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COMMERCIAL ROAD, E.

HISTORY OF THE PRIMITIVE METHODIST CONNEXION.

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CHAPTER I.

The condition of England in the first quarter of the Century—Then and Now.

TO find the true "Origins" of Primitive Methodism we must go back to the very beginnings of the century. Our class-tickets have familiarized us with the epoch years 1807 and 1810. These are indeed dates to be ever remembered; but we must go yet further back than these years if we would find the true well-spring of that movement which afterwards acquired a distinctive name. Hugh Bourne—first enlightened as to the nature of true religion by Wesley's sermon on the Trinity,—and afterwards converted by reading Fletcher's "Letters on the Spiritual Manifestation of the Son of God—" joined the Methodist Church in the Midsummer of 1799. In the year 1801, he tells us, he was much employed at Harriseahead, about three miles from

Bemersley. "Harriseahead had no means of grace, and the inhabitants, chiefly colliers, appeared to be entirely destitute of religion, and much addicted to ungodliness. It was indeed reckoned a profane neighbourhood above most others . . . . Hugh Bourne endeavoured to promote religion there. A work of religion, usually called a revival, took place . . . . and there was a great reformation in the neighbourhood." A celebrated natural philosopher has written a treatise on "The Dynamics of a Particle." Now if, borrowing the language of mechanics, we were to speak of the "dynamics of Primitive Methodism," may we not see in this evangelistic effort at Harriseahead, the first, almost imperceptible beginning of that movement which afterwards under the impact of other causes was to gain increased velocity and momentum and run to and fro through the land? Or if, changing the figure, we were to substitute the idea of life for that of mere motion, then we may say that in 1801 Primitive Methodism was already in its embryonic stage; 1807 and 1810 were rather the period of its birth. It was the perception of the urgent need for Evangelization that was the first quickening impulse of our Connexional life when as yet there was no Connexion nor the semblance or dream of one. Of Christ it is written "When He saw the multitude He was moved with compassion on them because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." So all through the year 1800 we can conceive Hugh Bourne looking upon the spiritual condition of the poor colliers till he too was moved with compassion. As a coincidence and convenient date-mark therefore, 1800 may be fixed

upon as the starting point of our history. In the sense already indicated, Primitive Methodism is coeval with the century. Let us not forget Harriseahead in looking at lofty Mow Cop. Mow Cop means much to us: so also Harriseahead is a place of memories. At Harriseahead was generated that impulse which at Mow Cop was finding its method and taking its direction.

The moral condition of Harriseahead in 1801 may be taken as fairly representative of the condition of many other districts of England in the first quarter of the present century. Look where we will no brighter picture meets the eye. In proof of this, let one or two other districts in their moral aspects—districts where our missionaries were to labour and to suffer—be rapidly brought under review.

What is known as the "Black Country" was notorious for the rough and rude manners of its populace. A stranger could hardly pass through some of its villages without risk of maltreatment. It is no fable which avers that the fact of the passer-by being unknown was enough to raise the cry "Heave half-a-brick at him!" or reason sufficient to move the dog-fancier to encourage his favourite bull-terrier to try its teeth on the stranger's legs.

In the purely agricultural district of Holderness in the East Riding of Yorkshire, it was an immemorial custom for a football match to be played between the rival villages of Hedon and Preston, on Maudlin i.e. St. Magdalene Sunday. The two villages formed the respective goals, and the aim of the players was to drive home the ball through the windows of the first public house found unprotected by shutters. The ball was

urged hither and thither amid the encouraging cries of bystanders—women as well as men—and the oaths and yells of the combatants, many of whom suffered severely in bruised flesh and broken bones, from the fact that some of the players tipped their boots with hard leather or steel in order to make their kicks more telling. Strong drink flowed freely. The whole country-side was alive with excitement and vocal with partisan cries. Preston Church has been known to empty as the ball drew near; and the parson after finishing his service would give a largess of drink to the victors. It was on Maudlin Sunday that the first Camp Meeting was held at Preston, and after a few anniversaries of the day had passed over, the unseemly and brutalizing sport had ceased to be.

A little further to the North-east of Preston is the fishing village of Filey—now the well-known watering-place. The Rev. John Petty tells us "it was noted for vice and wickedness of every description." The fisher-folk of that time were even more superstitious than the miners. They worked as hard on the Sabbath as on any day of the week. Now, the fishermen of Filey are, as a class, orderly, Sabbath-keeping, God-fearing. The late "good, gentle, scholarly" Rev. E. Day, Wesleyan Minister, once publicly declared—"He had considerable knowledge of the fishermen of many parts of our coast, but that he knew none equal to the Filey fishermen; and he declared with the greatest freedom that their superiority was entirely owing to the successful labours of the Primitive Methodist Connexion."

Now turn we to the mining district of South East

Durham. The historian of the first railway which was opened in 1825—the Stockton and Darlington—tells us what was the moral condition of that district at the period of which we write. Cock-fighting was a favourite amusement. The brutal sport has left its abiding mark in 'Fighting Cocks'—one of the stations on the Stockton and Darlington line. Sabbath desecration was a crying evil. It was no uncommon thing for Wakes and Fairs to be held on the Lord's Day. Gentle and simple alike were addicted to profane swearing. Squires and county magnates outswore puddlers and pitmen. Pugilism, drunkenness, and smuggling were rife. A good deal of rough horse-play went on, as might be expected from men who had gone down the pit at five years of age, and whose diversions were necessarily unintellectual. In fact the miner of those days was treated little better than a serf. If he "went on strike"—as he sometimes did—he was treated mercilessly by the authorities. This was the case in the great strike of 1810, when Durham gaol being full, three hundred pitmen were imprisoned in the stables and stable-yard of the Bishop of Durham, at Auckland Castle. In the sailors' strike at Sunderland in 1825, five men were shot by the soldiers and six others wounded. Many of the parish clergy did not do much to mend the manners and morals of their neighbourhoods. In too many cases they sank far towards the level of those whom they ought to have helped to raise. It was in the neighbouring district of Cleveland, in Yorkshire, where the parson was discovered by two of his parishioners lying in the ditch in a state of inebriety. "Let him lig (lie). He'll

not be wanted till Sunday," said one to the other contemptuously.

When the Historian of the first Railway comes to contrast *then* and *now*—which he does to the signal advantage of the present—he pays a tribute to the work of Primitive Methodism in that district—all the more valuable because it is a spontaneous and unbiassed one. "One cause" says he, "of this great change had nothing to do with the Railway. To the advent of the Primitive Methodists in the North Country is due much of the transformation undoubtedly effected in the latter part of the first quarter of the century. The Ranters, as they were then universally called, had to bear a good deal of ridicule and opprobrium, but that has long since been forgotten in the good which they effected. The accounts published at the time concerning the results produced by their ministrations among the semi-savage colliers of the North remind us of the glowing narratives of the most successful missionaries, and make us sigh for the dawn of another great religious awakening which would empty the publics of Bishop Auckland, and convert the rowdies of Spennymoor into local preachers."

When we turn to the *social* condition of England during the first quarter of the century we shall find reason to conclude that the lives of the people sadly wanted brightening. Those were, indeed, "hard times." True, some of the years of this period —notably 1811 to 1814—will ever be glorious in the military annals of the country. Our earliest missionaries would frequently be reminded by what they saw and heard that England was engaged in a terrible

and exhausting struggle. They see the postman, big with importance, ride into the village. He blows his horn and announces the latest victory. Loud huzzaings follow the announcement. Clashing bells celebrate the event. At night-fall the flaring bonfire lights the missionary to his billet. Often does he come in contact with widows and orphans the war has made. As he takes his stand at market-cross or on village-green, broken and disabled soldiers or discharged veterans who fought in the Peninsula or at Waterloo are found amongst his hearers. As we follow our narrative let us take note of these things, though they are in the dim background. The great war brought with it, as its penalties, heavy taxation, and after the general peace a terrible reaction. Thousands of disbanded soldiers were thrown on the labour-market. To add to the misery of the times a succession of bad harvests raised the price of corn to famine prices. Thomas Cooper in his autobiography tells us of the privations his mother and he endured at Gainsborough in the winter of 1813-1814. "At one time wheaten flour rose to six shillings per stone, and we had to live on barley cakes which brought on a burning, gnawing pain at the stomach. For two seasons the corn was spoiled in the fields with wet; and when the winter came, we could scoop out the middle of the soft, distasteful loaf; and to eat it brought on sickness. Meat was so dear that my mother could not buy it; and often our dinner consisted of potatoes only." 1818 has been described as the darkest period in the history of the century. The harvest of 1817 had been bad beyond all precedent. The inflation of the

war time had collapsed. Trade was depressed. Many forms of industry had been thrown out of gear by the introduction of machinery and labour-saving appliances. A great cry of distress rose from the starving people.

As was natural, misery bred discontent. The extensive diffusion of Paine's "Age of Reason" and "Rights of Man" was detrimental to religion, and leavened men's minds with anarchical sentiments. In 1811 the manufacturing districts of Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, and Leicestershire were disturbed by the Luddites. Gangs of suffering, desperate men ranged the country, destroying machinery, and committing excesses of various kinds. In 1812 the disturbances extended into Lancashire, Cheshire, and the West Riding of Yorkshire. In Charlotte Brontë's "Shirley" readers will find the state of things which prevailed in the West Riding graphically described; although they will not fail to note it is a caricature only of Methodism and of Dissent in general which is there displayed. While these things were happening, Primitive Methodism was gathering and assaying its new-born strength to cope with the spirit of disaffection and lawlessness that was abroad; and to cope with it in a very different fashion from the Government which bore with a very heavy hand on the disturbers of the public peace. The traditions and methods of the Luddites were handed on to the "Levellers." These cherished subversive projects and in many cases justified their name. The Government sought to counterwork the designs of the Levellers by an odious system of espionage. Seven men were hanged at Leicester for destroying machinery to the value of £7,500. The

Rev. George Herod tells us that in a village eight miles south-east of Leicester, arms were stored and nightly drillings went on. Work was neglected until many were threatened with starvation. In anticipation of a general rising to take place on June 9th, 1817, and which was to usher in the era of lawlessness, a man took his revenge on one who had wronged him, by maiming his sheep. While the perpetrator of the outrage was awaiting the sentence of death, his brother resolved to waylay and shoot the principal witness against the condemned man. But before he could effect his purpose a "Ranter" missionary entered the village. The would-be assassin, along with a number of his fellow-Levellers, was seized with conviction. In the absence of the missionary they convened a meeting for prayer in his father's house; but there was no one present who could lead the devotions. They could sing but not pray. So bethinking him, he took a book of family devotions out of the closet and himself undertook the duty of prayer-leader; and the singing and praying went on by turns. For many years that man, rescued from the dominion of evil passions, maintained a consistent Christian course; and the barn which had done duty as an armoury for the Levellers was turned into a Preaching-room.

Viewed in relation to the social condition of England, 1819 and 1820 are memorable dates. In the former year occurred the battle of Peterloo; in the latter the Cato Street Conspiracy when Thistlewood and his starving companions were hanged. With the close of the first two decades of the century the old, evil

days seemed to have passed. Revived trade, better harvests, brightened the face of things. The improvement continued until 1825 when a financial crash came and at its heels disaster and wide-spread misery destined, however, to be the gloomy precursors of the reforms of 1832.

Perhaps enough has been said to prove that England in the first quarter of the century stood much in need of earnest evangelism. The gospel with its regenerative, consolatory, and restraining power needed to be brought to men in such a way as would rouse them from their absorption in secular things. And yet the Churches of the land too largely neglected home evangelisation. They were either unequal to the task or unmindful of it. In their fresh enthusiasm for the heathen abroad, they overlooked their own semi-heathen at home. Their earnest gaze was directed to lands beyond the seas, so that the benighted condition of the masses of their own countrymen was temporarily forgotten. Once more; Does not the contrast between *then* and *now* raise an expectation in the mind that some such earnest evangelism as was called for has, in the Providence of God, been supplied? How far, and in what way Primitive Methodism may claim to have supplied that lack, let the reader, who shall do us the favour to read these pages, decide for himself.

CHAPTER II.

The Making and the Makers of Primitive Methodism, 1801-12.

"ON Thursday, February 13th, 1812, we called a meeting and made plans for the next Quarter, and made some other regulations: *in particular we took the name of* PRIMITIVE METHODISTS." It is the account of this meeting which, Hugh Bourne says, "appears regularly to conclude the history of the origin of the Primitive Methodists." If we can show how, and by whom, it was brought about, that a new Denomination—small it may be, but complete in itself—was now numbered amongst the Churches of the land, and stood ready to enlarge itself indefinitely, we shall have dealt with the question at the head of this chapter. To speak of Primitive Methodism before 1812 is to be guilty of a sort of anachronism. It is only by anticipation that such an appellation is allowable in writing of this formative period. In this period Camp Meetings, and one Camp Meeting in particular, make a conspicuous figure. Norton Camp Meeting stands at the centre of the picture and draws the eye of the observer. Prior to August 23rd, 1807, all things seem to lead up to this historic gathering, and, after that date, take their issues from it. Let the convergence and radiation of events, thus indicated, be kept in mind as we proceed with our narration.

To us, a Camp Meeting seems a very simple idea. It takes place according to plan and follows the traditional and prescribed method. But, in reality, it is a more complex idea than it looks. It has been built up variously; and in the Potteries at the beginning of the century Camp Meetings were a new thing—not only as events "under the sun," but, as not having yet been fully thought out.

Daniel Shubotham's idea of a Camp Meeting was rudimentary, and consisted of a day's praying on Mow Cop. Daniel was a vigorous personality amongst the Harriseahead community. Prior to his conversion on Christmas Day, 1800, he was boxer, poacher, and a ringleader in wickedness; but after Hugh Bourne, with much self-diffidence, led him to the Saviour, he busied himself in the cause of righteousness. Along with Matthias Bailey,—another of Hugh Bourne's "old companions," he made effective use of religious conversation with the colliers, and established cottage prayer-meetings. Though long prayers were discouraged at these services, the time was found to be all too short for those who wished to exercise. The leaders of the movement set their faces against long meetings. The proprieties must be observed. Late hours, even for prayer, might make their good to be evil spoken of. Beside—life's daily duties must be done. The bread-winners needed rest, and the inevitable "caller" would make his early rounds. One night, when regrets were expressed that there had not been time for more to pray, Daniel exclaimed—"You shall have a meeting upon Mow some Sunday, and have a whole day's praying, and then you'll be satisfied."

"And this spake he not of himself, but . . . he prophesied." The proposal was novel, yet seemed eminently suitable. Daniel's speech did not fall to the ground, but made its mark. "The people began to take it up;" and months and years after, "they conceived that the first proposal of a day's meeting was providential."

It might have been thought Daniel Shubotham had struck out a quite original idea, had not the Methodist Magazines,—which soon began to be circulated in the vicinity—showed that the idea, with a difference and an enlargement, had long been carried out in America. Meetings which, by reason of their accessories, presented many of the features of a Camp, had originated towards the close of the last century; and the Magazines frequently contained accounts of the exciting scenes which, for days together, were to be witnessed in various states of the Republic. These accounts kept alive, while they filled out, the original idea of a day's praying on Mow. In the midst of their deepest discouragements the eager but thwarted longings of Bourne and his companions found expression in the cry "Lord give us a Camp Meeting."

The impulse which finally led them to *take* a Camp Meeting as well as pray for one, was likewise transatlantic in its origin. It was the presence and writings and personal influence of Lorenzo Dow—unattached Methodist—whom no Conference or Bishop could hold or bind—a veritable comet in the Evangelistic world—who rushed flashing from America to Great Britain and back again thrice over, astonishing and bewildering men

—who had a record of labours and privations almost without parallel; whom many thought more than half a madman and the rest knave, while others beheld in him more than half a prophet and the latest apostle and discerner of spirits, and who hence was at once reviled and praised, shunned and followed, persecuted and kindly entreated;—it was through Lorenzo Dow—surely one of the strangest earthen vessels that ever God condescended to use and honour, that the Camp Meeting movement in England was precipitated. On the eve of his second departure to America (April 1807), Dow paid a flying visit to Harriseahead. Here he spoke largely of the Camp Meetings; observing "that occasionally, something of a pentecostal power attended them; and that for a considerable time, in America, as much good had been done, and as many souls brought to God, at the Camp Meetings, as at all the other meetings put together." On the following morning, Dow preached farewell sermons at Congleton at five and nine o'clock. Hugh Bourne and his brother James were present at the second service, having walked over from Bemersley,—a distance of six miles. As far as we know, no description of Dow as he appeared on that day has come down to us; but we possess a pen and ink sketch of him by Rev. George Herod, taken 1818, when on a subsequent visit to this country. Then, too, Hugh Bourne was present along with Dorothy Ripley, who had crossed the Atlantic no less than a dozen times to preach to the Americans, and especially to the Indians. Mr. Herod remarks that the impression made on his mind by the oddly-clad and eccentric trio could never be erased. Lorenzo Dow was then tall and thin.

His complexion was sallow; his eyes light brown and very penetrating. He wore a low-crowned and broad-brimmed hat, a black spencer over a blue double-breasted coat, and trousers of the same colour. "His hair reached to the bottom of the cuff of his coat-sleeve and his beard covered his breast." Another person was present in the congregation that morning who demands our notice. This was William Clowes. He saw the Bournes buy some pamphlets of the preacher at the conclusion of the service. These were an account of the Origin and Progress of Camp Meetings and the manner of conducting them, written by Dow himself, and a Defence of Camp Meetings by Rev. S. K. Jennings, M.A. Clowes had had a long walk that spring morning and must have been up betimes, for he had walked nine miles from Tunstall for the five o'clock service. To any one who had known Clowes as he was in bye-gone years, his presence in Congleton chapel might have seemed as strange as that of Saul amongst the prophets. By what chain of circumstances had he—the champion dancer, fighter, swearer; the tavern haunter and prince of good fellows—been brought there to be seemingly so much in his element? Why also is Bourne, as an inquirer, buying books about American Camp Meetings instead of selling his own tract chronicling the success of English ones—a thing he will be doing in two month's time? It is now 1807, and yet no Camp Meeting has been held; though since 1801 the holding of one has been the subject of thought, of talk, and of prayer. The answers to these questions will enable us still further to fill up the history of those six intervening years. It was a

time of weary waiting; one of those times of retardment and tarrying which lead men to say regretfully with Paul—"I purposed . . . . but was let hitherto." We do not exaggerate the strength of the desire of Bourne and those that were with him to see Camp Meetings established. The more Bourne's journals are studied, the clearer does it become that their hearts were set upon this. It was a fixed and dominant idea with them; and they were made sad by the disappointment of their hopes.

In the year 1802 Hugh Bourne was induced to interest himself in the building of a chapel at Harriseahead. Daniel Shubotham gave a corner of his garden for the site, and Bourne gave the timber for the structure. Other things he gave beside timber—time and labour and anxiety. He had his own troubles with the erection. A gale of wind blew down the gable, and the roof fell in. Bourne feelingly expresses his hope that "the Lord will have mercy on any one who has to pass through such scenes of trouble." At his instance the Society was taken over by the Methodists, and preaching was appointed for ten and two every Sunday. "This was overdoing it," says Bourne, who grudged that preaching should supersede praying, and was much of the same mind as Daniel Shubotham, that a few whole Sundays would be well spent in praying. The rigid requirements of the plan formed a kind of dam to the strong feeling for a day's praying; and behind that barrier rose a still higher dam, formed of the larger portion of the officialdom of the Circuit—in part difficult to move because of the dead weight of its inertness; in part interposing a more active resistance

to tendencies which it could not but regard as contrary to Methodist order and discipline. The situation is not an unfamiliar one. Once more we see the progress of novel and irregular methods of doing good met by distrust and barred by prescription and routine. Still, let us remember that both the favourers and discountenancers of Camp Meetings had something to say for themselves.

After, and as the result of Dow's visit, dam number one gave way in a somewhat unexpected fashion. It opened like the valves of a folding-door. The plan was examined, and it was found that on May 31st Thomas Cotton, a favourer of Camp Meetings, was appointed at Harriseahead. Thereupon it was resolved that a Camp Meeting should be held on Mow Cop on that day. Quite independently of this arrangement, the reading of Dow's pamphlets had decided Hugh Bourne to have a Camp Meeting at Norton in August, to counteract the evil influence of the wake—the yearly carnival of its district. This too was agreed upon. Here, again, let us notice the American factor in the Camp Meeting movement. As some one has tersely put it—"If there had been no Dow there would have been no Mow."

The morning of the 31st of May broke unpromisingly, so much so, that the Harriseahead people were late on the ground—not expecting a meeting. William Clowes and the Tunstall contingent were there before them, and found a few people singing under the lee of a wall. The weather cleared. "In a short time the clouds dispersed, and the Lord sent fine weather the whole of the day:"—which was surely a thing of good

omen for the future. Captain Anderson, of Kilham, reared a flag as a rallying-point for the people as they made their way up the sides of the mountain. As the company increased, more stands were erected, until the Gospel was being proclaimed at once from four contiguous points. The religious irregulars—the Dowites and Independent Methodists were to the fore. Two favourite ideas of Bourne were this day carried into effect. A couple of "permanent praying companies" kept to their work all day; and there were "various exercises"—the narration of experience—and the telling of anecdotes as well as preaching and praying. Far-travelled men told of what they had seen. Eleazar Hathorn *alias* "Eleazar with the wooden leg," who had left a limb in Africa, spoke of the horrors of war and of the vanities of the heathen. An Irish lawyer drew a moral from the condition of Ireland as contrasted with the liberty and gospel light of England. Captain Anderson gave passages from his life in verse, interspersed with exhortations. Last, but not least, Wm. Clowes narrated his experience—vindicated his action in taking part in the day's proceedings and exhorted the people. Clowes has recorded his mature judgment concerning the influence of Mow Cop Camp Meeting.—"The glory that filled my soul on that day far exceeds my powers of description to explain. Much of the good wrought at this great meeting remains; but the full amount of that good, eternity alone will develop to the myriads of the angelic and sainted inhabitants who will everlastingly laud the Eternal Majesty on account of the day's praying on Mow Hill."

It surely is significant that Clowes, like the other disciple who outran Peter, should have been on the Camp ground before Bourne, and that he should have laboured from six in the morning until eight in the evening. And now it is time to say something of William Clowes and of the experience he told on Mow Hill.

In 1804, J. Clark got a number of poor but pious Methodists of Stockport, to come over to the Michaelmas Lovefeast at Congleton. Hugh Bourne and others of the Harriseahead friends were invited to meet them. The "Revivalists," as they were called, "spoke much of being sanctified wholly." By public services and private conference, Bourne and his associates were led more fully into the "law of faith." At the Harriseahead Class meeting, on the following night, "there was an extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit." A revival broke out which spread through almost every part of Burslem Circuit. It affected Tunstall, making its power first felt there in the class of Mr. James Steele, whom also we shall meet again. Amongst the fruits of this revival were James Nixon, William Morris, and William Clowes, all of whom had their share in the making of Primitive Methodism. Thus Clowes was converted in a revival which was begun and accompanied by the preaching and experience of full salvation. This, too, may not be without its lesson for us. The abeyant period of Camp Meetings was, then, not in vain, since it was a tarrying for the enduement of power, and served to "make ready a people prepared for the Lord," such as were Wm. Clowes, James Nixon, and others. On January 20th, 1805, Clowes was soundly

converted. He soon gave evidence that the change wrought in him was real. He paid off his old score at the tavern; drew up rigid rules for holy living; crowded almost more labour into the Sabbath than it would admit of; knowing the fascinations and perils of the wake he shut himself up and spent the day in fasting, praying, self-examination, and the reading of the Scriptures. Then, with the fire burning within, he sallied out into the streets to rebuke and exhort. What a picture that is which shows him in the darkness of midnight praising God as a "happy inhabitant of the rock," and by his ecstatic cries arresting the purpose of the poor woman who was about to fling herself into the canal! He sedulously attended to mental improvement, was an active member of an association for putting down Sabbath desecration, and formed one of an earnest band of tract-distributors and visitors. He grew and matured fast. His progress was manifest unto all, especially to Hugh Bourne, who, two months after Clowes' conversion, writes in his diary:—"He is got very solid. . . . He grows up into God and our Lord Jesus Christ at a very great rate"; and again, a little later, he says of him—"Such a man I scarcely ever met with. O God that thou wouldst make me like him; I desire it from my heart." But by no means that are apparent to us could Bourne have become *just* like Clowes. The two men were essentially different. To Clowes nature had been very liberal to begin with. He had a compact, active frame, with abounding vitality. His countenance was clear and open; his manners frank and winning. He had a fine, expressive

eye, which, when it had become an organ of the spiritual life, has been known to transfix and cow the sinner. His resonant voice sometimes acquired a strange tremor which searched the deeps of men's souls. He was great in social qualities. Never, even as the graceless potter, would he have chosen to sit soaking alone at the ale-bench. As a sinner he drew and was drawn to company; and as a saint he was at home with the throng, which, in his best days, he could move by his mighty prayers and appeals. In his ardent, sympathetic nature, there was much of what men are pleased to call personal magnetism. He often gained his point, as it would seem, not so much by measuring strength against strength, as by the unconscious efflux of his own larger nature, as though, in a strictly human fashion, "virtue had gone out of him," and men yielded, they hardly knew why. He was not free from his own special weaknesses and infirmities, but certainly he was as free from frailties and oddities as it is usually given to men to be.

To Hugh Bourne nature had dealt with a more niggard hand—so far at least as the *personel* of the man was concerned. As with some soils, the riches she bestowed were hidden from view; and oddities and an uncouth exterior in the human subject, corresponded to the brown heath and boulder-strewn surface that are but the rough crust of the rich beds beneath. That Bourne *had* his oddities no one will deny. Early on, Clowes thought him "a singular man"; for on his visits to Clowes' house, where they sometimes talked of the deep things of God until one o'clock in the morning,

he would not accept of any refreshment or lodgings for the night, but would set off to Bemersley, three miles off, by a road which had no good reputation. In speech he was not remarkably copious or fluent. When in 1801 he preached his first sermon at the end of Joseph Pointon's house on Mow—the people lining the rocky eminence as though they were in an amphitheatre—"he preached with his hand over his face the whole time, and he was soon at a loss." The hand over the face is characteristic. To the very end he oft withdrew behind that same fleshly screen, or calmly surveyed the world through the bars of his fingers. But in talking thus *we* are pottering about the surface instead of boring into the interior. Any one who can lightly esteem Hugh Bourne's mental calibre needs the exhortation—"Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." Unknowing in the niceties of scholarship, he yet had much of the solid substance of learning. He was a diligent reader, nor was his reading confined to a very narrow range, considering the time in which he lived. "Gladly would he learn, and gladly teach." In 1802, when he ceased regularly to follow his calling, he taught a school for twelve months in the (Harriseahead) chapel on the week days, and a Sunday school on the Sabbath. At the same time he was "grinding" hard at Greek and Hebrew. As we shall see, he wrote much, and was a firm believer in the power of the press. He was master of a terse, rugged, somewhat quaint and thoroughly understandable style. Persistent, dogged, inflexible; industrious; methodical; able to grasp details; quick to detect, and stern to expose and punish breach of rule or wrong;

and yet sensitive withal, and capable of much devotion and quiet enthusiasm. Such was Hugh Bourne, and such were some of the qualities which fitted him to be the director, legislator, and watchful guardian of that cause which was all in all to him. The fact is, when we turn from Clowes to Bourne we have to do with a different set of qualities. The two men may almost be said to have worked with different apparatuses. This being so, it is utterly futile to ask which was the greater or the better man; and it is almost as great a waste of time to measure out to each his respective share in the making of Primitive Methodism. One was formed by nature and grace to be the founder, the other to be the apostle of a great religious movement.

Historically, the second and third Camp Meetings may be said to have done little more than "mark time." The second, held also on Mow-hill, on July 19th, lasted three days, and with its wooden tabernacle and tents, and elaborate preparations for the provision of the worshippers, closely followed the American models. But Camp Meetings of the American type did not take root in England. The work of out-door evangelization was to be carried on by means of less expensive and more extemporized methods. Mow-hill second Camp Meeting was also noteworthy for the collapse of the threatened opposition of a deistic manufacturer—on whom all eyes were turned with misgiving or with hope, as the case might be. He talked largely of the Conventicle Act, and rode blustering on to the ground, but retired with a very undeistic "God bless you!' The third Camp Meeting, on Brown Edge, on August 16th, was not on a large scale, and need not be dwelt

upon; but that held at Norton-in-the-Moors, on August 23rd, 1807, draws and merits close attention. We have no desire to belittle Mow-hill Camp Meeting. We would not if we could; and the very attempt would be sacrilegious. Men instinctively and persistently turn to Mow's "bleak and frowning summit." It is the Mount Carmel of the Primitive Methodist.

"The little cloud increaseth still
That first arose upon Mow-hill."

So far as tradition and poetry and sentiment are concerned Mow is safe enough. But to the historian who strives to see the interdependence of events, Norton overtops Mow, for *there* had to be decided the question whether Camp Meetings, modified by circumstances and the idiosyncracies of men, should become naturalized in this country.

Between the first and fourth Camp Meetings the Methodist Conference was held. Before leaving for the Conference the preachers of the Burslem and Macclesfield Circuits issued handbills disclaiming all connection with Camp Meetings. The Conference endorsed their action in passing the following minute:

Q. "What is the judgment of the Conference concerning what are called Camp Meetings?"

A. "It is our judgment, that even supposing such meetings to be allowable in America, they are highly improper in England, and likely to be productive of considerable mischief; and we disclaim all connection with them."

Armed with this minute, the superintendent, on his return, required the leaders and local preachers to stand aloof from the movement. Even Daniel Shubotham

yielded; and truth compels us to record that William Clowes—who was present at the second, but "laboured but little" at it—did not attend another for a period of thirteen months. Hugh Bourne momentarily wavered; but, in a severe mental conflict at Joseph Pointon's house, it was revealed unto him that Camp Meetings "should not die but live," . . . . and from that moment Hugh Bourne believed himself called of God to stand by Camp Meetings, and if he deserted the cause it would be at the peril of his soul." True, the dam—fortified by this Conferential edict—was plainly impassable. What then? Had he not read in an acknowledged authority that even General Councils "may err, and sometimes have erred?" He would take his own course, which also was the course marked out for him by God. Thus thought Bourne within himself, and resolved. Said we not truly that he was "dogged?" Doggedness had indeed a good deal to do with the making of Primitive Methodism. There were others who were made of the same unyielding stuff. After a short period of hesitancy James Bourne cast in his lot with his brother, and James Nixon, Thomas Cotton, and others remained firm. The preparations for the Camp Meeting went on, and it was duly held, lasting three days. The lack of leading labourers was at first the cause of anxiety to its conductors; but the unexpected and apparently providential arrival from Dublin of Dr. Paul Johnson—the friend and associate of Lorenzo Dow—wonderfully encouraged them and strengthened their hands. Henceforth they resolved to trust less in an arm of flesh, and not to be too anxious to see the end from the beginning. Will no

one give us a "Camp Meeting Idylls?" There is room for such a book. Right down through our connexional history they have been held. Some of them have become historical, and tradition yet talks of them in the localities where they were held. Such were those which took place on the Wrekin—the famous mountain of Shropshire, in 1808; Nottingham Forest in 1816; Scarth Nick in 1820; Mexborough Common in 1821; Oakengates, and one near Oldham, in 1822; and Winchester Downs in 1834. Some of these moved half a county. Some of them gave new and better associations to spots whose fame was derived from the footpad, the gibbet, or the occasional gathering of lawless or dissipated crowds. The lonely heath or secluded mountain became animate with living throngs, and vocal with stirring hymns. At some of these Camp Meetings from ten to twenty thousand persons are said to have been present. Making all deductions for the proverbial difficulty of estimating numbers, and therefore for possible exaggeration, it remains true that "listening thousands gathered round," and their scattering would carry snatches of song and a new fireside topic into many a home. The echoes of Camp Meetings may be caught in our literature. William Howitt in his walks through rural England hears—mellowed by distance—the strains of a plaintive hymn. If we are right it was that one which has for its refrain, "All is well! All is well! The prototype of Dinah Morris may have been a Methodist, but it is about certain that the Camp Meeting scene in Adam Bede was a reminiscence of early Primitive Methodism. Once more before leaving Camp Meetings, Norton Camp

Meeting, which was successful in counteracting the evil influence of the wake, may remind us of the principle which was largely acted upon by the makers and extenders of Primitive Methodism in all their open-air work. That principle was to meet vice and the devil on their own ground. As at the Camp Meetings held on the Wrekin, and at Preston on Maudlin Sunday (before referred to), they very often pitched their camp in the very midst of Vanity Fair. What was done on a large scale continued to be done on a small scale by the missionaries as they preached and travelled. It is one thing to denounce vice and sinful pleasure in a comfortable chapel; it is quite another to wrestle with them in the market-place, as the early missionaries frequently did. Joseph Spoor tires out the famous Billy Purvis and his band in Morpeth market-place. He remains master of the field, while the discomfited showman retires with the parting salute—roared out through his speaking-trumpet—"Aw warn (I warrant) thou's think thysel a clever fellow noo." While William Clowes is leading a Camp Meeting at Westminster, the proceedings are disturbed by the appearance of three strange figures with wings and horns and tails, whom a publican has dressed up and sent forth to stop the Camp Meeting. The masqueraders yell and rush about. The women scream, and for a time the meeting is thrown into confusion. But the preachers stand their ground, and after a time the publican's creatures slink away. There may be something grotesque about these incidents; but they have occurred, and hundreds like them. And what is the history of Primitive Methodism? Surely it is not

a mere catalogue of names and dates, though arranged with never so much relation to truth and chronological order; but it is the honest attempt to convey a life-like impression of the method and surroundings—the toils and struggles and victories of our founders and fathers.

The effects of Norton Camp Meeting are more easily traceable and can sooner be described than the causes which led to it. The first result to be noted was the expulsion of Hugh Bourne from the Methodist Society on June 27th, 1808. In his absence, with no notice of any charge impending, and even without being warned to attend the meeting, he was "put out" of the Old Connexion. Hugh Bourne had not, it is true, been either a recognised preacher or leader; but he was a trustee, and as such might have claimed, on the ground of courtesy and equity, to have had the opportunity of answering for himself. The blow was not unexpected. Before it fell he had reckoned with it. Hugh Bourne paid up his arrears of class money, and went on his way peaceably. He did not pose as a martyr; much less did he seek to foment bad feeling or create division. We leave him for a time working in his accustomed way, wherever there was an opening.

There was another man smarting at this time from the action of official meetings. This was James Crawfoot, of Delamere Forest, Cheshire, who at the close of 1807 had been arraigned for preaching for the Quaker Methodists at Warrington. Crawfoot was the centre and leader of the Magic or Forest Methodists, as they were called—names denoting not so much a distinct community as peculiar views and tendencies. They

talked much of "exercising faith in silence," and were reported to have visions and trances. The fame of them had spread into Staffordshire. Bourne, accompanied by Clowes, paid a visit to the Forest and attended one of the monthly meetings in Crawfoot's house. This was that "religious excursion" from which Bourne was returning when it was so painfully impressed upon him that he was to be put out of the Methodist Society. As to Crawfoot, he was a rustic mystic, and had some of the faults and excellencies of Mysticism. From his youth he had been taught and moved by dreams; and the natural tendency of his mind was perhaps strengthened by the influence of Lorenzo Dow, Dr. Johnson, and Peter Phillips, of Warrington, the founder of the Independent Methodists. Crawfoot is said to have affected the Quaker garb, and thus to have set the fashion for early Primitives. Yet he held fast to vital truths; and being gifted with considerable imagination, much spiritual insight, and a ready utterance, he was a successful preacher. In November, 1809, Hugh Bourne agreed to pay Crawfoot ten shillings a week until Lady-day, in order that he might devote himself fully to the work of evangelization. His instructions were to labour on the Cheshire and Staffordshire sides on alternate fortnights, and to advise his converts to join the denominations to which they were most inclined. In 1813 he ceased to be a travelling preacher; but though his labours filled but a short period, he was one of the makers of Primitive Methodism, if for no other reason than this—the influence he exerted upon both Bourne and Clowes. They travelled much together, and entries in Bourne's

Diaries, such as this, are common and significant—"I stayed with James, being drawn by the Spirit to stay, and go with him to-morrow. In the afternoon he opened some things on the power of faith, showing how the Scriptures run. I was astonished. I was convinced of unbelief; I never before saw into the power that is committed into our hands through the blood of Christ. Well, if any man is willing he may go up into the power and do much for the Lord."

The refusal (May, 1810) of the authorities to take over the Standley Society of ten members raised out of the world by the Bournes and their helpers, gave a new aspect to the Camp Meeting movement. The leaders of this movement were face to face with a new responsibility. It was now seen that it was not only necessary to get men converted, but to take care of them after they had been converted. Hence Standley Society had in it the "promise and potency" of a new denomination. It was the primal life-cell of a new organization, which so multiplied itself that the written plan for September, 1810, shows us 136 members in communion with the Camp Meeting Methodists.

And now at last William Clowes is to feel the effects of the Conference edict. Ever since October 9th, 1808, when he preached from his first text at the Ramsor Camp Meeting, he has been closely associated with Hugh Bourne in mission work; although, being a member and leader of two classes in the Old Connexion, his name has not stood on any written plan of the Camp Meeting Methodists. For two years he has been borne with; but in June, 1810, his name is taken off the plan on which it has stood since November, 1809.

This act, instead of silencing Clowes, serves rather to unloose his tongue, and he becomes increasingly popular. Then, in September, his ticket is witheld on the express ground of his participation in Camp Meetings. His Tunstall class beseech him still to be their leader. Yielding to their importunity he meets them at his own house. Preaching is now regularly conducted, instead of occasionally as heretofore, in the house of Mr. Smith, an old and tried friend of Methodism in Tunstall. The members of Clowes' class soon come to look upon it as their chapel. Messrs. Nixon, Woodnorth, Morris, and Barber secede from the Methodist body and join Clowes and his friends. In December, 1810, the first two agree to pay Clowes ten shillings a week out of their own pockets in order that he may devote himself entirely to Missionary labours. For seven months he is engaged in breaking up fresh ground, varied by visits to what may be called Bourne and Crawfoot's districts of evangelization. Next Mr. James Steele is unchurched for having attended the first Love-feast, held in Mr. Smith's kitchen on April 12th, 1811, although in point of fact he was not present at that particular meeting. For the most part the members of his two classes and the teachers and scholars of the Sabbath school he superintended cleave to him; and after some little deliberation this new group of secessionists, with the ejected Mr. Steele as its nucleus, coalesces with the Clowesites, as the people called them. The issuing of Society Tickets may be regarded as signalizing the union between the Clowesites and the Camp Meeting Methodists, and to have been the first visible symbol

of corporate life. "Prior to that time," says Bourne, "the Connexion, being begun in the order of Divine Providence, was held together by a zeal for the Lord of Hosts." The tickets bore the date May 30th, 1811, with the appropriate text—"But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest; for as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against." The same Midsummer, preparations are made for building the first Connexional Chapel at Tunstall; the maintenance of the preachers is intrusted to the two hundred members who formed the infant community, and Mr. James Steele is appointed the first Circuit Steward. In February, 1812, the first printed Plan is authorized, and the name Primitive Methodist is taken.

Briefly to recapitulate. Since Norton Camp Meeting was held, what do we see but the evolution of a new religious community? At first we have a mere evangelistic agency or Camp Meeting movement disowned by Conference Methodism, yet clinging to its skirts as if loath to part. Next we have the fusion of two distinct branches of this movement in the co-operation of Bourne and Crawfoot; for be it remembered Rissley Society was composed of the converts of Lorenzo Dow, and Rissley gave 20 to the 136 members reckoned in September, 1811. Then when Standley Society is declined, the "Camp Meeting Movement" becomes the "Camp Meeting Methodists." Finally, by the adhesion of the Clowesites, another important centre of revivalistic agency—also due to the Conference Pronouncement—is added. The Class Ticket supplies the sign and seal of unity, and the Camp Meeting Methodists become the Primitive

Methodists. What our founders thought of when they adopted the name Primitive Methodist may be gathered from an incident related by Mr. Herod in his "Sketches." When James Crawfoot was brought up for preaching for the Quaker Methodists, he quoted the closing words of John Wesley's farewell address to the preachers of Chester Circuit, in the year 1790." "Fellow labourers," said Wesley, "wherever there is an open door enter in and preach the Gospel; if it be to two or three, under a hedge or a tree; preach the Gospel—go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind; and the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room." He then lifted up his hands, and with tears flowing down his cheeks, repeated, "And yet there is room, and yet there is room." The quotation given, Crawfoot said, "Mr. Chairman, if you have deviated from the old usages, I have not; I still remain a *Primitive Methodist!*" The words, like those of Daniel Shubotham, were prophetic. Now, James Crawfoot, and the two hundred with him, are Primitive Methodists in a sense he could not have foreseen in 1807. We are told that Hugh Bourne was overcome with drowsiness when the name was adopted. Had he been fully awake we do not know that he would have taken serious objection to it, dearly though he loved Camp Meetings. Primitive Methodist means more than Camp Meeting Methodist; for it designates one who will not neglect the "two or three under a hedge," in seeking to address the multitude.

CHAPTER III.

Line of Geographical Advance.

THE connection between Geography and History is confessedly close. In any history of the districts of the Midlands known as the Potteries or the Black Country, the physical geography of those districts would have to be largely taken into account. It was no accident, we may be sure, that Primitive Methodism took its rise and wrought its first achievements in this particular part of Central England. The aims and methods of the new evangelistic movement must have met the wants and have been suited to the sturdy and strenuous character of the people. However, be this as it may, it is at least an interesting coincidence, that in its early progress Primitive Methodism followed the course of the River Trent. Until 1819 it did its main work within the Trent basin—in the counties drained by that river and its affluents—that is to say, in the counties of Stafford, Derby, Leicester, Rutland, Nottingham, and parts of Lincolnshire. As starting-points for Primitive Methodism, Tunstall, Norton-on-the-Moors, and Mow Cop were exceedingly appropriate. The two former are close to the head-waters of the Trent, and a double significance belongs to Mow Cop. This hill, 1,091 feet

above the sea level, is a height of the Penine range which forms one of the watersheds of the country. Down one of the furrowed sides of this range flows water which will ultimately mingle with the confluent waters of the Ouse in the distant Humber; and down the other side of the water-parting trickle tiny streams which will find their way into the Mersey or more remote Severn. Now, Mow Cop Camp Meeting, we are told, was held on the Cheshire side of the mountain, just over the boundary line separating the two counties; and on the first printed Plan stand the names of several places in Cheshire, and one or two in Lancashire, although the bulk of the names are those of places in Stafford and Derby; so that in the locality where it had its origin, as well as in the circumstances of that origin, Primitive Methodism gave the promise of ultimate extension into the basins of the Mersey and the Severn. But for this first period of advance we must track the course of the Trent. Until 1816 the only Circuit in the Connexion was Tunstall. The year 1813 was marked by the retirement of James Crawfoot and the adhesion of John Benton to the Connexion. Ever since 1810 he had been labouring as an evangelist unattached. In that year he had been engaged with Hugh Bourne on a temporary mission in London, and for some time before October, 1813, in association with Eleazar Hathorn, *alias*, "Eleazar with the wooden leg," had been carrying on irregular mission work, especially in those parts of Staffordshire bordering on Derbyshire. Intellectually a man of slender abilities, he was destined to do yeoman's service for the new cause in the Midland counties, until laid aside by the loss of his voice

in 1818. A Tract-mission, established in the neighbourhood of Hulland, in Derbyshire, was the means of raising up useful labourers, notably John Harrison, who, until his lamented death in 1821, served the Connexion in its four Circuits successively. About the same time John Ride, and Sarah Kirkland—the first female travelling preacher—received their first class-tickets from the hands of William Clowes at Mercaston, also in Derbyshire. Progress in Tunstall Circuit was not without its checks. The mistaken cry, "Let us consolidate, and for the present take up no more ground," gave a pause to extension. Then Camp Meetings began to decline in power, as the result of a departure from the old methods. One stand, at which there was much preaching of the longest kind and little praying, became the order of the day. But these mistakes and abuses were sought to be corrected. The more earnest spirits went on their way, and Camp Meetings were restored after the old model. The result was gratifying, and justified the intervention. Presently Belper was reached, where the lively singing of the Primitives gained them the nickname of "Ranters." Derby now, in 1816, became the head of an entirely new Circuit. Sarah Kirkland, accompanied by her zealous friend, Robert Winfield, preached at Nottingham for the first time on the Christmas Day of 1815, and soon a room was opened for preaching in the Broad Marsh. In this town the cause prospered greatly, and the adhesion of a number of persons, of sound judgment and good character, gave stability to the infant Church. Nottingham now superseded Derby as the head of the second Circuit. To relieve Nottingham from financial

pressure and embarrassment, Loughborough was made into a separate Circuit. This took place in September, 1818; but by this time, we have to remember, a considerable part of the Trent basin had been traversed by our missionaries. In the mining district of South Staffordshire the work went on. Leicester and its neighbourhood were successfully visited. It was from Leicester that the Rev. Daniel Isaac elegantly wrote—"The Ranters have bawled themselves out of breath in this neighbourhood," etc. It was at Leicester, too, that the Rev. Robert Hall defended the missionaries against misrepresentation, listened respectfully to their fervent addresses, and lent them his chapel for a funeral service, which he attended with interest. At various places, as we shall see, the missionaries encountered persecution—sometimes ingenious, and always cruel; but it was met with firmness and tact, and in spite of it, in most cases, permanent societies were formed. Oakham, the county town of Rutland, and Grantham in Lincolnshire, where John Wedgewood was imprisoned, must be regarded as exceptions. Says Mr. Herod in his "Sketches"—"We consider that the revival that took place in the counties of Nottingham and Leicester, in the years 1817 and 1818, was one of the most remarkable that ever was experienced in the Primitive Methodist Connexion. . . . . In about one year and nine months, not less than seventy-five towns and villages were missioned, and had regular worship established at them on Lord's days; and not less than seventy-five local preachers and exhorters were raised up." And again—"Many young men were raised up who became local preachers, and several of them lead-

ing missionaries, as Messrs. Garner, Bonser, Moss, Charlton, Oscroft, and Herod." During this period of extension Mr. Clowes was chiefly engaged in the Tunstall Circuit; but by his visit to Nottinghamshire in 1817, and to Leicestershire and other counties in the subsequent year, he gave a great impetus to the revival, and left an abiding impression on many minds. Still the work rolled on, following the course of the Trent. In December, 1818, Messrs. Braithwaite and Saxton opened their commission in Gainsborough by singing through the Market-place. Thomas Cooper tells us that as a lad he heard them, and became one of the first converts. Many villages on both sides of the Trent—afterwards to become strongholds of Primitive Methodism—were missioned. By the beginning of 1819 Hull was entered by a duly authorized missionary. It does not lie within the scope of the present work to give a detailed account of the introduction of Primitive Methodism into Hull. Suffice it to say it did not enter unbidden, but in response to a request from a few earnest souls—particularly of a small group of praying and preaching women—who sympathized with aggressive evangelization. Tidings of what was going on at Nottingham had reached them and awakened lively interest; and some had even gone there to see for themselves what the new sect was like. The application for a missionary came to the Nottingham December Quarterly Meeting, and Robert Winfield was specially asked for; but as Hugh Bourne had brought sundry charges against him at this meeting, his mind was pained, and instead of accepting the appointment he withdrew from the Connexion to

found the community of the "Revivalists." His formal declinature did not reach Mr. Thomas King until Friday evening. A messenger was without loss of time despatched to Tunstall Quarterly Meeting, which was to meet on the Monday following, and William Clowes was secured for Hull. "I arrived," says Clowes, "in the town of Hull on Friday, the 15th January, 1819, and made my way to the residence of Mr. Woolhouse. As soon as I entered the house, Mrs. Woolhouse and John Oxtoby, commonly called Praying Johnny, fell down upon their knees and returned thanks to God for my safe arrival. This act of devotion was very encouraging to me, and became a prelude to greater things. On the very day of my entering into Hull I preached in the evening in an old factory in North Street. Vast numbers of people attended, many influenced by curiosity, others with an intention to create disturbance, having heard of the arrival of the "Ranter preacher"; however, God was present in my first effort to make known the riches of his mercy, and the wicked were restrained, so the meeting terminated in peace and quiet. On the day following, I took a walk down to the pottery by the Humber side, where I had worked upwards of fifteen years before, when I was in the old olive tree, which is wild by nature; but I found the working of the pottery had been discontinued; I, however, entered the place, and proceeded to the room in which I formerly laboured, and kneeled down and praised God for the great change he had wrought in me. I then returned, and took a walk up and down the streets and lanes in which I had formerly wrought folly and wickedness. It

brought to my recollection the time and place when captured by the press-gang, and other circumstances of dissipation and riot. O what gratitude filled my soul when indulging in the contrast!—instead of reckless and brutal conduct, throwing the reins upon my passions, neither fearing God nor man, I am now a sinner saved by grace, and a missionary of the cross." The entry of William Clowes into Hull marks the close of the first period in the advance of Primitive Methodism. Just as in the wondrous hydraulics of nature, the water gathered on the slopes of Mow may now, after many a devious wandering, be passing the South-end Pier of Hull on its way to the sea; so that cause which had its rise in those same distant Potteries has at last — in the person of its accredited agent and in the marvellous providence of God—reached the same point.

But the work still rolls on. For it there can be neither stop nor stay. Every point gained is but a point of fresh departure. In March, 1819, John Harrison and his devoted wife, whom we knew as Sarah Kirkland, are given as fellow-labourers to Clowes. In June Hull is formed into a Circuit. On September 10th, Mill Street Chapel—the first Primitive Methodist chapel north of the Humber—is opened.

We almost despair of giving our readers anything like a clear idea of the geographical extension of the denomination from this year 1819. There was no formal allotment of territory to the tribes. Each and all were trying to conquer as much of the good land for themselves as they could. It is no deliberate, combined effort to execute a carefully-considered plan

of operations that we have to do with ; so that if we *can* detect any order of progression as we survey what was being done from 1819 and onwards, such order must be accidental, or at any rate, the result of occult laws lying beyond our ken.

We have, for some time to come, to do really with three main centres of aggressive life—Tunstall, Nottingham, and Hull ; for the arrangement of the Connexion into eight districts, made in the year 1822, which constituted such places as Belper, Scotter, and Hutton Rudby the heads of districts, was a premature and unnatural arrangement, and only continued until the Conference of 1824, when we find Tunstall, Nottingham, Hull, and Sunderland given as the heads of districts. On the basis thus laid down, the development of the Connexion has ever since proceeded. To Hull fell the country north of the Humber as well as that north of a slanting and somewhat ill-defined line drawn from the head of the Aire so as to include Preston ; also parts of North Lincolnshire. Tunstall and Nottingham not only divided the Trent basin between them, but had each to operate northward. The former soon entered the valleys of the Dee and Mersey and reached Chester and Manchester ; the latter advanced to Sheffield, Barnsley, and Wakefield, and had extensions in those parts of Lincolnshire afterwards to be known as Grimsby, Louth, and Alford circuits, so that both Tunstall and Nottingham soon came in touch with the missionaries of Hull circuit. The marches of a land are proverbially shifting and difficult of delimitation. So it is with the marches of these three districts. Out of this debatable land were afterwards

to be carved the districts of Manchester and Leeds—the former in 1827 ; the latter in 1845.

Tunstall and Nottingham districts had each, in addition, its special territory, and therefore each its special mission. The former, following the course of some of its own minor streams, was to descend into the basin of the river Severn, and to follow that river to its debouchure in the Bristol Channel. It was then to go on through Somerset and Dorset until it reached the sea ; there joining hands with the Cornwall and Devon stations—the former of which had owed so much to the fostering care of the Hull circuit and the labours of Clowes. This we may say was accomplished by the year 1828. Then, facing to the east, it was to work along the Southern counties, and still more, along the Thames basin through Berks and Oxford, Bucks and Surrey, until its mission stations were in 1843 or soon after transferred to the General Missionary Committee. A similar work awaited Nottingham and its offshoot—Norwich district, formed in 1825. As yet speaking of these as one, it was to penetrate into the basin of the Great Ouse, and by way of the Eastern Counties meet Tunstall in its advance ; thus with the help of the circuit Missions in Northampton, Kent, and elsewhere, rounding off to completeness the work of evangelization. This was what it was attempting to do when the General Missionary Committee was formed in 1843, and on that Committee has devolved the task of carrying on, in these later years, the missions on the South coast of England.

CHAPTER IV.

Method of Extension.

WHAT was the method by which this geographical extension was effected? So far as the means of extension were concerned it was done with the minimum of cost and with the maximum of zeal and self-denial. But leaving, for a time, the illustration of this, the extension resulted from the employment of a threefold method. We can perhaps find the analogies of these methods in organic chemistry. In the propagation of organic life there is multiplication by budding, as in the yeast cell. Each cell gives out one or two little germinations from its side, which grow longer by degrees, and receive into them part of the contents of the parent cell. Then these split off, not however before giving rise themselves to buds, and these in turn to others, thus forming branching chains of linked cells. Then, too, we are familiar with multiplication by offshoots or by dissemination—as when the seed of the thistle is wafted on downy wings to some favouring spot, or a shoot springs forth in an unexpected quarter from the parent root. Lastly, we have multiplication by the spontaneous division of one body to form two, as with the Infusoria.

It is mainly in the later history of Primitive Methodism that we see the 'multiplication by division' process going on. Such subdivision of interests does not necessarily involve extension—though it may do so. In so far as it does mark progress, it bespeaks consolidation, and gives the opportunity for greater concentration of effort. But in the earlier history of the Connexion we see the other two methods very largely carried out; and it is these methods which explain the fact already stated, that in 1824 Sunderland district was formed from Hull. Gladly would we linger on the details of the spread of Primitive Methodism in Hull, if that were possible. Without at all detracting from the honour due to other periods, we may yet regard the period from 1819 to 1824 as being the palmy days of Hull's evangelistic efforts. Most true was it then of the Word :—

> "More and more it spreads and grows,
> Ever mighty to prevail."

From 1819, to the holding of the first Conference in Hull in 1820, Clowes and his coadjutors were missioning the country drained by the Ouse and its affluents—the Derwent, Aire, Wharfe, Nidd, Swale and Ure. We see Clowes in York preaching in the market place with a troop of horse around him. At Ripon, through some influence or other, he is allowed the use of a chapel, and his preaching must have been with effect, for as the congregation is retiring, a man cries out, "If these be Ranters, then I am a Ranter." At Arkindale defamatory reports are spread that he has left a wife and six children chargeable to the parish, and that he has been used to carry a pack of 'soft goods' round the

country. At fashionable Harrogate the uncircumcised fasten the door of the house where he is preaching, and he has to get out at the back part of the dwelling. At Leeds he preaches on the Sabbath in Sampson's warehouse, used during the week by a dancing master. Sampson, full of subtlety and opposition, raises the cry from the bottom of the stairs that the warehouse is giving way, and there is a panic, which Clowes allays by singing, "Come, oh come, thou vilest sinner." At night Sampson padlocks the door, and they have to take refuge in 'Sally Taylor's cellar.' At Dewsbury, through the efforts of the missionaries, Devil Street is turned into Reform Street. The work takes a wider sweep, embracing Scarborough and other towns in the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire. Hutton Rudby and the parts adjacent are missioned. Then Darlington and the Tees-side are reached, and by a double convergence of agency, the Wear and the 'coaly Tyne.' Thomas Batty becomes the apostle of Weardale and of Alston Moor. Simultaneously with this northern extension, the district of Craven in the West Riding, Preston on the Ribble, Kendal in Westmoreland, the northern shores of Morecambe Bay, and 'merry Carlisle' are reached. How much ground had been broken up in the short space of three years is shown by the following entry in Clowes' Journal recorded in the Magazine :— "Tuesday, December 3rd, 1822. I set out for Hull, 180 miles, to attend the Quarterly Meeting. The ground is all broken up between Hull and Carlisle. Where it will go to next I cannot tell. But through the mercy of God, I can preach my way from Newcastle to Hull, night by night, without break at

all; and this I can do on ground I have missioned through, and broken up myself. During this quarter, the ground has been broken up from Newcastle to Carlisle. Our circuit extends from Carlisle in Cumberland, to Spurn Point in Holderness, an extent of more than two hundred miles. What is the breadth of the circuit I cannot tell; it branches off various ways. From Carlisle the work seems to be opening two ways; one to Whitehaven and the other to Gretna Green, in Scotland." During this period of extensive missionary operations, men were reached and got hold of, who were afterwards to do the Connexion valuable service—men such as John Flesher, William Harland, Henry Hebbron, Thomas Dawson, John Reynard, J. G. Black, Richard Raine, whose clear voice was destined in the after days to be heard leading the songs of praise at many a famous Camp Meeting—these and many more—of whom the 'time would fail to tell,' now began their life-long allegiance to the Connexion. But though Hull circuit might be two hundred miles long and of uncertain width, we must not think of it as unwieldy. That evil was provided against by its system of branches, which it carried to great perfection. The Home branch, as it was called, exercised rights of jurisdiction and government over the most distant branch, while for local purposes that branch had all the rights of initiative and independence that were needful. This system ensured the certainty of competent advisers being available for every emergency—of financial help when required—and of the constant supply and frequent interchange of suitable preachers. Then when the branch had proved

itself capable of self-government, it was let go with a blessing. Thus Clowes tells us that in March, 1826, "it was ascertained that from the fruitful mother, Hull, twenty-one circuits had been made, with 8,455 members; and that with the venerable parent there remained 3,541; consequently, from January 12, 1819, the day when I began the Hull mission, a period of seven years and two months, the Hull circuit alone had raised up in the Primitive Methodist Connexion 11,996 souls! Hosannah! Hosannah!"

At the Conference of 1833 Brinkworth district was formed. The fifteen stations composing the new district were situated in ten different counties—one of them, Haverfordwest, being in the Welsh county of Pembroke. Notwithstanding the formation of this new district, there yet remained to Tunstall, sixteen circuits located in eight counties. It was not by the "budding" process alone that so much ground had been covered. This far and rapid extension was largely owing to circuit enterprise in establishing distant missions. When a circuit was hemmed in by preoccupied territory; when there was an available surplus at its quarter-day, however small, or, on the other hand, when the balance was on the wrong side; or when the circuit did not seem to afford work enough for the preachers labouring on it; then the circuit would set about beginning a new mission on virgin soil. Thus in 1823, Tunstall, assisted by Scotter circuit, opened a mission in Gloucester and Somerset, which went by the name of the Western Mission. The greatest amount of success was obtained in the woollen-manufacturing district of these counties; and the results

of the labours of the mission appear on the stations for 1833 in the Frome, Stroud, Bath, Salisbury, Moreton and Motcombe (in Dorset) circuits. In 1824, Oakengates had begun a mission at Blaenavon in South Wales. Blaenavon, in its turn, missioned Cwm, situated under the famous Black Mountain, in Herefordshire. Here laboured the devoted Thomas Proctor, whom Petty calls "The Apostle of Herefordshire." Here too, the mother of the Rev. Henry Phillips, and others, became true and influential friends of the cause. Oakengates had begun a mission in Pembroke—the most western county of Wales. This, not proving successful, was, in 1825, transferred to the General Missionary Committee*. The next year, John Petty, then a stripling, was appointed to this mission and laboured with characteristic zeal and prudence. The scene of his labours figures on the Stations for 1833 as the Haverfordwest circuit of Brinkworth district. On the same stations and in connection with the same district, we find Witney, in Oxfordshire. This mission was an off-shoot from Leicester circuit, which, in 1824, set apart two missionaries to mission—somewhere. They were to follow the directions of Providence. After reconnoitring the country, they set up their standard at Witney. In passing, it may be remarked that Downham circuit got a footing in Essex in the same uncalculating way as Leicester in Oxford. In 1838, Messrs. Belham and Jackson "were appointed to mission work, but the sphere of their operations was left to their own choice, the meeting not being able to select a locality to

*With this exception the appointment of the General Missionary Committee was practically a dead letter until its re-constitution in 1843.

its own satisfaction." Going forth to view the land, the two missionaries travelled forty miles the first day, and reached Saffron Walden, which they made their centre. But to return to Brinkworth district as it appears in 1833. We find three Cornish circuits, Redruth, St. Austell, and St. Ives included within the district. This corner of the land had been taken possession of by Hull circuit. We entered Cornwall as we entered Hull and as we entered Leeds—by invitation. Just as in 1819 Clowes found his way to Leeds because Messrs. Verity, S. Smith and others had sent a letter addressed to "the Ranter Preacher, Hull," asking that they might be supplied with a preacher, so in 1825 Clowes entered Cornwall as the first Primitive Methodist Missionary, in response to a request from Mr. Turner, who, like the Leeds band of young men, had been working on Primitive Methodist lines though unattached to any religious community. Beginning under such favourable circumstances, the Cornish mission made progress and soon extended itself into Devonshire. But the most remarkable thing about the Brinkworth district Stations for 1833, is, that what is merely a large village, midway between Malmesbury and Wootton Bassett in Wilts, should stand as the head of the district, and that Shefford—another village in the vale of Berks—should have thirteen preachers put down to it. We see at once that Primitive Methodism has found its way into the basin of the Severn and is working eastwards. The explanation of this fact will illustrate circuit enterprise yet more strikingly, and call attention to a series of events of singular interest. It is not too much to say that from 1825 to 1843, whatever may be doing in other

parts of the connexion, we soon revert to what is going on in the ancient Kingdom of Wessex. In 1824, by the relinquishment of a mission which extended into Wales, Shrewsbury circuit (on offshoot of Oakengates) had a missionary to spare. Mr. Heath offered to break up new ground, and went into Gloucestershire. Unsuccessful at Cirencester, and driven away by persecution, he entered Wilts, and found there the need of earnest ministrations. Over a wide district there were few dissenters and still fewer evangelical clergymen. On the Sabbath-day men would play ball against the walls of the church. Contests with clubs, called "backswording"—more savage and brutal than the foot-ball match played at Preston on Maudlin Sunday—frequently went on in the streets. Magistrates and Mayors either refused or reluctantly yielded protection. Yet in face of ignorance and indignities and ill-treatment, societies were formed of which Brinkworth may be called the centre. Still the work went on; fresh labourers were added, and in 1826 Brinkworth became a circuit. Having gained strength, and being full of enterprise, the March quarter-day of 1829 resolved to open a mission in north Wilts and in the neighbouring, portion of Berks. Here, they found an earnest gospel, if anything, more needed than in the neighbourhood of Brinkworth, and as might be expected opposition was proportionately violent. At Ashbury no sermon had been preached by a dissenter for forty years. But they who need the gospel the most often welcome it the least. So the missionaries found it in this case. It was hard and cruel work toiling under such conditions. And now we come to an incident which, though

it may be deemed small in the eyes of the world was yet fruitful of results and has withal a grandeur and pathos all its own. The scene of the incident is Ashdown on the Berkshire Downs, where nearly a thousand years before, King Alfred and his brother gained a victory over the Danes. As for the time it is a dull, cheerless day in the month of February, 1830. We give the incident, we cannot do better, in the words of a writer in the Large Magazine for November, 1886, who has drawn out the significance of the event under the strikingly appropriate title of "A Parallel and a Contrast" :—"Two men of solemn mien, and dressed in the garb of peasant preachers, are to be seen approaching Ashdown Park Corner, where the treeless, rolling downs are varied by a coppice or small wood. The younger man had already that morning walked ten miles across the downs to meet his companion for prayer and counsel, and they were now returning together. Reaching the wood they had to part, as their destinations lay in different directions. They had already shaken hands. But no ; they must not, should not part until it had been fought out on their knees whether their mission was to prosper. 'Let us turn in here and have another round of prayer before we part,' was the remark of one of them, and turning aside into the coppice and screened by the underwood, and being far away from any habitation, no more secluded spot for communion with God could be found. Oblivious of the snow, and of personal considerations, they throw themselves upon their knees, and in an agony they pour out their soul to God. The success of their mission, which is for God's honour, and

the salvation of souls, is summed up in the burden of their prayer, 'Lord, give us Berkshire! Lord, give us Berkshire!' The pleading continued for hours. At last the younger one receives the assurance, and rising to his feet, exclaims with an outburst that betokens a new-found possession, 'Yonder country's ours, yonder country's ours! and we will have it,' as he points across the country, the prospect of which is bounded by the Hampshire Hills some thirty miles distant. 'Hold fast! I like thy confidence of faith!' is the reply of the more sober pleader. They now part with the assurance that yonder country is ours.' Such is the conflict in which the powers of darkness were arrayed on one side, and on the other the two men sent out to establish the Primitive Methodist mission in Berkshire. Up to this point the opposition had been so violent as sorely to try the faith of the missionaries. On leaving the wood, John Ride and Thomas Russell, for these are the men whose names will be imperishable as the pioneers of Primitive Methodism in Berkshire, went to their respective appointments. On the following night Thomas Russell was at Shefford; the Word touched the hearts of Mr. and Mrs. Wells, who built a house which served as the missionaries' home and the place for worship. This, indeed, has been the roof-tree of Berkshire Primitive Methodism, the original home of its early preachers, as well as its first meeting-house. Few incidents in the religious history of the county are of greater significance than this afternoon prayer in the wood at Ashdown. Had the pleaders lost faith in their cause the aspect of the county would have been different. Remarkable revivals of religion have followed, the

habits and practices of the people have been changed, scores of sanctuaries erected, until now there are more Primitive Methodist congregations in Berkshire than of any other Nonconformist body, and probably more Primitive Methodist chapels. It is surely a noteworthy coincidence that almost on the spot where the encounter for Saxon and Christian supremacy in England occurred, there also took place a struggle which decided whether Primitive Methodism was to be a power in the county. It is also illustrative of the way in which God honours prayer, for while Messrs. Ride and Russell pleaded for Berkshire, He gave also territory beyond, for out of the Berkshire mission sprang other missions in Hampshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Surrey, &c.

We have now, perhaps, said enough to convey to the reader a general idea of three things—viz., how far Primitive Methodism had succeeded in establishing itself in England and Wales in the year 1833, when Brinkworth district was formed, by what lines of direction it had got thus far, and what were the methods by which it had been enabled thus to extend itself. Something must now be left to the reader's imagination. From 1833 to 1843 he must conceive that the plan—already foreshadowed by a progressive but uncompleted movement—is being energetically carried out by means of the threefold method already described. Ten years are a considerable space of time, but it is something to know that at any time, in these years, it will be quite safe to say that the different districts will be hard at work in the South of England; whatever they may be doing in other parts. Without

concert, they are apparently advancing upon London. Not that they are making London their definite objective, but we see that if they go on in their work of aggression as they are doing, they will, coming from different sides, ultimately meet around the Metropolis, like an army concentrating for the purpose of investment upon some famous capital. We have said the *different* districts were thus engaged between 1833 and 1843. This is largely true; for with the exception of Sunderland district, whose field of enterprise naturally lay to the North of it, all the other districts co-operated in the evangelizing of the Southern Counties. By means of circuit Missions, Hull and Tunstall could lend a hand to Nottingham, and especially to Norwich and Brinkworth, on whom mainly devolved this duty. Burland had its mission at Northampton—Scotter took charge of Alderney—Hull fastened upon Kent, and had its missionaries on both sides of the Solent, in Bedford and in Hertford—and Manchester had charge, for a time, of Weymouth mission.

The removal in 1843 of the Book establishment to London, and the appointment the same year of a General Missionary Committee with its executive likewise located in the Metropolis, were events full of significance in many ways. They concern us here only in so far as they serve to mark a period—the supersession of circuit Missions—and as they seem to show that London had become, in a connexional sense, vastly more important. London might mean convenience. It might mean centralization, but it also meant that the Connexion was no longer, as heretofore, almost entirely

confined to the Midland and Northern Counties. To this, things have for some time been tending; and hence it may be convenient to glance at the history of Primitive Methodism in London, more especially, as that history will throw additional light upon the missionary labours of important circuits.

To Leeds circuit belongs the credit of establishing a regular mission in the Metropolis; though as long ago as 1810 Messrs Bourne and Crawfoot had laboured for some little time there, and John Benton had effected considerable good. A small balance at the quarterly Board—and a faith which in its disregard of difficulties bordered almost on simplicity, sent forth Messrs. Sugden and Watson to the Metropolis as pioneer missionaries. As they alighted from the coach on a cold day of December, 1822, the coachman touched his hat for a tip. The missionaries gave him their last shilling. Next came the guard who also touched *his* hat. Apostolic, in this respect at least, the missionaries could have said—"Silver and gold have we none." They told him candidly who they were and what their circumstances. From the standpoint of the cynical observer there might be a disparity so great as to appear absolutely farcical between the lofty purpose of these men and their slender equipment for giving effect to that purpose. Yet behind their destitution were the resources of God. There were plain intimations, even in this their first experience on entering the Metropolis, that God was with them. For the guard was a kind-hearted, Christian man. He took the missionaries home with him and not only gave them breakfast but purchased some books that they

might for a little time keep starvation at bay. We wish we knew the name of this early befriender of Primitive Methodism in London, that we might hand it down as the name of one who unostentatiously did a humane and helpful deed. For some time Messrs. Sugden and Watson laboured for the Bible Christians—the former in Kent while the latter remained in London. Soon, however, a small Primitive Methodist society was formed and Cooper's Gardens Chapel taken. Mr. Sugden was called in from Kent, and Mr. John Coulson was ordered to re-place Mr. Watson, who by this time had been re-called to Leeds. Mr. Coulson travelled to London on foot and arrived there on January 21st, 1823, with three shillings in his pocket. While searching for Mr. Sugden's lodgings he had the good fortune to meet him in the street. On a third winter's day (January 11th, 1824), Mr. Clowes preached his first sermon in London, at Pimlico. The societies in the Metropolis had got into difficulties and had been transferred to the care of Hull circuit. Mr. Clowes remained attached to London as the leading missionary until September, 1825, when he left the societies much improved in every way. But he found the Londoners harder to reach by the Gospel than the sturdy Northeners or the fervent Cornishmen. Now he writes, "London is London still, careless, trifling, gay, and hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." And again, "Often have I preached within and without the room (in Snow's fields in the Borough), and laboured with all the powers of my body and soul; but the pride, levity, and corruption of London appeared to be unassailable; the powers of Hell reigned fearfully

triumphant, the pall of midnight darkness rested upon thousands of all orders of society. O, for God's mighty arm to be outstretched, to shake the mighty Babylon to its centre!" His soul is stirred within him as he sees the awful profanation of the Lord's day in Clare market, and he stands up among the wicked and beseeches them to turn from their evil ways, and turn to God. The next Sabbath finds him there again. He begins to sing, but is confronted by a policeman, who bids him desist from disturbing the market-people. When asked for his authority the minion of the law pulls out his truncheon and says "This is my authority." From the vantage-ground behind an opened window which was offered him, Clowes "pours the thunders of the law upon the rebels against God and the King." He goes down to Westminster at eleven o'clock the same day, and stands up again in the open-air. "The Philistines," says he, "were again upon me; the abandoned of God and man, like incarnate devils, raged and howled around; however, I cried to the infuriated multitude to repent and believe the Gospel; and, contrary to my expectation, I finished my address, and retired without suffering any injury." To Clowes, with his sanguine temperament, and with his recollection of past successes, the chariot, though it moved, seemed to "roll on slowly and heavily."

In 1826 and 1827, London stands on the stations in connection with Hull district. From 1828 to 1834, it is placed amongst the stations of Norwich district. In 1835 London has disappeared from the Minutes of Conference; the fact being, that having again become involved in difficulties it was once more taken under

the wing of Hull circuit. In 1834 only 260 members were reported, but under the labours of such men as Messrs. Flesher, Sanderson, Holliday, Harland, and Ride, a steady improvement took place. In 1848 London again became an independent station with 710 members, Hammersmith mission having been taken from it during the year. In 1850 it was divided, the two circuits having 992 members between them.

As illustrative, alike of the geographical extension of the Connexion during this period, and of the method by which that extension was effected, a glance must be taken at the missions beyond the limits of England and Wales. These also were the outcome of circuit enterprise. Soon after the Conference of 1822 Bolton was formed into a separate circuit from Manchester. Yet six months after its formation it had sent Mr. John Butcher to the Isle of Man. His labours were so successful in the island that Bolton and Castletown—mother and daughter—both appear on the stations for the first time in the Conference Minutes of 1823. Bolton, too, is the circuit of which the story is told that having a welcome surplus of sixpence at its quarterly Board, it determined on the strength of it to call out a young man, and that the young man was none other than James Austin Bastow. If this story is true all that need be said is that never was sixpence better invested, and that Bolton circuit was certainly not wanting in courage and faith.

The year 1826 saw missions established north of the Tweed in Edinburgh and Glasgow, by Sunderland and Carlisle circuits respectively. The first service Messrs. Clewer and Oliver held in Edinburgh has

its points of interest. Passing through the Grass Market, where so many had suffered for conscience sake, the question occurred to the missionaries —"What place more suitable than this in which to open our commission?" Accordingly on the 13th April they entered the Grass Market, and being denied the use of a chair, Mr. Oliver took his stand on some flags in the centre of the Market place, and after they had sung, "Arise, O Zion," he announced for his text—"Is all well, wherefore came this mad fellow to thee?" Suiting their work to the peculiar circumstances in which they found themselves, the missionaries entered upon a laborious house to house visitation in the Grass Market—Cowgate and Westport. The tabulated results being laid before the public not only secured for them considerable financial help in sustaining the mission, but did something to awaken the churches to the necessity of an organized movement in behalf of town and city missions. It is painful to think that the Edinburgh mission beginning under such auspicious circumstances should afterwards suffer through the disloyalty of the successors of the first missionaries. This episode, however, belongs to a subsequent chapter. The mission begun by Carlisle was successful, and in the course of two or three years Glasgow became an independent station. Ultimately Glasgow made Paisley into a separate circuit. In 1836 Newcastle-on-Tyne established a mission in Dundee, which the next year was doomed to meet with disaster. Edinburgh turned its attention to Dunfermline and Alloa; the latter about two years afterwards being taken over by Sunderland circuit.

The Irish missions were begun in 1832. Encouraged perhaps by the success of its operations in Wiltshire, Shrewsbury circuit sent Mr. Haslam to Belfast in the April of that year. Shortly afterwards Preston Brook circuit sent Mr. Jersey to Dublin. The prospects of success in that city appearing unfavourable Mr. Jersey soon went North and made Newry and its neighbourhood the scene of his labours. In the autumn of the same year (1832), Mr. Cordingley was despatched to Lisburn by the Prees circuit; but the charge of the mission was subsequently undertaken by Oswestry which had been formed from Prees.

The origin and varied fortunes of our colonial and foreign missions deserve, and will probably receive, separate treatment in a popular form. When the work is published it should prove to be one of peculiar interest. But, warned by the scope and limits of the present undertaking, we can at the present stage do little more than chronicle one or two outline facts. In June, 1829, Hull and Tunstall circuits combined in sending four missionaries to the United States. Messrs. Morris and Summersides (who was afterwards to become a Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church) proceeded to Philadelphia, and Mr. Knowles and Miss Watkins made New York their head quarters. As regards this mission, there might have been a juster correspondence between means and ends; and judged by its after history it must be pronounced to have been something of a failure. The churches in the States soon severed their connection with the parent body, though they continued to maintain fraternal relations with it, and in 1843, as we shall see, they asked that the organic

connection might be resumed. The missions in Canada were more successful. There, as in the States, immigrants from the old country paved the way for Primitive Methodist missionaries. The first class was formed at Toronto in the house of Mr. Lawson, who had gone from Carlisle. This was in September, 1829; and in 1830 Mr. Watkins entered the Dominion as the first accredited missionary. The Conference of 1832 placed the Canadian missions under the care of Hull circuit, and thus they continued until their transference in 1843 to the General Missionary Committee. "At the Conference of 1842 the number of members was reported at 663. There were then three stations, Toronto, Brampton, and Markham, and two preachers employed on each." We have before us as we write a copy of "The Ninth Annual Report of the Primitive Methodist English and American Missions, belonging to the Hull circuit, for the year 1841." The following reference is made in that report to the Canadian missions :—

"The accounts from Canada still continue to be of a very pleasing character. A letter from Toronto, bearing date April 24th, 1841, gives a very interesting account of a course of protracted meetings, during which, it is judged, somewhere about two hundred souls were converted to God; and the Society realized an increase of one hundred and sixty two members. We still continue to allow them a portion of our Missionary money, to enable them to enlarge their borders; as an extensive field of labour presents itself to their notice, and prospects of increasing usefulness lie before them."

In the report from which the above is extracted, the

following missions of Hull circuit are passed under review :—Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton, London, Brighton, Bedford, Sheerness with Ramsgate, Margate and Maidstone, British North America. Looking at what has been attempted and done by such circuits as Hull, Tunstall, and others, we are almost reminded of the history of Venice and similar city-states, which, though they once set armies and fleets in motion, have now sunk, if sinking it be, to be integral parts of a homogeneous kingdom. Neither to Venice nor to Hull is it now open to precisely repeat the exploits of the storied past; but circuits may well study their own honourable history if only to see what enterprise for the general good has done in the days gone by, and what it may yet accomplish by means of the same qualities seeking new methods.

CHAPTER V.

Toil and Suffering.

TO know where an army marched and by what military movements it gained its successes is, after all, but half the story of a campaign. Military geography and the study of tactics and strategy have not enough of human interest about them to satisfy the average reader. He will want to know something of the spirit which animated officers and men; whether they bore their long marches and privations with fortitude; whether they behaved with courage and heroism in the face of the enemy. Similarly, though we are writing of the aggressive movements of a denomination and not of an army, we feel sure the reader is waiting to know something of the experiences of the human instruments who, under God, were the means of extending Primitive Methodism. In approaching this side of our connexional history, we are reminded of certain phrases in which St. Paul, almost reluctantly, as it would seem, puts down what he had gone through for the sake of the gospel. Is the question asked, "How did your early preachers accomplish their work?" The true, unboastful answer is ready in familiar, consecrated words. "In labours more

abundant—in prisons more frequent—in journeyings often—in perils by mine own countrymen—in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." Mr. W. Garner, writing in 1844, says: "In the space of twenty-one years I have travelled on *foot* with comparatively trifling exceptions, 44,936 miles, and have preached 6,278 sermons. The journeys do not include my daily perambulations in the cities, towns, villages, etc., where my lot has been cast; nor do the sermons include exhortations, addresses, missionary speeches, etc., which amount to a great number. . . It appears from my diary that forty-eight of my principal journeys, which were performed on foot, between January 8, 1823, and July 27, 1830, amount to 1,068 miles, which average rather more than twenty-two miles a day. And the reader must bear in mind that some of these journeys were performed beneath a scorching sun—some through depths of snow—some through windy storms and tempests—and some through drenching rains in the cold winter, while I was encumbered with an umbrella over my head, and a library and wardrobe on my back; though others were performed beneath a serene sky, and while I was surrounded with all the charms of a delightful spring." Mr. Garner may have been more methodical and exact than most in keeping a record of his labours, but we do not suppose that the labours themselves, great though they were, largely exceeded those of his brethren in the same period. The amount of sheer physical labour required in working many circuits and missions was necessarily great. In 1837 the writer's

father, with the late Mr. T. Penrose as superintendent, was labouring on the Settle mission. It was then some forty miles in length, extending from Heysham by the sea-side to Bellbusk in Craven. As he was wont to say, "It constituted a first-rate promenade for creating an appetite, but was remarkably scanty in supplying the wherewithal to appease it. *That* had to be got how and when it could."

It is easy to write that the missionary, Mr. Clowes for instance, proceeded from Carlisle to Hull to attend the quarter day. A moment's reflection, however, will serve to make it sufficiently obvious, that sixty years ago this was no light journey. It probably enough meant rising with the lark, and with the mission or branches quarterly income in his pocket, and staff in hand, trudging along over bleak fells, and passing through town and village and hamlet. Now and again, it may be, he gets a lift in a carrier's cart or passing vehicle, and then towards the gloaming turns tired and travel-stained into some hospitable dwelling, the home of some well-known adherent of the connexion, or of some colleague in the ministry. Then the frugal meal, seasoned with pleasant talk of the work of God, and all sanctified by prayer; the sleep which needed no wooing, preparing for the next day's journey. Many such days must have been, when as yet Whitehaven, Alston Moor, and other distant places, were branches of Hull circuit, and we have heard the description of some such journey as this from those whose lips are now sealed in death.

Connected with these "journeyings often," were

sundry perils arising from the darkness, the mischances of the way, or evil-disposed men. Clowes and John Wedgwood encountered all these perils at once, when utterly lost on a wild moor near the Blackmere of Morridge, with black night around them. They grope their way with their sticks. They discuss whether they shall lie down on the wet ground for the night. Clowes raises the cry "Lost! Lost! Lost!" A light is seen approaching, the bark of a dog and the sound of advancing steps are heard, but no kindly shout answering theirs. Their suspicion that the light is guiding enemies rather than friends is aroused. So with a new element of terror superadded, they make their way, they know not whither, over stone wall and ditch, until at last, to their unspeakable relief, they find themselves close to a farm-house. There they learn that they have been almost miraculously preserved amid precipices and moss-pits, and that it was a sure instinct which made them fly *from* rather than *to* the light, since it was probably carried by those, living near, who had an ill repute. An incident in the life of Mr. Spoor furnishes another illustration of the perils of the night to which our early preachers were exposed. As he was travelling between Harrogate and Knaresborough, a footpad suddenly closed with him. But the footpad found himself in the grasp of a "muscular Christian." In the struggle both rolled into the ditch—Spoor uppermost. He knelt on his prostrate foe and held him as in a vice, while he expostulated with him for thinking of robbing a poor preacher of the gospel. Exhortations to repent followed expostulation, until at last, with a wary eye,

Spoor released the miscreant. Had the experience befallen a less stalwart and courageous man than Joseph Spoor, the result might have been different. As it was he bore the marks of that night's struggle for some time. The following extract from "Sykes' Local Records" brings before us journeying perils of another kind :—"1831 (February 26).—As Mr. John Hewson and Mr. John Branfoot, two Primitive Methodist preachers, accompanied by a female, were passing from Bishopwearmouth along the Hetton Coal Company's railway, near Warden Law, to escape the danger on the inclined plane, they unfortunately rushed in between the light and laden waggons, when they were crushed between the waggons, by which Mr. Hewson was killed on the spot, and Mr. Branfoot survived a very short time. The young woman fortunately escaped unhurt. They were men of exemplary zeal and piety; one left a widow with five children, the other a widow with six children. Their funerals, which took place at Sunderland, excited great interest and sympathy, and their remains were followed to the grave by some thousands of persons."

The missionary had to lay his account, too, with discomfort and privation, and had to "endure hardness." When, missioning in Lancashire, in his early days, Clowes is put into a cold room and in the morning finds that, during the night, snow has drifted through the half-knocked-out window on to his bed; when, as he is attempting to swallow his milk and water porridge, a virago enters, and after staring at him, abuses him soundly and charges him with being "after

nothing but his belly," he might well take a walk and reflect almost bitterly upon the comfortable home, and the wife and friends he had left at Tunstall. Then again, when at Derby, he enters the Armoury on the invitation of a kindly soldier of the Royal Artillery, as he with difficulty climbs up into one of the bunks, lying tier above tier, which had to be his quarters for the night, he did well to say, "I remembered I was a missionary." A similar reflection must surely have occurred to Sampson Turner as he hastened betimes from the common lodging-house into which he had been put after preaching for the first time at Bilston. He had passed the night with tinkers, pedlars, and sweeps; hence his early retreat. All this was bad enough; but mere discomfort, we may be sure, was cheerfully borne, as being inseparable from the missionary's lot; the more so, as he often shared the discomfort with those whom he sought to raise. It was much worse, however, when to mere discomfort was added the greater evil of positive hunger. In many cases, we are afraid, our pioneers might have said, "in hunger and thrist, in fastings often." As an instance in point, we may cite the experience of the first London missionaries. Says Mr. Coulson—"We (Mr Tetley and himself) went through great hardships and sufferings that we might not bring heavy expense on Leeds circuit. I frequently went without dinner for the purpose!" In its mixture of pathos and *naïve* simplicity there is nothing finer in Petty's 'History' than the letter which Mr. Joseph Reynolds wrote from Cambridge to the Tunstall circuit Committee, August 8th, 1823, describing how it had gone with him there. The

letter might have been written by a suffering follower of George Fox long ago. We give an extract :—

"Dear Brethren,—When I left Tunstall, I gave myself up to labour and sufferings, and I have gone through both ; but praise the Lord, it has been for His glory and the good of souls. My sufferings are known only to God and myself. I have many times been knocked down while preaching, and have often had sore bones. Once I was knocked down, and was trampled under the feet of the crowd, and had my clothes torn, and all my money taken from me. In consequence of this I have been obliged to suffer much hunger. One day I travelled nearly thirty miles and had only a penny cake to eat. I preached at night to near two thousand persons. But I was so weak when I had done, that I could scarcely stand. I then made my supper of cold cabbage, and slept under a haystack in a field till about four o'clock in the morning. The singing of the birds then awoke me, and I arose and went into the town, and preached at five to many people. I afterwards came to Cambridge, where I have been a fortnight, and preached to a great congregation, though almost worn out with fatigue and hunger. To-day I was glad to eat the pea-husks as I walked on the road. But I bless God that much good has been done. I believe hundreds will have to bless Him in eternity for leading me hither."

As a pendant and contrast to this letter, let it be noted, in passing, that at Midsummer of the next year, 1824, Mr. Clowes re-opened the chapel at Cambridge. He preached in the evening, and had a sprinkling of collegians in his congregation, while the Wesleyan

superintendent made himself useful as a collector. But the worst evils endured by the early missionaries may be summed up in the word *persecution*, which was rife throughout the entire period covered by the previous chapters. Toil, fatigue, discomfort, privation, were as nothing compared with what came upon them from "their own countrymen." They suffered from the petty annoyances of the mischievous who deemed them fair game; from the brutality of the mob; from the opposition of priestly intolerance and social prejudice; from the straining and mal-administration of the law. Readers of Petty's History will not fail to be struck with the prevalence and general features of this persecution. And yet there was nothing in the behaviour of the missionary, nothing in the methods he adopted, that should have tended to excite antagonism. He was a plain man, rather quaker-like in his attire. He carried no flags and headed no semi-military processions. Indeed, these belligerent-seeming methods were severely discountenanced. As proof of this, we find that in 1831 two young men were admonished by the Grimsby quarterly meeting for having begun to mission without any official authority, and for having carried a white flag through the streets. They were reminded "that the preaching of Christ and Him crucified, and the fulfilling of the design of God in going into the highways and hedges to compel sinners to come in to the spiritual banquet, did not require such ostentatious display as that which they had exhibited; that their display was not consistent with the scriptural course of missioning; or in character with the Kingdom of Christ; and that therefore they

must discontinue it, and labour in a simple, humble, and persevering manner for the conversion of sinners to God*." The missionary was simply an open-air preacher. The only instruments he carried were his bible and hymn-book and possibly the innocent staff or umbrella. There was nothing inflammatory about his addresses. He avoided political topics and was instructed to refrain from reflecting upon other denominations, as he was also instructed to eschew all frivolous apologies, and to confine himself to the simple proclamation of the gospel. And yet, despite all this, the sound of the hymn raised by the missionary and his few faithful followers as they took their stand in the market-place or village-green, was the signal for the onset of "fellows of the baser sort," and even for the interference of some who would have strongly resented inclusion in such a category. Everything available that could make a noise, was pressed into service. The church-bells were set a-ringing to drown the preacher's voice. At one place they were swung so violently that they were cracked, and several pounds were spent in restoring them. At a Camp meeting held at Witney, in Oxfordshire, in 1825, about forty horns were blowing at one time, and the roughs overturned one of the waggons used as a preaching stand. While holding a service at the Market Cross at Dalton, in Furness, in 1823, three horns and a watchman's rattle were making a din in poor Mr. Jersey's ears. He sang and prayed as well as he could in the midst of it all, and then rose from his knees and shouted, "Glory to Jesus! I can praise Thee amidst all the din of hell!" At Bottes-

*Clowes Journal p. 316.

ford, in the early times, John Benton was disturbed by the beating of a big drum. But the big drummer got converted, and years after William Clowes rejoiced over him as a trophy of divine grace. But of all noise-producers tin-ware was the most handy and most in requisition. Now, if ever, tin-cans and rotten eggs found their reason of existence. At academic Oxford, in 1825, the missionaries by preaching against the walls of the city prison, were the innocent occasion of a "town-and-gown" row. The result was they were so besmeared with eggs and filth that, adds one, "we took a wisp of straw to a pump and cleaned ourselves as well as we could." The next sentence shows that harder missiles than eggs and mud were sometimes thrown. "I was cut by a stone thrown at my neck," says Mr. Bellham, "and acknowledged the honour of suffering for the truth's sake." We regret to add, that, ten years after this, another missionary pronounces Oxford to be "a sink of iniquity." Occasionally a bull was attempted to be driven through the congregation, but oftener than not, the animal, wiser than his master, either took a contrary direction, or turned upon his driver. In 1817, while Mr. Lockwood (a person of property, who actively co-operated with Mr. Wedgwood and others), was preaching from his gig in Newark market-place, a barber, acting under the direction of the clergyman, played upon Mr. Lockwood with the hose of the town fire-engine. "You cannot quench the fire within" said the preacher, and went on with his preaching. A number of boatmen cut the hose with their knives. The clergyman and not the boatmen had to make good the damage. Such was the

just decision of the magistrates. A few weeks afterwards the barber, who was also a manufacturer of fireworks, was blown through his shop window, and died of his burns. In this instance, as in scores of others which the annals of the Connexion furnish, retribution followed hard on persecution. A harsh steward who had evicted a tenant for favouring the Primitives is soon after drowned in the river. The ringleader of the persecution at Fulbeck, in Lincolnshire, loses his reason, and others have grievous losses in their cattle. The three men bribed by the publican to break up Clowes' service in Westminster, in the manner related in a previous chapter, are soon after apprehended and tried at the Old Bailey for pocket-picking and house-breaking. One is executed, and the other two transported for life.

These instances of retribution, as well as those of persecution just given, must be regarded simply as samples of the incidents which are furnished by our official history, and by various biographies in regretable plenty. But before closing our reference to the persecution undergone by our missionaries which did not attempt to shield itself under legal forms and procedure, it may be well to detail two incidents, in which we may see persecution of this essentially lawless kind reaching what may be called its high-water mark. The two confessors (for such they were) whose sufferings are here related were Messrs. John Garner and Thomas Russell. We give the account of Mr. Garner's treatment in Warwickshire in his own words as quoted by Mr. Petty. "In February, 1819, I commenced my itinerant labours in the Loughborough

circuit. During the month of May I visited Sow, near Coventry. At this place we had preached several times, but to little purpose, the inhabitants being vile persecutors, and the parish clergyman conducting himself towards us in so vile a manner that prudence forbids it being published. No sooner had I entered the village than stones were flying in every direction. I made haste to the house of Mr. —— where a few people were assembled to hear the word of life. The mob followed me, surrounded the house, broke the windows, and compelled me to stop the meeting. Seeing no probability of the persecution abating, I was necessitated to expose myself to the malicious rage of the wicked, by whom I was furiously driven out of the village, with stones, rotten eggs, sludge, or whatever came first to hand. The friends who accompanied me, seeing the madness of the mob, became afraid, and endeavoured to effect their escape by taking a footpath. The rebels followed me out of the village, and some of them seized me; others propped my mouth open with stones, while some were engaged in attempting to pour sludge down my throat. The cry was raised, 'Kill the devil! d—— him!' Immediately a man knocked me down, and after I had been shamefully beaten with the hands and feet of my enemies, and with divers weapons, I was dragged to a pond, around which they gathered, hoping soon to be gratified with my death. At this juncture of time I had not even a faint hope of ever being rescued from them alive; hence I committed my body and soul to the Lord, and most earnestly wished for death to put an end

to my sufferings, which were almost insupportable. However, 'the thoughts of the Lord are not as our thoughts, neither are His ways as our ways,' for, contrary to my expectations, He made a way for my escape. One of the vilest persecutors rescued me from the fury of his companions; and some of them pursued my friends, who had at first escaped. Thus the rebels were withdrawn from me. After having walked a few hundred yards, I perceived a woman much affected, tears were rolling down her cheeks; she kindly invited me into her house, and then assisted in washing my head and face. Being somewhat recovered through the hospitality of my hostess, I contrived, with the assistance of a friend, to walk to Bell Green, a distance of perhaps two miles, and by my kind friends at this place I was cordially entertained and taken care of. They lent me what clothes I wanted; for my persecutors had also torn my clothes, of a portion of which they afterwards made a scarecrow. After being carefully nursed at Bell Green a few days, I was enabled to attend to my usual labour."

Mr. Thomas Russell's experience in Berkshire we give verbatim from the official history of the Connexion; only bidding the reader remember that this was the experience of but one day and of one missionary. "Mr. Russell entered upon the Farringdon mission in full expectation of severe persecution, in which he was not deceived. Before four o'clock in the morning of the third Sunday in April, 1832, he prepared for his journey to the scene of his intended missionary operations. His mind was oppressed with the burden

of the work before him, and the dread of persecution and suffering; but he was supported with a sense of the Divine approval and the hope of success. When he arrived at the summit of a hill about ten miles from Wantage, he saw the town lying before him, and instantly a dread of what awaited him well-nigh overcame him. He met two men who knew him, and they advised him to return on account of the severe persecution which they expected he would have to encounter. He thanked them for their sympathy but went forward on his journey. At nine o'clock he stood up in the market-place and began to sing a hymn. He next knelt down and prayed, and concluded without molestation. But ere he commenced preaching a number of ruffians surrounded him, and he had not spoken long when a more violent company arrived and pushed him from his standing-place, driving him before them like a beast. He heard some of them cry, "Have him down Mill-street!" and suspecting, perhaps properly, that they intended to throw him into the river which flows at the bottom of that street, he determined if possible to prevent being driven down it, and managed to keep in the market-place. After being driven to and fro an hour or more, his inhuman persecutors paused, when Mr. Russell threw open his waistcoat, and in the true spirit of a martyr cried, "Lads! if the shedding of my heart's blood will contribute to your salvation, I am willing for it to be shed on these stones." At this moving statement those who were nearest him drew back a little, and seemed to relent; but a violent gang outside the throng pushed forward and urged the rest to reaction (*sic.*) A respectable

looking person, who Mr. R. afterwards learned was the chief constable, came to him and said, "If you will leave, all will then be quiet." Mr. R. replied, "If I have broken the law, punish me according to the law, and not in this manner." The constable then withdrew without ever attempting to quell the lawless mob, who again assailed the solitary missionary with ruthless violence. At length the beadle came and seized Mr. Russell by the collar, and led him to the end of the town, and there left him. Mr. Russell's strength was almost exhausted, with the violent usage he had suffered in the market-place; but determining if possible to address those who had followed him thither, he stood upon the side of a hedge and preached as well as he was able. But his persecutors were not yet satisfied; they pelted him with stones, eggs, mud, and everything they could render available for the purpose. Even women, unmindful of the tenderness of their sex, joined in this cruel treatment; some of them took the dirt out of their patten-rings to cast at the preacher! When Mr. Russell concluded the service he was covered from head to foot with slime, mud, rotten eggs, and other kinds of filth; and his clothes were torn, and his flesh bruised. As soon as he got alone by the side of a canal, he took off his clothes and washed them. Then putting them on wet, "enduring hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," he proceeded to Farringdon, where similar treatment befell him. When he came to a pool of water outside the town, he washed his clothes a second time, and then went five miles further to Shrivenham, where he was met with another violent reception. At a brook he cleaned himself a third

time, and then proceeded to another village, where he preached in peace, except that a person threw a stone or other hard material at him, which cut his lip. After this he walked six miles to Lambourn to rest for the night. He had been on foot eighteen hours, had walked thirty-five miles, had preached four times, and had gone through an amount of suffering such as none but a strong, healthy man could have endured. Next day, however, he walked twenty miles to the other side of his mission, and during the week preached at several fresh places."

Nor was persecution confined to the duly authorised missionaries of the connexion. In certain districts, their humble favourers and followers had to reckon with intimidation—loss of custom—loss of employment, and eviction. The word "boycotting" might not be used then, but the thing itself was extensively practised. Then, indeed, persecution struck home, and the missionary was got at through his flock. Either he suffered with those he saw suffering; or, if, not wishing to involve others in trouble, he dissociated himself from them, then he multiplied his own privations. Perhaps during cold and wintry weather he took to the streets in order to hold his services, instead of accepting the offered shelter of a dwelling-house, or he refused the hospitality ready to be extended to him, rather than bring down upon his sympathisers the vengeance of haughty landlord or oppressive steward.

One thing more only is wanted to complete the picture of persecution. There must be a prison in the background as well as an enraged, howling mob in

front. Paul's words no more fail us here, than they do elsewhere: "In prisons more frequent." In Petty's "History," within the period ending 1843, there are distinct references to some thirty cases of arrest for open-air preaching, issuing, sometimes in detention—frequently in imprisonment—and occasionally in imprisonment with hard labour. These thirty cases are not all that might be adduced by any means. Most of the early preachers had one such experience. To some of them the interference of the constable became a quite familiar incident; so familiar as to excite neither surprise nor alarm. The first Sunday Jeremiah Gilbert began his labours as a missionary (May, 1819), he was "taken up" at Bolsover, in Derbyshire, along with Samuel Atterby, and cast into prison. Two years later we find him saying: "In the last fifteen months I have been taken before the magistrates for preaching the gospel six or seven times, but I have never lost anything but pride, shame, unbelief, hardness of heart, the fear of man, love of the world, and prejudice of mind. I have always come out of prison more pure than when I went in." In their relations with the magistracy and police, the missionaries show to great advantage. They had developed readiness of resource and the acuteness of lawyers. Moreover, they knew they were on the right side, and that they were fighting the battle of religious liberty. This conviction gave them calmness and confidence in the presence of those who sought to abridge their liberties. Nor can we suppress the feeling that when apprehended they rather enjoyed the evident perplexity of the Justice Shallows of the period to know what to do with them. They

secretly chuckled as they saw the magistrate, helped by the parson and the lawyer, referring to musty precedents—fumbling with law books and getting mixed with statutes of Elizabeth and Charles II.

"What Act am I taken up under"? says Mr. Bellham to Colonel R—— the Magistrate, one day in 1825.

Magistrate.—"The Vagrant Act. You are a common vagrant."

Mr. B.—"I did not do anything to obtain money."

Magistrate.—"I meant the Riot Act. You collected a great number of persons together, I suppose to make a riot, as it was late in the evening."

Mr. B.—If I am taken up under the Riot Act, I have no business here. Commit me to prison, and let me take my trial before more than one magistrate."

Magistrate, with an oath.—"Be off out of my sight."

Mr. B.—"It is wrong to swear, sir. Jesus Christ hath said, 'Swear not at all.'"

Magistrate.—"Then don't provoke me." At last the Magistrate being rather rusty in his law and getting the worst in the encounter says :—

"Go about your business."

Mr. B.—"When I am properly discharged, sir."

Magistrate.—"Are you any trade ?"

Mr. B.—"I am a shipwright. I served seven years under Mr. B.— of Lynn.

Magistrate.—"You are a fine fellow—a shipwright, a parson, and a lawyer. Well you may go about your business ; I have no more to say to you."

Clergyman to the Magistrate.—"Stop sir, there is something for him to pay. Constable what is it."

Constable.—"Eight and ninepence, sir."

Clergyman to Mr. B.—"Eight and nincpence. You will discharge that bill, and then you are at liberty."

Mr. B.—"I *am* at liberty, sir; The magistrate has set me at liberty."

Magistrate to the Clergyman.—"Let the fellow go."

Clergyman.—"But who is to pay the eight an ninepence?"

Magistrate.—"Pay it yourself; bringing your fellows here."

Mr. B.—"I'll pay it if it is just and right. But I think the debt belongs to Mr H."

Magistrate.—"Be off."

Mr. B.—"Good morning, gentlemen."

We are told that Mr. Bellham and the clergyman left the room together, Mr. B. saying to him—"God forgive you sir; I wish you well"; but the clergyman was too chagrined to reply.

"Prison scenes from the lives of our early missionaries" would make a fitting companion volume to "Camp Meeting Idylls." Somehow we find there is brightness and cheerfulness and melody in the prison, and we feel the prisoner less needs our pity than those who put him in. When the missionary was interrupted in his open-air preaching, his invariable practice was to avoid all insolence, respectfully to stand on his rights and refuse to make any compromise. When led off to prison he sang all the way there and beguiled the tedium of confinement by still more singing. Then when liberated he usually made his way straight back to the place at which he had been arrested and held another service. This was what Mr. Gilbert did when arrested at Eckington, in

Derbyshire, on July 12, 1820. He was put into a damp and doleful room. The door was studded with nails and a barred aperture served for a window. When he was not exhorting the people outside, he was singing with them. Later on he conversed with the jailer about the salvation of his soul and prayed with him. About midnight he blocked up the aperture as well as he could, and failing better accommodation, lay upon some laths with a besom for his pillow! After his release he stood up to preach near the place where he had been pulled down and had a large and attentive congregation.

Sometimes, flashes of humour—the product of mother wit and a good conscience—mark the replies of the missionary, and serve to relieve the otherwise sombre picture. When Mr. Bonser was asked by the sorely puzzled bailiffs of Bridgnorth to make his choice out of three proposals made to him, viz., to promise that neither he nor any of his brethren should preach in the streets any more, or to find bail for his appearance at the sessions, or to be sent to prison at Shrewsbury; he immediately made his choice saying, "Then I will go to Shrewsbury, for I was there a few months ago, and they used me extremely well. They brought me eight breakfasts to prison one morning, and promised that they would use me well if I came again."

But the romantic touches which light up this part of our connexional annals must not blind us to the depth of its shadows. We are not writing a Martyrology or a history of the mal-administration of the law in England in the nineteenth century, and therefore will

simply record the following facts. That Mr. S. Waller, a cotton-spinner, was, in 1821, committed to prison for three months for preaching in the streets of Ashton-under-Lyne, and that he nearly lost his life through the rigour of his imprisonment; that in 1830, on the evidence of a constable who had bought some books of him, Mr. Thomas Russell was sentenced to serve three months with hard labour in Abingdon House of Correction for selling without a license; that he too suffered greatly in health, and yet that the prison doctor contented himself with declaring: "Here he came to be punished, and here he must be punished"; that on the Andover mission, six members of Society were, in 1836, imprisoned for only standing on a piece of waste ground to hear a sermon; that in 1837, Mr. Bunn was on a false charge of obstructing the highway at Mildenhall, in Suffolk, committed to Bury jail for ten days; that as late as 1843, Mr. Isaac Hedges was sentenced by a clergyman and surgeon to twenty-one days' imprisonment with hard labour for creating an obstruction near Bicester, Oxfordshire, although his congregation had consisted of only five persons; that in the same year, on a charge that he created a nuisance in Margate streets, another clergyman, as the spokesman of the bench, committed Mr. George Stansfield to Dover jail for seven days: and yet so little did Mr. Stansfield look like a misdemenant, that the prisoners took him, from his dignified and gentlemanly bearing, to be some one who had come to inspect the prison.

If a map were to be drawn, tinted, to show the comparative persecution our denomination has

encountered in the various parts of England during its history, the most northerly counties of England would be found to have been almost entirely free from it. But while on other parts of the map there might be found streaks and patches of colour, it would be some of the southern counties which would be found to be washed with the distinguishing tint. It would also be found that persecution was the most bitter, general, and inveterate, in precisely those districts of England where dissent had the least hold and influence, and where the cleavage between the upper and lower classes was the most complete. Once more, it would be found that where the Church, as by law established, had for long had its own way, unshocked and unthwarted by "schism," there the people were little better than serfs, and there persecution was rampant. Compare the reception Messrs. Clough and Lister met with at Berwick in 1829, when they preached at the Town Hall steps to thousands of people, including the clergy and gentry of the town; contrast their treatment with that received by our missionaries in Hants., Wilts., Berks., and other southern counties. In Northumberland there was too much Presbyterianism, in the eastern counties there was too much Puritanism, and in Cornwall there was too much Methodism, for persecution to be anything but short-lived, though these, too, were non-manufacturing districts. The Rev. Thomas Binney discharged an explosive shell into the religious world when, in 1833, he declared that the principle of a State Church 'had damned more souls in this country than it had saved.' We do not know whether Mr. Binney was aware of what was going on not very far from him at

the time he penned these words. If he were, there was some excuse for his strong language. Though we would not have it supposed that we endorse this dictum of Thomas Binney; it is the simple truth to say that the early history of our Church is a heavy indictment against the national Church. In our annals of persecution, the clergyman comes on the scene with almost sickening frequency. But yet charity would put in a demurrer. Every clergyman was not a persecutor. It was a clergyman who, when he gave Sampson Turner his license to preach the gospel, said, "Mind you preach it plainly!" It was another clergyman who said, when the missionary had entered his village, "my curate has come." True; but as one swallow does not make a summer, so the few exceptional clergymen and squires and constables we read of, as countenancing and sympathising with the Primitive Methodist missionary, like points of light, only serve to make the surrounding darkness more pitchy dark.

Who can wonder that in many cases the missionary, like the devoted Thomas Proctor, died early, or that the strongest, like John Garner, contracted disease and bore the marks of suffering to their graves?

CHAPTER VI.

The Era of Consolidation.

THE statement that since 1843 Primitive Methodism has had no history worth speaking of, would be one very wide of the mark; and yet it none the less remains true that its later history lends itself, less than before, to descriptive treatment. During this period the activity displayed has been immense, but still, from the very nature of the work going on, and also, perhaps, because we are not sufficiently detached from it, we find it difficult, if not impossible, to take in the whole field of activity by a single *coup d'œil*. Results have to be chronicled rather than processes. A few facts and figures emerge like the coral reef above the waves, to tell of the toil of innumerable workers which, all unseen, has long been going on beneath the surface. The period to which we have come is pre-eminently the period of consolidation; the period in which the gains of the past, augmented by any increment the years may bring, have been sought to be conserved. The two kinds of edification —the edification of enlargement and the edification of improvement—have been going on together, but so largely the latter, that it gives a character to the period.

By the superannuation in 1842 of Messrs. Bourne

and Clowes (notably of the former), a new departure was rendered possible. A devolution and distribution of power took place. The direction of affairs fell into more and into younger hands. The transition was made with the approval of Mr. Clowes, but must have been painful to Mr. Bourne, who for twenty three years had been the Editor of the Magazines, and until 1839 had usually attended most of the District Meetings as General Committee delegate. The Conference of 1843 established a General Missionary Committee, and appointed Mr. John Garner to be its secretary, who, with the Editor and Book Steward, should reside in London. Thus "the central wheel of management," which had been fixed at the hamlet of Bemersley was now set up in the metropolis. The "Mission House" was fitted up on the book-room premises. For the space of eleven years its location was "a ground floor about twelve feet square, with a proportionate elevation." The numerical state of the Connexion when the Missionary Committee took over eleven missions which had mainly belonged to Hull circuit, was as follows :—Home stations, 235. Travelling preachers, 488. Local preachers, 7,438. Connexional chapels, 1,278. Members, 85,565. The next year still more missions were handed over to its care and its operations gradually extended. It may be convenient to give here the names of the ministers who have up to the present directed the affairs of the Mission House :—John Garner, 1843, William Garner, 1848, John Bywater, 1854, Moses Lupton, 1859, Thomas Jobling, 1865, Samuel Antliff, D.D., 1869, William Rowe (1), 1874, William Cutts, 1878, John Atkinson, 1883.

In November, of this same year (1843), an historical missionary meeting was held in Old Cramlington chapel, in the North Shields Circuit. At this meeting, Mr. W. Harland, who was the deputation, broached the idea of establishing a Mission in New Zealand by enlisting the co-operation of the Sabbath-schools of the Connexion. We have a lively recollection of having some thirty years later assisted at a missionary meeting in the same chapel, along with Mr. E. Hall and the late W. Graham. The associations of the building had their influence. An attempt was made to repeat the past by inaugurating a movement for a French mission. But while the Old Cramlington Society and the North Shields circuit were enthusiastic, the Connexion as a whole did not kindle. The French-mission project was a flash in the pan. Not so the New Zealand project. It took with the Connexion. The conference of 1842 had committed itself to the founding of a mission in Australia; so it came to pass that in the same year, 1844, Robert Ward sailed for New Zealand, and Joseph Long and John Wilson for South Australia; thus opening a new and creditable page in the history of the denomination which it is a pleasure to read.

The work directed by the General Missionary Committee from the beginning of its history has necessarily been a difficult work, and one likely to escape due recognition, Probably the stations it at first received were feeble and had proved burdensome to the circuits which had given them into its care. Now, at last, when by the toil of the missionaries and the vigilant supervision of the executive, the stations so far improve as to become self-supporting, they pass out of the hands

of their guardians and become incorporated in some contiguous district; so that from the very conditions of his work, a General Missionary Secretary is like a schoolmaster who receives his pupils in a backward condition and has to part with them just when their proficiency would do him the most credit. But, it may be said 'This is his business.' True: but for all that the trials and drawbacks incident to that business merit kindly consideration. Since 1843, home-missionary efforts have been chiefly carried on in the South of England, and excellent work has been done in the watering-places on the coast—in many large towns—and notably in London, where the recent progress of the denomination has been most gratifying. This progress has been signalized by the recent opening of New Surrey chapel. The event is a striking one viewed in many aspects. It was surely a happy coincidence that Mr. Spurgeon should choose for his text at the opening of the new sanctuary, the same passage of Scripture from which Rowland Hill preached a century before at the opening of the old octagonal. In the new Surrey chapel, as in the old, the staple theme will be "But we preach Christ crucified." The new structure will not only serve to perpetuate the honourable traditions of Nonconformity in London, but it stands to show what whole-hearted devotion to a great work can accomplish. The omens—of which there are many—are favourable. We accept them. They seem to indicate that a new era of evangelization is opening, in which we, as a denomination, shall do something more than consolidate—an era in which as of old the watch-word shall be "Advance."

To show the nature and value of the work accomplished by the General Missionary Committee and the work it is still carrying on in the field of Home-missionary enterprise, let one typical instance be given. London district was formed in 1853. It was composed of the three London circuits and of Saffron Walden circuit which had belonged to Hull district; and of Reading, Luton, High Wycombe, and Maidenhead circuits, which had been connected with Brinkworth district. Now from the formation of the district to 1877, twenty-one stations were attached to the London district which had belonged to the missions.

As yet, however, we could only be called a Home and Colonial Missionary people. We could not be said to have any foreign missions in the proper sense of the word. The time came when that reproach was to be wiped out; and we were to take our stand by the side of those who were working for the Master's sake amongst those of other kindred and of other tongues. For a long time the Norwich district had had its heart set upon establishing a mission to Africa, but it was not until 1870 that the movement took practical shape, and Messrs. Burnett and Roe sailed for the island of Fernando Po on the West coast of Africa. The circumstances which occasioned this new departure were of an interesting kind. They show us commerce preparing the way for the gospel as God intends it to do. Ship-carpenter Hands who plied his adze and saw during the day, and at night and on the Sabbath preached the gospel to so many as he could collect together; and his godly captain, who seconded his efforts, remind us of Aquila and Priscilla who, while

following their trade, helped to establish Christianity in three of the most famous cities of the ancient world. It was well for the Fernandians that the good ship *Elgiva*, Captain Robinson, touched at the island; for that led to an appeal being forwarded to the missionary executive—an appeal they deemed it right, regarding it as a providential call—to respond to. Owing to the trying nature of the climate, and the fact that the island belongs to the Spanish Government which sometimes has interposed vexatious restrictions, the mission has been a difficult and costly one; yet it has done our people good, by evoking their sympathy and liberality, and fanning their missionary zeal. The mission has been served by a succession of devoted men; nor has it been without its confessors and martyrs. Mr. W. Welford suffered detention by the governor and was banished from the island; Mrs. Maylott and Luddington, two devoted missionaries' wives, fell victims to the pestilential nature of the climate, as did also Mr. Blackburn who died in April, 1879, after eight months' service. Borrowing the words found in the obituary notice which appeared in the Conference minutes we may say of him :—"His career furnishes a specimen of consecration to God worthy to rank with that of Henry Martyn and others of kindred reputation. Thus has fallen our *first* standard-bearer, whose remains await, on a heathen soil, the resurrection of the just."

A brief reference must be made to the fact that the year 1870 saw also the establishment of a mission at Aliwal North in South Africa, which relatively to the difficulties encountered from the unsettled state of the

country, has been prosperous. The experience gained from this mission has led to the last Conference sanctioning a movement for still further sharing in the endeavour to carry civilizing and Christianizing influences into the interior of the "dark continent. When suitable arrangements can be perfected, a missionary party is to be sent into the Barotse country, north of the Zambesi. The conference of 1888 showed its quickened interest in missionary affairs by placing the General Missionary Committee on a wider and more representative basis, and by making provision for the establishment of District Missionary Committees. In this connection it only remains to be added, that in the year 1884, with the expression of mutual good-will, we parted from the Primitive Methodist churches of Canada. They ceased to have an independent existence in order to become part of the great Methodist church of the Dominion. In parting with them we surrendered 8,223 members, 99 travelling and 246 local preachers, and 237 chapels.

The sub-division of circuits and the multiplication of chapels, schools, and other property held in trust for the Connexion, have been marked features of the period now under consideration. Although in some cases this process of cutting up circuits may have been carried too far—until the station has ceased to be a *circuit* and the preacher an *itinerant*—yet the general results of the process have been beneficial, inasmuch as it has rendered it possible to concentrate effort on a workable area so as to develop more fully its latent possibilities. We have here a kind of high farming. The superior productiveness and larger yield of the

ground tilled, must at least be taken as a set-off against the failure to push out into the wilderness in order to clear and enclose virgin soil.

That the period from 1843 to 1888, has earned the right to be called the "chapel-building era," will we think, be admitted, when it is remembered that the last conference reported the number of connexional chapels as being 4,406 and the value of Church property £3,138,885 while in 1843 the number was only 1,278. There are chapel *and* chapels; and it would be manifestly unfair to take the one thousand and odd chapels of 1843, as representing an equal number of those of 1888. It may be said that chapel-building, like circuit-divisions, has been overdone. This may readily be conceded. Some preachers have no doubt almost sunk the evangelist and pastor in the chapel-builder, and others acquired the doubtful reputation of sturdy beggars. But the unprecedented growth of the population—the springing into existence of new towns like Middlesbrough, Crewe, and Barrow-in-Furness—and the aggregation of the people in large centres have laid on the denomination the task of doing something to meet these grave phenomena of our modern social life by seeking to make adequate and attractive provision for public worship. But the question arises whether we might not now for a while "Rest and be thankful," and devoteo urenergy to the endeavour to fill the chapels already built.

But our chapels have a poetic, as well as a prosaic side; and to many this side will be the more attractive Fain would we linger on the romance of chapel building,

but must content ourselves with giving one typical specimen.

Some four or five miles from Middleton-in-Teesdale, on the high road to Alston, is the village of Bowlees, in which we have a neat and attractive chapel. The tale which is told about the securing of the site on which that building stands, will illustrate the romance of our earlier history in this respect. For a long while fruitless efforts had been made to obtain a suitable plot of land. The agent of the great proprietor of the district—the Duke of Cleveland—had been often memorialized, but without success. But there was one man, at any rate, in the little society, whose faith was not to be daunted by any difficulty. "Willie" Wilkinson, a sturdy dalesman, racy of the soil, after a course of earnest prayer resolved to present his plea personally to the great landlord. The Duke and a distinguished shooting party were staying just then at the High Force Inn, a short distance further up the dale; and Willie accompanied, it is said, by the "travelling preacher" made his way thither. On asking permission to see his Grace, he was of course refused, but brushing past the man in buttons, Willie, closely followed by his companion, halted not until he reached the ducal presence. Without hesitation he walked up to his Grace and grasping him by the hand exclaimed:—

"How aire ye, Mister Deùk, an' hoo's Misses Deùk?"

The Duke instantly saw that he had a "character" before him, and adapting himself with great adroitness to the situation, asked Willie what he wished.

"Ah want a bit o' grund, Mister Deùk, to beeld a

Primitive Methodist cheppel on. An' Mister Deùk it's nut the furst teyme we've axed for't nowther. A've seygned pepper after pepper mysel' : an' we've nivver heerd nowt aboot it at aw."

The Duke turned to his agent, who was present, and asked if this was so. The agent confessed that Willie's statement was true, but said he had never considered the matter of sufficient importance to present to his Grace.

"Ah olways thowt" burst out Willie, "that that was t' way on't. Ah've nivver spoken to ye in my life, but ah was sure ye were a decent sooart o' man. Ah olways thowt it was them nasty bodies aboot ye. An', Mister Deùk, if we get sum o't, poachers aboot here convarted i' the cheppel we want to beeld, ye'll mebbe be obleeged to us."

"You shall have a piece of land, most certainly, my good man" said his Grace.

"Thank ye Mister Deùk."

"Where would you like to have it?" asked the Duke.

"Mister Deùk" said Willie, "theer's a bit o'grund down yonder i' the corner of a pastur', it grows nowt, it nivver grow'd nowt, it grows nowt but steanes, but it'll du varra weel fur a cheppel."

"You shall have it, Willie," said the Duke. "When would you like it?"

"At yance," replied Willie, with energy.

"But," said the Duke, "we are just ready to start for the Moors, and cannot attend to your request at present."

"Varra well, then," said Willie, "we'll say neyne o'clock in the mornin'."

"My agent shall be there at that time, and you may have as much as you want," said the Duke, and Willie was dismissed.

Promptly at nine o'clock the next morning Willie appeared on the chosen site carrying a bundle of short pieces of wood sharpened at the ends. In a few minutes the steward also arrived.

"Thoo's cum, then," was Willie's instant and ironic greeting. "Ah thowt thoo wud cum. Thoo dudn't dar but cum when t' Deùk tell't thee. But ah hev thee noo. Dis 'ta see them stobs? Thoo'll put them in just where ah tell thee. T' Deùk sed ah was to hev as much grund as ah wanted."

And the agent meekly followed Willie from corner to corner, marking off with his "stobs" the ample site which the good man's "holy boldness" had so triumphantly secured.

The era of consolidation has naturally enough been prolific in legislation. The concession of invitations to preachers within their own districts (1872) followed (1879) by the invitation system being made general throughout the Connexion, dealt a heavy blow at federalism or districtism, and naturally led up to the partition of larger and the more influential districts. Under the old system, a minister might spend the whole of his life within one district, and thus by the cumulative weight of experience might acquire unbounded influence therein. The "district man" will soon be as extinct as the dodo. This legislation was radical, and will undoubtedly be far reaching in its effects. But as yet it is too early to attempt an estimate of the comparative advantages

School legislation of 1874-5, and the appointment of a Sunday School agent were needful enactments, and and disadvantages of the two systems. The Sunday have been justified by their results. Under the prudent and energetic management of the successive agents—Messrs. J. Wood, M.A., T. Whittaker, and J. Ferguson—the schools of the Connexion have been drawn more closely together and are becoming increasingly the nursery of the church. This will be the most fitting place to give the names of the ministers who have filled the office of General Committee Secretary since the creation of the office as distinct from that of Missionary Secretary. James Garner, 1865; Robert Smith, 1869; Charles Smith, 1874; Robinson Cheeseman, 1879; Thomas Whitehead, 1883.

The record of our book establishment is an exceedingly satisfactory one. Subjoined we give a list of the book stewards of the Connexion from the beginning of the present period: Thomas Holliday and John Hallam, 1843; Thomas King, 1854; John Day, 1859; Richard Davies, 1859; William Lister, 1865; George Lamb, 1870; John Dickenson, 1875; Ralph Fenwick, 1880; Joseph Toulson, 1885. The important aid which the Book-room has been able to render to our Connexional interests has been owing not only to the business ability and enterprise of successive Book Stewards but also to the literary and business qualities of the Connexional Editors. In their hands our serials have, especially of late years, taken a high place in the regard of our own people and of the religious world generally. The following ministers have filled this important office: John

Flesher, 1843; John Petty, Assistant, 1851, and Chief 1852; William Harland, 1857; W. Antliff, D.D., 1862; Philip Pugh, 1867; James MacPherson, 1872; C. C. McKichnie, 1876; Thomas Newell, 1887.

Brief mention must be made of the provision which the Connexion has afforded for the education of its youth and the culture of its rising ministry. In 1864 Elmfield College, York, was opened, and soon took a foremost place amongst the middle-class schools of the country. The venerable John Petty was its first governor. At his lamented death in 1868 Mr. Thomas Smith succeeded. When in 1879 he died, Mr. Robert Smith, the present governor, took his place. Bourne College, Birmingham, of which Mr. G. Middleton is the governor, was opened in 1876. Its course of study is similar to that pursued at York, and the school is doing good work in the educational interests of Primitive Methodism.

For some years Sunderland district persistently endeavoured to gain the sanction of Conference for the establishment of a Theological College. At last its end was gained. The old infirmary was bought and adapted to the required purpose. Here from 1868 to 1881 Dr. W. Antliff—latterly assisted and then succeeded by Mr. T. Greenfield—carried on the work which Mr. Petty had begun at York, in training a number of accepted candidates for the ministry. Afterwards the college was removed to the new building, Alexandra Park, Manchester, where the work of training is now carried on under Mr. J. Macpherson as principal.

The period from 1843 to the present has naturally

witnessed the removal of many who did yeoman service for the Connexion. Mr. Clowes died on the 2nd of March, 1851, aged 71 years. What a place he held in the affections of his brethren, and what a gap his removal from their midst must have caused, will be evident from the following letter written by Mr. Flesher when the death of Mr. Clowes was hourly expected.

"London, Feb. 28, 1851.

My Dear Brother Sissons,—*First:* Your report of the stroke which has prostrated the man of God is fraught with solemnity. It seems to bring on J—— and me the solemnities of death as associated with sweet recollections of nearly thirty years' friendship with him over whom you are watching.

Second: If not yet gone, may his soul be strong for the flight from earth to that heaven where hundreds, if not thousands, of his spiritual children will greet him, and whither tens of thousands of his affectionate admirers will shortly follow him! I can write no more. My heart is full. I shout Hallelujah! J—— unites with me in weeping affection for Clowes, for all his, and you and yours. Lord save us.

JOHN FLESHER.

Let us know when heaven opens for the soul of the mighty one."

Hugh Bourne lingered not long after his early associate. On October 11, 1852, he quietly breathed his last, just after exclaiming, "My old companions! old companions! my mother!"

Many others there are whose names recur to us while we write, and whose forms rise up before us. Gladly would we speak of them; but the limitations of space forbid. Enough:

"We have no need of names and epitaphs:
We talk about the dead by our firesides."

CHAPTER VII.

Side-lights on Facts and Figures.

IF we have at all succeeded in our design in writing these pages, some things affecting our idea of the past history of Primitive Methodism will already have been made tolerably clear to the reader. Gathering up the definitive results of our survey, the following facts, we trust, will stand clear out from the midst of the incessant movement and bewildering complexity which characterize all history, and scarcely less that of a religious denomination than of a people. We see the need for a new evangelistic movement which existed at the beginning of the present century, and that this need raises the expectancy that such a movement will be begun. We see also something of the social environment amidst which that movement, if forthcoming, will have to do its work in the first quarter of the century. Then we watch the evolution of a new religious community. We see it first quickened by an evangelistic impulse—seeking new methods—thwarted and turned aside into an independent path by the force of circumstances, and finally coalescing with other movements of kindred origin and having similar aims and methods. Again, we view it as it pursues its aggressive course from river-basin to

river-basin, and from county to county; and although we know it has no line of route laid down, we feel we are able to predict with tolerable certainty where it will have got to at any given time before 1843. We see also how this was accomplished by the threefold method of circuit branches—circuit missions—and circuit divisions; the two first characterizing what may be called the Home Missionary period of the Connexion's history, whilst the last is seen most fully at work in the period of consolidation which followed. Then surely we cannot but see that the results, whatever they were, were gained by means of toil and suffering almost without parallel. And lastly, although there may be no sharp parting-line between the Home Missionary period and that of consolidation, yet sufficiently striking differences mark the two periods, beside those embodied in their names. At first circuits are the only centres of aggressive activity. Then districts play a leading part, each developing its own distinctive individuality. In the second period we mark an increase of centralization, in the appointment of an executive or in the strengthening and enlargement of its powers, and in the consequent curtailment of power or lessening of responsibillty of circuits or districts. There is observable too, a tendency, which becomes more marked as we advance, towards solidarity. This levelling down to connexional homogeneity is gained at whatever expense of district distinctions. Connexionial solidarity is thought a sufficient good in itself to justify the sacrifice of district diversity. Here too we see an expansion of missionary enterprise, especially in the colonies and in foreign lands. Division

of circuits resulting in division of labour is continually going on. Chapels rise all over with astonishing rapidity. Schools are organized and banded together and regarded and administered as the hope of the Church. In short, as we have seen, the very magnitude and multiplex character of the work going on in this second period, beggars minute description and dispenses us from the requirement of enumerating details. If these are wanted; if any one wishes to know when such or such a chapel was built, or when Hull or Leeds circuit was divided again and again, are not such details written in the Book of the Chronicles of our Israel? Let the inquisitive reader turn to these for the desired information.

Such then are some of the ascertained results of our survey. But up to this point, Primitive Methodism has been considered mainly in the light of an aggressive religious movement. Its aspect as an ecclesiastical organization has not come under special notice. Now, though the larger and better portion of the history of a religious community may not be written in its "Minutes of Conference," a certain portion of its history is chronicled therein; and it is this portion of our history that demands brief notice. An ecclesiastical organization may be regarded as fairly represented by its highest court. The vitality which is in it blossoms annually in its conference—or by whatever other name it is known. It therefore now only remains to us to give with needful elucidations a table of the Connexion's progress from the beginning, as published by successive Conferences. This will be best done by supplying a list of the towns

at which the conference has been held, and, when known, the names of the presidents. The figures following the name of a deceased president will indicate, first, the year in which he entered the ministry, and second, the year of his death. The numerical progress made from year to year will be shown by the reported increase. The fact of an occasional decrease or succession of decreases will prove that the Connexion has not had a career of uninterrupted progress. Sometimes it has had to lament over declension. It has had to experience vicissitudes and pass through crises. The recognition of these facts will put us upon an inquiry into the causes and will lead us to notice that legislation has sometimes been corrective rather than constructive or perfective, having for its avowed object the lessening of hindrances or the removal of abuses.

But though we speak of Conferences we are not to think that full-fledged conferences were a feature of our denominational life from the first. The name Primitive Methodist was assumed in 1812, but it was not till 1820 that the first conference was held. The fact is our polity is a growth and not a manufacture. A paper constitution is soon made; but ours has been slowly evolved, just as the denomination has been. Bourne, speaking of the Connexion in its early shape, says:—"Improvements scarcely ever took place except through individual enterprise, or when called forth by gradual necessity." The truth of this remark is seen in the circumstances which led to the issuing of class tickets in 1811, the appointment of regular quarterly meetings in 1812, the adoption of society rules in

1814, and the creation of the office of superintendent preacher in the same year. Circuit committees grew out of the appointment of a special committee which sought to relieve Nottingham circuit from embarrassment. It did its work so well that every one felt (in 1818) the propriety of reappointing it for the next quarter. Thus circuit committees became a recognised institution in the Connexion. Necessity showed the way to the enactment of a measure "which was a means of filling up a chasm or deficiency in discipline." So branches owed their origin in 1819 to the unwieldy size of Nottingham circuit, which caused a difficulty in making out the preachers' plans. Then we see this process of evolution taking place in the case of Conference itself. In 1819 when the Connexion comprised four circuits, it was felt that in order to bring about greater cohesion and to render joint action possible annual meetings were necessary. A preparatory meeting was held at Nottingham, in August, 1819, to make arrangement for holding the first Conference at Hull, in May 1820. For the constitution of this preparatory meeting, a basis of representation was laid down, which has ever since differentiated our polity from that of other Methodist bodies. But not even was this two-to-one principle of representation hailed as a heaven-sent inspiration. It was not alleged to be laid down in the New Testament, or adopted on high *a priori* grounds. It was a conclusion arrived at after the discussion of its pros and cons. Some even argued that on this basis the travelling preachers would form a greater proportion in that meeting than they did in any other. Nevertheless this argument was set aside,

and such considerations as convenience and the saving of expense carried the day. Having themselves come together on this basis, the Preparatory Meeting, "not knowing how they could improve upon it," decided that the first Conference should be constituted on the same basis. At this conference, the state of the Connexion was reported to be as follows :—eight circuits, 48 travelling preachers; 277 local preachers; 7,842 membors. No returns of membership had been given since July 26, 1811, when the number in society was estimated at 200. From the numerical returns of 1820, Mr. Petty concludes that the progress of the community for several years must have been but slow; since of the 7,842 members reported to this Conference, there is reason to believe that half had been added during the preceding year. He proceeds to point out some of the causes which had probably operated to retard the growth of the Connexion. Amongst these he specifies the social and political conditions adverted to in the introductory chapter; the fact that the missionaries had laboured largely in thinly populated districts and that the denomination could offer few outward attractions—such as the learning or eloquence of its ministers, the elegance of its places of worship, or the social standing of its adherents—likely to draw or retain converts within its communion. Due weight should be given to these considerations, especially to the last two. However many or few names may have been inscribed on the muster-roll of the Connexion year by year, it is a fact quite notorious, that these names do not represent by any means the amount of direct good accomplished by

its agency. In certain districts especially, the denomination has largely played the part of "lion-provider" for other churches. We have beaten the bushes and others have netted the game. For instance Mr. Petty states on the authority of a Baptist minister, that "a certain dissenting brother at Bury St. Edmunds counted eighty persons admitted into the fellowship of his church who attributed their enlightenment, under God, to the open-air ministrations of the Primitive Methodist missionaries." Let such facts as these be kept in mind as we glance down the following table :—

Year	Place of Conference.	President.	Increase	Decrease
1820	Hull	George Hanford		
1821	Tunstall		8552	
1822	Loughborough		8824	
1823	Leeds		4254	
1824	Halifax		4035	
1825	Sunderland	Thomas King	75	
1826	Nottingham	James Bourne	No returns	
1827	Manchester		Do.	
1828	Tunstall		...	1897
1829	Scotter		2110	
1830	Hull		2013	
1831	Leicester		1681	
1832	Bradford		4185	
1833	Sunderland		7120	
1834	Birmingham		3597	
1835	Tunstall		4772	
1836	Lynn Regis		5657	
1837	Sheffield		2971	
1838	Darlaston		2389	
1839	Bradford		2730	
1840	Manchester		3594	
1841	Reading		1977	
1842	Newcastle-on-Tyne	James Bourne, 1860 ..	3548	
1843	Nottingham	John Garner	6050	
1844	Lynn Regis	Wm. Clowes	2840	
1845	Hull	Wm. Clowes	...	
1846	Tunstall	Wm. Clowes	401	820
1847	Halifax	John Garner	1191	

Year.	Place of Conference.	President.	Increase	Decrease
1848	Leeds	Thomas King, 1819-74	2606	
1849	Sunderland	Stephen Longdin	6156	
1850	Nottingham	John Garner	9205	
1851	Yarmouth	John Garner	4019	
1852	Sheffield	John Garner	1203	
1853	York	Joseph Bailey	...	1051
1854	Manchester	John Garner, 1819-56	...	1020
1855	Hull	Geo. Tetley, 1822-77	...	2055
1856	Darlaston	Sampson Turner	2699	
1857	Cambridge	Thomas Bateman	2126	
1858	Doncaster	Sampson Turner, 1818-76	5533	
1859	Newcastle-on-Tyne	Wm. Garner	7644	
1860	Tunstall	John Petty, 1826-68	8251	
1861	Derby	Wm. Garner, 1823-81	3278	
1862	Sheffield	Wm. Harland, 1828-81.	5791	
1863	Leeds	Wm. Antliff, D.D.	5396	
1864	York	James Garner	2109	
1865	Hull	W. Antliff, D.D., 1830-84	610	
1866	Chester	Geo. Lamb	2113	
1867	Luton	Thos. Bateman	3513	
1868	Sunderland	Wm. Lister, 1827-80	4848	
1869	Grimsby	Philip Pugh, 1834-71	266	
1870	Nottingham	Moses Lupton, 1822-75	934	
1871	Oldham	Jas. Garner	...	814
1872	Yarmouth	Jas. Macpherson	217	
1873	London	S. Antliff, D.D.	...	41
1874	Hull	Wm. Rowe, 1839-88	112	
1875	Leicester	Robt. Smith	5060	
1876	Newcastle-on-Tyne	John Dickenson, 1843-88	7085	
1877	Scarborough	Thos. Smith, 1834-79	4213	
1878	Manchester	Henry Phillips, 1846-86	2030	
1879	Leeds	Thos. Newell	...	171
1880	Grimsby	C. C. McKechnie	...	186
1881	Hull	Chas. Kendall, 1839-82	2621	
1882	Sheffield	J. Wood, M.A.	2369	
1883	South Shields	Wm. Cutts	5151	
1884	Tunstall	Geo. Lamb, 1829-86	...	22
1885	Reading	Ralph Fenwick	1187	
1886	Derby	John Atkinson	...	739
1887	Scarborough	Thos. Whitehead	21	
1888	Liverpool	Thos. Whittaker	1212	

A few elucidatory observations on the foregoing tables are perhaps called for. The absence, which according to our modern notions and usages may well

be called conspicuous, of the president's name in connection with the early conferences is significant. "No information obtainable" we are told. The probability is that each day the conference sat, it elected a fresh president, who was as likely to be a layman as a travelling preacher—nay more likely. Again we see evolution has been at work. When we do come to the succession of presidents we find many honoured names, some of whom happily survive to guide the affairs of the Connexion or to enjoy well-earned retirement; but still we have had men of mark who have never passed the chair—such men (thinking only of the dead) as John Flesher, Henry Hebbron, William Sanderson, Robert Key and others—scarcely less eminent than these—who in their day were known as powerful preachers, capable administrators, or successful evangelists.

It will be noticed that no numerical returns are given for the year 1826-7 and that a heavy decrease is reported for 1828. This was a critical period in the history of the Connexion. Men's hearts failed them. Even Bourne himself is said to have had misgivings as to the probable perpetuity of the Connexion. The causes of this declension are not far to seek. Consolidation had not kept pace with extension. The rapid multiplication of preachers, many of whom were necessarily unequal to the duties demanded of them; the creeping into the churches of men—headstrong lovers of power, who sought their own way, caring little whether it were or were not God's way, or the churches' way, and many of whom had escaped from the firmer and therefore uncongenial discipline

of other churches—these were amongst the chief causes of the time of trial which was now experienced. "They want discipline," said the Rev. Daniel Isaac. Yes they *did* want discipline, and they got it. Some of the legislation of this period was severe and perhaps, in some cases, bore heavily on the innocent, but it was effectual in largely purging the Connexion of the mischief-working element. Say the 'Minutes' of 1828, "It was therefore found necessary for all the preachers to be put on beginning, to make proof of their ministry. One consequence of this was, that in the course of twelve months, about thirty who had been travelling preachers were parted with." We see from this that "wear and tear" of another kind than that which resulted from toil and suffering, has at intervals marked the course of the Connexion's history. Almost every large town has had its season of trial. Hull experiences it when the erratic John Stamp heads a secession and founds the Primitive Methodist New Connexion. Edinburgh mission suffers when Nathaniel West causes a division.

There are troubles at Nottingham (1834). The Superintendent, Mr. Jersey, is unequal to the crisis. "His days of usefulness in the connexion are numbered," and he becomes a Baptist minister and emigrates to America. But Mr. W. Antliff—the junior minister on the station—distinguished himself by his untiring efforts to minimize the disaster and thus early gives promise of that eminence he afterwards attained.

Such instances might be multiplied, but enough has been said to show that ever and anon throughout the

progress of the Connexion, local waste has been going on. This fact also should be borne in mind as we study the numerical returns of successive years.

The large increase of 7,120 reported in 1833 synchronized with the visitation of the cholera to this country. The ravages of this fell disease at once stimulated the churches to greater activity, especially in large towns, and predisposed the people to listen to the gospel. In 1835 the deaths for the year were reported for the first time. The total death-roll of the Connexion, since and including that year, amounts to 96,585—a fact which has both its bright and sombre side, and gives food for reflection. The successive decreases which marked the years 1853-5, are significant to those acquainted with the religious history of this country during that period. Though we were not in the midst of the conflict and kept to our work, we were in the neighbourhood of the conflict and suffered instead of profiting by it.

For Primitive Methodist Hymnology 1818—1825—1854 and 1887 are important dates. On the covers of the Magazine for April and July, 1818, appears the following advertisement:—"Speedily will be published, price sixpence, a general collection of Hymns and Spiritual Songs for Camp Meetings and Revivals; a New Edition enlarged and improved; to which will be prefixed an account of the origin of the English Camp Meetings, &c." But this was not the first Hymn Book Hugh Bourne had published. Beside his reprint of Lorenzo Dow's collection in 1809, he had sometime after issued a somewhat bulky volume which sold for half-a-crown, and which did not prove a success.

From the minutes of 1821 it is evident that another hymn book was being thought of "What is done concerning original hymns? Answer: It is resolved that the original hymns now brought in be accepted; and that the circuits be requested to forward all the original hymns they can." The large hymn book—containing many hymns by Bourne and W. Sanders—was published in 1825; and it and the "Small Book" were bound together till 1854, when the collection compiled and edited by Mr. Flesher was published. The New Hymnal of 1887 may be justly regarded as one of the most catholic collections in existence, and speaks much for the breadth of view, the taste, and wide knowledge of hymnal literature possessed by the Committee to whom the work was entrusted. With a book like this, and the equally excellent Sunday School Hymn Book who shall say that we are not admirably equipped for the service of song.

In 1854 the conference received a deputation from the U. K. Alliance and passed a resolution in favour of the objects it aims to accomplish. This was probably the first endorsement of the kind given by a powerful religious body in its highest official assembly. But as early as 1832—in the Minutes as consolidated and embodied at the Conference held at Bradford—we find the following:

Q.—"What is the opinion of Conference in regard to temperance societies?"

A.—"We highly approve of them, and recommend them to the attention of our people in general."

These facts will show that Primitive Methodism sympathised with the cause of temperance when that

cause was less popular than it is now, and that its influence has been exerted in the direction of social reform.

It may be useful in closing to give, in a handy form, the state of the Connexion as reported to the last Conference.

Members of Society	192,874
Members who have died during the year	2,923
Travelling Preachers	1,041
Local Preachers...	16,219
Class Leaders	10,676
Sabbath Schools	4,190
Sabbath School Teachers	61,792
Sabbath School Scholars	423,713
Connexional Chapels	4,406
Other Chapels and Rooms	1,444
Hearers	561,883