there when Hugh Bourne paid his visit in 1831. The founder had a great time at Whitehaven, was particularly pleased with Harrington, and went to Distington and Workington also.

On its being made an independent station in 1840, Carlisle gave Cockermouth, Keswick, Broughton, and



other places to Whitehaven, and twelve years later a further contribution in the shape of Wigton, Bothel, etc., was made to that circuit. There was a glorious movement at Harrington in 1842, but John Parrott tells a doleful tale of the condition of the circuit in 1845, and of all that had to be done to make Mount Pleasant Church decently comfortable. A quickening succeeded, however, and as many as 130 were received into church fellowship in twenty-eight weeks. Disgraceful scenes of persecution were witnessed while Mr. Spoor was in the circuit, culminating in a rabble breaking into the chapel at Whitehaven during a watch-night service as 1852 was dawning, and the minister and many of the members were assaulted. Two of the gang were fined £5 each. In spite of the turbulence, mighty deeds were done in the name of the Lord. A band of Dearham Primitives held a camp meeting at Great Broughton, and amongst the number deeply impressed were several youths. Subsequently four of them joined a class, after Mr. Spoor had preached in a dwelling-house. Two of the four were William Graham and John Snaith—bosom friends—who became travelling preachers, and each in his own distinctive way made his impress upon the old Sunderland District. John Snaith holds the class-book in which Joseph Spoor wrote their names, and prizes it.

The services at Great Broughton were held in the house of Lancaster Todd, but in 1853 the meetings were removed to Little Broughton, where a chapel was built a few years afterwards, and where several good local preachers were raised up, one of whom is now the useful vicar of a parish near Keswick. By the recommendation of Moses Lupton, Dearham society secured Joseph Jopling to hold revival services. Dearham was stirred as it had never been before, the revival influenced every place on the plan, and in two years some ten new places were missioned. The conversions included some of the

roughest and most desperate characters, and all the preachers, itinerant and local, became revivalists. "Happy the man," exclaimed Mr. Snaith, half-a-century afterwards, "who enjoyed the honour and the privilege of living in the midst of such glorious scenes!" He recalls the names of John Oglethorpe, who went to Australia, and whose son entered the Primitive Methodist ministry there; John Thompson and his wife, Harrison Thompson, James Winter, Joseph Faulder, John and George Ritson (relatives of the poet Wordsworth), Henry Waugh, Joseph Sharpe (father of John Sharpe), Tommy Barwick, Willie Hodgson, and John Pattinson.

The arrival of Adam Dodds and John Taylor into the circuit was shortly after the advent of Joseph Jopling, and it was the coming of these men which made such a marked difference in the position of Primitive Methodism in West Cumberland. Great hearts were they, and true; and how they toiled and won the people! The circuit was divided in 1862, and Adam Dodds and John Taylor went into the new (Maryport) Circuit. Whitehaven was again divided in 1884, Workington becoming the head of the new station, with Joseph Hawkins as superintendent. Egremont was permanently established while John Sharpe and John Moffatt were in the Whitehaven Circuit about 1875, in which work Thomas Gilbertson rendered great help. Egremont was the native place of Isaac Nicholson, who attained a good social position and popularity as a local preacher in Tunstall Circuit.

Of the nine places on the plan, Cleator Moor holds second position in importance. The late Henry Robinson was an inspiring spirit in what was a little society when he entered the village. Now it is vigorous. C. T. Kearton, the circuit steward, lives there, and his fellow-labourers in the circuit include J. Jenkinson, W. Rowe, W. T. Lucas, E. Hunter, Whitehaven; Mr. Williamson and W. Stewart, of Frizington. where there

is a healthy society ; W. M. Peterell, Asby ; C. M. Skillicorn, Moresby Parks ; I. Watson, Egremont ; R. Shaw, St. Bees ; and W. Teare and W. Batson, Cleator Moor. The membership of the circuit reaches 365.

#### WAVES OF POWER.

An extraordinary—indeed prophetic—circumstance took place in Maryport Chapel in 1848. Moses Lupton was conducting a lovefeast after a camp meeting, and he related a dream he had had before coming to the circuit (Whitehaven then), to the effect that a very great revival of religion would spread all over his new station. The manifestations in that lovefeast were remarkable in the extreme ; the influence was overpowering, and the scenes in the prayer meeting were indescribable. People in the streets were amazed. Mr. Lupton's dream came to pass, though he had little active part in its fulfilment, as he had soon to leave the circuit to take up his duties as General Missionary Secretary. Joseph Jopling, Adam Dodds, and John Taylor were the principal agents used in the reformation.

These men made the formation of Maryport Circuit possible in 1862 ; and it is not too much to say that Matthew Johnson, and following him Ralph Shields, made the independence of Cockermouth possible in 1893. One of the first to visit Maryport as a mission place was Mary Ridley, who was put on the Whitehaven plan in 1831, when she was sixteen years of age, was one of the forefront evangelists in the North for many years, and died at Prospect in 1892, aged 77. Henry Golightly joined hands with his friend Mr. White in the society in 1837, and largely through these two men a chapel was built. Golightly was the most active man in the society of his time ; a man of influence outside, and universally esteemed. Henry Johnson, a vicious man before his conversion, was also a force at the time in evangelistic

work. As recently as January 20th, 1908, one who had served West Cumberland with sturdy fidelity and ability as a local preacher for nearly half-a-century passed away at South Shields in the person of Isaac Mossop, father-in-law of Matthew T. Pickering. His devotion and that of his wife to the institutions of Maryport Church was deep because it had its springs in love; and this hospitable couple were pillars in the society when friends were vastly fewer than they are to-day.

Crosby Chapel was built in 1861; and thereby hangs a tale which, to be adequately appreciated, can only be told at a length which cannot be attempted here. Publicans, farmers, the clergyman, and others were in opposition to the few members in the village. But the latter were men and women of grit, such as Joseph Banks and his wife (parents of Mrs. Ralph Shields), John McDowall, J. Robinson, R. Tiffin, J. Ravell, W. Burns, R. Sharp, Grace Bowes, and Margaret Ferguson, referring to whom John Graham (1), who went into the itinerant ranks from Crosby, and who has spent forty fruitful years therein, says:—"They stand out in my memory as the godly men and women who moulded my life for all time and eternity." A member bought some cottages and ground secretly, and though the opponents carried their resistance to the length of having a gentleman brought from London to contest a boundary question, the chapel people won. On the day when the foundation-stones were laid a farmer drove a herd of cattle among the company gathered for the ceremony, and during the building of the edifice continuous threats were made that the walls would be pulled down. The chapel became a centre of religious life and work in the village, and during the years 1865-70 the society was in a highly flourishing condition. Far and wide the children and youths of those days are scattered, carrying with them the sacred deposit which they received in Crosby

Chapel. Mention has been made of Mr. Graham. There was another ambassador—Adjutant Fenny, of the Salvation Army.

One of the most phenomenal revival movements of modern times took place at Ellenborough in 1905. In the January, R. Crewdson, the superintendent minister, began a series of evangelistic services in the village. Immediately the people flocked to the services, and so dense did the crowd become that the preacher, having forced his way into the pulpit, was unable to sit or leave it for hours. Traps, cycles, and motors brought numbers nightly from distant places; and while services were going on in the chapel, open-air meetings were held, and from eight to twelve cottage meetings were proceeding at the same time. Every household was gripped by the mighty impulse, every church was quickened, men who had lived ungodly lives were in such distress about their souls that they could not work, and something like 350 persons professed conversion. "Probably few villages in Wales, about which so much has been said and written lately, could at all compare with Ellenborough in the matter of reformed lives." That is the testimony of a gossip writer in the "Carlisle Express." A chapel was built at Ellenborough in 1861, and it was a great event then, but the material manifestation of the 1905 spiritual uplift is a new and handsome church, opened in the summer of 1907, and the visible sign of the acceptance by God of the people's gift has been the salvation of souls within the new sanctuary. Few men rejoiced more greatly at the marvels God had wrought at Ellenborough than George Fawcett, now ministering in the Gateshead First Circuit, for Ellenborough is his native place.

Maryport, amongst other places, was strongly moved by the Ellenborough revival, and in November, 1905, wonderful scenes were witnessed there during a mission.



Workers from Ellenborough, Prospect, Flimby (at which there was also a gracious work), Aspatria, Crosby, and even Keswick surrounded the missionary (Mr. Crewdson), and over 200, some of them from the lowest depths of Maryport, sought pardon. One night a man was at the communion rail who was said to have been the finest musician in Cumberland, but who had become so utterly degraded that even the publicans dared not supply him with drink, and no lodging-house would take him in. All this was an ethical work. Lives were reformed, homes were made beautiful, and debts were paid. Some of the converts have become local preachers, and one of them prepared himself for entering the ministry.

Reference to Flimby brings into view the devoted labour of William Wilkinson, through whom the village was re-missioned in 1859. A revival followed, a cheerful society was gathered, and a chapel built in three years. Wilkinson was at the front of it all, and his reward has been the beautifying of many a life in the village sanctuary as the years have gone.

#### THE AWAKENING OF COCKERMOUTH.

Cockermouth was missioned by John Parrott in 1834. He preached in the Market Place, and subsequently a camp meeting was held on Papcastle Common by the Carlisle preachers, and the lovefeast was held in the old Theatre, at the Sun Barn. There is a minute in the Carlisle records of September, 1835, authorising the taking of a room at Cockermouth, and it is presumed to be the rented room in St. Helen's Street, which was the meeting place for some years, after which a room was taken at Vinegar Hill. When the Wesleyans vacated High Sand Lane Chapel, the Primitives rented it, ultimately buying it. For almost fifty years they remained in this old sanctuary, in a yard, down a lane.

Multitudes were converted in it from time to time, but the character and situation of the building caused most of them to drift to other churches. "We literally fed the other churches of the town," says one who knows.

A commanding work of grace took place there in 1882, which produced a revolution, and which is talked of until this day with fervour. Hitherto, probationers had never stopped longer than one or two years. Matthew Johnson, of poetic soul and literary gifts, combined with evangelistic fervour, was in his fourth year when he arrived. He remained five years. Previous to the beginning of the revival, Cocker-mouth had twenty-five members, and contributed £3 10s. to the quarterly meeting. Downcast and terribly anxious, the young probationer determined that something must be done. Eventually it was agreed that Mr. Johnson should try a week's special services. Assistance was obtained from Maryport and Little Broughton, and the campaign opened on Monday, October 23rd, 1882, with a street procession, led by a brother who could play a concertina. Byers, Irving, Tunstall, and other Broughton stalwarts, together with the minister, gave exhortations and invitations to the chapel on the way. For seven weeks this went on night after night. It was a new thing in Cocker-mouth. At the start the chapel was well filled, and then became crowded. Conversions began, curiosity was awakened amongst all classes in the town, standing room could not be found, and shoals were swept into the Kingdom. "What a fervour marked everything—singing, praying, speaking!" remarks Mr. Johnson, as he recalls the scenes of a quarter of a century ago:—

"I see them yet as they were then. Old George Ritson, beginning to pray on his knees, but before he was finished he had been all his length on the floor, his great voice bellowing out, 'Glory be to God!' and other ejaculations. Dear old Harry Williamson, an ex-Presbyterian (father of Mrs. Robert Gillender), did good service; and John Clark, the 'father' of the church, with his great frame and woman's heart and modesty, who had

stuck to the cause through all its ups and downs, the beloved of the Sunday scholars. The few younger men there were also worked well; and the processions increased in number and in power, and soon the town and district were stirred as they had not been within living memory. Some young men from Maryport did splendidly. Everybody was willing to speak outside or in. Converts secured on the Sunday were found exhorting on the Monday. The converts were of all ages, and all churches benefited, including the Church of England. It was hard work, but how blessed! Numerically and financially Cockermouth became first in the circuit. We got the young men on to the plan as soon as possible, and one of them, J. E. Metcalf, went out as a minister to New South Wales, and is doing good work."

As an evidence of the public regard the Primitives had now won, several members of the Society of Friends and two Churchmen (Canon Hoskins and Mr. W. L. Alexander), magistrates, contributed to the funds and bore public testimony to the value of the work Mr. Johnson had pioneered so well. As it became an absolute necessity, Mr. Johnson set in operation means to secure a new chapel. Circumstances arose, however, which prevented his completing the work he started. Happily, he was succeeded by Ralph Shields, who readily took up the task, got possession of the solidly-built old National Schools in New Street, and transformed them into a nice chapel and schoolroom. The last instalment of the debt was paid in 1907, during the superintendency of Joseph Hawkins, and the building further improved.

Cockermouth Circuit, created, as has been stated, in 1893, includes Cockermouth, Dearham, Little Broughton, Blindcrake, Broughton Moor, and Keswick societies. In addition to what has already been said about Broughton, it may be stated that when Sir Francis Vane, Bart., opened the fine new school there on November 12th, 1908, he paid a fine tribute to Primitive Methodist achievement in the neighbourhood, naming in this connection Adam Dodds, John Taylor, Mrs. Thomas Graham, John Snaith, William Graham, and others. It is interesting to add that Mr. Snaith, now residing in Nottingham, preached the opening sermon.

With a bold vagueness, it has been stated that "Keswick was missioned by the Primitive Methodists somewhere between 1835 and 1840." In point of fact, John Parrott preached at Keswick in 1834, before going to "open" Cocker mouth; and when he, Lyons, and Barrett held the camp meeting on Papcastle Common, they were "aided by members from Keswick," so that there must have been an enthusiastic society at the famous resort in that year. At the close of 1835 a young preacher was working Keswick, and in the following year it was reported to be in an excellent condition. A couple named William and Ann White are specially mentioned as having rendered excellent service, and they had the joy of seeing their large family of eleven all converted, and three of their sons become preachers. On their removal in 1837, the church suffered a severe reverse. Joseph Martindale, of Shildon, can remember the early years of Keswick society, going to the meetings with his mother. He speaks of the stir the missionaries made in the open-air, and the lively services in an upper room in an off street, and the class meetings in the house of Thomas Martindale, in Banks' Yard. Joseph Jopling, in the early sixties, began his successful mission in a room over a stable in Head's Lane, and in that mission was laid the foundation of the society as it exists to-day. The loft was not suitable, and Jopling announced that a chapel would be built. And built it was, the evangelist being one of the largest subscribers. Some years afterwards a Sunday School was also erected. The Birkbeck family (to whom the Greta Pencil Works belong), the Wilson family, the Watsons, the Robinsons, the Elliots, the Cullings, the Weightmans, the Capes, the Wallaces, the Peels, the Telfords, Black, Miller, Knowles, Ferguson, Park, Havelburgh, Mrs. Walker, Miss Brown, and other past and present members and officials have striven nobly for the maintenance

of Primitive Methodist testimony in charming Keswick. There is one other yet to name—and it is hoped that ere this history is finished it will be shown what manner of man he is—Thomas Carrick, J.P., who has been a pioneer preacher, a successful business man, a man of culture in the broadest sense, of high ideals and noble character. He has been a tower of strength to the society since he went to Keswick. Now an octogenarian, may it yet be long ere his sun sets.

#### A NURSERY FOR PREACHERS.

Local, and probably accurate, tradition says the first Primitive Methodist missionary to enter Workington was William Summersides, early in 1823. Somebody must have been at work in the town, for William Clowes gave tickets of membership to thirty persons in November, 1823. With Whitehaven it has shared the ministrations of many of the well-known men in the Connexion from the opening until more recent years—William Clowes, John Flesher, John Oxtoby, John and William Garner, William Harland, Thomas Greenfield, Moses Lupton, Joseph Spoor, William Fulton, Adam Dodds, John Taylor, Henry Yooll, sen., John Day Thompson, William Jackson, and M. P. Davison. Hugh Bourne paid a visit to the place in 1831. After attending a lovefeast at Distington, “led by Bro. Lister, from Workington,” in all probability a local preacher, Mr. Bourne preached in the chapel at Workington to a large congregation, and had a good time. The founder was pleased with the “beautiful seaport town.”

Mr. Summersides had evidently frequently been at Workington, for he attended a camp meeting there in 1825, when “the word made a slaughter among the people,” and between twenty and thirty professed to enter into the liberty of the children of God at the lovefeast. Then again his name is to be found in the list



of the original chapel trustees in 1827. The first preaching place in Workington was a room in William Street, but the members soon "flitted" to a warehouse, at the corner of Ritson Street and North Street. Land was secured in 1827, the trustees being George Litster, Jonathan Musgrave, Joseph Sharpe, Hugh Campbell (afterwards a minister), Andrew Smith, Richard Moor, William Graham, Joseph Dand, John Graham, Henry Robinson, and William Summersides, itinerant preacher. As Francis Richardson, from whose booklet useful information has been got, observes: "The building of this first chapel was an important event, and was taken up with commendable earnestness and rare self-sacrifice. Women, who had given all the money they could, carried cobble stones from the shore to build its foundation and walls. The chapel itself was a plain but substantial structure, and is said to have cost nearly £900. This was a large sum of money for those early days, and we are not surprised to find that the financial burden was heavy for many years." A school was opened in 1841, Mr. Rodgers being the first superintendent, and Miss Helme, a faithful spirit, the first teacher.

In 1882-3 the present John Street Church and schools were built, costing £1,912; an infant school-room was added in 1891, incurring a further expenditure of £123; and in Mr. Richardson's term alterations were made costing £450 (all paid), a new organ was put in (£160 of the £300 raised), and £212 10s. taken off the chapel debt. Corporation Road school-chapel was erected at the same time, and £320 of the cost (£500) met. Harrington chapel debt was reduced £263 10s., and a second-hand organ was put in, costing £62, which was paid.

Joseph Hawkins was the first superintendent of the station, formed in 1884, the circuit town having added to it the societies at Harrington and Distington. In

that year the total membership was 125. Mr. Hawkins enjoyed much prosperity, and was followed by John Vaughan, during whose ministry a mission was opened in Gladstone Street, which ultimately became the Corporation Road society. Preaching services were commenced at Pica, and a new chapel built at Harrington, in the early nineties, at which time Thomas Barnes (who afterwards entered the ministry) was engaged as hired local preacher, Albert Hebblethwaite, B.D., being superintendent. The latter was succeeded by Robert Pattinson, and then Fred Firth, B.A., followed, who laboured successfully in the circuit for five years, that being a record term. A second preacher was eventually called out. In 1896 a seven weeks' mission in the circuit resulted in over seventy persons professing conversion.

Francis Richardson entered the circuit in 1900, and his success was on a big scale. In the September of that year services were commenced at Lowca; in the following year Corporation Street Chapel was built, and John Street Church saw considerable prosperity in all its institutions. Quickened by the reports of the Welsh revival, an intense longing for saving power took possession of the religious leaders in Workington in the early winter of 1904, and a baptism fell upon the watch-night services held in four or five churches in the town. A meeting of the Free Church ministers was held, and united prayer meetings were arranged. Attendances increased nightly, conversions began, and the meetings were continued for fourteen weeks, midnight meetings taking place on the Saturday and Sunday nights. Crowds of drunkards were sobered by the power of the Holy Ghost; women were saved from a life of shame; slums, which had rung with oaths and the brawling of fighting men and women, resounded with songs of praise; men and women who were well known to the magistrates, and regarded by them and by the police as

hopeless cases, were soundly converted; and at the end of fourteen weeks it was found that over 350 persons had professed to obtain salvation, and that over 500 temperance pledges had been taken. The Primitives received 120 new members, and other churches shared in proportion, while Maryport and Whitehaven also benefited. All the ministers of the town took part in the work.

The men at the front in the circuit include Samuel Kennaugh, circuit steward; the generous Lancelot Ferguson; Edmund Burrow, the devoted school superintendent; Jacob S. Sloan, a model society steward; Peter Flint, whose services and sacrifices are recorded on high, and John S. Beattie. At Harrington, "dear old Thomas Rutherford, with his snow-white head and smiling face, loved his chapel passionately," and Robert Quayle watched over all the interests of the church. Distington village, midway between Workington and Whitehaven, has given three men to the ministry: John Sharpe (1), who, after serving several circuits at home in the thirties, went to America; John Sharpe (2), the Australian missionary; and John Harryman Dixon, who went to Appleby in 1904. Mrs. Stalker is far and away the most prominent personage in the society at Distington, and holds all the principal offices.

John E. Carmichael went into the ministry from Workington, but failing health compelled him to relinquish a work for which he was conspicuously fitted. He has been of much service to his home circuit since he went back to business. William H. Wright, who went out in 1899; William Woodward, in 1902; John Newton Claque, in 1905; Joseph Henderson and William H. Richardson, in 1907, were all associated with Workington Circuit. From first to last the land occupied by the original Carlisle Circuit has done well in providing the Connexion with ambassadors of the truth.

## CHAPTER XI.

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### THE GLORIOUS DALES.

**G**LORIOUS in physical ruggedness, rising at times to grandeur, Weardale, Nentdale, and Upper Tynedale, together with Alston Moor, have been glorious in spiritual force and beauty. Both the spiritual and physical aspects of the territory are attractive, but our limitations forbid an excursion among the heather-clad hills, the naked scaws, the wooded bluffs, the brawling falls, the sylvan glens, the expansive fells, and the floral-decked banks of the streams; or to narrate the weird tales and romantic traditions of a sterner day.

And the people! An engaging theme for the physiologist and psychologist: the physique, cast of mind, temperament, and habits of the pure Dalesman. W. D. Judson ("Aldersgate," 1902) declares that one of the most representative Dalesmen living says: "We are as much Scotch as they are in Fifeshire." The fact that Weardale at one time formed part of Strathclyde; the prevalence of Scotch names, words, and phrases; the mental and spiritual characteristics of the natives—all spell Caledonia. We agree with Mr. Kendall that John Wenn hit upon a happy description of Northmen, and especially of Dalesmen, when he spoke of them as being "anthracite in temperament." "Northerners," continues Mr. Wenn, "are not exactly comparable to carpenters' shavings, soon alight and quickly extinguished; rather do they resemble anthracite in the slowness of its combustion and the retention of its heat . . . capable

of sustained religious fervour could they but once be kindled." And kindled they have been from generation to generation since George Lazenby, Jane Ansdale, Anthony Race, F. N. Jersey, Thomas Batty, John Oxtoby, and others "travailed in birth for souls" in the highlands of Durham, Cumberland, and Northumberland. Volumes could be written on several topics hinted at.

It may very easily have been that there were other Primitive Methodist missionaries in the Dales before October, 1821, when George Lazenby preached in a joiner's shop at Stanhope, or that some of the natives had been converted elsewhere and published the tidings at home. So far we have found no clear evidence of that; but the initial step taken by Lazenby was followed up, as William Clowes, when on his way to North Shields in the March of 1822, found seventeen members at Stanhope. The society is stated to have been formed in November, 1821, "John Dover Muschamp, William Willis and Jane Burns being among the first members." Now, Mr. Muschamp, of Brotherlee, a man of standing in the Dale, was converted under Jane Ansdale, and it is likely that his membership did not start until the middle of 1822. He was drawn by curiosity to Westgate to hear the female evangelist, and he was stricken in conscience. Subsequently, he attended a camp meeting at Stanhope, and stood bareheaded under the hot sun as the word was preached, and he experienced healing and forgiveness in his room that night. Immediately thereafter he and Mrs. Muschamp gave themselves heart and soul to the new cause. The first recorded camp meeting at Stanhope took place on Crawley Fell, July 14th, 1822, four months after William Clowes had directed "Bro. Jersey to take up Westgate." Regarding the first revival, one writer claims that "much of the harvest reaped in Weardale was the result of the seed



sown by Jane Ansdale." Of course, Thomas Batty, to whom has been accorded the title of "Apostle of Wear-dale," has the premier place among the pioneers of that district. Mr. Kendall justly remarks: "What makes the title 'apostle' as applied to him so eminently appropriate is the fact that, in the preparatory stages and in the conduct of the revival, we see concentrated and embodied in Thomas Batty the very spirit of the revival."

The genuineness of John Dover Muschamp's attachment to Primitive Methodism was apparent to all. He was specially helpful to the Westgate society by fitting up a barn for the services, and also when the first chapel was built in 1824, as will be seen in the account given in the Connexional History:—

"The land for the site was given, and the miners in their spare time cheerfully assisted in the erection. Mr. Muschamp might be seen hard at work among the rest. Thirty days he devoted to stone-getting or walling, and twenty to soliciting subscriptions. But presently the work was brought to a stand. It was alleged that the stones in the bed of the burn served to break the force of the 'spate,' and that their removal would endanger the bridge; hence the person in charge of the bridges of the district issued his prohibition against the taking out of any more stones for chapel-building purposes. In some way the matter came under discussion before certain magistrates and gentlemen at Durham. 'Who are these Ranters?' was the very natural inquiry. Some one well informed as to the facts of the case, and well disposed, too, it seems, stated what had been the moral effects of the entry of Primitive Methodists into the Dale, especially in having done more to put a stop to poaching than gamekeepers, magistrates, and prisons together had been able to effect. On hearing this, permission to take as many stones from the bed of the burn as might be necessary to complete the chapel was readily granted."

There is another story in regard to this incident, which represents that the bailiff, who had stopped the stone-taking from the burn, had heard that Johnny Oxtoby was praying about the matter, and became so concerned that he asked one of the members to tell Oxtoby that he would not interfere in future. But as the chapel was opened on April 4th, 1824, and as Oxtoby did not reach Westgate until October 2nd of that year, the authenticity of the latter story is hopelessly destroyed.

Mr. Muschamp was circuit steward and chapel treasurer for thirty years, dying in 1858, at Brotherlee, on the small family estate, where he had lived for eighty-three years. During his lifetime he saw his son Emerson rise to prominence and usefulness in the Connexion, and pass away at Redgate House, Wolsingham, in 1849. There were "fallings" in the cottage prayer meeting, conducted by John Oxtoby, that night when Emerson was converted; and whatever may be said about the extraordinary scenes, the life of Emerson Muschamp as a fervent youth, as a commercial man of integrity in Sunderland, as a politician of progressive ideas, and as a cultured gentleman, showed the actuality of the change he had undergone. He was secretary of the 1848 Conference at Leeds, and was then appointed one of the auditors of the Connexion. He spent the last day or two of his life in the work of that office in London, returning home to expire in the bosom of his family. With numbers more, who lived worthily, John Kirk, a native of Windyside, was brought to a concern about his soul in the same class of meetings, and was compelled to kneel down behind a hedge to pray. John had been a drinker, and he often remarked that his "besetting sin hurried him to the verge of hell." He became a useful servant of Jesus Christ, and did much to establish a society (Castleside, near Consett), which has had a remarkably prosperous career.

#### MAJESTIC SWEEP OF CONQUERING GRACE.

It was some time after his arrival in Weardale before Thomas Batty saw the arm of the Lord made bare in any marked degree. He passed through bitter nights and laborious days, and he seemed to be spending his strength for naught. Crowds attended the services, but they could not be got to join the societies. There was one night of awful depression. At that time Joseph

Walton, leader of the first class formed at Westgate in May, 1822, and one of the mightiest men in the opening era, was fully in the fray, and Batty had returned to the leader's house from what seemed to have been a fruitless service at Ireshopeburn. The preacher had waded through snow, slush, and water, and was "in extreme gloom of soul." He could not speak to Joseph; he "could only sigh, and groan, and weep," so deep was his distress. At last he told his host that if he could not succeed soon, he would have to leave. Walton replied that he must try a little longer, and he was cheered by the conversation they had. A man who kept a tollgate between St. John's Chapel and Prize, with whom Batty lodged one night, also comforted him. The tollgate-keeper was not at that time converted, yet he said:—"If you will come and preach about here every night for a week, you will soon have a hundred people in society. . . . You do not know the people as well as I do; they often stop and talk with me at the gate." The man declared: "The whole country is under convictions." Batty took the tollgate-keeper's advice, and the prophecy was fulfilled.

Ireshopeburn preaching place had been closed to the missionaries, but they soon had the choice of other two, as Anthony Race had said they would; and when Batty went to preach at Low Rigg, he found the congregation too large to be accommodated in the house, so he preached in the open-air. Before he had been speaking a quarter of an hour, "a person fell down under the word, and cried for mercy. He was carried into the house, and a mighty prayer meeting commenced." A small society was formed that night, and the revival started. The magnitude of it may be gathered from the numerical returns of the branch for 1823. In March, when the revival began, there were 219 members on the roll; 308 were reported in June; in September the num-

ber had more than doubled, being 625 ; and in December, when there were five preachers on the ground, 846 members were reported, having multiplied almost fourfold in nine months. In the following quarters further substantial increases were reported, and Mr. Muschamp might well say to Mr. Batty : " I think all the people in Weardale are going to be Ranters."

Apart from the Stanhope assembly in 1822, it is stated that the first camp meeting in the neighbourhood of Westgate took place in June, 1823. For weeks before the weather had been unsettled, but Batty had " got into faith," and in one of his prayers had said, with confidence : " Lord, we shall have a fine day." The report of this prayer spread for miles ; some said it was blasphemy, others hoped it would rain, " but many believed in the Lord." Joseph Walton was very anxious about it. " Now, Thomas," he said, " you rise or fall with this camp meeting. If it be a fine day, you will rise ; if it be a wet day, you will fall in the estimation of the public." Batty replied : " Let the Lord see to that." It rained until the Thursday afternoon, but on the Sunday there was not a cloud to be seen until towards night. Great multitudes attended the camp meeting, the preachers being Emerson, Batty, Young, and Anthony Race. Eleven souls professed to find liberty in the lovefeast. A violent storm broke over the dale that night, and the Wear and its tributaries became so swollen that many persons were prevented from going to their work next morning.

As illustrative of the eagerness of the people to hear the gospel at this period, Mr. Kendall gives an incident which occurred at Wellhope. To economise every inch of available space in the room, all the tables and chairs, except one for the preacher to stand upon, were removed,

" and then some stalwart miner would come forward, and stand with his back to the preacher, so that he—the preacher—might

find support by resting his arms on the man's shoulders. There was competition for the honour of fulfilling this office; and who shall say that such a living reading-desk was not as pleasing in God's sight as the eagle lectern of polished brass?"

The intensity of the feeling prevailing amongst the dales-folk is further shown by the miles some of them walked to attend a lovefeast, even in the winter time, and over a mountainous country. Two young men tramped nine miles to Westgate to get their souls saved, on November 9th, 1823, and were among twenty-six mourning souls in a ring that day. Batty afterwards preached in the place where they came from, and soon "a blessed work broke out there." November 10th, at Prize, was a night to be remembered, Batty says. Ten souls were converted, and "it was near twelve o'clock when we broke up."

#### "PRAYING JOHNNY."

After the revival had spread to Nenthead and other places in that direction, Westgate was detached from Barnard Castle, of which branch it had been part, and made a separate section of Hull Circuit. That was in 1824, John Hewson being the superintendent, and George Whitfield Armitage the junior minister. In a few months John Oxtoby ("Praying Johnny") was added to the staff, and the revival got a fresh impulse. Another phase was given to the work: the sanctification of believers as a definite work of grace was now a prominent feature of the revival, as well as the conversion of sinners. "Praying Johnny"—a remarkable servant of God—was the apostle of this new phase. Originally from Warter (Yorkshire), he was vicious in conduct and foul in speech until he was thirty-seven years of age; but in 1804, by the work of the Holy Spirit, he saw his lost condition, and "hell from beneath appeared as if open to receive him." Confessing his sins, crying aloud for mercy, and exercising faith in the Saviour, he



received forgiveness. He regularly thereafter visited every house in the village, and when it became necessary to build a chapel, he gave the land and £10. He and another also visited various places around, exhorting the people to flee from the wrath to come. In 1819 he became the right-hand man of William Clowes at Hull, and a few years afterwards was regularly employed as a travelling preacher. He was a man of extremely slender abilities, of little or no education, very provincial in his dialect, and in his attire a rustic of the rustics; yet his "unaffected address, plain faithfulness, engaging simplicity, and devotedness to the work of Him that sent him," endeared him to the people, and his prayerfulness, consuming zeal, and faith made him one of the greatest of the pioneers of Primitive Methodism. Men who worked with him, lived with him, overlooked his weaknesses and incongruities, and spoke with warmth of the way in which he was used in bringing believers to realise the higher altitudes of the salvation of God and in bringing sinners to repentance, even the irreligious confessing that no man could speak and act as he did except God was eminently with him.

From the day Johnny Oxtoby entered the Dales, signs and wonders accompanied his ministry. On the second day after his arrival at Westgate, an extraordinary display of saving power occurred at Swinhope Burn—the meeting in which Emerson Muschamp was converted—and two days afterwards he was at Hunshalford. "Held a fellowship meeting; three or four were sanctified wholly, and eight justified." That is all John says about the occasion in his journal; but George W. Armitage, who accompanied him, gives a full and glowing description of the service:—

"While many spoke of the goodness of God, a mighty power came down. It struck one (a believer) speechless; two others fell to the floor in great agonies, and rose praising God for what they felt. Another man began to pray for a clean heart, which he

received; and soon after he was so filled with the perfect love of God that he jumped up and down, shouting 'Glory!' with all his might. His countenance testified the reality of what he professed—he was indeed extremely happy. Sinners then began to tremble before God, and presently five or six fell down and cried for mercy. . . . That was truly the beginning of good days. . . . The members grew in faith, and, when they began to pray the power came down, and frequently struck one and then another down, till sometimes six or eight lay on the floor together."

What took place at Hunshalford became a common scene, and the matter got noised abroad. Men travelled distances of twenty miles to get sanctified, and "many devout Wesleyans" attended the services for the same purpose. Two or three months after these manifestations began, Mr. Armitage confessed that he had not received the blessing so many declared they had obtained; but he sought it earnestly, and obtained it, while waiting quietly upon God in "Bro. Watson's class at Westgate." "I felt," he says, "changed more fully into the image of the Invisible, and filled with perfect love, perfect joy, and perfect peace." Several more were similarly affected in that class meeting, some being "so filled with the fulness of God that they lay on the floor speechless. Such days were never seen in Wear-dale before."

There is further testimony in regard to this work by the late William Dent, given in the Connexional History. Mr. Dent, who was converted at Westgate in 1823, was called into the ministry in 1827, and, after a fruitful career of thirty-three years, located in Newcastle. Well does the present writer remember "his spare form, ascetic, spiritual-looking face, and his quick bodily movements," when something the preacher said touched him. In Nelson Street Chapel, in the early sixties, "the fire was down" upon a full congregation. William Sanderson was the preacher—it was an anniversary occasion; William Dent was on the rostrum. Mr. Sanderson had a good time with the great text, "When

I consider Thy heavens," and Mr. Dent's body swayed like a rolling craft; ever and anon he thrust his arms above his head, his fingers, as they met, moving quickly as if playing upon a stringed instrument, the music for which he himself only knew. By pen and voice throughout the whole of his life, Mr. Dent was a foremost exponent and defender of the doctrine of Christian perfection. In his early days he was a keen observer of the phenomena of Oxtoby's revival. He says he saw as many as fifteen cases of prostration at one meeting, some of them "sober-minded Christians, as humble as they were earnest." There was nothing in the voice or manner of the preacher to account for such effects, Oxtoby standing steadily and talking calmly. "But he was fully in the faith, clothed with salvation, *having, in many instances, got to know substantially in his closet what was about to take place in the great congregation.*" Mr. Dent says Oxtoby did not take a falling down as a certain proof of the obtaining of entire sanctification, but ascribed much to physical causes.

Oxtoby was credited with possessing the faith-healing power, an instance of which is given by Mr. Armitage. It was the case of a child which had lost the use of its legs. Medical aid had been without benefit. The distressed mother told Oxtoby, and he replied that he would pray for the child's restoration until he came there again, which would be six weeks. Before half of that time expired the child walked, and the parents firmly believed that the preacher's prayers had been effectual. A woman at Edmondbyers was said to be "possessed with an evil spirit." She cursed, swore, and danced when William Summersides and Oxtoby went to pray with her. For hours they pleaded, and still the woman stormed. At length they "set the Lord a time" to deliver the woman from her affliction, and one o'clock was agreed upon. It was then half-an-hour past noon.

“And at the last moment,” says Oxtoby, “God turned the storm into a calm, and delivered her.”

John Oxtoby was again in the Dales in 1827, and his journal shows the same results as before. “An inexpressibly glorious day” was experienced at a camp meeting on June 17th. “Individuals were brought to the ground by the matchless power of Deity. Others stood trembling as an aspen leaf.” Thirty were “brought to the ground by the sanctifying influence of God’s Holy Spirit,” at the lovefeast. Eastgate, described as a dark and benighted place, got the blessing; and day after day seasons of power were the order at Westgate, Wearhead, Blackdean, Fieldstile, Brotherlee, Prize, Lanehead, Frosterley, Wolsingham, Sidehead, Burnhope, Killhope, Wellhope, Black Clough, Boltsburn, Daddry Shield, Ludwell, Side-end, Coalclough, Stanhope, Hunshalford, Allenheads, Swinhope, Alston, and elsewhere. So great was the influence at times that persons ran out of the meetings; but some of them were so deeply affected that they fell on their knees on the roadway before reaching home, and cried for mercy.

Subsequently John Flesher was in the branch, and great crowds assembled to hear the eloquent preacher, whose ministry was accompanied with saving power. When William Sanderson and Ann Tinsley travelled there in 1831—its name was then the Alston and Westgate Union Branch of the Hull Circuit—Hugh Bourne visited the principal places, and his summing up was: “The pious praying labourers are diligent and powerful, and the work has been, and is, rather extraordinary.” Mr. Bourne walked twenty miles from Penrith to Alston over the fells, “a tract of country more dreary than any I ever saw in any part of England,” he says. Alston had been suffering from want of employment, and some of the inhabitants had

emigrated to America. At Nenthead he preached with liberty to a large congregation, afterwards going to Brotherlee, Frosterley, Stanhope, Daddry Shield, Allenheads, Allendale Town, Wearhead, and Westgate, where multitudes gathered to hear him. At Stanhope and other places there had just been revivals, and though the founder speaks of powerful times and of having had "most extraordinary liberty," there is no mention of "fallings" in his journal.

### "KINGS O' MEN."

Weardale has been the theatre of a succession of phenomenal spiritual upheavals since the opening days. Each from the beginning is generally known by the name of the leaders, such as Batty, Oxtoby, Sanderson and Simpson, McKechnie, Lister, Peter Clarke and John Watson, Rust, Phillips, Lowery, Snaith, and others, not omitting Miss Bulmer.

Lanehead was the scene of the outbreak in William Lister's time. It began at the usual weekly prayer meetings, at which a young man who had been at a funeral was converted. At a watch-night service, in the same week, and on the following Sunday, when Mr. Lister preached, several more were converted, and for many weeks thereafter crowded services were held nightly, and the society was lifted into a stronger position than it held before. It was William Lister who put Dr. John Watson on the plan as a local preacher. Henry Phillips was his first superintendent when he entered the ministry in his native circuit, and they saw the might of the Most High displayed in transformed lives. The revival during the superintendency of Mr. Phillips commenced at Frosterley in 1861. The society had entered a new chapel (built on the site of present one), and the occasion created widespread interest. People flocked in such numbers to the new place that a com-



plaint arose that it was too small. In about two months the society increased from 68 members to 147. Joseph Makepeace was one of the prominent workers at that time. Like a fire the revival spread throughout the circuit. In spite of wretched winter weather, the chapels were crowded. Men had sleepless nights on account of spiritual distress, some of them were compelled to walk miles to obtain salvation, and numbers were called out of bed in the dead of night to pray with souls in trouble. John Lowery, of Gateshead, and his wife were then labouring at St. John's Chapel, where a comparatively large chapel had been built in 1852, and for six weeks the converting work went on. As the outcome of that movement over the circuit hundreds of new members were added to the roll. Not long afterwards there was another gracious visitation at nearly all the places in the station, in which Peter Clarke and his colleagues laboured strenuously.

After having spent many years in the ministry, John Phillipson still cherishes in his memory a prayer meeting at Wearhead on a Sunday evening in 1868, after George Race, jun., then in his youthful strength, had preached. Some two hundred people, he says, had gathered in the body of the church:—

“While they sing and pray there was heard ‘a sound of going in the tops of the mulberry trees,’ and the hosts of God were mighty to the pulling down of strongholds. The whole place was moved. The people swayed like the ripening corn-fields in the autumn winds. What a volume of song! What power in prayer! What patient waiting! There men and women sing and pray until every heart catches the fire. What a holy fervour, depth of love, strength of faith, and joyous hopes find expression! No wonder that a number of seeking sinners find their Saviour in that prayer meeting.”

But the leaders of that church, most of whom have since then passed into the higher service, were “kings o’ men.” George Harrison, tall, thin, alert; quaint, devout, practical; who lived to see his eighty-seventh year, after a service of sixty years as class-leader.

Mary, his wife, whose encouraging words in the hours of depression, Thomas Greenfield confessed, " saved me to the work." Joseph Featherstone (stepfather of Mrs. Emerson Phillipson and Mrs. T. J. Watson), a commanding personality; kindly, judicious, true; untiring in labour as a local preacher, class-leader, and Sunday School superintendent; honoured by his circuit as delegate to District Meetings, as also by his District in being sent to Conferences, and elected to representative bodies by those outside his Church. George Featherstone, a studious local preacher, anxious for the intellectual progress of the young. Featherstone Phillipson (father of John and Emerson), a man of exceptional gifts, who spent the earliest years of his married life in Canada and the United States, who was also called upon to occupy front positions in the church and in the industrial life of the people, and was one of the prominent figures, with Hugh Gilmore and Dr. Livingstone, in securing a School Board for Weardale in 1871-2. Nicholas Whitfield, a mystic of deep and intense spiritual life and a successful soul-winner. And Ralph Whitfield, Frank Pearson, and many other consecrated men and women. What wonder, after the flight of decades, the hearts of youths of that period should grow tender with such hallowed memories!

Beyond the names of the mighty already mentioned, there is a host throughout the circuit recorded in the Book of Life—John Crowther and John Coultard; Joseph Stephenson and John Kidd, of Burnfoot; Thomas Lonsdale and Ralph Lee, of Westgate; Joseph Longstaff, John Featherstone, and William Vickers, of Stanhope; Cuthbert Fairless, of Rookhope; John Robinson, of St. John's Chapel; and Joseph Collinson, of Frosterley, of blessed memory, among the number. Nor shall it ever be forgotten that from Frosterley went Joseph Jopling, the simple, saintly, successful evan-

gelist, to give his life for the saving of men. There are the Watsons, the Waltons, the Gibsons, the Elliotts, the Pearts, and the Humbles also. Fanny Peart, of Lanehead! The very mention of her name will recall memories in the minds of many readers. In any conversation about Primitive Methodism in the Dales, she holds a place apart. Her own grandsons—Charles and Frederick Humble—speak of her with affectionate enthusiasm. Her home had a “prophet’s chamber,” and what a number of the old ministers she had entertained in that farm-house. Her interest in her church was exceptional; she gloried in serving it. What a gift of prayer she had, and what faith! Emerson Humble was the first member and official of the Lanehead society, and Jonathan Humble (his son and Fanny Peart’s son-in-law) was also a leading official and local preacher. Hannah English, of Wellhope, should also be mentioned; and Thomas English to-day gives his useful and unostentatious service to Whitley Bay society.

The name of Race has been associated with Primitive Methodism in Weardale from the days of Thomas Batty. It will be associated with its history for ever. Of that name was the greatest Primitive Methodist local preacher of his time—George Race—and he was reared in Weardale. His grandfather, Anthony Race, was an able and laborious Wesleyan local preacher when the “Ranters” arrived in the dale, walking as far to his appointments as Durham, Haydon Bridge, and Appleby, and frequently carrying his shoes and stockings to save them. He connected himself with Batty, eventually throwing in his lot with the missionaries. He missioned Nenthead in March, 1823, and was a travelling preacher for a few years. George Race and William Lonsdale (afterwards a travelling preacher) had been made exhorters by the Hull Circuit just two months before Hugh Bourne visited the Dales in 1831, for Westgate

did not attain circuit rank until 1834. George Race was a dalesman, and even in speech and manner he made no pretension to be anything else. "There was in the man a fine balance of brain and heart," and "the relation between him and his friends and neighbours was like that of a chieftain to his clansmen." He read much—the best books in theology and philosophy—but he thought more. In later life he devoted much time to physical science; and being an associate of the Victoria Institute, he sent several essays on the geological aspects of the Dales, which appeared in the "Transactions" of the Institute. Spiritual matters, however, were of the chiefest account in his mind. A man of fine physique, he was as strong in emotional fervour as he was in intellectual grasp. There was a time when no man could get the congregations in Weardale and the neighbouring valleys as George Race could. When touched by heaven, and having grip of his hearers, he carried everything before him; yet the simple utterances of sincere men, when he was a listener, delighted his soul. His son—also George Race—worthily bears the name, and has done fine service as an efficient local preacher.

It is questionable whether any similar area in the Connexion has given more men to the work of the ministry than Weardale. Beginning with Anthony Race, William Lonsdale, and William Dent, the list of men living and dead is a commanding one. Joseph Featherstone, Anthony Dent, Joseph Gibson, William Bee (for many years a Connexional leader in Canada), John and Timothy Natrass (brothers, who also ministered in Canada), John Watson (writer, college principal, and President), John Charlton, Featherstone Watson, John Featherstone, John Elliott, John Phillipson (a gifted preacher, who has himself given a son to the ministry), Emerson Phillipson (John's brother, who has bought or

erected connexional property of the value of £33,000), Thomas Elliott (who has a high place in the ministry), Thomas J. Watson, Joseph James, Harrison Walton, Joseph Tweddle, Burnhope Dennison, Charles Humble, and Frederick Humble form a goodly succession. Joseph Rutherford is also a Weardale man, and many other sons or grandsons of natives are serving in the itinerant ranks at home and in the colonies.

And the revival glory still hovers over the valley. To John Snaith it was revealed in 1875; and to Miss Bulmer when she went to Stanhope, little more than a girl, in the spring of 1888, and whose heart at this hour swells with gratitude at the remembrance of the kindness of the quarrymen and of their wives during the three years she spent amongst them. For months the rolling tide of salvation swept over the villages, and out of that harvest, as, indeed, out of all the others, stalwarts were raised to sustain the home societies and spread abroad the Redeemer's fame elsewhere. Nor have the dalesfolk forgotten how to preach, to pray, to testify, to wrestle, to prevail, and see the arm of the Lord made bare in the twentieth century. But there have been periods of quiet and of trial in this interesting circuit, especially when the lead mines were closed, and men in large numbers had to remove elsewhere to seek employment. At times the strain upon heroic servants of the church has been severe and testing.



## CHAPTER XII.

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### THE NENT AND THE ALLEN.

IT may be taken for granted that many residents of Alston, Nenthead and the neighbourhood had been in Weardale, had been witnesses of the remarkable scenes accompanying the preaching of the word there, and had been partakers of the joy of the believing souls, before Anthony Race missioned Nenthead and Garrigill in the spring of 1823. Others followed, and before the close of the year the revival in the Wear valley had reached the head of the Nent. From the first the people waited patiently on the ministrations of the missionaries, and wanted to pay for them by taking up a collection. On one of his visits, Thomas Batty took his stand on a flag by the door of Isaac Hornsby, an official of the lead works—the same flag on which Mr. Wesley had stood to preach—and after he had finished his discourse, a collection was taken, which, though it was a week-night, reached three pounds.

Occasional visits were only paid at first—once a fortnight on week-nights, and not at all on the Sabbaths; but the work grew so mightily, and the excitement became so intense, that more frequent ministrations were imperative. Meanwhile, however, numbers of the converts joined with other societies, which was then generally the case wherever our missionaries went. Isaac Hornsby, a man of influence in the district, received the pioneers into his house (supposed to be Ivy House, near the Workmen's Reading Room), and

became a class-leader. The religious awakening assumed extraordinary proportions. A man who was seized with such deep convictions while going to his work that he lost his bodily strength, leaned against a wall, and shouted for mercy. When the neighbours gathered round him, he declared: "We are all going to hell together," and exhorted them to turn from their sins, and to walk in the way to heaven. There is a tradition that a Mrs. Wilkinson, who occupied then the tavern now known as the Broad Inn, invited Mr. Batty to hold services in her house, and that in the first service she was converted. Two elderly women are said to have dropped into a discussion on their return homewards from one of Mr. Batty's meetings. "Aa tell tha," was the final deliverance of one of them, "he's nea batty (a small loaf); he's a hee'al kee'ak" (a whole cake).

John Hewson, John Flesher, G. W. Armitage, and John Oxtoby also laboured in this locality with conspicuous success. Powerful camp meetings were held at Nenthead, followed by lovefeasts whereon "the sanctifying glory rested." A lovefeast held by Oxtoby is described by him as "a great day of God. Two men came twenty miles to get sanctified; one of them caught the holy flame, and carried it to Middleton, and now it is spreading there." Many stories are told of Johnny's eccentricities. One Sunday (in 1827) Mr. Flesher failed to reach his appointment, and Oxtoby had to take his place. "Now, friends," he said, when he entered the pulpit, "Johnny Flesher hasn't come to-day to shoot his paper pellets, and I must take his place." After that sally at the man who was the rising orator in the Connexion, the meeting proceeded, and the unpolished messenger had many tokens of his acceptable service.

While the names of such places as Nenthead, Garrigill, and Allenheads are found in the early books of the Barnard Castle branch, no mention is made of Alston,

which, as is well known in the North, is the highest market town in England, and in a hilly district, forming the point of juncture between the Nent and the Tyne. But while the Barnard Castle missionaries had penetrated to within five miles of it, Alston had been missioned from another direction. William Garner was there in 1823, and he was not the first from the Hexham branch, which then stretched from Tynehead above Alston, to Dunston, close to Gateshead, a distance of forty-five miles. In 1825 Alston and Allendale were visited with a wave of revival power, and upwards of a hundred united with the former society in three months. "The Lord is extending our borders," reports John Garner, "and opening our way in Alston Moor and East and West Allendale." Joseph Grieves did a good work in 1826-7, and during John Flesher's term, 1827-9, crowds rushed to hear him.

Coalclough is now a stony desolation, but when the mine was working services were held during the week in the mine shop. Fluctuations of trade have caused other places to be abandoned, even though chapels had been erected. A reference to chapels brings up the courage of the early members at Garrigill. There were seventeen of them in 1825 when they built a chapel, 24 ft. by 30 ft. The church flourished, and in a few years the north end was taken out and six feet added. In 1856 the whole structure was pulled down, and a stone building capable of accommodating four hundred persons was erected. Nenthead Chapel must have been built at the same time as the first Garrigill edifice, for it bears the date 1825, and it claims to be the "highest place of worship in England," being about 1,800 feet above sea level. The first meeting place at Nenthead was Matthew Latimer's barn, at the foot of Dykeheads Road, and in it marvels of grace were wrought. The entire character of the place was changed, and some of

the greatest reprobates were savingly converted. Recently a vestry has been added to the chapel. It is conjectured that Hayring (Nentsbury) Chapel was opened in 1829. When the present sanctuary was erected on the opposite side of the river in 1868 (Joseph Ritson, the editor, assisted in drawing the plans), Hayring was closed. A new Sunday School has been built, the foundation-stones of which were laid on August 17th, 1907, by Lady Dorothy Howard, of Naworth Castle, and, on behalf of Joseph Hodgson, of Alston, by Mrs. Pinchen, wife of the superintendent minister. All the stones were quarried and the foundations cut by the members free of cost. It is believed that Alston Chapel was put up in 1825, but it had to be rebuilt in 1843, and further improvements have since been made.

Alston became a circuit about the year 1836, and in 1838 it included within its radius Allendale Town and Allenheads on the north and Penrith westward, as many as three ministers being stationed in the circuit at one time. Again and again "the heavens opened" upon the faithful labourers. Revivalism was the aim of the preachers and members. As to the "fallings" and being overwhelmed with the glory, that was a common occurrence, and there are men and women living to-day who have had the latter experience. "Considerable awakenings to prayer and holy action" took place frequently in the societies, and notable conversions were frequent. According to the venerable Thomas Carrick, Primitive Methodism, under God, succeeded on account of the *free hand* and the *direct message*: "Go! enter every open door, and stay there so long as God works!" "No gin-horse, perfunctory circuit work! When I was at Nenthead fifty-five years ago (1852), the circuit said: 'Stay there till your work is done.' I stayed sixteen weeks, and hundreds were saved." These were composed of nearly all classes, from the comparative child

to those on the "downhill of life"; from the outwardly moral and sober, to the inebriate and immoral. "Husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, companions and their associates have been embracing each other as though they had risen from the dead, shedding tears of joy together, and mingling their voices at the throne of grace." The fifties had barely run their course when there was another great awakening; and Thomas Stephenson (who afterwards went into business at Crook, and died there) was one of the promoters in the establishment of a Sunday School, which subsequently, with Jonathan Walton as its superintendent, attained a high position in the Northern District. Barnabas Wild gives a fine description of a revival in which John Gill and Miss Bennett, of Chester, were engaged. (The latter's fame spread over the North of England, and she became one of the foremost women preachers of her time.) Thomas Featherstone, who declared that he had been a mere moralist, cried out at one of the meetings: "I have got to-night what I never had before." Thirty-six souls prostrated themselves before the Lord, and the outside comment was: "If Thomas Featherstone needed converting, the Lord help us!" Years afterwards, when Mr. Wild returned to the station, he found a great number of useful men and good local preachers, the fruit of that revival. Luke Stafford tells of four months' meetings without a break in the hard winter of 1870-71, and reckons amongst the heroes of Primitive Methodism the men and women who worked, sang, and prayed with such tenacity all the time.

Yet another remarkable revival season—this time at Alston—was experienced in the winter of 1891. Miss Bulmer was the missionary, and she was accompanied by Miss Flora Walton (Mrs. Ridley). Miss Walton sang gospel solos, and the sweetly cultured tones and power-



ful expression with which they were given no doubt led many a soul to a better life. There had been trouble in the Alston society, and it was in a low condition. For a few nights the work was very hard; but during an all-night of prayer there "came such a light and glory" around the pleading few that some laughed, some fell, and others wept. "Victory!" shouted "good old Brother Dixon." Thenceforward conversions went on for weeks.

The membership of the circuit is about 270. How many valuable members and officials have gone from it from time to time to more promising fields of labour at home or across the seas it would be impossible to tell. Like John Shipley, who was converted under Jane Ansdale in 1823, and who went to the Isle of Man in 1831, and rose to eminence in the island, many of the highland sons became a social and spiritual power in the localities in which they settled. Of those who remained at home, tributes to their strength of personality, depth of conviction, tenacity of purpose, warmth of devotion, and generosity and hospitality, are beyond count. The Latimers, the Harrisons, the Pearsons, the Waltons, the Hills, the Thompsons, the Doyles, the Shields, and the Hendersons; W. Thomason, of Garrigill; John Hall, John Holmes, John Davidson, John Wilkinson, Thomas Moffatt, Edward Greenwell, Isaac Watson, and multitudes more among the living and the dead have surrounded Alston, Nenthead, Nentsbury, Blaygill, Garrigill, and the country round with traditions (and nourished them), the recital of which can never cease to inspire generations to come.

Nenthead gave Robert Hind to the ministry. In his recent lamented death a prince has fallen in our Israel. In addition, there have gone into the itinerancy from the circuit G. T. Lovatt, Isaac Cousin, and W. Robson. M. H. Barron, who died at Fernando Po, was

born at Wellgill, Nenthead, though his parents afterwards went to reside at Durham.

#### DOMINANT METHODISM.

“Methodism and the Established Church divide the land between them; but it is a very unequal division. The little Methodist chapels are dotted all over the Dales, and sometimes seem to have dropped down in the most unlikely places.” So wrote one who knew the tract of country lying between the Tyne and the Wear in the extreme south-western corner of Northumberland, and called Allendale. With a shade of difference, the characteristics of the people are similar to those of the Weardale folk. As it has been with the other dale, the population of the East and West Allen has been depleted through the closing of the mines. In later years, however, Allendale Town—“the toon,” as the natives call it—has obtained much popularity as a health resort, though the railway abruptly ended in the middle of a field at Catton (about a mile away) about forty years ago, and it has got no further yet.

Allenheads is the first society in this dale of which there is any positive record, and it may be accepted that the high part of the dale was missioned from Weardale when it formed part of the Barnard Castle branch. Mr. Wild says that one day two strangers appeared in the village, and began to sing about being soldiers of Christ. Their song, of course, would be the old ditty: “I a soldier sure shall be, happy in eternity.” The lads employed in washing lead ore rushed from their work to hear the strange men, and many of the mothers, thinking the newcomers were recruiting sergeants, whose object was to get their sons enlisted into the King’s Army, with more force than politeness ordered the strangers to be “off about their business.” Tradition has it that Thomas Batty was the chief actor in this

scene ; but William Lister, recording the death of Henry Phillipson, of Shildon, Northumberland, says curiosity led Phillipson and other young men to attend the ministry of the missionaries at Allenheads, in 1822, and he was converted in the revival then going on. The inference, therefore, is that the two strangers who had to pacify the excited mothers, and tell them that they were recruiting for the army of King Jesus, were on the ground before Batty.

The fact, as Mr. Wild has presented it to us, that Catton, as well as Alston, appears on the Hexham plan for the year 1823, indicates that the lower part of the dale was missioned by that circuit. William Garner's journal shows that he was at Allendale Town and adjacent places in the December of that year. When Alston was made into a circuit all the places in Allendale became part of it, and remained so until 1848, when the dales of the Allen were formed into an independent station. In "the toon" services were first conducted in a "heckler's shop" (a branch of business long since extinct in Allendale), and there the nucleus was formed of what afterwards developed into a numerous society. As elsewhere, cottages, barns, workshops were the initial homes of the societies in Allendale. Apple Tree Shield had the honour of having the first chapel. That was in 1829, and the following description of the trustees was copied from "an old deed, about the size of a man's hand":—

"John Flesher, gentleman, and minister of the gospel in the Primitive Methodist Connexion; Isaac Walton, of Appletree Shield, refiner of lead; John Walton, of the same place, lead ore miner; Henry Bell, Wellhope, lead ore miner; John Armstrong, of the same place, lead ore miner; Thomas Bell, Hexley Well, lead ore miner; and William Routledge, of Colacleugh, lead ore miner."

Though the structure was plain in the extreme, a gracious influence passed from it to the surrounding neighbourhood. Many years afterwards a much better

place was built on the same site ; unfortunately, in consequence of the depression in the mining industry causing an almost complete exodus of the population, the chapel had to be closed in the later seventies.

Next in the order of erection stood Sinderhope Chapel, built in 1830, which has since been superseded by a commodious and tasteful building. Allenheads society, because of "despotic agents of high churchism" and "the sectarian bigotry and insidious policy of a sporting reverend," did not get a chapel until 1841, and laboured under many disadvantages therefrom. Land, however, was secured by an influential local preacher, and the society grew so rapidly that in 1849 a much larger place, galleried on three sides, had to be put up. Whiteley Shield society strove for more than twenty years to get a site, and it was not until 1857 that the members were able to enter upon premises of their own in which to worship. Corry Hill Chapel was largely the outcome of the efforts of Joseph Ritson (of whom more anon). Of the eleven chapels now in the circuit, Allendale Town has a neat building, and Catton a creditable village edifice. This station has the honour of having been the first circuit in these northern parts to build a minister's house. The great event took place in 1861, during the superintendency of Mr. McKechnie.

In the valleys of the Allen mighty seasons of power from on high have been experienced from the days of Batty, Garner, Flesher, and Harland onwards. Such was the case in a marked degree in 1825, in 1831-2, in 1844, in 1852-3, in 1859-60, and so forth. Catton was baptised in a marvellous manner in 1831. During the next year at Keenley many were converted, Joseph Ritson among the number ; his sweetheart, Jane Clemitson, and seven months afterwards she became his wife ; and his companion, "Neddy" Henderson, who served Allendale and North Shields Circuits as a local preacher

in after years. Joseph Ritson was subsequently the leading figure in Primitive Methodism in West Allen, and he gave to the Connexion one of its foremost ministers of the present time. Joseph commenced business at Ninebanks as builder and joiner, built up a prosperous trade, and was known and trusted all round as a man of character and probity. Frank, manly, free from cant, inclined to sternness and severity, yet having the heart of a child, his worldly success never cooled his devotion in the Lord's service, and a revival was his joy. His house was the home of the preachers, and his attachment to them was very close. On a Sunday in July, 1878, he attended services at Corry Hill conducted by his son—the present editor—prayed with much fervour in the prayer meeting, and within a fortnight “passed on.” His eldest son Thomas is a local preacher in the Haltwhistle Circuit; John, the second son, was a class-leader at Ninebanks when he died some years ago; Ann, the second daughter, deeply spiritual, morally beautiful, cultured even, remarkable in many ways, became the devoted wife of Robert Clemitson, but was taken away in the fulness of her powers; Joseph, the youngest born, far and away the chiefest of them all, who, when a boy dedicated his life to the Lord, was made a local preacher at sixteen, when he returned home from Elmfield College, at seventeen returned to Elmfield as a teacher, at twenty went as a master to Woodhouse Grove, the Wesleyan school for ministers' sons, simultaneously received invitations from both Connexions to become a minister, entered the Primitive Methodist itinerancy, used untiringly his versatile gifts of mind and soul by speech and pen in some of the leading circuits in the Connexion, administrator and evangelist, pastor and social reformer, preacher and politician, controversialist and novelist, and now Connexional Editor, influencing very many thousands of minds, and displaying an apti-



tude for the office which has brought to him commendations from the entire community.

Of the many commanding movements in the circuit, that in 1852-3 at Allendale holds a high place, and some day may be told with the deserved and inspiring fulness of the phenomenal work at Allenheads in 1859-60. Allendale society in the early fifties was in a low condition, and the minister (J. Watson) and members toiled hard to bring about a better condition of things. Want of success discouraged them, but they held on, and at length sinners began to tremble and cry for mercy. Excitement waxed stronger, and it spread through the two dales. There is a story about a local brass band which Mr. Wild tells with enthusiasm. The members of it had decided to go into the street to drown the processionists. They went. The noise produced by the bandsmen and the singers was tremendous, the excitement indescribable; all the people in the little town seemed to be in the street. In the contest the band utterly failed, and the processionists sang lustily to the chapel, where a glorious meeting was held. The bandsmen retired to a public-house, with a sense of humiliation, several members declaring that that was their last night in the band. One of them, a young man named Robert Clemitson, consecrated his life to the Lord, was called into the ministry in 1858, for 43 years preached his cheering evangel principally in the old Sunderland District, and, after his settlement in Gateshead, has been engaged in preaching for all sections of the Free Churches, particularly the Presbyterians; for his Border blood has strong kinship with the spirit and traditions of the dominant confession of Caledonia. John, the drummer, lived to honour Christ in his own sphere, and many other youths and maidens were found in after years in useful positions in the church who had been made anew in that revival. John Gill, another youth of

that period, must be specially named. "A droll lad, full of playfulness and tricks," when converted, his high spirits found an outlet in earnest service in the church, and he was not long in becoming a travelling preacher. To qualities of heart were added qualities of mind, and these he exercised amongst the people. Superannuated in 1901, he retired to Enfield, close to the residence of his only child, the wife of a minister (John Pinchen), where he died soon afterwards. William Clemitson, John Foster, Robert Clemitson, John Gill, and Joseph Ritson form a good quintette of ministers to have been the product of one circuit.

It is no derogation to any of the good and faithful men who have ministered in Allendale to say that the most illustrious name in the history of the station is that of Colin Campbell McKechnie. He was its first superintendent in 1848, but he was removed by the Conference before the great plans of aggressive work which he and the officials were contemplating could be put into operation. He was back again, however, in 1859, and it was in the winter of that year when the notable awakening took place which has been so well told by Mr. McKechnie himself and by Mr. Ritson. Allenheads was the chief place of powerful manifestations, though these were felt for miles around. The conversion of Jamie Weatherburn, known "from Sparty Lea to the Heads and to Allendale Town" as a drunkard, a blasphemer, a moral wreck, had an electrical effect in both the dales. People were touched to the quick by the sight and words of the healed man, and the converting work broke out on all hands. Four hundred members were added to the societies, and the Wesleyan Churches participated in the harvest. Joseph Reed, who became a well-known local preacher in Newcastle, and his father, who fell to the floor in an excess of joy when he saw the truth, were among the saved. Stephenson Stobbs, too, who was

long regarded as one of the most eloquent local preachers in the country, and many more devoted souls found the Lord in that visitation.

Beyond those who have been mentioned, Matthew Lee, of Swinhope; John Little, of Sparty Lea; Nichol Carr, the quaint local preacher; Nicholas Phillipson, known at Ballarat as "Father Phillipson"; Hannah Harrison, chief among the worthies of her time; Barty Harrison, whose kindness Mr. Clemitson speaks tenderly of until this day; John Moore, an able man; Joseph Bell, the schoolmaster, and his wife, a beautiful spirit; and William Snaith, born at Tedham, one of the first-fruits of the early preachers, and who died at Ramshaw, deserve naming, as do hundreds more of those who have finished their course here, as well as of those who are still loyally in harness.

## CHAPTER XIII.

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### “THE HEART OF ALL ENGLAND.”

HAVING touched a portion of the original Hexham Circuit, let us go into the parent area itself, the Tyne valley, over the beauties of which Dr. Collingwood Bruce (of Roman Wall fame) used to break out into high eulogy. Amid scenes, once famous in ancient Border warfare, the fathers of the Primitive Methodist Connexion won battles for the Lord of Hosts. The town of Hexham was “opened” in 1822 by a preacher from Shotley Bridge, which, Mr. Kendall remarks, would almost seem to have been a kind of sub-branch of Barnard Castle at that time. According to Mr. Petty, a native of Hexham, who had been working in Weardale, while on a visit to his parents, gave exciting accounts of the introduction of Primitive Methodism into that dale, probably the lower part of it, and his statements, together with the hymns and tunes he sang, created much interest amongst his friends and acquaintances. John Gibson was led by curiosity to go to Newcastle, to the opening of the Butchers’ Hall as a preaching place by the Primitives, on October 20th, 1822, and he invited the preachers to Hexham. As they could not comply with his request, he applied to Shotley Bridge, and on the 26th of the same month a preacher from thence arrived in Hexham. A society of five members was at once formed, John Gibson being the first to join. The bellman was sent through the town to announce that a Primitive Methodist missionary would preach the

following day in the Old Malt Kiln, on the Battle Hill, and long before the time appointed for the service to commence the place was crowded. Many stout-hearted sinners trembled during the powerful services, and five more persons united with the infant cause. Opposition arose, but in spite of serious persecution, "bricks and stones being often thrown by the ungodly," many souls were turned to the Lord in the Old Kiln.

Mr. Gibson, in conversation with a minister over a quarter of a century ago, said William Southarts (? Suddards) and Jane Annandale (? Ansdale), who became Suddards' wife, were the first preachers. Gibson lived till he was over ninety, and did a great amount of work in the interests of Primitive Methodism. He used to tell how on one occasion Hugh Bourne, James Bourne, and William Clowes all visited Hexham together, and slept in his house; how the first camp meeting in the locality was held at Stagshawbank, and what wonderful effects were produced; how the meetings were held in the Malt Kiln until the first chapel was built in Bull Bank in 1830, and how many trials the society passed through until the old chapel was superseded by the Hebborn Memorial Chapel in 1863.

After its formation in 1824, Hexham Circuit spread itself in all directions, preaching services being established in the villages east and west along the Tyne Valley, in Hexhamshire, and in several places in central Northumberland. In ten years there were thirty-seven places on its plan at which there were Sunday services (including towns as far apart as Haltwhistle, Morpeth, and Rothbury), and eleven other places at which the travelling preachers were appointed on the week-nights, making forty-eight in all. Four ministers were then on the station—Stephenson, Huggins, Houghton, and Wrightson — and thirty-six local preachers and exhorters. On the Sundays, the ministers were planned



twice or thrice, and four, five, or six times on the week-nights, having usually to walk long distances.

Ten years further on—1844—there were thirty-four places in the circuit at which Sunday services were established, and three more where the travelling preachers held meetings on week-nights. Notwithstanding that Rothbury and Morpeth had been given up, the station was then thirty-five miles from north to south, and twenty-four from east to west. A reprint of the plan is now before us, the original being in the possession of Thomas Carrick, of Keswick, whose name appears on it as one of the twenty-one prayer-leaders, along with two Bells, two Saints, two Crows, two Ridleys, a Kirk, Elliott, Mews, Armstrong, Rowntree, Dent, Smith, Burkitt, Laing, Galloway, Maers, and another Carrick—seven bands of prayer leaders in all. The travelling preachers were Moses Lupton, McReadie, Robert Clapham, and Ralph Shields. Among the local preachers were two Saints, of Haltwhistle; two Ramseys, husband and wife, of Bavington, and Porteus and Steward, of the same place; Shafto, of Bavington Hall; Pears, of Hunstanworth; Brown, Harrison, and Brodie, of Ingoe; Parker, of Bay Bridge; Adamson, of Spittal Shield; Hudspith, of Spittal Shield, and Hudspith, of Cowburn; Waugh, Charlton, Johnson, Allinson, and Temperley, of Catton; Henderson, of Angerton, and Dodds, of Humshaugh; Davison and Hutchinson, of Dean Raw; Green, of Dye House; Rutherford, of Whittington; Hodgson, of Hexham, and Hodgson, of Shildon; Leonard, of Shotley Bridge; Bell, of Anick; Benton, of Brinkburn Lodge; Proud, of Hole House; Gibson, of Cambo; Irving, of Cowburn; Hamilton, of Haltwhistle; Thornton, of Donkin Rigg; Thompson, of Bogg; and Corbitt and Symm, of Haydon Bridge. Thomas Adamson was circuit steward. What an array, spread over such a space!

John Oxtoby visited Hexham in 1825, and in the following year such places as Blaydon, Whickham, Swalwell, and even Shotley Bridge, were on the Hexham plan; while during the superintendency of John Lightfoot the circuit sustained three missions—Jedburgh, in Roxburghshire, as well as Morpeth and Rothbury. Hugh Bourne was in Hexham in 1829, on which occasion he went to Bavington Hall, the seat of Squire Shafto, and had a powerful time in preaching. It was here where Mr. Bourne made his famous statement regarding the teetotalers. Mrs. Shafto asked him if he had joined the Total Abstinence Society. "No," he replied; "they have joined me; I was a teetotaler before the teetotalers began their society." Robert Ingram Shafto's claim to belong to a good old county family was unimpeachable, and notwithstanding his long pedigree and his rent-roll, the owner of Bavington Hall had his name in the class-book along with his dependants, and enjoyed a camp meeting with as much zest as any of them. He had been a younger son, and it was while he was a solicitor in Sunderland that he came under the influence of the early preachers, experienced the regenerating power of God's grace, and united with the society. On succeeding to the Bavington estate—the Hall stands about twelve miles north of Hexham, on the borders of a rugged tract of country—he, in a simple, unostentatious way, made it pretty widely understood that he was a Primitive Methodist, and intended his life to be in harmony with his religious profession. He started a society and Sunday School, took part in the evangelisation of the neighbourhood, and had a chapel built. To the Sunday School he gave special attention, and for many years rendered much devoted service as its superintendent. Members and local preachers from a distance were, at his instance, offered inducements to settle on the estate, and Bavington was

soon noted all round the countryside as a centre of Primitive Methodism. While liberally supporting the interests of the circuit and Connexion generally, Mr. Shafto took special interest in the Rothbury mission. But the Bavington society and Sunday School were scattered by the Squire's son, who got a dislike to the church of his parents while at one of the Universities; and when he obtained possession of the estate, turned the Primitives out of the chapel, which had not been made connexional. The young man did not hold the estate long afterwards.

About 1832 Hexham resolved to mission the Morpeth and Rothbury districts, and, while in Newcastle, John Coulson, an enterprising and intrepid missionary, had become acquainted with, and conceived an admiration for, Joseph Spoor, then a young local preacher at Whickham. Spoor, his sister Jane, and his companion, Thomas Jobling (who afterwards became a travelling preacher and General Missionary Secretary), had been converted under the famous Wesleyan minister, Hodgson Casson, but had found the spirit of the early Primitives more in keeping with their fervent souls, and they joined them. At the instigation of Mr. Coulson, the "keel lad" was appointed to "break up" the bleak and uninviting ground in the north. At the outset the youth met with such hardships as sleeping under haystacks and hedges, and having to eat wild fruit to allay his hunger, the whole being embittered by want of success in his mission. Eventually he ran away from the conflict; but he had not gone far until he bethought himself that he was more cowardly than Jonah. With strong cries and tears he sought and found strength in the hour of his bitter need, and invigoration for the mighty labours and sufferings which marked his future career. It was when Spoor was at an appointment at Morpeth that his memorable encounter with Billy

Purvis, the celebrated north-country showman of the period, took place. The preacher and his friends were holding an open-air meeting in the Market Place, and Billy, fearing that it was a rival entertainment, summoned his "band," and the horn and drum were played with vigour, whereat the singers "took breath." The musicians tired quickly, and the singers started afresh or Spoor prayed, but "Billy's band" went at it again. After other attempts, the showman lost heart and his band lost breath. On seeing that he was beaten, Billy, as a parting fling, took his speaking-trumpet, and roared out to Spoor: "Aa warrand thoo thinks theesel' a clivvor fellow, noo." With a clear field, Spoor preached with vigour to a large crowd.

Mary Porteus joined the circuit in 1833, and it rose in prosperity. She narrates that there were "some fine jumpers" in Hexhamshire, and felt delighted in being in meetings with them, believing them to be devoted people. She was a fast favourite with Mr. and Mrs. Shafto, and after her "location" she was six years at the Hall attending upon Mrs. Shafto's mother.

Five ministers were on the station in 1841-2. William Brining was superintendent, and his colleagues included Christopher Hallam, Henry Yooll, and Colin C. McKechnie, names which, through themselves and the sons of two of them, have been writ large in the annals of Primitive Methodism. Truly, John Hallam's mother might have been reckoned as yet another colleague, for she frequently preached in the circuit, and Mr. McKechnie claims for her that she had a mental equipment that would have been creditable to any minister of the gospel. Amid much hostility, Mr. McKechnie zealously laboured in Rothbury and the locality for three months, and a few good people were gathered into fellowship, Thomas Thornton, farmer, Cambo, being a sample. We join the lament of some of our best men



who have deplored that the Connexion has lost all hold of that part of Northumberland. Fortunately, Morpeth has been splendidly saved to Primitive Methodism.

On a pleasant Sunday morning, when he was walking from Edmondbyers to Carterway Heads, Mr. McKechnie was approached by two horsemen, one of whom was Hugh Bourne. It was a delightful surprise. Mr. Bourne was equally surprised when he learned that the young man—he was just over twenty—had been in the Primitive Methodist ministry about four years. “Ah well,” said Mr. Bourne, after expressing his wonder, “you will need much grace to keep you right, but not more than you can get. Be faithful, my young brother, be faithful; and the Lord bless you in your work, and keep you steadfast.”

#### TROJANS OF THE TYNE.

Through all the decades succeeding, the valley of the Tyne was evangelised and nurtured by godly men and women, and village chapels and societies to-day testify to the fidelity to conviction of Northumberland's sons and daughters. Many of the old ministers speak in warm terms of the three brothers Lowes, farmers, of Cowburn and Galisharigg, “just under the Roman Wall,” says William R. Widdowson. Two of them were members, and at the services at Cowburn the dogs entered the chapel with the shepherds. Thomas Lowes' wife had three notable cousins: John Martin, the famous painter; his brother Jonathan, who set York Minster on fire; and William, who claimed that he was the original designer of the High Level Bridge, Newcastle.

What an attractive past Haydon Bridge has had! What men it has had, and what men it still has! When John Snaith entered the circuit in the early sixties, his first Sunday services were at a Haydon Bridge camp meeting, and he was highly pleased with the members.



But he was shocked with the place of worship—a sort of a barn, at the end of a yard, and the worshippers had to pass unsavoury stables and byres. Henry Yooll, sen., was his superintendent, and a better chapel was built while they were in the circuit. To the assemblies in this later edifice it was a delight to preach—the tone, the fervour, the hallowed sanctity, made the services fruitful. The present chapel and commodious school are a credit to the men and women who have fostered and served the cause for so many years. In the glowing days Matthew T. Wigham, the thoughtful, spiritual, idealistic, now one of the prominent local preachers in London, and treasurer of the General Local Preachers' Training Movement, was a young man. John Davidson was in the heyday of his powers. Converted at Milfield (near Wooler), his earnestness and devotion soon brought him to the front. In 1875 he became the agent for the Greenwich Hospital Estates in the higher reaches of the Tyne, and made Haydon Bridge his home. Not Hexham Circuit alone, but Northumberland and Durham counties know John Davidson as a preacher of power and a man of high character—not his church alone, but outsiders have done him honour. Now Ald. Davidson, J.P., he and his family have been pillars in the society.

Langley also has an interesting story. Fifty years ago the Primitives had a good cause at Langley Mill, services being alternately held afternoon and evening in the same chapel with the Free Methodists. Though the Primitives were the stronger party they had to leave. There was a similar case of "combination"—Wesleyans and Primitives this time—at Ramshaw, but as the building was the property of the Lead Mining Company, neither could turn the other out. The Langley incident, however, was a real gain to the Primitives. Including James Davison, there were a few local preachers who

were a living power in the neighbourhood. The former opened his school-room at Dean Raw, not far away, and souls were saved during the years the services were held in it. A good chapel and caretaker's house were subsequently built, to which schools have since been added. Around this village sanctuary will cling the names of the Davisons, the Wighams, and others for all time.

Who of the Northmen in Primitive Methodism in the sixties did not know or had not heard of James Davison of Dean Raw? He was a young man when he gave himself to the Lord in the old school-room at Milfield, and his conversion was the occasion of unusual joy, for he was then a thoughtful and intelligent man. Excelling as a schoolmaster at Dean Raw, he also excelled as a local preacher and as a man of mental and moral strength, and left behind him a name and an influence which exercise their spell until this hour. District Meetings knew him; Conferences knew him; for twenty miles around his home he was best known, and it was always to this man that people turned when in trouble. He was a counsellor and comforter as well as a king. It was a common saying that James Davison's wife was made for him, and the tributes to her kindly hospitality have been abundant. That the late Dr. Joseph Parker had not been insensible of the widespread influence exerted by Mr. Davison was manifested on one occasion when they met at Haydon Bridge, after the doctor became famous. When he saw the schoolmaster—Mr. Widdowson was a spectator of the scene—he greeted his old friend with the exclamation: "Mr. Davison and Primitive Methodist camp meetings!" In a letter of the most intimate kind to Mr. Davison, the doctor spoke of him as being ever associated in his mind with boundless kindness, cultivated intellect, and open straightforwardness.

Dr. Parker's connection with Primitive Methodists

was most intimate in his early days, though there is a doubt as to whether he or his father was actually in membership. It is a fact—the venerable Robert Garnett, of Coxhoe, is our witness, who not only heard the story from the lips of George Charlton, but had lodged with the Parkers in Hexham, when he was a travelling preacher—that Joseph Parker's father was induced to sign the pledge by the noble temperance advocate named; and Teasdale Parker was drunk on the day that George Charlton first tackled him in a railway train. Joseph, when a youth, used to go with John Green, a Hexham local preacher, to his appointments, and took part in the services. He was also very intimate with William Hudspith and Joseph Saint, of Haltwhistle. Saint had a great gift in prayer, and Parker admired him much. The last time Mr. Carrick, of Keswick, saw the doctor they talked much about Joseph Saint, and, says the first-named, "I was always struck with the similarity in the manner and matter of the prayers of Saint and Parker."

A preaching place was opened at Belsay in 1874, when Robert Ord became factor for Sir Arthur Middleton, Bart. Mr. Ord held an influential position in the circuit for many years, and his devotion, and that of his wife, to the Belsay society gave it strength. A young man was sent there as a hired local preacher, and the experience was to determine whether he was to go into the ministry or into business. By the conversion of souls the Lord made it plain to the youth that he was wanted for the highest calling upon earth, and as a circuit minister and an administrator the Connexion knows and appreciates Matthew P. Davison, a worthy son of the Langley schoolmaster. For many years the Bambridge family has been most intimately associated with Belsay; and Edward Mews and his sterling wife are still spoken of with affection. John Richardson's work there is also

worthy of recognition. Of Robert Ord's fruit, John Teasdale (a fine type of the Cumberland character), who was restored one night in the old Bull Bank Chapel, Hexham, was a striking example.

Dye House, where there is a convenient little chapel, was once noted for its camp meetings. It is believed to have been the birthplace of Ald. Charlton, though Mr. Carrick holds that the reformer was born at Corbridge. Charlton went to Blaydon when he was sixteen years of age, was a butcher in Newcastle when he was twenty, removed to Gateshead, and was Mayor of that borough for two years—1873 and 1874.

From Hardhaugh, another little village, there went out a youth, who was converted, together with his amiable sister, during revival services conducted by Mr. Snaith, and who was known throughout the Connexion as W. E. Crombie, secretary of the Alresford Orphan Home, and thereafter Governor of Elmfield College. Young Crombie and Henry Yooll, jun., were put on the plan together, and were candidates for the ministry at the same time, regarding which John Hallam had much to do. Some of the men and women who were to the fore in Hardhaugh old chapel in the sixties have fallen on sleep, and Warden new chapel stands as the representative of the parent structure, in which some of the elders are still serving their day and generation.

Acomb society has a record which some look back upon with feelings of pleasure. Of Hallington, James Young, who knows the region well, speaks of the generosity of John Hall in connection with the new chapel. John Snaith tells of the days when services were held in Hallington Hall, then occupied by three or four families, and when Thomas Richardson and his wife were so kind to the preachers. Mr. Snaith held revival meetings in the Hall, and two of the converts were John Hall and John Gilhespie. Ingoe had a chapel as early

as 1848. The Brodie, Harrison, and Proudlock families gave this village church strength and status long ago, and there are yet Harrisons to look after the concerns of the rural society. George Richardson, a remarkable man, also dwelt at Ingoe some years ago. Matthew T. Pickering says Richardson was noted for two things: his knowledge of the Scriptures was wonderful, and he was a seer. William Dawson, of Blyth, a native of Matten, and one of Richardson's spiritual children, writes:—“ Put him in your history, and say he was a man of God, who, being dead, yet speaketh in the heart and life of one among many he led to the Saviour, nursed in the faith, and set before him high ideals of Christian service.” Strange stories of an occult character are told about Richardson and Ralph Ramsey, of Bavington, and his wife. Ralph was singularly quaint and of great spiritual insight. He was of the band referred to by Mrs. Porteus, all of whom were held in high esteem for their consistency and goodness.

Space forbids us do more than mention the names of Matthew Lee, who became a travelling preacher in 1827; of the Simpsons, of Bavington—it was Martin who gathered the children into his own house, after the dispersion of the Sunday School; of Isaac Bulman, one of the first to join the Edmondbyers society in 1824; of old Mrs. Forster, of Hexham, who was a power in the society for over half-a-century; of Mrs. Hunter, a great friend of the preachers and a woman of rare intelligence and piety; of Bessie Dodds—“ Aunt Bessie ”—who, along with her brothers Adam (the travelling preacher), William, John, and Walter, was converted at Milfield, and who was connected with Corbridge society until her death a short time ago; of Ann Wilson, of Whittington, another woman of great force of character, converted at the first Stagshawbank camp meeting; of Ralph Martindale, of Muggleswick, who was a short time in the



ministry ; of Thomas Parker, of Bay Bridge, known far and wide as a local preacher, lived until his ninety-fifth year, and who has a grandson in the ministry—John T. Gallon, of Willington; and of Irwin Murray, of Hexham, the faithful.

Another chapter is opening in the history of Hexham Primitive Methodism, and Matthew Davison, J. Dixon, John Hall, John Davidson, W. Henderson, Richard Davison, John Lisle, J. Dent, Willie Maughan, H. T. A. Thew, and a host of other veterans, supported by E. S. Lee, J. W. Dent, G. Ridley, and many more of the younger men, have been witnesses of the dawning of the new era. It is many years since the Hebborn Memorial Chapel was built. In addition to his influence as a preacher, Henry Hebborn was connected with the circuit by marriage, his wife being a member of the Ridley family, several of whom were persons of position in the locality, and a chapel was erected to the memory of the popular minister in Hexham. Unfortunately, the position was not good, and for a long time that has militated against the fuller success of the society. A splendid site in Battle Hill was acquired years ago, but no movement to build was made until John G. Bowran became the superintendent minister in 1906; and, notwithstanding the terrible ordeal through which that gifted man passed in the loss of his wife, he put the scheme into such a position that a handsome suite of premises—church, schools, etc.—will be opened this summer. It is a commanding work, and the phenomenal scene at the foundation-stone laying on Whit-Monday, 1908, when over £1,300 was realised, was a tribute to the regard in which Mr. Bowran is held personally, as well as to his organising ability, his popularity as a minister and writer, and his capacity for work. It has been well said that the new church at Hexham is a triumph of tact, courage, and enthusiasm.

STILL ON THE BORDERLAND.

“ 'Wunz ! hear ye ! If God's coomen here, it's time aa wiz gannen. Let me be oot o' this ! ” An agitated woman thus gave vent to her feelings on December 3rd, 1822, while William Clowes was praying in Joseph Saint's kitchen at the Dye House, Haltwhistle. Clowes was on his journey from Carlisle to Hull Quarterly Meeting, and stopped at Haltwhistle on his way. A crowd had gathered in the aforesaid kitchen to hear the strange evangelist, and he prayed with his accustomed fervour, faith, and vivid realism of expression. All in the house were moved, and some were terrified. He pleaded for the Lord to come down among them, repeating the petition several times, and crying : “ Come, Lord ; come, come, c-o-m-e, c—o—m—e ! ” Then, rising into a more confident tone, he exclaimed : “ I hear the rumbling of His chariot wheels ! *He's coming ! He's c—o—m—i—n—g !* ” It was at this juncture that the woman quoted above could contain herself no longer, and fled from the house. Others followed her, while many that remained were shaking from head to foot.

Whether Clowes was the first Primitive Methodist to visit Haltwhistle is not clear. It is certain that members of the Saint family, if not others also in the locality, knew of the doings of the Primitives, and were ready to join the small society formed on that eventful winter night. Hexham Circuit took charge of the little band, and over twenty years afterwards Haltwhistle held the sixteenth place on the plan, even Cowburn and Henshaw being above it. Seventeen miles above Hexham, lying snugly in the Tyne valley, overlooked on the south by the rising swell of Plainmellor Fell, and hemmed in on the north by the well-known range of basaltic crag, crowned by the famous Roman Wall, Haltwhistle is an irregularly built old place. The remains of old Border

castles may be found not far away, recalling the strifes of ruder times, but we may not indulge in that alluring theme.

For six years after the soul-stirring meeting held by William Clowes, services took place in an old woollen factory belonging to the Saints, and Joseph Saint was the shepherd of the flock; but a chapel was built in 1828 in the "Mill Lonnen," half way down the Castle Bank, John Flesher and William Thackray being the preachers at the opening. The society then numbered four, all of one family, but they had raised about £100, and the membership soon rose to ten. Much good was done in the unpretentious building, and in it Joseph Parker, then a mere stripling, made one of his first, if not his very first, efforts at public speaking. Young Parker was very frequently in Haltwhistle, preaching and speaking on temperance. His association with Joseph Saint has been already referred to.

It was also in the Mill Lane Chapel where, in the spring of 1843, the Scotch missionaries, who were engaged and paid by "Douglas of Cavers," began a work which had a remarkable influence upon the inhabitants of Upper Tynedale. Douglas was the lineal descendant of the second Earl, who was killed by Percy at the Battle of Otterburn, 1388, and the mission was the evangelistic outcome of the Morisonian movement in Scotland. The work of conversion spread for miles around Haltwhistle, and "the consistent prominence of several who identified themselves with the Nonconformist churches," says the late William Hudspith, "and who became not only leaders in their societies, but prominent in business pursuits, helped to remove existing prejudices and to establish the societies in the goodwill of the people. The places of worship, which were few and insignificant, increased and were enlarged. These have since been doubled and quadrupled."

More than three-score years have sped since that great awakening, and yet there are some surviving who were borne into the kingdom by the upward impulse which then operated, notably T. Ridley, of Haltwhistle, and T. Carrick, of Keswick. Miss Pattinson, who subsequently became the wife of James Davison, of Dean Raw, was one of the converts of that time. Thomas Carrick was then sixteen years of age, and soon after his conversion he became a class-leader, having among his members his own mother and the wife of Adam Dodds, who was then stationed at Haltwhistle. Susannah Carrick had the joy of seeing her son Thomas—in 1847, when he was twenty years of age—become a preacher of the Word. He retired from the itinerancy in 1855, in consequence of his health giving way. The writer well remembers a night in Consett Chapel when another Susannah Carrick, the granddaughter of the former, gave herself to the Lord. It was in the sixties, after a sermon preached by Andrew Latimer, then one of the ministers, and a number of young people entered into the joy of God's salvation on that hallowed eve. In 1907, under the heading of "Octogenarian's Lay Sermon at Keswick," a local newspaper gives a digest of a sermon preached in the Wesleyan Chapel, Keswick, by Mr. T. Carrick, J.P., who is described as "one of the grand old men of Cumberland." "I am now over eighty years of age," he said to the writer in the autumn of 1907, "and never tasted intoxicating liquor or tobacco since I was born; and my children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren ditto."

During the winter of 1851 and the next spring many conversions took place at various villages, the most productive services being those at Angerton (a colliery village, four miles west of Haltwhistle) and Greenhead, the school-room in which the services were held being midway between the places named. Angerton no longer

appears on the plan, but Greenhead, where a chapel was built, has been a stirring place. When W. R. Widdowson was sent there by Conference he found strife about whether the chapels to be built at Greenhead and Coanwood should be connexional or unconnexional. Harry Proud, one of the "anti-connexionals" at Greenhead, and secretary of a club holding a piece of land which he was anxious Mr. Widdowson should buy for the chapel, was won over by the kindness and strategy of the minister, and the sanctuary was soon built. At Coanwood, one of the managers of the colliery, Thomas Walton, brother of Isaac Walton, was a connexional man; and some young men having been a short while before that converted in the village, a band of loyal trustees was soon got, and the work of building proceeded with.

In the matter of chapel-building Mr. Widdowson rendered a lasting service to the circuit, for he also got the Haltwhistle society out of the "Mill Lonnen" in 1863 into a more commodious building in a much better position. When he left, there was only about £200 debt on the three chapels, peace prevailed, and the membership of the circuit had considerably increased. In his reminiscences of Haltwhistle, Mr. Widdowson refers to the Saints; to an excellent family named Bell, grocers and drapers, three brothers and two sisters, all elderly, and all unmarried, Joseph being circuit steward; old John Carrick, father of Thomas; Tommy Coulson, John Maxwell, Thomas Ridley, George Carrick, "and, not least, Isaac Walton and his wife." He also speaks of William Armstrong, of the Whinshields, father of the secretary of the centenary movement, and of his dear friend James Davison (of Dean Raw), with whom he used to have many a talk, one of their topics being "the influence of our early work upon Dr. Morison (founder of the Evangelical Union Church of Scotland),



and perhaps the influence of Morison on our work " in that corner of Northumberland and Cumberland.

In 1836 a little chapel was built at Henshaw. That was the time when William Towler was superintendent of Hexham Circuit, and old members used to speak of the marvellous effects of his eloquence at the great camp meetings which were held in those days. Richard Thompson, a small landowner and remarkable local character, who was converted under Mr. Towler, gave the site for Henshaw Chapel, and it was the standing custom that the camp meeting should be held in one of his fields. He was also a composer of music, and his brother William was noted for his power as a singer. At the camp meetings his voice could be heard far along the hillsides. A writer in 1883 says :—" The society here has included among its members and adherents some racy specimens of country Methodist character." He names William Armstrong, his wife (who was converted under Mrs. Hallam), and sons, three of whom being local preachers and one a travelling preacher; John Thompson, of Cranberry, who is still alive and lives near Penrith; John Ridley, of Towhouse; the Hendersons, of Huntercrook; old Matthew Pearson, and several excellent and devoted women.

Out by the Roman Wall there were in those days Thomas Hogg, a genuine Border shepherd, " full of Scotch metaphysics and poetic sentiment," local preacher, class-leader, and leader of the choir at Cowburn; W. J. Legge, gamekeeper to Sir Edward Blackett, and quite a priest in the moorland parish; John Heslop, of Cowburn Shield (who died suddenly in 1908), and William Renwick, of Stone Faulds, also good samples of " ootbye folk." It is an interesting fact that Cowburn Chapel, built during the superintendency of John Gill, is the only place of worship between Haltwhistle and Scotland, going due north, and that in the school-room a day school was established.

Many interesting particulars were supplied to us by T. Pearson Ellis, the superintendent minister, in March, 1908. He tells us that Joseph W. Heslop, grandson of old William Thompson, who was related to the notable Martins, is a good worker at Henshaw; John Ridley, late of Towhouse, now lives at Croft House, Henshaw, is still society steward, has one son a class-leader and Sunday School superintendent at Henshaw, another a candidate for the ministry in Canada, also two daughters, a daughter-in-law, and a son-in-law members at Henshaw; Matthew Henderson, of the Huntercreek family, is in the Carlisle Circuit, and his brother William's widow and son (J. P. Henderson) live at the home farm, the latter being a Henshaw official; John Maxwell, circuit steward for many years, died in 1907; Gilchrist, of Greenhead; John F. Graham, a local preacher for forty-nine years, is still vigorous; Thomas Ridley, another local preacher; John Nicholson; James Weir's son Robert, a generous man; James Armstrong, of Whinshields, a fine strong man; John Richardson, of Harper Town, converted under James Jackson (a former superintendent), and who has been a member and local preacher at Coanwood for many years; Thomas Ritson, of Partridge Nest, Bardon Mill, elder brother of the present Connexional Editor, a local preacher for over fifty years, and who still takes appointments. Powels Carrick was sent into the ministry from this circuit; so also were Thomas Carrick, Robert Fairley, returned missionary, and John Wilkinson. Robert Walton, superintendent of Brandon Circuit, was born at Blenkinsopp Cottages; and near by Thomas Copeland, the father of the Methodist union movement at the Antipodes, first saw the light. In this circuit also William Walton, one of the front rank local preachers in East Northumberland, was reared.

But there is another yet to speak about. At

Whinshields Farm, which lies at the foot of Whinshields Crag, where the old Roman Wall attains its highest point between east and west, there was born to William Armstrong a son, in 1856, who was destined to become one of the great personalities in the Primitive Methodist Church. It could never have been predicted of the modest, retiring lad George Armstrong was, that the day would come when he would fill such a large space in the Connexion's life. But he was a thoughtful youth, became devoted to his father's God and people, and there burned in his soul hidden fires which only needed opportunities to burst into flame. The opportunities came; larger and broader than ever he could have dreamed possible in the quiet of his rural home, or even after he had entered the wider spheres of life. The foundations of his character were laid in his puritanic home, where he heard of the mighty things which the fathers of the Connexion had accomplished. A Dean Raw scholar, at seventeen he was put on the plan, and at twenty-four was a travelling preacher. The hand of the Lord was upon him for good while he was a circuit minister, and he resisted every attempt made to nominate him for any connexional office until the call came from God and the Church he served to take up the monumental work of Centenary Secretary.

There are now many capable young men growing up to be useful officials in the circuit. In Haltwhistle there are 370 scholars in the Sunday School, the largest, as it was the first, in the locality, and Robert Hudspith and Joseph Batey have had the oversight of it for nearly thirty years. The choir, of which William H. Batey, son of Joseph, is leader, is noted for its musical ability. There are 380 members in the station, and the church property is valued at £5,000, the total debt being £300.

## CHAPTER XIV.

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### DERWENT WAY: A REVELATION.

IT came as a revelation to many, even old officials in the North, when they read in Mr. Kendall's History that Winlaton had been the head of a circuit for three years, 1827-8-9, the latter year, of course, running to the Conference of 1830, when the station ceased to exist. At the period named Winlaton was a wild place, but that location of smiths was evidently of more importance, or seemed a better centre, than Blaydon or Shotley Bridge. In 1829, after preaching at Winlaton and Blaydon, Hugh Bourne remarks in his journal: "The work in this circuit appears to be going on well." During the three years the preachers who travelled in it were Anthony Race, J. Spencer, J. Harrison, Philip Bellwood, John Coulson, and Thomas Oliver. A plan for the first quarter of 1830 has upon it Winlaton, Barlow, Thornley, Blaydon, Dunston, Swalwell, Whickham, Hedley, Prudhoe, Wylam, Ovington, Kyo, White-le-Head, Pit Hill, Shield Row, Collierley Dykes, Handen Hold, Shotley Bridge, Newlands, and Medomsley. This wide tract had two travelling preachers, sixteen local preachers, and thirteen exhorters to work it. Other plans we have also seen, and there appear on them the names of W. Charlton, probably the father of the late John Charlton, of Blaydon; Blythe Hurst, who was so long vicar of Collierley; J. and M. Ward; J. Richardson and J.

Whitfield; B. Stokoe, who was closely identified with the early days of Blaydon; John Wrightson, who was in the ministry a short time, eventually locating at Blackhill and Consett; John and Adam Brodie, who had landed at Shotley Bridge from Ingoe about 1825 or 1826, and began business as tailors and clothiers, John becoming a man of note for many miles around, and was father of the late Thomas Brodie, an able minister, and of Matthew and Septimus, who hold official positions in the Consett Iron Company; and there is also a Halliday, an exhorter, the head of a family of that name once influential at White-le-Head.

William and Mary Surtees are named as the pioneers of Primitive Methodism at Winlaton, and the time stated is 1821-2, a society being then formed. That it has had varying fortunes may be taken for granted, the membership being at times as high as a hundred and as low as twenty. One of the most fruitful events which ever took place in the career of any society occurred here in 1845, when the Sunday School superintendent—understood to have been the late James Hurst, "General Jimmy," a tower of strength in the days of struggle—invited the late Matthew T. Pickering to join the school. Matthew, the eldest of the family, was fifteen years of age at the time, and had been six years at work in the pits. He accepted the invitation, was made a teacher forthwith, and this circumstance was the turning-point in the lives of his brothers and sisters—men and women who, together with their offspring, have played a conspicuous part in Northern Primitive Methodism. Matthew rose to great influence in and around Winlaton, and subsequently in the Blyth neighbourhood, both as a man, a preacher, and a mining official, and many a man in the ranks of the itinerant and local ministry feel yet the fragrance of his life. Several times he was delegate to District Meeting and



Conference, and in local and national politics took a keen interest and occupied representative positions. At one and the same time three brothers—Matthew, John, and Robert Pickering—were circuit stewards: the first at Blyth, the second at Blaydon, and the third at Sunderland.

John followed his brother Matthew in joining the Primitives, then Robert, then Ralph, all of them youths. The first-named, a capable business man, recalls with pride that he has had the fellowship of thirteen ministers who have been Presidents of Conference. Ralph was a local preacher, and did good work during his long connection with Nelson Street, Newcastle. The Central Church was opened before he died. One of his sons is a respected local preacher in the Ashington Circuit, and another—William—is a minister, whose energy, gifts, and acquirements have excited great expectations in the minds of the leaders in the District. Sunderland Primitive Methodism—and Sunderland town, for that matter—knows Robert Pickering. He went to the Wearside town in 1856, and has been a successful local preacher for over half-a-century, as well as a business man of probity and fidelity. Throughout the immense Sunderland Circuit of his younger days and in the pulpits of other churches he has been a welcome minister. Devoted to Sunday School work, he was president of the Sunderland Sunday School Union in 1891. Jane and Lizzie, sisters of these splendid brothers, have also been of special service. The former, on her removal to London, had, for the sake of convenience, to join the Wesleyans, and it is her joy to have a son in the ministry of that church. The latter is the widow of the late Edward Holmes, who was so prominently connected with Nelson Street Chapel, Newcastle. After losing her husband, Mrs. Holmes was a useful member in West Street society, and now holds a responsible position in

the management of the domestic affairs of the famous Mill Hill School, London.

In the front line of our younger ministers Matthew T. Pickering stands to-day, and he is the son of the collier lad who accepted the invitation of the Winlton school superintendent in 1845. Wherever he has been stationed the churches felt the glow of his enthusiasm and the inspiration of his mind, and God has set His seal upon his ministry in an unmistakable way in the conversion of souls. His administrative abilities are acknowledged in the District and in the Connexion, and wide a sphere as he already fills, he is only at the start. And all this in the history of one family was brought about by the kindly act of a Sunday School teacher in a village which has few attractions.

A realistic, yet beautifully tender, description of a week-night service fifty years ago in the old chapel at Winlton, surrounded by the glare of the low-roofed, one-storied blacksmiths' shops, has been sent us by an able correspondent, but only a touch or two of it can be given :—

“A score of voices of varying *timbré*, at the invitation of Matthew Pickering (whom the Angels of Love and Patience made their own), join in singing “Thou Shepherd of Israel and mine,” after which we are led to the Presence by simple heart-language. Jackey Parker prays with open eyes, fixed on the ceiling, and his wheezy voice, and his wrinkles become less prominent as he speaks of guidance and deliverance from his difficulties. William Armstrong, with the wooing note, gently and smilingly leads us from our doubts and fears. Then came the sonorous tones of George Spark, telling of perils manifold, but in the darkness of the mine there was still the gracious light; and how that voice rolled and swelled as he prayed that we might, ‘like Zachariah and Elizabeth,’ go ‘hand in hand through Emmanuel’s land, to fairer words on high’; then it broke as he told of those who had gone before. Robert Brooks, whose personality was unique, and whose seventy years sat lightly upon him, rejoiced that Jesus was the end of the law. ‘He has conquered for Brooks; oh, hallelujah!’ he would exclaim; and as he prayed the fading sunlight made his hair appear whiter than any fuller on earth could whiten it, and ‘the light that never was on sea or land’ illumined both the speaker and his fellow-worshippers. Then Tommy Warren, the singer saint, took his part; he whose optimistic faith carried him through sorrows and over difficulties which would have paralysed

less heroic souls. Ellison Clark, calm and judicial, and others less frequently heard, followed. Women were there, who came to keep their tryst and meet their Lord, and were not disappointed; and young people were drawn and held by the mystic contagion, the influence of which lingers with some to this day."

By a fortunate purchase of old property the chapel emerged from the obscurity it originally had, and a few suitable changes and alterations have literally transformed it. Seasons of grace have sweetened and invigorated the life of the society, which has at its head the enthusiastic Thomas Renwick, Thomas Moore and his wife and son, H. A. Ridley, Thomas Irving, F. J. Hogg, Thomas Curry, and R. J. Walker.

While we are in the locality, we must needs take up the tale of the circuit in which Winlaton is now included. Blaydon became the head of a station in 1894. William Dent says the town was missioned from Hexham, Jane Ansdale being one of the first preachers. Many were converted under her ministry, several of whom became local preachers and leaders. Jeremiah Gilbert held a service at Blaydon in November, 1823, which began about six in the evening, and continued until three the next morning. Mr. Dent regarded Thomas Waller as the most important man in the Blaydon society—a superior local preacher, mighty in prayer, and benevolent to a fault. John Parker and his wife—converted with other members of both families at Catton in 1831—were also notable figures in the infant church.

At one period erratic, Blaydon, nevertheless, kept the revivalistic element within it, and rose to stability and strength. The chapel built during the superintendency of William Dent has been held in reverence by two generations, and has been the birthplace of many souls. For years, however, the society has needed better accommodation, and a new site, in a central situation, has been secured, at a cost of £1,000. When Newcastle Second was divided into three circuits, Blaydon,

Winlaton, Winlaton Mill, Hedgefield, Crawcrook, Rowland's Gill, and Blaydon Haughs became a station, with Joseph Tweddle as superintendent. Though regarded as the least hopeful of the three, its success has been remarkable in every respect. Along with Winlaton, Blaydon in 1897 experienced abundant blessing, and one of the many converts—James L. Baggott—is now in the ministry.

The building of a chapel in the quaint little hamlet of Winlaton Mill by a few heroic Primitives forty years ago was a great achievement, and it has been made useful in the promotion of the Kingdom of God. Hedgefield, or "The Addison," as it is locally termed, has been the scene of many triumphs for the Lord. What times of refreshing and exaltation have been enjoyed in that plain chapel, when William Maughan, the redoubtable Moody, the Erringtons, John Watson, and others were in their prime! Rowland's Gill Chapel, the outcome of a branch of Winlaton Mill society, and built in 1883, was a fortunate adventure, and in the near future a suite of church premises in keeping with the growing importance of the place will be erected on additional land recently acquired. Many years ago, the late William Paxton, a tradesman of prominence in the locality, devoted much time and attention to Blaydon Haughs, establishing a Sunday School, then having preaching services, and eventually, largely through his generosity, a chapel was built there.

The development of Crawcrook and its surroundings has been one of the wonders of the marvellous expansion of the coal industry in the North. Cradled in a small cottage at Woodside, approaching fifty years ago, and nourished by the Shotley Bridge Circuit, the society of six or eight members thereafter removed to the Emmaville Colliery, to a cottage occupied by a family named Yelder, and thence to a small meeting-house

vacated by the Independants. In 1875, the society again "flitted"—this time to the old Wesleyan Chapel, where it worshipped for twenty years. Increasing congregations compelled the members to build. A school-chapel was first erected, and in 1908 a handsome church was reared by the side of it. Revivals of a memorable character have taken place in the village in recent years, one of the converts—Michael Featherstone—during Mr. Tweddle's term, being now a travelling preacher. Of those who have passed within the veil in the course of the years, John Pearson, Martin Cockbain, John Rowell, Joseph Charlton, and William Westgarth are remembered for their fidelity to God. The testimony of Edwin Richardson, who has been the able minister there for some years, is that "for a working-class church, it is a model of what such churches should be."

Beyond those already named, there is a gallant army of workers in the circuit, such as the stewards, William Wilson and F. L. Brown; E. R. Davison, Alfred Skidmore, Matthew Kirsop, Thomas Beveridge, and Walton Holmes, Blaydon; Ralph Featherstone, William and John Armstrong, William Cameron, Joseph Charlton, Joseph Rutherford, and Joseph Lee, Crawcrook; James Laverick, and William, Edward, and Henry Purvis, Hedgefield; William Forster and William Biggins, Rowland's Gill; John Geddes and William Findlaw, Blaydon Haughs. In March, 1908, the circuit had 420 members and church property of the value of £6,699.

#### UP THE RIVER.

Placid, pastoral, picturesque Shotley Bridge has had its pretty outskirts invaded by rude industry since the first Primitive Methodist missionaries first visited it, and pits and ironworks have blackened and distorted the landscape. Of course, these distortions have had their compensations. Missioned by the Darlington



branch in 1822, then included in the Barnard Castle branch, next in the Westgate branch, thereafter in Winlaton Circuit, subsequently a branch of Newcastle, and ultimately made a circuit in 1843, Shotley Bridge had a devious career in twenty years. The day of small things was passing away when it was granted autonomy, and the phenomenal expansion of the coal trade and the colossal development of the Consett Ironworks caused thousands of inhabitants to pour into the region around.

In the spring of 1822, F. N. Jersey was at Satley and Shotley Bridge. He preached at the latter place on Sunday, March 24th, and in the evening formed a society of five at Ebchester Bridge. But Newlands was the crowning scene of the visit. The meeting was held on the following Wednesday, and so powerfully were the people wrought upon that, after a long service, some of the mourners went into a wood and wrestled with God for pardon until the morning. The first class does not seem to have been formed at Shotley Bridge until the July, yet it appears to have been a kind of sub-branch when William Suddards was appointed to it by the Hull June quarter day. Thomas Batty was at Shotley on October 29th, and had a joyful season. He was back again in another month, and then at Christmas. A prayer meeting at five in the morning, a united communion service at ten, preaching service at half-past one, and a lovefeast in the evening—that was how that Christmas Day was spent. The lovefeast was such a time as Batty confessed he had seldom witnessed. Testimonies were interrupted by penitents seeking liberty. "It was a Pentecost indeed."

A few days before that—December 16th—the land on which the chapel was built at Cutlers' Hall, the second Primitive Methodist Chapel opened in the county of Durham, was conveyed by Robert Taylor, of Knitsley, yeoman, and William Robson, of Shotley

Bridge, grocer, to William Coulson, of Newlands, mason; John Gibson, of Hexham, clogger; William Littlefair, of Witton-le-Wear, shoemaker; John Dover Muschamp, of Brotherlee, Stanhope, gentleman; William Mole, of Shotley Bridge, sword-grinder; Robert Nevin, of Newlands, tailor; William Nicholson, of Shotley Bridge, joiner; Robert Smith, of Wolsingham, tailor; Hector Sutherland, of Shotley Bridge Gate, yeoman; John Ward, of Newlands, millwright; Henry Wilkinson, of Newlands, shoemaker; Leybourne Wilson, of Shotley Bridge, shoemaker; William Willis, of Stanhope, miner; and John Wilson, of Hexham, joiner. Every name, including that of the chapel, teems with interest, "Cutlers' Hall" and Mole, the sword-grinder, recalling the days when the German sword-cutlers came to the Derwent Valley in the time of William III.

But the historic event which concerns us most in this record was a camp meeting held at Collierley Dykes, on August 3rd, 1823. Mr. Batty says it was held by the request of the people in the neighbourhood, "as there was much prejudice, and it was thought it would be a means of removing it in a measure." It was a delightful morning, and "the hosts of Israel issued forth from their different tents in full expectation of a triumphant victory over the combined forces of hell, earth, and sin." From Shotley Bridge, Newlands, and various other quarters the people trooped, and at prayer the loud "Amens" were "such as to rend the very heavens, and make hell's gates tremble." Rain interrupted the proceedings in the forenoon, and in the afternoon (as it still rained heavily) services were conducted in a barn, under sheds, or wherever there was protection from the wet, the preachers being Thomas Batty, F. N. Jersey, and Jeremiah Gilbert. While the lovefeast was going on in the barn, in the evening, a

woman fell down, and cried for mercy, then another, and another, "until about thirty fell down and got liberty." A great work of grace had broken out amongst the colliers previous to the camp meeting, and the outcome of that eventful gathering was the foundation of the prosperity of succeeding years in that locality.

When the document applying for independency—signed by John Parrott, president; William Alderson, secretary—was sent to Newcastle in March, 1843, the membership was 329, and the quarter's income was £30 11s. 4½d. Three vigorous circuits now occupy the area, and in 1908 the respective quarterly income was—Shotley Bridge, £122 13s. 1d., apart from a balance from the previous quarter of £78 19s. 10d. and £18 5s. 6d. for the Centenary Fund; Stanley, £126 13s. 4½d.; Burnopfield, £108 17s. 8½d.—total, £358 4s. 2d. Membership: Shotley Bridge, 800; Stanley, 1,052; Burnopfield, 514—total, 2,366. The value of the church property is between £40,000 and £50,000.

Cutlers' Hall Chapel became too small, and one was built in Wood Street on a bank side, in which numbers who have passed to the skies were born from above. It was superseded in 1895 by an attractive church, built on the main road, at a cost of £2,121. Among the many revivals which took place in Wood Street Chapel, that conducted by John Lowery somewhere about fifty years ago was an epoch-making time, as also was the movement at Consett, led by the same evangelist. People for miles around had got blessed in "the Berryedge revival," and they wanted the evangelist to visit their own places. Though it was sneeringly said that the methods good enough for the Consett puddlers would never do for the respectable inhabitants of Shotley Bridge, Lowery went there after "the Lord had told him that He was going to begin a great work at

Shotley." Lowery's intense tenacity brought him victory when he was a pugilist, and with the same pugnacity he wrestled with the forces of darkness after his conversion, at the same time keeping grip of the promises of God. He went to the meetings at Shotley Bridge from his knees, and told the assemblies how many would be converted; and it came to pass.

For generations the glow of Shotley has been a precious tradition, and it was during those periods that Thomas Brodie, Robert Huddlestone, A. J. Campbell, and E. Campbell, ministers; John Brodie, jun., William Campbell, William Urwin (whose choir became immensely popular), James Ainslie, James Leadbitter, Thomas Huddlestone, John R. Telford, and hosts of other useful men and women, many of whom have gone to their reward, were made anew in Christ Jesus. In 1875 and 1876 there was a fruitful movement in the town and district, and the first missionary was a mere youth, John Foster, who had been converted at North Wylam two years before. He had been a prodigy as a putter and hewer. Unapproached as a coal-winner, he has also been successful as a soul-winner. In his work at Shotley Bridge, Blackhill, and Consett, the Campbells were among his first trophies, and the brothers Huddlestone were converted about the same time. John Foster has given a good account of himself in the ministry of the word, and his son in the gospel, A. J. Campbell, is known wherever the denominational magazines are read, and in England and Scotland has inspired thousands by his power of heart, brain, and tongue. Miss Bulmer also conducted a fine mission in 1892, and speaks with warmth of the support she had from William Campbell, James Leadbitter, William Urwin, James Fox, Thomas Mackay, George Swailes, Mrs. W. Renwick, and Mrs. Sherratt. There are other names which should not be omitted—old Thomas

Huddlestone, for instance; Alex. Seed, too, and the bluff and hearty Amos. Then there was old Edward Wardhaugh, the father-in-law of John Atkinson and William Campbell, the grandfather of three ministers, and the great-grandfather of another, the latter being A. J. Campbell's son. One peculiarity of Shotley Bridge Circuit is that it has what it is pleased to call a "deed poll member"—George Turner, who may be styled the local Primitive Methodist historian, and who has afforded us special help, was, in December, 1908, elected a permanent member of the quarterly meeting.

The progress at Blackhill has been exceptional. At one time a mere farmstead, it is now a populous town, and Primitive Methodism has kept pace with the growth. The first place of their own was an insignificant cottage-looking structure, in which the late Mrs. Walton, mother of John Walton, of Newcastle, was a leading member and chief hostess of the preachers. Subsequently the growing society built what was regarded as a choice sanctuary in the same locality; and, last of all, the commanding church and capacious school and halls, where there are 170 members, flocks of scholars and Endeavourers, and large congregations, which demonstrate the greatness of the stride which has been made. Those who were privileged to be present at the District Meeting services in this fine edifice in 1908 are not likely to forget the high occasion. J. Kirk, the senior circuit steward, resides at Blackhill.

Consett had an evil name at one time, but Primitive Methodists won many victories for their Master there. Some of the most godless men in the kingdom were savingly converted in the chapel built in Trafalgar Street in 1842, and to-day not a few of their children's children are actively engaged in Christian work in their native place and elsewhere. The revival in which John Lowery was the chief instrument was the beginning of



a new era in Primitive Methodism in Consett, and the much larger chapel at the bottom of Front Street was opened in the spring of 1865. In the strenuous sixties Thomas Carrick was in the fulness of his splendid powers; "old Mister Brodie," as the patriarch was always called, was in the thick of the fray; George Nesbitt, too, the Gledstones, and Robert Telford, the circuit steward; also the band represented by Isaac Unsworth and Thomas White, and the younger phalanx, of which the veteran Isaiah Pratt is about the best known now; behind which came the striplings, of whom Thomas T. Harvey (who was elected a member of Jarrow Town Council in February, 1909), Andrew S. Coates, John Charlton, and Tom Hull are fair samples of fidelity and efficient labour. George Lowes, a mighty man in many ways, then lived "doon the hill." Some years ago the visit of Miss Bulmer to Consett was attended with much blessing, and a mission in the spring of 1908 demonstrated that the evangelistic spirit still abides in Consett. The death of Mrs. Bowe, mother of William Bowe (for this well-known minister went out from Consett), in her ninety-third year, robbed the society of a member who was in many respects a remarkable woman. Her grandson, Tom Smith, a Primitive of the fourth generation, is a zealous official at Consett. But the future of Consett Church promises to far eclipse the past in material possessions and numbers, for a more capacious church and schools are to be erected at the top of Delves Lane.

The first Sunday School in the circuit was planted at Consett and the second at Knitsley Grange, a chapel having been built at the latter place in 1842 by Gordon Black, of Sunderland, and in which Hugh Bourne spoke in the following year. Many years ago the Thompsons and the Chalders were the leading families in the rural sanctuary.

Altogether Primitive Methodism has had a remarkable history in the sweet and airy village of Castleside. Joseph Pattinson, a native of Alston, converted under Thomas Batty, was the originator of the society in 1831 or 1832. He and his brother Thomas and their families also established churches at Mosswood and Muggleswick, the latter being at one time a strong society, from which Robert Pattinson, who only died in 1906, went into the ministry, and William Bee went to Canada in 1854. Jane Coulthard, Mary Kirk, Ann Bowman, and Margaret Hodgson were women of mark in the early years of Castleside society. William Bacon Earl, who rose to distinction in the Connexion and in business circles in Sunderland, is credited with being the chief factor in the building of the chapel in 1842, having associated with him in the trust John Natrass, Castleside; John Featherstone, Fox Hales; Lancelot Black, manager, Consett Ironworks; Joseph Proud, Consett Ironworks; John Pattinson, Ebchester; John Lee, Mosswood, and others. Some are of opinion that Hugh Bourne preached the opening sermons of the first chapel. Twenty years afterwards John Mole, Robert Douglas, T. Lister, T. Pattinson, jun., Matthew Lee, Robert Robson, George Metcalf, Thomas Raine, George Stephenson, and many noble women sustained the cause. On June 3rd, 1884, Mrs. R. Walton, of Stanhope, a native of the village, laid the foundation-stone of a beautiful new church, the site being the gift of the late George Stephenson. An organ was put in after the church was built, and there is no debt on the premises. John Richardson, Robert Carr (now deceased), and Robert Pattinson (M.D., now of Michigan), went from Castleside into the ministry. Frank B. Raine has done good evangelistic and other work in Yorkshire, and Henry Potts has been of great service to Kingsley Terrace Church, Newcastle, as Sunday

School superintendent and choir leader, in the latter capacity doing honour to Thomas Raine, who conducted the village choir for forty-five years. There are Raines, Pattinsons, Lees, and Prouds yet in the society; Bainbridge also, and Jewitt, Ripley, Wales, Milner, Hutchinson, Vipond, and Peadon. For intelligence and liberality Castleside has a record difficult to surpass.

Thomas Yates has stated that Leadgate was missioned in the connexional year 1845-6, when there was conspicuous prosperity in the station. Possibly attempts had been made to form a society there before 1845; and that there were members in the village (which is only a mile from Consett), when the missioning specified took place, cannot well be doubted, for the new society reported sixty-two members in 1846. When Thomas Richardson reached the village he inspired his fellow-members to build a chapel, as he had done at Walbottle and Wingate, and it was accomplished with a struggle. Hawdon, Fleming, Rowe, Lowden, Robson (father of William Robson, who went into the ministry from Leadgate), and Lammonby were among the leading men in the sixties. Another chapel was built in 1875, and a larger one is needed.

Bradley Cottages, where it need not be said the society was born in a dwelling-house, had as early shepherds Robert Brown and his kindly wife, and got a chapel in 1894. And who that went to Allendale Cottages thirty or forty years ago are likely to forget William Richardson, the gentle and true? The village had not been long in existence until the Primitives had a place of worship in it; but a better one was soon needed, and in 1874 one was erected to accommodate 330 hearers. The ups and downs of Waskerley Park—in the Gowland and Robson days—cannot be detailed here. There was, at the worst, always a faithful remnant, imbued with the spirit of the dales, and the

later permanency, with a Raine as steward, is, perhaps, due to that fact, and to the further fact that the chapel built for £600 in 1902 is debtless. Shildon and Ramshaw will bring up many memories in the minds of the older generation. Beautiful spirits have been reared in this lovely region, and one of the loveliest was Mary Oliver, of Blanchland. Not allowed to have a chapel in their own village, the Blanchland members had to climb the hill to Shildon to a rented room, and the hospitable Olivers—Joseph Oliver, of Durham, is one of the family—were ever in the forefront of the noble few. The steward of the tiny society now is Mrs. T. Oliver; while the steward of Ramshaw (where a small chapel was built in 1877) bears the honoured name of Ridley.

Another outlying village in a different direction is Butsfield, about two miles from Satley, which William Clowes and other fathers of the Connexion visited. Both Satley and Butsfield were on the Winlaton plan in 1827, but it was at the latter village—or rather at John Willis's farmhouse—in 1837 that a permanent society was established. Years afterwards a cottage was obtained from the owner of the estate by Mr. Willis, and it was opened for worship by the late Edward Rust. The gallant few have struggled on, and George Scott, one of the veterans, is still engaged in the good work. At Satley, where there used to be seasons of power, but where there is no cause now, the society worshipped for a short period in the house of Mr. Allison, whose son is at present a prominent member of Consett Wesleyan Church. In the last month of 1865 there was a small society of six members at Lanchester—Thomas Kasher, John Thompson, John Jacques, and their wives. Charles Puckering, a local preacher, arrived in the ancient village at that time, and he joined the little company. He has been con-

nected with it ever since, and his sons are treading in his footsteps. For more than three years services were held in the members' houses, then a cottage was taken, subsequently a joiner's shop, and then the present chapel was built in 1884, to which a school was added in 1893, and a larger school and other rooms in 1906. So grew the little one of 1865.

#### WOMEN IN THE VAN.

But we must hurry Stanley way. At the lovefeast following the historic camp meeting at Collierley Dykes in 1823, W. Anderson (uncle of Robert Gray, of Felling), and Jane Luke were converted, and it was in the house of the latter, at Shield Row, where services were first held. Some time afterwards Betty Gilchrist, the old schoolmistress, offered her large kitchen for worship. This was accepted, and the old lady was leader of the singing and leader of the class. It was here that the Hallidays used to meet originally, also Mark Lowden, and the notable Tommy Fenwick. Two houses were got in 1853 from Mr. Joicey, and the partition wall was taken down. In this place John Lowery met with marvellous success. Robert Gray was among the converts in that revival.

Another powerful movement took place under John Dodgson, and so great were the effects that the present chapel (which has been much altered from the original) was built. John, William, and Thomas Batey and James Barrass and his family joined the society about that time, and evangelism became the order of the day. Striking conversions took place, some becoming local preachers—William Atkinson, now of South Moor; H. Rule (dead), William Price, and George Jobling, who went to Australia and is still preaching there.

Stanley was made the head of a circuit in 1868, and some of the Shotley Bridge officials expected that the



twelve societies would soon want to be back again to the mother circuit. But, with Andrew Latimer and John Welford at their head, from its very start the new station went with a swing. The growth in numbers and finance was the wonder of all onlookers, and the powerful Stanley and Burnopfield circuits of the present will have no conception of what they owe to the ministers named. There were a few places in those days it was difficult to get a footing into. Craghead and South Moor were examples, and they were "sinks of iniquity." But an entrance was effected, and at Craghead, in the house of A. Redhead, some of the most pronounced blackguards in the village were brought to the Saviour through the labours of the late Philip Reay, of Annfield Plain, Robert Gray, and others. To-day there is a well-built chapel, several local preachers, and a good society in the village. Burnhope was also missioned, or re-missioned, with success, and a chapel was built at South Moor a few years ago. At Tanfield Lea John Coe opened his house for services, and he and his married son got saved. They were the means of obtaining a site from Mr. Joicey, on which a good chapel was built, and now there is a strong cause in the village.

From Tanfield Lea Miss Bulmer emerged in the spring of 1888, and the girl became a power in Northern Primitive Methodism. After she had been an evangelist for six years, she was asked to conduct a mission in her own home chapel at Tanfield Lea. William Gelley was superintendent of the circuit at the time, and Miss Bulmer says she will never forget his unwearied efforts and burning zeal for souls. Many fine young men and women were added to the church during the mission, and, with few exceptions, are the life of the cause in that village to-day. In addition to the Coes, the Pyles were also devoted souls; and James

Huggins, John Long, Henry Mudd, and many young lieutenants are striving earnestly to make this day even brighter than the past days.

West Pelton society of the past is now known as Grange Villa, and is a powerful church. It was full of vigour forty years ago, when it had no place of its own, when it was famous for its fiddles—one of them was an enormous instrument, played by a brother named Thompson—and when it had one of the best local preachers (Thomas Harrison) in the entire of the Shotley Bridge Circuit. The veteran George Potts, the Haddons—James is the present circuit steward—Ben and Mark Burrige, and John Emmerson have done good work. West Pelton claims to have sent into the ministry James Waggott, Bartholomew Haddon, and Thomas Harrison; while other societies in the locality have supplied John Pearson, John Strong, and John Clennel.

In the course of its migrations, in the days of its infancy, the little society of Oxhill held its services in a small office at the end of the coke ovens, in 1871. Tommy Fenwick was living there then, and the venerable Jane Luke, Miles Handy, John Smith, Blenkinsopp, and Beatham; and when Robert Gray joined them, a chapel scheme was floated, and floated with conspicuous success. Blest with a most assiduous society steward (William Paxton) and other enthusiastic officials, Oxhill has flourished.

After many years of stress, Greencroft is now established, and William Natrass has been its fostering spirit. East Stanley has good men and true in it, but none more so than Bartholomew Johnson, who was circuit steward for many years. Edward Heslop has lived to see the day of better things at Burnhope; and at Kyo Laws, in the revival at which J. C. Sutcliffe had a leading part, there is a healthy cause, nourished

by William McClenning and others. In other connections, Joseph Bainbridge, Fred and Henry Manistre, and Matthew Armstrong have rendered worthy service. The mention of the Manistres cannot fail to bring to mind the appalling explosion at West Stanley, on Feb. 16th, 1909, when over 160 men and boys lost their lives. Fred Manistre had a miraculous escape, but two of his sons and a nephew were among the killed. Thomas Coulson and his son, Allan Miller and his son, William Jefferson, John Johnson (East Stanley), and George Fewster, all associated with the Primitives, were also among the victims. Mark Henderson, a deputy-overman, who belongs to a Primitive Methodist family, did heroic work in that disaster.

The rise of Annfield Plain from a few wooden houses and a pit row or two to a busy town has taken place within living memory. Many troubles, financial and from pit-workings, have beset the chapels built at "the Plain" since the forties, but the fine church and school held there by the Primitives to-day are commensurate with the growth of the town. It is stated by Mr. Gray that the first known Primitive Methodist who ever visited Annfield Plain was called "Canaan," that being the hymn he sang, and Phil Robson, the singing carpenter then at the place, did not know the preacher's name. Philip Bellwood located there after he ceased to be an itinerant preacher, and for a long period was a zealous and acceptable local preacher. Here also lived and laboured dear old Christopher Graham—"Kit," the rugged Borderer, with his great voice, his humour, and his immense faith—going home only a short time ago. John Taylor, Tommy Fenwick, James Johnston (the carrier), Thomas Armstrong, and other veterans were in their heyday in the sixties, when John W. Taylor, the present member of Parliament for Chester-le-Street, turned his feet into the ways of God's

testimonies. One night, about thirteen years ago, while Philip Reay was conducting a meeting at the Plain, Tom Spears led to the front a ragged prodigal, and the Lord saved him. This convert could neither read nor write, and William Gelley, the late David Kyles, and others took an interest in him. He became a preacher, and there is no better known evangelist in the North at present than William Willis. Thomas Holland, his associate in the gospel, is also a product of Stanley Circuit.

Stanley has been favoured with noble labourers in word and doctrine. Thomas Brodie, of the catholic mind and tender spirit, and his excellent wife; William Bowe, of the administrative temperament; William Gelley, of the fiery soul, during whose five years the membership rose from 533 to 860, and the quarterly income from £50 to £87. These are but a sample since the significant opening of Latimer and Welford. Miss Bulmer was called upon to stand in the breach, first of all when Richard Robinson, the superintendent, died in 1899, shortly after his entrance into the circuit, and, in the second place, when the youthful and gifted David Kyles died about a year afterwards. In her native station, and under circumstances almost without a parallel, for two years Miss Bulmer did the work of a travelling preacher with results which will live for ever. Nor will the tender ministries of Thomas Sellors, the present superintendent, and his devoted wife, in the awful experience through which the station has just passed, be soon forgotten.

#### ON THE OTHER HILL.

On the other hill from Stanley stands White-le-Head, and its name was given to the new circuit made from Stanley in 1884, Emerson Phillipson being first superintendent. With it Marley Hill and Causey Row at the

top of the valley were added, together with the societies stretching Tynwards to the Spen. For reasons of convenience the name of the circuit was changed to Burnopfield. John W. Taylor, M.P., and James G. Taylor, J.P. (brothers), stand for much at Dipton, which is the more modern name of Collierley Dykes, where the notable camp meeting of 1823 was held. In the little old chapel built there much good was done; but the late Ralph Shields did well to get a more convenient place erected, the prosperity of the society therein soon demanding more room. An excellent church, school, and class-rooms have just been reared, at a cost of £2,400. Causey Row brings to mind the Lawson family, who shepherded the little flock in the past. Thomas Oates, a man of piety and usefulness, will be remembered at the Causey; and C. Taylor, W. Turnbull, and J. Bainbridge make it their care now. The chapel was put up in 1866, and in the winter of the next year there was a powerful revival. Spen is doing well, with Emmerson, Potter, Charlton, Smith, Lee, and others as its guardians.

Hamsterley, after many years of ups and downs, is now prosperous. In 1884 an iron structure was erected, and the progress afterwards was of a more stable character. A new chapel has just been built. Victoria Garesfield was missioned by Thomas Brabban and others soon after the colliery started, and for a long period it has been regarded as one of the finest societies in the circuit. It keeps on its peaceful, generous, useful way, with the Barkers and the Gardners at the front. Whinfield, a new village near to Victoria Garesfield, was entered seven years ago, and the trustees of the latter place gave £80 out of their funds towards the building of a school-chapel. A society of over thirty members there is full of promise. The once rural hamlet of Greenside is rising into importance as a colliery



village, and a society has been gathered therein. Burnopfield Village, though the circuit takes its name from it, has had no Primitive Methodist church in it, but that lack will not long continue. Burnopfield Colliery, however—better known a generation ago as “the Hobson”—has long been the scene of courageous endeavour by the Primitives. What days of prayer and power were there experienced since 1850, after Robert Pearson (father of John Pearson, the minister), went to live at it, and when John Lowery laboured there! The building of the first chapel about 1859 was a memorable event, voluntary workers hewing the stones out of a quarry near by. At the time when Thomas Hetherington was at the height of his power, and when John Strong was shaping for the ministry, there was a special season of grace. Another chapel has taken the place of the plain erection by the roadside, and the glory of the latter house has, in some respects, excelled that of the former. Ald. H. Curry Wood is a potent factor in the circuit and society, and J. W. Bell, John Brabban, B. Davison, C. Hall, H. Ainslie, J. Gilliland, and others are also leal supporters of the cause.

White-le-Head was missioned in the early days, when most of the populous places in the locality only existed as farm-places or a few cottages, and was on the Winlaton plan in 1828. Many years elapsed, however, before a home was found for the society. At length, under the direction of Andrew Latimer, a chapel was built, and a much larger church has been erected during the superintendency of Burnhope Dennison, whose hands have been full of chapel-building throughout his term. Crisp, Dawson, Nicholson, Pyle, Harrison, and Atkinson lead the zealous company. Young, eager, resourceful Chopwell—helped in the hour of its extremity by the liberality of the Colliery Company—officered by strenuous men like C. C. McColvin, J.

Egglestone, B. Hall, R. Armstrong, J. Cree, W. Robinson, J. Dixon, and R. Morgan—with its sixty members and their proof of knowing what their obligations are—should produce a story in the near future worth reciting. A chapel, built in the village in 1901, costing £1,550, was destroyed by the colliery workings three years or so afterwards. Though compensation was given, the loss was not fully recovered, and another building scheme had to be faced. This was done with courage and success.

And there is Marley Hill—influential, exhilarating for half-a-century! Marley Hill and the Brabbans—William and Thomas, and their families—not forgetting Ralph Turnbull, George Chismond, Daniel Wright, John Brown, John Gray, and Sarah Gray, the last-named once a successful evangelist and missionary collector. Whickham society first missioned Marlow Hole, as it was called in 1841, and in the following year the services were removed to Bowes Bridge, near by, but it was a feeble cause, and was eventually forsaken. A society of five members was gathered, however, in 1847, during the time of William Dent and Henry Pratt, and in 1853 the first chapel was built when Adam Dodds and Thomas Carrick travelled in the Shotley Bridge Circuit. In recent years a modern church and schools have been erected, and at the head of the enterprise was Thomas Brabban, than whom a more active and devoted member and official of the Connexion it would be difficult to find. The hospitality of the family is known far and wide. Walter Rouse, W. Lawson, T. Armstrong, and many more are also earnestly working to keep Marley Hill in the van.

## CHAPTER XV.

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### HUTTON RUDBY'S FIRST-BORN.

**A**FTER we have wandered over Hull's North-Western Mission and its amazing products, we have at last got to the no less fascinating Northern Mission. And South Shields must have the first place. True, the earliest record available of a Primitive Methodist missionary having visited the lower reaches of the Tyne is the scene in Sandgate, Newcastle, on August 1st, 1821, when John Branfoot attempted to speak to a surging rabble from a boat-race. It is true also that Branfoot preached in Gateshead on the following day. But neither Newcastle nor Gateshead was then "taken." As a matter of fact, the Harbour Boroughs have the honour of being denominationally the parents of Newcastle and Sunderland—North Shields of the one and South Shields of the other. It was at South Shields where Primitive Methodism first got a permanent footing on the Tyne, and where the first meeting of the Northern District was held.

Hutton Rudby Circuit missioned South Shields, opening it on December 17th, 1821. On that day John Branfoot, who was entrusted with the mission, held a service in the Market place, and from that meeting proceed great and far-reaching issues. Other open-air gatherings immediately followed, a society was formed, and two cottages were engaged in Waterloo Vale (now Oyston Street), and made into a meeting-house. When William Clowes was in North Shields, he went across

the water on February 5th, 1822, "to hear Brother Branfoot," and adds :—" I think we are likely to spread through the North ; but whether or not it will be swift I cannot say." He was soon able to say, however. John and Thomas Nelson and Joshua Shaw were speedily on the ground assisting Branfoot. Great crowds gathered round them in the open-air, and exciting scenes were witnessed. The preaching room was quickly deserted for a spacious sail-loft in Barker's Dock, Wapping Street, to accommodate the immense congregations. William Clowes, whose interest in "the good work at South Shields," frequently led him to "cross over to the south side," opened the loft in the October, and the congregation "seemed to be all on a move. There was a cry for mercy, and two got liberty. This meeting, I conceive, will never be forgotten." In this rude resort scores of sinners were converted, including a number who became useful officials, and who served their generation well.

The class-leaders in the loft were Edward Nettleship, John Robinson, and Joshua Hairs, and they and their fellow-worshippers began to build a chapel in the spring of 1823 to seat 900 people, on land belonging to St. Hilda's Glebe, on the west side of Cornwallis Street. At the foundation-stone laying the collection amounted to £3 14s. 3d. The building of the edifice was not contracted for ; it was done by the day, and paid for as the work proceeded. Much of the work, such as preparing the site, etc., was undertaken by the members themselves. The ultimate cost of the chapel and the cottages alongside was £1,600, and none of the poor but enthusiastic members—except, perhaps, the three leaders—seemed to have realised at the start the greatness of the undertaking into which they had launched. The work came to a standstill for want of funds ; and when John Robinson witnessed the distress of his

brethren—they were having a prayer meeting when he arrived—he advanced £460, and some smaller sums were advanced by others. When the building was a mere shell, the first service in it took place on August 24th, 1823. Until the society was in a position to sustain the responsibility, John Robinson took upon himself the whole financial burden; and his son John, who was so long circuit steward, was a true son of his father in rendering financial help in various directions, in which, and all other good works, he was supported by his excellent wife. The following story has been often told concerning the first Glebe Chapel:—

“A couple of gentlemen, passing down the lane by the side of St. Hilda’s Church, came within sight of the chapel, which was approaching completion. One of them exclaimed: ‘What building is this?’ Before his friend had time to reply, a boy, who was playing among the rubbish, said: ‘Oh, sir, its the Ranters’ Chapel.’ ‘The Ranters’ Chapel,’ echoed the gentleman; ‘why, how in the world have those folk got a building like this?’ ‘If ye gan aroud the other side, ye’ll see,’ quickly responded the lad. The gentlemen, following the advice of the youth, went round to the other side of the building, and read this inscription on the wall: ‘Hitherto the Lord hath helped us.’”

Devout men and women toiled in the first Glebe (in which Hugh Bourne preached in 1829) for forty-two years. In 1865 it was pulled down and rebuilt, but in the next quarter of a century the character of the neighbourhood changed, the town developed enormously, another site was obtained, the chapel was sold, and on April 23rd, 1889, the late Mrs. John Robinson, whose husband had at that time been a member sixty-six years and for a great portion of that period an official, laid the foundation-stone of the present Glebe Church—for the name is still retained—in Westoe Lane. It seats over 650 people, the school and rooms accommodate 600 scholars, and the additional infant school, church parlour, and class-rooms since erected present a church and set of buildings which do credit to the successful and energetic society. They are regarded as the finest



Nonconformist premises in South Shields. Other early workers in this famous church include the father of the well-known John Day Thompson. Alexander Thompson, who was son-in-law of the venerable John Day, was a true Borderer in his intellectual grip of, and firm adhesion to, the fundamental truths of evangelical religion, in the strength of his presentation of them in the pulpit, and in the power of his personality. The coincidence has been noted that two generations of Thompsons have been superintendents of the Glebe Sunday School, in which have been trained many men who rose to positions of prominence in the borough and elsewhere, the cultured divine named above being among the number. The school anniversaries fifty years ago were veritable *fete* days. Another notable South Shields superintendent is John Hunter, who has held the office—first at the Glebe, thereafter at the Alma Street Mission, which subsequently became the Baring Street society—for nearly half-a-century. George Bird, Richard Bulmer, Jennings, William Wake, Peter Robson (followed by his son and talented grandson), William Owen, John W. Owen, W. H. Dunn, James Brack, Richard Goodwin, T. Elstob, T. Spencer, and numbers more, past and present, have their names enshrined in the work connected with the Glebe.

Before the first Glebe was built, a few members from the sail-loft went to the colliery at the west end of the town and began a mission. Seven members were formed into a class in the house of William Hardy, and the first leader was a publican—"a wide contrast," remarks Mr. G. B. Hodgson, in his "History of South Shields," "to the present-day attitude of the denomination towards the liquor traffic. Indeed, the early accounts of the local chapels include frequent payments for porter, ale, bread, and cheese, etc., for the visiting preachers." Week-night services were held in a cottage in Brick-

garth Row, and A. Young established a Sunday School. Two cottages were rented in 1825 in Slake Terrace, thence a shift was made to the blacksmith's shop at Templetown Pit, from which a society of a hundred was ejected during the strike at St. Hilda's Colliery in 1832. But the members got back again to the shop, and powerful awakenings occurred in the neighbourhood, one of the most remarkable taking place in the summer of 1839, following upon the terrible Hilda explosion, in which fifty-two men and boys lost their lives. A chapel was built on the Ballast Hills in 1840, a leading spirit in which was John Smith, whose son Matthew was so well known to the next generation. It was in this little chapel where Tommy Addy raised his famous choir. A flood-tide of revival power swept hundreds into the kingdom during the autumn and winter of 1856-7, and compelled the erection of a new chapel and schools at Corstorphine Town in 1859. Here a mighty society was raised, and such a band of local preachers and officials as few places anywhere possessed. In the early seventies, when Andrew Latimer and Thomas Brodie were in the circuit, the services there were at times overwhelmingly powerful. Thomas Davison, Mark Moody (his son-in-law), John Brack (father of Mrs. Henry Pratt), Matthew Smith, Matthew Hall, James Kelly, John Faid, Mrs. Parker Sewell, and other godly men and women, with consecrated younger men and maidens in their wake, were used of God in a conspicuous manner. It was this virile company which launched Laygate Lane scheme in 1881, and which built the stately church and premises wherein the Conference of 1883 held its sittings. During the four-score and more years the society has existed there have only been three chapel stewards. Thomas Davison was the first, and was succeeded by his son-in-law (Mark Moody), who in turn has been succeeded by his son-in-law (Edward Coxon). The veterans,

Matthew Hall and James Kelly are still hale and hearty. Of those who have gone home, a more Christly soul than John Brack and a more cheery and hospitable woman than his wife, who was a sister of James and John M. Dawson, could scarcely be found; and Mark Moody and his wife partook of their spirit.

Heugh Street society, started in 1858, and where a chapel was built in 1873, did well for a while; but, in spite of the prayers and exertions of the loyal people, with Robert Work, that brave Shetlander, at their head, it had to be given up. Meanwhile, the Alma Street Mission had grown, an iron structure was put up in Baring Street in 1883, and in 1902 a fine church and school were built in the same street, from designs by T. E. Davidson, who has been architect of most of the new connexional property in the borough. In the mission John Hunter, Samuel Waterhouse, John Robinson, the Carrs, T. E. Davidson, and R. McKeith laboured with unflagging zeal, and they were joined in the Baring Street project by James Brack (brother of John), W. H. Dunn, J. W. Owen, and others from the Glebe, and Laygate, and John Ashton, the society steward. The devotion of Ralph Shields to this place while he was superintendent of the circuit, is spoken of with enthusiasm.

Over forty years ago Tyne Dock was a rising suburb of South Shields, and it has since been included within the area of the borough. It was missioned in 1863, and John Ramsay Anderson (converted in Newcastle during the visits of William Clowes and John Nelson) was appointed to take the lead of it. Soon there was a strong and active society, and a chapel was erected in 1869. Like many other societies on Tyneside, Tyne Dock owed no little in the days of its power to the Border villages, and the Craik family—Mrs. Brown is one of them—and the late John Johnson contributed

much to its prosperity. M. J. Sainty, too, from a southern shire (father of a minister who has made his impress upon the West of Scotland), Michael Wilkinson, Kemp, Clark, Barkes, N. Lee, M. Jackson, T. Clark, and many more deserve well of their brethren. And though the society has suffered long from an inadequate building, the day is not far distant when that will be overcome by the possession of up-to-date premises in a more delightful quarter.

Good work was done by the Nicholsons, the Scorers, and other faithful Primitives, in the little chapel at Harton Colliery, and the building of a school-chapel in Talbot Road about ten years ago was a distinct advance. So successful have the soul-winners there been that a new church will be put up on land adjoining almost immediately. Here E. Sword, J. W. Coatswith, J. Corner and others are doing a great work. A mission was started in 1890, in what used to be called Harton Green Lane. For a time the services were held in a rented room, but in 1901 a school-chapel was built in Wenlock Road, and there have been times of refreshing experienced. From this little Zion two ministers—J. T. Gallon and A. Bayfield—have already gone out.

As it is now constituted—Jarrow Circuit having been carved out of it in 1892, and numerous societies having been given to other stations long anterior to that—Boldon Colliery and Marsden are the only country places held by the station. On July 21st, 1822, the first class was formed at West Boldon, with George Hull as leader. He was a farm hind, and was attracted by the preaching of Clowes and the Nelsons at East Boldon. He entertained one of the Nelsons, and got his house licensed as a preaching place. The little society, the "father" of which died at Haswell in 1853, may not have survived until the colliery was opened, for much missionary labour was expended upon the latter place,



and there were many ebbs and flows, before the members got "their own vine and fig-tree" in 1876. From the opening of the chapel the society prospered, and a new block of schools was erected in 1904. James Lewins is a faithful steward; Joseph Smailes has rendered yeoman service, and we are not likely to forget that Tom Chisholm lives at Boldon Colliery. Elderly Primitives have only to think of Peter Clarke or Andrew Latimer leading a camp meeting, and having such men as George Newton, Matthew Hall, Elijah Nicholson, and Tom Chisholm to call upon! Regarding Marsden, George B. Brown, who has been connected with the village society almost since its inception in 1878—the year when Thomas E. Basham entered the colliery—can tell a story of "the upper room" and the building of the first chapel which has in it a touch of the miraculous. The fidelity and devotion of Basham, Lishman, Robinson, Foster, Marsden, Kellett, Tait, Miller, Kirtley, and their wives, amongst others, led to the erection of the neat village church in 1904, and to the present status of the society being possible.

From its dawning days until now some of the most notable men in the Connexion have exercised their ministry in South Shields Circuit, including six Presidents—and more to follow. The first Primitive Methodist missionaries out of England were sent to Jersey and Guernsey by the South Shields and Sunderland Circuits, at their own expense, in 1832. The original radius of South Shields Circuit, which was created in 1823, stretched to Chester-le-Street, Birtley, Pelton, and Galloping Green (Eighton Banks), and there was one society—St. Anthony's—on the north side of the Tyne. Within these outposts were Whitburn, the Boldons, Waggonman's Row, Bill Quay, Portobello, Nova Scotia, Chatershaugh, Oxclose, The Mount (near Springwell), New Washington, Usworth, Washington



Staithes, Vigo, Hebburn, and Jarrow, the latter at that time one of the least of the flock. Even Sunderland itself was missioned by the South Shields preachers, and Jeremiah Gilbert, in his journal, dated Sunday, July 13th, 1823, tells of a lovefeast being held at Sunderland, "in the South Shields branch of Hull Circuit." The first quarterly meeting was held on December 9th, 1823, when the membership was found to be 551, an increase of 140 during the three months, and the contributions amounted to £34 3s. 7d. The following quarter showed an increase of 209 members, and the income reached £41 19s. 4d. The circuit in its circumscribed area now is a mere corner of its original expansiveness; yet in March, 1908, there were 928 members, a quarterly income of £160 3s. 9d., church property of the value of £25,000, and an income for all purposes at the rate of about £60 a week. Since 1902 there have been three ministers in the station, and with its present trio—M. T. Pickering, Walter Duffield, and Fred Hobson—aided by T. Elstob and J. W. Coatswith, the stewards, and the other numerous lieutenants, the future should have in its lap yet greater things for this splendid and strong circuit.

#### THE HOME OF THE VENERABLE BEDE.

Schoolmen associate Jarrow with the Venerable Bede, and commercial men with the great captain of industry, Sir Charles Mark Palmer. It was an insignificant colliery village when the Primitive Methodists first visited it, and formed a society in 1822. In May and June of that year William Clowes was there, but it is certain that somewhat earlier, John Branfoot and the Nelsons would have been there. Hugh Bourne conducted a powerful missionary meeting there in 1829. For a generation almost the society had a keen struggle. Seven Jarrow pitmen, five of whom claimed connection with the Primitives, were transported to Botany Bay for

their participation in the strike of 1832. Two years before that the little band had been decimated by the pit explosion, in which forty men and boys were killed, and in subsequent years the heterodox teaching of Joseph Barker threatened to wreck the society. In 1847 a meeting-house was "fettled" up in the Middle Row, and it became known as the "Bakehouse Chapel." William and Abigail Tinkler were two of the principal workers at that time, and their son William is one of the truest men and finest thinkers in the ranks of the Connexion's local preachers. The arrival of John Scott in 1851 was a great gain to the society for a generation, and his children and children's children have been a source of strength to Jarrow church. George Charlton, who worked at the pit, was another leader, and George Cowell, a trimmer, was society steward.

Dark days again beset the heroic workers, the closing of the pit in 1852 reducing the society to two members—John Scott and another—and the meeting-house had to be given up. But the development of the shipyard and ironworks soon brought about an influx of population, and in 1859 what was called "Neddy Eddy's Chapel" was secured. Here, in 1861, when Peter Clarke was superintendent of South Shields Circuit, there was a sweeping revival, and in the following year the lusty band built a chapel in Dog Bank Row (now Princess Street). The membership increased in number and influence. A Sunday School was started, and, under the oversight of such men as George Huntley, it flourished. The choir also became famous, George Todd leading it to the height of its popularity. The school anniversaries in the Mechanics' Hall and afterwards in Ellison Street Church were great occasions. Thomas Nightingale was at his best at these festivals, and his great sermon on "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom," is still remembered. The growth of the

town on its western side led the members to attempt a daring project, and in 1877-8 a church, school, and other appurtenances were built at a cost of over £4,000. What workers there have been and are in this powerful society! The Dents, the Todds, the Huntleys, the Smiths, the Harveys, the Armstrongs, the Vartys, the Shepherds, the Waltons, the Reavleys, the Rusts, the Kellys, the Coxs, and a host more. Three have been mayors of the borough. Ald. Robert Reavley (in whose parents' cottage at Newsham Thomas Burt's father preached) is the father of Alf. E. Reavley, who is making for himself a name in our ministry.

Eight other places were associated with Jarrow when the new station was made in 1892—Hebburn Colliery, Hebburn New Town, Bill Quay, Wardley Colliery, Heworth Lane (now Pelaw), Washington Row, Usworth Colliery, and Monkton. Emerson Phillipson was the first superintendent, and there are now eleven places, nearly fifty local preachers, 759 members, and a quarterly income of £122. Hebburn Colliery was the great place when the countryside was first opened by the pioneers, a society of a hundred members being raised in one year. John Branfoot records the conversion of twenty-four persons on one day. This was the birth-place of James and John M. Dawson, travelling preachers. Here also John Brack and his wife, and James and Thomas Brack, too, were nurtured; and two families of Johnsons were efficient supporters, Thomas, of Gateshead, the well-known District Committee member, and Jacob, of the Jarrow choir, being the present representatives of each. George Newton was a great figure at the colliery, and Thomas Bates, who used to have hand-to-hand encounters with the devil. But there were also saintly and mighty women at Hebburn. Jane Laverick, a fragrant soul, is held in reverent remembrance. All accorded to Jane

Richardson, however, the highest place as a "mother in Israel." Her brother John, one of the first-fruits of the notable Collierley Dykes mission, became a conspicuous official of the Connexion in Australia, and his son rose to take a prominent place in the Legislative Assembly at Victoria. By the flooding of the pit in 1858, the society was in a languishing condition for several years; but the subsequent enterprise of the company and the growth of the shipbuilding industry on either side of the village brought again a measure of prosperity, and the building of the chapel in 1875 meant the establishment of a new regime in the life of this historic church.

Hebburn New Town may be said to have been created, in the first instance, by Tennant's Chemical Works, as Hebburn Quay was called into existence by Leslie's shipyard. The new village was missioned in 1866 by John Faid and J. W. Owen, of South Shields, and William Looney, of Jarrow. They had rough work at the start, but with the assistance of the Riddles and Joshua Bewick the society got firmly established, and in due course a chapel was built. William P. Huntley gave worthy service in this sanctuary, which was continued until he, M. Potts, and others in 1892 started the Argyle Street cause. During recent years Jacob Bamborough and other ardent spirits have been leading the New Town society to enlarged success. From Hebburn New Town George Featonby passed into the ministry. Mrs. H. Glenney, of Jarrow, whose mother was connected with the Colliery society in the early days, laid one of the foundation-stones of Argyle Street Church, in the same year in which the mission was commenced, and the enterprise has been justified.

Heworth Lane, at one time the best society in South Shields Circuit outside the town, had in its high days such members and leaders as William Parkin, Anthony



Brown, T. Charlton and his daughters, Wears, Taylor, and others, men and women distinguished for their enthusiasm and liberality. A small class appears to have been formed in the time of John Branfoot, but it did not last long; nevertheless, a few Primitives got work at Bill Quay glass-works, and they organised a society in 1833, which prospered, and a chapel was built in the following year. Here a great work of grace took place in 1837, William Parkin being among the converts. Through the decline of the chemical trade, people left the village, the cause declined, and it was decided to remove the services to Pelaw, where a new town was springing up. An iron chapel was put up at the latter place in 1900, and good progress has been made. In 1888 some of the Heworth Lane members started services in a hired room at Bill Quay, and built a chapel in 1892, so that the old society is actually two bands in the dispersion.

Usworth Colliery and Washington are two of the places opened by the pioneers. Up to the seventies the former was a weakling. For twenty years or more the members worshipped in the colliery school-room; but the loyal people, with Ralph Elliott at their head, succeeded in putting up a chapel at Usworth in 1885 which was a surprise to many, and a fine suite of school premises were added in 1907. In fair weather and in foul Ralph Elliott and his devoted wife "stuck to the ship"; and their fidelity and business prosperity have meant more to Usworth and New Washington than will ever be known. Mr. Elliott celebrated his jubilee as a member in March, 1908. One of the first—if not the first—cottages in which services were held at New Washington was No. 37, New Rows, occupied by a man known as "Happy Jack." James Kelly, Matthew Hall, William Owen, John Brack, John W. Owen, and James Brack, all from South Shields, were the men



who never ceased to take a special interest in the two villages until the societies got a stable footing. W. Meldrum Ellison, Peter Horn, John Deans, George Hunter, and others were the chief actors in securing a chapel in 1861, in which numbers were saved. Members also arrived from other places, notably W. Hardy, George Robinson, M. Swaddle, the three brothers Whittle, the Mackeys, Archer, Ward, Greenwell, Bence, Sallows, Farnish, Knox, Hodgson, and so on; and in 1896 a large church, with schools attached, was opened. In five years the church was extended, the schools enlarged, and other improvements effected. Again and again there have been mighty manifestations of power in the expanding village through the agency of this vigorous church.

The opening of a new colliery at Washington Station quickly attracted energetic Primitives to it, and as quickly a society was established. Its growth was extraordinarily rapid, and the erection of a building for worship was as speedily accomplished. With half-a-dozen local preachers and over sixty members in 1907 in a rising place, the best is possible. Unhappily, the toll of death in the mine claimed one of its useful officials—Robert Cowen—in the explosion of February 20th, 1908.

James Kelly formed a class at Wardley in 1871, and he has lived to see a permanent church in appropriate premises doing useful service in the village. Short, the veteran, and Thompson, were faithful souls, and John Simpson, too. And now we have reached Monkton. It is not generally known that Thomas Nelson, if not others also of the pioneers, preached in the rural hamlet in 1823; but it is doubtful whether ever a society was gathered until the Jarrow Circuit bought the Free Methodist Church there in 1892.

## CHAPTER XVI.

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### THE MECCA OF OTHER DAYS.

**T**IME was when Sunderland was the Northern Mecca of Primitive Methodism. 'Tis that no longer. And there is no other—not yet. There is no other Flag Lane. The sun of Nelson Street, Newcastle, had passed its zenith when the glory of Flag Lane paled, and the Central Church is too new, though the portents are in its favour, for the fathers of the tribes meet there at stated times, and great assemblies often gather there from the region round. But its stones and timbers must mature to become articulate. No change made by time and circumstance, however, can obliterate Sunderland's magnificent achievements, traditions, and standing for nearly half-a-century after the introduction of Primitive Methodism within its borders.

On the day after he held his first service in Gateshead, John Branfoot "visited some friends at Pallion, near Sunderland, and preached there." "Some considerable time after," says Mr. Kendall, "John Nelson walked over from South Shields to hold a service. A good-hearted woman lent him a chair for pulpit, which he placed at the end of the Friends' School—the very building which soon after was obligingly placed at the service of the few who had rallied round the missionary, amongst whom are particularly named George Peckett, John Tiplady, Benjamin Dodds, and Christopher Fenwick." William Clowes was in Sunderland on July

16th, 1822, had a quickening time, and thought there was likely to be a good work there. Though Mr. Clowes says nothing about a class in Sunderland until his visit on September 1st, when there were six in society, there is a statement in Mr. J. W. Fawcett's "Memorials of Primitive Methodism in the County of Durham," that a class was formed there in March, 1822. Early in October Mr. Clowes preached in the Friends' School, in Nile Street. "There was a cry out for mercy; and one who was present got liberty the next day." Mr. Kendall thinks this would probably be the service attended by a young man who became a New Connexion minister—Andrew Lynn—and who afterwards recalled his impressions, in which he speaks of prejudice giving place to unutterable bliss.

Having been "opened" by South Shields, the preachers on the station, of course, took Sunderland on their rounds, and in and around the Wearside town, and as far as Pelton, Chester-le-Street, and Houghton-le-Spring, the Brothers Nelson and their colleagues did a remarkable work. Writing from Newcastle on July 28th, 1823, Jeremiah Gilbert refers to a camp meeting held "at or near Sunderland," on June 22nd, which was conducted by the evangelists, and says:—"Sinners began to fall down and cry for mercy before the preaching commenced. In the course of the day thirty found liberty." On Sunday, July 13th, Mr. Gilbert adds:—"There was a lovefeast at Sunderland, in the South Shields branch of Hull Circuit, and many were set at liberty. In that branch they have four travelling preachers, and I have been informed that last week under one sermon ten were converted, eight under another, and five under another." Thomas Nelson confirms Mr. Gilbert's account of the camp meeting, and thinks there were about six thousand people present; "but, indeed," he adds, "I was so thronged in praying

with the distressed that I knew very little who was preaching.”

From that eventful day Primitive Methodism went forward with a bound in Sunderland, and in the school-room, at Ayres Quay, Monkwearmouth, Hylton, and Southwick crowds gathered, and some of the vilest characters turned to the Lord. When Thomas Nelson preached his farewell sermon on the night of August 25th, “a woman fell down in the open-air,” in the presence of thousands, “and got liberty.” Retiring into a large room, the meeting continued until the next morning, “and many professed to get into liberty.” Under that date, Thomas Nelson put this entry also into his journal :—

“Last year at this time, in Sunderland, we had six in society, and one leader, but now we have 275 members, eleven leaders, and a very large chapel building. The increase for this quarter (in this South Shields branch) is 459. . . . Shall I say this has been one of the best and most wonderful quarters I ever saw before? I have preached nearly every sermon in the open-air, and have seen the good effects of it. *I am afraid, if our people do not watch, as they get chapels and places of worship, they will cease to preach in the open-air, and then the glory will depart from us as a people.*”

The above was written over eighty years ago. It needs to be sounded with trumpets now. The names of John and Thomas Nelson will be for ever associated with the early evangelism of the North. They sprang from a village in the neighbourhood of Whitby. Thomas's fiery soul so reduced his body that he only travelled seven or eight years, and died at Rothwell, near Leeds, in 1848. John had the advantage of his brother as to physique, and had considerable intellectual power. He withdrew from our Connexion, and was still a fine-looking man when James Young met him at the funeral of Alexander Riddell, at Belfast, in 1866. During their short conversation it was evident that his heart was still with the people of his early choice and ministry.

Soon after the Nelsons, another remarkable man was stationed at Sunderland—Nathaniel West, an Irishman, over six feet in height, only a few years before known as Corporal West of the King's Bays, and who eventually went to the United States, where he became a D. D. and chaplain to the Federal Forces. He was in Sunderland when the Hull quarterly meeting of September, 1823, made that and the Stockton branch into a station, called the Sunderland and Stockton Union Circuit. In this great area, from Hartlepool to the Wear along the coast, and embracing Durham, Houghton-le-Spring, Hetton, and Chester-le-Street inland, there are now some twenty flourishing circuits. West had not been long on the ground when he wrote :—

“A very blessed and glorious work has gone on for some time in Sunderland and the neighbouring collieries. In Sunderland and Monkwearmouth (which is a village on the opposite side of the river from Sunderland) we have nearly 400 members. In Lord Steward's and Esquire Lambton's collieries we have near 400 more! Some of the most abandoned characters have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Indeed, the Lord and the poor colliers are doing wonderfully. . . . On some occasions (for want of time to wash themselves), they are constrained to come 'black' to the preaching, or else miss the sermon. And when the Lord warms their hearts with His dying love, and they feel Him precious in His word, the large and silent tears rolling down their black cheeks, and leaving the white streaks behind, conspicuously portray what their hearts feel.”

Writing on December 8th, after the first quarter day, when 962 members were reported, “leaving out South Shields and her towns, which are a circuit of themselves,” showing an increase for the quarter of over 400 (“taking in Stockton and her few towns”), the ex-soldier continues to speak of the blessed prospect. “We have got our large chapel at Sunderland covered in,” he says, and adds that some useful men had lately joined them. Revivals proceeded during the winter at Sunderland, Shiney Row, New Penshaw, Philadelphia, South Hylton, and other villages, bringing the total membership of the circuit up to nearly 1,300. In and



about Shiny Row and Philadelphia signal manifestations continued. On Sunday, April 11th, 1824, there was a lovefeast at the former place conducted by Nathaniel West and William Taylor. The attendance was so great that two places had to be utilised—a barn and Joseph Fawcett's house—and there was a mighty time in both.

#### FLAG LANE CHAPEL.

In March, 1825, there were seven travelling preachers in the circuit — West, Gilbert, Simpson, Spencer, Sleightholme, Harrison, and Oliver. The membership was then 1,674, an increase of 291 on the year. Within three years after the formation of the little class of six members, Sunderland entertained the Conference, the chief services being held in Flag Lane Chapel. The building of this historic fane was an extraordinary event in the highest degree. Looked at from the methods of to-day, it was a rash step for a poor society not many months old to buy land without money, and then begin to build a chapel to seat a thousand people. Before a start was made with the building in the autumn of 1823, “an obstacle of considerable magnitude presented itself.” Running along the ground which they had bought was a large wall which belonged to another owner, who had refused to sell it. A prayer meeting was held, God was earnestly besought to touch the gentleman's heart, and Brothers Peckett and Sharkitt were sent to interview him. When their wishes were made known to the gentleman he hesitated at first, but when he fully understood “their plan and design, he told them they might take the wall and pull it down.”

Work started with no greater sum than £23 in hand, the first shilling of which had been given to Robert Anderson and William Hildrew by a poor coal-porter. When the windows were wanted, there was no money to

buy them; but prayer was made incessantly, and in a little time one of the brethren was "directed by the Lord to a place in Newcastle, where he obtained the complement of windows, ready-made and glazed, just the size wanted." In spite of evil rumours and adverse prophecies, "the Lord gave us favour," says Nathaniel West, whose account we are following, "and opened our way, and gave us credit." When the chapel got covered in, however, there was another stoppage for want of funds, and the enemy "sought out matter for an evil report," and some hands were already weakened. But men of the calibre of John Gordon Black and Henry Hesman were now in the thick of the project; and while the society prayed and collected, these and others of their brethren interviewed gentlemen of substance, with the result that money was forthcoming, and the work of completing the building went on with greater vigour than ever. Further difficulties were encountered, but "the hand of the Lord was with them," as West said, and time and again deliverances came. All this time the revival continued, "useful men" kept coming in amongst them, and some of the most notorious sinners were getting converted.

At length the happy day on which the chapel was opened arrived, which was Friday, September 3rd, 1824. It being a working day, the congregations were not so large; but on the Sunday the assemblies were of such magnitude that overflow services had to be held in a grass field in the morning and afternoon, and in the old place of worship as well as in the new chapel at night. On the Monday night, F. N. Jersey preached to a crowded congregation, the chapel holding on an emergency 1,500 people. The whole of the collections amounted to £60; but "what gave a better finish to the dedication" souls were set at liberty. The total cost of the chapel was about £1,600. In this enterprise, how-

ever, much voluntary work was done; for at the opening a young man, who found his sweetheart in the society, was converted, and in the succeeding years he used to say in class-meeting and lovefeast that the Lord had given him a brand new heart in a brand new chapel; and that the fisher lass who became his wife, with her father and mother, helped to carry the stones for the building in which he was saved.

Sunderland Primitive Methodism "was strong in the moral strength of its earliest and most prominent officials." Locally, their position and influence gave weight and status to their church; in the District and connexionally their great power was acknowledged for half-a-century. In his lifetime Gordon Black, a striking figure, with a clear, penetrative intellect, possessing the power to lead and command, was far and away the chief. He was a statesman, and was known as such at home and in the early Conferences. While prospering in business, he gave himself with skill and devotion to the promotion of the interests of the denomination (though he did not confine his sympathies to it), and he was one of the original signatories of the Deed Poll.

Mr. Kendall gives the second place to Henry Hesman. "That dwarfed and deformed figure," says Mr. McKechnie, "enshrined a richly-dowered soul, clear, piercing, far-reaching in its perception, and with capacities for high and subtle thought." In addition, Mr. Hesman had "a silvery musical voice, oratorical gestures, and a singular excellence in his style of address." His popularity as a local preacher was very great, and he had the honour of being put in prison at Durham for preaching in the streets. Among the contemporaries or immediate successors of those already named were W. B. Earl, Whittaker, W. Hopper, Emerson, Muschamp, Robert Walker, Robert Huison, John Dent, J. Tiplady, and his son Joseph, Christopher Fenwick (whose father

got a chair and set it on the edge of the Town Moor for one of the first missionaries), John Fenwick, George Goodchild, William Todd, John Stockdale, Mrs. Ann Erskine, Joseph Brown, Thomas Robson, and Thomas Gibson. The latter, the friend and son-in-law of Mr. Black, rose to front rank in the District and in the Connexion, and that he finally withdrew from the denomination does not, as Mr. Kendall truly observes, annul the valuable service he rendered Primitive Methodism. Sunderland, at the instigation of Mr. McKechnie, saw the first effort made to provide facilities for the better educational preparation of candidates for the ministry, and, indeed, for the promotion of the mental culture and ministerial usefulness of those already in the itinerancy. This appealed to Mr. Gibson, and the effect of his practical interest in the District Preachers' Association and the institutions which grew out of it—Sunderland Theological Institute and the Hartley College—as well as in other large schemes for the extension and consolidation of the denomination, cannot be wiped out.

#### PROGRESS AND EARLY CONFERENCES.

From the Leaders' Meeting Minute Book, 1823-4-5, we learn, though, unfortunately, no preacher's name is given, that the "text to the first sermon preached in Flag Lane Primitive Methodist Chapel, Sunderland," was Hag. ii. 9—"The glory of the latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts." There are eighteen leaders' names in the book, and we give them as they are written:—Robert Anderson, William Hildrew, John Walshaw, Thomas Metcalf, John Cooper, Thomas Davison, John Spence, George Pecket, Gordon Black, John Purvis, William Brass, Henry Hesman, William Holmes, John Sayer, James Halliwell, Foster Smith, F. Bird, W. J. Coates. There

are some curious entries in the record. For instance, it was ordered "that a little wine or spirits be provided for the preachers after service in the school room." Further care is manifested for the refreshment of the preachers, for a year afterwards it was resolved that the minister have the liquor at each of the Sunday services and on the Tuesday nights. The quarter day dinners were also a matter of grave concern. For one quarterly meeting it was ordered that, for the dinner, "the three stewards provide things proper," and that there be "only water, not ale, at quarter day." "The things proper" the stewards had to provide, and the absence of the ale, had not pleased the brethren evidently, as, for the next quarter day dinner, it was stipulated: "That there be a round of beef and a ham cold and vegetables, viz., pease pudding and potatoes for quarter day dinner, and each member to have one pint of ale; that where the meat is bought it is to be cooked." For the following quarter day it was decreed that there be roast and boiled beef and boiled mutton, "and plain suet dumplins with vegetables"; but nothing is said about the ale. But these leaders' meetings seem to have been much of the character of magistrates' courts. Their area of discipline was certainly broad, marital matters and domestic affairs coming within their jurisdiction.

As is well known, Sunderland was favoured from time to time with the ministrations of the greatest men in the Connexion, and it was frequently the Conference town, that being the case in 1825, 1833, 1849, and 1868; only once since, in 1890. John Petty and William Lister travelled there in 1831-2, the latter year being that in which the cholera raged so furiously. They and their colleagues visited the sick and dying with a holy fearlessness. A glorious revival took place at the same time, and, said Mr. Petty, "such a work of sanctifica-



tion I have never witnessed." Houghton-le-Spring, Hetton, Easington, Philadelphia, Newbottle, and Durham are specially mentioned by Mr. Petty as places at which he had gracious seasons. So powerful was the time he had in the cathedral city in the summer of 1831, that he cried out: "Durham shall live and not die!" The going of John Petty and William Lister to Sunderland Circuit was in consequence of a distressing tragedy which had occurred. On Saturday afternoon, February 26th, 1831, John Branfoot and John Hewson were travelling up the waggonway to Hetton. It was a double line of rails, and they stepped from the one line to the other to avoid a set of waggons, and did not observe another set approaching on the line on which they stood until it was too late. Hewson was killed on the spot, and Branfoot was so frightfully injured that he died in a few hours, but not before he had given a bright testimony.

When Mr. Petty returned from the 1832 Conference—and from his honeymoon—his heart was torn at the ravages the coal strike of that year had made in the societies; and he wept in secret places at the sufferings of those who had been turned out of their homes. On the strike ending, the good work again prospered, and he was sent to Guernsey by the Sunderland Circuit in 1833. When William Lister went to Sunderland, it was with a trembling heart, but his association with Mr. Petty was of the most blessed description, and their friendship was unbroken in life. His labours were abundantly blessed, and before leaving the circuit in 1832 for Edinburgh, he was married in Durham to Jane Calder, of Berwick-on-Tweed. While in Edinburgh, Mr. Lister, at the request of Mr. Petty, sent to Sunderland a young man who became in after years Connexional Editor, President of Conference, and College Principal—James Macpherson was his name.

The Conference camp meeting of 1833 was a high time. It was held in two old limestone quarries two miles out of Sunderland, on the road to Shields, and the attendance was computed at 10,000. At the lovefeast in Flag Lane Chapel, in the evening, a quickening took possession of the crowded place, "the work rose higher and higher, and a number found the Lord." The 1825 camp meeting, held four miles out of the town, was no less remarkable. The lovefeast on that occasion was held on the Monday night, it seems, and there were mourners in the gallery of the chapel as well as below. But the Conference of 1849 was evidently a high water mark up to that time. There had been an increase of 815 members in the Sunderland District and 6,169 in the Connexion. In spite of the unpromising weather, the camp meeting was attended by many thousands, and at the lovefeasts in Flag Lane, Monkwearmouth, and Hopper Street Chapels many sinners were converted. The circuit ministers were John Lightfoot, William Brining, C. C. McKechnie, and Peter Clarke; and among the delegates were Bourne, Clowes, the three Garners, Flesher, Tetley, T. and W. Holliday, Turner, Sanderson, Hugh Campbell, Ward, Harland, Bishop, Bastow, Gordon Black, J. Nixon, T. Bateman, W. Hopper, and J. Davison. Hugh Bourne said he did not remember having previously left a Conference without pain of mind; but on leaving this he felt nothing but satisfaction. When the Conference of 1868 was held in Sunderland the immense advance made by the Connexion in every department was very apparent. Thomas Bateman, who had been president the year before, handed on the honours to William Lister. John Petty had just died at Elmfield College, and Thomas Smith was sent to continue the good work. The old Infirmary at Sunderland had been bought, and transformed into a Theological Institute, of which William Antliff was

appointed principal. The Infirmary and its renovations cost £3,000. It was a big step in its day; now, the offspring of that institution—Hartley College, Manchester—is considered the largest Nonconformist building of its kind in England. At the same Conference the African mission had its birth.

In 1849, there was an extensive revival in Sunderland Circuit. More than five hundred persons were added to the societies, not a few in the colliery villages—Hetton, Easington Lane, Middle Rainton, Murton, and other places—being rescued from the lowest depths of degradation. Flag Lane and Monkwearmouth societies shared largely in the blessing, and some of the country chapels had to be enlarged to accommodate the congregations. From 1850 to 1860 an additional chapel had been bought in Sunderland, a very spacious one was erected at Hetton, and several other chapels were built in different parts of the circuit; and the membership had risen, in spite of lamentable strikes which tried the hearts of men like Joseph Spoor, from 920 in the early forties to 1,623 in 1850, and to 1,979 in 1860. The opening of Hetton Chapel on Saturday, May 22nd, 1858, was one of the most conspicuous events in Northern Primitive Methodism half-a-century ago. A chapel to seat 750 people and a school to accommodate 600 children was erected in that colliery village, and over 1,100 persons partook of tea on the opening day. John Petty preached on the Sunday, and overflow meetings had to be held. Among the first and the best in Sunderland Circuit, Hetton society was formed in 1823 by J. Cook, T. Dakers, and others; it had a chapel in 1824, and floods of blessing fell upon it throughout the years, and still descend.

#### MONKWEARMOUTH SIDE.

Within the borough of Sunderland in 1858 there were six chapels, six Sunday Schools, 244 teachers, 1,275

scholars, and 786 members. The name of Thomas Fairley will be for ever associated with the early struggles of the Monkwearmouth cause. It was a fortunate circumstance for Southwick and Monkwearmouth that the Fairley family went to reside there in 1834, though it was a great loss to Holywell. Southwick was low when the Fairleys got there, but the society was soon out of a room and into a chapel; and in this western extremity of Sunderland there is now a large and debtless chapel, built in 1860. From 1901, Southwick had J. Trevett as a kind of evangelist-pastor for four years, and he raised the society from 90 to 175 members, and the class moneys from £7 to £15 a quarter. Four hundred pounds debt on the property was liquidated during the same time. Missions were held, in which Thomas Campbell and S. Redhead assisted, and in one revival over two hundred persons sought forgiveness, and some striking cases of conversion took place. It was a remarkable day when John G. Marriott, of Whitley Bay, was the preacher there; but he never preached. Mr. Trevett says:—

“ He gave out a hymn, and then a member prayed. He then read a few verses, and some one started a hymn. Then prayer followed prayer and hymn succeeded hymn, and it was half-past twelve before the morning service closed. At night, when the opening prayer was being offered, a man walked out of the gallery into the vestry seeking the Saviour. Then another went forward, and another, the meeting the while being engaged in singing, prayer, and testimony. At the close it was found that fifty had come voluntarily out for Christ. What a day of victory and blessing! ”

It is not likely to be forgotten that Robert Graydon Graham was given to the ministry by Southwick. After thirty years' fruitful work, he fell asleep in Sunderland, only fifty-three years of age. Men gasped when they heard of the swift flight of this prince in Israel, in the fulness of his powers of mind and soul.

A room in a back street, near the ferry-boat landing, was the first meeting-place of the Monkwearmouth

society, then a larger room was rented on Look-out Hill, and ultimately it possessed a real chapel in Williamson Terrace, "with a real pulpit, and a real penitents' form." That was in 1840, and it was then no uncommon thing for a mission band of 120 men and women to hold an open-air service near the ferry-boat landing on a Sunday night, year in and year out. This society grew, and was the parent of the famous Hodgson's Buildings Chapel, a half-mile away; and development still continuing, the Pilgrim Street Chapel was built, and this is at present a flourishing society, with a well-organised Sunday School, under the superintendency of John Soppit. In 1890, the old Hodgson's Buildings Chapel was needed by the North-Eastern Railway Company for extensions; the trustees started the erection of a chapel in Newcastle Road with the money they got, and a good society worships there. Old Williamson Street Chapel gave place, in 1881, to a new church on the same site. It cost £3,000, and is a most commodious and comfortable place of worship. Fifteen years ago, a mission was started in Bright Street, which is at present a flourishing little society, guided largely by Charles Peacock, an efficient local preacher. At Castletown, a mile and a half further up the Wear than Southwick, the society worshipped for years in a dilapidated smithy; but in 1904 a school-chapel, costing £1,400, was erected.

Monkwearmouth has been rich in men and women of God. In the intermediate days of power—the later fifties and early sixties—when Ralph Fenwick looked upon himself as the governor of a province, with William Alderson, John Waite, M. A. Drummond, John Laverick, and John Hallam as colleagues—marvellous things took place at Monkwearmouth. To listen to the testimony of Thomas Chisholm, of Boldon Colliery—who, as a wayward lad, was arrested in the street by hearing the children singing—regarding Ralph Atkin-



son, Ralph Scott, Hugh Donnison, George Hudson, Thomas Pratt, Ralph Heron, Thomas Snowball, Edward Donald, John Carr, George Newby, Henry Dixon, William Brown, Taylor Ramsey, and other noble souls, with Jane Fenwick at the head of the women; to follow his recital of the revival at Pilgrim Street, under Mary Ridley, of Whitehaven, when Edward Cowey, who became a prominent agent of the Midland Miners' Federation, was converted, when Nichol Horn and George Buckley and a host of younger men toiled for six weeks, when men and women fell "under the power" as if dead—to hear his story about these events and personalities, is truly inspiring. And Pilgrim Street has yet its evangelistic fervour, for a good work took place there in 1908, under Miss Butters, and over sixty professed conversion.

Of the other prominent men in the third circuit, mention must be made of E. H. Brown, senior circuit steward, local preacher, school superintendent, and a member of the Town Council. His ancestors, says A. J. Campbell, "were among the founders of Primitive Methodism in Sunderland; his mother, an old lady of eighty-five, is one of the most regular worshippers at the Sabbath evening service; his wife is sister of one of our ministers, and four of his nephews are in the active work of our ministry to-day." John W. Stores, who is the junior circuit steward, is also a local preacher, and is society steward at Williamson Terrace; and "Tommy" Campbell, the ardent, ubiquitous, forceful, is known all over the Sunderland District, but never misses his class and other duties at home.

#### DIVISIONS AND SUB-DIVISIONS.

The slicing up of the great territory commenced in 1837, when Stockton was made into a separate station. Then Durham and the collieries Thornley and Coxhoe

way were given autonomy in 1838. For a quarter of a century thereafter there was no disturbance of the area until Hetton, with the Houghton-le-Spring and Chester-le-Street localities, was given independence. In 1877 the never-to-be-forgotten division of Sunderland itself occurred, when two hundred members went out and formed the Christian Lay Church, and when a number of the leading officials resigned. Flag Lane society and chapel were in a state of almost utter collapse when Robert Clemitson went to Sunderland First Circuit. He was instrumental, however, in the construction of a school-chapel on the site of the Theological Institute as the new home for the dwindled Flag Lane Church, and in time gathered a hundred members. While in the circuit he had to face an acute depression in trade, and he laid himself out to meet the wants of the people as far as he could, using the old laundry of the Institute as a store-room. Mr. Clemitson's grip of Sunderland has continued until this day, and Trinity Presbyterian Church knows him well. A great forward step was taken by R. G. Graham in the building of the fine church and premises at Cleveland Road, in 1901, at a cost of £4,626, just a year after Williamson Terrace and the other places on the north side of the Wear had been made into Sunderland Third Circuit. Sunderland First, therefore, was left with Cleveland Road, Carol Street, Hylton, Millfield, and New Silksworth.

Carol Street is the successor of old Hopper Street, where W. B. Earl, the Newbys, the Tipladys, the Burnhams, Robert Park, the faithful steward, and many another did valiant service. To-day there is a vigorous society, located in good premises; and, piloted by Swinton Stoddart, young and old have given, and are giving, proof of their enthusiasm. Hylton goes back to the heroic days. The present chapel dates from 1880, and the extensions made in 1908 give evidence of the present

vitality of a historic society which cherishes the memory of Mrs. Hastings, John Wake, and others, and which has so staunch a friend as Alderman W. A. Weightman. Millfield has now the oldest chapel in the circuit. New Silksworth got a new church in 1896, and it has a strong society. Altogether, there are four hundred members in the circuit, a quarterly income of about £60, and property of the value of £9,515. The oldest local preacher on the plan is Alderman Fairless. Standing next him is Thomas Newby, the senior circuit steward, whose worth it would be difficult to over-estimate. Four generations of the family to which he belongs have been conspicuous in every kind of service. Alderman Palmer, J.P., Silksworth, is the junior steward, and there is a good contingent in his village; while men of the stamp of Swinburne, Barrow, Witty, Hodgson, and Pattinson are widely known for their zeal and effective service.

Tatham Street society became the head of the second circuit, Daniel McKinley and John Day Thompson being the first ministers. It has now only Malings Rigg attached to it, for Seaham societies were made a circuit in 1893; and Mainsforth Terrace, Ryhope Colliery, and Ryhope Village have been known as Sunderland Fourth since 1904. The building of Tatham Street Chapel was a gigantic undertaking at the time. It was opened in August, 1875, and the land, houses, chapel, schools, and organ cost £9,000. The debt has been brought down to £2,710. A thousand persons can be accommodated in it, and the largest membership was reached in the days of Thomas Guttery and Danzy Sheen. Mr. Guttery was twice superintendent, and his labours in evangelistic work, and in the reduction of the debt were herculean. He had a great scheme of debt reduction in hand when he was stricken down in 1894, and the seer, the gifted, fervent orator, the winner of the shining crown given to those who turn many to righteousness, passed within

the veil. At this moment there are noble men and women at Tatham Street. Of Robert Pickering, whose name stands next to that of the superintendent minister on the plan, we have already spoken; and William Bowran will be referred to in another connection. The brothers Gibson, J. Nelson, H. Eggleshaw, George Holland, and others have done work worthy of the best traditions of Primitive Methodist toilers. The last-named is circuit steward, a nephew of the late William Saul, and his conspicuous characteristics are (in the words of Henry Davenport) "unimpeachable integrity, superabundant energy, overflowing geniality, and an almost prodigal liberality." Tatham Street has 192 members, and Malings Rigg 33, and the quarterly income is £58.

What memories crowd around Malings Rigg! A few good men belonging to Flag Lane—E. Jobling, J. Whittaker, M. Spencer, M. Wayman, R. Norwood, and J. Wilson among the rest—took a room in The Hatcase in 1852, opened a Sunday School, and conducted a religious service on the Sunday nights and other meetings during the week. John Moffatt, who was then twelve years of age, was the first scholar in the new school, and he and many more who joined had never been at a Sunday School before. So many children came that two rooms had to be made into one; then a larger place had to be taken, and it became so crowded and the heat became so intense that Joseph Spoor, on one occasion, put off his coat while preaching. Michael Spencer and his wife started a new class. One night, in the October of 1854, about a score of young people were converted, among them being John Moffatt and William Baitey. The revival went on, an old Presbyterian Chapel at Malings Rigg was afterwards bought, and Mary Porteus opened it in 1856. Souls were saved, the church grew, and the Sunday School flourished.

Rarely a week passed without converts, though dark days intervened. The men and women—such spirits as Jane Spencer and Ann Erskine among the latter—expected conversions, and conversions they got. John Moffatt, William Baitey, and J. B. Buglass went into the ministry from this society, over a dozen local preachers were connected with it at one time, and it continued to prosper until the unfortunate split, when all the members, save one, joined the Lay Church. William Baitey, eccentric it may be, yet one of the most marvellous men on the platform the Connexion had, is dead. John Moffatt, the kindly, the much-loved, is spending the years of his retirement in helpful ministries in connection with Cleveland Road Church; and J. B. Buglass, the most of whose useful ministerial life has been given to the Lancashire Districts, is still in active work.

Some forty years ago Thomas Oliver wrote in the Magazine that Hendon was distinguished for many years “as a place of resort for the inhabitants of Sunderland, where thousands of people spent their Sabbaths in carnal pleasure. God in His providence has brought about a great change in the neighbourhood. A few years ago the land in that part was laid out for cottage buildings, a number of families belonging to the working classes soon resorted thither, and the Primitive Methodists, as is their wont, set up their standard, preaching Christ as the Saviour of the lost and the Friend of sinners.” Thomas Dawson’s cottage was the first meeting-place. That was in 1857. A chapel was subsequently built in Emma Street, which in time became too small, and Mainsforth Terrace Chapel was erected in 1866. It has since been greatly altered and improved, and recently stained-glass windows were put in to commemorate the work of Thomas T. Dawson, Thomas Guttery, and John G. Rogers and his wife, and in recognition of the long and devoted service of J. M. Nichol-



son, who is still to the fore. It was admittedly a happy circumstance which directed Joseph Trevett to go to Hendon in 1891, and his ten years' service in connection with the Mainsforth Terrace Church will never be forgotten. Everybody thereabouts knew him. The church membership rose from 157 to 245; it was said to possess the best C.E. society in the town, and hundreds of pounds were obtained without either bazaar or sale of work. John Rogers, R. Dobson, R. Carter, J. Carter, R. Crombie, H. Ellison, J. Brockbanks, J. M. Nicholson, C. Smith, and others, with a band of godly women, have made this a hallowed place; and the continuance of the revival spirit was manifested in 1908 during the mission of the Brothers Bell, of Haswell, when many were converted. Robert Shanks is a most useful local preacher and class leader; Joseph Gardener, a loyal Primitive, is another prominent local preacher, and the Jeffersons, the Hansons, the Rogers, with many already named, are devoted to the interests of the circuit.

Ryhope Colliery may not hold the place it did, but the society there has a distinguishing record. Over forty years ago, William Gelley opened a campaign in the village, when it had a bad reputation for drunkenness, gambling, fighting, and dog-racing. The Primitives had a good chapel in the place, and a lively society. William Bates, Joseph Humble, and Alec Pettigrew were among the outstanding men. In two weeks the chapel was crowded night after night, and for the next ten weeks the excitement and interest spread far and wide. The village was transformed. Among the converts were the best public-house fiddler, the most popular bar-room singer, the leading boxer, and drunkards and "dog-men" of every degree. The best evidence of the secular advantage of the work to masters and men alike was given by the owners, who engaged Mr. Gelley for two years to visit their collieries in Durham and Northum-

berland as a missionary—a striking testimony to the truth that true religion is the friend of the masses and the inspirer of social progress.

The four stations in Sunderland in March, 1908, stood thus :—

	Members.	Quarterly Income.	Value of Church Property.
		£ s. d.	£
First Circuit	... 400	52 17 9	9,515
Second    "	... 225	58 14 6	10,500
Third     "	... 491	82 16 6	7,442
Fourth    "	... 335	45 14 1	3,480
Total	... 1,451	£240 2 10	£30,937

#### “ THE NEW HARBOUR.”

Before we deal with the greater country slices from the original Sunderland Circuit, we must have a word about the child of the second circuit. On July 22nd, 1831, John Petty went to Seaham Harbour, intending to preach, presumably in the open-air, but the exceeding coldness of the night prevented him. “ This is a new harbour,” he says in his journal, “ and is becoming very populous ; and Satan, it appears, intends it for himself ; but, by the grace of God, we intend otherwise.” This place was created by the Marquis of Londonderry for the shipment of coal, and has expanded with the development of the coal industry. It is possible that Mr. Petty was not the first missionary who visited it, and however strong were his good intentions on that cold summer day in 1831, and however valiantly some of his successors may have “ stormed the citadel,” many years passed before a sure foothold was got by Primitive Methodists in Seaham Harbour.

A Primitive Methodist family named Stamp went to the town about 1845, and finding no society of their own, joined the Wesleyans. Shortly afterwards, however, Thomas Grant, from Sunderland, commenced a

boot-stall there, and the Stamps, learning that he was a Primitive local preacher, requested him to invite the Sunderland Circuit to open a mission at the Harbour. This was done, and Grant was appointed pioneer. Meetings were held in the open-air on Sunday evenings, at the end of the North Terrace; and on one occasion, when it was raining, a publican of the name of Matthew Adamson invited Grant to preach in his long room. The offer was accepted, and Joseph Stephenson was converted that night and became an ardent Sunday School worker and trustee. For a few months the missionaries kept to the long room, and many precious seasons were experienced there. An old disused blacksmith's shop was afterwards secured, and for two years the zealous souls carried on the work of God in this rude structure.

In 1848, however, efforts were made to get a chapel, and in two years the present sanctuary in Tempest Place was erected. Change, improvement, and addition since then have made a very different place of it. The society grew, and is to-day well officered. J. Whitelock and J. W. Grant are the society stewards; James Harrison, T. M. Smithson, William Lee, Raine, and the Hunter family are also worthy supporters of the cause. In November, 1908, Mrs. Herron went home from this society, aged ninety-three. There are nearly 300 scholars in the flourishing Sunday School, some of whom have distinguished themselves in the examinations.

There is a record that William Thompson, of Murton, started sinking operations at Seaham Colliery for Lord Londonderry in 1844; and being a devout Primitive Methodist, he commenced the first class and Sunday School there in a dwelling-house. When the partition was taken out, and two rooms made into one, it served the society for twenty years. After the first chapel was built at New Seaham Colliery, the work of God prospered, and many remarkable conversions took place.

Among the men who have helped to build up the society William Crozier, John Rawson, John Clark, and Joseph Heppell must be named. In 1888, a fine church and schools were erected, and a vigorous society and effective Sunday School do much for the moral upliftment of the village.

To Thomas Buttrick, when second preacher of the Sunderland Second Circuit, belongs the honour of having missioned the Bottle Works, out of which has sprung a most energetic society. During the ministry of Henry Errington, the first superintendent of Seaham Harbour Circuit, a small mission-room was built, and John Robson and Nelson took up the task of working the new venture. Their labour has had a rich reward, for the school has now 200 scholars, and the services are thronged with attentive hearers. The population is growing very rapidly in the neighbourhood, and a large site has been obtained, plans of a commodious church and school premises have been prepared, and building will soon be started. Hudspith, Lee, and others are putting their best into this courageous enterprise, the present ardent and successful superintendent (Charles Pettler) being at their head.

Made a circuit in 1893, Seaham Harbour has had devoted pastors and overseers in it—Henry Errington, Joseph Tweddle, James Young, and W. W. Price—and its future is full of promise. Two of its sons—Amos Ryder and William Robson—are now serving in the ministry. The membership of the station is 328, its quarterly income £51 13s. 6d., and its property is valued at £3,500.

## CHAPTER XVII.

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### ABUNDANT LIFE AND GROWTH.

ON December 8th, 1863, Hetton, Houghton-le-Spring, Chester-le-Street, and the villages adjacent to each were made into a separate station by the Sunderland Circuit. The parting scene at that quarterly meeting must have been very touching. "Many a tear was shed," says M. A. Drummond, after the motion was passed unanimously, in dead silence, "both by the country and town members of the meeting at that last united quarter day for them. The parting was most pathetic; the farewells tender and many." Against his inclination, Mr. Drummond was appointed superintendent of the new circuit. He loved Sunderland. It was his native circuit. Flag Lane held him in thrall. He was born in 1832, in a miner's cottage at New Penshaw, though his father was acknowledged by the Edinburgh Court of Session to be the heir to the Earldom of Perth and Drummond, and the lineal descendant of the attainted Earl, who took flight during a Jacobite rising, and landed and settled on the banks of the Wear. Though there was a flourishing society at New Penshaw in 1824, it must have failed afterwards, for Maurice Andrew Drummond was one of the first to put his name on the roll of a society formed in June, 1849. George Brown was the class leader, and John Daghish, who became a conspicuous local preacher, was the assistant. A revival followed, and much progress was made in all the adjoining societies. Mr. Drummond was put on the



plan, and in 1854, at the solicitation of Thomas Smith, he went to Durham Circuit as a travelling preacher, but in a few months he went home again. In another year, however, he was once more in Durham, and thereafter the work became his very life and joy, eleven years of his ministry being spent near the Monument Hill. When he was stationed in his native circuit in 1862 he felt it no small honour, and to be chosen the superintendent of Hetton a year and a half afterwards was no small responsibility.

The first ministers of Hetton Circuit were M. A. Drummond, James Foggon, and W. Taylor, the new circuit having nineteen places and 877 members. As we have already seen, Hetton, from the entrance of the early missionaries, was the centre of mighty spiritual exploits. The preaching power of some of the miners was extraordinary. The leaders were all men of God. Revival power and glory rewarded their fidelity and zeal after they had accepted their new responsibilities, as had been their experience before, and the union camp meetings, held between Hetton and Houghton were memorable occasions.

Of the great doings when Hetton Chapel was built reference has already been made. The jubilee was celebrated in 1908, and the leading figures at the rejoicings were M. A. Drummond and John Hallam, who were associated with the circuit at its inception and early growth. The jubilee services were marked by spiritual fervour and enthusiasm. While listening to the heroism of the saintly men and women of the past, the listeners were moved to "expect great things from God, and to attempt great things for God," in the years to come. The old leaders were George Lowdon, W. Gardiner, W. Errington, C. Ferry, and J. Kay; while Robert Taylor was the leader of the choir, and the hospitable James and Alice Dakers were among the first-fruits of the

pioneers. What seasons have been witnessed in Hetton Chapel! In the early seventies there was an exceptionally great manifestation of power, when Miss McKinney laboured there, and it touched Easington Lane, Houghton, and surrounding places, over three hundred persons professing conversion. Jabez Kay, George Clough, and Thomas Barrass were then prominent in the work. On several occasions Mrs. McKenzie led successful missions, and up till to-day Hetton society has kept before it the great purpose of its being, to save men.

John Archer, George Thompson, William Soulsby, and others were the founders of the church at Hetton Downs, about the year 1860. Though the Downs section of the Hetton society was the stronger, bitter opposition was offered to the formation of a separate society at the former place; and, with George Thompson, the elder, at their head, the Downs members had to fight the question at four Sunderland quarterly meetings. They succeeded at length. The first chapel was built in 1865, and an enlargement, with a schoolroom under the new portion, was made in 1877. There were numerous converts during Miss Peart's mission in 1888, George Thompson, the younger, now a leading official in the circuit, being one of them. His nephew, J. T. Bell, of Pocklington (sent into the ministry from the Downs society), though only eight years of age, was drawn to the Lord in the same mission. Mr. and Mrs. Harrison were at the Downs in 1903, and so mighty was the awakening that it was said there had never been anything like it known there before. At present there is a virile church at the Downs.

For many years Easington Lane, which is also in "the revival zone," has had a powerful society, and it has a fine block of premises in which to worship and culture the young. John Robson, William Parker, John

Howe, Henry Tonks, F. Platts, and Joseph Rosecamp are named as the "fathers." Adepts in evangelism, it was the Easington Lane men who led in the religious upheaval at Murton in the early sixties. Indeed, it was an Easington Lane man (John Robson) who, in 1839, when sinking operations were going forward, accompanied Ralph Fenwick (who was himself reared at Easington Lane) to Murton Colliery to find a preaching place. The services were commenced in the house of William Thompson, a sinker, who broke the sod, and he commenced the first Sunday School in the long room of a public-house known until now by the name of "Back of the Shaft." It is the same William Thompson who started a class and Sunday School at Seaham Colliery. He died at the age of eighty-four, having been a member fifty-four years. An interesting figure in the person of William Hall passed to his rest on April 3rd, 1908. He arrived at Murton in 1843, was converted in October, 1849, and a saying of his was: "The first year of my conversion we had to put our jackets off and begin to work to get the chapel built." This first chapel was superseded by a new one in 1875. Hall was the founder of a fife and drum band, which rendered good service to the temperance cause. For in those days the Primitives of Hetton, Easington Lane, and Murton, as in other districts, were in the forefront of temperance reform.

As Joseph Hall tells it, the beginning of the great revival at Murton is a striking story. Fired with the Spirit of God, a group of men started to sing at Easington Lane Chapel door, one Sunday evening, and marched as they sang, saying they would go where the Lord would lead them. They proceeded to a plantation, prayed for several hours among the trees, and very early on the Monday morning they arrived at the door of Murton Chapel. Taylor Ramsay, the leader of the "assailants," explained to Thomas Hunter—a man of

power in several senses—and to the alarmed people that the Lord had sent them. “We’ve been singin’ an’ prayin’ aal neet,” he continued; “the Lord is gannen tae de a greet wark for the salvation iv sowls in this big colliery. Please open the cheppil door.” It got spread about the rows and down the pit that Ramsey and his men were praying in the chapel, and many hastened thither. The “invaders” had a high day, and the work spread, Messrs. Fenwick, Drummond, and Hallam being at the front that winter, when nearly two hundreds persons were converted. Not a few have gone home to heaven, but many of their families are in our churches, and others are serving their Lord in America and Australia.

It may be added that four worthy men—Joseph Hall, John Bell, William Gardiner, and John Robson—celebrated their jubilee as Primitive Methodists in 1906. The quarterly meeting presented each with a new Hymnal as a souvenir of the occasion. John Bell, one of the most successful leaders in the Connexion, known and beloved throughout the District, and held in high regard at the colliery, of which he is assistant manager, also received an illuminated address from Murton society. John Robson, father of Tom Robson, superintendent minister of the Crook Circuit, was made a Deed Poll member in 1907. While speaking of noble men, the late Thomas Armstrong should be put on the list, and the good work done by William Wilson, John Ritchie, and Robert Hills should not be forgotten.

Middle Rainton, at which Hugh Bourne once preached, and the scene of so many triumphs of grace, has fallen upon evil days. There are people yet alive who speak of the singular doings which took place there about forty years ago, when Miss Hyde (afterwards Mrs. Thompson) laboured at Rainton. Men, women, and children got into a state of semi-consciousness, and used

to walk about the chapel, across pew tops, and more dangerous places even, then fall down, and remain in a kind of trance for some time. The same kind of phenomena spread into Durham Circuit.

The Moorsley society has also been the means of doing much good. A gracious work took place in 1868, the leader in which was Richard Clish, whose real worth and service can never be fully estimated. He was supported by such men as James Bell, William Wilkinson, Joseph Smailes (now living at Boldon Colliery), David Parkinson, T. Hill, and Joseph Stack. Out of that movement sprang the present chapel, wherein many have been brought to know the truth. T. Redfern is still to the fore there, and from this society John Bainbridge, William Curry, and John Pinchen went into the ministry.

In addition to Richard Clish, there were many local preachers of outstanding excellence in the circuit. William Parker, born at Benton Square in 1818, and lived until he was eighty-two years of age, was greatly used of God in the salvation of souls, as was also his son John, who was for many years a well-known evangelist. John's first mission was Philadelphia, when the late John Thirtle, a local preacher and a true lover of Zion, was converted. Thomas Chisholm was located at Houghton-le-Spring when Peter Clarke was superintendent, and when the circuit was "on fire from end to end." Robert Taylor and John Dawson, Haswell converts, John Simpson, George Wilson, M. Duck, old William Foster, Tom Cape, and others yet to be named were in labours more abundant.

How affectionately the old preachers are spoken of! And there are people in what may be called the intermediate stage who speak with a special emphasis of the time when Adam Dodds, John Alderson, and Christopher Longstaff travelled in the circuit; while with those of more recent days, after Houghton had been cut



off, the name of W. R. de Winton is held in reverence, the feeling being accentuated by his tragic death during a gale in February, 1903, when he was killed in his bed by the chimney stack falling through the roof. In the immense assembly at the funeral there were four candidates for the ministry, in whom Mr. de Winton had taken a great interest—J. W. Hutler, J. J. Cook, William Groves, and J. T. Bell. With a touch of tenderness, yet with a note of pride, the devout, prosperous, brilliant service of Matthew Johnson is referred to, for in 1910 he leaves them, and will then retire through failing sight from the active work of a ministry he has adorned as a preacher and writer.

#### HETTON'S HIVINGS.

Hetton soon became a parent circuit, Chester-le-Street being the first offshoot in 1871, and then at the Conference of 1891 Houghton-le-Spring was granted independence. The latter—rendered famous long ago by the ministry of the celebrated Bernard Gilpin—had then a membership of 425 in the station, leaving Hetton with 576. In 1908 the figures were 605 and 643 respectively. John Phillipson was superintendent when the division took place, and he went with the Houghton people, George F. Johnson becoming superintendent of the parent circuit. Mr. Phillipson did an abiding work in the new station, and his successor, George Armstrong, was made mighty in word and deed. Ernest Lucas followed, and an additional preacher was subsequently called out. Large accessions were made to the roll during Joseph Tweddle's term. The societies now joined to Houghton are Newbottle, New Herrington (which is another name for the old Philadelphia society), Shiny Row, New Penshaw, Lumley Thicks, Lumley, New Lambton (with the establishment of which William Harrison had much to do), and Sunnyside, and each

place has a worthy record, for are not they all within the region trod by the early fathers?

Houghton was a pleasant old-world village when it was visited by the pioneers, and the cause there was of little account compared with those at the Raintons, Shiney Row, and adjacent villages. From not having a suitable place, the society at Houghton was much crippled for many years; but a building was got in 1855, when Joseph Dixon was at the front, and in the early seventies a substantial church was built, since which time extensive additions have been made to it. "The men of to-day," says Mr. Young, "are the children of the stalwarts, who created and sustained the best traditions of Primitive Methodism for long years, and the character of the past is largely reflected in the present-day aspects of the church." Though the losses of officials by death have been great in recent years—notably, Lancelot Kirtley in 1903, and John Curry, the circuit steward, in 1904—T. Mason and A. Smith, who took a prominent part in the formation of the circuit, the Francombes, the Fletchers, John Forster, R. R. Barkes, William Gardner, and many more are supporting the standard nobly and well.

Newbottle, in which the pioneers lifted up their voices, and which knew the indefatigable Johnny Richardson, has a fine chapel and suite of premises now. At New Herrington—or old Philadelphia, where so many triumphs of the Cross were recorded by the early preachers, and where Thomas Smith, the second governor of Elmfield College, was born—the Primitives bought the chapel from the Bible Christians when they finally gave up their northern mission, and a school-room was added and other alterations made. Shiney Row, as we know, has a glorious past; it has also a healthy present. "Joseph Fawcett's house" is frequently mentioned as the abode of the early society in

Shiney Row, and Fawcett, as far back as 1824, advocated the starting of a children's magazine, there being at that time ten boys and eleven girls in the village society. With such a beginning, Shiney Row has seldom let the fire burn low. To-day it has a strong society in good premises, and Mr. Barkes and his family have co-operated with and stimulated the believers there since they went to reside in the locality.

Lumley and Lumley Thicks have held an honourable place in Primitive Methodism in that strenuous region. For many years the Dodds family at the former village and the Dodd family at the latter made them attractive centres. Old Mr. Dodd, of Lumley Thicks, was a forceful personality, and his two sons—Michael and T. R. Dodd—were prominent local preachers, and exercised considerable power in the councils of the church and in the political life of Durham and Northumberland. Michael has long been a mining official in South Africa. Tom—the able, unconventional, brave, beloved Tom—was in South Africa when the trouble began, and was arrested for the part he took in the initial political movements. He subsequently became an officer in a brigade to protect the railways during the war, and died at his post. William Dodds, of Lumley, and his wife were deeply venerated. William, brother of the revered Adam Dodds, was converted at Milfield, and lived a beautifully unselfish and blessed life; and his wife, converted at Berwick, was a remarkable woman. At Lumley and in Edinburgh their son Marshall—thoughtful beyond the average, with the qualities of heart of his father, a man greatly loved—has witnessed a good confession. It was at Lumley where the nationally-known Peter Mackenzie conducted his first mission.

Beyond those already named, Hetton and Houghton Circuits have sent into the ministry H. Hewitt (who afterwards became a Congregationalist), Francis

France, John Moody (who joined the Anglican Church in Australia), William Shenton, John T. Smith, and Ralph Laidler. Ralph Shields, who went out from Chester-le-Street Circuit, belongs to an old Lumley family. Though he went into the Wesleyan ministry, T. R. Pickering was converted in our Lumley Chapel, and his sister, Mary Turner, preached extensively in the Durham villages.

“ POOLS OF WATER IN A THIRSTY LAND.”

“ Walked ten or more miles to a place called Chester, between Durham and Newcastle; a dry place, but God can water it.” So wrote Thomas Nelson in the summer of 1823, when he and others were doing their pioneer work in North Durham, with South Shields as their centre. A fortnight afterwards he paid another visit, and says:—“ Spoke at Chester-le-Street in the open-air; I believe not in vain.” That was a trifle better, and in the August, when he paid his third visit, he says several were well affected, and “ one soul gave in his name for the first among us in Chester-le-Street.” That was the beginning—one soul. But the Lord was watering the dry place, for next day Nelson states that he had “ a powerful good time,” many were much affected, and “ one aged woman gave in her name as a member.” A prayer meeting was held on the following morning, before he left, and two more gave in their names to meet in class. “ This,” he adds, “ has been a most hardened place for a long time; but the Lord is beginning to revive His own work.”

Thus was Primitive Methodism introduced into Chester-le-Street, and thus did the pioneers toil on in faith. A preaching-room was opened in 1824, but Chester must have drooped and been abandoned after that, as in the obituary of Thomas Davison (written by C. H. Bowser) it is stated that in the year 1841

“ Chester-le-Street was missioned by South Shields Circuit, and Brother Samuel Nettleton, who was stationed there, was the means of turning many sinners to righteousness ; among them was our deceased brother.” Even after the good work of 1841, South Shields must again have given it up. It was subsequently, however, in the Durham Circuit, for at the December quarterly meeting of 1846 of that station Chester-le-Street and four other societies which appear to have had twenty-three members in all, were given to the Sunderland Circuit, for the purpose of being united with two or three places of that station to form a branch.

But the weakling grew rapidly. With the amazing advance of the coal industry, Chester-le-Street became an influential centre, and the head of a powerful circuit in 1871, Thomas Parsons being the first superintendent. Two new churches—the Central and Durham Road—in the town itself testify to-day to the vigour and enthusiasm of the officials and members ; and great things, in very deed, have been accomplished in the populous villages surrounding it. For decades the circuit demonstrations have been the wonder of the District, and the enterprise of the men at the head of affairs in the station has invested the circuit with great importance. In the thick of this were John Hallam, M. A. Drummond, James Young, John Taylor, and other devoted men. John Parker, during Mr. Young’s superintendency, led a fruitful mission, in which about 150 persons professed conversion. The District Meeting was held in the school-chapel (before the Central Church was built) in 1888.

One special circumstance connected with this circuit was the employment of Miss Bulmer for three years, and she was invited for a fourth, but on August 8th, 1906, she became the wife of J. E. Leuty, and went with him to his Staffordshire circuit. Before that event her



name had become connexional—indeed, had gone beyond the bounds of Primitive Methodism, for in 1904 she was elected to the National Executive of the Christian Endeavour Council, and visited the great centres of the country. Her success in the circuit was remarkable, and the scenes in the Red Rose Mission (out of which sprang the Durham Road Church) will never be forgotten. T. A. Young had been called out as a second preacher in the interval, and, with A. J. Campbell as superintendent, the might of the station was extended. Favoured in its excellent ministry, there has also been no lack of men of grit and devotion among its officials. William Wilson and Thomas Hope, two of the first few who met in the old room in “Bland’s Opening,” in “the day of small things”; Albert Graham, Mrs. Lamb, Mrs. Storey, Mrs. Bertram, William Willis (whose daughter, the wife of the zealous Thomas Storey, can sing any of the old-time tunes), Thomas Telford (circuit steward for over twenty years), John Smith (beloved by all, one of the pioneers of the South Moor cause), John Clark (the choirmaster), Robert Clark, William Clark, Armstrong, the Blackburns, James Fletcher, and many more, have been, and the majority of them still are, “lifting up holy hands.” The name of Thomas Wright, too, is still dear to the Primitive Methodists of Chester-le-Street. Though his name was not on the class-book, his regular attendance at the services, his intense interest in the circuit, his liberality to the church and the poor, and his unselfish life, leave no doubt in the minds of those who remain as to his eternal destiny. And then there is Henry Pringle—bright and beneficent, known throughout two counties, and further afield—whose work amongst the “canny bairns” has been unintermittent for half-a-century, and who, with John Clark and the fiddle with which he leads the camp meeting processions, can yet

sing the oldest of the old songs! It is only a few months since the now venerable James Young was lifted up to the third heaven in a service at Chester-le-Street.

For a long time Birtley society has been distinguished for men of marked intelligence and strong individuality. Some of them have built up lucrative businesses as well as excellent characters, and their attachment to the house of God has strengthened with the years. From the building of the chapel in 1867 this society has advanced forward, and in the two-score years stalwarts have been reared and prodigals reclaimed. A numerous church, which has within its ranks men of the stamp of Alderman William Allison, Joseph English, Bertram Bolam, John Smith, Frank Knox, Fred Jones, Thomas Hudson, Storey, and others, must be a potent factor for good in any locality, should be continuous in its prosperity, and ready for all the demands of a swelling population.

Many futile attempts were made in the early days to establish a society in Pelton Fell. In the beginning of the sixties, however, after severe struggles, a permanent foothold was got. This occurred when the meetings were held in the house of Joseph Dixon, and that devoted man, who was killed in 1865, took a prominent part in the building of the chapel in 1864. A strong society has since done a fine work in the village. Joseph Hutchinson and Andrew Glenwright, along with a few more brave souls, "keep the lamp burning" in the old village of Pelton.

Great manifestations of saving power have been witnessed at Ouston from time to time, and the society there stands in the front rank of the vigorous churches in the circuit. Neither money nor labour is spared to push forward the work of God, and success is the result. Thomas Nelson formed the first society of four members here on August 7th, 1823, and a little chapel was built

in 1836-7, when it was in the South Shields Circuit. Strikes and other causes afterwards acted injuriously, and the chapel was lost to the Connexion. Thomas Armstrong, of Urpeth, was the only member left, and he used to go into the fields and pray the Lord to send some Primitives that way. In 1856 a new village was built at Perkinsville, and two local preachers arrived there — William Holland and Emmanuel Strong. Another start was made, and in 1858-9 a spiritual awakening of considerable force affected the whole neighbourhood. About 150 persons were converted, some becoming class-leaders and local preachers. Here are a few of the names of the preachers:—Robert Thirlaway (who was in the ministry for a time), C. Ritson (travelling preacher), Luke Fenwick, R. Fenwick, J. Howe (Free Methodist), J. Morriss (Wesleyan), J. Chapman (Wesleyan), R. Chapman, W. Winter, R. Thompson, Joseph Beaumont, M. Price, and W. Allison. A goodly band, indeed. John Lowery was a frequent preacher at Perkinsville, and when a chapel was built at Ouston, many were brought into church fellowship through the instrumentality of James Hall, of South Hetton, William Gelley, and others. Revivals were frequent, and amongst the band of workers John Hall, George Urwin, and Michael Glenwright were in the front line. William Allison was largely the means of Mr. Gelley visiting Ouston in 1867, and the excitement created by the services was indescribable. Many of the leading blackguards in the locality turned from their evil ways, and 112 names were taken of those who desired to serve Christ. During the fervour of the early sixties Ouston helped the few members at Birtley to form a society there, and also did mission work at Pelton.

Notable events have taken place at Waldridge Fell, about two miles from Ouston. Matthew King, T.

Stephenson, and one or two others, though unconverted men, commenced a Sunday School in the village some sixty years ago. Unable to offer a prayer of their own composing, they simply recited the Lord's Prayer along with the children at the opening of the school, then sang hymns, and taught the youngsters to read. These men, so near to the kingdom, soon afterwards entered into the joy of salvation, and the society thus commenced grew in numbers and power. Twenty years afterwards the conspicuous men in it were Matthew King, old Mark Shanks, Robert Shanks (of Sunderland), James Shanks, W. Willis, Michael Dodds, James Coxon, William Coxon, John Simpson (who is enshrined in the heart of at least one robust ambassador of Jesus Christ), and George Bruce, whose son, an efficient local preacher, has caught the spirit of his father. The village owes much to Joseph Spoor, who made his home there with Tommy Young, a class-leader, amongst whose members were well-known women like Mrs. Minto and Mrs. Affleck. Robert Milburn, William Lindsley, Greener Robson, John Binney, and John Morgan were also among the original band; and John Lowery and his wife, and afterwards William Gelley, saw drunkards, dog-fighters, and blasphemers made anew in Christ Jesus. Nine local preachers and two ministers were amongst the outcome of Mr. Gelley's mission in 1867. The ministers are G. W. King, who is doing a heroic work in Bradford Mission, and J. G. Binney, who years ago joined the Congregational ministry. Another result of that revival was the building of a chapel, the fortieth anniversary of which was celebrated in March, 1908.

Kimblesworth, where Robert Atkinson did useful work amongst the young before he was killed by a fall of roof in the pit; Harraton, from which went suddenly home on August 9th, 1897, Samuel Oliver, born at

Morpeth in 1817, the first scholar in Hopper Street Sunday School, Sunderland, and a tower of strength at Lumley Thicks, Ludworth, and Harraton. Chester South Moor, Portobello, and Fatfield have societies of fluctuating fortunes, though each can tell of fruit from its testimony and labour.

In 1908 there were 768 members in Chester-le-Street Circuit, and 46 local preachers; twelve chapels, built at a cost of £17,000, the debt being a little over £5,000; quarterly income, about £95. The old Sunderland Circuit of 1863 had a total membership of 1,983. That area has now eight independent stations, with 3,795 members on their rolls, eleven travelling preachers and numbers of local preachers and class-leaders exercising their ministry in commodious places of worship, together with an army of consecrated men and women who devote themselves to the spiritual culture of the young in the Sunday Schools and Endeavour societies.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

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### INVASION OF AN ANCIENT STRONGHOLD.

**N**ATHANIEL WEST'S soul rejoiced as he entered in his journal on December 10th, 1824: "Praise the Lord for what He has done at Durham!" The ancient place had been "opened" that year by Thomas Oliver, who had just been called into the work by Sunderland, his native circuit. The "invasion" was not done without opposition, but the people flocked to the house which had been secured as a preaching-place, and "a number were converted, and some backsliders were healed." Susan Dixon is named as one of the converts, and she became a mother to the young in Israel. Some of these young people were pillars in the church when Mr. Oliver returned to superintend Durham Circuit in 1840. Probably it was in 1825 that a chapel was built, after many difficulties, in "Silver Street Lane." There was no more laborious collector then than Susan Dixon, who "obtained regular subscriptions amounting to pennies and halfpennies a week."

A far other scene was witnessed in the historic city on the afternoon of October 22nd, 1860, when the foundation-stone of the Jubilee Chapel was laid. Headed by William Clemitson and Edward Rust, a procession started from the Mayor's chamber. Sir William Ather-ton (then Solicitor General) and Mr. John Bramwell (Recorder of Durham), had conspicuous places in the procession, and were followed by a number of ministers of various denominations, by officials of the Durham

Circuit, and by a multitude of others. The ceremony was performed by the member of Queen Victoria's Government named, who was also one of the representatives of the city in Parliament, in the presence of about two thousand people. On May 19th, 1861, the congregation worshipping in a small chapel in a back lane in Silver Street, "a wretchedly bad situation, the passage to which was bad also," entered into possession of a new sanctuary on the North Road, capacious, attractive, and comfortable, and entered also upon a larger sphere of work for God and humanity. But in the humbler place, in the unsavoury back lane, the Cowards, the Liddells, and others—families prominent for two or three generations—had seen "signs and wonders wrought in the name of Jesus." In it grace fashioned men whose ministry in the local and itinerant ranks have been widely known. Thomas Southron was arrested and harnessed there; Charles Simpson, too, but he died after having travelled little more than six years. Silver Street had the honour of having the District Meeting held there in 1858, and it was said "there was great joy in the city" thereat. At the annual assembly sixteen years afterwards in the Jubilee Chapel, when Henry Yooll and William Welford had finished their probation, and were ordained, striking evidence was given of the advance which had been made in the District. The District Meeting of 1905 in the same city was another high occasion.

But up to the building of the Jubilee Chapel the numerical prosperity of the country places in the circuit was comparatively greater than the progress made in the city; indeed, the outside societies rallied to the help of the city society in the building of the chapel. That Durham had caused anxiety in the early days is apparent from John Petty's exclamation, uttered in an exalted mood: "Durham shall live, and not die!" Thomas

Butterwick, in his glowing account of the Kelloe revival in 1843, says:—"We are looking for the glory of God in the city of Durham; and however unlikely it may be that our expectation will be realised, we will, nevertheless, stay our faith on the power of the Almighty, and on His willingness to save citizens the most obdurate." One of the most powerful examples of how Durham could be moved occurred in the early seventies, when John Taylor was superintendent. Revival services were conducted by Miss Hyde in Jubilee Chapel, and precisely the same scenes were witnessed as had taken place at Middle Rainton. The chapel was crowded every night, people travelling from all the country round, and many were converted. It was such a season as had never been experienced in the city before. Students from the University attended the services nightly. Men and women fell down as if dead. Some ran along the pew tops with perfect facility; others walked about as if in a hypnotised condition. When Mr. Taylor went to Durham he determined to make things move; they did move after a fashion which even that ardent soul could not have conjectured.

In later years, Durham city has had men of distinction associated with it. John Coward, J.P., is a link with the beginnings of Primitive Methodism in the city, and during his life he has been connected with almost all the institutions the Connexion has fostered, and has received the highest honours. Thomas Shipley, an energetic local preacher and politician for over fifty years, died in 1902. James Hall, converted at Darlington in 1825 under John Flesher, and at one time manager of the Durham N.E.R. goods station, took an interest for years in everything affecting the weal of Zion. Then the Wheeler family: the father, a lover of books, and his five sons zealous in good works. Three of the sons—John, William, and Robert—became travelling

preachers. All have gone. William's death, which occurred in August, 1907, called forth some of the finest tributes ever bestowed upon any man, and the manly, cultured, kindly, modest spirit was worthy of them all. Henry is an able local preacher in the Ripon Circuit, and George, the eldest, is a useful official at Whitley Bay. James Bell, who was cut down in the fulness of his powers in 1907, was born at Seghill, and was nurtured by godly parents. He went down the pit when he was only nine and a half years old; but his pit work was of short duration, and his success in the clothing business into which he embarked was such that when he died he was one of the chiefs in the large firm of Hepworth and Company, Leeds. Converted at Bishop Auckland in 1882, he was thereafter an enthusiastic servant of his Lord, and his election in 1903 to the Vice-Presidency at the Newcastle Conference was well merited. That John Wilson, M.P., John Johnson, M.P., and other noteworthy men are to be found in Jubilee Church to-day is a pledge of strength.

#### CAPTURING THE NEW COLLIERIES.

Mary Porteus was in the Sunderland Circuit when Durham and several adjacent collieries were made into a distinct station in 1838, and she, with George Tindall as superintendent, was sent there. The collieries were mostly new ones, the roads were excessively bad in winter time, and after twelve months' labour her health completely failed, and she retired from the work she had been so successfully engaged in for fourteen years. Many glorious revivals had taken place, however, during the year. Take the outbreak at Coxhoe as a specimen. When the colliery was first opened there, the Primitives very soon got a cottage to preach in, and started a society. A noted sinner went into the service one Sunday morning. The man, unwashed, unkempt,

seated himself behind the door, became serious during the service, and lingered behind the congregation at the close. "We are going to hold a class-meeting, will ye stop?" This from the leader to the prodigal, who answered: "Aa think aa will." Before the members the man declared that he intended henceforth to serve God; and when he went home, he went straight to a drawer, drew out a pack of cards, and cast them into the fire. Not a word had he spoken to his wife, who, when she saw what her husband did, instantly threw a shovelful of coals on the fire, burying the cards, and exclaimed: "Aye, man; hoo's this come te pass?" He told her he had been at the "Ranters' meeting," and that he was going back again. She went with him in the evening, and in the fellowship meeting she said: "The Lord bless ye for what ye've done for ma canny man." The conversion of this couple made a stir in the new village, for the man was the leader of a company of sword-dancers. His mates went to chapel, most of them were converted, and numbers more were brought to the Lord. The swords used for dancing were sold (to be converted into "gully" knives) for the purpose of purchasing Bibles and hymn books. Since that upheaval, there were other visitations of gracious seasons, notably in the autumn of 1857, when James A. Bastow and his helpers directed large numbers of penitents to the Saviour, and the converting work went on, there and in other parts of the circuit, for weeks.

On or about 1839, a new colliery was started at Kelloe, and a society existed there almost from the commencement of the village. In three years the population grew to 1,500. The society had sustained a godly character, and a flourishing Sunday School, with Thomas W. Elliot as superintendent, was doing well in the religious training of the young. But sinners were not getting converted at the public services, and the



members got troubled about the matter. Increased private prayer was agreed upon, and the time-honoured method of singing, praying, and exhorting in the streets was employed. The people were aroused, and conversions followed. Every family in Kelloe was visited, and prayed with. The arm of the Lord was made bare in a remarkable manner. Night after night, the cries of stricken souls were heard by a merciful God, and songs of deliverance followed. As many as twenty-three souls professed conversion in a single night, and from December 8th, 1842, to January 23rd, 1843, 216 persons, some of whom had been notoriously wicked hitherto, had publicly declared that they would live a new life. About sixty boys and girls were included in the total, and most of them belonged to the Sunday School. The change produced in the village was astonishing.

As is known in the county, Haswell was shorn of its strength by the closing of the pit in 1896. Shotton, Haswell Moor, and Haswell Terrace were also much affected by that cessation of work. The latter society had 106 members when that untoward event occurred, and in its dark days it owes much to the fidelity of John Smith and his associates. Shotton has been saved by the re-opening of the pit there six years ago, after being closed about a quarter of a century. In a measure this has helped the contiguous places. Haswell Moor has become the abode of old miners. While John Richardson was in the Thornley Circuit—1897-1903—the colliery properties were sold. Unfortunately, the Primitive Methodist chapels at Haswell Terrace, Haswell Moor, and Shotton were held simply on colliery lease, and were disposed of with the rest of the estates. Shotton and Haswell Terrace Chapels were bought back by the societies. About a hundred of the houses at Haswell Moor were purchased as “Homes for Aged Miners,” when that movement began, with John Wilson, M.P.,

and Canon Moore Ede (now Dean of Worcester) at its head. This philanthropic organisation also bought the little chapel, and the offer of Mr. Richardson to supply preachers for the services was accepted.

But we are in front of our story. It was the early revivals in the Durham collieries we were dealing with, and the upheaval at Haswell was one of the most remarkable. This transpired a few years after the formation of the Durham Circuit in 1838. Wesleyans, as well as Primitives, shared the heavenly baptism, among the converts of the former being Peter Mackenzie, the notable Wesleyan minister. From Haswell as a centre the mighty impulse affected a large area, and its effects remain until this day. Men were saved from their lower habits who became saviours of their fellows in almost every part of the county. Such were the Reavleys, the Jeffersons, the Thompsons, Hepple, Brown, and many more. Haswell society was a good nursery for the church for many years after. Edward Brown, lifted out of vice, taught to read by William Parker and others, became an earnest, manly Christian, and a fervent local preacher. John Reavley, an upright, holy man, so powerful in prayer that when wayward men were asked to go to chapel they would reply that they were afraid of John Reavley's prayers. Two of his sons—Matthew and Joseph—are serving faithfully in the ministry, and the Reavleys are now numbered among the most devoted families in Primitive Methodism. Haswell was the church of the Featonby brothers in their younger days. Newark—"Newrick"—full of wit and humour of the wise and acceptable kind, and singular in his picturesque style has been more vividly remembered than his thoughtful brother Jacob. During the troubles of 1844 he left the Primitives and joined the Wesleyans. He had been a local preacher fifty-five years when he died, and his popularity during

his lifetime, not only in the colliery districts, but in Sunderland, North and South Shields, and Newcastle, was exceedingly great. Possessing a good vocabulary, into which he often threw the pitman's vernacular with effect, coupled with a ready utterance, and breathing an intense earnestness in every part of the service, he at once attracted the attention of his hearers, and kept it to the end. He described himself as "a queer compound of nature and grace." Jacob was known as "the Bishop," a calm, thoughtful, dignified man, and an excellent preacher. His attachment to the people of his early choice was lifelong, and his work was beneficent. George Featonby, grandfather of G. F. Johnson and G. Featonby, was a fine man, an ideal class-leader. Peter Burt worked with Peter Mackenzie in Haswell Colliery, and his illustrious son, the Right Hon. Thomas Burt, began his pit life there as a trapper boy when ten years of age.

#### THE MEMBER FOR MID-DURHAM.

Of other prominent men at Haswell, William Hepple and George Thompson stand out with impressive distinctness. The latter took a leading place in Hetton in after days. It was at Haswell many years ago that John Wilson was converted. This society was influential because it was distinguished for its evangelistic fervour. Ten days would be spent in "the upper room," seeking preparation, by an outpouring of the Holy Ghost, for a camp meeting or revival service. The members kept a list in their minds of the most unlikely men in the village whom they sought to save. They would watch and pray and use every opportunity for the conversion of the men they carried in their hearts. Thus it was in the case of Robert Richardson's conversion. He was amazingly ignorant, never went to a place of worship, but he found mercy. One night he heard Thomas Bell,

an evangelist, preach on the Crucifixion of Christ, and the scene was depicted in impassioned language. Robert's indignation against the Jews rose to white heat. Shortly afterwards a Jewish pedlar called at his house, and the irate miner chased him out of the village. Yet this man, concerning whom many amusing anecdotes are told, became a useful local preacher; and when John Wilson, after he returned from America, heard of Richardson being a local preacher, at once said: "Truth is indeed stranger than fiction."

As John Wilson's name has been freely mentioned, some words will be expected regarding a man who holds so high a place in the county, in the country, and, above all, in the regard of his fellows. Said Mr. Andrew Carnegie, in a speech at Dundee, in 1890:—

"I know a man whom the President of the United States (Mr. Cleveland) complimented when I presented him as a member of the Arbitration Committee. He said to me: 'Mr. Carnegie, tell me about that man; are such men common among the democracy, among the working men, of Britain?' I replied: 'Yes, Mr. President; I think I know Scotch working men, and many of them are just as able.' 'Well,' said he, 'that man made a better speech, and he is an abler man, than——' And then he enumerated two or three Baronets and Sirs. That man was John Wilson, who has just been elected member for Durham. 'We should run a man with a record like his for the Presidency, and all the Lords and Dukes could not hold the candle to him in a real Republic.'"

This same man has impressed the House of Commons, and admittedly holds a place in that distinguished assembly which hundreds of his fellow legislators, notwithstanding all their advantages of birth and education, would be proud to occupy. Indeed, his first speech in the House drew a warm eulogy from no less an authority than Sir Erskine May, who declared to a journalist: "Wilson is the most eloquent man who has come into the House this session"; and added, "He must be a local preacher." The surmise was quite correct, of course.

John Wilson—County Alderman John Wilson, ex-Chairman of Durham County Council, member of Par-

liament for Mid-Durham, and the leading official of one of the greatest trade unions in the country—has “burst his birth’s invidious bar,” and “fought his way up.” And it *has* been fighting. How fierce the struggle has been few know. Born at Greatham, near Hartlepool, in 1837, left an orphan when very young, working in Ludworth Pit at twelve, living for a few years with a family called Stabler (whose boy he had rescued from death) a hewer at seventeen, off to sea at nineteen, back to the pits in three and a half years, going to America in the last year of the Civil War, where he spent three years as a working miner, and returning to Haswell, where he was brought to consecration through the agency of William Hepple at a class-meeting in a humble dwelling-house. He had been married a few years when he was converted, and was fully thirty years of age, but he applied himself with thoroughness and self-sacrifice to acquire knowledge, his “study” being a corner in the bedroom of a pitman’s cottage. He also carried an old grammar with him down the pit, and as opportunity afforded he looked at it by the light of his Davy lamp. A local preacher nine months after his dedication, he used, as a further means of promoting his own culture, to help any young man who was wishful to educate himself. In 1869 and 1870, when the spirit of trades unionism began to spread, John Wilson saw in it the possibilities of the social redemption of his class, and he threw himself into the movement. The story of the conflict is one of sacrifice and tragedy. John Wilson had the distinguished honour of being the first victim in the later movement. For his loyalty to unionism he was refused work at Haswell. Hunted from place to place, he at last got “set on” at Wheatley Hill, but after a few years he was again cast adrift. In 1882 he was appointed treasurer of the Durham Miners’ Union he had done so much to form, and he took up his resi-



dence in Durham city. Eventually, in 1895, four years after his election for Mid-Durham, he rose to the high position of corresponding secretary of the Union, and the coalowners have for years as freely shown their confidence in his integrity as have the miners for a very much longer period. Of his personal heroism in time of peril, he has again and again given proof. It has occurred that the man who pleaded one night on the floor of the House of Commons for measures for securing the further safety of the miners, was the next night, so to speak, at the head of a rescue party in the wrecked ways of a pit, after an explosion, battling with the fatal fumes to reach his stricken or entombed fellows. This he did so recently as February, 1909, at West Stanley, in company with his able colleague, John Johnson, M.P. There is no vulgar display about John Wilson; he is too strong a man to indulge in such a weakness. Since the hour John Wilson gave his life to the Lord in the Haswell cottage, whether he has been exalted or abased, he has been a loyal and zealous servant of Jesus Christ.

Many families removed from Haswell after the stoppage of the colliery, and that a society continued to exist there is due to the loyalty of men like R. Stephenson, T. Clough, and P. Featonby, the leader of the choir.

Near to Haswell is the village of Sherburn Hill, with its beautiful surroundings. This is where Joseph Hall, of Murton Colliery, was twice-born, and he lovingly lingers over every episode and every sterling man connected with the early days of Primitive Methodism there. Fifty and three years ago Joseph was grandly saved, and rich has been his service for his Lord. William Robson raised a choir, which drew the people to the double-roomed cottage that had been secured from the late Lord Durham, and a revival followed, whole families being converted, the Mortons, the Suggestts, the Liddells, the Coxs, the Smiths, Pratt, Ritchie, and Hepburn,

afterwards doing conspicuous service at home and in Australia. After the revival, a chapel was built, which has since been enlarged; and the long and patient labours of T. Robson (son of William), J. Hall, J. Liddell, Robert Errington (Thornley circuit steward), his wife (widely known in her younger days as Miss Sims, the evangelist), and others have been and still are fruitful.

Pittington figures prominently in the pioneer period. That the first missionaries drew large companies is evident from the journal of William Lister, who records that on February 5th, 1832, people thronged the room, round the windows, and round the door. Before the present chapel was built in 1842, services were held in the cottage of John Turnbull, who died at Edmondsley many years ago. Edward Dixon, who had been society steward for fifty-four years, died September 24th, 1899; James Scott and James Guy (leading singer for forty-six years) were also much esteemed. The society suffered a great depletion when the colliery stopped. J. W. Hall, now of Moorsley, remembers when there were as many as ten local preachers at Pittington. John Blakemoor, who stands alone now, was, together with W. Heppell and J. Haswell, of Langley Park, presented with an illuminated address in December, 1907. At a service conducted by Peter Clarke in the village, an athletic youth named James Cuthbertson was deeply impressed, and subsequently gave himself fully to the Lord. He entered the Wesleyan ministry, travelled in some of the best circuits in Methodism with much success, was chairman of the Carlisle District, wrote voluminously, settled in Monkseaton after superannuating, and though now approaching four-score years of age, moves about with facility, preaches with the vigour of a young man, and employs his pen daily. In 1908 he produced a story, "The Maid of Monkseaton," which deals with the early

monks from Iona, and which has had a popular reception.

#### GENERAL PROGRESS.

At Carrville, Sacriston, Edmondsley, Framwellgate Moor, Leamside, Bearpark, New Brancepeth, and Neville's Cross trophies have been won for the Master. Bearpark suffered a severe loss in 1908 by the death of George Gardiner, a local preacher of repute, a splendid Sunday School superintendent, and junior circuit steward of Durham Circuit. The senior steward is J. Oliver, the bearer of an honoured name. Edmondsley is where John Moffatt ordered the devil out of the chapel. It was a time of revival power in the circuit, but Edmondsley was hard to move. Mr. Moffatt's action—for the devil in this case meant a band of young men—created a sensation. The converting work, however, began the next night, and went on for weeks, some of the expelled young men being among the saved. Giles-gate Moor occupies no insignificant place in the story of Durham Circuit. The "old chapel" was formed out of two miners' cottages, and in that humble structure, in the days when Martin Cuthbert—father of the respected ministers, William and Martin Cuthbert—worshipped in it, services of power and glory were experienced. The awakening of George Thompson, who said he had had a vision of the Day of Judgment, was a notable event. The beautiful life of Jane Preston, who died in 1872, had a blessed influence upon the place. Mrs. Fawcett, who died in 1905, aged eighty-five, and Mrs. Usher, the nonagenarian, who joined the society in 1851, are spoken of with deep respect.

Seasons of power have been experienced at Sacriston. One such took place in the closing seventies, when William Welford conducted services for three weeks, walking the four miles from Durham and back each day. The final cricket match of the season with Kimbles-

worth, concluding with a dinner in the Blue Bell Inn, was abandoned, because, as the Sacriston secretary wrote to the Kimblesworth Club, "the Ranters have had a revival, and nearly all our chaps have got converted and will not play." Langley Park is new, but it is now one of the largest collieries in the North of England, and the society started there about thirty years ago has grown with exceptional rapidity. A chapel of no mean dimensions was built in 1883, when William Baitey was superintendent. This has just been transformed into a Sunday School, the foundation-stone of a new church to seat 450 persons having been laid on Whit-Monday, 1908, under inspiring circumstances. In this work the society has the experienced guidance of Emerson Phillipson and his talented son, J. W. F. Phillipson, architect.

There were 373 members in the Durham Circuit when it was formed in September, 1838, and in 1843 no fewer than 1,500 members were reported. The agitation produced by the teachings of an expelled minister from another church caused declensions, and the great strike of 1844, the horrors of which acted as a pall upon thousands of homesteads, shattered the societies. In July, 1846, there were only 520 persons on the circuit's roll. William Lister then became superintendent, and when he left in 1849 the membership had risen to 870. From thence to 1860 the circuit had more than regained its 1843 position, for in the first-named year 1,804 members were reported. The venerable Robert Garnett, speaking of his experience as a minister in the circuit in 1859, says a mighty spiritual force operated on the minds of the people, and there was an ingathering of hundreds of souls into fellowship with God's people, no fewer than an increase of 800 in the station in three months. Mr. Garnett's colleagues were William Clemitson, J. Watson, and J. Elstob. The visitation was far-reaching in its influence, and he has no doubt that the building of

Durham Jubilee Chapel and the subsequent division of the circuit into several large and important stations can be traced to that great spiritual awakening.

Joseph Spoor began his ministry in Durham Circuit in 1861, and he remained there seven years. An increase of nearly two hundred members was reported during the first three years, then Thornley Circuit was made, leaving the parent circuit with seven hundred members, which number waxed to 850 before Mr. Spoor left, notwithstanding disturbances created by "certain ambitious, pragmatic, disloyal persons." He was nobly supported by G. Lee, the circuit steward, and most of the officials. Chapels were built at Sherburn and Ferryhill and another was in progress at Shincliffe Colliery, a more spacious one was erected at Low Spennymoor, and preparations were made at Spennymoor itself for a large and costly building. It was in this great station where Mr. Spoor's health was undermined, and he died at Stockton in the autumn of 1869. A plan of Durham Circuit for the first quarter of 1864 is before us. Covering the region of six stations of to-day—Durham, Thornley, Wingate, Coxhoe, Spennymoor, and Brandon—it bristles with interest. There are thirty-six places in all, and eighty-two local preachers. Chilton and Page Bank are at the bottom, but have no preachers planned to them. Wheatley Hill, Brandon, Langley Park, and many another strong society of the present may be searched for in vain. Fain would we linger over the names of Knox and Reed, of Spennymoor, Featonby of Haswell, Beaney of Thornley, Garnett, Cuthbert, Armstrong, and Liddell, of Coxhoe, and the Moorsley, Trimdon, and Shotton men, but we must forbear.

#### SOME LIMBS OF DURHAM.

As has been intimated, the first slice taken off the ninety or a hundred square miles occupied by Durham



Circuit in 1864 was Thornley, with which were the Haswells, Trimdon, Wingate, Coxhoe, and the villages surrounding them. The new station had 692 members. Within this radius men of character, zeal, and faith have laboured. In addition to those already named were W. Adamson, a Hexhamshire man, who was richly blessed; Benjamin Porter, father of J. Fletcher Porter, Orphanage Secretary; J. Spencer, who had immense power with the people; A. Cummings, and R. and T. Hope. "Diamonds in the rough" were converted in the societies, and some of those out of whom local preachers were afterwards made could neither read nor write before they were "brought in."

John Waite was the first superintendent of Thornley Circuit, and it bounded forward immediately on its being made an independent station. In three years five village chapels were built, and the membership increased. Thornley and the several places attached to it had contributed £42 2s. 10½d. to the March quarterly meeting of 1864, and the liabilities amounted to £51 12s. 10½d. In June, 1908, Thornley Circuit (excluding Wingate and Coxhoe sections) had 538 members, and a quarterly income, including £22 16s. 3½d. balance brought forward, of £93 15s. 9½d. But it has not been uninterrupted sunshine and progress during the forty and four years. It was a time of depression when William Welford entered the station in 1880, and in his five years' term he walked not less than 8,000 miles in all weathers, visited 10,000 homes, christened over 1,000 infants, and conducted 2,000 services, besides giving many lectures and leading hundreds of open-air processions. There was an immense quarter day debt when Mr. Welford began, "most of the chapels were in poor repair and in arrears; appointments were neglected, and there was a general lack of interest." Where the pits had been "laid in" for some time, as at Coxhoe, Cassop,

Shotton, and Kelloe, the chapels were all but empty during the services. At West Cornforth, indeed, it had been decided to close the chapel. In a short time, however, the dilapidated circuit rose into newness of life, all the properties were put into good repair, congregations increased, arrears were met, including the circuit debt, and seven chapels were rendered debtless. A new chapel and schoolroom were built at Castle Eden Colliery and a school-chapel at Station Town, while land was secured at Quarrington Hill for a new sanctuary. Notwithstanding that Thornley, Wheatley Hill, and Ludworth pits had been "laid in" during the term, in five years there was an increase of 350 members.

"A Circuit Revival!" That was Mr. Welford's note at the first quarterly meeting. The officials took it up, and with brave hearts and renewed faith went to their work. Open-air services were a great feature. The first week-night procession at Thornley was started by the minister, his wife, and their two little boys. At Kelloe Mr. Welford opened the campaign alone. Of course, the laggards turned out in a shame-faced way after the start had been made, and week by week their courage and numbers grew, as far as eighty people being got to a week-night service. Four bands of Singing Pilgrims were organised, and did immense service in the circuit. Three women were placed on the plan. One of them, Margaret (Maggie) Taylor (sister of Nichol Taylor, the zealous superintendent of Whitley Bay Sunday School), who decided for Christ when she was only ten years of age, did service as an evangelist in the counties of Durham and Northumberland which will never die. In the last seven years of her consecrated labour over seven hundred persons professed conversion. The sweet spirit passed within the veil at Marley Hill, a few days after she had preached in the chapel to a great congregation as one inspired.

The circuit demonstrations and camp meetings were attractive events. "I heard many mighty sermons from local preachers," says Mr. Welford; "but I wish to pay a tribute to Mr. John Wilson, M.P. He was one of the best men I was ever yoked with at a camp meeting: so ready, so willing, so untiring, so forceful in prayer, so appropriate and convincing as a preacher, that he was always a great asset for a long hard day." Joseph Elwin, Richard Stephenson, Robert Garnett, J. Bell, G. Lewins, Henry Booth, and others, were men who could lay hold of the topic of the hour, and their handling of the disastrous occurrences which took place at Seaham, Trimdon Grange, and Tudhoe about that period was impressive. T. K. Upright and J. Forster were Mr. Welford's helpful colleagues during these strenuous and fruitful years; and, in addition to those already referred to, William Glass (Vice-President of the Leeds Conference), his brother Thomas, Mr. and Mrs. Coates (*nee* Miss McKinney), T. S. Allison, John Parkin, W. Young, J. Cook, F. Wellock, Benny Robson (the "Billy Bray" of Ludworth), J. Donkin, W. Waggott, Joseph Luxmore, J. Hedley, William Lorrison, and many more were heroes in the fight.

During John Richardson's ministry in Thornley Circuit (1897-1903), the same company which re-opened Shotton Pit, and so put new life into the large village and other adjacent places, began sinking operations on the coast between Seaham Harbour and Hartlepool, and missions were opened at Easington and Horden. The latter has been a success, and in 1905 a commodious school-hall was built on an excellent site secured by Robert Walton. But far and away the strongest place in the whole region is Wheatley Hill, which, in the summer of 1908, had 186 members, fourteen of them being local preachers. It was here that John Wilson first came into public prominence. One of the youths he

helped in his intellectual struggles was Henry Errington, who afterwards became an efficient minister, and died at Morley, aged fifty-three. Hugh Walton, manager of one of the collieries, and to whom the prosperity of the society owes much, is mentioned with reverence. Douglas Hall, who went from Wheatley Hill to the Aged Miners' Homes, was a saintly man. George Clarke, of Trimdon, another resident at the Homes, was also a fine soul. Services were held at one time in a barn at Wheatley Hill, and, subsequently, two sets of meetings were held simultaneously—one at one end of the village, and another in the Temperance Hall at the other. After heroic toil in the barn, the present chapel was built in 1873, and has since been enlarged to seat four hundred persons. Several hundreds of scholars are in the Sunday School, the C.E. societies are vigorous, there is an efficient choir, the Sunday evening services are crowded, and it is thought another enlargement of the chapel must take place or a new one must be built. Wheatley Hill has passed through all the trying ordeals incident to colliery village life; but since the re-starting of the pit twenty years ago, it has grown apace, and there is now a population of about 5,000. Remarkable revivals have taken place, and men like Joseph Carey (who had been an "out-of-the-way" Irishman) and M. Usher, who are frequently engaged in evangelistic work, are the fruit thereof. There is Edward Ferry, too, quaint and devout, who nurtured Carey as a father would his own son, and was aided in this work by James J. Wick. John Dickinson, also, a man of exceptional mental calibre; Peter Lee, the indefatigable; William Snaith, junior circuit steward; T. H. Taylor, the lover of the young folk; William Brown, the veteran, and a host of rising men and women combine to assure the future success of this virile church.

The ministers sent out from the old Thornley Circuit

were—William Dinning, John Redhead, William and Martin Cuthbert, J. W. Middlemiss, Henry Errington, and William Booth.

In 1901, when there were twenty places in all, the circuit was divided into three stations—Thornley, Wingate, and Coxhoe. The first had one minister, John Richardson (and had to call out a probationer), 26 local preachers, 535 members, and nine places; Wingate, one minister, T. J. Watson, 19 local preachers, 228 members, and four places; Coxhoe, one minister, R. Fletcher, 24 local preachers, 329 members, and seven places.

Through the Glass family Wingate has been made known throughout the Connexion. Prosperous in business, their devotion to the cause of God and their open-handed liberality are a household word. Wingate Chapel and Sunday Schools are witnesses to the generosity of William Glass; and when he was elected to the Vice-Presidency of the Conference, gratification was felt in every northern society. Members of the second generation of the Glass family are walking in the ways of their forerunners. Wingate Sunday School has a record to be proud of. In 1907, Maggie Luxmore, who had won two silver medals and several book prizes previously, carried off the gold medal awarded by the Connexion for the best paper on "The Early Life of Joseph," in the senior scholars' division. Her sister, in 1906, won the gold medal in the teachers' examination. During 1908 over £1,500 was spent in the extension and improvement of Wingate Chapel.

Trimdon, at which a society was formed as early as 1823, has been recognised as one of the successful spheres of operation in the locality. The colliery has a vigorous society and over half-a-dozen local preachers. Castle Eden has had a chequered career; nevertheless, the place has been held by a faithful band. At Station Town, John Bell, before he removed to Murton, was one



of the originators of a church which has become important in the village, a new chapel having been recently erected in place of one destroyed by fire. In June, 1908, there were 295 members in the circuit, and the quarterly income was £50 12s. 11d.

John Ward, converted under William Dryden, in 1822, near Ebchester, has been named as the founder of the Coxhoe society. Edward Cairns attributes his conversion and connection with the church of which he is a minister to the example of his mother and the influence of a Sunday School teacher at Coxhoe, when he was a scholar in that school. Undoubtedly the arrival of Robert Garnett in the village was an event of the first importance so far as Primitive Methodism at Coxhoe was concerned. After nine years' labour in the ministry, failing health caused him to retire, and since 1861 he has made Coxhoe his home. A man of intellectual power and of refined tastes, he threw himself into all the interests of the church, and a new and better chapel was soon built. The membership rose from thirty-six to 120, and notwithstanding serious trade reverses, Coxhoe to-day has a fine working church at the head of the circuit, since the formation of which Robert Garnett has been steward. By the death of John William Raine not long ago, a severe loss was sustained by the whole circuit.

Trimdon Grange, Kelloe, and West Cornforth are strong societies, and have faithful officers and members. Quarrington Hill also has a good record, and from whence some have passed away whose names are as ointment poured forth. Cassop can tell of wonders of grace, and bears a good witness for the Master. A new and promising cause has been opened at Bowburn.

When Coxhoe Circuit was formed in 1901 the membership was 326, and the quarterly income £44 6s. 2d. In June, 1908, there were 408 members, and the quarter's income was £65 15s. 7d.

## MORE LIMBS OF DURHAM.

The expansion of Spennymoor, Tudhoe, and the adjacent places has been on a large scale. In 1853 the Tudhoe Ironworks were established, and the colliery commenced in 1866, ten years later the same company opening Croxdale. Great numbers of people flocked into the neighbourhood, and the churches at Mount Pleasant and Spennymoor grew amazingly. Though the works were closed in 1901, the societies were not greatly affected in consequence. Spennymoor was made a branch of Durham Circuit in 1868, with 352 members, whose contributions to the quarter day amounted to £26 16s. 4d. William Bowe was superintendent of the branch, and it was such a success that in two years it became an independent station, its first superintendent being Henry Pratt, sen. Another year saw a second preacher—J. Carr—on the ground. Joseph Cook was the first steward, and the progress was nothing short of astounding.

The first services were held in one of the cottages at Whitworth Pit, Spennymoor, and in 1855 George Street Chapel was built, in which a great revival took place in 1862, amongst the converts being most of the large family of William Reed. His son Robert is now in Chicago, and William and John became travelling preachers. The chapel becoming too small, the present sanctuary in Rosa Street was erected in 1867, which has since been extensively improved; and this powerful church, at the head of a powerful station, had its birth in a modest pit cottage. A widow—Mrs. Burnett—who is nearly ninety years of age, was a member of the old Whitworth Pit society. William Benson, whose widow is still at the front, was another of the original band. His son, a very able local preacher, resides in Glasgow. David Knox, another of the early and enthusiastic mem-

bers, lives at Ashington. Ralph, William, and John Parker, too, the former grandfather of John Williams, superintendent of the Allendale Circuit; John Pratt, survived by two sons, George and John, the former being at Redcar; James Beckwith and his son James also strove nobly for the faith, and the former's grandson James is treasurer of the Spennymoor trust; John Reavley, father of Matthew and John, was also a leading man at George Street Chapel at one time; George Cheesman, Henry Lowery, William Thompson, John Dent, Wales Mason, John Newman, Thomas Gibson, and Matthew Reavley (the three last still alive) did yeoman service. And at the present time the chiefs of Spennymoor society are among the leaders of the public life of the town. During the thirteen years of its existence as an Urban Council, three Primitive Methodists have occupied the chair at different times—Councillors P. Knox, G. Rhymer, and J. Reavley. In the Coronation year (1902) every office of any importance in the town was occupied by a Primitive Methodist. The Inspector of Police, Joseph Elliott, was then a class-leader, and since his retirement, six years ago, has been more actively engaged in religious work.

Ministers who have served the churches in the circuit are unanimous in their praise of the loyal and capable officials in the various societies. Until now, Dr. John Watson speaks with enthusiasm of the time he spent in Spennymoor Circuit, with William Gelley as his fellow-labourer. Luke Stafford went to Spennymoor in 1879, and had an experience which warms his heart until this hour, declaring that, after having been in all kinds of stations in various parts of the Connexion, Spennymoor takes the palm as having had the best class of local preachers. He mentions Stephenson Stobbs, then of Page Bank; Thomas Werritt, of The Boyne; George Rhymer, of Tudhoe Colliery; William Johnson, then cir-

cuit steward; Robert and Thomas Pearson, and Thomas Harrison. Spennymoor Circuit was great in evangelistic effort, and had good choirs. Mighty achievements were, therefore, accomplished. The revival of 1886-7, when William Shipley and Ralph Shields were the ministers, was a great uplift. From that station a goodly number of young men have been sent into the ministry—Matthew and Joseph Reavley, John and William Reed, J. Fletcher Porter, George F. Johnson, John Mason (who joined the American Eastern Conference), B. Robinson, Francis Richardson, G. E. Walker, H. Fletcher, Charles Mathison, Mark Pattison, and J. W. Naisbit.

During recent years, John Rogerson has been an outstanding man in the circuit, having previously been an active worker in the Shildon and Bishop Auckland Circuits. A man of culture and refinement, he has taken a leading part in the public life of Spennymoor and district for many years. Spennymoor society was blessed for twenty years with the abundant service of John Walker. Hugh Henderson, the kind and modest native of Garrigill; William Fairley, of Croxdale; and George Barker, who was born in the Brompton Circuit, have each left a good record. Page Bank lost a genuine pillar when Jane Mitchison departed in the winter of 1906; and in the same year Ferryhill Village was the poorer for the death of Mrs. John Reed. In the terrible explosion at Tudhoe Colliery on April 18th, 1882, when thirty-seven men lost their lives, eight members of the Primitive Methodist society and five adherents were among the victims. The members were—Robert Artus (class-leader), Peter Strong, Jonathan Gair, Joseph Faulkner, James Shaw, James Rhymer, John Brown, and George Bowes; and the adherents—Henry Lawson, Joseph Marsh, Thomas Snowdon, J. Smith, and William White. Many other Primitive Methodists than those named

belonging to this station have taken a conspicuous part in public affairs as members of Councils and officials in trade unions, such as W. Berriman, R. Wood, M. Minns, A. James, J. Watchman, E. Maughan, M. Hutchinson, R. Willey, W. E. Nicholson, M. Price, W. J. Parker, C. Roe, M. Lawson, D. H. Pearson, and James Robson.

About thirty years after being made an independent station, Spennymoor decided to make a new circuit of Brandon, Langley Moor, and Browney. Daniel McKinley and John G. Bowran were ministers at the time, and the latter became superintendent of the offshoot, which was a success from the start. A new cause was started at Ushaw Moor and another at Broompark, and the young, able, and enterprising minister was loyally supported by Richard Leckenby (whose death caused a gap at Langley Moor), James Tynem, David A. Pearson, Thomas Gibson, R. C. Maddison, T. Briggs, J. Lawson, and many others. The enthusiasm and push of the superintendent infected all the societies, and the youthful station began its career with a vigour which created a tradition teeming with vitality. It was here, in the midst of his glowing evangelism and abundant services as teacher and pastor—for John G. Bowran knew his people in their homes—that the impulse came upon him to write. In Brandon and its surroundings he found material for his first stories, most of the characters in his "On God's Lines" being got in that neighbourhood. "I had a great time there," he says; "the people were a grand lot."

In June, 1899, the membership of the Spennymoor Circuit was 890, and the quarterly income £128 1s. In the following year 255 members were given to the Brandon Circuit, and in June, 1908, there were 823 members on the Spennymoor roll, the income being £146 16s. 5d.



Brandon had a remarkable Sunday School as far back as 1879. Luke Stafford says of it then : " I have seen many schools whose management has pleased me, but, without prejudice or partiality, I give it as my judgment that, among all the schools I have visited, Brandon Colliery was by far the best conducted.

The first quarterly meeting of the station was held in September, 1899, when the membership was 293, and the quarter's income £44 9s. 7½d. Last year there were 369 members, and the quarter's revenue was £53. The church property is valued at over £6,000.

A very few lines will give an idea of the results of the developments and work during the past seventy years in the prolific area we have just been dealing with. The quarter's income from the 373 members in the sixteen places forming the original Durham Circuit in 1838 was £20 12s. 5d., and Sunderland Circuit added £7 6s. to that amount to meet the total expenditure. In its present circumscribed condition, Durham Station had in June, 1908, 685 members, and a quarter's revenue of £102 16s. 6½d. The returns of the offshoots for the same date are :—Thornley, 538 and £93 15s. 9½d. (including a balance of £22 10s. 3½d. brought forward); Coxhoe, 408 and £65 15s. 7d.; Wingate, 295 and £50 12s. 11d.; Spennymoor, 823 and £146 5s.; Brandon, 369 and £53. In the six stations, therefore, there are 3,118 members, contributing £512 5s. 10d. every quarter, whereas, there were 373 members, sending £20 12s. 5d. to the quarter day, in 1838. And that is but the numerical and financial phase of the ascent.

## CHAPTER XIX.

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### “THE METROPOLIS OF FOUR COUNTIES.”

WHEN dealing with the eastern section of Northumberland, we must naturally take Newcastle, “the metropolis of four counties,” as it has been called, as a centre. So far as can be gathered, Newcastle was the first place on Tyneside at which a Primitive Methodist missionary preached. Then, too, before John Branfoot held his historic service in Sandgate, William Morris and John Bagshaw, two Staffordshire local preachers, who had been associated with Hugh Bourne and William Clowes at Tunstall, and who had removed to a pottery in Newcastle, had been doing evangelising work. These were the men who invited William Clowes to visit Newcastle, though they had meanwhile sought a home amongst the Wesleyans.

Alluring as the topic may be, it is not our business to dilate on the commercial, social, and intellectual ascent of lower Tyneside. Suffice it to say, that the stream has been transformed into a majestic tidal river, upon which the enormous modern battleships and liners can float with ease from Elswick to the sea; and that the miles of pastures and arable land from Mickley Square to South Shields on the south side, and from Newburn to Tynemouth on the north bank, are now thronged with collieries, manufactories, docks, shipyards, engine-works, and towns after towns filled with swelling populations. The nineteenth century, and especially the latter half of it, saw the whole of the amazing evolution.

In his roving commission, as has been told, John Branfoot "found his way" to Newcastle from Hutton Rudby, and preached on the Sandhill on that memorable first of August, 1821. There had been a boat-race that day, and the rowdiness of the crowd around the preacher roused the ire of Mary Porteus. The meeting broke up in confusion, but Branfoot's visit had not been fruitless. Mary Porteus and John Lightfoot were brought into direct contact with Primitive Methodism by it, and their names have been writ large in the story of the Connexion's beginnings in the North. Mr. Lightfoot's youngest son is a respected minister to-day.

"An incident occurred," writes George E. Almond, of Gateshead, "at the Conference of 1842, which is of great interest to me. The first Primitive Methodist Conference camp meeting was then held on Newcastle Town Moor, and was attended by Hugh Bourne and William Clowes. My wife, when she was nine years old, was taken to that meeting by her grandmother (Mary Porteus), and so connects the founders of the Connexion with one who is living at the present day." Since Mr. Almond penned the foregoing interesting note, his amiable wife has passed away, the sad event taking place in November, 1908.

William Clowes visited Newcastle in the autumn of 1821, and preached in the open-air at Ballast Hills—a place for ever memorable in the history of Northern Primitive Methodism. After attending the Loughborough annual meeting or Conference in 1822, Clowes remarks in his journal that he "returned to the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Mission," but though he preached at North Shields on June 23rd and elsewhere afterwards, he does not seem to have taken an appointment in Newcastle itself until July 1st. Ballast Hills was again his stand, preaching in the open-air. After three weeks had passed he was there again, and "it was a shaking

time.” John and Thomas Nelson were then in the locality, and the hand of the Lord was with them. On the 29th of July, after Thomas Nelson had preached, when “some cried for mercy,” a society of ten persons was formed by Mr. Clowes at Ballast Hills. It is therefore the parent society of Primitive Methodism in Newcastle, and was at the first included in the North Shields Circuit.

Additions were made to the little band in the following weeks, and one of the journals stated: “Some of the worst characters are turning to God here.” The Nelsons, Gilbert, Shaw, Baker, Spencer, and Wallace were in the region in 1823. On the next Sunday Jeremiah Gilbert preached at Ballast Hills, and in a letter, in which he eulogises the work done by the Nelsons, he says:—

“The Lord was very present. I think there was a thousand people. Several wept. One woman, very richly dressed, kneeled down on the ground in the open-air; tears fell from her eyes, and she cried to the good Lord of heaven to have mercy upon her, until the Lord removed her burden, and she rose and praised Him. In the afternoon we had a lovefeast in Newcastle. After a few had spoken, the mighty power of God came down. Three couple fell down by two together, and they found the Lord. There was a mighty moving through the place, and I believe more than ten got liberty. We have near one hundred in society at Newcastle, including those on trial. At night Brother Wallace preached in the yard, and I gave an exhortation. We afterwards went into the place to hold a prayer meeting, and three professed to find the Lord.”

George Wallace and Joseph Spencer also held successful meetings at Ballast Hills and Byker Hill. The very heart of the town had, however, been attacked, and the building in which the lovefeast referred to above was held was the Butchers’ Hall, in the Friars, which was opened as a preaching room on October 20th, 1822, and in which many were brought to a knowledge of the truth.

North Shields made Newcastle into a circuit in December, 1823, with three preachers to work it, Jeremiah

Gilbert being superintendent. With North Shields, Newcastle, and Morpeth (a branch of the former) as bases, a magnificent work was carried on amongst the pitmen and keelmen. The preaching of the earnest missionaries was accompanied by an extensive revival of religion, and hundreds of the most profligate were converted. "Deep emotions, loud responses, and sometimes faintings and convulsions, attended the preaching and other religious services among the pitmen." But the genuineness of the work was proved by its fruits, for a general reformation of manners was witnessed; and when one of the coalowners was applied to for aid towards the erection of a chapel, he replied: "Oh, yes; I will help you, for your preachers have done so much good amongst our men that we have much less to subscribe for policemen and for trials for misconduct." Preaching rooms were opened, societies formed, and Sunday Schools instituted with amazing rapidity.

#### FROM SALLYPORT TO CENTRAL CHURCH.

From the Butchers' Hall Newcastle society moved in April, 1824, to an old chapel in Sallyport, previously occupied by the Presbyterians, and capable of accommodating 500 or 600 persons. The next step was the securing of a chapel, vacated by the Independents, in Silver Street, which street had not even then the best reputation. For twelve years this was the circuit chapel, and many sterling men and women were born in it. Just the year before leaving Silver Street, the ten members in 1822 had swollen to 1,028 in the circuit in 1837; and Mr. Kendall, referring to the April-to-July plan of that year, says there were then twenty-eight places in the station, stretching from Wallsend to Wylam, and from Westmoor to Shotley Bridge. There were four travelling preachers—of whom one was located at Dundee for the "Scotch Mission"—and sixty-two local



preachers and exhorters. John Lightfoot, Mary Porteus, Joseph Spoor, Jane Spoor, Thomas Jobling, John Matfin (converted in Sallyport Chapel in 1824), and S. G. Butterwick had gone into the ranks of the ministry before then, and Thomas Butterwick was soon to follow them. W. B. Leighton and Peter Kidman had already begun their long and honourable work at Ballast Hills. Speaking of the Sunday School Mr. Leighton started at Ballast Hills in 1829, Mr. Kendall says :—

“ Of this he was the superintendent for the long space of 59 years. After its formation, the school grew until it had 500 scholars and 60 teachers. It had its branches, to one of which the present St. Anthony’s society can trace its origin. The Revs. John Davison, the biographer of Clowes, and Thomas Greenfield, were two of many who had a new direction given to their lives by this Sunday School. About the year 1830, Mr. Leighton, then only a young man himself, invited a youth who was playing at pitch-and-toss to go with him to the school hard by. The youth yielded to persuasion kindly given, and from that simple incident Thomas Greenfield was accustomed to date his conversion. Then began, on his part, that course of mental cultivation which in the end qualified him to be a college tutor and principal, and made him an expository preacher of rare excellence. Thirty years after Mr. Leighton won this youth for his Master, the like process was repeated, and with the same happy results. This time it was William Pears—whose name stands No. 35 on the plan of 1837—who induced his young lodger to accompany him to Ballast Hills Chapel. That youth was Hugh Gilmore, than whom our Church can show no more interesting figure. But at that time the youth, though a lad of parts, was poor, untaught, and undeveloped as a lion’s cub. He went, and went again to Ballast Hills, and soon ‘experienced a complete awakening.’ Hugh Gilmore never forgot Ballast Hills or its Bible Class, of which the Rev. T. Greenfield was now the president. Nor did he forget William Pears; for in the last sermon he preached, June 7th, 1891, he thus refers to him: ‘I lived with a plain, poor man, whose name was perhaps unknown beyond the people in the little row of cottages where we dwelt. I felt that there was something about that man—not from any natural cause—that made him separate from the men with whom I was mixing.’ ”

The transition from Silver Street to Nelson Street may be ranked as among the boldest movements in the experience of any society in the Connexion at that period. William Clowes laid the foundation-stone of the notable chapel on November 21st, 1837, and those who heard his address and dedicatory prayer said the

chapel was consecrated before it was built. The silver-tongued William Sanderson, together with John Bywater and Henry Hebbbron, officiated at the opening of the sanctuary on October 7th and 14th, 1838. It was a tremendous undertaking, but there were practical men of high character in the society. Here are the names of the trustees:—John Scott, George Charlton, Joseph Salkeld, David Kell, Robert Barron, Ralph Cook, John Taylor, Andrew McCree, Thomas McCree, William Armstrong, W. B. Leighton, Edward Holmes, George Dodds, James Thompson, George Moore, Robert Foster, J. Lockey, Joseph Pattison, R. Robson, James Stewart, and James Gibson.

John Scott and John Taylor were tradesmen of known probity. Mr. Scott and his wife were among the 1,500 victims of the cholera in the fatal autumn of 1853. Others who fell in that terrible visitation included Ralph Walton, a pious and charitable member; John Gardiner, a useful local preacher; and Robert Foster and his wife. Foster was one of the first members in Newcastle, a local preacher in 1822, "went out to travel" in 1825, but could not bear the physical strain of the itinerant ministry, and returned to Newcastle, where he won many souls for his Lord. On the death of his parents, Robert Foster, jun., now "silvered o'er with four-score winters' snows," was the eldest in a family of six, and at once took up the burden of the maintenance and education of the rest most willingly. And now few men are better known in the Connexion than Robert Foster of Newcastle. All his life a student of the best literature, he has won and kept a position as a superior preacher. His election to the Vice-Presidency in 1901 was the estimate of his brethren as to the value of his life's work. Marrying the daughter of John Day, whose memory is blessed, Mr. Foster is therefore the son-in-law of a minister. He is the nephew of another pioneer, William

Garner, who married Elizabeth Pattison, his mother's sister. John Day Thompson is his nephew, and T. Alex. Thompson, B.Sc., his grand-nephew.

William Thompson and Thomas Parker started a mission in William Street, Arthur's Hill, out of which sprang Kingsley Terrace and Derby Street churches. Joseph Salkeld and his wife, from Cumberland, soon went to Howdon, and were willing workers. Andrew McCree, two of his brothers, and a sister were converted in Silver Street. Andrew was superintendent of the Sunday School for twenty-four years, and his youngest brother, George W. McCree, was a travelling preacher for a short time, and became a Baptist minister, and an able temperance lecturer and writer. James Stewart gave to the church and to the civic and commercial life of the town a son whose name will stand among the honoured of each for all time. William Stewart rose to be one of Newcastle's leading tradesmen and “Sheriff of the town and county.” True to his church, he took an abiding interest in the work of the circuit, of which he was steward, of the District, and of the Connexion. The hospitality of Mr. Stewart and his generous wife—the daughter of Thomas Pattison—was also of service to the church. Ralph Cook, husband of Jane Spoor, was more closely associated with Ballast Hills and Heaton Road than Nelson Street.

And there are the two renowned Georges! Mightier men in the temperance world have been rarely produced than George Charlton and George Dodds. They had their hands on State affairs, too, and lived to see the enfranchisement of the workers and other reforms for which they laboured incessantly and with commanding force. The growing municipalities on the river also claimed their attention, and each borough in which they resided gave them the highest seats, for George Charlton was Mayor of Gateshead and George Dodds was Mayor

of Tynemouth. A striking presence, with a mind of great activity and force, George Charlton never appeared more in his element than when taking part in leading a procession, or in preaching at a camp meeting. On October 29th, 1875, when his portrait was presented to Mr. Charlton in Gateshead, the late Joseph Cowen, M.P., in the course of a fine speech describing a camp meeting, said :—

“ As I approached the meeting, the congregation had just been singing the beautiful hymn by Bishop Heber, commencing ‘ From Greenland’s icy mountains ’; and, with that, up rose a tall and manly frame, and in clear and ringing tones, and with a powerful and pathetic voice, pleaded on behalf of the moral principles of Christianity in a way that I have never heard surpassed. Since then, gentlemen, I have heard the same cause advocated by distinguished dignitaries of the English and Roman Churches; I have heard some of the ablest ministers of the Presbyterian faith expound the Christian Gospel, amongst them the manly and eloquent Dr. Chalmers, one of the best and noblest of our modern divines; but I never heard the first truths of Christianity put with more power and pathos than by that plain Methodist preacher at the camp meeting in the valley of the Tyne—the man whose services we have met this evening to recognise and to honour.”

Of Edward Holmes, who was a familiar figure in Nelson Street for many years, Mr. Kendall, who, as Newcastle’s “ young man,” spent three years under his roof, gladly bears witness to his piety and solid qualities. It is over forty years since the “ young man ” was the colleague of Thomas Smith and Lewis F. Armitage in Newcastle; and as the years have sped, Mr. Kendall, as preacher, teacher, writer, editor, and connexional historian, has accomplished a work which will stand for him as a memorial. He had but opened his lips in Nelson Street as a probationer when his fame went out, and all casts of mind gathered to hear him. Says Mr. McKechnie, an authority Mr. Kendall himself quotes with avidity :—

“ I don’t know whether I admired most the purity and sweetness of his spirit, or the gifts of intellect and genius with which he was so richly dowered. A more highly gifted young man I had never met.”

That was said in 1868-9. Since then no honour, including the presidential chair, has been too great for his brethren to place upon Holliday Bickerstaff Kendall, B.A.

Among the other Nelson Street notables were John Kidd, the sweet singer and composer, sought out by Richard Raine to lead the singing while the society was yet in Silver Street; Robert Barron, whose son Robert, now living at Monkseaton, has never been out of Sunday School work, first at Nelson Street, then Prince Consort Road, Gateshead, and now Whitley Bay; John Thompson, Ralph Winlow, one of the originals of Brunel society; Henry Pratt, who took charge of Bulman Village class, and went into the ministry—and that he was born at Benwell may account in some measure for the fostering care his son, his son's wife, and family have taken in the society there; John Ingledew, the gentle; James Bruce, the demonstrative keelman; T. G. Snowdon, the Sunday School enthusiast; Robert Varty, the silent and generous; John Wilson, the genial restaurant-keeper; Thomas Stokoe and his family, rich in good works; George Morton, the faithful steward, and his family; the Robsons, true in the dark days as in the bright; the Handysides, the Pickerings, Coates, Davenport, Reed, and many more; never forgetting the venerable divine—William Dent—who spent so many years of his retirement in Newcastle, and Mrs. Grace Wrightson, who died at Whitley Bay, in 1904, having been a member from the Sallyport days on to the Central Church period.

Some of the foregoing are in the Central Church today. And there is another not yet mentioned, who spent useful years in Nelson Street, and was called to the higher service when he was giving increasingly useful service in the new church—John Hewitson. His deep and tender interest in children was shown in the strenuous manner in which he discharged the duties of



Connexional Orphanage Treasurer, and the Harrogate Homes will bear his name for all time.

After passing through many periods of trial, Primitive Methodism never had the position in Newcastle it holds to-day. The Central Church in the heart of the city, and the many fine buildings and enterprising societies on every side of it, are witnesses. The story of the inception and completion of the gigantic undertaking known as the Central Church is a substantial portion of the tale of Arthur T. Guttery's thirteen years' superintendency of the Newcastle First Circuit. But his prodigal expenditure of power was not confined to Newcastle, nor to his own denomination. The pulpits and platforms of the Free Churches of the United Kingdom, in a manner of speaking, knew him before he went to London to become the General Missionary Secretary. In the church which seats 820 people and cost £14,271—indeed, in the entire circuit—Tom Sykes and Arthur Lowe are already, in their own way, working out a new record. The station has opened a new place—Prestwick Colliery—which has at its head J. T. March, a devoted and able preacher.

With the story of Derby Street society the names of James Gow and William Goodrich are intertwined. The present chapel was built in 1883, after services had been held for a long time in a room above Robert Carrick's shop. Along with the couple mentioned, McEwan, Wilson, Bainbridge, Greygoose, and Mather have done loyal and lasting work. Bulman Village was swallowed up long ago in Gosforth, that popular and extending place. Chiefly through the liberality of a working man—Alexander Robson—a chapel and school were erected. Many years of struggle have been the portion of the society, and no one will rejoice more heartily at the improved conditions than the leal-hearted Matthew Turner.

THE WESTERN SIDE.

Newcastle Second Circuit was carved out of the original station in 1874. It was the western side, extending up the Tyne to Mickley Square. James Young was its first superintendent, and it was a happy appointment. Except to a few, he was then unknown in the North; when, a quarter of a century or so afterwards he “retired from the active work of the ministry”—as it is called—and located at Cullercoats and Whitley Bay, no man was better known or more highly esteemed throughout the old Sunderland District. Maple Street Chapel and society became the head of the new station. This chapel was built in 1870, but a splendid company had been gathered in Brunel Street before that, when William Charlton, George Newton, Joseph Reed, Joseph Harrogate, and Alexander Swinney were prominent and active members. A more efficient Sunday School superintendent than George Watt would have been difficult to find in that day. For some years Maple Street increased in numbers and influence, but an unhappy rupture, and subsequent removals, have hampered its energies. In the most stressful times, however, the Watts, the Waughs, the Harrogates, the Parks, the Wedderburns, the Thews, the Hindmarshes, the Dodds, the Grays, the Tweedys, the Bumphreys, the Waltons, the Whitfields, and others kept their hearts and their posts, and the women toiled incessantly.

Though the first Primitive Methodist meeting was held at Arthur’s Hill in 1834, when Mary Holmes started prayer meetings, it was not until 1842 that it was put upon the plan for regular preaching services, and much good was done in William Street. In 1864 the increasing band built a chapel in West Street. Many scenes were witnessed there which will never pass out of mind, not the least being the times of refreshing during Miss

Bulmer's mission in November, 1891. Clark Hallam did good work there before going into the ministry. After long thought, a new church and school were built in Kingsley Terrace, in 1897, the handsome sanctuary being opened on New Year's Day, 1898. John Harryman Taylor did a great and lasting work in the building of "Kingsley," and faithful men and women represented by the Reeds, the Waltons, the Vartys, the Allisons, the Thirlwells, the Robsons, the Stobbses, the Kirtons, the Wilsons, and others sustained his hands. Men of vigour and ability such as Anthony Oates, William Spears, Henry Potts, Thomas Dodds, Joseph Longstaff, and John Dodd have joined the front rank men there during the ten years; and the ministries of Sister Jessie, aided by the wives and daughters of the officials, have given the added fragrance of human sympathy and help to the dignity, beauty, and fervour of the worship in the fine church.

Strickland Street Chapel is the successor of a joiners' shop in Elswick, and that many souls have entered the Kingdom in it William Barnes, Matthew Armstrong, Dranskill, and other leaders can tell. Strickland Street may claim to be the parent of Benwell society, which has blossomed into such vigour and promise during Henry Pratt's term, and which has now a commodious school-chapel, in a first-class position, and a growing membership.

In 1894 Newcastle Second Circuit was divided, Blaydon and Lemington becoming the heads of new stations. Blaydon has already been dealt with. Lemington Circuit has now seven societies: Lemington, Walbottle, Throckley, Mickley Square, West Wylam, Eltringham, and Branch End. Lemington was often missioned, but not until the later forties was a permanent society established, and the Old Engine, a pile ten storeys high, commonly known as the "buggy hut," was secured.

Here Robert Blackett and his wife were regular worshippers, and a family—George Nichol, his wife, and children—afterwards gave the society a decided lift up. Nichol took charge of the singing and introduced violins; and the Sunday School anniversaries became of great importance. The Nichol family—four sons and one daughter—were splendid workers in every institution of the church. William has been for some years one of the best known men in the Leeds District. John Wilkinson, Matthew Varty, Isaac Reed, George Fawcus, Henry Wheeler, John and Henry Wailes and their wives, Margaret Denton and her son Ralph, Mrs. Telford, Margaret Danskin, Thomas Danskin, and W. Lishman and his wife were among the honoured people of that time. Wilkinson and Lishman undertook to build a chapel, if the bricks and stones could be got. The bricks and stones were got, and the chapel was built. At the foundation-stone laying, the tea meeting was held in the Pot House, and seven hundred persons attended, a number larger than the then entire population of Lemington. It was in 1861 when the chapel was opened, and days of gladness and grace visited the village. In that decade the Wighams of Scotswood were useful members in the society. Thomas went into the ministry in 1860, but he died after having only travelled about eight years. The name of Wigham has been honourably associated with Lemington for generations, the later family having migrated there from Lumley about twenty years ago.

The congregations grew with the growth of the village, and in 1891 a chapel costing £2,100 was opened for worship. In this work Michael Dodd and his brother Tom, who were then residing in Lemington, and who were in the fulness of their power and popularity, took a prominent part; and among the fine lot of willing workers in the prosperous society to-day are R. Lowes and J. Johnson, circuit stewards; W. Stoker, R. J. Lay-

bourne, T. Muxworthy, and his family of five sons and two daughters, John and Robert Wigham and the family of the latter, John Blackburn, Thomas Gardner and his large family, William Gelley (son of the well-known minister), the Renwicks, the Bakers, the Wilkinsons, J. R. Wilson, Margaret Danskin, and Jonathan Southern, the picturesque local preacher, lecturer, and evangelist. The removal by death in the autumn of 1906 of Councillor C. Ferguson was a severe blow to the circuit.

The names of William Suddards and Jane Ansdale remained fragrant at Walbottle Colliery for a generation. It was one of the villages which felt the spiritual impulses given by the early missionaries, and there was a thriving society in 1824, Matthew Ledger, a native of Black Callerton, being one of the original members. When the cholera was raging in 1832, Peter Kidman, of Byker, preached there one night with such power that forty souls were brought to penitence and salvation. Prayer meetings were held down the pit, at one of which a frolicsome youth named Joseph Henderson was converted, and for thirty-five years he was an efficient local preacher. From first to last the success of the society, under trying circumstances, has been exceptional. Throckley society may be regarded as the outcome of one of Walbottle's adversities, and the chapel there has been of service in sweetening the life of what was once a rough place.

Mickley Square and West Wylam originally belonged to the Shotley Bridge Circuit. George Hubbuck was a comparative youth then, and he, Proud, and Porter are well up on the plan now. Proudlock and not a few more who warred a good warfare have joined the church triumphant. Since the day they joined Newcastle Second Circuit much good has been done. From West Wylam John Foster and John T. Ridley were "separated unto the gospel of God." Branch End, far up towards



Stocksfield, is a recently-formed society, with the enthusiastic Battensby at its head, and the erection of a chapel there by about fifty members has created a new interest in the rising district.

#### THE EASTERN SIDE.

Another big slice was taken off the first station in 1892. This time it was the eastern side. Newcastle Third Circuit has Heaton Road Church as its head, the other societies being Ballast Hills, St. Anthony's, Westmoor, Wallsend, Walker, and Dinnington Colliery. Chillingham Road has since been added. The latter was opened and sustained largely through the zeal and liberality of George Nixon and his wife, and many a heart ached—the poor and the needy as well as those of the hundreds who knew him—when it was told that Mr. Nixon was dead.

Heaton Road society is the product of Ballast Hills. At its commencement it had amongst its members W. B. Leighton, Peter Kidman, David Wright, George Nixon, Jacob Beautyman, J. Hudspith, T. Scott, and W. Richardson, all men of striking personality, whose influence is still felt in this and other circuits, though they have passed within the veil. The Leighton Memorial Church and schools were built in 1877. That portion of the city was just being opened out then; the church and schools are now surrounded with a teeming population. Only T. Corby, I. W. Johnson, A. Morton, W. Robson (of Tynemouth), G. Temple (of Whitley Bay), W. J. Richardson, and C. F. Hunter remain of those who signed the trust deeds. The sacrifices and heroisms with which the story of the struggle of the trustees with an original debt of £3,600 is crammed are worthy of being acknowledged. “How amply repaid they have been by the splendid success they have achieved, and the position they have won,” is the reflection of a veteran minister.

Ballast Hills Chapel was built in 1841, the gallery being added twelve years afterwards. Here in the school and in the no less notable "Young Men's Class" were influenced, in addition to those already named, William Gelley, Gleghorn, and Havre (now a Presbyterian minister), and local preachers of religious vitality and marked intelligence, the best-known representative of to-day being William Robson, whose name is now known in official circles of the Connexion. Of Philip Wears, who was thirty years acting-superintendent of the school, Mr. Robson says: "Few men ever so perfectly found their sphere in any service as did Philip Wears in the life of the Sunday School, and through the children into the life of the people." Branch schools were opened from time to time at "The Fold," Stepney, Leighton's Buildings (Quality Row), Mr. Kidman's schoolroom at Byker Hill, and in the Temperance Hall, Grafton Street, Byker. When Heaton Road premises were built, the two latter branches, in one of which John E. Mackay, of Whitley Bay, and others did useful work, were taken over, and made a good start in the capacious schoolroom. Another of the branches was removed to the Copperas Works at Bird's Nest, William Bolton and Henry Berry being then at the head, and out of it sprang St. Anthony's society and chapel. The work of the Jull family at St. Anthony's will not soon be forgotten, and Ralph Robson, Thomas Craig, and Robert Whitfield laboured hard for the spiritual well-being of the village. The few—notably J. T. Potts and his wife, J. Broughton, J. N. Warhurst, and Mrs. Melvin—who now prosecute their self-denying work at Ballast Hills deserve the fullest commendation.

To hear Arthur T. Wardle tell of his reminiscences of Westmoor is to be thrilled. Sixty years ago this society exercised a marvellous power, which continued for almost a generation. The people were alive, prayer

meetings sometimes lasted all night, and miracles of grace and mercy followed. Bessie Simpson, Tommy Lowrison, John Johnson, George Orton, William Simpson, Tommy Hymers, Tommy Barnes, and the grandfather of G. B. Gleghorn, of Peterborough, were to the fore in those days. Then there were the Wardles. Harry, the eldest, died in 1853. Arthur, father of Professor W. L. Wardle, B.D., went into the ministry in 1867, and William followed him six years later. Both have served the Connexion well. Their younger sister Pollie began to preach when she was sixteen, was popular in the Northern circuits, and is now the wife of a Methodist minister in America. The Hendersons, Hartleys, Watkins, with Wardle, Charlton, and others still keep the altar fires burning at Westmoor.

The Primitives missioned Wallsend in the early twenties, since which time it has grown from a small pit village to a municipality. After holding meetings in a long room behind George Swan's Sand Mill (now the dilapidated property opposite the Café), the little society built a small chapel in 1829 on Kenton Waggon Way, now known as Portugal Place. Valiant men and women laboured there, conspicuous amongst whom were Henry Daglish, John Heads, John Thompson (a schoolmaster), Thomas Calvert, and William Oliver. A better place of worship was erected in the north end of the town in 1871, and T. W. Huntley and the school anniversaries will long be remembered. Years afterwards the present site was purchased, upon which a hall and schoolrooms have been built. When the church is erected the whole scheme will cost over £6,000. John Wallace, the saintly and cultured, has long since gone home, though there is yet a Wallace at Wallsend, and the Knoxes, Calverts, Liddles, Willises, Raines, Featherstones, Richardsons, with Middleton, Watson, Peart, Locke, Wilson and many more, lead the bands in this powerful church.

Benjamin Spoor was a spiritual product of Ballast Hills Sunday School, and after his marriage, in the early forties, he opened his house for preaching at Walker. Just before Benjamin's departure for Witton Park, in the Providence of God, the late Thomas Scott went to Walker, and his house became the meeting-place when Mr. Spoor left. A deserted stable was afterwards renovated, and services and a Sunday School were held in it for years. Several "flittings" occurred until at length a chapel was built in Church Street. That was in 1868, and a great step forward was made in 1906 in the erection of the school-chapel in Welbeck Road. What Thomas Scott and his family did for Primitive Methodism in Walker cannot be computed. His son Thomas is the head of the well-known printing firm in Newcastle, and his daughter is the wife of a minister (Daniel McKinley). Associated with the Scotts at first were the Twentymans, Bruces, Gibsons, and Mrs. Earle. Then came the old Jacob Adamson period, after which the Guthries, Martin Fatkin, Henry Giles, the Atkinsons, William Jobling, William Mason, the Midcalfs, Thomas Holt, the Metcalfs, William Hood, James Miller, William Donnison, Thomas Richardson, the Bells, Gates, Burrills, Thomas Brandon, Arthur Wilson, Thomas Coulson, M. Masterman, William Edminson and his family, T. Moxham, the Shands, and Frank Maughan came to the front as the years went on, and the growing church is now well officered.

Early in the seventies Dinnington Colliery was missioned, a class was formed, with Thomas Gleghorn of Seaton Burn as leader, and eventually an iron chapel was put up. The society grew, and under the lead of J. Dodd Jackson (who had also something to do with the forward movements at Wallsend and Walker) a creditable village chapel was erected in 1898, the foundation-stones having been laid by Mrs. Coltman, Mrs.

Cato, Mrs. Corby, and Mrs. Hunter, all of Heaton, and Mrs. Thomas Heads, of Dinnington. Mrs. Nixon, of Heaton, opened the chapel, and during the term of W. A. French the debt was wiped off. David Paxton, George Allan, Thomas Heads, Mrs. Greenfield, William Bennett, James Herbertson, and Thomas Reed are names which have a prominent place in the story of the church's struggles and triumphs.

The greatest men the Connexion has produced have ministered in Newcastle. Four Conferences have been held in the city—1842, 1859, 1876, and 1903—and the camp meetings on the Town Moor were unforgettable days.

#### THE SOUTHERN SIDE.

Reverses and disappointments were the common experience of the early promoters of Primitive Methodism in Gateshead; yet during recent years few towns in the Connexion can show a more gratifying rate of progress. John Branfoot was the first Primitive Methodist missionary who preached in Gateshead. August 2nd, 1821, was the date, and the place was in High Street, under some trees, on the very spot where John Wesley once stood. Mary Porteus had done her best to get him a congregation, and the assembly was large and orderly. In the following year a preaching room was opened in Garden Street, and regular services were organised by a few members of the Newcastle society who lived in Gateshead. Being too poor to pay the rent, however, they had to give it up, and they migrated from room to room in various directions. One of the rooms was in the “ Brandy Vault ” public-house, from which they were expelled for making too much noise, and another was in Church Walk. Imprudently, as William Dent says, a large chapel was built in Mulgrave Terrace in 1838. Two years afterwards the treasurer absconded



with the money, the mortgagee took possession of the property, the chapel was lost, and reproach was cast upon the cause.

The brave few once more began in the streets, then opened a room in Church Walk, and subsequently took larger premises in West Street. Their prosperity continued, and on New Year's Day, 1854, Nelson Street Chapel was opened. William Brown, Martin Gleghorn, Arthur Hedley, J. Lough, T. Gibson, Bell, William Peel, John Thompson, Edward Gowland, Joseph Urwin, John Scope, John Cherry, William Gibson, and G. E. Almond were the earnest men of that time. The latter, as has been stated, is still alive, and his daughter—"that quiet and beautiful soul," as one of the foremost women in the Connexion styles her—takes a conspicuous interest in missionary and other work.

In 1825 Isaac Thompson declared that "Gateshead was a place much noted for hardness." Low Fell, Sheriff Hill, Wrekenton, and other places in the immediate vicinity, were more popular than the town. Jeremiah Gilbert writes of a camp meeting at Windy Nook, "near Newcastle-upon-Tyne," on September 21st, 1823, when "a few got saved." It was at the instigation of Gilbert that Mary Porteus started to preach, and he sent her to Wrekenton to take a service before her name appeared on the plan. Eighton Banks of to-day, where there is a vigorous church, is really Wrekenton, and it was also known as Galloping Green when South Shields Circuit had it. The locality, therefore, including Windy Nook and Heworth Colliery, has a special interest, in that the early preachers paid so much attention to it.

In 1837 Gateshead was made into a circuit. Possibly in consequence of the chapel episode it failed to maintain its position, and was re-united with Newcastle in 1841. That re-union existed for exactly twenty-one years, when Gateshead became fully able to stand alone.

At the June quarterly meeting of 1873 it was decided to open a mission at Teams, and William Carr, Robert Scope, and Richard Dinsley were appointed to the work. With Robert Laidler at their head, and supported by a number of Nelson Street young men, recently converted, they took the place by storm. A room was first rented in Pianet Row, and larger places afterwards. In 1881 several influential members joined the mission, including George Charlton, John Thubron, Haswell, Aitchison, Ellis, Hamilton, and the wives of some of those named. Two years afterwards the Charlton Memorial Church in Victoria Road was opened, and gracious seasons have been experienced within its walls. This society owes much to the devotion of Alderman Thubron, his wife, and family.

A mission was started in Sunderland Road in 1874, and William Carr and Richard Dinsley were put in charge of it. A room was got in Somerset Street, and the success was such from the start that a schoolroom was built in 1878, and a chapel seating six hundred people in 1885. William Carr has been at the head of it all, and a more splendid work it would be difficult to find. Bank Street Chapel, built in 1891, is the outcome of a mission in Askew Road, with which the names of Dinsley, Scope, Carr, Matthew Wotherspoon, George Miller, and others are associated. James Sallows, of Dunston, has done much for Bank Street. In Whitehall Road a commanding site was secured a few years ago, and an iron chapel erected. It was here where William Gowling worshipped until the gentle spirit went home in 1908. The first circuit has just entered upon a great scheme in Dryden Road, near Low Fell, a populous district, the site alone costing about £600, so that enterprise is still the watchword at Gateshead.

Suitable as the neighbourhood was when the chapel was built, Nelson Street deteriorated with great rapidity,

and the building was sold in 1886. A site was bought in Durham Road, and a lecture hall and school were erected, followed in 1892-3 by the church and manse. The entire block cost about £7,000, and the property is now in very easy circumstances, a fact due to the devoted work of Henry Pratt and his wife, of George Armstrong, and of the faithful and generous men and women who worked so enthusiastically under their leadership. One name must be mentioned with special veneration—that of John Gowland, a son of one of the original Gateshead Primitives, a man of sterling character, one of the most successful Sunday School superintendents and class-leaders possessed by any circuit—William Robson, society steward at Whitley Bay, was one of his members—and held in the highest regard in the town and in the Council, of which he was a member. He died suddenly in 1907, and thousands mourned for him. The death of Mrs. Almond also made Durham Road poorer.

Dunston, Swalwell, and Whickham are places which have been connected with Primitive Methodism from the days of William Suddards and Jane Ansdale. The former is a growing society, going up rapidly since the coal-staiths were erected there. Whickham, where Charles G. Tetley has located, is a pleasant village. It was Joseph Spoor's native place, and the chapel there is called the Spoor Memorial Chapel. Swalwell has had a striking past. Robert Gillender, a leader in the memorable engineers' nine hours' agitation on the Tyne and Wear, was a tower of strength in the society. Two of his sons—Robert and John—have been long in the ministry, and Robert H. Gillender, M.Sc., headmaster in the Tiger Kloof Native Institution in Bechuanaland, is his grandson. For years, however, little progress was made at Swalwell; but a new chapel was built, and a new day begun, chiefly by families who had gone to the neighbourhood.

Prince Consort Road Church, the head of the Second Circuit, has been a conspicuous success. Like Durham Road, it has been the spiritual home of a generous and devoted people. Scope, the Bowrans, Barron, Ridley, Grainger, Hewitt, Johnson, Thirlwell, and a host more have been connected with the fortunes of this strong church for many years. As regards the Bowran family, their life has been interwoven with the society from its start. A few men from Nelson Street commenced a mission in Worcester Street, in an upstairs flat. The Bowrans lived near, and the children went to the Sunday School. The father, an engine-driver, was drawn to the chapel when it was built, having been invited there by R. Bell, who was also an engine-driver. From that day he became attached to the place, and in this way all the family was secured to Primitive Methodism. There are eight sons, and the success in life of each is remarkable. William, the eldest, is a local preacher in Sunderland, where he holds a position of trust on the “Echo.” Robert has built up a large business, is the choir-master of Prince Consort Road Church, was the conductor of the District Psalmody Association which did so much for the improvement of the service of praise in scores of chapels, and is a member of the Town Council. John G. (“Ramsay Guthrie”) went into the ministry when only twenty years of age, and the mark he has made as a preacher, pastor, and evangelist is heightened by the popularity he has secured by his Methodist idylls. George and his wife are the leaders of the Poor Children’s Mission at Shieldfield, Newcastle, in connection with the United Methodist Church, where some eight hundred poor children are under their care. Thomas is a local preacher, the organist of Prince Consort Road Church, and one of the school superintendents. James is at Prince Consort Road also. David S. is a local preacher, and one of the circuit stewards; and Edwin

O. was the musical director of the Central Church, Newcastle.

Much good work has been done at Carr's Hill. W. Hamilton (now of North Shields), who has been in the front rank of Sunday School workers for many years, was a scholar in the Thorn Cottage, where the society was started. The chapel was built in 1858-9, when the Olivers, Kendalls, Proud, and Robson were leading the way, and a camp meeting resulted in a revival, which spread over the locality, the Cooks, the Olivers, the Nesbits, the Pattersons, and John Lowery taking a prominent part.

And there are Low Fell, Kibblesworth, and Bewicke Main, where worthy efforts have been made for the spread of religion. In Bewicke Main society the genial Luke Fenwick, who died in April, 1906, was a pillar of strength for many years. T. Cook and R. Brack also did nobly. Kibblesworth Colliery has often been visited with seasons of grace, and the unstinted labour of the society has been rewarded. Low Fell is a suburban church now. It was missioned by one of the Nelsons in the spring of 1823, and others of the early missionaries record many signal events at the Fell. Forty years afterwards John Lowery made the name of Low Fell extensively known in both counties. Some of the most devoted souls known in any church have been here engaged in Sunday School and other work, and the future is rosy.

Somewhere in the twenties services were held at Felling, in a thatched cottage belonging to Mrs. Shepherd, and afterwards in a large room connected with the Poorhouse. The first chapel was built in High Street, in 1833. In 1864, John Hallam, then travelling in the station, conducted a mission, in which he was assisted by Hugh Gilmore and William Gelley. They were all young men, and the kindness of Mr. Hallam to



the other two has often been acknowledged. It was an epoch-making revival, for a new church was built immediately thereafter. There was another wave of blessing in 1877, the services being conducted by William Johnson, who was then superintendent; John Tyson, of South Shields, and others. The congregations continued to grow, and in 1896 the present commodious church was built. Felling Church has a large body of strong and progressive men in it, and bands of active women, and holds a prominent place in the life of the town. Under the able leadership of Councillor T. W. Huntley, the choir is in excellent condition. The society has had some loyal supporters, including Mrs. Hepburn, who had been associated with it for eighty years, and her children and children's children; Thomas Thompson, now in retirement at Pelaw; William Taylor and his family; Mr. and Mrs. Buchanan, Samuel Hann, the Hutchinsons, Simon Lang and his wife and daughter Janet. Robert Gray has just celebrated his jubilee as a member, having been a prominent local preacher from his youthful days at Stanley. In recent years Gateshead has sent T. P. Ellis, David Cook, and J. J. Alderson into the ministry.

Gateshead Circuit was divided in 1891. The old station retained Durham Road, Sunderland Road, Felling, Carr's Hill, Windy Nook, Eighton Banks, and Heworth Colliery societies. The new circuit consisted of Prince Consort Road, Victoria Road, Low Fell, Bank Street, Swalwell, Whickham, Kibblesworth, Bewicke Main, and Dunston societies. Whitehall Road has since been added. There are seventeen chapels in the two circuits, the estimated value of the whole property being £34,000. In 1868 there was only one chapel in the borough, with about a hundred members. There are now six places of worship, and about 800 members.

But take a larger view, now that we have gone over

the area of the original Newcastle Circuit. Within that compass in 1862 there were 952 members, three travelling preachers, and sixty-four local preachers, the quarterly income being £74 17s. 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ d., and the chapel property (thirteen places of worship then recorded in the documents) valued at £7,750. In the seven circuits, formed out of practically the same area, and served by eleven ministers, the figures were in 1908 :—

	Members.	Local Preachers.	Quarterly Income. £ s. d.	Church Property. £
Newcastle I. ....	469	22	111 10 0	19,700
Newcastle II. ....	350	22	61 7 0	14,650
Newcastle III. ....	546	42	108 0 0	14,500
Gateshead I. ....	660	54	110 0 0	19,250
Gateshead II. ....	687	49	94 10 0	15,000
Blaydon .....	420	28	64 0 0	6,690
Lemington .....	358	32	50 0 0	6,090
Total .....	<u>3,490</u>	<u>249</u>	<u>£599 7 0</u>	<u>£95,880</u>

## CHAPTER XX.

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### A PROLIFIC PARENT OF CIRCUITS.

**A**ND now we have arrived at that wonderful parent of circuits, North Shields : mother of Newcastle and its progeny, Blyth and its offshoots, Berwick and its children, and Seaton Delaval—fourteen in all ! Greater honour rests on few places in the Connexion. What a territory it was, even after it shed the Newcastle area in December, 1823. About that time it was the missioner of tracts of Northumberland which are connexionally blank to-day—Alnwick on the main highway, but also penetrating into the interior as far as Longhorsley, Wingate, Kirkwhelpington, Middleton, and Hartburn. Just a month before his death in March, 1824, George Wallace was on the latter “round,” and walked seventeen miles amid rain and snow. “There were great mountains, and crags, and burns to go over,” he said, “which sometimes nearly exhausted my strength.” He says his toil that day reminded him of the first Methodist missionaries.

But we are before our tale. While on a visit to his Newcastle friends in the autumn of 1821, William Clowes went down to North Shields, and preached to a large congregation in the open-air. In the January following, Joseph Peart, a schoolmaster and a Wesleyan local preacher, wrote a letter to Mr. Clowes, while he was in the Darlington branch, inviting him to go to

North Shields to establish a cause there. How he came to write the letter, Mr. Peart tells about three years after he himself had become a Primitive Methodist travelling preacher. He says :—

“ One day I was alone in my room, studying how I could best glorify God in supporting His blessed work; for there had frequently been antagonists to great outpourings of the Holy Spirit, even among the professed members of the church. They could not endure the natural result of such visitations, but looked upon it as wildfire, confusion, enthusiasm, etc. I had a very strong debate with a professor of the dead languages, who, as well as myself, belonged to the society of Old Methodists. While contending with him in vindication of the rationality and great utility of such a work as had been effected in North Shields (about five years previous to that time) by an extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Ghost, he (by way of derision) said: ‘ You should have been a Ranter.’ It powerfully wrought on my mind, as I sat in the room, that it was my indispensable duty to send for the ‘ Ranters ’ (so called). The circumstance was very singular, for I had never heard, nor never seen, any of them. ‘ I was not disobedient to the heavenly call,’ but wrote for William Clowes, who shortly arrived at our house, and stopped till the cause got established.”

In a schoolroom belonging to a Mr. Webster, at the low part of the town, William Clowes began his mission in North Shields on Sunday, February 3rd, 1822. Next day a class was formed. Joseph Peart’s name was put down first, and Mr. Clowes appointed him “ to lead some more that followed, viz., William Summersides, who stood the test, and S. H., who failed.” It was a feeble start, yet out of that little class two became prominent evangelists in the North of England, and William Summersides afterwards had the honour of being one of the first batch of Primitive Methodist missionaries sent to the United States by the Conference of 1829, and lived to become a Bishop of the American Episcopal Church. On two Sundays following Clowes preached in North Shields with telling effect, when he joined other nine members to the original class, and formed another class on the third Monday at the upper end of the town.

Speedily thereafter Hull quarterly meeting (March) determined to send three missionaries into Northumber-

land, and John and Thomas Nelson were the colleagues of William Clowes. In August about seventy members were in the two classes, and the work increased in the town and country, notwithstanding the severity of the weather during the winter of 1822-3, when the roads were blocked with snow-drifts and the coast was strewn with wrecks. On the early morning of March 3rd, 1823, William Clowes and the Brothers Nelson had a narrow escape. They met at North Shields for the purpose of attending the preparatory quarterly meeting, and were the guests of Dr. Oxley. After having been in bed for a while, Clowes was awakened by the noise of the wind, which had risen to a perfect hurricane. Scarcely had he dressed, when a stack of chimneys crashed through the roof and broke in the floors. When he and his alarmed companions made for the stairs, they found them blocked by the fallen roof. They managed to escape, however, as did also the doctor and his family.

“Three hundred and seventy increase this quarter in North and South Shields branches—in all 681. It was proposed that North Shields branch should be made into a circuit. The work in these parts is more promising than ever.” Such is the note William Clowes makes respecting the preparatory meetings. It meant that Percy Main, Howdon, Newcastle, Gateshead, Morpeth, Blyth, Newbiggin, and the villages within that radius had been evangelised by North Shields, and it meant also the formation of many flourishing societies. The circuit was formed, and included, as has been previously stated, Newcastle and its western societies until December of that year, when the northern metropolis became an independent station. By that time the membership was nearly eight hundred, and there were seven preachers on the ground. Jeremiah Gilbert had arrived in the July, and that was the month—20th day—when the far-famed camp meeting was held on Scaffold Hill, near



Benton Square. Thousands attended. Seven travelling preachers took part in it—the Nelsons, Gilbert, Spencer, Wallace, Shaw, and Baker—and a number of local preachers, exhorters, and prayer-leaders. It was a blustering, wet day, but “the work of the Lord went on well.” In the morning sinners fell down before preaching began, and several were set at liberty in the afternoon. A lovefeast was held in the open-air in the evening, and a few penitents found the Lord. Over twenty souls professed conversion that day; and the Benton Square society of the present time counts it a high honour that that historic event occurred in its neighbourhood.

Union Street Chapel, built on the side of the hill, was secured from the Wesleyans early after the Primitives obtained a footing in North Shields. Jeremiah Gilbert described it as “a noble chapel,” Mr. Kendall thinks another adjective might have been more appropriate, and Mr. Dent has not a good word to say for it. “The main peculiarity was that the Sunday School was over the chapel, and the preachers’ houses actually *under* it.” That is how John Hallam puts it, and he was born in one of the houses. It was heavily burdened with debt, and in 1836 Mary Porteus had to be sent “through Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, and elsewhere where Providence might direct her” to collect funds. From 1849 the debt was tackled earnestly, but it was not until 1861, when Thomas Smith was superintendent for the second time, that Saville Street Chapel was built. At no time in its history was Primitive Methodism in North Shields on such an elevated plane, as when Thomas Smith, C. C. McKechnie, Ebenezer Hall, Robert Clemitson, and H. B. Kendall travelled there in the swinging sixties.

Mr. McKechnie had been in the circuit before, when its borders were wider. He had gone shortly after the 1844 strike, by which the societies between the Tyne

and Blyth had been reduced to mere skeletons of their former selves. Many of the "sacrificed" men were officials in the Primitive Methodist societies, and had been compelled to seek work elsewhere or turn to some other calling for a livelihood. "Religion had done much in the colliery villages in awakening a sense of manhood, which made the servitude in which they were bound galling to many, and they sought by combination to improve their condition." They failed in 1844, and other attempts failed. So we speak. Were not the foundations thus laid in blood of the huge superstructure of unionism afterwards reared? Joseph Spoor was in the circuit when the disastrous conflict was proceeding, and his references to it give a glimpse of the appalling havoc and distress. For two or three years previously there had been steady progress in the circuit, and Moses Lupton had rejoiced in being able to report an increase of 187 members in two years. So valiantly did Messrs. Lightfoot and McKechnie face the repairing of the wreckage that in 1846 the circuit was actually able to take an additional preacher.

#### DAYS OF CONQUEST.

It was a different circuit Mr. McKechnie returned to sixteen years afterwards. The change in the position, habits, and intelligence of thousands of the Northumbrian miners and the inhabitants of the riverside towns was extraordinary. Men of strength were at the front. Good men like Stephen Knott, W. Grieves, John Foster, and James Hall had done their work amid trial and reverse. The sixties and seventies saw another type dominant: John Spence, who was a trapper boy at Percy Main at nine years of age, and was Mayor of North Shields before he died; Thomas Smith, intensely religious, strong in mind and in passion; Ralph Walton, intellectual, an able preacher; Joseph Salkeld, the

healthy-minded, sunshiny Christian ; Benjamin Hall, the metaphysical cobbler, a genuine man ; Richard Raine, the renowned camp meeting singer. These were specimens, closely allied with whom, and becoming prominent in the years following, were Thomas Nightingale, trim in person, quick in action, lofty in thought, brilliant in imagination, poetic in soul, with his sudden flashes of humour, and a master hand before a great popular audience or at a camp meeting ; John Barnard, the winsome man and winsome preacher ; John H. Joplin, efficient in many directions, a life crammed with fruitful service, self-effacing, generous, beloved for his own sake—thank God, he is still alive ; J. Grant, the kindly patriarch of Percy Main ; Adam Rutherford, the hospitable, for many years circuit steward ; the Jewels, the Thompsons, the Nicholsons, and others which may be named hereafter.

Mr. McKechnie's superintendency of North Shields Circuit was a period never to be forgotten. The impression he made upon the political and literary circles of the town, as well as upon the churches, was considerable. For several years prior to his term conversions had been taking place in Shields and in the country places ; indeed, an extensive work of grace occurred in 1858, when Thomas Southron was superintendent. It was at an ordinary service, on a Wednesday evening, in the autumn of 1867, that the first great manifestation of saving power was witnessed in the revival which spread through the circuit. Saville Street schoolroom was full, and when Mr. McKechnie had done preaching he thought that the words he had spoken had been forceless and inappropriate. Yet, scarcely had the prayer meeting commenced, than anxious seekers after God began to find their way to the penitent form. Among the seventeen penitents that night was his own daughter Kate. A colleague gives this description of one of " the

usual Friday night prayer meetings" which Mr. McKechnie was planned to conduct:—

"To use the old term, there was an *unction* in the opening prayer that lifted us up to the 'heavenly places.' . . . There were alternations of singing and prayer, such as you only hear on occasions like this, blended with strong crying and tears, and shouts of salvation from I know not how many. . . . That night every form was a penitent form. I had seen my friend in positions of honour, or on the platform where he swayed a host of people, as the wind sways the trees of the wood, or in the pulpit when in the mood he preached in power, or in debate, or in company, where I admired him, but never as on that night when I saw him stepping over form after form amongst the people struggling in the pangs of the second birth, pleading with them, striving to lead them into the way of peace, the falling tear bespeaking the intense sympathy of his heart, and anon the radiant expression of joy which lit up his countenance, and the exclamation of praise when the struggler realised his conscious acceptance with God. The spiritual birth-rate that night was high."

The influence spread more or less over all classes in the town, and not a place in the circuit failed to share in the visitation. Times and again, as the weeks sped on, men and women by the dozen crowded the penitent forms. A rich harvest was gathered at Seaton Delaval, Cramlington, Dudley, Howdon, Cullercoats, and other places, as well as in North Shields; and the circuit's numerical returns for 1868 and 1869 show an increase of six hundred members for the two years.

During the forty intervening years men of superior ability like John Hallam, John Watson, Hugh Gilmore, Henry Yooll, and Samuel Horton have laboured in the circuit, and left their impress. Saville Street society has still in Thomas Lowes (circuit steward), D. C. Hibbs, A. Hastie, the Elsdons, the Hamiltons, Fairless, Scott, Badger, Whitfield, Halcrow, and many more, a band of devoted workers. Inspired by the present superintendent (Ralph Laidler), a plot of land in the new district Preston way has been bought, and the trustees propose to build a church and schools there and a second chapel in the western part of the town when they dispose of Saville Street Chapel. The giving up of the Bull Ring

Mission is deplored until this day. To Thomas Nightingale, Arthur Johnston, and other zealous men belong the honour of carrying on a beneficent enterprise in that locality, and a year before he went into the ministry James S. Nightingale devoted much of his leisure to the flourishing mission, where Thomas Campbell (of Sunderland) and Newton were converted.

Percy Main society was born in revivalism, and the evangelistic spirit hovers around it still, with the Grants, Halls, Telford, Barlow, Potts, Carr, Taws, and Hunter at the front. There were eighteen members there when William Clowes preached on Friday, August 2nd, 1822, and the first chapel was built in 1829. John Spence was the first scholar in the Sunday School, and became a member in 1830, when he was fourteen years of age. William Grieves was also among the first members, and was circuit steward for a time. The chapel was enlarged in 1867; but soon a better site was secured, on which a capacious schoolroom and class-rooms were built, and eventually the present church.

William Clowes preached at Howdon Pans in February, 1822, and had a congregation of about a thousand people. This was followed up by subsequent visits, and a society was formed. At this period Willington High Row, Willington Low Row, Willington Square, and Bigge's Main possessed societies, and felt many a baptism of power. For many years Howdon society worshipped in dwelling-houses, but in 1840 it took up its quarters in the Temperance Hall, shortly after which the new era in the history of this mighty church opened, which has had giants of the capaciousness of Hudson, Salkeld, Hall, Raine, Heslop, Appleby, sen., G. Rutherford, and Heppell, together with Rimer, Forster, Crow, Davidson, Thompson, Cook, Stafford, Stoker, Heads, Stobbs, and others. In 1844 the chapel was built on the hillside, and what shining days were



witnessed in that little sanctuary ! There salvation came to such men as John Barnard, John H. Joplin, Adam Rutherford, N. Lee, W. Johnson, W. C. Forster, John Bell, J. Scorer, Wm. Proudlock, R. Dodds, J. Brown, T. Reed, J. Cubit, and many another valiant follower of the Lord Christ. What a record ! The present fine church and schools (extended and beautified since) were opened on Easter Sunday, April 17th, 1881. The last service in the old place was conducted by the late Ben. Hall, who had then been identified with the society forty-one years. In the new house, near to the famous "Howdon Well," Thomas Bolam, Batey, and others named and unnamed carry on a beneficent work.

On February 27th, 1823, Joseph Spencer preached to a large congregation, at Whitley, had a powerful time, and formed a society of ten members. A member named Henry Milburn, who joined the society in 1838, removed from Whitley to Seaton Delaval, and, in conjunction with John Forster, was the founder of the society there. All that sounds odd in these days, for Whitley Bay Church is the youngest born in the present North Shields Circuit. But Whitley was a colliery village before the modern town was ever dreamt of, and the society sometimes met there and sometimes at Monkseaton. For the most part the members would be miners, and the closing of the colliery would end the society of that period. At the latter end of the nineties, however, a few Primitives residing in the rapidly-rising seaside resort of Whitley Bay began services in the Assembly Rooms. In 1899 a site was secured in Oxford Street, on which an iron structure was then erected, and in 1904 a beautiful church was built. Most of the men who have served here with fidelity and success have been named in other connections, but special mention must be made of the valuable pastoral work of the venerable James Young.

Primitive Methodism had a feeble start in Cullercoats.

A society of three members was formed in 1833, and the school was commenced by John Forster, a native of Corbridge, in 1838, in which work he laboured until 1872. The fisher folk were captured, and the society flourished. Originally the services were held in an old chapel jointly used by the Presbyterians, the Independents, and the Primitives; but in the end the latter were left in possession, and they rebuilt it in 1868. As the "fishermen's chapel" its fame was known throughout the Northern counties. To hundreds of the summer visitors the services were a novelty. With the building of the present handsome church in 1900, and the acquisition of an organ, the musical part of the service underwent a marked change. Charles Young (son of the retired minister) succeeded in gathering a large and efficient choir, and, with Mr. Stapylton, an able organist, gave Cullercoats services quite a modern attraction. That the second minister (George W. Wellburn, B.A., who is even greater than his widely-extending popularity) resides there also counts for much. For many years John Jefferson has seen to it that the pulpit was well supplied, and there is barely a man of note in the Connexion he has not succeeded in drawing to minister in the popular resort. Families like the Taylors, Smiths, Lisles, and Dawsons have been for many years a tower of strength in the society. There are others now also taking a leading part, conspicuously Arthur Johnston and his family, Bowey, Hindmarsh, and Thwaites. Alec. Pettigrew, the eccentric, was a long time at Cullercoats.

#### HISTORIC BENTON SQUARE.

Though it has had a varied experience, there is at Benton Square to-day a healthy little society, thanks to the loyalty of George Laverick and one or two others. Thomas Nelson is said to have been the first Primitive Methodist missionary who preached there. Robert Daw-

son gave the preacher a chair to stand upon, afterwards opened his house for services, and was a useful member until he died at the age of ninety-three. This has been one of the most fruitful causes to be found in the Connexion. A chapel was built in 1833, and it is stated that the first Bible for the "new chapel" was given by the father of the present Lord Joicey. The sanctuary was enlarged in 1904. Thomas, Matthew, and Ralph Dawson were active workers for many years. The Ralph Dawson who was styled "Aad Ralph" was known over a wide area. His daughter Mary is the wife of Thomas Johnson, of Backworth; her brother George is a member at Westmoor, and her brother Ralph at Barrington. William Barrass and his family were also early connected with the society; James was converted there. The Johnsons, too—a notable family. Thomas, the father, was not a member, but his second wife, Martha, was, and each of his brothers Joseph, Robert, George, and Elijah, the latter being still alive at Bebside. Tommy Wanless and Matthew Lowther, other two remarkable men, were converted at Benton Square. The latter was the father of Alderman Edward Lowther, of Brighton. Though living at the Allotment, Peter Clarke was converted at Benton Square, and was soon sent into the ministry. James and Sarah Bell also lived at "the Square" usefully, and "dear old Willie Parker," of the Hetton Circuit, was a local preacher there. There were the Bateys also, two of whom have done such good work at Backworth. Reverting back to the Johnson family, we have mentioned Thomas, the local preacher, of Backworth. Charles, another local preacher, died at Chopington in 1880; John sits in the House of Commons as Member for Gateshead, and Matthew, who is superintendent of Hetton Circuit, was prepared for the ministry by Dr. John Watson, who had Peter McPhail in hand at the same time. But there was another Johnson at

Benton Square—at least, he was known all his life as William Johnson. His mantle of steadfastness fell upon George Laverick, and though the great exodus made the society feeble, it revived again, and is now living its cheery life. Men and women who made West Cramlington famous sprang from parents who had been trained at Benton Square. The flower of West Cramlington was transferred to Ashington when it came into view, and Ashington begat Hirst and the surrounding societies. Benton Square has thus exercised an enormous influence over a large number of societies and circuits.

Earsdon society is a delight—"a fruitful bough." Joseph Dobinson, at one time a leader there of much intelligence, says Jeremiah Gilbert was the pioneer of the village Primitive Methodist church. The house in which John Lowes, jun., now resides occupies the site on which the dwelling stood where the pioneers held their services. The first society was formed in 1825, and in nine years a chapel was built at the bottom of the village. Among the early members at Earsdon were John Lowes, sen., Edward Dunn, and another named Short. Willie Forrest was the leading singer afterwards, and the cause got so low that he urged Lowes to close the doors. "No, Forrest," was the reply; "as long as the preachers will come, will I stand by the doors, and keep them open." And the tide turned. Henry English, William Foster, James Hedley, J. G. Crone, and others joined the society. One of the greatest manifestations of saving power ever witnessed in the locality took place in 1857-8, when James Foggon was in the circuit. The present chapel and schools were built in 1886, and a further building extension cannot be long delayed. John Lowes lived to see his five sons and two daughters all become members, and their service has been the church's enrichment. Joseph is steward

of the society, and Thomas is steward of the circuit. Miss Bertram, another family of Hedleys, J. McCulloch, and others are worthy of all praise for the work carried on in that "hill of blessing." John Richardson's sudden call has left a big blank.

Backworth society, known as East Holywell in the days that were, has had many seasons of power and salvation. Thomas Fairley, afterwards known as a conspicuous official in Sunderland, was one of the fruits of the 1829 revival. Three chapels have been erected in the locality—one in 1854, another in 1868, and the present one in 1901. It was in connection with the latter that a tea meeting was held down one of the Backworth pits, by which £35 was taken in aid of the new chapel funds. Preaching services were established at the Allotment and Murton by the first missionaries. Through the efforts of R. Prudhoe and others a brewery at the Allotment (discontinued in 1866) was obtained, and transformed into a chapel in 1868. Worship is continued there until this day. At Shiremoor a comfortable chapel was built in 1902.

There was a time in the history of North Shields Circuit when more than forty societies were counted within its area, including Morpeth, Alnwick, and Berwick. The last circuit which was an offshoot from North Shields was Seaton Delaval, and the parent circuit was left with nine preaching places, 425 members, and property reputed to be worth £5,000. There are now ten chapels, valued at £25,000, and 730 members.

#### ABUNDANT HARVESTS.

At the December quarterly meeting of 1874, North Shields made Seaton Delaval and its adjacent societies into a new station, William Bove being the first superintendent. Seaton Delaval, Cramlington, Dudley, Seghill, and Hartley have been favoured spots in the



Kingdom of God. Close about the year 1840, as we have seen, Henry Milburn and John Foster raised a society at Seaton Delaval. After the 1844 strike rapid progress was made, a chapel being built ere twelve months had gone past, and Matthew Richardson tells that there were 150 members in 1849. Men of mental and moral stamina gave force to the church, and the outward and visible sign of its progress to-day is the large sanctuary and school premises and the comfortable manse which stand by the side of the main road.

Here as elsewhere in their struggles to better their conditions of labour, some good Primitive Methodists were called upon to suffer severely. A glaring instance of how men were "marked" took place in 1859. Galled by a succession of petty tyrannies, some of the more impetuous of the men decided to strike, and the pit was thrown idle without notice having been given, though the rash act was opposed by the more intelligent and leading men of the colliery. Nine of the best men in the village were arrested, taken before the magistrates, and eight of them sent to Morpeth gaol for two months. Wilson Ritson, Alexander Watson, Thomas Wakenshaw, Amos Hetherington, Henry Bell, Robert Burt, Anthony Bolam, and Edward Davis were the victims—every man a teetotaler, six of them Primitive Methodists, and two of the six local preachers. When remonstrated with for selecting for prosecution respectable men who had opposed the strike, the manager callously answered: "I know they are respectable men, and that is why I put them in prison. It is no use sending those to gaol who cannot feel." When Robert Burt (uncle of Thomas Burt, M.P.) was arrested he was kneeling by the bedside of his dying wife, and the prison experiences of Henry Bell left their mark upon him in a weakened body all his life afterwards. But several of the "gaol birds," as they were called—the case of Anthony Bolam,

now living at Newsham, is a striking example—lived to become capable and trusted officials at the same colliery from whence they had been haled to prison.

Of the other men of note at Seaton Delaval, the saintly, though eccentric, Tommy Gleghorn was widely known. He and "Jimmy Hepplewhite"—a toy soldier, with which he used to collect for the chapel—were familiar in all the colliery villages round about. Then there were John Bruce, Thomas Bower, William Robinson, William Ovington, Edward Sanderson, James Sanderson, John Ramsay, and Robert Baxter. John Roseby and John Carter are yet alive, and can tell of the marvels of grace wrought through the instrumentality of Robert Wheatley and others during the years, as can also J. A. Grainger, who has served long and well in the ministry.

Death, migration and emigration sapped the Cramlingtons, but Old Cramlington rose again, having now at its head Burrell, Endean, Trenberth, Bell, and Smith. It was first missioned quickly after the early preachers got a footing in the region, and John Grieves had a class of intrepid men and women, whose strenuous work told upon the village. William Bell, too, gave his life for the people of Cramlington. The colliery owners built the Primitives a chapel, which they held free of rent until they erected one for themselves. Old Cramlington has the high honour of having had much to do with the missioning of New Zealand. William Harland started the idea at an exciting missionary meeting held there in November, 1843, and proposed that the mission should be supported by the Sunday School teachers of the Connexion. An approving resolution was carried, and it caught hold of the Connexion in such a way that the same year (1844) which saw Joseph Long and John Wilson sent to South Australia, witnessed Robert Ward, whose name will never die, set sail for New Zealand.

Of the many visitations from on high which have lifted souls from dejection and depravity at East Cramlington, one occurred in 1875, when James Young preached the anniversary sermons, and when thirty-nine souls professed conversion in one night. Conversions had taken place in the fortnight preceding, when George Warner was there, and they continued afterwards.

When Christopher Gregory arrived at West Cramlington from the Allotment in 1838, he found no society there, so he opened his house for worship. From that initial step grew a church which has had a far-reaching influence. A chapel was built in 1850, after a powerful revival—and it was not the first—and soul-saving went on in the new sanctuary. Young men, who afterwards rose to distinction in their craft and in reforming work, were gripped in mind and soul by “the hand of the Lord.” Said an octogenarian minister not long ago:—

“There was a group of places which contained the finest specimens of Christian human nature I ever came across. West Cramlington was the centre of the most vigorous, intelligent, and spiritual societies I ever beheld. Jim Barrass, as I have seen him on his knees, especially at a Coble Dene camp meeting! And there was William Crawford! West Cramlington had some rough young men in it, but the influence of William Crawford was remarkable. He was a king amongst them, and the power he exercised over them, though he never obtruded it, was marvellous. A man of superior gifts of mind, of much suavity, and full of fire, he was altogether a great force.”

The Lowthers, Crawfords, Campbells, Cloughs, Gregorys, Absaloms, Wanless, and John Ramsay took a leading place in all good works. J. G. Harbottle, J. Absalom, Milburn, and D. Hopkins are among the chiefs to-day.

In its early life Dudley society was feeble, but some fine souls went to live there, and the work of the Lord revived amazingly. Such were John Bell and his saintly wife, parents of the late James Bell, who was a Vice-President of the Conference; B. Creigh, George Bell, Robert Grieves, M. Jackson, J. Wright, G. Purdie, J.

Cherey, G. Hall, G. Wilson, J. Askew, J. Ross, and Henry Bell. The latter used to have as many as a dozen of the converts in his kitchen, teaching them to read and write. Robert Grieves, as overman of the colliery, was of invaluable service when the chapel was built in 1865. Burradon has had heavy trials. The disastrous explosion of 1856, when seventy-two men and boys were suddenly hurled into eternity, and when the heroic Robert Jefferson, one of the rescuers, was overpowered with the foul air and died, depleted the society. All the trustees and many of the members were among the victims. There was a good society in 1884, when Thomas Stoddart and Joseph Johnson (now of Lemington) were the chief figures in it, but the strike of 1887 and the closing of the pit for two years scattered the people. A better day dawned, however, and the work went forward again. A healthy influence has been exerted by the Primitives at Bates' Cottages. The Knox family did much to found this church, being zealously assisted by Joseph and Robert Johnson and their families, while the service of Ralph Smith and Matthew Davey has been valuable.

Soon after the first missionaries visited the district a cause was established at Seghill, and the colliery owners helped the members to build a chapel in 1838-9. The prominent original members were William English, John Alexander, D. Fanterrow, John Nicholson, John Parkin, Joseph Humble, Charles Stephenson, and his wife, and Thomas Davidson. The 1844 strike played havoc with the society, and for many years they worshipped in an inconvenient place. The arrival of T. Dunn, the colliery engineer, from Eston, in 1896, however, gave the society a new impulse, and the present excellent premises were built in 1901, costing £853, and are now debtless. A long list of useful men and women have been (and some are still) connected with Seghill :

Peter Burt, J. Wanless, Hayes, Harrison, the Davidsons, Austin, Hogg, the Dobinsons, Graham, Leck, Brown, Wake, Redalph, the Soulsbys, the Richardsons, Telford, Moore, Graham, Symington, Holmes, Nutter, Carr, and Morton.

Hartley, Hartley Pans, and Seaton Sluice Glass Works have an interesting past. "Old Nanny" Smith was a fervent sister of repute at Hartley, and James Long and G. Gleghorn have since been honoured names in the church there. But Hartley cannot be named without the fatal day in January, 1862, coming to mind, when, by the breaking of the ponderous shaft of the pumping engine, 204 men and boys were entombed in the pit, and not one was got out alive. Ten toilsome days passed before the bodies were reached; and, as showing the power of religion to sustain in a situation so terrible, there was found on the body of the back-overman a note, roughly pencilled on a piece of paper, which ran:—

"Friday afternoon at half-past two.

"Edward Armstrong, Thomas Gladston, John Hardy, Thomas Bell, and others, took extremely ill. We also had a prayer meeting at a quarter to two, when Tibbs, Henry Sharp, J. Campbell, Henry Gibson, and William G. Palmer [exhorted]. Tibbs exhorted us again, and Sharp also."

Four of those mentioned as having exhorted were Primitive Methodists. William Tibbs was a class-leader at New Hartley, and Henry Sharp a chapel steward at Old Hartley. Joseph Humble, an esteemed member, was under-viewer of the colliery when the catastrophe occurred. Jeanie Patterson was a vigorous soul at the beginning of New Hartley society, and the chapel built in 1885 has been made a centre of moral and spiritual life. The new Seaton Sluice has also an enterprising cause, nor should mention of the push at Annitsford and Station Terrace, Cramlington, be omitted. To the energy of Ralph Dixon the latter owes a place of



worship, and the Urwin family, now of Whitley Bay, contributed much to the success of the church.

There are 503 members in the circuit, and the church property is valued at £10,784. John Carter is circuit steward, and J. Burrell finance secretary. In recent years M. Dobinson, J. W. Collingwood, and others have gone into the ministry from this circuit.

#### “PORT CARBON.”

Blyth (“Port Carbon,” as it has been called), is the product of the growth of the coal trade in East Northumberland. Few were its inhabitants when William Clowes preached there on February 5th, 1822, but he thought there was “an opening for the work of the Lord.” He was confirmed in his opinion when he was again in Blyth in the summer, this time having John Nelson as his companion. To Joseph Jefferson, of Cowpen Square, is given the credit of having been the first to open his house to accommodate the few members forming the infant society; then a room in the Grey Horse Inn was secured, and afterwards a blacksmith’s shop, but the cause waned and died. In the early thirties it was resuscitated, and in 1835 a chapel was built. For a few years all went well, but the great strike cast its pall over the society, and bitter feuds followed, which even frustrated the efforts of Joseph Spoor, who was in the town twelve months. Again the cause failed, and the chapel was lost. Little time, however, had elapsed before another society was raised; in fact, it is doubtful whether the Sunday School, opened in 1833, had ever been relinquished. Its last removal up to 1852 (says a report then published, signed by George Davison), was to “the new commodious school-room, underneath the new chapel.” From thence a new complexion was given to the entire district by the springing up of new collieries.

The society and congregation in Blyth grew a main, and it and other societies were made into a branch of North Shields Circuit in 1856, with 144 members, whose total quarterly contributions amounted to £8 18s. 1d. By 1864 the branch was made into an independent station, James Jackson and John Nicholls being the first ministers. The membership was then 297, and the quarter's revenue £31 18s. 3½d. A dozen years later, when the third minister was engaged, there were 939 members, and the quarterly income was £94 1s. 5d. Amble and other places were made a branch in 1893, with 103 members, and two years later Ashington Circuit was constituted. This left Blyth station with 555 members, and in 1908 the number on the roll was 713. The present church at Cowpen Quay was built during the superintendency of John M. Dawson, but so extensive have been the additions, alterations, and improvements since then that the original has disappeared. W. Hindmarsh and J. G. Ogle are the circuit stewards, and R. P. Clark is the society steward at Cowpen Quay. But there is a second church in Blyth to-day, and Coburg Street, with its hundred members and R. Grant as its steward, has a rosy future. Primitive Methodism, with such men as Adam F. Pickering, W. Dawson, George Bailey, R. Dodds, the Bakers, Charlton, the Colpitts, T. Mason, W. Scott, James Elliott, Lee, and many more, in addition to those already named, has been a force in Blyth.

The ministry of James Jackson, John M. Dawson, Henry Yooll, sen., Adam Dodds, John Snaith, Robert Clemitson, M. A. Drummond, J. Ritson, Hugh Gilmore, Robert Hind, J. A. Grainger, J. W. Allison, A. J. Campbell, T. Robson, and M. T. Pickering was fruitful. R. G. Graham and M. Johnson were each twice in the circuit, and witnessed days of the Son of Man and of power. What is called "the great revival," however, took place in 1867-8, and which continued in the circuit

for more than a year, upwards of four hundred souls being added to the church.

Bedlington, Netherton, Bebside, and Shankhouse are notable societies in this circuit. The first class at Shankhouse was formed in 1848, and Henry English was appointed to lead it. In 1865-6 there was a great influx of miners from Devon and Cornwall into the Cramlington district. Many of these were religious men, and not long afterwards a powerful revival took place. In less than four years the Wesleyans, Primitives, and Free Methodists had comfortable chapels in the village. For twenty years the Shankhouse Primitives were noted for their religious fervour and enthusiasm in temperance work. Several young men from this village have become ministers—W. Cann, James Polwarth, and the popular William Younger, of Harrogate; J. H. Cann, another youth, became a member of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. Two women of strong personality in Shankhouse's heyday—Bessie Younger (William's grandmother) and Betty Robinson—are named with enthusiasm until now. Then there were the Grieves, Wrights, Canns, Doneys, Braunds, Stanburys, Forsters, Dawsons, Phillips, Allsop, Easton, Shaw, Farthing, Symons, and Rowe. Representatives of the families are still there. The disastrous strike of 1887 brought Shankhouse down from being the most powerful society in the circuit to a struggling cause; but it must never be forgotten that it is practically the parent of the flourishing interest at the new colliery of Hartford, and that it has given sons who have exercised extraordinary power in this and other lands.

Bebside is an old society, and it is claimed for this village that in the later seventies and early eighties it was "the intellectual hub of the district." It was here that Charles Fenwick, who was born at Cramlington, was sent to work at the pit-bank at nine years of age,

and it was here he worked "at the face" until he laid down his pick to contest Wansbeck Division of Northumberland, when that constituency was created in 1885. He won the seat splendidly, and the division has had no other member. "If my life has been in any degree a success," Mr. Fenwick said recently, "I owe it all to the providence of God, and my early and continued connection with the Primitive Methodist Church." There are many other men, such as John Foster, who did a good work at Bebside.

West Sleekburn, Cambois, Barrington, Newsham, and New Delaval have all been sweetened by the savour of the gospel through Primitive Methodist agency. Ald. Reavley, ex-Mayor of Jarrow, remembers Thomas Burt's father preaching in his parents' cottage at Newsham. That was before the miners pulled down the disused "pig crees" to build the chapel. New Delaval had the last years of the zealous Thomas Davison, and was lifted up in status by the advent of the Pickering family. West Sleekburn, where the veteran Robert Grieves resides, has shown its enterprise in chapel building which speaks well for future endeavours. Splendid trophies of grace have been won at all the collieries, and Barrington, where Ralph Dawson has been a pillar in the church for over forty years, has shared in the blessing, in spite of serious adversities.

Netherton has been the spiritual birthplace of a band of men of whom any church might be proud. It was a feeble cause in 1852, when the services were held in the cottage of Martin Middleton, and when John Bell (afterwards of Dudley), George Pringle, Robert Hepplewhite, and Daniel Robinson began a Sunday School. Bedlington was then the head of the northern part of North Shields Circuit, and the preacher stationed there in 1854 was Thomas Carrick. Then Netherton chapel was built. Conversions followed the opening of the sanctuary,

among the first being the well-known Henry Pringle, of Chester-le-Street; Robert Wheatley, the conspicuous evangelist; and W. E. Nicholson, who died in the autumn of 1908 at Consett. Revival work was "the meat and drink of the people"; and William Walton, Daniel McKinley (who afterwards became a travelling preacher), James Barrass, William Postgate, and other men of grit and soul going there to reside, Netherton was a centre of evangelistic power. Robert Walton (William's cousin) was converted when he was seventeen years of age, and in 1877 he went from Netherton into the ministry. The closing of the pit put a stop to the brilliant career of the society, and for years it was a desolate place. George Randall, who had arrived in the village with his family in 1890, got the chapel re-opened; and since the pit has been again started, a healthy society and prosperous school have been gathered.

Jeremiah Gilbert was in all probability the first Primitive Methodist missionary to visit Bedlington. Cosens, the coloured preacher, held services in the Old Hall, once a place of some importance, and in which, it is said, King John dined. Sir David Gooch, who laid the Atlantic cable, was born at Bedlington, his father being a clerk at the once celebrated ironworks there. A new chapel was built in 1828, and the work of God progressed. Some fine men and women were nurtured in the chapel, but the stoppage of the ironworks brought evil days upon the society. James Elder Davison, who lived until February 3rd, 1892, went through all the stress. He was a local preacher fifty-eight years, and at his jubilee meeting James Barrass, John Wood, Thomas Wanless, John Ramsay, and Robert Clough (Cramlington) joined hands with him on the platform, and sang, "Now here's my heart and here's my hand." The event is still spoken of with emotion. The prosperity of the coal trade has made Bedlington a populous



centre, and not only is there a fine church and schools in the old village, but also an excellent suite of premises and a vigorous society and Sunday School at Bedlington Station. Beginning with James Baxter, John Davison (son of the veteran James), John Foster, and Ralph Moralee, all at the top of the plan, there are about a dozen local preachers in the two societies, not a few of them men of distinct individuality.

In 1845 William Gleghorn, a native of Blyth, went to be a travelling preacher, but he broke down in 1848, and died in 1852, not before he had laid the foundations, however, of a useful society at Blyth. But there was another of the earlier travelling preachers who was born at Blyth, the able, judicious, affectionate and successful William Jefferson. To him the Connexion owes the song, "The Lion of Judah shall break every chain." The cultured Nadin Jefferson is his second son.

#### "FELL-'EM-DOON."

Here is the simple record of the beginning by Thomas Carrick of what is now the head of a circuit which teems with life, and the whole story of which is one of the marvels of this industrial age and of evangelistic accomplishment:—

"In 1859 I missioned Fell-'em-Doon, afterwards called Ashington Colliery. At first I preached in the open-air, in one case to twelve men who were lying on the green playing cards and drinking whiskey; afterwards in a cottage house. It was almost impossible to get a house at the start, as there were so few; and then when one was secured, it was difficult to get anybody to go into it. But the work broke out, and kitchen, bedroom, and step-ladder were crowded."

The great expanse of green fields in 1854, when Mr. Carrick began his missionary work, is now covered with miles of colliery cottages, and Ashington and Hirst are the wonder of the country. Here 5,500 men and boys are employed, and the daily output is about 7,000 tons of coal.

It was not until 1871 or 1872 that a firm hold was secured in the new colliery by the Primitives. But the men from West Cramlington arrived, including the Gregorys, Charles Main, the present circuit steward, Joseph Campbell, who went to Australia in 1878, and others, and began their spiritual campaign in the open-air. One of the first preachers at the new start was Edward Sample. A blacksmith's shop, the Bandroom, the Mechanics' Hall, and a chapel in 1876—that was the order of their progress. In sixteen years the congregations outgrew the accommodation of the first chapel, and a church to seat seven hundred worshippers and schools costing £3,300 were erected. Just on the other side of the railway from Ashington is the new town of Hirst, in which were twelve inhabitants little more than a dozen years ago. Now it is bounding up to twenty thousand. A school-chapel was built there in 1896, and in 1903 a large church. In the two societies there are about three hundred members, and over six hundred scholars in the Sunday Schools. Then, again, Seaton Hirst sprang up close by, and a useful society and Sunday School were quickly established, and have been housed in an iron building. Great missions have been conducted in the towns by Mr. and Mrs. Harrison, Messrs. Willis and Holland, and others; while in the "common round," glorified with uncommon fervour, have been William Walton, William Crawford, Main, Flaxman, Deans, Sample, Dobinson, Cutter, Richardson, Morpeth, Featherstone, Bell, Robson, Scouler, Armstrong, Houliston, and scores more.

Thomas Davison was a wayward youth at Cramlington when Bessie Newton laboured there about 1838, but the grace of God did wonders in the mind and soul of the ignorant lad, as his forty years of sterling life and work testified. Choppington Guide Post, where he started a society and did so much in the erection of a chapel,

knew his worth. The Netherton men did a great work there in the sixties, and from thence Guide Post has been the birthplace of hundreds of souls. A beautiful village church and school have been built on Sheepwash bank. There are Wheatleys of another generation there, and Gibbesons, Millers, Youngs, Fails, and Bamford; George Randall, the soul-winner, the beloved, too. Peter Waddell, father of J. Wesley Waddell, was a notable man at Guide Post. And there was Ned Lewis, who was a desperate character when the Lord smote his conscience through the mouth of William Gelley; and what the police, the prison, the cat-o'-nine tails, could not do, Jesus, with His gentle touch, accomplished. Wheatley, Waddell, Lewis—what a trio in one society!

Lewis's conversion led to many others surrendering themselves to the Lord, and it was during the same evangelistic tour that Mr. Gelley witnessed an upheaval at North Seaton. From that society Thomas Elliott, the gentle and the godly, and James Barrass, mighty in word and deed, were translated. A good village chapel was built in 1868, and the altar fires are kept burning by a healthy society. Linton is a little village, whereat we have an iron building and a small society, largely brought into existence through the labours of William Crawford, who celebrated his jubilee as a local preacher in April, 1908, when appreciative addresses were given by the Right Hon. Thomas Burt, M.P., Charles Fenwick, M.P., and others; and their eulogies of his successful endeavours in the promotion of religion, trades unionism, and other movements were bare truth. J. Chester also plays a useful part at Linton. Longhirst got a shock at the stoppage of the colliery, and is the weakling of the circuit; but Pegswood is growing, and its new church has given it a fresh stimulus, the Lowerys, Youngs, Cranes, Nichols, Taylors, and others doing fine work. Choppington, in spite of fluctuations,

has a number of loyal spirits to keep the flag afloat in the old centre of Primitive Methodist influence and success. Robert Lawther, known and esteemed from the Tyne to the Wansbeck, and many more whose names are on high, served and sacrificed here and hereabouts. Stakeford has long been a strong society, and the vigilant bands of intelligent young people there to-day are an inspiration to all who minister to them. The names of Charlton, Gordon, Potter, Sanderson, Shield, and Hostler stand for much there.

At Morpeth we are on historic ground. William Clowes and John Nelson were there in July, 1822. Their reception was chilly, but in the following year a society of fourteen members was formed, and at the December quarterly meeting it was made a branch of the North Shields Circuit, with a preacher stationed there. Jeremiah Gilbert was very successful in the converting work in and about Morpeth in 1824, and Mary Porteus did well there in the same year. That section was a part of the Hexham Circuit in the thirties; and though Mrs. Porteus, when she was stationed at Alnwick in 1836, "enjoyed the pleasure of preaching among her early associates at Morpeth and elsewhere," it was given up in 1837. When Mr. Carrick was at Bedlington in 1854, he missioned Morpeth, and a society was formed in an upper room, but even after that it had been again abandoned. The year of the great impulse, however, in the Blyth Circuit (1868) saw the planting of a permanent church in Morpeth, this time Robert Wheatley being the man sent to capture the place. Fifty years after Clowes's mission a chapel was built in Manchester Street, and John Mouat, jun., and his family, Mrs. Bowman, and other devoted spirits laboured hard for the extension of the Kingdom of God. The work of Thomas Elliott and George Fawcett in the Ashington Circuit will be ever memorable, not the least item being the erection

of the handsome church and schools, costing £2,500, in one of the best parts of Morpeth. A new manse has also been built. George Fawcett exercised a powerful influence in Morpeth, and among those who sustained his hands Charles T. Carr, Edward F. Herdman, the Mouats, Fails, and a host of others deserve all praise. None, however, gave him more powerful aid in this remarkable project than a Congregationalist—Thomas Swinney, the head of the ironworks, a man of high character and great soul, who received his Godward impulse in the Berwick revival of 1861.

Even Newbiggin has succumbed to the twentieth century invaders. William Clowes and John Nelson were there in 1822, and other evangelists followed, but little was accomplished, and it had no Primitive Methodist society until the beginning of 1908, by which time Newbiggin began to assume an industrial complexion, a colliery having been started near by. The success of the infant cause became its embarrassment, and the circuit had to face a building scheme at once. A centenary hall was opened at the back end of 1908, and there is ground adjoining for a church. Those in the village, represented by the Horns, Pattersons, Dawson, and Pope, have done excellently.

#### A GALLANT CORNER.

Amble society and circuit form another illustration of heroic effort and persistent endeavour. In March, 1885, the first society was organised in the seaport, and the Drill Hall was engaged in which to hold meetings. Five persons gathered at the initial assembly: Robert Ballantyne, John Ross and his wife, and two others. The stern handful continued their work, notwithstanding the difficulty they had in getting preachers for their small detached society. At first Blyth Circuit refused to take Amble under its care, but it won the sympathy and help



of Robert Wheatley, James Barrass, Robert Lawther, and William Walton, and eventually the circuit accepted it. After being in a rented schoolroom for four and a half years, the members bought the Sale Rooms in Queen Street for £400. It was a bold stroke, but turned out a good business investment. The General Missionary Committee came to the help of the little church, and of the few adjacent places which had been missioned, J. Wesley Waddell, a probationer, being placed on the ground. When he completed his four years' term, Amble, with which there are now societies at Radcliffe, Widdrington, Stobswood, Chevington, Chevington Drift, and North Broomhill, was made into an independent station. During John Alderson's superintendency the important step of the disposal of the Sale Rooms and the erection of a chapel and school was taken. The latter were built in 1902, at a cost of £2,453, and while William E. Goodreid was in the circuit a manse was erected. There are families in Amble who richly deserve the thanks of the whole Connexion for their loyalty, sacrifices, and labour.

At Widdrington a healthy little church worships in the chapel built in 1893, and there is a mission at Stobswood near at hand. Chevington, which had the assiduous care of William Walton for three months after the initiation of the mission, has been the witness of the saving grace of God, and got a home of its own in 1905. A new district sprang up at Chevington Drift a few years ago. Preaching services were commenced, a society was formed, and in 1906 a chapel was built, which has been the one centre of religious work in the village. The work at Radcliffe, where there is a comparatively strong society, and where a chapel was erected in 1901, is promising. After not a few futile attempts, a footing was obtained in the populous colliery of North Broomhill in 1906, and the mission started then was so

successful that the circuit authorities were compelled to build a chapel in 1908 so as to conserve the fruits of their labours.

The anxious, devoted members in this corner of the vineyard have had a stiff fight, and their courage and fidelity have had a rich reward. The membership of the circuit is 247, and the quarterly income is over £50. Never forgetting the godly women, such men as Ballantyne, Manders, Cavers, Hedley, Tate, Smith, Thompson, Dodds, Tuck, and others, with Mark Pattison as their present superintendent, are worthy of the sympathy the District has shown them.

## CHAPTER XXI.

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### THE SCOTTISH BORDERS.

“THE most notable achievement of North Shields Circuit, in the early days, was, undoubtedly, next after the planting of our church in Newcastle, the missioning of Berwick-on-Tweed.” So says Mr. Kendall, and never was a truer word uttered. William Clough, a man of excellent parts, was the first missionary, and his opening meeting was held in Wallace Green, near the Parade, on January 4th, 1829, a cold and windy day. About three hundred people attended, and it is stated that Nellie Don, a woman of strong personality, held in repute by a generation which has few representatives left—John Renton, an octogenarian at Whitley Bay, is one of them—provided him with a chair. Clough had hired a room—near the Town Hall—and it was crowded at night, with “sober, serious, and attentive people.” On the following Sunday evening, not only was the room at Berwick crowded, but the stairs and alleys also. He spoke with liberty, and three joined class. But a remarkable circumstance had occurred during the afternoon. Here is the extract from Mr. Clough’s journal:—

“At half-past one I went to the Town Hall steps; thousands attended. I never spoke to a greater congregation, except once at Newcastle camp meeting. Spoke with great liberty to a mixed multitude of gentry, clergy, and commons. Not the least persecution, all were attentive, and in order that the people might hear to profit, the ringers stopt ringing the bells.”

Thus were Berwick Town Hall steps consecrated as a preaching place by a Primitive Methodist missionary, on

January 11th, 1829, and upon that historic spot have since stood some of the princes in our Israel, as well as men of national fame belonging to other denominations. Referring to the incident of the stopping of the bells, Mr. Kendall recalls that there were many places in England where the missionary no sooner began his service than the bells were set a-ringing to drown his voice; "but, as far as we are aware, Berwick was the only place where the bells were stopped ringing, even at the authorised times, so that the open-air service might not be interrupted."

For a time, Mr. Clough continued his pioneer work, preaching, in Tweedmouth, Spittal, Murton Colliery, Burnmouth, Ord, Horncliffe, and Paxton, and to the prisoners in the gaol. But the real human agent in the making of Berwick Circuit was William Lister, who followed Clough. The former was on the Alnwick branch of the North Shields Circuit before he was sent to Berwick, and during his first term of fifteen months in the latter place he gave himself without stint to the work of evangelisation, proceeding as far as Kelso. The revival in Berwick began in May, a month after his arrival, and many of the meetings had to be held in the open-air, the room becoming too small even for the prayer meetings. Conversions followed in quick succession, and as many as seventy persons attended a class meeting. In June a plot of ground was bought in College Place, on which a chapel was built. But a time of trial set in. Two of the leaders, five of the trustees, and several members resigned, because the meetings were so noisy, and during these days of tribulation Mr. Lister was hunting about for money to build the chapel. About this time also Hugh Bourne tarried for a night in the town, preaching in Castlegate on the new birth. After seeing the site and plans, he gave Mr. Lister some useful hints thereanent. An opportune letter arrived one morn-

ing. It was brought to the preacher by a boy, who ran away after he delivered it. Bank of England notes to the amount of £70 were found in it, and the following unsigned letter :—

“ Rev. Sir,—Please to accept of the enclosed : from a friend, £15 ; a well-wisher, £20 ; a lover of truth, £10 ; and one who has got good under your ministry, £25—total, £70 ; to aid you in the building of your new chapel.”

The chapel was opened on February 18th, 1830, the whole outlay being about £630. There had been £225 raised, and the mortgage was not easily got. Many and severe were the struggles, but hundreds of Primitive Methodists, Presbyterians, and others have thanked God that ever it was built.

#### “ THE BRYANITES.”

On New Year's Day, 1830, Mr. Lister set off from Berwick to open a new mission at Wooler. He went by way of Lowick, and found some “ Bryanites,” as the Bible Christians were then called, with whom he held a meeting. Theirs is an interesting story, for they laid the foundations upon which Primitive Methodists built in a section of Northumberland, as the Bible Christians built upon foundations laid by Primitive Methodists in Cornwall. Some noble men and women were converted in the villages named through the instrumentality of the Bible Christians. It appears that in 1821, a young woman from Devonshire was visiting some friends in the neighbourhood of Kyloe, and went with them to the cottage of a shepherd named Henry, at Laverick Law. Having herself tasted of the good word of God, she soon began to tell of the love of Jesus. The shepherd was the first to realise the power of saving truth, and this led to Bryanite missionaries being sent to Northumberland from Devon. Mary Ann Weary, Mary Armstrong, and Ann Guest, consecrated women, are named from time to time as having been specially used of God.



Joseph Swan, who died in Victoria (Australia) in 1886, was converted at Belford through the first-named evangelist, and lived a useful life. Esther, wife of Christopher Brown, of Tuperee, was brought to the Lord through the Bible Christians, and adorned the doctrine of God her Saviour throughout her life. She left two sons and a daughter, the latter becoming the wife of J. P. Tiplady, who was a short time in the ministry, and was well known in Sunderland. Esther's first-born was John Brown, of Ancroft, one of the greatest men on the Borders. In his mental make-up he was a typical Borderer—strong in his convictions, powerful in his reasoning, and intense in his zeal as a religious and political propagandist. Had John Brown lived he would most certainly have been sent to Westminster as the representative of some agricultural constituency. Esther's husband and his brother Thomas served the Lord and wrought righteousness. The latter was the father of Thomas Brown, of West Learmouth, and James Brown, of West Horton. They and their hospitable wives have done splendid service for their Master and for the denomination which has been so dear to them and their families.

Matthew Davison, the fruitfulness of whose life at Tow Law and elsewhere has been mentioned, was gloriously converted at Lowick in 1824, when Mary Armstrong, from Cornwall, was preaching there. A shy and sensitive man, William Dodds by name, was born again at Milfield, under Ann Guest; and no man in the Hetton and Houghton-le-Spring Circuits was more greatly beloved.

These are just a few samples, but there were many more who gave character and strength to that side of the Berwick Circuit when in 1830 the Bible Christian societies were transferred to it. Special mention should be made of Thomas Clark, of Milfield, a former Bible

Christian, who for many years took a leading part in the fortunes of Primitive Methodism under the shadow of the Cheviots. There were five societies—Milfield, Wooler, Lowick, Bowsden, and West Allerdean.

On June 27th, 1830, the first camp meeting was held at Spittal, the preachers being Messrs. Herod, Clough, Cosens, and Lister. It was thought there would be about 4,000 persons present in the afternoon, and it may be safe to assume that Robert Lisle, of Lowick, and others of the old worthies were there. For seventy-seven years thereafter Spittal camp meeting was held annually, unless weather conditions made it impossible. 1908 had the unenviable distinction of having been the occasion when it was not planned. Speaking of the first camp meeting, Mr. Lister says: "It was a day of salvation that will be long remembered." The same could have been written of many a Tweedmouth Feast in the succeeding years.

#### FROM THE FORTH TO THE ALN.

Berwick Circuit was formally constituted in 1831, George Herod, William Clough, and John Parrott being the preachers. The new station stretched from Edinburgh to Alnwick and Shilbottle, a distance from north to south of something like ninety miles. Its width may be reckoned from Ford, where there were eight members in 1833, to Holy Island, where a society of ten members had been raised. The island could only be reached safely at low water, and even then the preacher had to take off his shoes and stockings, whether winter or summer, and walk three miles across the wet sands. John Matfin, who had been too late for the incoming tide when he reached the sands, had to swim. It was then he caught his deafness—a lifelong affliction. To this day Thomas Carrick has vivid recollections of his experiences in crossing to the island sixty years ago.

The mainstay of the society was Jamie Morton, a godly fisherman, who had the help of John Foreman in the fifties. In more recent years the Presbyterians opened a mission there, and have now a useful church.

In 1834 Edinburgh was transferred to Glasgow Circuit, and Alnwick branch to North Shields—(Mr. Herod, in 1833, reported that the Primitives had a neat chapel at Alnwick, capable of seating three hundred persons)—so that when Mr. Lister was serving his second term he wrote, “We have but the Berwick Station now.” But internal strife had brought the station low, and Mr. Lister and his colleagues had to work with unremitting ardour to restore peace and prosperity. After three years’ labour in the circuit, there is this entry in his journal, dated June 27th, 1836 :—

“My labours are at an end on this station to-day. Through the blessing of heaven, we leave 120 more members than what we found, one new chapel, nineteen new places missioned, and Berwick Chapel relieved of its financial difficulties, and all old circuit outstanding bills paid off. On looking over my account book, I find that for my three years’ labour I have received—For salary, £108 10s. ; allowance for one child, £9 12s. ; for my house rent, £26 15s. ; for furniture, £3 6s. ; for rates and taxes, £5 2s.—total, £153 5s.”

Thus was the Berwick Circuit as it was known for many years afterwards put on a sound basis, though in many of the villages missioned (and at some of which societies were formed) no permanent hold was got. Not a few churches, however, reaped where the Primitive Methodists had sown. There were 232 members in the station when Mr. Lister left. Amongst the earliest members in Berwick was a little girl named Ann Dixon, who was afterwards known as the devout and devoted wife of William Fulton. A young woman, the daughter of an army officer, incurred the displeasure of the Wesleyan minister by going to hear the Primitives. She not only continued to go, but she joined them, and in 1835 was married to John Matfin. It has already been

said that William Lister took to wife Jane Calder, of Berwick; and some years afterwards Henry Yooll, sen., married Betsy Hattle, of Berwick, as his second wife.

About 1832, Thomas Marshall, who died in the house of his son-in-law, William Dodds, at Lumley, near Chester-le-Street, in 1866, joined the Berwick society, and was a prominent local preacher and temperance advocate, especially in the Sunderland Circuit. William Young and his family, of Richardson's Stead, and James Faid, of the same place; James Chisholm, and his family, of Allerdean; James Trainer, and his wife and family, of Berwick; John Jobson, George Jobson, and the widowed mother; Helen Morton, Jane Moor, Betsy McMillan, Dorothy Wilson, the Weatherstons, Garretts, Palmers, and hosts more clung to their Saviour and Primitive Methodism in shade and shine during the first decades.

#### GREAT AWAKENINGS.

Revivals of wide extent and power were experienced during the ministry of Ralph Shields, Adam Dodds, Thomas Carrick, Henry Yooll, sen., William Fulton, Powles Carrick, W. E. Parker, and other faithful ambassadors. But the stirring sixties—covered by the ministerial terms of James Warnes, John Snaith, John Magee, John Atkinson, William Bowe, Barnabas Wild, and John Gill, and on to the days of William Fulton, Hugh Gilmore, William Johnson, Joshua Dyson, R. G. Graham, and others—witnessed such manifestations of saving power at Eyemouth, Berwick, and elsewhere, which amounted to a spiritual resurrection. Take Eyemouth, visited by William Lister in 1834, where the little society built a chapel in 1835, but which got into such a condition in 1859 that its abandonment was discussed. Yet in that village William Fulton had been converted, and William Landells, afterwards one of the greatest Baptist ministers of his generation, was

brought to a knowledge of the truth through the agency of William Lister. When Eyemouth was in its darkest hour, in 1859, in the providence of God John Snaith was sent there. His soul was on fire, and the prevailing dissipation, notwithstanding the professed outward respect for the Sabbath and religion, moved him mightily. A tide of salvation swept over the village, and people flocked to the services from as far as Duns. Altogether six hundred or more souls were converted during the revival. Eyemouth was born again, and the quickening was felt at St. Abb's, Grant's House, and the country round. Industrially as well as spiritually the fishing village rose, and finer and more industrious fishermen, with better craft and gear, it would have been difficult to find. All the churches reaped the benefit; as a matter of fact, the Morisonian Church was an outcome of the revival. There was another revival in the early seventies, when John Reed was stationed there. In 1876 Eyemouth was made an independent station; but the awful disaster of 1881, when so many Berwickshire fishermen lost their lives in the October gale, swept the great majority of the Eyemouth bread-winners away. Among the victims were no fewer than twenty-five male members and adherents of the Primitive Methodist Church, leaving nineteen widows and ninety fatherless children. In 1893 Eyemouth society was obliged to join the parent circuit again. During recent years, however, a great advance has been made, under the ministry of John Charlton, Rowland B. Goodwin, and Thomas Dale. There is now a flourishing society of over a hundred members, and a beautiful new church was opened in 1905. After the veteran Turnbull, the Dougals, Cowes, Collins, and others, not forgetting the youthful and saintly Mary Alexander, carried on the good work, and in more recent years J. Wright has been of considerable service to the society. A gloom was cast over the



village in February, 1908, when it was reported that James Cowe, who had been an active member thirty years, was lost off the Longstone Light.

It was in 1861 when the windows of heaven opened, and showers of blessing fell upon Berwick and the neighbourhood. College Place Chapel was the centre, and hundreds of young men and maidens were born from above there. Many allied themselves with the churches in which their parents worshipped, but a few joined the Primitives. Two young men, George Lewins and Robert Laidler, who had been converted at Ord, became associated with College Place. The first-named is in the ministry, and the latter, after a life of conspicuous usefulness, died a year or two ago. George Wood and David Robb also became ministers, and are now Congregational pastors. The brothers Swinney, afterwards of Morpeth, got their lift heavenward in that revival, as did numbers of others who have served their God and humanity in various parts of the country. To have had part or lot in that glorious resurrection has been the inspiration of a lifelong song in many a heart, not the least in that of the present writer. A lad paid occasional visits to the chapel about that period. It was Henry Yooll, and the place was not strange to him. Had not his father occupied the preacher's house? In the course of years he himself was superintendent of the Berwick Circuit, and rose to commanding distinction in the Connexion, becoming Connexional Editor, General Secretary of the Local Preachers' Training Council, and President of Conference in 1907.

The society at Allerdean has a gracious history, having had the Chisholm family connected with it for so many years. David Carr and his family, and John Brown and his family also; and in more recent days the Nesbits, Youngers, Adams, Mowitts, and other choice spirits. It has been a strong society for many years, but it took the members seven decades to get a suitable church.

The present fine village sanctuary was built in 1903, when R. H. Auty was superintendent. A band of godly men and women gathered in a room at Richardson's Stead in 1834; that may or may not have been the origin of the present vigorous society at Scremerston, where the John Brown Memorial Church was built in 1886, and the Smiths, Bruces, Browns, Youngs, Locke, Ayres, and Dryburgh have been diligent workers. Norham Chapel, built in 1877, has had a varying history, but the society got a new lease of life when Mr. Davidson and his zealous wife went to live in the old village. The other members of the chapel committee are G. Straughan, J. Forster, J. Darling, J. Malcolm, and W. Forster.

The circuit stewards are D. Smith, of Scremerston, and J. McDonald, of Berwick. Of the other officials who have not hitherto been named, R. Carr, Grindon; W. Smith, Thornton Park; J. T. H. Sutherland, James and John Jobson, Councillor Thomas Wilson, William Eales and family, and P. Richardson must be mentioned. The Jobsons and Thomas Wilson are Berwick Primitives of the third generation; and there are women, too—especially the daughters of James Trainer and Archie Weatherston—who preserve the link with the heroic past.

#### BETWEEN THE CHEVIOTS AND THE SEA.

Lowick section of the Berwick Circuit was made into a separate station in 1869. There were seven places, including North Sunderland, a distance of some twenty-five miles from Milfield, where the superintendent minister's house is. George Wood and William A. French were the first ministers, and the membership stood at 255. Since then, in spite of the depopulation, great and lasting good has been done by the ministers who have travelled in that agricultural circuit, and by a succession of able and earnest local preachers. Robert Lisle, J. and R. Pringle, Andrew Craig, John Brown,

John Forsyth, James Young, J. P. Tiplady, M. Clark, P. Waters, W. and A. Taylor, and A. Easton need but be named. Not only were the Primitive Methodist societies well served by them, but also frequently Presbyterian churches. A leading Presbyterian confessed to a former superintendent (W. Brown) that the Presbyterian churches of the locality owed their present-day position to the activity of the Primitives of a few years ago.

Robert Lisle, Mary Galbraith, and Mary Laidler (wife of John Laidler) may be reckoned as having been among the fruits of the Bryanite mission at Lowick, and they and their families did well for the Primitives. Places of honour must likewise be given to the Forsyths, Hoggs, Pearsons, and many more, who gave of their substance and their toil without stint for the spread of the gospel, and the generations following have cherished the early traditions. On October 7th, 1860, a chapel to seat about 250 persons was erected, and it has been the birthplace of many souls. Here, and in all the expanse of country around, the memories of many recall with affection the work of William Graham, John Snaith, William A. French, Henry Yooll, Joseph Hawkins, John Laverick, John Alderson, Robert Walton, William Robson, Martin Cuthbert, and other servants of God. There was a remarkable revival in the village of Lowick in 1876, when Messrs. Robson and Cuthbert were in the station, and when the membership rose in three months from 34 to 117; and there have been seasons of power since then. There are Pringles and Forsyths at Lowick still, together with William Taylor, J. R. Cox, W. Bell, L. Burrell, A. Watson, S. Mole, W. Dagleish, and A. Seeley in the front.

It is questionable whether there is another place of its size in the Connexion from which so many men of mark have gone as from the lovely little village of Milfield. James Davison, of Dean Raw, and Adam

Dodds are two distinct types, and the old Sunderland District has been blessed with the fragrance and fruitfulness of their kind, raised up and equipped at Milfield. Worship was conducted until 1856 in the village school-room, but a site was got from Mr. G. A. Grey, of Milfield Hill, and the foundation-stone of the chapel was laid by Mrs. Clark, the first member of the society, assisted by her husband, already named, who rendered great service to the cause. The Clark family have been most generous supporters of the cause. In 1876 a manse was built and the chapel was renovated. Mr. Clark, who died in 1908, left £600 for temperance and evangelistic work. G. Keir is society steward now, and the Hettles, Lyall, Fairbairn, Moffatt, and Mrs. Dyson lead.

There was a flourishing society at Ford Moss when the pit was working, but it has long been practically closed, and the members were scattered. In its day it accomplished much permanent good. A man named Clarke went with others to the services one night, and mocked and mimicked some of the lively members. Next day, Clarke damaged one of his fingers, and it had to be cut off. He regarded the circumstance as a judgment upon him for mocking the Methodists, and in an agony of soul he sought and found forgiveness. He made a few attempts to preach, but did not succeed to his satisfaction. One Sunday night he knelt on the moor, and cried: "O Lord, please excuse me from preaching, for I cannot do it; but I do solemnly promise that my son Michael shall take my place." Michael Clarke was then a boy, but he became an esteemed minister, and a man of power and prominence in Australia. George Clarke, his brother, was a highly respected local preacher in the Thornley and Shildon Circuits, and other members of the family have lived useful lives. Ford Moss was also distinguished as having been the home of James Young for many years. It should not be forgotten that services

were also held at Galewood, amongst other places, once, nor should the services of Mr. Robson, agent for Sir Horace St. Paul, pass without recognition.

For forty-two years the Primitives worshipped in rented rooms in Wooler, but in the winter of 1893-4 (after evangelistic services by F. R. Brunskill, now in the ministry), the congregations became so large that necessity was laid upon the members to build a chapel of their own. At that time the principal officials were Peter Waters, Robert Forster, and Thomas Fullerton, who, with their families and others, were enthusiastic in the work. The death of Mr. Forster at Fleetham, in 1908, was the removal of a great spiritual force. James Brown, of West Horton, is the present steward, and W. Cooper, J. Tulley, and T. Tait are local preachers, various offices being sustained by Mrs. Brown, G. Oliver, Mrs. Baker, Miss Tait, and Mrs. T. Hall.

Michael Clark, of Belford, is now the oldest local preacher on the plan. He and his wife Jane, now deceased, have been the mainstay of Primitive Methodism in Belford, and they have borne the burden and heat of the day nobly. The loyal society, so far away from pastoral oversight, has had its trials, and it owes much to S. Marsh and his family.

There is a small society at Branxton, the oversight of which is in the hands of J. Fairington, and occasional meetings are held at Kimmerston, Ewart Bridge, Horton, Lanton, and other places.

Donaldson's Lodge is regarded as the most Methodist society in the circuit to-day, and the full story of its rise and progress is crammed with romantic elements. George Holmes, of Wark, a local preacher, was amongst the earliest visitors to "The Lodge"; but it was in the seventies when the glory cloud burst over the thirsty land in the Marmion country. It was a time of power, expansion, and permanent planting remarkable in the



history of Lowick Circuit. In the opening years of the decade there were signs of spiritual awakening in the station. It was then that William D. Dunn, an evangelist known throughout Scotland and the North of England, was first brought prominently into the field; it was then that William A. French made his signal mark upon the station; it was then that Henry Yooll, jun., was living at high pressure, and that he and the people became fused in soul; it was then that Joseph Hawkins led the hosts of Israel into the enemy's camp on the Scottish side, and did exploits in the name of the Lord of Hosts. After repeated invitations from Donaldson's Lodge and elsewhere, it was decided that Mr. Dunn should go to the Lodge for three days, and he and Miss Easton sang through the village. The meeting place was filled, but when the prayer meeting was announced, after preaching, only one or two remained. While John Johnston, who was sorely afflicted with asthma, was gasping out his petitions to the Lord, two young women fell prone upon the floor, cried for mercy, and obtained pardon. An elderly woman was so overcome the same night that neighbours had to carry her home, and put her to bed. These occurrences made a sensation in the village, and the people flocked in such numbers to the meetings that a partition had to be taken down, and even the doubled space became too strait. Subsequently, a farmer, an avowed unbeliever, gave his barn to the revivalists. Night after night souls were saved, and it scarcely abated for three years. French, Yooll, McKinley, Hawkins, and Dunn, aided by willing and able local preachers, were in the thick of the fray; and the Lodge became a centre of spiritual power, from whence mission bands went to all the country round, and grace abounded to the chief of sinners. Every witness bears testimony to the conspicuous devotion of James Easton and John Swan and

their wives. When the present Sir Francis Blake laid the foundation-stone of the beautiful little church, in 1892, he said: "A church that produces characters like James Easton and John Swan is worthy of the best support I, or any one else, can give it." And there are Swans and Eastons there still, delighting in the work, supported by the Browns, Jeffreys, Johnson, Voy, and Harrison. William and Andrew Easton became local preachers, the latter one of the most efficient pulpit and platform men in the community. Other men of outstanding usefulness were George Melrose, of Kelso; George Fairnington, of Branxton; George Curry, of Coldstream; Thomas Fairnington, Adam Kennedy, and David Brown. Men and women are scattered over the United Kingdom and in the colonies who remember with joy their second birth in the meetings held at Donaldson's Lodge and the neighbourhood.

#### GRACE DARLING'S COUNTRY.

Though the establishment of a permanent Primitive Methodist society in the fishing village of North Sunderland is comparatively recent, visits were often paid to it by the early preachers. But the conversion of William D. Dunn and his entrance into evangelistic work were the forerunners of the planting of a vigorous cause in Grace Darling's country. In 1867, while engaged in religious work on Tyneside, Mr. Dunn, accompanied by Andrew Taylor, of Cullercoats, went to North Sunderland for a holiday, during which these ardent souls held meetings in the Mission Room at Seahouses. So great was their success that the soul-saving assumed the dimensions of a revival. Some remarkable conversions took place, and the excitement spread over the locality. Seahouses was a rough place then, and some of the more turbulent of the young fishermen behaved in a riotous fashion, but in the midst of the stone-throwing,

window-smashing, personal violence, and insults, souls continued to be saved.

About forty of the converts met in the "Peedge," a hall in a back lane, belonging to Mr. Ewing, fish merchant. Among them were William and Bessie Spears, W. Spears, sen., Ralph Spears, Mitchell Walker, Thomas Pringle and his wife, Matthew Walker, William Darling (Grace Darling's nephew), George S. Eadington, and W. Matthews. George Darling, Grace's brother, also became a member, and William, the lighthouse-keeper on the Longstone, was a local preacher, and for some years circuit steward. In 1868, at their own request, the converts were formed into a Primitive Methodist society, and Mr. French became the first resident minister of the denomination in the village.

Revival fervour continued with them, and soon a larger and better place than the "Peedge" was required. A chapel was built in the same quarter in 1871. The Atkinson family did praiseworthy service at that time and for years afterwards. George was a local preacher and circuit steward, and his wife toiled hard for the chapel, along with Miss Fair and Miss Fortune. So genuine was the prosperity that in 1874 North Sunderland, Craster, and other places were made into a circuit from Lowick, with 195 members (including Belford, which afterwards went back to Lowick Circuit). Mr. Yooll was the first superintendent, and soul-saving signalled his ministry there, and also that of Ralph Shields. The evangelistic spirit still abides in the whole region. It was the zone of the consecration movement, of which Henry Johnston, of Belfast, was the leader, and William Nightingale the resident evangelist. Within it were some fine spirits, the misfortunes which overtook it notwithstanding. C. Archbold, D. Brown, J. Young, A. B. Mather, Andrew Taylor, Adam Taylor, R. Dawson, and A. Cormack are the leading men in North Sunder-

land now, and the time may not be far distant when they and the sincere men and women associated with them will have a sanctuary worthy of them beside the new manse.

Craster is a fishing village pure and simple, though there are indications that it may before long develop into a seaside resort. How Primitive Methodism was introduced into it is an interesting story. About 1869 or 1870, while fishing out of the Tyne, Matthew Stephenson, who was fond of singing, heard some of Sankey's hymns sung, and caught several of the tunes. On his return home, he spent his Sunday afternoons in teaching his own children to sing them, then his neighbours' children were attracted, and speedily his house was full of youngsters. In course of time, first one and then another of the parents found their way to Stephenson's house to hear the children sing, and ere long the two capacious rooms were filled with young and old every Sunday afternoon. On one occasion, a few of the parents remained behind for a talk, and one of them—William Archbold, most probably—suggested that it was now time there should be prayer as well as singing. This led to one of their number being sent to North Sunderland to ask the young Methodist minister (Mr. French) to preach to them. He went, and the people heard the word with gladness. He went again and again, and many believed and turned to the Lord in Stephenson's kitchen. Mr. French had the great joy to read to the next quarterly meeting a letter from the Craster people asking for regular preaching, and giving the names of twenty-six persons who desired to become members. These included Matthew Stephenson, William, Ralph, Joseph, and Robert Archbold, Robert and John Smailes, Robert Sanderson, George Dawson, Richard Simpson, William Simpson, and their women people. Services were afterwards held in the houses of

Ralph Archbold and Edward Dawson. Eventually the former was enabled to give a site for a chapel, and William Archbold gave a piece of ground to make a roadway to it. The chapel was opened in 1880, was improved in 1894, and a schoolroom was added in 1897. The attractive place of worship has been made an abundant blessing to the village. Some months before it was built, under the labours of John Moffatt and Ralph Shields, there was a revival, in which some of the worst men in the place were converted. Few villages have witnessed more gracious times than Craster. The Archbold families have done much for the place, and the name of William is spoken with reverence by hundreds who knew the devout and zealous man. There are Archbolds and Smailes in the van to-day, with Eadington, Scott, Stanton, Taylor, Grey, and others to publish the saving Name.

Embleton, Newton, Alnmouth, and Boulmer have not been neglected. William Lister and others of the early missionaries visited some of the villages, but Boulmer is the only place where a permanent society has been established. It was re-missioned by Mr. Yooll, following a remarkable series of meetings at Craster. For many years the meetings were held in George Stanton's house, but Mr. Archbold gave the members a herring shed, and in this "Black House," as it is called, much good has been done. There are some who have been members in Boulmer society from that beginning, such as Jane Stanton and Bessie (Sims) Stanton.

Christon Bank has had a vigorous career. The arrival there of James Young and his family in 1883 gave force to the society, which then had Theophilus Moor, who was station-master at the time, as society steward. In 1891 Sir Edward Grey granted the members an ample site, and in another year a nice chapel, which has a commodious hall attached to it, was erected.



Some remarkable conventions have been held at Christon Bank, especially when the Consecration Movement was at its height. "Dear old Jamie Young," the prototype of "Robin Auld," in William Graham's story, "Heatherfield," died in 1901. Five of his seven sons are local preachers, and his widow always has a welcome for the men who go to preach that gospel which her husband proclaimed with great fervour and a rugged native eloquence for over forty years.

The picturesque village of Bamburgh, lying under the shadow of its ancient castle, has a small Primitive Methodist society. When Dr. Hodgkin went to reside at the castle, services were conducted in the Keep. The doctor himself often officiated, but usually invited any Christian brother to take part with him. On the castle passing into the hands of Lord Armstrong in 1896, meetings were held in the house of William Johnston, who has been a staunch Primitive for years, and an iron building was erected in 1897.

North Sunderland Circuit has been blessed with the ministrations of many able and useful servants of Jesus Christ, not the least beloved being John Charlton, the present superintendent, and his amiable wife. He is loyally supported by his people, at the head of the officials being R. W. Patten, of Rock, the senior circuit steward, who is a genial, practical man of affairs. Mr. Patten and his wife serve the circuit well.

The Berwick Circuit, which was put upon a firm basis by Mr. Lister, and which had 232 members when he left it in 1836, is now three stations. Berwick has at present 303 members; Lowick, 272; North Sunderland, 200—total, 775. When all the circumstances are considered, especially the enrichment of societies in populous places by members from these Border circuits, the work of the years is worthy of the heartiest commendation.

## CHAPTER XXII.

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### “WHAT HAS GOD WROUGHT?”

**I**N the foregoing pages we have endeavoured to show what part the English Border Counties have played, in the good providence and grace of God, in the work of the expansion and upbuilding of the Primitive Methodist Church, and in the promotion of human betterment. Having told the story in a brief form, let us recapitulate a few of the leading features.

Ingleton society of fifteen members, formed by William Clowes on June 5th, 1820, was the first band of Primitive Methodists in the region denominationally known as the old Sunderland District. There are now three districts in that area—Sunderland and Newcastle, Darlington and Stockton, and Carlisle and Whitehaven. The first reported 17,268 members to the Conference of 1908, the second 11,012, and the third 3,491—a total of 31,771 members, or over one-seventh of the entire membership of the Connexion. When Clowes entered Durham county the meeting place was a borrowed cottage. In the three Districts there were 493 chapels in 1908, of the estimated value of £639,619, and which were served by 125 ministers and 2,161 local preachers, who had 95,342 hearers at the principal Sunday service. Then there is the huge array of Sunday School scholars and Christian Endeavourers, with the noble companies of men and women who teach and lead them.

In missionary and ministerial work in the United States, the Colonies, and Africa, the North gave William

Summersides, who was in the first batch of Primitive Methodist missionaries sent to America; John Leckley, from Middleton-in-Teesdale, was the founder of Primitive Methodism in the Western States; and Thomas Butterwick, a Tynesider, occupied a prominent place in the ministry of the American Connexion. As to Australia, Joseph Long, Michael Clarke, John Sharpe, John Watson, Thomas Copeland, Hugh Gilmore, and John Day Thompson loom largely in the story of pioneering and consolidating the church there, and Thomas Copeland has been styled the father of the union movement at the Antipodes. Old Cramlington inspired the mission to New Zealand, and Matthew Reavley and William Atkinson were strong additions to the ministry of New South Wales. Africa has had Dr. Watson, William Welford (who was in prison during his term in Fernando Po), Robert Fairley, Matthew Barron, and William J. Ward.

William Lawson unfurled the flag in Canada, and was joined in his pioneering work by other two men from Cumberland—Robert Walker and John Elliott. From 1847 into the sixties Primitive Methodism in British North America had John Davison, a Novocastrian, as a kind of Colonial Bishop.

Regarding the initial efforts to obtain facilities for the better mental equipment of candidates for the ministry, the old Sunderland District holds a first place. The original impulse proceeded from the Northern Preachers' Association and the *Ambassador*, and Mr. McKechnie was the soul of both. With him at the start were such spirits as Thomas Smith, John Petty, William Antliff, and Thomas Greenfield. Tentatively, Elmfield College was the beginning, then Sunderland Theological Institute followed, and Hartley College is the outgrowth, at the head of which have been Northmen like James Macpherson, John Watson, D.D., George Parkin, B.D.,

and William Johnson, F.L.S. The list of Governors of Elmfield College contains the names of Thomas Smith, Robert Harrison, John Gair, and W. E. Crombie. The latter had previously made the interests of Alresford Orphanage his own, and J. Fletcher Porter, his successor as secretary, is a native of Durham county. In this humane service the late John Hewitson took a positive delight; while William Watson, J. K. Ellwood, and John Clennell have done work in the social ministries in London.

In the realm of finance, John Atkinson imparted a fuller life into the Insurance Company and Chapel Aid Association, connected with which have been (and some still are) Thomas Gibson, William Stewart, John Coward, B. Haswell, Robert Harrison, and John Hallam. Robert Hind followed Mr. Atkinson in 1899, and his sound judgment, rare skill, and enthusiasm were shown to such advantage that his death this year is lamented throughout the whole church. Here, as in all the prominent connexional schemes, the ardour and munificence of Sir W. P. Hartley have been conspicuous.

Of Presidents, editors, secretaries, and other high officials the North has been strongly in evidence. William Lister, Moses Lupton, Thomas Jobling, James Macpherson, Thomas Smith, Henry Phillips, C. C. McKechnie, Thomas Southron, Ralph Fenwick, John Atkinson, John Hallam, William Graham, John Watson, James Jackson, H. B. Kendall, Robert Hind, R. G. Graham, Robert Harrison, George Parkin, Henry Yooll, John Welford, John Day Thompson, William A. French, Joseph Ritson, A. T. Guttery, and George Armstrong. Vice-Presidents: John Coward, Robert Clapham, William Glass, Robert Foster, James Bell, and Mark Harrison. Emerson Muschamp was secretary of the 1848 Conference. Then Sunderland District has some claim upon the Garners, John Day, Samuel Tillot-

son, Sampson Turner, John Petty, William Harland, and others who rose to connexional importance. What a galaxy of diverse personalities has been named!

But the most tangible credential Methodism can present of its worth and work in the North is the transformation wrought amongst the miners, and in this Primitive Methodism has had no second place. It is not enough to point to the chapels and chapel-goers in the villages. That phase does not cover all the evolution. Methodism found the miners in serfdom. The breath of heaven, operating through that agency, awakened their manhood. They discovered themselves and their heritage, and altered their environment. Domestic decency and happiness, social purity and progress, industrial equity, educational expansion, political freedom, and national righteousness have been stimulated by Primitive Methodist propagandism, whether those affected by its agents have allied themselves with it or not.

A new era has opened. New men are pushing forward new methods, and speaking a new language. Nevertheless, the old truth remains—the truth which was expounded and pressed home by the early Methodist evangelists of every section—the truth which has the eternal sanction of the King of the Kingdom: “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.”

















