Our Church in Sandburg.

BY S. W. MOORE, D.D.,

OF THE MEMPHIS CONFERENCE.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

THOS O SUMMERS, D D.

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To

The Rev. JOSEPH B. WEST, D.D., and the Revs. S. P. WHITTEN, J. R. PLUMMER, A. MIZELL, C. C. MAYHEW, J. G. MYERS, J. B. HAMILTON, J. R. MCCLURE, J. W TARRANT, of the Tennessee Conference; the Rev. W. E. ELLIS, of the North Mississippi Conference; the Rev. JOSEPH TURRENTINE, of the Little Rock Conference;

And the Rev. W. C. JOHNSON, Editor of the *Western Methodist;* and to the memory of the Revs. JOSEPH E. WHITE, B. B. ABERNATHY, J. L. HILL, M. P. PARHAM, and WILLIAM COOLEY, who died in the faith and in the work;

Faithful brethren all, who, with the Author, were admitted on trial into the Tennessee Conference, at Columbia, A.D. 1844, *and into full connection, at Nashville, A.D.* 1846:

"OUR CHURCH IN SANDBURG"

IS RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY

Dedicated.

INTRODUCTION.

OUR excellent friend, the author of this work, caused the sheets to be laid on our table while they were passing through the press, in order to elicit our opinion. We have read it.

"And now, what of it? Is it a work of fiction?" Yes—no.

"Our Church in Sandburg" is as much Utopian as "Post-Oak Circuit;" but the reader who is acquainted with the history of Methodism for the past thirty years, especially in the South-west, will not be at a loss to locate "Sandburg," and to identify every minister and member of "Our Church" at the place. The characters are drawn to the life: Snell, Ticknor, Grumbles, Peters, Trigg, Standby, Hardwill — Old Sister Phipps and Aunt Ruthie—and many others, of both sexes, saints and sinners, preachers and teachers, stewards and singers—surely, we have seen them all in the flesh—and the reader will know them all at sight!

The fluctuating fortunes of a small station are truthfully depicted—pastors are individualized—there were twenty-six in "Our Church in Sandburg," during the

thirty years over which this history extends—Presiding Elders are photographed — local preachers are brought into favorable notice—the inevitable contention about instrumental music, with the usual victory on the side of those who advocated its use—suppers, concerts, etc., to raise supplies—development in the Sunday-school — attainment of a respectable social *status* and settled prosperity—all these, and other matters, are presented with striking verisimilitude, as if the author, as will be suspected, had been *quorum pars.*

It is quite likely that he anticipated our agreement with him in his views on the various points here presented; if so, he was not mistaken. Those who wish a pleasing and correct concrete view of Methodism in this region—the system in its actual working—will find it in this charming volume. T. O. S.

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OUR CHURCH IN SANDBURG.

CHAPTER I.

History proposed—Family name—Two questions—Location—"The Meeting-house"—How it was built—Society in Sandburg—Representative men—Representative members—Local preacher—Other names hereafter—Undeveloped country.

I PROPOSE to write the history of a Methodist Church, beginning at the date of my earliest recollection, and tracing its career through a period of thirty years. I am to record its vicissitudes—its struggles in the day of small things—its battles against opposing forces—its seasons of revival and of coldness, as these varied times passed over it during a generation.

Memory recalls the holy zeal of its members, whose mutual affection and devotion to a common cause found frequent utterance in the phrase, "Our Church." In sympathy with that sentiment—a sympathy unchanged by half a century—I adopt their family name, and write of *Our Church*—its rank and file, its chiefs, its pastors—detailing with care

and candor their errors, their virtues, their failures, and their triumphs.

The design of this history is not merely to perpetuate the names and dates of a past age; it is rather to embalm the deeds and friendships of bygone days—to paint portraits in which expression shall be more fondly prized than lifeless features, and thus preserve fresh and familiar in the living present whatever was noblest and dearest in the buried past.

A modern writer asserts that there are two questions to be answered in writing biography: "What influence did the departed exert on society? and What influence did society exert on him?" Accepting this assertion as both true and wise, I shall keep its philosophy constantly in mind, and endeavor to show wherein and how much Our Church affected the destinies of society, and wherein and how far its course was modified by outside influence.

Since this record is in no sense a geographical treatise, but merely a recital of the rise and progress of a certain association of people during a stated period, there seems to be no reason why the exact location should be given. However, this much may be said: The location appears on the map between the longitude of Washington, on the east, and the Mississippi River, on the west; and between the thirty-fifth and thirty-seventh degrees of north latitude. Within these confines stands the town of Sandburg, the seat and theater of the scenes and transactions detailed in these pages. Alas! there live now but few who walked those

sandy streets and worshiped in that dear little temple at the time from which these annals begin.

"The meeting-house," as above intimated, was small. It was a framed building, not painted, but very respectable for "the people called Methodists" of that day, in that section of country. The "society" was also small, numbering, I suppose, not more than thirty names. But they were zealous, devoted, united. I recall, even now, the boyish wonder with which I used to listen to a chorus which they often sang to one of their favorite songs:

> We're all united, heart and hand,
> Joined in one band completely;
> We are marching to Immanuel's land,
> Where the waters flow more sweetly.

This close union resulted, no doubt, partly from uniform views of doctrines and similar experience—for herein they walked by the same rule and minded the same things; but it was made more conspicuous by the outside pressure of an unfriendly community—an unfriendliness as distinctly marked as the religious character of the brethren. Some outsiders regarded them with contempt, others with indifference, and others still with feelings of bitter opposition. Methodism was not at all popular. To espouse it meant conflict always with public opinion, sometimes with friends and relatives.

How, then, could a society, so feeble and so unpopular, build for themselves a house so respectable? It was easily done: The members all gave what they could in cash and material, and some of them

did much of the work. For instance, Brother Carsner had a saw-mill a few miles off, Brother Sizemore was a number-one woodsman, Brother Lewis owned a good team; so it was easy for these three to contribute liberally in cutting, hauling, and sawing lumber. Nearly all the citizens contributed; some because they owned real estate, and knew that a good church would add to the general character of the town, and perhaps increase the value of building-lots; and others because it was then considered a social duty to assist a neighbor at a "house-raising," and they did not discriminate between this enterprise and the more common one of raising a private house. There were a few who desired to meet their fellow-citizens as often and in as large numbers as possible: they were candidates for popular favor. Sunday suited them as well as any other day, and hence they subscribed liberally to the undertaking. So it turned out, that by getting help from all these sources, our little flock soon finished the best church-edifice in all that region. Except in the one fact of its unpainted exterior, it was nearly equal to the best building of any kind in Sandburg.

Allusion was made above to the tone of public opinion that prevailed in and around town. That tone, it must be confessed, was neither pure nor high. A few examples of representative men in different grades of society will show the character of the people among whom our brethren lived. But before naming individuals, let me say generally: There were some well-educated men and

women; a larger number who were well informed and practically wise, but unlearned in books; and a yet greater mass who ranged from bare ability to read, down to wholly unlettered ignorance. These classes made up the people of Sandburg and the surrounding country. Now, more particularly, let me introduce some of the fellow-citizens of my boyhood's days.

Philip Krumpter was a well-to-do farmer, not far from town, lived high, and kept free house, after the fashion of the times. He warmed himself in winter and cooled himself in summer with brandy made at his own distillery. There was no Bible in his house till the Bible Society furnished it. His sons and daughters—he had two of each—were leaders in all the frolics of town and neighborhood, had been to dancing-school, and were far better educated in their heels than in their heads. When they went to preaching, it was for recreation, to see their friends, or to amuse themselves by laughing at the exercises. A warm, stirring song, with lively chorus, was, in their estimation, "mighty funny;" and a shout stimulated their ridicule to the highest pitch. Their property gave them the passport to respectability—their merry living drew around them a considerable circle of friends. Their influence was all against religion — avowedly against Our Church.

Ezekiel Snow was another prominent citizen, an ignorant man, as to books, but practically wise in worldly things. He had grown rich by hard work and rigid economy, was very moral in his habits,

sober and temperate in all things, was one of the few outsiders who never used profane language; but he evinced no interest at all in religion. He occasionally took his family to preaching — his house was a mile and a half from town—when the weather was fine and the roads were good, so that he could drive up in impressive style; but he remained out of doors or occupied a back seat, looked unconcerned, and returned home well satisfied with himself. His wife claimed to be a Presbyterian, was an exemplary woman, but had no church of her sort near enough to attend, and not being a very positive character, her influence in the family was scarcely perceivable, and the children grew up in a kind of genteel ungodliness.

Joshua Freed, a man in pretty good circumstances, was a worse man than either of those before-named. He was dissolute in morals—followed with greediness all the baser amusements of the day, such as gander-pulling and cock-fighting. He kept game chickens, and did not scruple to spend Sunday in this cruel pastime. His family consisted of four boys, who were growing up, at this time, without restraint and without home association, except that of their wicked father and of careless servants. Their mother died when the youngest was born. Their house was a lawless abode of passion and revelry, and their life in society, till excesses in crime disgraced both father and sons, was a deadly miasma.

It is pleasing to pass to a better model of manhood, though he was not all that true manhood

implies. Col. John Mount was the most extensively known and by far the most popular citizen of Sandburg. He was every inch a man in size and features, and a perfect gentleman in manners and address. He had inherited large property, was thoroughly college-bred, and lived up to the highest standard of easy elegance. Having no professional engagements, and being ambitious of political preferment, he was frequently a candidate for public favors, and was several times elected to the State Legislature, and afterward to Congress. It was considered, at that time, necessary for a candidate to treat the people on public occasions: his success depended more upon the amount of whisky he distributed than upon the brains he possessed; and Col. Mount found the affections of the masses more readily secured by a well-filled jug than by the sparkling creations of a well-filled mind. But while he showed his liberality by profuse treating, he must evince his sympathy with the dear people by partaking of the treat; and thus he grew so fond of his dram that, though seldom really drunk, he was more seldom perfectly sober. His influence over all classes was very great: unfortunately, it was on the wrong side; for while he was a believer in Christianity, and showed its professors profound respect, he served the world and advocated sin with the whole energy of his being. His example was a stumbling-block to many who mistook his pleasing manners for genuine virtues, and, in admiring his brilliant qualities, readily glided into his pernicious vices.

One of the most highly esteemed young men of Sandburg was John Dexter, attorney at law. He was a handsome man, witty and fascinating in conversation, and was, therefore, much courted in society. Fun was his besetting sin, and this he could extort from every subject, however grave, that chanced to be introduced. Thus, though not an avowed infidel, he diverted the thoughts of others from serious matters, and drew them into all kinds of reckless gayety. These, with the Gibbons family—rich, and worldly-minded—and Dr. Browman—a popular physician, whose daughters were beauties and belles—give a fair outline view of our social surroundings. That is, these were the leaders of *outside* life: what they said and did was law to those below them in society—a law more potent in shaping the destinies of a generation than the statutes of a powerful government.

I need not mention the names of many who dragged out their days of weary toil without impressing their fellow-men. Of these there are some whose brief prominence will appear in this narrative; but the rest—passive as they were in the transactions of their day—such as Joe Sizeman, who said, "Of all sorts of fresh meat, give me good old bacon," and Peter Overton, the wood-hewer, who said, "I never expect to feel befitten to join any religious society; but if I ever do, it will be the Freemasons"—did nothing worthy to be recorded. It is sad to think of the multitudes who live, labor, suffer, and die, and are forgotten forever. Not unnoticed by their God while living, not forgotten by

him in the profound solitude of their graves, they pass into an oblivion with men, as nameless as leaves in a wilderness.

I will now introduce some of our most conspicuous members, as memory calls back their features: First comes the venerable James Carsner, the old class-leader. We all called him Uncle Jimmie, for he was a general favorite with the young people, and enjoyed the full confidence of the whole community. He was tall, large-framed, slightly bent by age, with keen black eyes, benevolent features, and a full shock of gray hair—the crown of a noble life. His broad, beaming face was always cleanly shaved on meeting days—it was unchristian then to wear long beard. Uncle Jimmie "seemed to be a pillar" in the Church. His zeal knew no abatement, his judgment was sound, his social *status* good, his reputation unchallenged. When he led class, it was as one having authority; but it was a paternal authority, for he was kind to the erring, gentle to the timid, sympathetic with the sorrowing, and able to guide to higher attainments those who were growing in grace. When he prayed in public, it was as one having power with God, for heaven seemed near to earth as he appealed to the throne of grace. When he sang, what a voice! how clear! how strong! His favorite song was,

The voice of free grace cries, Escape to the mountain;

and when he launched out in those lofty strains, there was a mellowness in the tone that spoke the feelings of an earnest and honest heart, and secured the reverent attention of the congregation. Every-

body acknowledged him to be a good man, even those who added, "but an enthusiast."

Not far from him lived old Mother Black, then the oldest Methodist in those parts. She was a lovely specimen of aged womanhood, was the mother of a large family, whose children—the Blacks and Lewises—perpetuated her vigorous character and her Christian faith. They constituted, to a great extent, the strength of our little society. Sister Lewis, oldest daughter of Mother Black, was the most demonstrative member among us. I recollect how heartily she used to shout, and how the cold chills would thrill me when her wild key-note, "Glory! glory!" gave the signal of a general outburst of praise. She reared a lovely family—none of them remarkable for intellect or culture, but all remarkable for uniform and consistent piety. Her daughter Mattie, a meek and gentle girl, was a great pet with both boys and girls in the village school. Even those who made light of her religion, and declared it impossible for one so young to be a Christian, respected her virtues and admired her beautiful life. The untimely death of this amiable girl was, if I remember correctly, the first loss Our Church sustained. It was indeed a shock to her schoolmates, who knew but little of death, and followed her to the grave with strange and silent wonder. It was a serious loss to the Church-members, for they doted on their little sister, and anticipated a rich harvest of good works in the maturity of her life.

We were blessed with the labors of a local

preacher, Rev. John Givons. He was a comely man, and pleasant to look upon, about thirty years old, very positive in his manner, free and fluent in conversation, but sometimes too solemn and gloomy in expression. His zeal was fervent and tireless, but his gifts as a preacher were not of a high order. His delivery was plain, his voice rather monotonous, his gesticulations too rapid and stormy. He was a saddle and harness maker, managed a large shop, and worked himself a portion of the time; he was, therefore, not expected to preach carefully-prepared sermons. But his sound sense, practical illustrations, and blameless life, secured and maintained the general respect of the people.

There were two other families, the Crossties and Mundays, persons in medium condition as to property, and more moderate as to cultivation, who were sound in the faith and reputable in Christian character. Nearly all of these two family connections were devoted Methodists, bearing the burden of our unpopular name and cause with commendable firmness. Socially, they were among the best of their class, and were no mean element of our strength.

There were in our little band a few of the poorest of the poor. The Browder family, utterly thriftless in worldly matters, professed to be laying up treasure in heaven. Mrs. Baughn, the hapless wife of a miserably-worthless man, claimed and received the fellowship and sympathy of our sisterhood. Baughn, whose wealth consisted in a poor character and eight unpromising children, lived about

half a mile from town, in a cheerless, leaky, pine-log cabin. The old lady had higher aspirations than her do-less lord, had seen better days before the star of wedlock shone malignantly on her destiny, and would often pour out her. sorrows in strains of womanly eloquence in the presence of her more fortunate sisters. But she had a disagreeable twang in her voice, and a flippant alliteration in her language, which often produced disgust or mirth where she sought for pity or assistance. There was something laughable in her frequent and fluent use of the term, "Seems like." On one occasion, when she had called upon a neighbor for creature or mental comforts, and was bewailing her isolation from society, she closed her lamentable story by saying, "Seems like I never see nobody, without somebody goes by; and seems like nobody never goes by, for I never see nobody go by, seems like." I have recalled our good Sister Baughn from the long-forgotten grave in which she slumbers, not to furnish an item of amusement, but to illustrate a fact in history.

These brief sketches must suffice for the present. Other names will be introduced when needed to portray the onward progress of Our Church. And since this is not a biography, confined to the life of one man; and not a romance, delineating the character of an imaginary hero, just so much information about particular individuals will be given as may be necessary to exhibit the parts they acted, and the influence they exerted, as year succeeds year in the narrative.

Our location was not really in the back-woods, but it was in an undeveloped region of country. Sandburg was an interior town, far from the great centers of thought and trade. Once a week the mail came to our post-office. The post-boy, who brought the scant mail-bag on horseback, was our "herald of a noisy world." He was then as important as a railroad postal-car is nowadays. Great affairs of State, and great disasters on land and sea, were unknown to us for weeks after they occurred. The conflict in Congress between Adams, Jackson, and Clay, was decided a week before we knew it; and Commodore Porter's malfeasance and arrest, and the melancholy fate of the noble sloop Hornet, were stale news on the sea-shore when the weekly papers first made them known among us.

CHAPTER II.

First year—Our appointment—Court-house, etc.—Population—Amusements, and literary *status*—Large circuit—Sunday preaching—Brother Briggs, senior preacher—Brother Searcy, junior preacher—His trials—A revival—Our first Sunday-school singularly constituted—Did good—Fate of our superintendent.

SANDBURG, though called a town, was really a village. It was a county-seat: there was a court-house of tolerable appearance, with the attachments of justice then in vogue, such as a jail, a pillory, and a whipping-post. The last two have long since given place to more humane, but more expensive, modes of punishment.

The population numbered about three or four hundred. But the surrounding land was thickly settled, and we scarcely knew the exact boundary between town and country. In the preceding chapter a general view of society is presented. Let me add, that the amusements of the young people consisted in parties, balls, and other gatherings for social enjoyment, at which fun and frolic were always free and unrestrained. Dancing was an accomplishment not to be neglected—to refuse, or abjure it, was considered unsocial and unrefined. Literary culture was not essential to high social

position. I heard a popular beauty declare her intention to go to America, in response to a gentleman's remark, that the Americans loved pork and hominy. A Thespian Society, in which the young men cultivated their theatrical talents, and gave occasional entertainments, was their chief literary enterprise.

Our Church was a comparatively small portion of the population, and feeble in material resources. The large majority of the people were "outsiders." I mentioned, in the first chapter, one Presbyterian lady: she was alone in her denominational faith. There were several Baptists in and around town, but their place of worship was about six miles distant, near a pond, which they used as a baptistery. There were also a few Lutherans among us, but they had no organization, seldom received any pastoral attention, and were sadly deficient in religious training. They treated the preaching of our ministers with a shy and distant respect: some of them spoke of it with haughty contempt.

There was preaching at our appointment twice a month: once by the senior preacher on the circuit, and once by the "helper," as the junior preacher was then called. Ours was a Sunday appointment. The circuit was very extensive—covered more territory than most Presiding Elders' Districts do nowadays. The preachers looked jaded when they rode into town Saturday evening; and as they walked into the meeting-house on Sunday, with saddle-bags on their arms, they inspired the respect due to men of noble purpose and heroic toil.

The senior preacher this year was the Rev. Zachariah Briggs. He was then, I judge, about forty-five years of age; and, though much battered by hard-fought battles, he possessed a wonderful reserve of physical and mental activity. Both of these he employed without stint in the pulpit. He had been a carpenter before he joined Conference, and was not by any means an educated man. This fact caused certain fastidious people to question both his right and his ability to preach the gospel. However, his strong natural sense, clear statements of doctrine, zealous exhortations, and his powerful appeals to God in prayer, soon commanded attention and rebuked criticism. "The common people heard him gladly." To these qualities in public he added a most pleasing manner in private. His suavity, simplicity, and meekness were so remarkable as to secure the sincere esteem of his flock. Yet he was very firm, and, some thought, too unyielding in the administration of discipline. Perhaps he did not exercise enough charity toward the short-comings of his fellow mortals; but as this failing "leaned to virtue's side," and was apparent only when the cause of Christ seemed to be in danger, it did not diminish his popularity nor curtail his usefulness.

The "helping preacher," Brother Searcy, was the exact antithesis of his senior. He was a tall, roughly-built young man, awkward in the pulpit, awkward in company, and of unpromising appearance every way. His education amounted to a bare ability to read; his experience was short and painful, for this was his first year in the work. Men of

the world made sport of the poor boy's ungainly appearance and blundering efforts. Lawyer Dexter had a fine subject for wit and ridicule, and was not backward in pointing his shafts at the unoffending youth. One of the weak brethren—inclined to be ashamed of whatever the world chose to laugh at—treated the young preacher coldly, gave him discouraging advice, and had well-nigh made him abandon the field in despair. But Brother Briggs came to his aid with better counsel: "Don't be discouraged, Brother Searcy," said he; "everybody has to make a beginning. Pray much, read your books, study your Bible, trust in God, and go forward; for he has called you to this work, and you dare not give it up." Taking hope and heart from this earnest advice, he went on his way around the circuit. Some, the more thoughtful brethren of Sandburg, were especially kind to him on his return; and when Sister Lewis shouted under his preaching, and thanked the Lord for sending such messages of grace to his people, he was wonderfully encouraged, and advanced so much in preaching-ability, that his "profiting appeared to all." More than one sinner who laughed him to scorn when he first came among us, trembled under his rebukes before the year expired.

Toward the end of this summer the labors of these faithful men were crowned with success. The humble and importunate prayers of the little flock were answered in showers of mercy. A revival broke upon the town—a sweeping tornado; for a revival in those days was no tame affair. There was

power in song, in prayer, in sermon, in exhortation: a power which moved the hardest and humbled the proudest sinner. The happy death of the lovely young Christian, mentioned on a former page, had not lost its softening influence on her associates. It had caused them to take a new view of religion, and to set a higher value upon it. Hence, many of them eagerly embraced this opportunity to seek "the pearl of great price."

We shall find the fruits of this gracious work in the future of this narrative, and may, therefore, refrain now from farther details, except one sad item: while many entered into the troubled waters and were made whole, the majority made excuses, some mocked, and others stood aloof with cold indifference, and "were not saved."

Our first Sunday-school was organized this year, concerning which I have somewhat singular to relate. In those days the various denominations had not assumed control over their own Sunday-schools. All coöperated with the American Sunday-school Union, used its books, and contributed their money to its support. Every Sunday-school society or association was "Auxiliary to the A. S. S. Union." About this time the subject was first agitated throughout our country, and an agent of the Union, in prosecuting his work, arrived and opened his mission in Sandburg. The scheme struck nearly everybody as plausible—no one could see any harm in trying it—and so it was resolved, by common consent, to establish a school immediately It must be in Our Church, for there was no other place in

town for it; but it was not to be sectarian, and must not be officered entirely by Methodists. This, it was suggested, would circumscribe its influence, by making all classes of anti-Methodists suspicious. Here was a quandary, and to avoid danger on all sides, and give offense to nobody, it was decided to select a superintendent who was not a member of any Church. This was a premium on "outside" merit not often paid in religious enterprises, and a dread of sectarianism which was a sorry compliment to Christian charity. However, the agent, who introduced the subject, was presumed to know more about the proprieties of the case than any one else; so his advice was accepted, and a perfectly unsectarian superintendent was chosen. Mr. Snow, the well-to-do moralist, was unanimously elected. For the purpose to be served in the election, this really appeared to be the very thing, and the only thing to be done; for Mr. Snow was, I reckon, as impartial a man in such matters as ever lived, inasmuch as he cared nothing for any sect. His social *status*, attained by a growing estate and an honest life, would have made him desirable as a leader of any public enterprise; but for this one he was wholly lacking in literary qualifications. He could scarcely read intelligibly, perhaps did not read a page a year, and his spelling was privately laughed at when he had occasion to write a note or a receipt, or to draw off an account. He presented a bill against one of his neighbors for so many pounds of *Psalt*, and wrote to another about a new patent, which he called a "patteron rite." But this was a

small matter, compared with the danger of sectarianism, and, therefore, *nem. con.*, Mr. Snow was installed superintendent.

These novel honors did not fit him gracefully. How was he, who never prayed at home, to open Sunday-school with prayer? This duty, of course, he performed by proxy. Then the singing—we used a small and simple Union Hymn-book, and the common tunes of the day—the superintendent could not read well enough to announce a suitable hymn. In this case he always had help convenient, for several of our young men were good singers, and cheerfully performed this part of the service. One of these young men was a teacher in the school, though not at the time a converted man, but he was so moral and orderly in his deportment that he was a general favorite in the community. He very often announced the hymn and led in singing, but would not venture to pray. I ought to add this about him, as he passes out of my field, that he soon after this professed religion, joined the Baptists, became a minister, and occupied no mean place in the Christian world for twenty-five years following.

Our Sunday-school, singularly organized as it was, did much and permanent good. Its programme of exercises was very simple, consisting of recitals of portions of Scripture and hymns committed to memory during the preceding week, then the distribution of tickets according to the number of verses recited. Each ticket had a money-value, and when enough was accumulated by a scholar, he

could purchase a reading-book furnished by the Union. This brief transaction accomplished, Sunday-school was dismissed. For awhile the novelty of the thing, and the spirit of rivalry among the children, secured a large attendance and kept up an intense interest. It was an exceedingly flourishing school.

The arrangements and operations detailed above are so widely different from those that prevail nowadays, that some may question whether any good came of a Sunday-school so organized. Good did come of it—good came of it in spite of its nondescript constitution and its non-Christian head. And why not? The Bible was our chief text-book—our sole task was to commit to memory as much as we could, and many a youth then and there learned whole chapters of the Gospels, which he remembered and digested in after-life to the profit of his soul. The melancholy fate of certain boys who refused to attend, compared with the noble career of several who were diligent pupils, proves clearly that good did come of it. Objectors and opposers could not deny the happy results. There was a marked improvement in the general tone of morals among the young people, and gainsayers grew more cautious in throwing their flippant jests at religion.

It is due to the memory of our first superintendent to state his melancholy end. He did not long enjoy his uncoveted honors, being accidentally killed by a fall from the upper story of his flouring-mill.

The circuit-preachers did not interfere with the

arrangements specified above. They had on hand more than they could do. To meet the calls and demands of their large and growing field required constant labor and daily travel. Had those godly men lived and labored forty years later, they would have given no countenance to such a Sunday-school. The lights and experiences of this day would have shown them the far better plan of making the Sunday-school a part of Church-work—a work that no Church can neglect without detriment. The denomination that does not thus nourish and instruct its own children, so far from deserving compliments for unsectarian liberality, is justly blamable for unfaithfulness.

CHAPTER III.

First year continued—Two valuable assistants—Religion superior to sectarianism—A striking incident—A remarkable friendship.

FIDELITY to the truth of history demands a brief notice of certain collateral influences which, at the period now under review, were exerted in favor of religion. These were not in Our Church, but contributed largely to the cause of morals and the advancement of Christ's kingdom, of which it was the chief representative. The precise line to which the influence of a Christian denomination extends, cannot be accurately drawn. Every such organized body casts, indeed, a marked and unmistakable shadow upon the moral landscape; but at the border of this there is, as in natural shadows, a *penumbra*, or undefinable extension, so that it is impossible to say precisely where the real shadow terminates.

There were in the community at that time two acknowledged models of social and Christian character—one a lady, the other a gentleman. They were both Baptists, and both very decided in their convictions on doctrinal questions and ecclesiastical polity, but both contributed largely, though unintentionally, to the progress of Our Church.

The lady was the wife of the Hon. Mr. Mount, our free-thinking and free-living politician. He and she seemed as poorly mated as any man and wife could be, yet she loved him with a wild, romantic devotion, and he treated her religious profession with manly courtesy. She was delicate in person, beautiful in features, intelligent, gifted in conversation, and quietly elegant in manners. Her social *status* made her widely known, her personal endowments made her generally popular, her shining virtues made her an object of veneration. Her gentle dignity subdued into sober propriety the wild propensities of her husband's boon companions, and thus rendered the home, which otherwise would have been a frequent scene of high-life riot or genteel debauch, a delightful rendezvous for literary and religious visitors. The moral power of so elevated a character could not be confined to narrow sectarian limits. It extended far beyond the boundaries of her own denomination, and contributed to the growth and ultimate success of one whose distinctive forms she heartily disliked. It turned to religion the attention of a class of society with whom it was fashionable to treat the subject with levity, and thus disposed them, when they attended preaching at Our Church merely to see and meet the crowd on Sunday, to give the sermon a more candid and serious hearing. That several ladies of this class were afterward converted and brought into our fold, was manifestly due to this unintended influence. The good that one pious life accomplishes can never be computed. The *Christian* is

far superior to the *sect*—pure religion overleaps the barriers of bigotry.

The gentleman alluded to as a collateral though unintentional force in pushing forward Our Church, bore the simple name of John Johns. He was then about the noon of life, was rather stiff and backward in company, shrinking from conspicuous position, and transparently free from guile. His literary attainments were much beyond the general standard, for he owned a good library and read with diligence and discrimination. His opinion, therefore, was accepted as the decision of a high court in things pertaining to books, while his industrious self-culture continually enlarged his mental vision and warmed his charity for the opinions of others. There was in his conversation a quiet vein of humor—a directness of expression—an occasional sparkle of chaste wit—that caused his company to be desired and courted by a large circle of friends. His counsel was sought on nearly all questions of private or public interest where complication rendered it difficult to reconcile conflicting views. In such cases he spoke with the meekness of a child, while others accepted his words as the decisions of an oracle. His piety was no less conspicuous than his fine social and civil qualities, for he was a man of prayer in private and in his family; and though never intrusive in conversation, yet always ready to give "a reason of the hope" that was in him.

The moral influence wielded by Mr. Johns will be best understood by one or two incidents in his life. He was once solicited to become a candidate

for the legislature. This he declined, stating that he did not covet and could not seek the honor proposed. His friends, failing to get his consent, nominated him without it, only a few weeks before the election. He distanced all the candidates in the race. After one term, no inducements could prevail upon him to continue in public life; he steadfastly adhered to his purpose to spend his days in the peaceful and quiet position of a private citizen.

In those days Sandburg was head-quarters for the militia, and the company musters of the citizen soldiers were held there, if I recollect rightly, four times a year. At these company musters one or more candidates for popular favors were sure to be on hand with harangue, hand-shaking, and treat. After a brief parade, which consisted in a blundering execution of unwarlike antics, supposed to be military evolutions, these native heroes would warm their patriotic blood with free potations of whisky, fresh from a neighboring still. Then would follow such scenes as drunken multitudes, with no impulse but heated passions, might be expected to present. To adjust differences, settle difficulties, and decide questions of manhood by personal rencounters were considered legitimate, if not obligatory. On one of these occasions the rabble had become unusually boisterous. Several fist-fights had occurred, and other parties were stripping for the fray. Officers of the law commanded the peace—a command which no one heeded. Mr. Johns, in passing, saw the sad state of affairs, and, turning briskly toward the surging crowd, walked into their midst and

said, in an authoritative tone, "Tut! tut! tut!" The effect was instantaneous—it was electrical. The riotous mob scattered like chaff, some skulking sullenly off, others running precipitately away. So potent was this just man's presence, even among those who did not fear God, nor regard their own sort of men. That this fact is not alone in the history of human phenomena will be readily admitted by the well-informed reader. His mind will recall that beautiful parallel in the Æneid of Virgil: *Ac, veluti magno in populo cum saepe coorta est seditio*, etc.

This man, I said before, was not of our "faith and order." He heartily believed, and vigorously defended, his own denominational tenets. For Methodism, in doctrine and polity, he had no fellowship at all. Some of our doctrines were, in his opinion, dreadful heresies; some of our usages wholly destitute of scriptural authority. He disliked our closing doors at class-meeting; thought the mourners' bench and altar exercises enthusiastic and injurious inventions; but, strange to tell, his most intimate friends and most constant associates were Methodists. His religious experience was too clear, his charity too strong, his judgment too candid to permit the "pent-up Utica" of his own Church to confine his Christian affections. One of his most devoted friends was our local preacher, Brother Givons. Their souls were knit together like the souls of David and Jonathan. They would often indulge in playful cuts at each other's peculiar doctrines, but far more frequently would they spend half the night together in talking of "the

deep things of God." And so it was, that while this good man could not approve our doctrines and adopt our usages, he would not oppose our efforts to "spread scriptural holiness over the land," and became, unwittingly, a strong and valuable ally in the warfare we waged against wickedness—an outpost garrison in the territory we sought to reconquer for our Lord. I cannot tell how many, moved by his pure example to consider their ways, were brought to Christ more directly, and into Our Church finally, by the aggressive labors of our ministry. Several of his sons were, in after years, prominent and useful in our Zion.

Trusting that this eddy in the current of my history has given the reader a more satisfactory view of surrounding scenery, I now invite him to float onward with me down the current of events.

CHAPTER IV.

Second year—Nondescript Sunday-school dissolved—The new preachers, Brothers Thomas and Ashton—Appearance, labors, advancement, and fate of Brother Ashton—Brother Thomas a solid man—Was he a great preacher?—Obstacles and adversaries—Worldliness rebuked—A rival denomination—Pastoral labor needed and supplied—Additions—Annoyances—"Fool Billy"—Sister Ruthie—Self-important brother "goes up"—A scandalous apostate—Church grows—Grand quarterly meeting and love-feast.

THE Sunday-school flourished vigorously for awhile, as before stated, but toward the close of summer the children lost interest in it, and as there was no one who felt it a duty to rally and inspire them, they dropped out, and the school was entirely deserted. No attempt was made to reörganize on the original basis. The old maxim, "In union is strength," proved to be a fallacy in this case, for the union element of this concern was the cause of its dissolution.

In the meantime Conference had been held, and the day for preaching in Sandburg was drawing near. Expectation was wide awake: all were nervously anxious to see, greet, and hear the new "circuit-riders." Rev. Anthony Thomas was preacher in charge, and Brother James Ashton, a young licentiate, was helping preacher. Brother Ashton made

the first round on the circuit, and was duly in town on the day appointed. All the brethren were well satisfied with him. His appearance was prepossessing, his bearing and delivery unobjectionable; and if the matter of his sermons was not very profound, and the different parts of his discourse not very logically connected, they were seasoned with Scripture phrases and spoken with evident unction. He was indeed a promising young preacher, altogether unexceptionable in deportment, very devout, and a laborious student; but yet he was not as useful as he might have been. He lacked consecration to the ministry as his life-work, would occasionally allude to the hardships and sacrifices of the itinerancy, saying it offered a poor prospect for a living, and when the time should come for him to support a wife, he would seek some other field in which to make that support. This opened the door to suspicions that his motives were not as lofty and unearthly as those which were supposed to move the Methodist preachers of the day. But he traveled through this year acceptably, if not fruitfully. I will anticipate a few years, and tell poor Ashton's brief story. He located at the end of this year—studied medicine—settled in a village about thirty miles from Sandburg, soon became a popular doctor, and married the wife he now felt able to support. Soon after his marriage he was thrown from his gig in the rocky streets of his village, became entangled in the wheel, was whirled several times violently over, and was dead when friends rescued him from the dreadful situation. His funeral, they told

me, was a thronged and mournful one, for he was beloved by his neighbors, as a Christian and as a physician. There was something in his fate that reminded me of the tragic affair related in the thirteenth chapter of the First Book of Kings. There were many who sighed over poor Ashton's grave, "Alas, my brother!"

Brother Thomas, the senior preacher, was a man of different stamp. In age about thirty, in size over medium, muscular, and manly; in intellect above mediocrity, in scholarship excellent for that day; in the aggregate of his character, a noble specimen of a man and of a minister. He made no effort at display, was solid rather than showy, and, therefore, soon ranked high among the highest in point of mental ability; and those native Solomons, who had often asserted that Methodist preachers were an illiterate and unpolished class of men, were compelled to confess that they had met one exception to their rule. It is hardly necessary to add that Brother Thomas attracted attention, commanded the respect of the people, had the confidence and love of his flock, and drew large congregations at his appointments.

Some considered Brother Thomas a great preacher. I do not fully indorse this opinion, unless we accept a definition of great preaching slightly different from the one usually given. His sermons were simple in plan, plain in language, full and satisfactory in illustration, powerful and convincing in argument. His manner was wholly unstudied, and so natural that some objected to the absence of

effort. His discourses were so far doctrinal as to define and fortify the distinctive faith of Our Church, and so far practical as to convince all tardy professors that "faith without works is dead." His appeals to sinners were earnest, forcible, loving, persuasive. There was a mingling of the logical and the emotional in his preaching that furnished pabulum for thought, while it warmed and stirred the heart. There was much talk about the man and his labors. He made religion conspicuous, and silenced many a senseless objection to Methodism. If he was not a great preacher, he accomplished a great work.

Leaving our minister to pursue his course of evangelical toil, let us turn again to survey the field which he had to cultivate. The ground was by no means free from thorns and thistles. It did not promise a rich harvest without painful and patient labor. Some few of his members, mistaking the pastor's dignified manner for a show of conscious superiority, spoke enviously against him as arrogant and self-important, and thus marred his influence for awhile. This difficulty, however, was limited: very few sympathized with the sentiment, and those who indulged the unworthy thought were afterward ashamed of their folly.

There were two other sources of opposition much more formidable. The worldly, pleasure-loving citizens, who had never before felt themselves so forcibly rebuked by the pulpit, began to regard Brother Thomas as a rival in the realm of reason, where their supremacy had been acknowledged. They

saw their sphere of power contracting in extent and failing in tributes of honor paid to superior wisdom. They did not abandon the field without a show of bravery; but as the preacher waxed bold in proclaiming God's truth and denouncing his wrath against all ungodliness, these vanquished braves found nothing so suitable as a sullen retirement from open contest. They continued, however, to send their shafts of spite from secret places, and to seek all private means to enlist the young under their banner. In this they so far succeeded that too many withstood the entreaties of the gospel, and grew more reckless in sin.

The other source of opposition was a rival denomination; yes—I write it with a sense of shame—a rival denomination. Their preachers, with very few exceptions, exerted themselves more zealously to forestall the Methodists than to cast out devils. They indulged in ill-natured taunts at "baby-sprinkling," "falling from grace," and "straw-pen religion," till the more ignorant of their hearers were convinced that Methodist preachers were "wolves in sheep's clothing," or hireling shepherds, who labored for the fleece, but cared not for the flock. There is no force stronger than prejudice—no prejudice so implacable as that which is born of ignorance. Some of their members, however, were of a better spirit, and many of their hearers—such as could discern between ribaldry and reasoning—were disgusted and driven away. But the cause of Christ suffered a degree of damage, as is always the case when his professed ministers do

not exhibit the spirit of their Master; and "if it had not been the Lord who was on our side," I know not what defeats we might have suffered at the hands of these defiant Goliaths. However, "by God's good hand upon us," we occupied a position from which no foe could expel us, and within whose strong intrenchments Our Church calmly watched the impotent efforts of its assailants.

Since last year's gracious revival had added so many young and inexperienced members to our little band, we more than ever needed the watch-care of a pastor. We needed a shepherd with a loving heart and an enlightened mind to go before us and guide us into good and healthful pastures. This need was partially supplied by Brother Thomas, who made Sandburg his home, and spent all the time he could spare from other portions of the circuit in nourishing and building up the growing charge in town. The flock profited greatly by this attention, was more consolidated than ever before, and grew into a fuller understanding and a higher appreciation of religious duty. Certain spurious elements, which had formed a sort of *fungus* upon the body, were severed from it by the knife of skillful discipline, while the ordinances of religion, and the conventional means of grace, were more regularly and systematically enjoyed. We were farther encouraged by the addition of several valuable families who, moving to town, brought letters of commendation and sought fellowship with us.

I must mention a few of the internal difficulties that troubled us about this time. They were more

annoying than formidable. There was one very noisy, officious brother, who entertained a much higher opinion of himself than any other person did of him. He was profound in only one thing, and that was his ignorance. This brother—Billy Jones—was a great talker, considered no subject fully discussed till he had given his opinion, and when he thought he was producing the deepest conviction his neighbors were most amused at his nonsense. In fact, he was known in the community as "Fool Billy." Well, it was noised abroad that Billy Jones professed to be called to preach. He presented his application to the Church for recommendation. This the brethren took into respectful consideration so far only as to authorize him to *exhort*, which answered his purpose for awhile. Some weeks after this he got into a street-wrangle with a Baptist about infant baptism. The Baptist man, of course, demanded a positive declaration of Scripture. "I can produce it," said Billy, with an air of triumph: "the Bible says that the jailer and all his *straightway* were baptized, and what was his *straightway* but his children?" So egregious a blunder brought Brother Billy's pretensions into universal contempt, and quite ruined his prospects for promotion. His exhorter's license was taken away—he quit us in disgust, and forthwith joined the Baptists. What comfort he found among them, or what profit they derived from him, comes not within the limits of my story. His departure was, to us, riddance from a plague.

Another annoyance was a maiden lady, a curious

compound of singularities, who indulged a high opinion of her singing talents, and would fill up spare times at meetings with a song of her own choosing. This she sang *solo*, with her own inimitable intonation and emphasis. It was indeed a murderous assault upon the gamut—and tones the gamut never knew were thrust into it, accompanied with contortions of countenance and gyrations of body painful to behold. But old Sister Ruthie was a good, innocent, and unoffending creature in other respects, and withal she was poverty-stricken and deformed, and extremely sensitive to slights and insults. So there was no remedy but to let her sing: it did her so much good that others endured the torture for her sake. And as no one would wound the forlorn creature by asking her to desist, and as she had too much confidence in her talent to dream that her singing was not the best part of the exercises, it came to be tacitly admitted and endured as an unavoidable evil.

Far more troublesome than good Sister Ruthie's song was the forwardness of Brother Lewis Venners. He "loved to have the preëminence," was impatient of restraint, "heady and high-minded." He verily thought he could preach, claimed to know that he ought to preach, and took preliminary steps, with characteristic vehemence, to obtain authority. But as his "gifts" were not apparent, and his "grace" still less manifest, his application was unsuccessful. He quit us in great wrath, joined a sect just then coming in vogue under the name of New Lights, and became a vio-

lent adversary of Methodism. His case is fitly described by St. John: "They went out from us, but they were not of us."

The severest blow Our Church received in the days of its formative period fell upon it this year in a case of scandalous apostasy. Brother A. W., whose disgraced name I will not write in full, was a man in good circumstances and in good standing. He was assistant class-leader, was efficient and useful in the Church, and was reputable and respected in the whole community. But what was the amazement of his friends when he suddenly abandoned all claims to religion, and became openly profane and a shameless drunkard! His downward career was rapid—no efforts to reclaim him availed—he soon rested in a drunkard's grave. Before his death, he deplored his melancholy fall, lamented the disgrace he had brought upon the cause of Christ, but made no appeals for mercy to his God. He stated that he first resorted to the bottle for strength to bear his domestic troubles; that his wife reviled his religion, mocked his claims to piety, made an uproar when he attempted family prayer, and treated him with so many indignities that he drank to drown his mental anguish. This unnatural woman was a member of another denomination, and often declared that she would rather see her husband a drunkard than a Methodist. The thing she preferred was obtained through her unwomanly endeavors: she scattered evil seed, and gathered a harvest of death.

In spite of all these hindrances, Our Church grew

in numbers, in strength, in favor with the people, and in grace, under the faithful government of Brother Thomas. "They that hold on their way shall be stronger and stronger." There were more for us than against us.

The quarterly meeting, held in Sandburg this year, was a rich and memorable blessing. The Presiding Elder, Brother Peters, was "a mighty man of valor." Physically, he was a large man, and had a powerful and pleasant voice; intellectually, he was larger still, and his big brain was well cultivated; but his spirituality surpassed all his other qualities, for his power was in the Holy Ghost. He was grand on the cardinal doctrines of religion—the plan of salvation, repentance, faith, regeneration, and holiness. These were his favorite themes, and he handled them with a masterly skill, so as mightily to "convince the gainsayers." His visitation to Sandburg this year was attended with valuable results in the more complete vindication of our doctrines—thus "putting to silence the ignorance of foolish men."

The love-feast on this occasion was a joyous time. I must not trust my memory to recall even an outline of the thrilling talks that gave interest and power to the meeting. The aged spoke of years of trial and years of peace, of their growth in grace in spite of the troubles and temptations incident to this sinful world, and humbly ascribed the glory of their victories to the presence and power of all-conquering grace. The young spoke timidly, but with grateful tears, of their espousals to Christ,

and told how he had taken away their sins, and given them joy for heaviness. One short speech produced a deep impression. A young man, noted for his self-reliance in temporal things, but of a very different spirit in regard to his religious profession, rose, and for awhile tried in vain to give utterance to his feelings. After a brief delay, he spoke with a faltering voice, but with peculiar emphasis, simply repeating the stanza:

> Once a *sinner*, near despair,
> Sought the mercy-seat by prayer;
> *Mercy* heard, and set him free:
> Lord, *that* mercy came to *me*.

I have often thought that this trembling youth embodied in his short love-feast talk a richer combination of theology and experience than can be found elsewhere in the same number of words.

The effects of this quarterly meeting were manifest: Our Church had evidently taken a step forward, refreshed and renewed in spiritual strength and aggressive power.

CHAPTER V.

Second year continued — Growth of Sandburg—Increase of Our Church—A *caveat*—Riches to be consecrated—Marriage of the preacher—A wolf in the fold—Sunday-school re-opened—A camp-meeting—Glorious results.

THE history of a Church is inseparable from that of its location. A waning town seldom has a growing Church; a prosperous town should never have a waning Church. The former would be an anomaly; the latter, a disgrace to Christianity.

At this period of our narrative, Sandburg was rapidly growing in population and in commercial importance. The rich natural resources of the surrounding country were developing, and nearly all branches of business were yielding a handsome remuneration. Capital, following the laws of political economy, sought investment where it was promised the largest returns; and thus several families were added to our citizenship, bringing their intellectual and social, as well as their commercial wealth, to augment the common prosperity. Among these were the Strongs, who moved into town for school and social advantages; and Mr. Gliddon, a merchant of large means and fine business capacity. Three of old 'Squire Strong's daughters united with Our Church, and added no little to our strength

in young-lady members. Dr. Browman's daughters joined us about the same time. The sons of both these families were, unfortunately, wild and reckless; and, following the leadership of Mr. Dexter, the witty young lawyer, they did much to check the progress of religion, by making ungodly amusements respectable.

In the family of Mr. Gliddon Our Church gained a treasure. At what date, or through what special instrumentality, the old gentleman, his wife, a widowed daughter, and his son Jacob, were converted from their previous worldliness to a happy Christian life, I do not now remember. They joined us about the middle of this year, and immediately took the position of zealous Christians and ardent Methodists. Jacob, then in the prime of young manhood, was afterward appointed class-leader—an office which he held and adorned for many years. His good practical sense gave him a front position in society; his sterling virtues rendered him conspicuous as a Christian.

Let me here enter a *caveat* against an inference that may be captiously drawn, that Our Church exulted in these acquisitions on the score of their pecuniary and social importance. Such was not the case. We were willing to rest our claims to genuine Churchship upon the test, "The poor have the gospel preached unto them." We were not destitute of this mark—we had not failed to secure abundant proof of our Lord's gracious approval in this class of witnesses. We had seen our calling, "that not many mighty men, after the flesh, not

many noble, are called;" but when a Joseph of Arimathea came with his wealth to confess and honor our Saviour, were we to reject his offer and decline his fellowship? No, no! Be it far from the disciples of Christ to undervalue the piety of the poor, for "God hath chosen them, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom;" but let the Church, wherever it can, baptize the intelligence and wealth of the land, and sanctify them to the Master's service, for no class of believers have been more honored than these in revealing, defending, and propagating the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In those days, the marriage of a Methodist preacher was an occurrence almost as notable as a transit of Venus. Hence there was "no small stir among the people" when it was rumored that Brother Thomas was about to wed the daughter of Brother Gliddon. She was rich, beautiful, and accomplished; a young widow, with the world all before her, and suitors in abundance from whom to choose whenever she saw proper to decide. This rumor, therefore, was a fruitful theme of gossip, till its consummation put an end to conjecture. Some suggested that it was a bad step for the preacher; that he would be prouder than ever; that he would abandon the traveling ministry; that he would have too much property to manage, and could not afford to travel. Others hinted that it was a great condescension in the lady, wealthy and accomplished as she was, to marry a poor Methodist preacher: they were surprised at her; they were astonished that she should thus throw herself away.

However, her parents and brother heartily approved of the match; they esteemed Brother Thomas as one of the purest and truest men of the country; and she had strength of character to make her own choice, and follow her own counsel. As to Brother Thomas—a model gentleman himself, and as well connected in family relationships as any of her other suitors, or as any who presumed to discuss his merits—he was wholly beyond objection as a match for the lady, except on the score of his calling, and this, in her estimation, was one of his chief attractions; for she was, heart and soul, a Methodist, and asked no higher position than a place by the side of a devout and zealous itinerant.

A long, prosperous, and honored life was granted them. Their labors enter largely into the history of other fields. I cannot follow their career, full of interest though it is, beyond the sphere whose annals their acquaintance, affection, and marriage adorn with one of its most pleasing paragraphs.

I turn with reluctance from this scene of virtuous happiness to trace another of far different color—one that cast a shadow of life-long sorrow upon a too credulous heart. There appeared in Sandburg about this time a fine-looking young man, who introduced himself as the Rev. Mr. Miller, a local preacher and a professional teacher. His paper seemed to be genuine, his address was plausible and winning, and his scholarship was evidently excellent. The community needed a good teacher just then, so Miller opened a select school, with

very flattering patronage, was cordially admitted to the fellowship of the Church, and received in the best society. He was always willing and ready to preach, was a fluent talker, and soon gained considerable reputation. In a short time he began to pay marked attention to Miss Kate, daughter of Dr. Browman, and was not slow in winning her confidence and contracting a marriage engagement. Her friends expostulated, and counseled delay, reminding her that while appearances were all in his favor, enough was not known about the man to warrant so grave a step. It was all in vain—neither parental wishes nor friendly counsels were heeded—she was infatuated with her eloquent and accomplished lover, named an early day, and the marriage was duly solemnized. Their course of wedded life ran smoothly for a month or two, when rumor began to whisper that something was wrong about Miller. He ascertained that a newspaper, containing the offer of a large reward for a fugitive counterfeiter, had been sent to Sandburg from a New England State, and that the description threw suspicion upon him. Upon this, he suddenly disappeared, leaving his young and deluded wife to weep over her precipitation and her disgrace. It soon transpired, to the intense mortification of all who had accepted him as an honest man and a minister, that he was a veritable "wolf in sheep's clothing," an accomplished swindler. The Church could do nothing but denounce him, remind the people of the traitor Judas, and quote St. Paul's apology for similar impostors: That if Satan transforms him-

self into an angel of light, it is no marvel that his ministers should transform themselves into ministers of Christ.

During this year our Sunday-school was reöpened under far more hopeful auspices. We had a competent and punctual supply of teachers, a superintendent who knew how to pray and give religious instruction, and the hearty sympathy of the entire membership. It was now *our* school, and those who dreaded sectarian influence could easily keep out of its way. But this former source of trouble appeared to have vanished; for many children and young people from families not connected with our communion, eagerly accepted the general invitation to attend, and thus enlarged the circle of our influence in the town.

Toward the close of summer, our people took part in a new camp-meeting enterprise. The ground was judiciously chosen—a few miles from town—a large brush-arbor was erected, camping arrangements — mostly cloth-covered tents — provided, the day was set, and the meeting began. We had but a few preachers, but they preached with power, the brethren worked faithfully, God blessed the labors of his servants, and many were converted. This meeting was not at first attended with those wonderful displays of divine power which frequently signalized similar occasions; but there seemed to be a melting, subduing spirit abroad among the people, that softened hard hearts, and caused stiff necks to bow low in the altar of prayer. Even Lawyer Dexter's gayety forsook him, and he

and his merry companions withdrew from the ground. In sight of the camp-ground lived old Mother Doland, an aged widow whose children and grandchildren, a numerous progeny, were settled around her. She was not a Methodist, but was a woman of faith and prayer, had formerly belonged to the Seceders, but now had no Church connection. A request was brought from her that one of the preachers should go to the house and preach to her, as she was too infirm to come out. The request was granted, and she gathered her children and grandchildren into her room to join in the devotions. While the preacher was talking, the Holy Spirit descended upon the little congregation, the old lady rejoiced aloud, and one of her grandsons, a man of the world, noted for his reckless irreverence, fell upon the floor, and was then and there converted. This had a powerful effect upon the issues of the camp-meeting, for the new convert was a popular man, had been sheriff, and was then clerk of the county court. The whole family connection was aroused. Nearly all the older ones had formerly belonged to the denomination named above, but since moving to this region had held themselves aloof from all. Monday night, when the preacher opened the door for members, old 'Squire Lock, a son-in-law of Mrs. Doland's, and regarded as the patriarch of the family, came forward and gave his hand to the preacher. This leveled the last barrier, and the rest came flocking into our fold. O that was a joyous night, when so many, "whose hearts the Lord opened," came

mustering under the banner of Christ! A shout of victory went up from our Zion—we made that grove glorious with songs of praise. The huge pine-fires that illuminated the encampment were kept burning all night, and the voices of penitent prayer, of new-born joy, and of exultant thanksgiving, floated upon the air till the hour of morning devotion.

Thus closes the second year of this history, with "peace upon Israel."

CHAPTER VI.

Third year—The anxious question—Brothers Snell and Hurt—Brother Snell's levity—Does no good; is ignorant, fussy, and sinks to obscurity—Brother Hurt a better man—He is popular—A study—Brother Gliddon's wise counsel—A noble rally—Two remarkable conversions—We want a stationed preacher—Presiding Elder promises assistance.

WHEN the preachers left us to go to Conference, the brethren awaited the coming of their successors with more than ordinary solicitude. Having been so blessed in their ministers during the term just closed—having so frequently and so rationally rejoiced in their godly labors—they regarded the problem of next year's appointments as one of far more than usual concern. "What will Conference do for us?" was a frequent question among them. "Can it send us two men who will profit by the advantages thus far gained, take up the work where Brothers Thomas and Ashton left it, and carry it forward to still larger results?" Time answered these questions as to the men, and a longer time answered them as to their suitableness for the work. The announcement read: "Sandburg Circuit, Allman Snell, John Hurt."

To give a faithful record of the year's operations, I must take the measure of the new preachers, stat-

ing, as accurately as possible, their physical, mental, and moral dimensions; for, allowing for modifying considerations, that saying of the Prophet Hosea is a universal principle, "Like people, like priest."

> The priest a wanderer from the narrow way;
> The silly sheep, no wonder that they stray.

Brother Snell was a man of less than medium height, rather chunky, about forty-five years old, and of only moderate natural intellect. He had not long been a member of Conference, but had exercised his gifts in the local ranks for several years, in a region of country where a high order of talent was not requisite to reputation. Hence he had come into the traveling connection with fine promise of usefulness. But he entered too late in life to profit by the prescribed course of study, and having been a laboring man while local, he had acquired but a limited stock of theological knowledge. He boasted that he never read any book but the Bible: it soon became evident that he had not read that very carefully. I heard him say, with tremendous emphasis, in a sermon on repentance, "The *sorry* of the world worketh death, but godly *sorry* worketh repentance unto life." He was fond of alluding to the *Childurn* of *Isarul*, and had much to say about the raising of *Lazaruth* from the dead. It was horrible!

Brother Snell's besetting sin was mirth. He loved company so well that he was not sufficiently choice in selecting his companions. Under a false apprehension of the Master's example, "eating with

publicans and sinners," he would laugh and jest with the ungodly, and even tell anecdotes of religious extravagance, and turn the grace of God into profane amusement. In this social talent he had few peers, for he could *act* as well as repeat; and hence his company was sought by the young and gay more for fun than for religious profit. When the latter was expected, disappointment followed; when the former, it was sure to be found.

In the pulpit, Snell assumed another *role*—was grave, serious, and seemingly in deep earnest. With wonderful fluency, a pleasant voice, and rather vehement gesticulation; with a rich fund of anecdotes, authoritative thumps on the book-board, and hearty threats of "hell and damnation," he decidedly impressed the masses, and on some portions of the circuit was regarded as an Apollos in eloquence, and a Paul in wisdom. In Sandburg, he was out of his element. His unpolished, almost rude manners; his foolish levity, often verging upon the borders of obscenity, mortified his brethren, and disgusted intelligent sinners. Ashamed of their minister! That is a dreadful thing to say. Alas, for the Church that must confess it! But what could we do? Why, simply endure his distasteful peculiarities, palliate them as best we could, say as little about him as possible, and—wait for a better day.

I knew a horse-trader, who, when hard-pressed by objections to the head, neck, and limbs of his animal which he could not deny, deliberately lifted the horse's foot, and said, with a tone of triumph,

"You never saw a finer frog in a horse's hoof in your life!" Was there not as large a redeeming feature in the character of Brother Snell? Well, he did have one good talent—he sang well, he sang delightfully. At the close of some of his soul-thrilling songs, when everybody was moved and melted, some, may be, to tears, we would almost forget his rudeness and forgive his follies—but not quite.

I will anticipate dates, and dispose of Brother Snell's personal history. He went down rapidly in the Conference. I am not sure but this was his last year in it. He was gravely suspected of a worse sin than levity, and was summarily laid aside. Let us hope that he improved, at least in purity of heart and mind, before he died, if he is dead. I never heard his destiny after his ejection from the Conference. He surely merited the oblivion to which he sank.

Brother John Hurt, our junior preacher, was a man of far different style. He was barely twenty years old, small, ruddy, and fresh with the glow of youth. Sweet-spirited, unpresuming, diligent in reading, ardent and chaste in thought and speech, poetical in conception and expression, he soon won the hearts of many, and excited the admiration of others. His mind seemed to yearn after knowledge, and his soul was so eager after fellowship with whatever was pure and lofty, that nothing but the stern calls of duty could draw him down to earth. The young people loved him, and listened to his poetical creations with admiring delight. The old

sisters petted him, for he called them "mother," and talked to them about "the gorgeous glories of the better land." The old men said, "He is a smart boy—time will rub the flowers off—he will make a big man some day, if he holds out."

Brother Hurt had two faults, as a preacher. One was, he spoke so rapidly that the people could not always understand him; the other, that his language was so flowery as to hide the real thought. Thought there was—good, pure thought—in his sentences; but sometimes the body was concealed by superfluous ornament. The brethren, knowing his numerous and brilliant virtues, readily pardoned these faults; for, when they did not catch his meaning fully, they felt sure that his meaning was a good one, and they would sometimes ask him in private for an explanation of his sermon in simpler language.

A question, growing out of the peculiar elocution of the young preacher, was mooted among the more thoughtful brethren. It was asked, Is it better for a beginner to speak too rapidly, trusting to experience to correct his delivery; or is it better that he speak too slowly, intending by practice to rise to the proper standard? This question was warmly discussed, but not satisfactorily decided. One side predicted that Hurt would never overcome this defect, and that it would hinder his usefulness; the other were equally sanguine that he would outgrow this little infirmity, and be one of the first orators of the age. It is, perhaps, true, that those who commence public speaking with too rapid an

utterance, are liable to fasten the habit upon themselves; for, being ever intent on the thought—especially if extemporaneous speakers—they forget to curb their natural enunciation; while such as begin with a drawling delivery seldom overcome the fault, unless they learn to think more rapidly. For, is not this really a question of thinking, rather than one of speaking? A young man whose thoughts crowd up in quick succession will naturally try to express them as they come; while one whose ideas evolve more slowly, must needs speak only as the tardy thought enables him. The maxim I would deduce from this discussion is this: Regulate your *thinking*, and your *delivery* will regulate itself. If you speak the thought as soon as it occurs, you may perhaps utter something that should be suppressed, and you lose the mental poise which holds a nascent thought in abeyance till the mind can pass judgment on its fitness; while if you deliberate too long over a half-formed conception, your mind loses both promptness and clearness of action, and you drawl out nerveless and pointless sentences.

Thus while our senior preacher was displeasing to the best portion of his charge, and only approved by those whose brains were as shallow as his own, our junior preacher was accepted as a rising star, and became a study for Christian philosophers. I dare not say more about his after career, for he yet lives and labors, an old man in years, but young in reputation and usefulness.

Having sketched the captain and mate of the "old ship," as she was about to sail on a twelve-

months' cruise, we may now glance at the crew and passengers, and relate the incidents of the voyage

The reader will not be surprised at the mention of disaffection and complaints. A mistake had been made by the appointing power. The Presiding Elder discovered it on his first visit to our circuit, but not having a man under his control who could be substituted for this wrong man in the wrong place, he could do nothing to rectify the mistake. It was as painful to him as to us, but regrets being fruitless the wise conclusion was reached by him and the officials of the circuit, to make the best of the appointment till the close of the year. It could then be changed for the better—not possibly for the worse. This consoling reflection made the itinerant system more acceptable to some who complained of its rigor last fall, when we had to give up our popular and useful preacher. Then it took from us our most beloved pastor: now it will deliver us from an incubus.

Our Church held together and struggled bravely against the adverse current, but could not wholly countervail its force. The congregation decreased, except on Brother Hurt's Sundays, and the Sunday-school suffered through the general decadence of Church interest. Several of the young members grew cold, began to drop off from class-meeting, and finally went back to the world. Infidelity came forth from its retreat, and boldly showed its hideous visage again. Lawyer Dexter sang camp-meeting songs in derision, while his merry companions laughed and applauded. The adverse party of re-

ligionists exulted and said, "I told you so: this mushroom religion soon comes to nothing." Brother Hurt bore himself meekly and firmly, but was with us only once a month, and could not accomplish much. Old Brother Carsner was too infirm to be very active in affairs, but he gave valuable and weighty counsels, exhorting to steadfastness and patience. Jacob Gliddon, the young class-leader, rose above the discouragements of the times, and set a noble example. He said to some complainers, "The Church must be sustained—the popularity or unpopularity of the preacher should neither stimulate nor depress the zeal of the membership. It is not man's cause, but God's, and we must work as servants of Christ, and not of the preacher." Noble sentiment of a noble man! By such wise speech and manly action he gained greater influence in the Church, and grew stronger in the confidence of the community. But time would fail me to tell the several parts acted by different members—noble men, godly women—who, in this hour of darkness, drew nearer together in fellowship, and showed a devotion to the cause of Christ worthy the Christian name.

Although the membership was in a partially dormant state, and very little visible good was done, yet the year was not wholly without fruit. Two remarkable conversions occurred, brought about by private instrumentalities, which proved to be a most valuable acquisition. The first of these was as follows: Young Mr. Johns, a son of the pious Baptist, before mentioned, was one day in the woods,

hunting. A limb knocked his hat off, and a scrap of paper, which he did not know was in it, dropped out. Taking up the paper, and, seeing that it contained a written sentence, he read the verse of Scripture, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." The handwriting was strange—he had no conception of its source. This unexpected call in the solitude of the forest went home to his heart, and roused within him the deepest penitence. He was from that time an earnest seeker until he found peace in believing. There was no stir in the Church —his feelings and purpose were known only to Him "who seeth in secret." When he felt assured of his acceptance with God, he hastened to relate his happy experience to an older sister, a pious member of their father's Church. She heard his story, and then with grateful tears informed him that she wrote the text on the slip of paper, some weeks before, and hid it under his hat-lining, praying as she did so that it might meet his eye in private, and be the means of his conversion. At the time she did this, Johns was a gay young man, respectful, indeed, to religion, but bestowing no thought and showing no interest on the subject. Greatly to the surprise of all who knew him, the young man joined Our Church, and was, to the end of his life, one of the truest and purest men I ever knew.

The second conversion was another member of the same family, an older brother, married, and settled in town. He had grown up moral, had never been

classed with the wild youths of Sandburg, had fine business talent, and a popular turn, and was, at the date of his conversion, the sheriff of the county. His young wife was a pious woman, and a Methodist, and doubtless her example and prayers were made a blessing to him. Soon after the younger brother's happy change, this man became deeply concerned about his soul: like David, he "remembered God, and was troubled." He resolved to seek religion privately—was particular to make this condition with himself, that no one should know his purpose till it was accomplished. He had imbibed his father's prejudices against excitement, altar exercises, and all similar aids; he had heard so much about "fox-fire" and "mushroom religion" that he shrank from subjecting himself to these degrading imputations. After several weeks of ineffectual effort to obtain relief, he approached a Methodist friend, and candidly described to him his sad condition. The Methodist asked, "Why do n't you go up to be prayed for?" Johns replied, "I dislike that way; it is both a cause and an effect of animal excitement, and I am sure it would do me no good." "You are letting pride and prejudice keep you away from Christ," said his friend. "You must quit prescribing terms and conditions to the Lord, and consent to meet him anywhere, publicly or privately, before your prayers will be answered." Mr. Johns, now deeply in earnest, responded, "I am willing to embrace Christ on his own terms—I have no conditions to interpose—I will tread down my prejudices, and go to the mourners'

bench the first opportunity you will secure for me." This promise he kept. Not long after this conversation—perhaps the next Sunday night—the preacher invited mourners, and Mr. Johns went forward to be prayed for. But it seemed to do him no good. He applied again to his Methodist friend for advice. "Join the Church as a seeker," was the advice given. Johns had freely spoken in former conversations of his growing admiration for Methodism as the most vital and efficient form of religion; but, to the objection before stated, on the score of animal excitement, he urged one still more formidable: "They take sinners into the Church." The blunt and positive assertion, "You must join the Church as a seeker," horrified him. "How could I dare!" said he; "what business have I in the Church? The Church is for good people, and I am not good; the Church is for Christians, and I am a sinner." His friend, taking up a Discipline, read to him, "There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies—a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins." Silence ensued for several minutes, when Johns spoke slowly and seriously: "If that is the condition, I can meet it; for I do desire to be saved from my sins." Next Sunday he went forward, when the door was opened for members, and gave his hand to the preacher. There was a general and hearty *Amen* from the brethren, when the preacher "hoped they would pray for Brother Johns, that he might very soon obtain joy and peace in believing." Having gone

thus far, Johns resolved to take up every cross, and seek in every way, till he obtained the blessing. That night he held family prayers—in a faltering, blundering way, but in great earnest. Next morning at sunrise, while walking to and fro in his garden, and lifting up his soul to God, light and peace sprang up in his heart, and he rejoiced in Christ his Saviour.

Thus was the blind brought by a way which he knew not; darkness was made light before him, and crooked things straight. The news of his conversion had a happy effect, and his support of Methodism was henceforth as sincere as his experience had been singular.

The year was drawing to a close. All felt that the Church was passing through a crisis. The officials, with a few other thoughtful and zealous brethren, held a consultation to interchange views on the situation. Old Brother Carsner's opinion was, "We had better let well enough alone. The society has prospered for several years; and though this year has not been favorable, yet this little backset is nothing uncommon in the history of God's people. We need no change but what Conference will make for us; and with a good, earnest preacher next year, we will recover our lost ground in a few months." They all regretted to dissent from the old patriarch's views: he had been a prince in Israel so long, that it seemed like treason to reject his counsel. But Brother Jacob Gliddon had set his heart on a change, and gave his opinion as follows: "We are able to support a stationed preacher, and ought

to have him. Sandburg has increased, and is yet increasing, in population, and Our Church has nearly doubled its numbers in the last three years. The circuit is large enough, and strong enough, without us. Let us ask the Presiding Elder to secure for us a pastor. We need him here all the time; we ought to have services every Sunday, instead of twice a month."

Brother Talbot—an intelligent and pious merchant, whose accession I should have mentioned before—indorsed the views of Brother Gliddon, and enlarged upon some of the advantages likely to accrue, especially to young people, from the labors of a regular pastor. Old Brother Carsner assured the rest that he would acquiesce in the wishes of the majority, and so all harmonized upon the point in question. Some of the older brethren, when they were informed of the proposed change, felt how painful it would be to sever the ties that bound them to other parts of the circuit. They understood the operations of the Church in this connection—changing to a station seemed to them an innovation on established usages; they would miss their long rides to distant quarterly meetings, and they would have to pay more quarterage than they felt willing to pay. These views, prompted more by feeling than by sober reason and Christian zeal, were treated respectfully by those who saw the subject in a better light, but were finally overruled by a large majority.

When the Presiding Elder was consulted, he fully agreed with the prevailing preference, and promised to exert his influence in this behalf. He

was a man of large and enlightened vision, as well as experience and "understanding, to know what Israel ought to do." He always advocated progress, believed in enlarging the borders of Zion, and, as he had great weight, in the cabinet, we felt that our plan would almost certainly be adopted.

CHAPTER VII.

Fourth year—The Bishop's visit and ministrations—Does God direct his people?—Egbert Worth stationed in Sandburg—The man, his labors and studies—Church thronged—A wonderful revival and increase—A bereavement—Place supplied—Old Brother Carsner retires—New class-leader—A rich, proud steward—Sunday-school prospers—"Thank some brother to raise the tune."

PROVIDENTIALLY, the Bishop passed through Sandburg, on his way to Conference. Here he remained several days, including Sunday. Seeing the rapid advancement of the town, and conversing freely with the brethren, he highly appreciated the wisdom of their views, and cordially sympathized with their wishes. The Church was encouraged by the interest he exhibited in their affairs, and profited otherwise by his visitation. His godly counsels, genial gravity in the social circle, and especially his deep, chaste, "weighty, and powerful" sermon on Sunday, made a lasting impression on the whole community. I recall, even yet, his "meek and unaffected grace" in the pulpit, and distinctly recollect one sentence in his introductory prayer: "Go with us up to Conference; preside over us, and direct us in our deliberations." This sentence awakened the inquiry, Does God control the counsels of his serv-

ants, disposing their minds to wise conclusions? If so, then should prayer be made without ceasing for our spiritual guides, and our solicitude for future arrangements should give place to patient waiting on the Lord. We all felt that our cause was in safe hands, both divine and human, when we saw the Bishop, the Presiding Elder, and one or two of our most solid brethren, roll out of Sandburg in the stage-coach for Conference, about sixty miles away.

In due time the appointments were announced: ours was, "Sandburg Station, Egbert Worth." He came almost simultaneously with the news. Being a single man, with no domestic cares, and all his worldly store—a box of books and a trunk of clothes—easily transferable, he had nothing to prevent immediate entrance into his new charge. And as this was a crisis in our history, and as this year's work affected the future for many years following, I must minutely describe the efficient instrument of such large results.

Brother Worth was comparatively young, about twenty-seven, and had now been traveling six years. His personal appearance was not prepossessing, his size below medium, features pale and thoughtful, movements quick and restless. His only manly beauty was his eyes. They indicated, at all times, depth, penetration, and frankness; and, when animated, they almost sparkled with the light of thought. His whole expression of countenance indicated *character*, without, at first, showing what sort of character. In natural gifts—that is, in ability to discern quickly, and grasp firmly, the salient

points of a text—he was not extraordinary; but in patient mental toil, in persistent effort to fathom the depths, and survey the whole extent of a theme, he surpassed all men I ever knew. He read the Bible, with notes, an hour every morning, kneeling before the outspread volume, and praying for light and understanding. The plan of a sermon being formed, he laid the whole realm of knowledge, as far as he had explored it, under tribute for proof, explanation, and illustration. His discourses were, therefore, models of exhaustive discussion. They were delivered in chaste and appropriate language, and in a style very like John Wesley's. It is hardly correct to say he was eloquent: his style and manner both bordered too closely upon stiffness, and his sentences were too rigidly logical to be called eloquent, in the popular sense. And yet the vast crowds that thronged the church paid him the homage always rendered to oratory—a silent and intense attention. The only defect in his character as a preacher was that he could neither exhort nor extemporize. If forced to talk to a congregation, without previous preparation, he was confused, and rambled vaguely about as if in search of something to say. His only safety, in such cases, was to call up the outlines of some theme, previously digested, and follow its leading points rigidly through. Even his short talks at prayer-meetings were carefully studied expositions of portions of Scripture, and all the exhortation he delivered was a pointed and forcible application of the subject to the people then present. This habit, which made careful prepara-

tion an absolute necessity, was, to a limited extent, a drawback; and I recollect hearing the older brethren express regrets that their preacher had so little of the off-hand readiness for which Methodist preachers were remarkable. But they all forgot this one little fault when he did get ready, and came before them with the burnished panoply of gospel truth.

The pulpit was not Brother Worth's only strong point. After spending the forenoon in his room, in intense and prayerful study, he visited from house to house in the afternoon, instructing, admonishing, comforting, and praying with his flock. This plan of pastoral work he pursued with the same unyielding rigor that ruled his private habits, and hence he was scarcely known in the social circle. When in company, he was silent, unless all would listen to him; for he had no conversational talents. But his words were always instructive, though not always fully adapted to the occasion.

Such labors as those above described could not be long unrewarded. The congregation was growing in size and seriousness, and the Church was growing in spiritual grace. One Sunday, I think it was early in June, in preaching from St. John iii. 16—"For God so loved the world," etc.—his very soul seemed to glow with more than mortal ardor, as he portrayed God's love to a ruined world. It seemed as if an atmosphere of love, like that which surrounds the throne of glory, enveloped and inspired him. The congregation was moved, the power of the Spirit was manifest, the word of God was magni-

fied. At night his text was, "Some have not the knowledge of God; I speak this to your shame." The peroration, portraying the shame—the everlasting and overwhelming shame—of those who live and die without knowing God, as revealed in Jesus Christ, was irresistible. The triumph of the gospel was complete. Penitents were invited to the altar. They went with tears and sobs—they went in haste, prostrating their convulsed forms at and around the altar. The old, the middle-aged, the young, from nearly every station in society, were there together, weeping over their sins and praying for mercy. About three weeks this scene was repeated, night after night, with such variations only as the number of conversions or the increase of mourners naturally produced. Very many found peace at their homes, and went next night to tell the wonderful story. I cannot state, with any degree of accurateness, the number of converts; but "many were added to the Lord."

A full account of this wonderful work of grace would fill a large volume. The fruits remain to this day. Among the converts were many young men, some few of whom, after running well for a time, became entangled in worldly snares, and yielded themselves willing captives to Satan; others stood firm by the colors of their great Leader, and died on the field of battle; a few yet live, in Sandburg and in other places, men of faith, men of devotion to Christ and his kingdom; two of them entered the ministry, and bore the banner of the cross to far-distant regions. There were several conspicu-

ous conversions from gay and frivolous life to the quiet and happy walks of piety, among the young ladies. All these, as far as I know, continued steadfast: some few were full of good works, and for many years adorned the doctrine of Christ by their self-denial and intelligent devotion to his cause. Our membership was augmented, not only in numbers, but in spiritual strength. Its position was so firmly fixed in the community, that no ecclesiastical rivalry could modify or check its increasing influence.

In the meantime several modifications had taken place in town and Church affairs. Just before the revival, our good local preacher, Brother Givons, whose growing family of boys demanded a change in his mode of living, removed to the distant West. It was a sorrowful day to his brethren, when his white-covered wagons, followed by servants and older children, moved slowly out of Sandburg. To compensate for this loss, we received another local preacher, Rev. Thomas Leroy. He came from an adjoining county to establish and edit a newspaper in our town. He was a man of an excellent spirit, consistent in his piety, not a very fluent preacher, but wonderfully gifted in exhortation and prayer. I vividly recall his thrilling appeals to the throne of grace, and his pathetic and pointed directions to mourners. His pious and intelligent wife added to the available strength of the sisterhood. She was a model Christian lady, and a Priscilla in evangelizing labors.

It is sad to drop from the list of active workers

our dear old Brother Carsner. He had grown too feeble with age to go in and out before us, as he had long and faithfully done. He said, "All I can do now is to await my appointed time, till my change come." Brother William Hall was appointed to the leadership, thus left vacant. He was a man worthy of a biography. His life was uneventful, his deportment modest, his daily walk simple, plain, meek; but I often thought that his real influence was more felt in the Church and in the world than that of any other member. When he walked the streets, the wicked were forced to say—and were often heard to say—"There goes a good man." He served the Church, first, in another charge, and, from this date till his death, in our station, through a longer series of years than any other named in this history, and always with success in whatever office he was placed.

I mention, with less satisfaction, a new steward, who, about this time, came into office—Robert Ticknor, a wealthy merchant, a pleasant gentleman —one of the strong men, socially and financially, of the town. He was, by far, the richest man in the Church at that time, and might have been of immense advantage to the cause; but really, he did us no good. His show of religion abroad was not justified by his mode of living at home. His family grew up to love and follow "the vain pomp and glory of the world." "His sons did evil, and he restrained them not." But just at the date now under notice, his life was not altogether so objectionable as it afterward became, and there was strength enough in

the Church to counteract the evil influence of his example.

Under Brother Worth's administration, improvements were made in other departments. The Sunday-school was an object of watch-care and diligent nurture. He fully appreciated its immense value: it was the nursery, which was to furnish young and vigorous scions for the Lord's vineyard—its nurslings now, were to be the fruit-bearing vines of the future. His efforts were seconded by a noble band of workers, male and female, who, from week to week, gave time and thought and prayer to preparations for Sunday's duties. Many young immortals learned from their lips the way to the kingdom, and were bright examples of religion in after years. It was a transcendantly lovely scene, that crowd of children and youth, eagerly listening to these earnest instructions in the truths of eternal life.

With an eye to all that is profitable in public worship, Brother Worth gave attention to congregational singing. This necessary part of divine service had not been cultivated: our singing was not subject to any recognized rules of authority or propriety. "Thank some brother to set, and carry the tune," was about all that was ever said on the subject; and "some brother"—whoever happened to be in the best tune at the critical moment—obeyed the summons. Sometimes the key would be too high; neither he who pitched it, nor those who pitched after it, could follow its flights, and there was a shameful break-down. Then, again, the key would be too low; "some brother" would choke down in

his first descent below the staff, and an awkward pause would ensue. Occasionally, a brisk beginning of a common-meter air to a long-meter hymn, caused an amusing balk. This was to be remedied, and was remedied, by practice every Thursday night, under a competent teacher. He soon had a trained band of male and female voices, strong enough to manage the straggling singers of the congregation. This was a grand improvement. "Some brother's" "occupation was gone," and, with his office, our troubles disappeared for a season. Even Brother Ticknor, who, with all his money, was vain of his musical powers, and who, almost invariably, butchered one or two tunes before he could find one to "set and carry" successfully, gracefully acknowledged the improvement, and followed the chosen leader. Brother Harvey, a very modest brother, and a poor man in worldly goods, was our leader, and was found to be richly endowed with this useful talent. The old practice of lining the hymns was continued.

CHAPTER VIII.

Fourth year continued—Compactness—Not numbers, but *animus*—Relentless conflict—Growing importance of Sandburg—Presbyterians—Their pastor—Another organization; claims all, allows none—The harness off, and on again—Godly women—"Old Sister Phipps" prays loud—Advantage of quarterly meetings—Fanaticism rebuked.

AN organization so complete, presents the Church in distinct and cognizable outline before the world—"a city set upon a hill, that cannot be hid." Making due allowances for human frailties—for there must needs be frailties in every thing human—Our Church was, at this date, in all its visible affairs, a compact and powerful institution. It was a trained and disciplined cohort of true and trusty soldiers of the cross. Its membership included representative men and women from every grade of society. With enough of the middle and upper classes, in point of culture and resources, to insure respectability before men, we embraced enough of the poor and ignorant to vindicate our claim to genuine Churchship in the sight of God. While we rejoiced in the orderly walk of a large majority, we occasionally had to deplore the delinquencies and backslidings of a few. With these, such disciplinary measures were taken as to show

that we were striving for purity more than for numbers—for character rather than names. And whatever might be the opinion of the outside world, we did not estimate our strength by the number and social rank of our members, but by the signs of the spirit of Christ in their lives.

We fully recognized the relentless conflict that ever has existed between the cause of Christ and the world—a conflict in which advantage on either side is certain defeat to the other. These are the two central forces that solicit the human soul—one drawing man toward God, the other dragging him to ruin. The votaries of worldly pleasure seek happiness on principles wholly different from those prescribed in the Bible and adopted by believers. Knowing this, the former make overtures to the latter by treacherous efforts to confuse moral distinctions—"by cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive"—to persuade Christians that the maxims of the world are true, its pursuits legitimate, its pleasures lawful. "There is no harm in this," is a siren song, which Satan has set to enchanting music, to lure young pilgrims into snares and death. By this means a few of our young members were led away this year. They lusted after the flesh-pots of Egypt; they looked back wistfully to the gross delights of Sodom; they returned, like Orpah, to the gods of Moab. After faithful but unavailing efforts to regain them, they were stricken from the list of probationers. "They refused to hear the Church," and were, therefore, separated from it, and became "as heathen men and publicans."

The growing importance of Sandburg attracted to it many new citizens, who differed from us in religious sentiments. A Presbyterian Church was constituted about this time, with a goodly membership, and the Rev. Dr. Gracey was installed as pastor. He was a fine scholar, an urbane gentleman, and a devoted minister. His Church was a strong accession to the Christian strength of our town, and, in its own quiet and regular way, sustained and aided the aggressive efforts hitherto made by Methodism. There being ample room for both, they worked in perfect harmony, and bore the same testimony against sin and in favor of spiritual religion.

Another organization, of smaller proportions, but far loftier pretensions, was set up in our midst. The building was erected by means collected in other portions of the country—the peculiar teachings of this people being entirely new to most of our population. The house was dedicated with great pomp, and was named "Christ's Church." The bishop, who dedicated it, was converted in a Methodist prayer-meeting, but had left that communion afterward, from motives which I will not question. The pastor of the small flock was the Rev. Mr. Free, a New England school-teacher, and a Congregational preacher, who had come to our warmer latitude several years before, had discovered his error in theology, and found, as he supposed, the *ultima thule* of ecclesiastical *terra firma*. He denounced all other denominations as sectaries, all their preachers as unauthorized intruders into the

rightful heritage of the Church, putting heavy accent on the words, "*to whom* WE *gave no such command;*" but charitably proclaimed his right and readiness to receive into the true fold, and bless with apostolic authority, all deluded children of heresy who would return to the motherly bosom of the Church. His efforts to proselyte the weak and wavering were truly wonderful, and worthy of a better cause. But as his bishop and himself, and nearly all who belonged to his organization, were well known to have been inducted into the Christian profession by some one or other of the "godless sects," and to have found the true way by much studying, long after they had found Christ by much praying, his appeals were very little heeded. Methodists, and others who appreciated a scriptural experience more than they did an imposing ritual, could not renounce the instrument by which they had been blessed with the former, for the sake of adopting the empty display of the latter. One of our brethren, who occasionally complained of our strict rules, went over, and was confirmed. In a short time he came back, begged pardon for his defection, and was restored to fellowship. He said, "If I ever get the harness on again, I'll wear it to the grave." He found no "grace to help him" in mere forms.

Among our efficient working agencies, at this period, the godly women deserve particular mention. Many of them, both married and unmarried, "labored much in the Lord." They sought out and assisted the poor, visited and nursed the desti-

tute sick, encouraged and strengthened the weak, promoted regular attendance at class-meeting, and collected numbers of neglected children into the Sunday-school. Some of these children they clothed, and otherwise provided for, by united efforts to make money for the purpose. One of this efficient band, it is true, was at times an annoyance. She was a widow, went by the common title of "Old Sister Phipps," though not very aged, was entirely too fussy, talking in loud, twanging tones, shouted too boisterously, perhaps, and, on revival occasions, would pound and bang the mourners till they would beg for deliverance from her merciless zeal. In prayer—for she was occasionally asked to pray in public—her voice would rise above the noise of the altar, and fill the whole house with its marvelous volume. A dry old Scotch Presbyterian suggested to Brother Worth that he should send her to the house-top to pray, "that she might be nearer the throne of grace, and not have to call so loud." But she was a good woman, and we pardoned her extravagances for the gain of her godly influence. There were others, far more discreet, who did not so much honor Christ. I do not eulogize her stunning tones, but I honor her consistent piety. Even those who jested at her faults, confessed the power of her example.

Our Church enjoyed, for the first time, this year, the benefit of four quarterly meetings. Before, being in a large circuit, we had this privilege not oftener than once a year. We had a new Presiding Elder on the District, a man of fame and power.

His talents were of the highest order—he was a prince among nobles. His manly form and genial face won favor with a congregation as soon as he rose before them—a favor that grew to admiration and love before he was far advanced in his sermon. His expositions of law and gospel, of type and antitype, and of the one offering for sin on Calvary, were profound in thought and grand in imagery. His delineations of the sinfulness of sin, the perils of the sinner, and the woes of the second death, were like "sharp arrows of the mighty," hurled with unerring aim. It so happened that quarterly meeting occurred during the progress of our great revival. The labors of the Presiding Elder were abundant, and greatly promoted the grand triumphs of that occasion.

These wonderful discourses, together with the love-feasts connected with quarterly meetings, were seasons of grace to the believers, whereby they were refreshed and comforted. In one love-feast, a brother spoke extravagantly of great lights and visions that he had seen, and voices that he had heard. The Presiding Elder said, "Stop, brother, you must be mistaken; you only imagined you saw and heard these things." "It is every word true," said the brother; "I saw—" "Sit down!" thundered the Presiding Elder; "we want none of that nonsense here;"—a fitting rebuke of fanatical nonsense.

At that time, quarterly meetings were occasions of much more interest than they are now. The Elder's coming was anticipated with high expecta-

tion. He was supposed to be a man of deep piety and large theological attainments, able to instruct and edify believers, and mightily convince gainsayers. Frequently, one or more preachers from other charges in the District attended him, and added the interest of variety to the special services of the occasion. If this historical grace of the quarterly visitation is not now a fully recognized fact in Methodism, it behooves the present generation, both ministry and laity, to investigate the cause of this forfeiture, and seek to restore to its utmost *spiritual* utility an institution so essential to our *temporal* economy.

CHAPTER IX.

Fifth, sixth, and seventh years—Cultivating the field—Methodism grows apace—Sandburg, a central point—Brother Lang—His style and spirit—Church polity discussed—Christian education—School proposed—Brother Davidson—Scholarly and exact—Diversities of gifts—Preacher's wife—She labors much—Books and Advocates—Two candidates for the ministry—Brother Lowe—Stately and morose, but preaches well—Reaction: worldliness and coldness—Dancing, and other follies—Our testimony—A "Stonewall" in the Church.

THE three years which succeeded the eventful first of our station-life were distinguished by no remarkable occurrences. These may be grouped together, partly to avoid tedious details, and partly because they present no changes, except in one single item, which marked an epoch in our history. The three successive pastors who followed Brother Worth seemed to be employed in cultivating the vines he had planted, and gathering the fruits of his toils, rather than in enlarging the field and breaking up virgin soil. This work was needful, and, in its general results, yielded abundant remuneration.

This period was one of grand progress and success in Methodism generally. Its triumphs filled the land, excited the wonder of thinking men, and

provoked other Churches to zeal and good works. Sandburg became a central point in the Connection, if not quite the metropolis of a large region of country.

Our next pastor was the Rev. George Lang, a comely, gentle, polished man, and a deeply pious Christian. Everybody was well pleased with his appearance, and predicted favorable results from his labors. He was not a laborious student, like his predecessor. His sermons were not as instructive, his thoughts were not so carefully arranged, and were not delivered with the same consciousness of mastery. He was a reader, rather than a thinker, and hence his public efforts did not excite, and at the same time feed, the thought of his hearers. Yet he was not a negligent pastor, but secured and sustained the confidence of his flock, looking after all their interests with commendable care. In one field he was eminently skilled; that is, in controverted questions of theology and ecclesiastical government. This was his forte, and whenever occasion demanded, he entered the field armed with facts and arguments to maintain his cause; and while he never gave just grounds for offense, always speaking respectfully of his opposers, he dealt them merciless and deadly blows. Thus were this people instructed in the peculiar tenets of our faith, and the members were built up in sound doctrine—a culture essential to vigorous and healthful development. There never was, perhaps, a congregation more thoroughly taught in the way of salvation by faith in Christ, and in the necessity of holiness as a

fruit of faith, than ours was; but as to the reasons why we did, and should, prefer to be Methodists rather than Baptists or Presbyterians, we had hitherto heard but little. Brother Lang incited us to "walk about" our "Zion, to mark well her bulwarks and tell her towers," that we might stand unshaken by the rash assaults frequently made upon us by ecclesiastical opposers. A series of sermons which he delivered on succession and ordination increased his reputation as an able minister, and guarded us from danger in that direction; and he was no less felicitous in discussing the mode and significance of water baptism, and the doctrine of universal redemption. In these respects his ministry was timely and exceedingly valuable.

During this year the subject of Christian education began to be much agitated. It was asked, Why commit to the hands of others the delicate task of training our children? In most of the schools of the country, teaching was pursued as a *trade*, rather than as an honorable *profession*. Teachers were known to be, to a very great extent, the molders of character, and most of them were both imperfect models and unskilled workmen. How could they educate men, such as were needed for the country and the Church? This was a grave question, involving weighty issues. The laity discussed it in private, the preachers studied it, and wrote about it, and the Conference resolved, "That it was expedient to establish a school of high grade for young men, to be organized and managed under their supervision." The object, thus formally pro-

posed, met with general favor. Agents were sent forth to solicit funds for the purpose—with what success we shall see on a future page.

Our Church held its ground this year, and was consolidated, but made no decided aggression. It was increased in strength, but not much in numbers. Some were added to its roll by letter and by profession, and some few were stricken off for dereliction of duty and for graver offenses. Brother Lang was loved by his flock, respected by the world, and dreaded by ecclesiastical enemies. These enemies thundered away at us, now and then, from their frowning batteries; but either they did not get our range, or their shells would not explode, or our works were too strong for their guns: no harm was done—we continued to hold the field.

Thus flowed the current of time; thus came and went months, with their events, and Sabbaths with their privileges, till Brother Lang, having fulfilled his course at our altar, departed to minister to another fold, and we found ourselves under the care of a new shepherd. The Rev. Josephus Davidson was our next pastor. He was entirely new to our place and region, having worked in fields far distant from our part of the Conference. He presented some traits of character which attracted attention, and excited comment at first—they were so unlike any thing we had previously known. He was the cleanest-looking man I ever saw—was scrupulously, almost delicately, neat in person and attire. All this, on a rather roughly made, angular frame, and with features somewhat gross and irreg-

ular, looked odd enough, and contradicted the usual law of individuality. Another novelty in his case was that he brought a wife with him, which involved additional expenses, and opened, for the first time, the troublesome question of a home for the preacher's family. A few of the older brethren, who remembered the days of Asbury and his bachelor heroes, were inclined to blame Brother Davidson for "incumbering himself with a wife," as they were pleased to express it; but the stewards willingly accepted the situation, though wholly unexpected, and soon had the preacher and his family comfortably domiciled. Sister Davidson was a lovely Christian woman, not foolishly shrinking from the scrutiny to which her position subjected her, nor claiming more deference than other ladies of equal merit, but going quietly along the open path of duty—a helpmeet, instead of an incumbrance to her husband.

He was a studious, scholarly gentleman, thoroughly versed in the classics, and devoted to that branch of learning, having come into the ministry from the vocation of a teacher. His chief fault as a speaker, besides a little harshness in voice and stiffness in manner, was too great an effort at exactness in expression. He seemed to be afraid to speak out the word that first came up, lest there might be, somewhere in the dictionary, another which would possibly be more suitable. Those who had appreciated the bright and glittering sentences of Brother Worth, or enjoyed the voluminous and free declamation of Brother Lang, felt cramped by

the Gunter-like precision of Brother Davidson. The average hearer wants his mental nourishment in bulk: when it is spread before him, condensed and reduced to its very essence, his perception is not sufficiently delicate to receive it. The effort of a hard-worked hand to pick up a pin from a smooth floor, illustrates the mental struggle of which I am speaking. Such hearers did not always feel satisfied with this preacher's sermons.

However, "there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of ministries, but the same Lord." We perceived that this same Spirit was in our new minister, and we allowed him to indulge his peculiar bias, and to go on rasping, and filing, and sand-papering his sentences, while we rejoiced in the earnestness of the preacher and the soundness of the doctrine. "Paul, and Apollos, and Cephas!" blessed be the Lord who hath given to his people a diversified ministry; for so shall a larger number hear with profit—so shall the more be saved!

Under this cautious and somewhat hesitating pastorship, Our Church moved along in peace and safety, ever guided to the purest waters, and led into pasturage farthest from devouring wolves. Now and then there was an addition to the flock, occasionally a loss by death, by defection, worse than death, or by removal to distant parts.

The most notable improvement was made in the female department. Sister Davidson possessed a rare administrative talent, and her quiet way gave system and order to the work undertaken by

the sisterhood. She was not inclined to lead in these matters, but they found her suggestions so judicious, and her experience so valuable every way, that they voluntarily insisted on her directing their affairs.

The preacher's refined taste in literary matters excited a thirst for reading. Increased attention began to be paid to religious literature. A larger number of *Christian Advocates* came to Sandburg than ever before. More Methodist books, from the grand "Concern" at New York, were unboxed, bought, and eagerly studied, than had hitherto been known, even by name. The profiting of this work soon appeared. Intelligent and well-posted men were able to "give a reason of the hope that was in them," and thus "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." Those who declared that the Methodists had no authorized ministry, no valid ordinances, and, indeed, no Church, met refutation and rebuke where they did not expect it. And such practical and instructive books as Watson's Conversations, Fletcher's Appeal, and Christian Perfection, and the Lives of Carvosso and Stoner—little books, worth their weight in diamonds—were freely circulated, and carefully read, among the young. This class of members received special attention: a young men's prayer-meeting was established, and regularly attended, with gracious results.

While matters were thus progressing, it transpired that two young men, converts of the great revival, felt it their duty to preach the gospel. The pastor carefully inquired into their feelings, directed

them to read Dr. Olin's treatise on a call to the ministry, and admonished them to compare their impressions with the tests of a genuine call laid down in that essay. After some weeks, being satisfied that the good Spirit had called them to the sacred work, he gave them both license to exhort. When it was generally known that these youths professed a call to the ministry, and were making preliminary preparations to that end, opinions were freely expressed by brethren and acquaintances, as to their future career. One of them was pronounced, "A very promising boy." And, indeed, he was; for he showed mental development in advance of his years, was fluent and free in utterance, and of commanding personal appearance. The other was timid, shrinking, easily confused, at a loss for words when he most needed them, and there was nothing in his appearance to justify large expectations. Opinion and prophecy corresponded unanimously with the surface manifestations: while all agreed that the former would "make his mark in the world," the latter was advised by one of the leading brethren to abandon his purpose, and turn his attention to business. "You never can make a preacher, and you had better not try," was the advice given him. People never were more mistaken. The "promising boy" was never known beyond a contracted sphere; the unpromising one soon rose to high position, and still maintains it. Opinions, formed on external appearances, are more frequently wrong than right. The only safe rule to follow, in such cases, is to say, "Go, and try," when

the religious character of the candidate is good. This, of course, must be unquestionable, and all the intellectual culture possible must be enjoined, and then let the candidate either justify or refute his claim by actual experiment.

Brother Davidson's term of service ran its uneventful course—uneventful, in a sense historical or romantic, but in reality fruitful as a period of edification and instruction. He left behind many warm friends; he carried with him the good-will of the entire Christian community. Erelong, we were sitting under the sound of a new voice, and accepting pastoral care from another hand. The Rev. W G. Lowe was our next preacher. About him I must speak cautiously, for he did not gain my love; sometimes I had to labor to endure him, and, therefore, I may not do him full justice.

Brother Lowe attracted attention everywhere by his stately stature and evident self-poise. His look was solemn, gloomy, sorrowful. A smile seldom visited his features, and when it came, it hurried away, as if to escape rebuke. His face was suggestive of arctic winter, with only now and then a faint borealis to mitigate its night. To the young, nay, to all who deemed religion no enemy to cheerfulness, he seemed like a huge iceberg floating in a polar sea. "Hush! the preacher is coming!" announced his approach. Yet, really, he was not cold-hearted. From a mistaken view of sanctity, he had fallen into this unlovely habit. It was "his way," and when we discovered this, we began to feel a little more at ease in his presence. But he was too

far removed from the region of hope and brightness in which young people dwell, and without which their existence is abnormal and deformed, to feel any sympathy with their joys or their sorrows. He was severe, even unkind and harsh, in reproving small indiscretions; and for this cause he was dreaded, and in some instances, perhaps, hated, where he should have received affectionate reverence.

Nevertheless, Brother Lowe was no ordinary preacher. On the cardinal doctrines of the Bible he was clear, strong, convincing. After a slow, drawling exordium, he waxed warm with his theme, his somber features grew bright, the rigid stiffness of his manner gave place to easy dignity of gesture, and he carried his hearers with him through the grandest fields of thought. Had his manner out of the pulpit corresponded with his power in it, he would have been among the successful men of his day. This lack of every-day force, however, detracted from his influence as a pastor, and the Church did not grow and prosper very healthfully under his care.

It is, doubtless, unfair to blame a pastor for all the evils that may prevail, at any time, in his charge. He is not, perhaps, the cause of them, and has no power to check or remove them. He must guard against their entering in among his people, must testify boldly against them, and use all lawful measures to expel them; but we must not hold him responsible for their existence.

There appeared to be, just at this time, a reaction

in our religious condition. Worldliness made stealthy inroads upon us, apathy gained ascendency over many of the older members, and gay pleasures stole away the hearts of some of the younger. The pastor was not ignorant of these facts, nor did he fail to "reprove, rebuke, and exhort;" but he delivered his remonstrances in such morose tones and bitter terms, as to deprive them of their desired effect. He lacked the loving spirit of a tender shepherd, who wins and leads by the voice of affection. Dancing became popular, as a social recreation, and several of our young people — especially those who were not blessed with favorable restraints at home —listened too willingly to the specious arguments in its favor, and were ensnared by their sophistry. "It is no harm," said certain refined gentlemen and ladies; "It is an innocent amusement—a graceful and healthful exercise," said a proselyting clergyman; "I have known whole communities reformed by dancing," declared a learned bishop. Our Church stood almost alone in bearing testimony against this fleshly pleasure, with the double task of preserving itself from ruin, and convincing the world of its scriptural position on the subject. The question was a serious one. In the minds of some, it assumed the magnitude of social martyrdom for religion. They could not see how they could maintain their social *status*, and yet refuse to join in the chief social enjoyment of their equals in society. It was a perplexing problem, truly difficult of solution. Indeed, the issue seemed to be squarely made: "You must conform to the approved usages of good

society, or you must take a second rank—a back seat in social life." This alternative, backed by the fascination that naturally attaches to frivolity, augmented the force of the world's side of the question. There were but two ways of meeting the issue. One was, to give up the disputed point, and go over to the enemy; the other was, to make a decided stand against him, denounce the practice as wicked in Christians, and immodest in sinners—a heathenish festivity, anciently—a "Caucasian insanity"—most popular always in the most dissolute and immoral ages—and to claim the highest position in life for the purest form of religion. The advocates of this claim assumed that the Church is the exponent of moral order; that the world has neither the right nor the ability to dictate to it on matters of right and wrong, and that every attempt to do so is an aggression and a trespass. But nothing so much gratifies the wicked as to see Christians disgrace their high profession. Hence, the abettors of dancing used all arts and devices to attract to their giddy gatherings unwary professors, and involve them in the odium which their Church had denounced upon this custom. To induce a young Methodist, under the excitements of a jovial company, to throw away his profession, and "dance himself out of the Church," was the grand endeavor of some who were falsely called "gentlemen." In this, alas! they did succeed in a few instances, but finally they were beaten in the contest. They did some mischief to the cause of religion by drawing two or three volatile young members entirely away

from us, but they could proceed no farther. The more solid members stood firm in their principles. Judicious counsel and earnest entreaty removed the poison from the minds of some, and others saw their peril and drew back alarmed at the fearful gulf of sin to whose brink they had ventured. Brother Lowe, seeing that his wrathful threatenings availed nothing, relaxed his rigid manner, and approached delinquents with more conciliatory address, and thus gained an influence over hearts where his lack of warmth had hitherto denied him entrance. By the close of his term, he and we regained much of the ground that once seemed hopelessly lost. But this was not a prosperous year. Our roll was shortened by two deaths—two estimable and pious young mothers—several removals to other parts, and by the defection of a few who confessed they wanted "more elbow room" in a less rigid communion. Our condition was far from satisfactory, but we were not in despair.

"Honor to whom honor is due." In our conflict with the powers of darkness, in the question of dancing, Brother Gliddon was a "Stonewall," in coolness and vigor. The friend of his youth, Lawyer Dexter, was the confessed leader of the world's forces. These men had been brought up together, and each respected the other's talents. Dexter knew the strength of Gliddon's devotion to Christ, and dreaded his honest appeals; Gliddon knew Dexter's deep craftiness and subtle enmity to religion, and heartily pitied him, but did not spare him. Our cause was greatly strengthened by the

fervent zeal of Brother Leroy, and by the meek and uniform life of Brother Hall; but by neither of these was it more efficiently sustained than by the intelligent and refined piety of that noble Christian, Sister Leroy. Among the young ladies of Sandburg she did more toward establishing and maintaining a scriptural standard of social life than all others together. These worthies, and others whose names, like theirs, I doubt not, "are written in the book of life," "fought a good fight," and "came off more than conquerors," in this hard-contested conflict.

CHAPTER X.

Eighth year—"Sandburg Station, James Rider"—"Angel of the Church"—Brother Rider's odd looks and unique ways—Powerful exhorter—High-school established—Addresses—Opinions discussed: education is not religion—May be aided by it—Congregation mixed—Preacher's troubles—Emerges unhurt—Progress.

"SANDBURG STATION, James Rider," was read out by the Bishop, at the close of next Conference. He was soon among us, and at work.

The central figure in a congregation of worshipers is the pastor—"the angel of the Church." Whether wise or simple, learned or ignorant, he is the leader of the people, the focus of spiritual light, and, by virtue of his office, is "counted worthy of all honor." The people are necessarily influenced by his sentiments, must pay respect to his opinions, and imbibe more or less of his spirit; for he comes in the name of Christ, and speaks as his embassador. Therefore, every preacher, entering a new field of labor, begins with all advantages in his favor; and if he fail to secure and retain favor in the eyes of his people—a favor which is accorded him in advance, independently of his merits—he is surely an unfortunate blunderer, if not an undeserving minister.

Brother Rider's appearance was not prepossessing. He was rather over medium size, but irregularly put together. His joints were large, and moved ungracefully; his head was oddly shaped—a curious combination of huge bumps and deep depressions—a puzzle, I guess, to phrenologists. This singular physical conformation, however, was relieved by a frank and generous expression of countenance, a playful and chaste conversational talent, and a cordial, friendly address. He was a bachelor, and though not advanced beyond the age of susceptibility, was incumbered with some of the peculiarities of his class. His mental action was more abnormal than his physical structure. He had no use for text-books, was not even an industrious reader, except in newspaper literature. The past was nearly a blank chaos to his mind—over its confused surface he seldom brooded. The future had some brighter attractions, but not sufficient to induce his home-loving thought to explore its hidden mysteries. The living present was his world: its daily unrolling canvas was the panoramic picture on which he delighted to gaze.

In elaborating his self-originated trains of thought, he would stroll about town, and silently watch the busy labors and idle sports of the people, or drop in and talk awhile with a family, and then return to his room, light his pipe, and smoke and pat his foot by the hour.

When he announced his text, no one could anticipate the outlines of the sermon. He followed the

meanderings of his eccentric thought through intricate mazes, reminding the listener of

> Tangled junipers, beds of reeds,
> And many a fen where the serpent feeds,
> And man never trod before.

These discourses were singular mixtures of good theology, practical religion, and impossible philosophy. But not so every time: now and then he made a "lucky hit," as he laughingly styled his happier efforts, and poured forth strains of fresh, original, and stirring eloquence, full of exalted piety and melting fervor. These occasional successes served to vitalize expectation, and keep up large and attentive congregations.

But Brother Rider's distinguishing gift was exhortation, to which scriptural mode of address, as St. Paul advises, he had given "attendance." At our Wednesday night prayer-meeting — usually full houses—he would sometimes declaim with such point, energy, and unction, as to move and sway the hearers almost at his will. Encouragement to the struggling, comfort to the desponding, reproof to the delinquent, and warning to the thoughtless sinner, poured from his lips as if they had been touched with fire from the altar of God. Thus his exhortations, more than his Sunday sermons, kept his flock alive in the spirit of religion, and preserved his pastoral work from the charge of failure. And although no special revival occurred this year, yet we began to emerge from the mist and shadow in which the preceding one had left us, and to shine

forth in radiant spiritual beauty. The pastor had the confidence of his charge. The majority freely condoned his frequent failures in the pulpit—some even suggested that they were the eccentric efforts of genius—in consideration of his efficiency at other times. His frankness, benevolence, and cordiality gained the esteem of the young men of the town. They sought and enjoyed his company, and greatly profited by his instructive conversation.

In a former chapter I referred to the subject of denominational schools, and stated that Conference had resolved to establish one of high grade, for young men. The agents had so far succeeded, by the time we are now describing, as to enable the trustees to erect buildings and supply furniture necessary for opening the institution. The last week in August of this year was appointed for the grand ceremonies of dedicating the house and installing the faculty. It was a festal time for Sandburg, the fortunate seat of the school, and for Our Church, which was to be the recipient of additional strength by the coming of professors, students, and new citizens. Addresses were delivered by distinguished statesmen, and by no less distinguished ministers, with all which the vast throng of eager hearers were greatly delighted. The new president of the school made an inaugural address, profound in substance, and simple in arrangement, which foreshadowed the future of the institution, and created large expectations of good to arise from its operations.

As this was the first effort of Methodism, in our

latitude, to provide for the education of her own sons, I will be readily granted the liberty of a short pause in the current of my history—a pause it is, and not a digression—to record and review some of the principles announced and accepted at this great inauguration. The opinions advanced on the occasion by a prominent statesman were declared by him to be cardinal principles in the popular theory of *education as a governing force in the State.* "Thoroughly educate the masses," said he, "then obedience to just laws, and all the happy fruits of patriotism will follow, and make America the joy of her sons, the envy of rivals, and the wonder of nations." In harmony with this eloquent strain, a pious minister portrayed learning as the handmaid of religion. "Educate the mind," said he, "and the heart will love virtue, and follow its precepts: leave the mind in ignorance, and the moral powers must be gross and sensual, and seek only those low delights that mark the brutal savage."

These propositions profoundly impressed the people. They were uttered with all the confidence of deep conviction by men who seemed to be oracles, the one in politics, the other in theology. They so favorably impressed the people, that they became maxims, which no one dreamed of doubting in that day, and which, even now, are held by many as unquestionable truths. And as the school, at the opening of which they were uttered, had from that time forward for many years an intimate connection with the operations of Our Church, and exerted a wide influence on Methodism over a large area around

Sandburg, I must be permitted to anticipate the results of nearly forty years' experience, and to record, once for all, the facts which time has developed and observation confirmed.

1. Education, as a separate force, has no reformatory effect on moral character. I mean, of course, book education, such as is imparted in schools and colleges. It makes of a bad youth only a bold infidel, or a specious skeptic, instead of a debased and ignorant votary of lust. Of the hundreds of young men who attended Sandburg School, many were immoral, and some were vicious, even among those who stood high in scholarship. Those who sought education alone, got what they sought, and nothing more—that is, as a necessary result of mental culture. Their minds were trained to think, but their hearts were not changed to love God.

2. Education is no part of religion. The highest culture may be attained without one devout emotion: the purest devotion may be found in a mind ignorant of letters. Learning is no more the handmaid of religion than is wealth, or any other acquirement. Some of the finest scholars of the last century were the most defiantly wicked men of their age.

3. But since certain departments of Church-work require mental culture to prepare the worker for his mission, it is the duty and interest of the Church so to direct the education of its children that they may employ their intelligence in promoting the cause of Christ, and may serve the State, if need be, in those responsible offices where virtuous patriotism alone

can secure the public welfare. And since in our republican government every citizen is a participant in government, it is the duty of every Christian to promote the soundest virtue along with the necessary education of his children. An incorruptible Bacon would have left a noble legacy to the English nation, and a Christian Jefferson would have been the ornament of ours.

4. Since education, without moral restraint, evidently increases the natural capacity for evil, it behooves the Church to so mingle moral with mental culture as to subdue the passions by bringing them under the restraints of religious principles. Thus, in the conflict of forces which develop character and shape destiny, the good may preponderate over the bad. The Church ought to provide for the training of her children, in view of this desirable result.

The establishment of this school brought to Sandburg several new citizens, men of means and culture, who, with their families, augmented the resources of society and of Our Church. The faculty—two able and scholarly ministers and three learned laymen—increased our working strength in many respects, but most visibly in the Sunday-school. It was not without some effort and some friction that this new class of workers were assigned their places. It was like the introduction of new bands and untried wheels into old machinery. The effort at adjustment was a study in the laws of adaptation, interesting and profitable to philosophers. It was not to be expected that men, conscious of ability,

and zealous in the cause, would be slow to assume the position here that they had held elsewhere; nor was it at all surprising that the old members, who had so long managed matters after their own views, should be loth to give place to strangers. Happily for us, the large increase of pupils demanded more teachers, and the pastor, by his good-humored and original method of administration, succeeded in harmonizing the new with the old, and all soon flowed onward together, like the mingled waters of confluent rivers.

There was one occasion of trouble, which required more delicate work and cautious management. This touched Brother Rider himself, and he was not as quick to deliver himself from his own difficulties as he had been to guide the brethren through theirs. It was this: The superior pulpit ability of the president of the school—the Rev. Dr. Stevens—excited a general desire to hear him more frequently than the pastor. This could not be concealed from Brother Rider, for many were imprudent enough to ask him to get Dr. Stevens to preach for him as often as possible, and it affected his sensitive feelings most painfully. I suppose this was one of the severest trials of his life—a great and sore temptation. But the brethren, understanding how matters stood, appreciated the situation, and "did not despise the temptation" of their worthy pastor, though they highly prized the more powerful sermons of Dr. Stevens. So when Brother Rider felt assured of the sincere esteem and confidence of his flock, he conquered the tempter, went

bravely forward in the path of duty, utilizing as often as practical the aids which Providence had sent into his field.

These troubles being adjusted, we then began to realize the magnitude of our resources. Those were grand days—grand in their historical facts, grander in the triumphs of charity over selfishness, but grandest in the renewed spiritual and numerical resources of a Church which had, in former years, fought for its position so persistently against so many and so formidable adversaries.

But in reviewing the current events of this year, now approaching its close, while we can truthfully claim substantial progress, we must candidly acknowledge some disadvantages. The Church gained a degree and kind of strength by additional members—members who were ornaments to society, and increased our social superiority to other denominations. There was also an improvement in zeal, and in compactness of organization. We were like an army, lately thinned and shocked by hard fighting, now rested and reïnforced for new campaigns. We felt strong, and rejoiced in that consciousness. There was no dissension within to disturb us, no foe without to make us afraid. Our only weakness was this very consciousness of strength; for we rejoiced more heartily in our favorable situation than we did in the power of the Holy Spirit. The apostle said, "When I am weak, then am I strong." Is not the converse of this saying equally true, both in individuals and in Churches? Yes, when they are strong in pride of acquirements, or feel rich in ex-

ternal resources, they are weak in grace, and poor in the sight of God. Had not Our Church discovered its condition and hastened to rectify it, I know not what disaster might have befallen.

We have now passed through a year of mingled and varied scenes. Alternate shadow and sunshine has flitted across our way: we thankfully pass into a new administration, which, if less varied, is yet fraught with intenser interest.

With sincere regret we bade farewell to our good, eccentric, self-denying, courageous Brother Rider, and waited, with whatever of patience we could command, to see and welcome his successor.

CHAPTER XI.

Ninth and tenth years—Dr. Godfrey—A model man—Inimitable preacher—A serio-comic act—Brother Lawne, local preacher, a sound man—Sunday-school and Bible-classes—The stewards mortified—They "come up to the help"—Dr. Godfrey returned—Church flourishes—A glorious work—Scenes and incidents—"Quench not the Spirit"—Converted in his buggy—Fourth quarterly meeting: three young preachers licensed—Presiding Elder, a man of faith and power.

OUR next pastor, the Rev. Dr. Godfrey, was all that heart could wish. In person he was a model man, in manner a perfect gentleman, in social conversation always edifying. His mind was naturally one of the strongest and best-balanced, had been thoroughly trained by study, and was stored with theological and literary lore. These qualities and acquirements made him conspicuous in every relation of life. In the pulpit he was an orator, as well as an expounder, and excelled in both characters. Crowds flocked together to listen and wonder, and captious criticism resigned its office, having found no fault to rail at. If he had a fault as a pastor, it was in the fact that his devotion to the highest culture raised him above the masses. With the common level of thought and feeling per-

haps he could not have a real sympathy, for his life was in a sphere above them; and hence, while all admired the preacher, all were not nourished by the preaching. And hence, also, while he fully possessed the confidence and respect of those who complained that he was too profound for their comprehension, he was not as universally beloved as some of his predecessors had been. The grand force of his ministry, however, was not broken by this one abatement: it was ultimately successful. But I will not anticipate.

Our Church and congregation presented at this time, as previously mentioned, a novel aspect. Almost every variety of social and intellectual development was there represented. By the learned and thoughtful professor sat the browned and toiling laborer. Thriving merchant, far-famed jurist, skilled physician, and independent mechanic, pressed to the front seats, and listened with equal interest. On the ladies' side—for the men and women sat apart—style and polish in manner and attire mixed with homely simplicity. A common faith and a common purpose brought these extremes together around our common altar. Sister Baughn, in her faded "best," did not hesitate to crowd in by Sister Ticknor, in her glossy new silk; and good old Aunt Ruthie, in home-spun and sun-bonnet, was not abashed by the more showy drapery of Sister Gliddon. If these women had enjoyed less religion, they would have felt more restraint in each other's presence. Nothing but the assimilating power of religion—"the unity of the Spirit"—

could have blended such dissimilar elements into such harmonious oneness. In this respect our Zion was beautiful.

He was a wise man who said that there is but a step from the sublime to the ridiculous. There was a serio-comic act in the drama of that day, which I must introduce, in its proper place, upon the stage. The opening of the school, attended by the domestication of a learned faculty and an influx of students, introduced new social elements, and partially revolutionized society. Many good and worthy citizens—none the less acceptable to God for being unlearned—conceived an erroneous view of literary life, and imagined that all their intercourse with the school-people must be carried on in a strained and pompous style, suited to what they supposed to be the mode of thought and speech among literary men. Hence came many laughable blunders—"leaping at the stars and falling in the mud"—until the quick experience of a closer intercourse dispelled the painful delusion. For example: Brother Lawne, local preacher, an excellent man and reputable minister, moved to town to keep a boarding-house for students. Though not a classical man, he aspired to reputation as a scholar, and made a pass, now and then, at a Latin phrase. One of these attempts provoked such an uncontrollable laugh as to cure his unwise itch for classical fame. Having heard the phrase, *lapsus linguæ*, and ascertained that it meant "a slip of the tongue," he attempted, one day at his dinner-table, to apologize for an awkward expression, by declaring it a *flapsy*

lingum. We had, too, a bachelor merchant, Brother Cowen, more remarkable for his long neck and high collar than for scholastic attainments, who supposed that he must "talk war in the presence of Hanibal." A student called for "The Last Days of Pompeii." Brother Cowen politely handed down the book, remarking, as he did so, "This man Pompey must have been a mighty smart man, to have *wrote* this book in his last days." This perverted opinion about school-life came near cropping out seriously in one case. A plain, working man got very mad with one of the professors for a jestingly familiar remark. He immediately assumed a hostile attitude, clenched his fist, and replied, "See here now, you jest stop that. One of my own sort may joke me as much as he pleases, but no *talented* man like you shall do it."

One more case will sufficiently illustrate the painful tension to which this singular view of school-life had drawn some of the uneducated. A professor had occasion to call on Brother Crosstie, in the suburbs. Brother C., with an open book in his hand, met the professor between the gate and portico. "You seem to be quite literary this morning," said the professor. "Yes, I'm fond of reading *aunshent* history," replied Crosstie, "it gives a man a *foresight* into what has been going on in the world." "What book are you reading?" asked the school-man, suppressing his rising smile. "I'm reading," responded Crosstie, "the Life of Joseph Pine, and he certingly were the greatest man I ever hearn of." The professor, whose curiosity was

aroused by this introduction to a newly-discovered hero, took the book and looked at the title-page: it was "The Life of Josephine."

The same mania for the literary *usus loquendi* possessed the ladies, though with less intensity than in the more ambitious sex. But after discovering that their efforts were necessarily blunders—that they made Jupiter slay the lion, and Hercules launch thunderbolts—they abandoned the field in despair—some of them with creditable disgust.

I mentioned, above, the ludicrous mistake of Brother Lawne. The best of men do foolish things sometimes. Brother Lawne was not, it is true, a man of deep learning, but he was a Christian of deep piety—he had a small stock of scholarship, but a large stock of sense. When occasion placed him in the pulpit, he was pointed and impressive, for there he handled themes of which he was master, in language of which he knew the meaning, and showed himself "a workman that needed not to be ashamed." He was an appreciable addition to the working-strength of the Church, being accepted by all classes as an *authority* in practical and experimental religion. Men of superior learning respected his merits, and students who laughed at his blunders in Latin, wept under his appeals in English.

Under Dr. Godfrey's leadership our Sunday-school improved in numbers and efficiency. It became a power in itself—was not so much a field of Church-work as a fellow-helper of the Church in field-work. A Bible-class of young men, most

of them candidates for the ministry—all of them candidates for honorable positions in their generation—is specially memorable for proficiency in scriptural studies. Their teacher was a layman, a professor in the school, a man of varied learning, and of unaffected piety. I have gazed with admiration at the reverent earnestness with which he would answer questions, impart information, stimulate inquiry, and magnify the Scriptures before his class. He entered the ministry himself, several years after this, but died after a very short career as a preacher. He closed a noble Christian life by a peaceful Christian death. Several young men of this class, doubtless stimulated to effort by his faithful instructions, became men of mark in the Church. Thus the Sandburg brotherhood, uniting their evangelizing labors with the mind-developing work of the school, became a fountain of refreshing influence, ever springing, never stagnating, but sending forth streams of living waters to other regions and coming days.

The year of Dr. Godfrey's pastorate was nearly spent. His ministry was popular and profitable. There was a general desire, and it was freely expressed, to have him back again. But what about his support? He had a growing family—had kept house this year—had been poorly paid—(a singular fact, considering his popularity)—had drawn upon his private resources for a living—could not serve the station another year on this plan. The fact that his allowance had not been paid had been strangely overlooked by the stewards. They were mortified—

they were aroused. Brother Talbot declared it was a shame; Brother Hall said the disgrace must be wiped off; Brother Gliddon affirmed that while our ministry was fully equal to that of any other denomination, Our Church was behind all others in sustaining their ministers, and added, "We must have Brother Godfrey another year: we must pay every cent of his claims, and make a liberal allowance for table expenses." Enough was immediately subscribed to pay up the old deficit, and to provide amply for all expenses the coming year. The Doctor departed for Conference highly gratified, not so much that his temporal wants were met, as that his charge "esteemed him highly in love for his work's sake." The wishes of the people were regarded, and he was returned to Sandburg Station. A Bishop never made a wiser appointment.

The current of Church-life ran on in the usual channel. Dr. G.'s sermons were able, polished, weighty; prayer-meetings were full and lively; class-meetings were considered means of grace which no Christian could afford to neglect; Sunday-school flourished, and specially the Bible-class was prosperous in studies and results. This was the surface appearance: to all human eyes, it seemed to be such a time as the hymn recalls:

> Surely once thy garden flourished,
> Every plant looked gay and green.

If there was any "root of bitterness," its upspringing was choked by the more vigorous plants of grace. If there was in the way of prosperity any

stumbling-block, it was so small as not to check the wheels of Zion's car. The pastor and official brethren, keeping vigilant watch on all departments, detected a case or two of backsliding. One case required removal of the offender; the other yielded to reproof and entreaty, and was saved.

Toward the close of summer the fruits of Dr. Godfrey's labors began to mature. A glorious revival, commencing without extra effort, continued day and night for about two weeks. It was deep and melting, rather than noisy—no extravagance, such as often mars the beauty of revivals, interrupted our regular, yet almost resistless, advances upon the kingdom of darkness. True, Aunt Ruthie would, at unseasonable times, get off on her *solo*—"Where, now, is meek old Moses"—and Sister Phipps would bawl too loud in prayer, and bang the mourners too hard while talking to them; but we had learned to bear with these little evils, and to wink at them as eccentric manifestations of really upright endeavors. We treated them like a distinguished Baptist minister did an untimely discourse on immersion, delivered by a young brother at a union meeting: said he, "Let us put the young brother's sermon in a parenthesis, and go on with the work of the Lord." Dr. Godfrey was gifted in managing a revival—a gift not always joined with superior ability in the pulpit. With him, it seemed a natural and easy transition from the overpowering eloquence of the pulpit to the song, and prayer, and shout of the altar.

One night, after mourners were called, and many

had gone to the altar, I went to a young friend in the congregation for whose salvation I felt a deep concern. He looked serious, and his friends had strong hopes that he would make the wise choice, and begin to seek religion. I asked him, "Luther, will you go to the altar, and give your heart to the Saviour?" He answered roughly, "No!" I turned away in sad disappointment, and began to talk to the mourners. Presently I heard, from the aisle near the altar, a wail of despair such as seldom pierces mortal ears. It was my friend Luther, prostrate in the aisle, deploring his lost condition. I fell down by him, and begged him to look to Jesus, and hope in his mercy; but he said, "No, it's all over with me—when I replied angrily to your friendly request, just now, I felt the Spirit of God leave me, and I know I am doomed forever." After some judicious instruction by experienced brethren, he began to pray for mercy, and was powerfully converted.

On another evening a scene of still more exciting interest occurred. Judge House, one of the first jurists of the day, a man in the prime of life, who had hitherto seemed wholly indifferent to religion, if not skeptical as to its divine authority, had been for some time a regular attendant at our services, bringing his family, and acting with becoming gravity. On the evening alluded to, when the sermon was closed, and mourners were invited, the Judge rose up, walked deliberately forward, and bowed down in an humble posture at the altar. The people knew that nothing but the force of

truth could convince such a mind—that nothing but the power of God could humble such a sinner. Several of his family followed the father's example. They were all received into fellowship, a few days after this, happy in the saving grace of Christ. This was a great victory, for Judge House and his family had been leaders in high-life iniquity, and their conversion made a ruinous breach in the ranks of the enemy. But what affected us in this scene more than any other feature, was the interest taken in the Judge's case by a poor neighbor—a pious but thriftless tailor—who wept over him, prayed for him, instructed, and then rejoiced with him. There knelt the great jurist, learned in the laws of men, but ignorant of the "law of life in Christ Jesus," eagerly listening to words of hope and encouragement from one whose social position, whose limited attainments, and whose religious profession he had hitherto despised.

Very different, sadly different, was the case of Col. Rainer. He was a thrifty farmer, whose fertile lands bordered on one side of Sandburg. He had lived chiefly for himself, did not fear God, and had little regard for man. On this occasion, curiosity brought him out, and he attended several meetings. One Sunday he was powerfully moved, trembled violently, and tears ran freely down his hard face. Christian neighbors saw how he was affected, and prayed that he might yield and be saved. Dr. Godfrey noticed his condition, and went to him, and solemnly besought him to obey the dictates of his conscience, and seek the salvation of his soul.

He seemed to rally all his strength for one desperate resistance, shook his head, and replied to Dr. G., "Not to-day," and left the church. It was his last attendance at public worship. One of the old brethren said, sorrowfully, "He will never feel that way again." He died soon afterward, in a drunken stupor.

The fruits of this gracious season were gathered into the garner of the Lord, a rich harvest of precious sheaves. The old, the young, the lady, the gentleman, knelt at the altar, and took upon them the vows of consecration with the waters of holy baptism.

A few months after the revival closed, there occurred a remarkable conversion. Mr. Dupont, a prosperous merchant of Sandburg, moral in his habits, and honorable in business, but not religious, had been seriously concerned about his soul, but for some reason had not been up to the altar. He was still seeking peace, but as yet had not found it. One Sunday afternoon, as he was returning from the country, his horse took fright, and dashed off with the buggy down a steep and rocky hill. Mr. Dupont, after trying in vain to check the furious animal, finally gave up the effort, and yielded to what seemed to be his inevitable fate. But while thus dashing down the steep, he mentally reviewed his life, renewed his petition for mercy, and said to himself, "If I am killed, I will die trusting my soul to Jesus—surely he will not let me be lost, for I look to him alone for salvation." Soon the horse was down the hill,

and, in ascending the opposite slope, became more manageable, and finally submitted to the reins. Mr. Dupont, finding himself out of danger, began to reflect on his condition. A feeling of tranquil peace, before unknown, pervaded his heart. It was a holy peace—it was divine joy. He hastened to tell Dr. Godfrey, and other friends, how strangely the Lord had brought him to a knowledge of pardoning mercy.

Our fourth quarterly meeting was a glorious and memorable season. Three promising young men were licensed to preach, and believers were "built up on their most holy faith." Indeed, all our quarterly meetings this year were times of refreshing, for our Presiding Elder was a man of fine talents, and of a gentle, sweet spirit, and wielded a happy influence everywhere by his devout temper and pure example. In early life he was a blacksmith, and a wicked, dissipated sinner. When soundly converted at a camp-meeting, he began to study books, and exercise his gifts in prayer and exhortation; he was soon admitted into the traveling connection, rose rapidly and regularly into high position, and, at the time now under notice, was one of "the fathers"—a man of repute and power in the Conference. His visitations to Sandburg were times of joy and profit. Not even the accomplished Dr. Godfrey could draw a larger congregation, or more deeply move their hearts than our venerable Elder. His name is not given, for a reason: I believe it was written in the "Lamb's book of life," and that he now enjoys the reward of a holy life and faithful ministry, in heaven.

CHAPTER XII.

Eleventh and twelfth years — Home mission work—Good results—Brother Liskew, our new preacher—Does better than appearances — Reaction, after tension — Christmas frolics—A proud woman makes trouble—What is to be done?—Turn her out!—Religion in high life—Temptation and flight—Brilliant example—Brother Liskew's second year—Bigotry crops out—Negro-traders—Sandburg grows —Line of stage-coaches—Sins of civilization.

BEFORE introducing our next stationed preacher, I must bring up the record in one or two particulars. Our Church, after its recent growth in membership, began to extend its labors to "regions beyond." There were three neighborhoods within a distance of six or seven miles from Sandburg, which, by reason of their peculiar position, could not conveniently be served by the circuit preachers. Two of these were geographically isolated, and, therefore, had been neglected; and the other was a region of poor hills, thickly settled by poor people, among whom there was very little religious knowledge. These places were regarded as missionary ground; and being rich in working resources, we undertook to cultivate them. We commenced by organizing Sunday-schools, and holding prayer-meetings. Erelong we had three

flourishing schools, well supplied with books, and regularly attended by teachers from town. After awhile appointments were made for preaching by the candidates for the ministry, who were students in school. Reports from these outposts, relating remarkable incidents, number of conversions, obstacles encountered and removed, afforded most entertaining features at our Sunday-school anniversaries for several years.

About this time there was a general awakening on the subject of temperance. Drunkenness was on the increase, and its many and terrible evils were sources of alarm to the Christian and patriot. Our Church, always prompt in good enterprises, took a leading interest in this. Several meetings were held in our house of worship, at which strong and stirring addresses were delivered. For a time, great good was accomplished by these efforts. The young men of the town—many of them, at least—gave their names and influence to the cause, and some who were fast verging into the fatal and hopeless entanglement, abjured strong drink, and became useful members of society. We had great cause of rejoicing in this good result.

In the midst of these events, came our new preacher, the Rev. W H. Liskew. He was an unmarried man, and the youngest pastor we had had. But he was grave, sober, discreet, and the appointment was considered a very safe one. In those days —and the same may, perhaps, be true yet—the Bishop could not send the right man to the right place every time. There were more places than

men, and Sandburg must take its chances with others. Brother Liskew's personal appearance, though pleasing enough, was not impressive. His form lacked symmetry and grace, his arms were unusually long, his shoulders a little stooped, but his mild and benevolent expression imparted to his whole aspect a sort of dignity which disarmed criticism and counterbalanced his awkwardness. In the pulpit he made no pretensions to oratory—in fact, rather seemed to avoid suspicion of aspiring to that gift. His style was as plain, simple, and free from ornament as the Epistles of St. John. Never was there a more striking contrast between two men than that between Brother Liskew and his predecessor, Dr. Godfrey. That fact was favorable to the young man's popularity; for when the people discovered that he made no effort to imitate his superiors, that he was content to be simply himself, and to preach according to his ability, they admired his candor, and esteemed him all the more highly. An industrious pastor, a safe counselor, a worthy exemplar, a pleasant if not a brilliant companion, we had in our young pastor for this and the succeeding year. He gained and retained the confidence of the congregation; his sermons were always instructive, if not very inspiring; and though he did not enlarge the Church by aggressive victories, he did consolidate and build up its members by sound doctrine and wholesome discipline; so that, when he closed his second year's labors, if he had no grand triumphs to record, he had no hurtful errors to lament.

After the tide comes the ebb. Reaction invariably follows a long-sustained excitement, and one of the most difficult tasks in pastoral administration is the management of a station in one of these reaction seasons. In grand onward movements, the preacher's whole soul may be thrown into the shout, "Forward, brothers!" But after battle and victory, when rest and reflection should keep good soldiers from straggling, it requires rare skill to guard the lines so as to prevent desertion. Unfortunately, our communion was not exempt from this tendency to reaction. Trouble came upon us about the first Christmas of Brother Liskew's pastorship. It was the old trouble, growing out of worldly amusements. The hardest lesson for young Christians to learn is, that they are not *of* the world, though *in* it.

The old members, who had fought and conquered in the conflict about dancing, some years before, grieved to see the battle renewed by the enemy with greater vigor and determination than before. One case, because of certain peculiarities, became a test case, and both parties silently watched its developments, as if agreed to let this one decide all others. This case has a short history, which contains both novelty and instruction.

Some nineteen years before, Captain Wheat, a wealthy bachelor planter, had married a dashing young woman, his inferior in social position, but of rare personal beauty. She was uneducated, except in the simplest rudiments, but being possessed of a quick and penetrating mind, she was conscious of

her power, watched her opportunity, and captured the wealthy planter. Thus suddenly elevated to position by Captain Wheat's riches, she affected style, assumed aristocratic airs, behaved patronizingly toward her former associates, dressed magnificently, and thrust herself into the best society. There she was treated as an equal, to her face, because of her husband's solid worth in business circles, but was laughed at, behind her back, because of her own vulgar ignorance. In course of time she joined Our Church, which step the Captain approved, not that he cared for religion, but because it was considered respectable. Sister Wheat was a working member in our sisterhood. In all matters of interest, except in humility and meekness, she was—as Sallust says of Jugurtha in the chase—"the first, or among the first." Where time, talk, and money would accomplish an object, she was conspicuously useful. Her oldest daughter, Teresa, a comely but weak-minded girl, now in her teens, had professed religion in our last revival, and united with Our Church. But the mother was more ambitious of Teresa's promotion in society than in spiritual things, and the class of people who made the grandest display, she chose to consider the highest class. Teresa must not decline the attentions of a wealthy suitor, no matter what his morals were; she must accept the card of a high-life beau, even to attend a dancing-party. Was it not respectable? was it not fashionable? Did not the Tinnins, the Shapards, the Jacksons, all their associates, go to balls, and were they not the *ton* of the country?

How could there be any wrong in such amusements, when the very first families in and around Sandburg patronized them? No, no! Teresa must maintain her position in society, the protests of the preacher notwithstanding.

Now, what is to be done? Here was one of our richest and most active members, sustaining her daughter in braving Church opinion and violating Church rule. The case was met firmly—delay or hesitation would have been fatal. The pastor called; Teresa was not at home, but he told her parents the object of his coming, and explained to them his painful duty in the case. Captain Wheat replied, "I am not a member of your Church, Parson, and know nothing about religion, but it seems to me that when people belong to the Church, they ought to obey its rules, and if they break the rules, they ought to be turned out. Go on, and do your duty with Teresa, for if she has violated your rules, she has no business in the Church." Well said, for a plain old sinner. But not so said Madam Wheat. She desired the respectability of membership, and yet could not afford to abandon the gay world; so she entered upon a vigorous defense of herself and daughter. She asserted the innocency of dancing, pleaded the high social station of those who practiced it, and closed her tirade by saying, "And, beside all this, *there was a carpet on the floor*, and I have always heard that there was no sin in dancing on a carpet." The pastor failed to see the neutralizing effect of a carpet, and so he distinctly stated to the indignant woman that the voice of the Chris-

tian world was against this practice—that those who indulged in it must acknowledge their error and pledge amendment, or be cut off from fellowship. This last alternative the delinquent accepted—the mother went out with her, disgusted at the stupid pastor and brethren who would not permit their members to have "a little innocent amusement." The recusants soon found an open door into a less scrupulous communion, where they were reclothed with the externals of religion, quite to their own satisfaction, and greatly to our relief; but whether to the profit of their own souls or not, let "that day" reveal. Thus ended again the disturbance about dancing—the most insidious snare the devil ever spreads for young Christians. Other offenders confessed their error, and were restored to fellowship.

We had, at this time, a number of active and zealous workers, of a class from whom very marked devotion is not usually expected. These were young ladies who had professed religion in our last revival. One of these, who had been a leader in gay and fashionable life, was sadly missed by her former associates, and was constantly solicited to return to the life she had renounced. On one occasion she accepted an invitation to a party on the assurance that it was simply a conversational reünion, and that there was to be no dancing. Soon after the company gathered, she discovered that a deception had been practiced upon her—that preparations were made for a ball. When the violin broke forth with its bewitching music, and couples began to

take their places on the floor, she felt for an instant all the fascinations of the hour; but realizing the baseness of the falsehood which had thus led her into temptation, she indignantly left the room, ran to the house of a Christian lady near by, and asked for a protector back to her own home. This signal rebuke to the treachery of pretended friends gave such strength to her position as a follower of Christ, that she was no more tempted in this way to renounce her profession. That one act of heroic firmness, displaying so nobly, and yet so modestly, the true spirit of martyrdom, made a deep impression on many hearts. The devoted young lady died, a few years afterward, in the full joy and peace of the Christian faith.

The most conspicuous and influential of this class was Miss Mary Warner, a young lady of extraordinary endowments of person and of mind. Comely, graceful, frank, and unselfish in disposition, educated in the best seminary of the State, and polished by the influences of a refined and elegant home, she had the world all before her in which to choose her career, and reign as a queen in her circle. Like her illustrious namesake of Bethany, she chose "that good part"—a place at her Saviour's feet, where she might hear his words and learn his will. When she gave her hand to the Church, that act sealed her heart and life in irrevocable consecration. To the poor she ministered with pious liberality. At the sick-bed of the wretched she was a constant and tender nurse, while the Sunday-school and prayer and class-meetings always found her at

the post of duty. This exhibition of the meek, gentle, and active spirit of Christ by one who was fitted to shine in courtly circles, one who was sought as a leader in literary society, so brilliant in intellect, so gifted in conversation, so charming in manners, could not fail to impress the community, and force even scoffers to confess the unearthly beauty of religion. She yet lives, in a distant city, a lovely matron, the cheerful companion of an itinerant's labors, an ornament to society, a faithful "mother in Israel."

It must not be inferred that our young-lady members were not at other times valuable and useful. It is simply meant that, previously to this date, this element of strength had not been as large and powerful as now, and that at a time when a vigorous effort was made by the world to claim and array on their side the beauty and intelligence of Sandburg, Our Church was sustained by several of the noblest models of womanhood.

During Brother Liskew's second year, we were more troubled in our relations with other denominations than we had formerly been. The proselyting establishment stood ready to offer a safe passage, and a through ticket, stamped with apostolic die and perfumed with hereditary grace, to all who sighed for an easier road to glory than Methodism could offer. The industrious leader of that cause "overthrew the faith of some" of our restless brethren, and carried them over into his fold.

The Presbyterians had changed pastors some time ago. In the place so long adorned by the

gentlemanly and evangelical Dr. Gracey, came a bigoted, unsocial sectarian, who wished it distinctly understood that he was always right, and all who differed from him were necessarily wrong. The cordial fellowship, hitherto existing between them and us, was estranged; and had not several of his members discountenanced his unseemly ways, our relations would have become avowedly antagonistic. It is proper to say that the popular sentiment—or rather, I should say, the Christian charity—of his people was not at all in sympathy with his churlish temper, and he was compelled to hide his asperities under an improved exterior. However, some injury was done, as is always the case when the professed ministers of Christ do not show his meek and gentle temper. This burly man, Rev. Mr. Coltart, went wholly down in public esteem, and, later in life, gave up the ministry.

There was, this year, another trouble, from a different cause—one which gave no little sorrow to the Church. Two of the brethren, both of them stewards, having become involved in financial difficulties, imagined that the shortest and surest way to mend their fortunes was to engage in buying and selling slaves. This business was called "negro-trading," and was not then, and never was, so far as I know, in this part of the great South, considered compatible with Christian character. It was a thing entirely different from owning slaves. The pastor, Presiding Elder, and other brethren, remonstrated, implored, and besought them to abandon their project; but there were a few who claimed to

see no more harm in the traffic than there was in owning negroes, and the two brethren embarked in the business. They claimed to be humane in the business, would not separate husband and wife, or take young children from their parents; and as there was no positive law to forbid them, they went forward in their trade, still holding membership, but not official rank, in the Church. I am not a fanatic on the old and troublesome question of slavery, but confess that that transaction was a great scandal to Christianity. Providence seemed to frown on it. One of these men died, a few years after this, somewhat improved in his finances, but in an unhappy state of mind; the other became a drunkard, and an openly profane sinner.

Sandburg has more than doubled its population since this narrative began, and Our Church numbered, at the close of this year, nearly two hundred members. A tri-weekly line of mail-coaches brought us into closer connection with the thought and commerce of the day. The post-boy had given place to the stage-driver. This improvement in social and mercantile departments was accompanied by certain evils—such as invariably follow advances in civilization when there is not a corresponding progress in religious sentiment. "The polished arts" are said by the poet to have "humanized mankind." We accept the saying, but still insist that the arts of civilization are of real and permanent benefit to a people only so far as they are limited and guided by true religion. They only raise a rough sinner to the

higher grade of an accomplished sinner. So we found with those citizens of Sandburg who adopted and cultivated every new mode and means of improvement, except the religion of Christ.

CHAPTER XIII.

Thirteenth year — Brother Gilliam — A pleasing, bookish, working preacher—Change of times—Church out of date—Must build a new and larger—God must have the best—The sisters lend aid—About fairs, suppers, and concerts—A liberal soul—Built and dedicated — Changes — Brother Hall sleeps in Jesus—Brother Ticknor forsakes us—Their places filled — Two dissimilar officers — Brother Lawne moves away—His place filled—Brother Grumbles wants "to make the contempt" to preach—Brother Gilliam marries.

THIS chapter is a budget of items. It relates a year's transactions in occurrences seemingly unconnected with the thread of our history; but these will be found, in the aggregate, to have been influential on our near and remote future. I have watched the course of a river, gliding majestically along, as if no obstacle of hill, or rock, or drift-wood could check its onward flow; then I have seen it drag its tardy current through the plain, winding and doubling back upon its length, eddying in stagnant bays, and spreading into marshy fens, till, seeming to awake to a consciousness of delay, it renewed its strength, gathered its scattered waters into one grand swell, and rolled onward in its sublime career. Thus has it been—it is—it will be—with the course of Our Church.

Our pastor is the Rev. Justin Gilliam, a widower of about forty-five, fat, ruddy, with wig and spectacles for himself, and smiles and kind words for others—a delightfully pleasant gentleman in private, a very agreeable speaker in public. He had read many books, and digested them well, was authority in history and chronology, and very skillful in argument. In our pulpit he was "master of the situation," at which his brethren rejoiced, while the foes of our cause confessed it, and kept silence. He had a cultivated eye for whatever is conducive to order, and a fine taste for esthetics in public worship. This peculiar talent soon got into active exercise, and put the people to work, also, in good earnest.

Times had changed wonderfully in the last thirteen years. Society had advanced, and people began to say—what their posterity has said a thousand times in later years—"This is a progressive age." The house in which we worshiped was growing old-fashioned—every modern improvement about town made it look more antiquated. Besides, it was too small for our present and prospective demands. It had been repaired as often and kept in order as long as judgment could approve or affection for the dear place could require: now, why not build a new house for the Lord? Brother Gilliam had scarcely asked the question before it was answered. Everybody was for the enterprise. Outsiders approved, and promised to aid it. So, then, with confidence that "ways and means" could be provided—of course, making allowance for the hindrances insep-

arable from such undertakings—the pastor and brethren addressed themselves to the work.

A new location was as necessary as a new house. The old building used to be central, but the town had grown away from it on one side: it was evident that we must move farther up town. There was something better than "pride of life," something better than good taste, in this decision—there was religion in it; for a church-building ought always to occupy the most eligible position and the prettiest lot in town or city. The builders honor God by dedicating to him the best place.

Now, our Brother James Simson owned a number of town-lots. One whole square, a beautiful situation, he had reserved, hitherto, waiting for property to rise in value: this he gave to the Church, saying, "This is Methodist Square—build upon it a house for the Lord." This was a grand and pious generosity, but it brought a pause in proceedings. The conspicuous location made it necessary to erect a finer edifice than was at first intended. It must cost, at least, fifteen thousand dollars; but the work must be done—and it was done.

Building committee, subscription papers, collectors, and whatever usually enters into the preparatory measures in such cases, were duly appointed. The sisterhood took a lively interest in the work, and sought plans to help it forward. The question as to how they could raise money, brought up a sifting discussion of fairs, concerts, suppers, etc. Some few could see no harm in any of these means. For instance, one good sister asked, "Who could object

to a *fair*—the most likely measure to make much out of little—when the money is all for the Church? We can get up our articles in showy style, at very little cost—will charge one dollar admittance-fee, and when we get the crowd in there, we can manage to get four or five dollars out of every one." An unexpected remark about "doing evil, that good may come," made her blush, and spoiled her specious plan. It was, however, agreed that perhaps a concert might be held—that every one would know exactly what he was paying for, when he bought his ticket, and there could be no excitement, flattery, or competition to wring money from unwilling hands, as in a fair. The pastor did not fully indorse the plan, but as it seemed to be so popular, and the sisters seemed so anxious to contribute something, he withheld his objections, and let them go through with it. This, and a strawberry-supper afterward, brought several hundred dollars into the treasury. However, there were many who did not join in these measures, and several of our most pious sisters resorted to their needles—sewing machines were unknown in those days—to raise their contributions. The money obtained by these means was a small rill compared to the larger streams that flowed into the reservoir. The amount secured was, after much working, hoping, despairing, and rallying again, sufficiently large to justify contract with builders—the bargain was made, and the work commenced, pushed forward, completed.

I must record one case of liberality. Col. Warner—whose accomplished daughter is mentioned in

the preceding chapter—had been, heretofore, possessed of large wealth, but at the date now under notice, was dreadfully straitened by a series of heavy losses. But he gave, on the first subscription, five hundred dollars, and when the work was finished, and a considerable balance must be secured in order to dedicate the church free from debt, he relieved the embarrassment by giving another five hundred. He was a princely man, and a noble Christian. This was only one of many generous deeds prompted by his liberal soul: how many *now* in Sandburg remember his munificence?

In an account of the dedication of our new and elegant temple, there would be nothing novel. It was a grand day—the sermon was grand in gospel truth and in spiritual unction—there was grand congregational singing, the voices of the multitude were lifted up in lofty strains of worship—many a grateful tear fell from the eyes of those who had planned, and prayed, and labored, and given, in view of this day—the prayers were earnest appeals to God to accept and bless the house, and record his name there, and many hearty amens showed that the prayers uttered by one were the fervent petitions of all. We have reason to believe that our supplications were heard, as our subsequent history will abundantly manifest.

When things settled down into regular routine again, at an early day after the occupancy of our new house, certain changes occurred in our official board. Brother Hall, venerable with years and beloved for his virtues, so long had he been a leader

in every good word and work, "fell on sleep, and was gathered to his fathers." Another name disappeared from the roll in a sadly different way: Brother Ticknor "forsook us, having loved this present world." The pastor had remonstrated against his wine-drinking, at home—his brethren had often and earnestly admonished him for neglecting class and prayer-meetings. But he had grown rich and proud, had formed social alliances which gratified his aspirations for stylish living and prominence in the community; so he rejected the counsel of his pastor, resented the admonitions of his brethren, and united with a more fashionable and worldly denomination.

To fill these vacancies, two men, hitherto unknown in this narrative, were brought into prominence. Brother Masters, a merchant, was a rising man in Sandburg, energetic in business, and fervent in religion. A few years before, he had failed, was sold out of house and home, and gave up every article of personal property—even taking the watch out of his pocket, and handing it to the officer who was selling his effects—to satisfy the demands of his creditors. Beginning business again, with no capital but character, he accumulated so rapidly as soon to regain his former *status*, and so continued, until, in a series of years, he became the largest capitalist in the country. This wonderful prosperity did not diminish his ardent piety—in the midst of growing and absorbing engagements, he found time to read, to attend social Church-meetings, and to discharge punctually his official duties. He was

a model citizen—an intelligent, well-informed, and sincerely devoted Christian—and soon evinced his fitness for the responsible office of steward by putting the finances of the Church in as sound a condition as his own. In fact, Brother Masters was a man of rare ability—his name was afterward known, and his influence felt, in the fiscal affairs of the State: it was acknowledged, not only in the financial, but also in the spiritual, affairs of Our Church.

Brother Robert J. Proffit, a retired teacher, now a farmer near town, was the other steward. He was a living enigma—a singular, eccentric man, uniting opposite traits of character in unintelligible combination. A native of Massachusetts, he spent all his income in purchasing slaves; a polished scholar, he used slang words and country idioms; devoutly spiritual sometimes, he was offensively light and trivial at others; patriotic as a citizen and benevolent as a neighbor, he was exacting, if not cruel, to his servants; gentle and urbane in company, he was harsh and petulant in his family I believe he was a good man—in a charitable sense, a good man: all good men are not perfect. But his influence was sadly divided—in some minds his goodness was questioned—what was bad in him fought against what was good, and often prevailed. He made money for himself, and attended to his official duties with seeming zeal and manifest liberality; but his children grew up worldly, sensual, godless—his house was not included in his religion. Perhaps the children saw so little of their father's piety that they were not inclined to follow a model

so unsatisfactory. Like Eli, he served the Lord himself, or claimed to be doing so, and allowed his sons and daughters to serve the devil.

We lost, this year, our good local preacher, Brother Lawne. He moved southward, seeking a better cotton region. He concluded that he could do more good raising cotton than keeping boarding-house—so he went away. We missed him—all the people missed him—for he was a precious Christian, and an excellent preacher. His place, however, was soon filled by another local preacher, Brother James Thomas, who settled in Sandburg to edit and publish a secular newspaper. His biography ought to be written: it contains a lesson for gospel ministers. I can sketch his career only so far as it was connected with the workings of our station. Politics did not aid Brother Thomas's spirituality. As he waxed warm in party zeal, he grew cold in the love of God. Providence did not seem to smile upon his employment—his enterprise failed, and he found himself poor, and getting poorer daily. His health broke down—his mind was harassed by visions of his own death, and of hopeless poverty for his family. A long and painful sickness brought him to the verge of the grave. On his bed of pain he cried to the Lord, asked for recovery that he might return to the itinerancy, and promised his Master the remainder of his days. He recovered, kept his vow, and was, for many years, "a star of the first magnitude" in the galaxy of Methodism.

In Our Church there was no respect of persons. No man was set up on high for what he possessed,

but was esteemed for what he seemed to be. Following this rule, we occasionally met with incidents more amusing than edifying. For instance, Brother Grumbles, a poor man, and apparently pious, had enjoyed the affections and good offices of the brethren. But he, at length, made known to the pastor that he felt it to be his duty to preach. To try his gifts, the pastor called upon him, one Sunday, to lead in prayer. The result did not advance the candidate's prospects at all, for, after beginning, "It is not for any thing worthy of Thy merit in us that we git down before Thee," and proceeding with equally meaningless jargon, he prayed that we all might "have a foretaste of the joys that await the finally impenitent." Instead of the usual amen, Brother Gilliam said, "God forbid!" Brother Grumbles, though dissuaded by the brethren, declared that he "must preach, or, leastwise, make the contempt." They gave him license to exhort—for he was running over with zeal. Under this authority he would take a text and divide it at random, and propose to show what he termed its *pints:* "Now, I've told all about this *pint*, and am a gwine to pick up the next *pint*, which *are*," etc. This was more than Christian charity could bear; it was too heavy for the broad shoulders of Methodist opinion on qualifications for the ministry: we got rid of Brother Grumbles, by refusing him license, but he fought under another banner.

The summing up of this year's work did not exhibit very large results. We held our own, barely, in numbers, gained somewhat in public opinion,

and were thus really more progressive than appearances indicated. Brother Gilliam paid more attention to externals and preparations than to the more important and immediate ends of ministerial labor. Our new house did us much good, by attracting outsiders who appreciated order and propriety, but perhaps our worship was not as spiritual as it had been in the old one. There is some temptation to pride in a fine house, and Christians may indulge it to their hurt, considering, all the while, this subtle sentiment to be an emotion of piety. Time, use, and reflection, cured this evil.

Before this year closed, our worthy pastor went back to his former station, and brought from thence "a helpmeet for him." He found there a Christian woman of suitable age, of goodly culture, of devout piety, who was willing to share with him the vicissitudes of itinerant life. Everybody pronounced it a most judicious marriage, except one sister—a maiden lady of forty years—who suggested that Sandburg Station could have furnished Brother Gilliam with just as good a wife, and saved him the trouble and expense of going fifty miles to get one.

CHAPTER XIV.

Fourteenth year—Conference in Sandburg—Perplexing privilege—William Smith, station-preacher—"Who on earth is he?"—Discouragement — Comforted — Works and wins—Brother Broom's experience and zeal—A vision—Brother Foreman's weakness — The world turns — Preacher's wife helps him—Revival—A concert—A failure—Sending forth laborers—Epidemic—First Psalms or Second Philip.

THAT week in October, when Conference held its session in Sandburg, was a memorable week. Fair, mild autumnal days, and bracing moonlight nights, contributed to the physical comfort of preachers and people, and brought out throngs of eager listeners to hear the word of life. The most popular and beloved Bishop presided—visitors from contiguous Conferences were present, and added character to the occasion by platform and pulpit eloquence. But hundreds of like festivals, in as many places, have blessed the broad domain of Methodism: it is needless to dwell on the transactions of this session. It was proper, however, to record the event as a gala-season in our local history; for such a gathering of ministerial strength contributed largely to the growth and permanent establishment of Methodism.

When the last night arrived, and the Bishop was

standing up to read out the appointments, expectation was painfully intense, for there had been differences of opinion among the brethren as to their choice of a preacher. Some wanted Brother Brown; some strongly objected to him, and as earnestly petitioned for Brother Black; and another party for Brother White. The Bishop had said to the official members, "Let me know your choice, and you shall have him; if you cannot agree among yourselves, I must decide for you." This was very kind, but it augmented the trouble. The privilege of choosing their pastor, made every man more intent on having his favorite preacher, and but for the wise concession of power to the Bishops in Methodist economy, would have resulted in our getting no preacher at all. Knowing the confused and conflicting views of the brethren, the Bishop made the appointment without consulting any one as to its fitness. Disappointment, chagrin, almost dismay, played over the countenances of the members, when the Bishop announced a name that none of them knew: "Sandburg Station, William Smith." "Who on earth is William Smith?" was asked by half-a-dozen at once. The Presiding Elder—a grave and prudent man—quieted their fears as well as he could; but one of the preachers, with less prudence, made a remark that seriously blocked Brother Smith's way for some time: "No matter for you," said he, to some who were mourning over their disappointment, "you would not agree on any one till all the *good preachers* were disposed of; now, you must put up with what you've got." This saying was spread

abroad in a short time, and fixed public opinion against Brother Smith in advance. No wonder that his reception at first was shy, cold, almost mortifying. But being entirely ignorant of the cause of this coldness, and being, also, wholly unacquainted with the citizens of Sandburg, he kept his thoughts to himself, prayed for strength and grace, and resolved to do the best he could.

The new preacher was comparatively a young man—had been but a few years in Conference—had traveled circuits in parts of the territory most remote from his present field—knew nothing whatever about station-preacher work—had very little confidence in his ability to go in and out acceptably before a people who had been served by many first-class preachers—and would have felt far less afflicted had his name been announced to "Post-Oak Circuit." But, thank God for Christian charity, and thank God for Methodist flexibility! When we fully realized that Brother Smith was *our preacher*, we accepted him cordially, rallied around him unitedly, and all heartily seconded the advice of old Sister Berry, who begged him not to be *disincouraged*: "Don't be disincouraged, Brother Smith," said she; "we've had *wuss* preachers than you; and you jist go 'long and do your duty, and trust to the good Lord, and I'll be bound it 'll all work right." The preacher felt encouraged by this indorsement, and wisely concluded to take the old lady's counsel. We shall see what came of it.

Of course Brother Smith was not a great preacher, but he was a plain and earnest man, and made the

people listen to him, so that he kept up the congregations. He visited the people, the poor and sick especially, and thus became popular, in spite of his *quasi* reputation as "not a good preacher." He nursed and increased the Sunday-school—prayer-meetings were more frequented — class-meetings were better attended—the Church really seemed as lively as if it had a "good preacher." Under his administration several vexatious cases of discipline occurred, which, as they form a large part of the year's items, had better be recorded here. A few words of preliminary explanation are necessary to understand the cases alluded to.

A local preacher, of remarkable zeal and energy, had become connected with us by change of his place of membership. He was a Mr. Broom, a wealthy farmer in the neighborhood of town. His conversion, a short time anterior, was considered close akin to a miracle. He had been a very wicked man—in drinking, swearing, card-playing, and, in fact, in every known species of high-handed wickedness, he had been a famous leader for many years. The idea of his ever becoming a Christian would have been pronounced insane a year ago. But he had become a professor of religion, and a local Methodist preacher. His conversion was most remarkable. It occurred at a time when there was no public interest or excitement on the subject of religion in his neighborhood. In fact, Mr. Broom never went to Church—never had any thing to do with it, except to curse it with a bitterness of hatred worthy of the archfiend himself. One day,

at his country home, at the close of a long and terrible debauch, he saw the devil looking through the window at him, and mocking him with horrible grimaces. He rose immediately—for he was a fearless man—took his double-barreled shot-gun in hand, and fired through the window on his mocking visitor. He disappeared. Then Mr. Broom became unconscious of earthly things, and only knew that he was passing upward, through space, toward the heavenly world. Standing on those wonderful shores, he saw and talked with the Saviour of men. His description of this interview, and of the appearance of the Saviour, was affecting beyond expression. There was the glory of God, scarcely obscured by the humanity—the human, almost exalted to the divine—and features of such mildness, gentleness, goodness, and love, as would melt the hardest heart by one glance. To the Saviour he frankly and fully confessed his many and horrible sins—from those divine lips he received assurances of pardon, and directions as to his future course. The first and leading item in these directions was, that he should join the Methodists—a people whom he delighted to hate and curse—and spend the remainder of his days in working for them; another was, that he should make restitution in certain cases in which he had won large sums of money at the card-table, and also in one in which he had taken heavy usury. Mr. Broom was not slow in obeying these impressions, or directions, as he considered them. He made restitution in all the cases alluded to, giving as his reason for so doing, to the aston-

ishment of the other parties, that he had repented of his sins, had obtained forgiveness, and had promised the Lord to do this thing. His profession created a profound sensation. Many thought his visions of the devil and of the heavenly world were only phenomena of *mania a potu*, and predicted a speedy return to old modes of living. Perhaps it was *mania*, but he did not recede from his position —joined the Church immediately, and devoted himself most sedulously to the duties of religion. But perhaps the strangest part of this story is yet to be told: Some days after his profession, while passing around his field, he heard a sepulchral voice call his name. Looking in the direction of the sound, he saw the devil standing by a large stump in the field, and heard him say, "John Broom, you have escaped from my clutches, but I will get A. B., C. D., and E. F"—naming three prominent citizens, his boon companions. Broom hastened to the house, mounted his horse, rode to each of these friends, stated to them what he had seen and heard, and implored them to change their mode of life. They were excited and dreadfully frightened for a season, but did not repent. Soon after this, A. B. disappeared, and no one knew his fate; C. D. died, not long after, of a congestive chill; and E. F. was killed in a drinking-saloon in town. The reader must draw his own conclusions from these facts.

Now, Brother Broom coming into the Church with most intensely excited zeal, and glowing with convictions of the unearthly purity of the Christian name, received from his vision of our Saviour, im-

agined that the Lord's heritage ought to be forthwith purged from all defilement and corruption. He therefore brought charges against several members whose lives were open, perhaps, to objection. There was a Brother Doolittle, who was slow to pay his debts, and often made promises that he could not meet—he was subjected to a rigorous prosecution, which resulted in his acquittal. The management of this case by the pastor displeased Brother Broom, and he became the uncompromising opposer of the administration, from that time forth. This did some harm, for Broom was a good man, had proved his sincerity by his works, but his zeal ran off with his judgment. Several similar cases, resulting in like manner, greatly intensified his antipathy to the preacher.

Another brother, quite a veteran in the ranks, fell out with Brother Smith, and curtailed his influence with a certain class. This brother, Foreman by name, was a mechanic, and a very good one, too; he was a good man, also, as far as any one knew. But Foreman had his weaknesses—I have known several good people who had them. He was a good singer, and was often called on to pray. The new preacher, in ignorance of Brother Foreman's rights in the premises, had raised a few songs himself, and called on other members, with whom he happened to get acquainted at first, to lead in prayer at the Wednesday-night meetings. This was a mortal offense to Brother Foreman; his dignity was outraged; his long-conceded prominence was ruthlessly snatched away: he made bold to resent the

injury, and exerted his influence, privately, to detract from the pastor's popularity. Poor human nature!

"Nevertheless, the world turns over," and the Church moves on. The preacher, accepting these troubles as a part of the perquisites of his position, quietly went forward, studying, and praying, and preaching, and visiting. His wife—I neglected to say before that he was a married man—aided him very much by nursing the sick, and providing with her own hands for the wants of the poor. This godly labor of hers called to mind the fruitful efforts of Sister Davidson—the first preacher's wife ever connected with the station—and those who remembered and appreciated those good works, performed nine years before, rallied around Sister Smith, and followed her into several fields of usefulness. So went matters till about August—if I remember correctly, it was our fourth quarterly meeting—we had such promising signs of a revival that the preacher continued from day to day, for about two weeks. He was aided chiefly by the local brethren—some, by the clerical professors in our school. Not more than twenty professed religion in this revival. One was a case of special interest. On Sunday, while the pastor was preaching on the new birth, and just as he had explained that this happy change follows appropriating faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, a lady, who had been anxiously seeking the blessing for several days, obtained it, proclaimed it, and ran to the pulpit, shouting, "I know it, I know it!" The effect was electrical. She was a lady of intelligence and high social position—her husband

was a worldly-minded man, who seldom entered a church door—so that the evidences of genuineness were overwhelming. I heard the preacher say that he was nearer satisfied with that sermon than with any he had ever preached; and that if some one would believe and be converted every time he preached, he would conclude that he really was a good preacher. Why are not sinners converted under every sermon, O brothers?

This revival came to an end abruptly, and after this fashion: When Brother Smith and the local brethren began to fail, the weather being exceedingly warm, some of the old members, who loved the memory of a former pastor, concluded that if they only had him with them, every thing would move forward with irresistible power. So they dispatched a message for him—he obeyed the call promptly, and in due time made his appearance in the pulpit before a house crowded to suffocation. He made a beautiful exordium, indulged in graceful allusions to his former connection with Sandburg, and then attempted to proceed with his discussion. He wandered about awhile, uttering straggling, disconnected, and irrelevant thoughts, till, finding himself completely in the dark, he hastened to conclude, and sat down, overwhelmed with mortification. The standard of feeling in the congregation was too far above the preacher when he began—instead of rising to their pitch, he brought them down to his—and both he and his hearers grew colder and colder to the end. Good Dr. Watts defined our case exactly when he sang, "In vain we

strive to rise." We could not get over that shock. The meeting was closed, almost with the disgrace of failure after glorious success.

Our station was fruitful this year, in giving to the ministry a promising laborer. He was licensed to preach, recommended to Conference, and is, at this writing, a useful traveling preacher. There is always life in a Church when its young men are called to this high and holy vocation.

We had some affliction this year. Several of our members suffered severe and protracted illness. That terrible disease, typhoid fever, appeared in town, and not a few were subjected to its slow but certain ravages. One poor sister went up from a hovel of squalid poverty to her mansion in the "Father's house." How strange, that from such a sorrowful scene as her death, there should come a cause of laughter! But so it was. Returning from her funeral, the pastor remarked to old Sister Cobbs, "What a wonderful transition from a suffering body and wretched poverty to immortal joys and boundless wealth!" "Yes," said she, "I have often thought of that great and sudden change, when a poor Christian gets to heaven: it must require a strong constitution to stand it!"

Ignorance often singularly dwells with goodness. At one of our country appointments, a man about forty years of age had been converted. He made a zealous member, but was sadly uneducated in biblical literature. He was telling one of the young brethren from town about a wonderful sermon a local preacher had delivered at the appointment on

the preceding Sunday. "What was the text?" asked the young brother. "I can't tell you," replied Brother Hammill, "adzactly *what* it was, but I know pretty near *where* it was." "Well, where was it? maybe I can repeat it," said he from town. "It was in first Psalms or second Philip, one or the other," said Hammill. "Get your Bible, and look," suggested the young man. Hammill got his Bible and opened at Genesis, and patiently turned through until he came to *Philippians*. "Here," said he, "is Philip Pyans, but I don't see second Philip; I reckon it and first Psalms are both left out of my Bible."

CHAPTER XV.

Fifteenth year—Brother Morton, preacher—His character—Large family—An old slander—A broken heart—Safe administration—Spiritual life—Lining the hymns—A trouble cured—Sudden fall—Professor Chardon's apostasy—Two acquisitions and their story—Our supernumerary—Migratory population.

THE revolution of the ecclesiastical wheel brought to our station the Rev. Samuel Morton, one of the truest, purest, holiest men I ever knew. His face bore the priestly motto of the ancient ritual, "Holiness to the Lord;" and all his sermons and private conversations were wonderfully redolent of "the mind that was in Christ Jesus." Yet neither the wickedest sinner nor the most formal saint could accuse him of cant or pretense in religion. If there was any thing against Brother Morton's character, it was that "all men spoke well of him." His preaching was not as grand in thought or as beautiful in language as that of some of our former pastors, but he was sound in doctrine, deep in experience, powerful in example, and earnest in delivery. He lost nothing by his lack of oratory.

But his arrival stirred up a little short-lived trouble among the stewards. He had too large a

family to board—wished to live rather on the outskirts of town, where a larger lot, and less temptation, would help him raise his boys. This, after some flutter and fuss, was all arranged according to his wishes. It was an inconvenient arrangement, in some respects. The sisters wanted Sister Morton in a more central position, so she could be always on hand to assist them in their Church work; but when they ascertained what a faithful and judicious mother she was, what a model housekeeper, what a kind and benevolent nurse to the sick, they excused her from active leadership in the more public affairs of their department. Her children advertised the mother wherever they appeared—at church, on the street, or in school. The old slander, that "preachers' children are the worst children in the neighborhood," was silently but completely refuted by this well-ordered family.

Reader, let us sit down here and talk awhile on the subject of preachers' children. And, to give a practical turn to the subject, I will introduce another preacher's family, and we will see what conclusion we can reach by the comparison. There dwelt in Sandburg, at this time, an aged widow of an old traveling preacher, who had spent his life's prime in the work, and had gone to his reward a few years before. There were in the family several boys and one daughter—all grown, or nearly so. The father had been a popular minister, much of his time from home, easy and indulgent when there. The mother was foolishly weak, not to say culpably blind, in regard to her children's deportment. So

far from controlling them, and correcting their faults herself, she would hide their errors from their father, when he was at home, and even make false reports to him about their conduct during his absence. They soon came to understand this state of things, and entered, without fear of punishment, into every inviting path of sinful indulgence. Idleness, bad company, night revels with low associates, soon brought them down to the lowest point in morals, and to the lowest seat in society. The good old man discovered, when the fatal mistake was past remedy, that he sinned against society and against his own posterity by slackness in parental discipline. And when his only daughter abandoned the way of virtue, and brought disgrace upon the name of woman, it was more than he could bear: his heart broke under the weight, and his gray hairs went down in sorrow to the grave.

Now, right under the same sky, surrounded by the same external conditions, Brother Morton's sons and daughters grew up, and have long since attained to manhood and womanhood. They are intelligent, honorable, and honored, and have taken position in society, high among the highest, best among the good. Was the efficient cause of the outcome in either case their being children of preachers? You say, No! I say, No! What then? Simply this, and nothing more: In the one case the parents were false to the calls of duty—neglected their offspring—blindly and wickedly permitted them to go to ruin; in the other case there was Christian discipline, good family government—

father and mother mutually helping each other in the sacred task of "bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord"—and when those children got old, they did not depart from the principles of virtue and piety implanted in their youthful hearts. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

The administration of Brother Morton was eminently edifying. His sermons were sound in matter, full of instruction to the inquirer, full of warning to the wicked. His was indeed a ministry of light and love—a rare mingling of qualities, but a most healthful mixture. When light shines and love melts, flowing from the pulpit in fervid and glowing language, who so hard as not to confess the divine origin and the divine power of the gospel?

There was no special revival this year, but yet the Church grew and flourished. The influence was constant and progressive, but not "with observation." It was more like the fire in a coal-kiln, where the heat gradually and regularly insinuates itself through the whole mass, bringing all parts into uniformity and into a desired condition, than like the flaring and lashing flame of open-air combustion. There really appeared to be more spiritual life in Sunday-school instructions and exercises than formerly there had been. The children took a deeper interest in those parts of their lessons that brought them nearer to Christ. Their singing was greatly improved, both in taste and animation, for about this time music and words, specially adapted to young people, began to be introduced

into our country. This was a grand advance in Sunday-school work.

Our Church took a new step—forward, the large majority believed, but backward, a few declared—in congregational singing. It was found that we were drawling along in that part of worship, in a manner good enough in its day, but behind the times. Some of the young people banded together, employed a professional teacher, took lessons and practiced, until, before anybody was aware of the treat they were preparing for us, they broke forth with one of their choice voluntaries in such charming style as to win an almost unanimous concession of merited praise. The leading of our singing was surrendered to them—hymn-books were procured for the congregation—lining the hymns was abandoned. Some few good brethren, who could not be convinced that a new sharp knife is better than a dull old one, even when they have a hard stick to cut, grumbled at the innovation, and talked sneeringly about "the stuck-up choir;" but "progress" carried the day—for it *was* progress.

Our good pastor had a short but serious trouble with a young married lady, a member of the Church, whose husband was a high-strung young lawyer, but ignorant of religion. The lady had danced, or was said to have encouraged dancing, at a party. The pastor, as in duty bound, sought an interview with her on the subject, but the young husband rejected it as an officious interference with private rights, and made threats of personal violence if any steps were taken to bring his wife to trial. A few

judicious friends instructed the young gentleman more fully in regard to Church obligations, and assured him that the pastor was only doing his bounden duty. He changed his manner, and promptly gave assurances that the offense should not be repeated.

It saddens my heart even to record a loss we sustained this year, in the defection of two prominent members. Let the story be short as possible. Mr. Cane, a merchant, prosperous and rich, had for several years maintained an unblemished reputation as a business man and as a Christian. He stood high in the Church, and held the honorable office of steward. To the utter astonishment of the community, and to the unspeakable mortification of his brethren, it transpired that he was dreadfully involved in his finances, and worse involved in moral obliquity. "The loftiest pines fall with the heaviest crash," says Horace. This man's fall illustrates that figure. Never was there a more sudden and disastrous termination of a prosperous business career; never did the followers of Christ witness a more total and shameful apostasy.

Scarcely had we ceased to wonder at this sudden turn in Mr. Cane's affairs, when we began to fear a like result in the history of another honored brother. Professor Chardon—a ripe scholar, a clear-headed thinker, a popular teacher—for many years a Methodist, for several months a steward, had allowed his mind to become so poisoned by Swedenborg's dreamy mysticisms, that he began to doubt, then to deny, some of the cardinal doctrines of the gospel.

He published in the *Sandburg Gazette* a caustic review of a sermon on the resurrection, which the pastor had lately preached. In this review, after exhausting his supply of argument, he employed unchaste and offensive language, denouncing all who believed in the resurrection of this body as "the deluded victims of a senseless superstition." Of course the pastor took no notice of this unbrotherly attack, believing that its author would very soon solve the problem of his Church relations for himself. It was known, not long after this, that Professor Chardon was indulging freely in strong drink. His connection with the school was severed—he got out of the Church, I do not remember how—became an avowed infidel, a public drunkard, and died such a death as must needs end such a life.

Could the cause survive these disgraces? It could—it did. The world cannot rationally charge religion with the bad conduct of its votaries, as long as the Church promptly denounces crime and renounces criminals. Judas left a vacancy in the number of apostles; he detracted nothing from the divine authority and commission of the apostleship. His place was filled by a better man, and Christianity spread over the world. Our Church filled the places of Cane and Chardon, and went on in prosperity.

Perhaps it was providential that, about this time, we were strengthened by the acquisition of two members, Barker and Tracey by name, who had become citizens of Sandburg some time before. They

exercised for several years their well-developed gifts and graces among us, adding no little to our spiritual, social, and financial resources. They had a remarkable history in relation to each other, and a remarkable coincidence attended their coming in and going out of our fellowship, while a complete dissimilarity marked their subsequent careers.

Brother Barker was the senior of the two, a farmer, and moved into Sandburg from the East, settling among us for the purpose of educating his children. He was a rich planter, a judicious and safe business man. He was far more spiritual than the laity of his time generally were—sang well at prayer-meetings, prayed well in public, was even fluent and impressive in exhortation. He was steward and class-leader, filling both offices in a highly satisfactory manner. These strong points, added to his good practical sense in public and municipal affairs, soon placed him in the front rank in social and ecclesiastical circles.

Brother Tracey came to Sandburg from the West—a merchant with small capital, began business on a moderate scale at first, and devoted himself to it with marked industry and energy. In religious affairs he was, perhaps, more active and forward than Brother Barker. This zeal placed him in office—he was elected steward and superintendent of the Sunday-school, and for a season was a model worker in each. There were no men, connected with us at that time, more judiciously zealous, more perseveringly laborious, than these two. Let me anticipate events a little, and sketch, briefly, their subsequent

history. They left Sandburg not far from the same time, one going North, the other South. Misfortunes came upon Brother Barker in a few years, and completely stripped him of his property. But his integrity remained untarnished. The religion which had comforted him in prosperity, now consoled him in adversity. Brother Tracey was successful in business—there seemed to be a charm in his hand, that whatever he touched turned to gold. But alas! as money came into his pocket, religion went out of his heart. He abandoned his religious profession, and gave himself up wholly to a life of worldliness and sensuality. The religion which he had sought and cultivated in his poverty and early struggles, he renounced in the days of secular aggrandizement. "How hardly shall they who trust in riches enter into the kingdom of heaven!"

It is so rare to see "elegant leisure" used to the glory of God, that I mention with gratitude the citizenship and occasional ministrations of the Rev. Mr. Willburn, a supernumerary preacher. The school had brought him to the vicinity of our town. Having ample means, he was not compelled to give attention to business; and having no pastoral work, he had time to assist others whenever his health would permit. Hence, he was a valuable adjunct to the pastorship, and an able and instructive preacher.

A perpetual check on secular and spiritual development in the South is the migratory instinct of the people. When the novelty of a place ceases to charm, or when the surface soil of a farm is exhausted by unwise culture, the next impulse is to

move to a newer region. This characteristic of our people may prevent the stagnation of society, and promote a sort of freshness and vitality in individual life; but it oftener, perhaps, hinders that harmony of taste and feeling of common interest so necessary to the success of Christian enterprises. Men lose their attachment to a Church, and the Church loses its power to command and use their talents, whenever they begin to feel unsettled, and look about for a more inviting domicile. Under the operation of this cause, and, alas! under the sterner law of death, I find in our communion now, at the end of fifteen years, only a few of those who loved and labored together when my narrative began. But few of these deaths have been recorded, because this is not so much a history of individual *members* as of the works, the reverses, and the successes of a perpetuated *membership*.

CHAPTER XVI.

Sixteenth and seventeenth years—Brother Pollock's coming, works, and death — A Christian death — A supply—Too much for one—Revival and romance—Brother Burleson our preacher—A mistake—A year of gloom—Universalist preacher—A happy death sanctified to good—A train—Farewell to Sister Phipps—Aunt Ruthie's burial—Under a cloud.

AFTER this lovely and beloved man of God (Brother Morton) had fulfilled his ministry with us, and gone to another field, came the Rev. Albert Pollock as our pastor. He was a younger man than his predecessor, but no less intent on doing good. What he lacked in experience, he strove to supplement by hearty counsel with older ministers and earnest prayer to God. Ardent in temperament, sensitive to the calls of duty, panting after knowledge, burdened with the worth of souls, he addressed himself to the work with a loftiness of purpose truly poetical, and a zeal really apostolic. His young wife, trained in the heart of one of the oldest and stanchest Methodist families, knew already much of the privations of itinerant life, but did not shrink from the worst. Their home was with one of the brethren—they preferred to board.

Brother Pollock's sermons were not on a level

with those we had lately heard, but his earnestness and directness of diction and manner threw a charm around his pulpit which drew, and then entertained, large congregations. He was a fine reader: his Scripture lessons were so read as to excite attention, and in reading a hymn he felt and expressed, in tone and emphasis, the most impassioned passages. I make a special note of this superior excellency because it is so rarely possessed, so lightly esteemed, so little cultivated. I accept the ability to read a hymn in the pulpit, so as to bring out its meaning perfectly, as evidence of a high order of talent, or a high state of cultivation—it is either a great gift or a great grace. It was one of the attractions of our Sunday service, this beautiful and expressive reading. I shall never forget the fervor and force with which he read "O where shall rest be found," the last time he appeared in the pulpit. The last time! That came in the early spring-time of his pastoral year. A mortal disease arrested him in his ardent and upward career, and released him from labor forever.

I shall attempt no word-painting of a sorrowful, painful, yet beautiful and triumphant death-scene. That scene defies description. Angels might set his words to music, and chant them as an anthem in singing the wonders of redemption; but no mortal can repeat them, save one already near enough to the heavenly world to hear its songs and feel its inspirations. "Come," said he to the wife of another minister, "see how a Christian minister can die, that you may ever cheer your husband's toils with the

hope of this reward." In words of manly affection he took leave of his own stricken wife, embraced his two little boys, shook hands with a company of weeping brethren, and then went home to Jesus. The worldly bard would say, "O what a noble heart was here undone!" The Christian poet sings, "How blessed the righteous when he dies!"

The funeral of Brother Pollock was a strong indorsement of his character. All classes and kinds of people thronged the church, and joined in the procession. The sermon was preached by Professor Smith, from the text: "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace."

The Presiding Elder of the District employed Professor Smith to take charge of the station for the remainder of the year. This arrangement was the best that could be made, for Professor Smith had filled the station a few years before, and was generally acceptable. But he could do nothing but preach—his duties in school effectually prevented him from doing the kind and amount of pastoral work necessary to the development of a Church. No preacher ought to be allowed to have double work, except in providential cases like this. The one work of feeding the flock of Christ is as much as any man can do successfully. How, then, can a man be teacher in a school, employed all the time five days in the week, and visit the sick, look after delinquents, find and encourage the distressed, seek out and assist the tender inquirer, call on and get acquainted with strangers who come into

his town, study two sermons for Sunday, attend to his own domestic matters, and many occasional calls beside? The thing is utterly impossible—one or the other branch of labor is sure to be neglected. And whereas the school claims five-sevenths of the time, and claims it so imperiously that no modification is admissible, and as the meat-and-bread question is intimately connected with success in school, it does not require much arithmetic to find which of the two is to suffer. Let teachers teach; let pastors preach and feed the flock, and let the Church honor and support its faithful pastors.

During the temporary pastorship of Professor Smith, there was a very gracious revival, conducted mostly by visiting and local brethren, in which several were converted, and the Christians wonderfully blessed. Some of the fruits of that short season of grace have ripened and been gathered home; some are yet living and laboring in the common cause in other portions of the vineyard. I must mention four young girls, then just approaching womanhood, who were singularly happy during that meeting. Two of them died soon afterward—one in calm, serene peace, the other with joy and singing, and heavenly light upon her face. The other two illustrate the vicissitude of this uncertain life. Miss Mollie was a poor girl, but queenly in form, slow but determined in learning, full of aspirations after the highest attainments. Miss Jennie was rich, haughty, fair, quick and sprightly in mind, rather frivolous for a Christian, deeming all the resources of life at her command. She was disposed to look

down from her lofty social *status* upon her poor classmate, and acted toward her more as a condescending patron than as an equal and friend. Time brought maturity and marriage: Mollie was admired for her personal worth by a wealthy gentleman, much her senior in years, greatly above her in family connection. She accepted him, was "endowed with his worldly goods," rode in high places, and was, for years, one of the most popular and courted leaders of the *ton* in a distant city. Jennie was admired and sought by a gay young man, whose fancy her wit had captivated, whose mercenary soul her money attracted. She accepted him, and, after a brief season of extravagant splendor, was left a drunkard's penniless widow, to work through a life she had mistaken, at toil she had despised, for the support of her orphan children.

From Conference this fall came the Rev. Robert Burleson to our station. Like our last pastor, he was a young married man—was considered able to fill "good appointments"—had some talent, a *modicum* of industry and not quite enough zeal, suspected the people of not appreciating his abilities, was inclined to be querulous and peevish when things did not suit him, and—but this is enough. He was glad when his year was out; perhaps not one of the flock wept when he went away. Wise and good men make mistakes sometimes—the Bishop made one in this instance.

The Church kept together this year more by the attraction of cohesion than by the central force of the pastor. Occasionally we heard a minister from

the school, or had the instruction of Brother Willburn, our learned supernumerary, or were roused and cheered by the Presiding Elder at quarterly meetings. So we had no "famine of hearing the word of the Lord," though our stated diet was neither abundant nor nutritious.

In other respects this was a year of gloom. In the winter, typhoid fever prevailed; in the summer, dysentery. The doctors did not know how to treat either disease at that time; hence numbers died. The school was damaged by this epidemic sickness —scholars went home, and matters wore a most unpromising appearance. Among the victims of typhoid fever, and one of the first, was our Brother Miles, a large, strong, vigorous man—a wagon-maker by trade. He wilted under the dreadful scourge, wasted away, and died—but his end was peace. Then one of the most popular and accomplished young men in town, a young merchant, moral but not religious, was taken down, lingered, wasted, died. He professed religion during his sickness, and his friends had hope in his death. Perhaps the next victim was a man from New York, who had recently come to Sandburg to establish some sort of a factory. He was a shrewd, sharp man—gave out that he was a Universalist preacher, and was going to enlighten the people on the subject of religion. Poor man! he clung to life with the grip of despair, tried to beat death back by main strength, but yielded at last, and left no words of hope behind. How different another! Mrs. Rollin was a pious matron, in middle age, the

mother of a lovely family. Col. Rollin, her husband, was not religious. She yielded so uncomplainingly to the will of God, talked so composedly of the comforts of religion in the last great trial, that her friends mingled joy with their grief at her departure, and her husband, like the great Chateaubriand at the death of his mother, "wept and believed."

But this mournful record of mortality is too long —for these are but a few of the many who passed away from earth during this eventful year. The good died—the wicked were hurried away—the old and the young went side by side to the cemetery. It was a dark time.

Besides all this, it was a time of financial stringency. Bad crops and poor prices prostrated business, and only those who had ample capital or strong friends could brook the current. Many went down under the violent force of unexpected reverses.

A passenger, with a through ticket on a railroad, sees human nature in endless variety. Between start and terminus he is left by most of those who went aboard with him, while at every depot some more come on, ride a few miles, and disappear. The sober old man, the thoughtless young man, the grave and solid middle-aged, plain old women, gay young ladies, anxious mothers with fretful babes, gay belles with smiling beaux, embrowned farmers, hard-worked mechanics, the sagacious lawyer, the grave minister, the empty buffoon, the slick-tongued hypocrite, the disguised pick-pocket, the escaping murderer—all whirl along together. So in the cur-

rent history of a community—the few that live through fifteen or twenty years find themselves surrounded by a new population. If a man lives many years, nearly all his friends are new—the old ones have passed away. Yielding to this law, we "let off," this year, several of our first members. Good Sister Phipps—she who prayed so loud, and banged the mourners so hard—removed to a neighboring town. A change in her fortunes compelled a change in homes. Dear old Aunt Ruthie, the curiously-deformed, the craky-headed sister, yielded to the ravages of disease, and was not. We heartily trusted, as we smoothed down her grave, that she was with her oft-celebrated saints, "Meek old Moses and good old Daniel—safe in the promised land."

Whoever reads these pages will not be surprised to read this statement: Our Church in Sandburg is under a cloud—its membership is thinned—many are discouraged—the people generally are dispirited—congregations are not as large, the tone of the worshipers not as animated, as they were a year ago. Israel was in the wilderness, but they were Israel still. The Lord took care of us, also, and brought us to see better days.

CHAPTER XVII.

Eighteenth and nineteenth years—Railroad and telegraph—Brother Alfred Marsden—Civilization—Preacher labors—Sinner dies—Dr. Josephs's faith—A case of lay baptism—Good preaching—Zion refreshed—Brother Marsden's second year—Children sing—All sing—Israel rejoices—No formula—A Timothy sent forth—Baptists and Cumberlands organize—Help and health.

"HAS the train arrived?"

"Not yet; it is behind time, and is expected at 4:40 P. M. Are you looking for any one this evening?"

"Yes, we expect our new preacher on this train. Conference adjourned yesterday, and we received a dispatch saying that he would be here to-day."

"Who is he? I have not heard who was appointed for this place."

"The Rev. Alfred Marsden."

"What about him? Will he do? Who knows him?"

"Professor Smith knows him well—says he is the very man for us. He is a stranger in this region, having traveled most of his time in the northern part of our territory."

"Has he a family? What's his age? What for a scholar is he?"

"He has a wife and two children, I understand—is about thirty, or may be under—and as to his education, I know but little, except that he is said to be a man of fair attainments, well posted in theology, of sprightly mind, pleasant address, and a real worker."

"That all sounds well; I am glad to have such a favorable account."

This conversation between a steward and a private member explains itself, and suggests one or two other things. We have come to the age of railroads and telegraphs — institutions unknown when our narrative opened. Sandburg has the benefits and the evils of both, and has become familiar with the new language and new modes of business introduced by these wonderful inventions. Its plodding method has changed to rapid and restless ways, and impatience at an hour's delay prevails where a few years ago men could wait days together without complaining. Are these inventions improvements? In a human and political sense, yes; in a moral and religious sense, no. Were I merely a statesman, laboring to aggrandize my country and my age, I would use all available means to promote facilities for transportation of merchandise and transmission of thought; I would cultivate the fine arts, encourage splendor in architecture, and lavish rewards even on labor-saving and ornamental inventions, until my State should rival Babylon in splendor, and my capital surpass Rome in wealth and power. But were I a moralist and philanthropist, seeking the greatest and most

permanent good of my age, I would commend simplicity in manners, adhere to natural modes of transportation, encourage a tardy transmission of news and of ideas, discountenance all exhibitions of pride in architecture, and pay large premiums on honest manual labor. This may seem like strange language from a professional teacher; I shall not defend the opinion, knowing that whoever lives to see the *real* supplant the *hypothetical*, the *useful* accepted instead of the *ornamental*, the *good* adopted and the *evil* rejected, will acknowledge the wisdom of this theory.

I beg pardon for this reflection, naturally enough thrown in while waiting for the cars. Now, we must drown our sober thoughts in the scream, and roar, and clatter of the coming train, and the rush, push, and shove of the mannerless crowd that infest the depot. Brother Marsden, with wife and babes, is received cordially at the car door, and taken to his rooms at Brother Harwood's boarding-house. He is a small man, very dark hair, beard, and eyes, with quick motions, and features indicative of character. Any one, at all gifted in reading character from the features, would say at once that he is a man of thought, energy, decision—perhaps eminent in strength of will. Thus introduced, he went to work, everybody seeming pleased with the hopeful promise always connected with energy. The promise was not in the existing *status*, but in the preacher's will to labor, and specially in God's pledge of good to him that soweth.

The prevalent sickness had not yet abated. We

lost one or two distinguished citizens about this time—men of great moral worth. One of the saddest afflictions connected with this visitation was the death of a very popular but very wicked citizen. He was a kind-hearted, friendly, social, genial man—had been rich, but had squandered his estate by dissipation—had a large family, who, as well as himself, were kept up by friends and relatives. Well, this man—Mr. Mardoc—fell under the epidemic, and seeing that he must die, called for the ministers and Christian friends to pray for him and instruct him—a call which they speedily obeyed. It was too late; the fatal line was passed—there was no godly sorrow, no living faith, no hope in his death. There seemed to be a gloom resting upon the community. His funeral was attended by numbers of his old companions in sin, and the preacher was not slack in reminding them of their certain fate if they did not repent. Let every minister be honest and plain with the living when he can say no good of the dead.

Another melancholy case must be recorded, because the ministry and other praying people had made special efforts in the case, and failed. Dr. Josephs, a gentleman and a good physician, had been deeply convicted, but he resisted. The pastor had visited him, and pleaded with him. The doctor replied, "I know myself a sinner—I know, also, that none but Christ can save me, and that I ought to submit to him and trust in him. But yet I delay, and have no excuse for it." He still delayed, turned to brandy to drown the troubles of his mind, and

succeeded, I fear, in drowning his soul in perdition —for he died a drunkard.

A case of more than ordinary interest occurred about this time. A young man, clerk in a store in town, feeling symptoms of sickness, went to his mother's, some seven miles in the country. Growing rapidly worse, he called his mother, and said, "Mother, I feel that I am going to die; I have never been baptized, but I know my sins are all forgiven, and I am not afraid to die. Please send for the minister, and let him baptize me." A messenger was started to town immediately, but it was late in the night when he arrived, and a violent storm was raging at the time, which prevented the preacher from setting out before day-break. When he reached the house, the young man was dead. The widowed mother met him, and with tears and sobs of sorrow, and with a troubled mind lest she had done wrong, said to him, "Brother Marsden, my dear boy found that he was going, and asked me again and again if you had come; when I told him you had not, he said, 'Mother, I can't die satisfied without baptism—get some water, and baptize me yourself.' I could not deny my child's last wish, so I got a bowl of water, knelt by his bed and prayed, and then baptized him in the name of the Lord. It relieved his mind, and he calmly fell asleep in Jesus. Did I do wrong?" The preacher replied, "No, Sister W., you did exactly right; the ordinance was as valid in the sight of God as if I had done it myself." Some theologians might, perhaps, give a different answer to the mother's ques-

tion; but plain sense, and parental affection, and scriptural faith, all say, "She did exactly right—it was a valid baptism."

Brother Marsden addressed himself to his pastoral work with steadiness and energy. He visited from house to house, talked to and prayed with the families, exhorted all to attend regularly to their private duties and to the social meetings, dropped a fitly-spoken word, now and then, in the stores and offices on the square, visited the school, and showed a hearty interest in the salvation of the students. His preaching was warm and fresh, and if his sermons did not smell of the midnight lamp, they exhaled the dewy fragrance of Sharon's Rose. In a month or two the Church realized the influence of a pastor, and began to center around him; and the people felt the spirit of an earnest minister, and began to flock together to hear him. The purer and healthier atmosphere that brought release from sickness in town, found a striking correspondence in the fresh vigor and vitality of the people of God. We felt how sweet must have been those songs of ancient Zion, when the Lord turned the captivity of his people, and "Jacob rejoiced, and Israel was glad."

Though greatly refreshed, we experienced no special "feast of weeks" this year. The time was mostly occupied in building up the waste-places and in getting back fully into the old paths. Some, however, were added to our roll, good and valuable members. Thus the year passed away—Conference came and was over—Brother Marsden was returned to Sandburg.

Having the vantage-ground of last year's success, he went to work with hopeful diligence. The Sunday-school was fully restored to its former prosperity, congregations looked like they did in days past —once more we were "strong in the Lord." Nothing (that is, as a means) contributes more to the life of worship than good singing. This adjunct to devotion had sadly decayed; it was now brought back, and even advanced beyond its previous standard of excellency. The children received special instruction and exercises in vocal music under an efficient teacher; so that, with understanding and heart joined in sacred song, they inaugurated the Sabbath-day's exercises with thrilling, charming, elevating strains of melody. Congregational singing was cultivated, also, with a zeal and taste that soon brought out all the best talent of the Church in harmonious praise. I wonder how a pastor who does not give attention to this branch of worship can expect success in his labors.

An experienced minister or layman, after reading the statements here made, is anticipating the announcement of a revival, of a great awakening and a glorious harvest of souls. It came—a precious season of grace. We saw once more the altar of old Sandburg Church surrounded by mourners in Zion, we heard again the unmistakable note of victory, as from time to time some struggling soul emerged into "the liberty of the sons of God." The little girl, with gladness sparkling in her eyes, told how precious Jesus is to the trusting heart; the strong young man, giving his heart to God,

spoke words of more than eloquence in expressing the joys of pardon; the aged, with tears of rapture on their furrowed cheeks, magnified the long-suffering mercy which had forgiven a life of sin; while many old members, who had seen the glory of former years, and had lived through the gloom and shadow of the recent past, scarcely restrained themselves from extravagant displays of joy.

There is no fixed form of revivals—manifestations of saving grace are not made by rule. It is difficult, nay, it is dangerous, if not irreverent, to judge of the genuineness of a work by external signs. The gentle dew nourishes the plant, the noiseless shower invigorates the drooping crop, the storm and tempest, lashing the forest in fury, pours copious richness on the thirsty fields; and who shall dictate to the Father which of these to send upon his vineyard? Even so—let the minister plant carefully, and cultivate diligently, and then let him and his charge wait, "and have long patience, till they receive the early and the latter rain;" and whether it come in pentecostal power, or in gentle acceptance of grace, like that which opened Lydia's heart, let it be received and appreciated with equal gratitude.

One of the converts of this revival is now an eminent minister. He, perhaps, may read this line without identifying himself. The full harvest, however, was not gathered into our garner: other denominations received accessions from the happy season. The organization of a Missionary Baptist, and also of a Cumberland Presbyterian Church, in

town, should have been mentioned before. The ministers of these Churches rendered valuable assistance, throwing their whole strength on the Lord's side, and forgetting, for a time, their sectarian peculiarities. How wonderfully the love of Christ is at war with bigotry! In revivals these differences are forgotten or subordinated; in seasons of coldness they flourish.

In the ministerial department we had help in great variety. Several brethren—plain, solid men—came from their charges, and engaged in assisting Brother Marsden. It is not always a good plan to have very many preachers in a protracted meeting, but this time it worked admirably. There seemed to be a pungency in the words of one of these visiting brothers which reached hearts that would not yield to the strongest appeals made by more polished speakers. So it is: the Spirit uses means, and in his hands a flint-pointed arrow is more potent than burnished steel in human hands.

The Church felt, as the year approached its close, that it was in a much-improved condition. Perhaps affliction, through which we had passed, had been made a blessing to us; doubtless the prayers and supplications of the membership were greatly to our profit; but to the persistent labors of the pastor, God's grace attending, we were chiefly indebted for the wonderful restoration. For, for this purpose—that is, "the perfecting of the saints, and the edifying of the body of Christ"—has the Lord given to the Church apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Twentieth and twenty-first years — Rev. Dr. Roberts — His household—Sandburg remodeled—A bank and a banker—Mischief done— Additions — Col. Green — Dr. Haines — Brother Rowland—A liberal sinner—Not much progress—Dr. Roberts returned—"Marrying out of meeting"—Which should yield?—A storm of trouble—Discretion and loyalty—Preacher broken down.

THE Rev. Dr. Roberts succeeded Brother Marsden in our station. The Doctor was advanced in years toward the "high twelve" of life, was a short, thick-set gentleman, of agreeable presence, very companionable, quite piquant and spicy in conversation. He was more than an average preacher as to matter and manner, and having a good utterance—one of Mr. Wesley's points in the make-up of a preacher—and being entirely new to us, a recent transfer from another Conference, he began his pastorate under as fair conditions, and with as few drawbacks, as ever a preacher did. He had, moreover, a nice family of boys and girls, and dwelt in a hired house which the stewards promptly provided for him. In this he had a better berth than St. Paul had at Rome.

The railroad, as heretofore mentioned, remodeled old business somewhat, and opened doors for new

enterprises. This brought a new element into the population—capital sought investment, and society invited additions of almost every class. Some of these additions were really subtractions from the aggregate moral value of the town. A wealthy banker brought his capital and his vices, and set both into active operation: the first, no doubt, facilitated business, but the latter retarded good morals; for he and his became ringleaders in all sorts of respectable wickedness, such as dancing, cards, etc. Another gentleman of large resources moved from the country into town. His wife was a Methodist, and united with us; but the tide was so strongly set against her at home, that she seemed to keep her religion carefully removed beyond high-water mark. The old gentleman loved fun and frolic, the boys and girls preferred his ways to their mother's; so they carried matters with a high hand, and on a large scale. It is sad to contemplate how much poison two such families can scatter abroad in a community. These did much harm in Sandburg for several years. They have nearly all gone to the dogs in property and social *status*—some of them have gone to their final reward.

Our Church received several other new members from the growing ranks of population. Col. Green, from a neighboring State, bought land near town, built a fine house, and ornamented his place with a taste bordering on magnificence. He, his wife, and three of the older children united with us, and were thought to be acquisitions. The Colonel was a boisterous, impulsive, showy man — loved to be

prominent in affairs—soon became a steward, and paid liberally toward supporting the station. But he paid in his own way. It was common, in those days, to let the expense question drag along through the year, and then, at or near the close, to bring the subject before the congregation, and appeal to them for money—a despicable proceeding. On these, and similar occasions, Col. Green took care to make reputation for himself by making large donations to the cause, and calling on others to come up to their duty, and show a liberal Christian spirit. This *modus operandi* injured his standing, and damaged the good cause after awhile; for the people found out that he never gave any thing, except in public, and they therefore began to doubt his sincerity. Poor Green! "he loved this present world"—sought its perishing honors—grew less and less careful about his soul—until, by the time when this history closes, he and all his family were out of the fold of Christ, and wholly devoted to mammon. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

Dr. Haines and his lovely family were real additions to the social and religious wealth of the town. The Doctor was a modest, scholarly gentleman, front in his profession, devoted to Methodism. His wife was his equal in her sphere, and contributed vastly to the working force of our lady-membership.

Brother Rowland, a machinist—a sensible and pious man, with an equally intelligent and godly wife—took place among us also. He was soon elected a steward, having the qualifications laid

down in the Discipline, viz: a man of solid piety, who knew and loved Methodist doctrine and discipline, and of good natural and acquired abilities to transact the business of the Church. But he had limited views on the subject of support. Having himself but a small family, and light expenses, and withal living very frugally at home, he thought a preacher could thrive well on the same plan; hence he would collect a dollar where ten would have been more suitable. For instance: he called on Sister Wilson for her quarterage, and when she asked him how much shĕ ought to pay, he said, "Five dollars, I reckon, will be enough for you." When her husband, a liberal sort of sinner, heard of it, he cursed the steward and the Church for their stingy dealings and inadequate arrangements, and said, "If they had taxed you fifty dollars I would have thought there was some soul in the concern. Wife, if I were in your place I would not belong to any such a people. Do they want their preacher to give all his time and talents to their interest, and see his wife and children starve?" This was, of course, an extreme view of the case, and a rough way of expressing it, but it shows how closely the world watches the operations of the Church, and how unfavorably impressed they are by illiberality on our part toward our pastors. The true line of action, perhaps, lies between the sum assessed by Rowland and the sum estimated by Mr. Wilson.

So went matters through this year. Dr. Roberts, it must be confessed, did not keep up altogether as

well as his beginning promised. He had a large family, and pleaded this as an excuse for entering somewhat into secular business, which divided his time, curtailed his pastoral visiting, and took his thoughts away from the work of sermonizing. Therefore, his discourses depreciated in edge and point, and failed to interest and feed the congregation. Still, the Church grew a little—more by inherent vitality than by life infused from the pulpit.

When Conference came on, it was agreed that as the Doctor was popular as a man, and it was inconvenient for him to move, we would take him another year. This was, accordingly, so done by the appointing power, and, without much jostle in the machinery, he resumed his place in the pulpit and in the hired parsonage: in the former as God's embassador to dying men, as Christ's minister to offer grace to sinners and comfort to believers; in the latter as the "Angel of the Church" in Sandburg, to go in and out before the people, to be a guide, a counselor, and an exemplar through the week.

The current of events ran regularly for several months. Nothing occurred worthy to be noted as materially affecting our condition, except the loss of two or three valuable female members. They married "out of meeting," as the Quakers used to call it, and chose to go with their husbands rather than have a divided house. This is to be approved, where Christian character in the man and sound doctrine in his "faith and order" render the change no sacrifice of principle. The Methodists, I believe, lose more members in this way than any other denomi-

nation. I suppose the reason of this is that our Church is more liberal toward others than others are toward us. We declaim against sectarianism, and teach our children that saving religion is a matter of the heart rather than of the name; hence, they readily change the name, when charity or propriety demands, without discarding their hereditary doctrine of a sound scriptural experience. I am sure that facts and figures, could they be collected and tabulated, would demonstrate the unsectarian liberality of Methodism in this regard, in singular contrast with the bigotry and prejudice inculcated by others. How far the tastes and habits of education of either the husband or wife ought to be merged into those of the other, is a question to be solved on individual responsibility. When conscience is satisfied, and prejudice yields, and experience is not contradicted, and peace and convenience are both promoted, let the change be made.

Were I writing to beguile the tedium of leisure, or to indulge agreeable recollections, or to gratify my pride as a Methodist, or to feed self-laudatory reflections in Methodist minds, I should pass over in silence the remainder of this year's transactions; but, having undertaken to trace the current of Sandburg Church through a given period—to show its influence on society, and the influence of society on its developments—the painful, no less than the pleasing, must be fairly and truthfully recorded. Dr. Roberts seemed to be moving along in the ordinary duties of his office, making no appreciable impression on anybody, when it was made known to cer-

tain officials of his flock that serious accusations were made against his Christian character. These charges, whispered privately at first, were soon trumpeted upon the astonished ears of the people, and involved not merely his *status* as a minister, but his standing as an honorable, and even a decent, man. The mortification and dismay that came upon his flock, at this astounding revelation, cannot be described. With all our misfortunes, through more than two decades past, no such shame had made us blush before the faces of men; now, we were confronted by the brazen insolence of infidelity—we were jeered at by the scoffer—we were "the song of the drunkard." Never did a community of men act with more discretion than did the leading members of the Church in this emergency. They faced the outside world with calmness, encouraged the brethren to stand firm, and demanded an immediate investigation—assuring Dr. Roberts of their sympathy and support till the alleged facts were proved. The Presiding Elder of the District was in attendance in a few days, with a committee of ministers, to investigate the case. When the accusers were called upon to make good their charges, they signally failed to substantiate a single one. One of the leading items was withdrawn after the witness, introduced to prove it, had contradicted herself in several vital particulars, and made it evident that her testimony was an effort to repeat from memory a story dictated to her before. Other disgusting details damaged the prosecution by reason of their utter improbability. The committee found the accused

"not guilty"—their verdict was indorsed by a nearly unanimous public opinion; but the preacher's influence was gone—they had taken away his strength; for a minister's *strength*, which he has in himself, is his character for uprightness: he must be blameless, of good report among men outside of the visible fold, so that whatever they say of his theory, or of his religion, they must have naught to say, truthfully, against his manhood. So the New Testament teaches and enjoins.

Though wholly vindicated, our preacher never recovered his spirit of cheerfulness and self-respect. Having attempted to preach one time after the investigation, he frankly informed his congregation that he should enter that pulpit no more. As the time was short till Conference, the place was supplied by one of the professors in the school for the few Sundays that remained. To him it was a happy release from an awkward and uncoveted responsibility when the time expired.

CHAPTER XIX.

Twentieth and twenty-first years continued—Uniform teaching—Spiritism and ministering angels—A sermon—Sound doctrine proves churchship.

UNIFORMITY of teaching in the same pulpit is a thing greatly to be desired. When one minister challenges the teachings of another, who has recently preached what he conceives to be the truth, it becomes a serious question—perplexes the minds of the hearers, and diminishes, more or less, the authority of all preaching. But what is to be done when a minister of known ability utters opinions which his brethren cannot accept? Must the pastor, for instance, be silent on the subject if a respected brother has expressed erroneous views in his pulpit? The course to be pursued should be dictated by the importance of the point of difference: if the doctrine be an essential or a leading one in theology, and the views offered be materially at variance with commonly-accepted opinions, the error must be challenged, exposed, refuted; but it would be a most burdensome task for a pastor to correct every harmless or silly *originality* vended in his pulpit. A case of this sort came up in our history: The president of Sandburg Institute preached

a sermon on the nature and offices of angels, in which he taught that the spirits of departed saints were the angels of the Bible—that they were constantly interested in human affairs, and frequently communicated with men, under divine direction, on matters connected with the invisible world. The vexatious question of Spiritism, involved in the knocks, thumps, raps, table-tippings, and involuntary writings of mediums—all under invisible influence—was just beginning to attract general attention; and it was thought by many that the revered president's discourse conceded too much to the claims of that revolting fallacy. So, in order that "the ministry might not be blamed," Professor Smith—having charge during the unexpired term of Dr. Roberts—felt it his duty to correct the erroneous impression made by the angel-sermon of his worthy superior in the faculty. He therefore delivered an exhaustive discourse on the same subject. His arguments had a happy effect on the minds of his hearers, and his theory was accepted almost unanimously as the scriptural teaching on the question. As this effort to establish the people in sound doctrines, and to banish an error that has overthrown the faith of some, had thus a decided bearing on the history of Our Church, I must record an outline of the sermon. His text was Heb. i. 14, and the discourse, in outline, about as follows:

"Our knowledge of the spirit-world is derived solely from revelation. Reason has no foundation upon which to base a theory; conjecture is utterly

void of authority; imagination, however beautiful its creations, is to be accepted only as a dream. Human testimony is unreliable, because the witness has neither seen nor heard that whereof he affirms. No venturous Columbus ever discovered that far-off coast, and, returning, brought back an account of its scenery and its inhabitants. No studious Newton ever measured the circumference of that world, or fathomed its glorious atmosphere. No tireless Humboldt ever ascended its mountains, or threaded its valleys, and returned to publish its beauties and its mysteries. Once, and once only, was a mortal caught up thither and permitted to return to earth: 'he heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter' (2 Cor. xii. 4). But of the existence of that fair country God has given us ample evidence, and something of its inhabitants he has seen proper to make known; for we have in the Scriptures allusions, declarations, illustrations, informing our understanding and limiting our opinions as far as we are capable of apprehending a state so high above our present condition; and at sundry times in past ages its citizens visited our globe, were seen by mortal eyes, their voices were heard by mortal ears, and men felt the touch of *angels'* hands.

"It is, therefore, not only lawful for us to know, but it is obligatory upon us to study, whatever God has revealed concerning this high order of his creatures—specially so, since it is clearly intimated that they are closely connected with God's people in this world, and are to be our fellow-citizens in that to come. I will, therefore, discuss—

"I. The nature of angels.

"The name signifies 'messengers'—highly intelligent messengers, sent by God to execute specific missions on earth—'ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.' Who and what are they?

"Some people suppose, and some theologians teach, that the angels of Scripture are the glorified spirits of departed saints. That this is a groundless notion, a gratuitous assumption—not merely an unscriptural, but an anti-scriptural, doctrine—is manifest from the following facts:

"1. This order of heavenly beings is mentioned in Holy Writ before any man had died on earth. Examples: 'The cherubim, placed to keep the way to the tree of life' (Gen. iii. 24); 'All the sons of God shouted for joy' when God 'laid the cornerstone of the earth' (Job xxxviii. 7). Whose souls were these?

"2. In the first chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews, St. Paul compares Jesus Christ and angels, to show and prove the superiority of Christ: Christ took not the nature of angels, but the nature of man; therefore, before his incarnation, he was neither angelic nor human; and therefore the angelic and the human are two distinct orders of God's creatures—angels are neither divine, like Christ, nor human, like man.

"3. It is freely admitted that departed saints have, in a few instances, reäppeared on earth; but this fact, recorded in Scripture, so far from justifying any confusion on this subject, is one of the strongest

guards against error; for in every case a careful distinction is made between the being who appears and any other order of God's creatures. They appear *in propriâ personâ*, announced by their own name—as fully announced as to their mission, but *never* with the business of angels. In the transfiguration of Jesus (Luke ix. 30), Moses and Elias are declared to have appeared and talked with him. They were there in their own names—as a special favor to them—not to minister to Jesus, or to strengthen him, as angels did after the forty-days' fast in the wilderness, and in the agony and bloody sweat in the garden, but solely to learn more than they yet knew about the mysterious God-man's struggles with the dark problem of redemption: 'They spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.' It is passing strange that men of sound mind and solid piety should ever have fallen into such erroneous views as those entertained by some about the meaning of Rev. xix. 10, where the *angel* is supposed to declare himself an *ex-man*. The language conveys no such an idea—is not susceptible of this interpretation: the angel declines John's worship, not because he is or ever was a man, but because he is a servant of God—a creature—the fellow-servant of John, and of other prophets like John. To this corresponds the language of Paul, in Heb. xii. 22, 23, where he carefully distinguishes the 'innumerable company of angels' from 'the Church of the first-born, and the spirits of just men made perfect.' No two things are more clearly separated than these two orders of heavenly inhabitants.

"4. In Luke xvi. 19–31, we read that direct application was made by a lost spirit to a glorified saint that the soul of a man should be sent from heaven to earth with information concerning the disembodied state, and a message of warning and expostulation to certain wicked men yet in the flesh; and the application was refused, for the reason that the mission would not accord with the established mode of divine instruction, and would, on natural principles, be wholly fruitless. I cannot conceive on what principle of interpretation any man can construe this scripture so as to blend and confound the functions of 'ministering spirits' with the powers and privileges of 'the spirits of just men made perfect.' It plainly teaches that departed spirits are not permitted to come to earth on such missions as are committed to the hands of angels, and for a purpose already met by authentic revelation.

"Therefore, we are forced to conclude that angels are a separate, distinct, and peculiar order of God's creatures, whose abode is in heaven, who 'always behold the face of our Father'—a rank of beings above man—pure, sinless, wise, and powerful.

"They are sinless. Jesus calls them 'holy angels.' Their condition, their nature, was originally pure, and they 'have kept their first estate.' A wisdom superior to man's is attributed to them in the Bible; so signify the words of the wise woman whom Joab sent to David to compass the return of Absalom: 'And my lord is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth.' (2 Sam. xiv. 20.) Such was, manifestly,

the popular faith of the ancient Church on this subject.

"Their might, power, strength, are spoken of in Revelation as distinguishing them from weak and feeble men. David declares that they 'excel in strength' (Ps. ciii. 20), and invokes them to 'bless the Lord' in strains louder and longer than men can utter. St. John saw 'a mighty angel' take up a stone like a great millstone and cast it into the sea (Rev. xviii. 21), a feat of muscular force such as not even fable attributes to a giant's arm.

"They are numerous. To meet all the demands of boundless empire requires vast numbers of ready and willing servants. Scripture does not contain a *census* of the heavenly citizens, but represents them as being almost countless in multitude. Read 2 Kings vi. 16, 17, where Elisha asked the Lord to open his young man's eyes that he might see the host of celestial warriors who filled the mountains round about him. See, also, Dan. vii. 9, 10, where the prophet saw the Ancient of Days sit upon his throne, and 'thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.' Jesus said that his Father could presently give him more than twelve legions of angels—more than sixty thousand—to defend him from the malice of the Jews. 'The chariots of God,' says David (Ps. lxviii. 17), 'are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels.' What inconceivable multitudes of these 'ministering spirits!'

"We have reasons for believing that there are grades and differences among angels. The titles,

cherub, seraph, thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, and archangel, indicate that some are superior to others in endowments—that some are above others in place, honor, and authority, in the kingdom of God. Precisely what these distinctions are, we do not know—it does not concern us to know, it does not become us to inquire. It is enough for us to know that they all 'behold the face of our Father,' and 'are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.'

"II. The office or functions of angels.

"What worlds they visit, with what missions they are charged to regions beyond our planet, is to us a perpetual secret. In relation to us, their business is that of servants in the house of God Almighty: 'they do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word.' (Ps. ciii. 20.)

"They never appeared on earth till sin had separated man from God. Then began their ministrations — sometimes of wrath, more frequently of mercy to men. Cherubim kept the way of the tree of life at the east of the garden of Eden, lest man should 'take of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever' in his fallen state. (Gen. iii. 22–24.) A destroying angel spread desolation and death over the land of Israel in punishment for David's pride. (1 Chron. xxi.) In the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of Revelation we have a vivid description of 'seven angels having the seven last plagues,' in which was 'filled up the wrath of God.' These are a few examples of their ministry of wrath.

"Hagar, faint and despairing in the wilderness, was called, comforted, and instructed by an angel. (Gen. xxi. 17.) Another visited Manoah, and informed him of the future birth and greatness of Samson. (Judges xiii.) Another assured Paul, when in danger of shipwreck, saying, 'Fear not, Paul.' (Acts xxvii. 24.) But more particularly they are employed in three departments of God's economy:

"1. They made known to men, in the early ages, God's will and purposes. They visited Abraham, and informed him of the impending doom of Sodom, warned Lot of his imminent danger, and rescued him from the fated city. (Gen. xviii. 19.) In Jacob's dream they showed him the connection that earth has with heaven (Gen. xxviii.); explained to Balaam the future greatness of Israel (Num. xxii.); often spoke to the prophets, unfolding divine truths to them, as in the first chapter of Zechariah, and as 'Gabriel informed Daniel, and talked with him, and gave him skill and understanding.' (Dan. ix. 22.) In like manner was the birth and mission of John the Baptist foretold to Zacharias, and the birth of Jesus announced to the Virgin Mary, by 'an angel of the Lord.'

"2. They developed the grand scheme of redemption, of which the Levitical law was the first visible exponent—it was received 'by the disposition of angels.' (Acts vii. 53.) 'Cherubim overshadowing the mercy-seat' in the old dispensation is explained by St. Peter to signify their deep interest in the plan of salvation. (1 Pet. i. 12.) They

'rejoice over one sinner that repenteth,' (Luke xv. 10); ministered to Christ in the wilderness, and in the garden; announced his resurrection to Mary; attended, in cloudy squadrons, his ascension to heaven; and foretold his second coming to earth. (Acts i. 10.)

"3. They execute God's designs in providence. Scattered all through the Bible we find wonderful stories of their presence and supernatural aid. God sent his angel before Abraham's servant in his journey from Canaan to Mesopotamia (Gen. xxiv. 7); 'an angel of the Lord' fed and cheered Elijah under the juniper-tree in the wilderness, when he fled from the wrath of Jezebel (1 Kings xix. 5); shielded from harm the three Hebrew martyrs in the fiery furnace (Dan. iii.); accompanied Daniel into the lions' den, and protected him from the violence of the ferocious beasts (Dan. vi.); instructed Cornelius how to learn the way of salvation (Acts x.); delivered Peter from prison, and from the fury of his foes (Acts xii.); directed Philip's way on a successful preaching tour (Acts viii. 26); carried Lazarus to Abraham's bosom (Luke xvi. 22); are largely concerned in all the affairs of the Church; and will attend and officiate at the general judgment. (Matt. xiii. 30.)

"Their ministration is perpetual till the end of time—not visibly, as formerly, but really and verily. As long as sinners repent, they will rejoice; as long as saints suffer and labor here, ministering spirits will be present to aid them. There is no reason why they should not come—there is no intimation that they do not come—now, as in olden days,

to perform their functions of mercy and favor to men. How precious, how full of comfort, is this glorious doctrine of the Bible!"

I have given this outline sketch to show how jealous Sandburg Station was of its character for orthodoxy. The sermon, before mentioned, which hinged so closely upon modern spiritism, gave pain to some, and unsettled the faith of others; this plain, practical, and scriptural exposition of the doctrine of "ministering spirits" removed all difficulties, and was generally accepted as the truth. From that date forward Our Church was never troubled by the unnatural and unchristian theory of spiritism. There is no surer evidence of the apostolic constitution of a Church than this devotion to sound doctrine, this hatred of heresy, this prompt rejection of all mere theorizing outside of plain scriptural declaration. "The Bible is the religion of Protestants" against the superstitions of popery, and against modern innovations on "the faith once delivered to the saints." We were always afraid of teachers who brought "any other doctrine," neither bidding them Godspeed nor heeding their graceless declamations.

CHAPTER XX.

Twenty-second year—Brother Edmunds, station-preacher—Bright sword with dull edge—No execution—Social meetings and Sunday-school—Bad health—Place supplied—Pastor's labors needed—Church-music: organ or no organ—Old Methodism invoked—Charity is kind—Losses and additions—The Waters family—The Fitz-James connection—A star that shone and expired in shame.

THE Rev. H. T. Edmunds succeeded to the pastorship. He was a well-favored gentleman, on the vernal slope of life, pretty well educated in the ordinary curriculum, and brought with him a spotless name and an accomplished wife. The field upon which he entered afforded a fine opportunity for a pastor to make reputation: it needed culture, and was in a condition to respond readily to diligent tillage. Brother Edmunds had the talents requisite: there were very few better minds in the town; he had, naturally, a clear perception of truth, and often a felicitous mode of expression; but, after all this, he did not succeed. He was a riddle. None doubted his piety, none questioned his intellectual ability, but none could boast of his success. There was something lacking: he would preach a good sermon, and round it off blunt and pointless, so it would hurt nobody; he would begin to utter a fine thought,

but manage to snatch away its beauty just at the end of the sentence; he would appear as if about to smite error with a sledge-hammer, and raise the weapon so high and bring it down with such vehemence that you would listen for the dying groans of his crushed and ruined antagonist—but just at the critical moment he would break the fall, or suspend the force, or soften the blow, so as to do no execution. I suppose the reason of all this was found in his mental habits. He read trash—fiction, magazine literature, and newspapers. If he studied seriously and deeply one hour, nobody knew it. His sermons, therefore, were chaffy, vapid, dry. There was no more freshness in them than in the story of "the house that Jack built." Hence, the Church did not grow under his hand, neither in numbers nor in grace. We kept together, however, and maintained our ground tolerably well. The social meetings were attended with some punctuality, and Sunday-school flourished handsomely.

Perhaps some of the preacher's delinquencies, as a student and as a pastor, were due to his health. This was not vigorous; the climate did not agree with his constitution, or, may be, as was suggested, he was too inactive—took too little outdoor exercise, had too small a stock of "leg theology," to keep up a high state of physical vitality. To crown the trouble, his health failed entirely—a long and critical spell of sickness completely prostrated his energies, early in the summer, so that he was off duty till about a month before Conference. The old recourse was had to the school for pulpit supply, which

did well enough on Sunday, but could not meet the demands for pastoral attention to the flock. Preaching is certainly a large part of a minister's work—it is the chief means ordained for the instruction of the ignorant, the edification of believers, and the conversion of sinners—and blessed is the man who can preach with spirit and power; but this is far from being the whole duty of a pastor, and thrice blessed is the man who can preach in the pulpit on Sunday and preach in the people's houses during the week. This lack of service none could supply at this time, and the charge suffered to the extent of the deficiency.

About this time the vexatious question of Church-music was mooted, and created no small stir among the members. Our membership had so changed, by removal of older persons and the marriage of younger ones, that our leader found himself straitened for available support in the service of song. An instrument, to lead and control, was suggested as the only adequate remedy, and the sense of the Church was sought on the question. A special meeting was held—the proposition was discussed in all its bearings. Parties stood about this way: A large majority were for the organ, considered it necessary in order to keep our young people regular in their attendance, since both the Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches had instruments, which were attracting our children to their houses on all convenient occasions; besides, they argued, the lawfulness of the thing for Christians was not an open question, being decided by ancient and approved

usage, and by the almost universal practice of Christendom in modern times. Properly managed, they said, it would put us abreast with the progressive ideas of the day, and prove to be a most delightful and profitable adjunct to our devotions. And since we had among us a number of ladies who were accomplished performers, we could organize a choir wholly free from the objectionable presence of a hired organist of doubtful morals, and bring into practical use all the educated musical talent in the Church, which was now silent for want of instrumental accompaniment. A second party appeared, and took half-way ground, saying: We see no special harm in the organ—it is a dumb machine till operated by human skill, and a tune is a tune, whether played or sung; so that we discern no moral feature in the question of an instrument which does not equally inhere in the whole question of sacred song; therefore, we agree for those who want an organ to secure and use one, provided all are satisfied, and no strife or contention follow. Up to this point our way seemed clear—no opposition appeared; so the vote was pronounced unanimous, and the instrument was procured. But two or three most excellent brethren, after studying the matter over a day or two, came to the conclusion that a horrible sacrilege was committed, that old Methodism was dishonored, that the Church was ruined. They averred that "Young America" had usurped authority over God's heritage, forsaken or ignored the worthy customs of the fathers, run wildly after "the vain pomp and glory of the world," and in-

stalled the devil in the house of the Lord. Here was a *contretemps* most unwelcome. The proposers of this change had not counted the cost of meeting such violent and relentless opposition. To argue was in vain—every good reason in favor of the new arrangement was met by the plea of "old Methodism, modern innovation," and so on. "You began," said the objectors, "some years ago to forsake the old paths, when you discontinued lining out the hymns, and supplied the seats with books instead; now, you want to silence the congregation, and give up the whole work of praise to a few self-conceited upstarts; and what your next *progress* will be, the Lord only knows." There was no avoiding the issue—it was simply "to be or not to be." The opposition was deaf to entreaty, regardless of argument, implacably offended. What shall be done? was asked and repeated many times before it was satisfactorily answered. Finally, charity came to the rescue—the majority agreed to yield their preferences to the wishes of the very small minority; and so they quietly removed the instrument, fell back on their former resources, and waited for a better day.

Mention was made a few chapters back of changes produced by the migratory disposition of the people. At the period now under review, our Church-population suffered very marked modification. Of the old original membership very few remained. The Gliddon family have all disappeared; some are dead, others removed to distant parts. In the room of these and others came strangers from adjoining

counties and States, presented certificates of membership, and became more or less conspicuous in current affairs. Notable among these was a large family-connection by the name of Waters—four brothers, with young and growing households. They were all merchants, were all men of business capacity and religious zeal, and have, by the time now under notice, taken high position in our communion. They all, with the exception of one brother who died soon after settling in Sandburg, remained among our leading members for many years, and illustrated by consistent lives the power of grace to conform the laws of life to the laws of God. Good men and true in the house of the Lord were William, George, and Lewis Waters. They were examples of public spirit, paid liberally to support the pastor, gave freely to the missionary cause, and were regarded far and near as the substantial men of the country. Colonel Moser, a brother-in-law of theirs, accompanied them, and, though he was somewhat cold in religion and slack in duty, he was a patriotic citizen, and munificent in the use of his money; and his wife was an "elect lady" in all things pertaining to the cause of Christ. She loved the Church with a highly intelligent devotion, dispensed an elegant and refined hospitality in her house, and made the lowliest aspects of daily religion beautiful and attractive. Noble woman! She has since gone to her reward—a glorious reward, if virtue triumphs after death: the savor of her name is a perpetual blessing.

Another family-connection, consisting of three or

four branches, came from another State, and settled in and around Sandburg. They were all farmers, purchased an extensive tract of land, owned an ample number of slaves, and planted cotton on a large scale. They had been trained in the early school of Methodism; and as some of the old folks, who had seen the heroic days of its struggles and triumphs, were yet living, the tone of piety in this family was set to the key-note of those lively and historic times. They swelled the aggregate of our spiritual strength appreciably, and, along with the Waters connection, gave decided social prominence to our communion. Among these, I mention with pleasure old Brother Fitz-James, a local preacher of ability, though rapidly passing down toward the sunset. He did not long survive—died in peace, and was gathered to his fathers. Mr. Points, a diffident, shrinking man, but a worthy Christian, most appreciated by those who knew him best, made a useful member, and with his lovely family adorned our social ranks. Judge Worth was one of this number, also—not a man of shining abilities, but of very solid qualities. He filled efficiently various offices in the Church, from time to time, as occasion demanded his services. But the most conspicuous and most widely known of this number was Wilson Peters. He was the youngest man among these new members, and, because of his highly vitalized constitution and popular address, was foremost in affairs from the first. He filled every office known to the lay membership —class-leader, steward, trustee, Sunday-school superintendent—sometimes held all of them at once;

and it was wonderful to see with what versatility he could adapt his flexible talents to the varied duties of these departments, and how successfully he worked at every post assigned him. Besides, he was among the grandest singers I ever heard; his voice was strong, musical, cultivated—could drop from air to bass, or rise from bass to air, glide off into alto or catch the tenor-key, according as either part needed strengthening or guiding in a performance. In public prayer he certainly was gifted, eloquent, at times deeply pathetic, and always apparently earnest and devout. But Brother Peters had a constitutional fault that detracted from his influence: he loved fun, sought amusements, was restless and unquiet when not engaged in something exciting; and the misfortune was that one excitement seemed to answer his purpose as well as another. A fox-hunt was just as acceptable as a camp-meeting; a crowd of gaping loafers to laugh at his anecdotes pleased him as well as a class-meeting; a fish-fry, with rude and profane companions, readily took the place of a Sunday-school picnic. He grew more and more noisy as a social talker, told smutty jokes, and related disgusting stories in filthy and even blasphemous language, and finally adopted card-playing as an *innocent amusement*. Of course, all this was painful to the brethren, as far as it was generally known; but he adroitly kept the worst features of his downward course concealed from them a long time, and thus went on serving the Lord, in form at least, on Sundays, and the devil during the week—each with equal avidity and gusto,

to all appearances. It was like the fall of a thunderbolt from a fair sky, to the large majority of the people, when it was publicly announced that Brother Peters had been detected in a most shameful and revolting sin. He made at first some show of righteous indignation, and attempted to wear the face of injured innocence; but the proof of his guilt was too positive to allow denial—he pleaded guilty, and was formally expelled from the Church. It was a prodigious fall. Those from whom his real life had been concealed reluctantly believed him guilty—those who had known his habits of frolic and amusement scarcely could admit his criminality; but his own monstrous and barefaced confessions silenced all doubts, and poor Peters went down to the moral sewerage of character where he had really for years belonged.

The terrible apostasy of this wretched man was overruled for good in one respect: it was a warning to young men to shun the certain tendency of idle talk, foolish jesting, filthy conversation, and recreations of questionable propriety; and specially did it plead with them to shun the companionship of the wicked, as it showed how surely this leads down the groveling pathway of vice to the dark and slimy bottom of hopeless corruption.

CHAPTER XXI.

Twenty-third, twenty-fourth, and twenty-fifth years—A season of repose—Brother Trigg's two years—Suspected, approved—Eccentric habits—Good wife—Johnnie—Brother Trigg sings—A new hat—"That's a fact!"—Eloquence—Unequally yoked—Brother Windham takes the station—Is a stormer, in spite of his faults—Good work—Stewards in trouble—Repairs needed—Ways and means: What and which?—School declining—Something must be done.

WITH scarcely a ripple on the surface, our current history glides along now for about three years. No very great prosperity, no marked misfortunes, distinguish this period of peace. It was a time when the country was quiet, and a profound repose reigned over all departments of State and religion.

Two different pastors—both good men and true—served our station during these years; and the history of their pastorate is little more than a description of the men. The Rev. W J. T. Trigg administered affairs two years. Brother Trigg was a native of a higher latitude, and for this reason was a novelty in our town. Many of the younger people had never seen a Pennsylvanian, and therefore looked with curious eyes upon a man from a State with such a long and pompous name; and moreover,

there was, just at this date, certain vague suspicions centered on all visitors from the free States. It required some time to convince a few patriotic citizens that Brother Trigg was not an abolitionist in disguise. Prudence and waiting cured this ill; for no better man ever dwelt in Sandburg, no holier minister ever entered our pulpit, than Brother Trigg; and this became so evident that all who suspected guile at first were afterward ashamed of their prejudice. "We thought he was 'all right' from the first," they said, "but then it 's well enough for people to have their eyes open these days." It is wonderful how knowing some folks are in *post factum* matters; they remind us of Brother Crostie, who got such a clear "*foresight* into what *has* taken place."

Our preacher, by his gentleness, amiable disposition, blameless walk, seasonable conversation, cheerful gravity, and spiritual sermons, won the confidence of outsiders and the cordial love of his flock. We rejoiced in having, to go in and out before us, a high and true model of a Christian minister, "in all things showing himself a pattern." The Church rallied around him, and he led them in the highway of life.

Brother Trigg had peculiarities which sometimes raised a laugh, but they were all so innocent as to create an interest for the man rather than a cavil at his faults. He would lose his gloves, drop his handkerchief, leave his umbrella, and forget where he had started to go: absent-mindedness was his evil genius. Professor Smith used to say: "I dislike to sit in the pulpit with Trigg; he invariably borrows

my handkerchief, and as invariably keeps it, till Sister T. finds it in his Sunday-coat pocket, and washes and returns it." His mind was abnormally devoted to mathematics. I never could exactly see the affinity between theology and the symbols of a problem; but our preacher found this affinity, and in preparing for his pulpit would spend whole days over an abstruse question in analytical trigonometry, covering sheet after sheet of foolscap with hieroglyphic scribbling. This diligence was invariably rewarded by rich discoveries, and he would go from this singular exercise to the pulpit with his face all aglow with the good and the grand involved in his text, and dispense the truth with an ardor and a clearness truly impressive and really edifying.

The preacher's wife was his guardian-angel. She was a most admirable woman, and would have been largely useful in the community, but all her time and all her talents were absorbed in taking care of her absent-minded husband and managing her little boy, Johnnie. The boy had all his pa's idiosyncrasies, intensified by the restiveness of childhood, and enlarged by the hot-house culture of a blind maternal idolatry; hence, he kept matters up to high-pressure mark—monopolized his mother when they were at home together, and monopolized her and everybody else when they were out visiting. One of the questions I never could answer is this: How do some mothers succeed so perfectly in making their children a torment to themselves and a loathing to their friends? They strip the little fellow of all the lovely innocence of childhood, and invest

him with the revolting enormities of a totally perverted disposition. Such children inevitably suffer the penalties of parental *guilt*, either in a premature decay or in a life-long conflict with the evils of their training. Poor Johnnie! I used to wonder what would become of him, and now I wonder what has become of him; for all this was long enough ago for the seed then sown to have brought forth their legitimate fruits.

I forgot one of Brother Trigg's oddities, and must call him up again and tell it: he *thought* he could sing, but we *knew* he could not—he would try his skill occasionally on a *solo*, specially at those very times when we wanted him to be silent; but the performance was entertaining, because of the singular blending of natural sounds in one voice: by *natural* sounds I mean those of the frog, the crow, and the midnight cat. Still, everybody loved the good man—even the wildest sinners and the fiercest sectarians about Sandburg treated him with free-and-easy kindness; and when he was about to start to Conference, a wicked merchant brought him a fine hat, and said: "Here, parson, I want you to wear this hat to Conference; and you must be a good man, and try to get to heaven." By the way, there was more than one point in this present—a hat was Trigg's pet. Conscious of his weakness in the matter of gloves, handkerchiefs, and umbrellas, he held on to his hat with a determination that almost compensated for the loss of other articles. His boots might be muddy, his coat was sure to be dusty and linty if his wife happened to miss her daily exercise

on it; but his hat was always shiny, and he could twirl it and manipulate it in company with a skill that must have been attained by long and diligent practice.

A few days before Conference, Brother Lewis Waters called at the Institute to see Professor Smith about next year's arrangements. "Brother Smith," said he, "you are going to Conference, and we want you to see the Bishop and try to get us the right sort of a preacher. Brother Trigg is, everybody knows, a *good* man, but—" "Stop, right there," said Smith; "you have named the rarest commodity on earth: if you know, and if all the brethren know, that we have that scarce article, a *good man*, why not keep him?" "That 's a fact," replied Waters, scratching his head thoughtfully, and looking bewildered—"that 's a fact." So, there the subject dropped, and Brother Trigg, "the good man," was returned to our station. No large demonstration celebrated this event, but a feeling of satisfaction pervaded the congregation: the Church felt safe in the hands of a good man.

During his second year there was nothing very different from the smooth current of the first. The Church grew, perhaps, more compact and united; a few additions were made, and we lost two good members by death. One of these was a plain, working man, who fell a victim to consumption. He talked beautifully on his sick-bed—spoke to his friends about the comforts of religion, the supporting grace of Christ, and the near prospect of endless life. If passion is the soul of eloquence, love is the

most eloquent of the passions; and hence the simplest minds, when filled with pure, heavenly love, feel the grandest emotions, and express them in the strongest language. I have listened to faintly-uttered thoughts of dying Christians so sublimely eloquent that Bascom might have borrowed them with profit: clothed with the thunder and majesty of his voice and gesture, they would have shaken the multitude. The other death was a sad one—a comparatively young mother, wife of a drunken husband, and mother of two children. While she lay pining in her chamber, he drank deeper and deeper, till, overcome by excess, he took his bed in another room, tortured to agony by an evil conscience and an abused and ruined body. He sank rapidly, and died a death of unutterable horrors, while his poor stricken wife gasped for breath and prayed for his salvation on her dying-couch. She had hope, but no joy, in this awful hour. We thought her mind was so occupied with the dreadful fate of her husband and the gloomy prospects of her doubly-orphaned children, that she could not think of herself. "Unequally yoked" in life, I thought their fresh graves looked unlike in the cemetery: there was some brightness about hers—his looked as forbidding as despair. It was a somber funeral. Many Christian men felt keen regrets that they had not labored more energetically for poor Dunker's rescue and salvation; but his descent was so rapid that he was gone before we knew his danger.

The reader will readily sympathize with the regret

I feel in passing from the mild and loving ministry of Brother Trigg to the boisterous and stormy declamation of his successor, the Rev. Ebenezer Windham. A native of the sunny South, his horoscope seemed to have been governed by the central orb of the heavens rather than some less fiery sign of the zodiac. He embodied all action and all passion in delivery—was even excited and vehement in conversation. I used to wonder that his glowing brain and heated nerves had never been vulcanized into a less elastic tension, but could never discover any waste of energy or failure in tenacity. He was a widower when he first came to Sandburg, but soon changed this condition for a better. His gentle bride soothed his excitable temperament somewhat. He was too intensely enthusiastic to be entirely cured—he might begin never so moderately, and bear down on the brakes never so heavily; it was no use: when the steam was up the train had to move, and it went with a scream and a roar becoming the "lightning express."

Let not the reader infer that I am making light of my preacher. No! But I undertook to write a history, and history means truth. The just demand of friendship is, "Love me, in spite of my faults;" and if a Christian minister may not file this plea in the court of Church-opinion, he stands a poor chance for a favorable verdict. Indeed, we all did love Brother Windham. He was as guileless as Nathanael, and as bold as Nathan—cheered on the Lord's people with trumpet-notes of heroism, and rebuked the laggard and reproved the wicked with stormy

and withering invective. True, we sometimes smiled at his lawless gesticulation—more frequently cringed under his wild vociferations—but we loved him in spite of these, for he was an excellent man and a sound preacher. In disciplinary matters, Brother Windham was uncommonly faithful. The motto, "Evil-doers shall be cut off," moved him to use the pruning-knife. He made some timorous members go to class-meeting: they fell in love with the institution, and were among the most faithful and regular attendants thereafter. The Church grew, to a limited extent, under this vigorous culture. There was a short revival, whose fruits swelled our roll of worthy members. It must be confessed, however, that Brother Windham's vehemence frightened away a few timid and nervous persons. It was unfortunate that he could not "become all things to all men." One way was his capital stock—where that was below par he was bankrupt.

Not for a long time had there been any trouble in the matter of expenses: why the stewards were straitened this year, I scarcely can conceive. Perhaps the price of board had gone up slightly. I know that one good-paying member had moved away, and that about this time a bank broke and left batches of useless notes in the hands of our moneyed men; and perhaps the stewards, being in perplexity about their own affairs, had neglected official duty. Whatever the cause was, the trouble was a mortifying reality, and required no small amount of worry to bring matters out even. They made their assets reach their liabilities, after a season

of anxious effort, and were heartily ashamed of a state of things which was not usual with them—which is always disgraceful to a Church. This, however, is anticipating a few months. Let us return.

"The rains descended, and the winds blew, and beat upon" our house of worship—it was growing old, and needed repairs. The roof was considerably decayed, the painting had grown dingy, the carpets were threadbare, and time had left the shape and altitude of the pulpit entirely out of date. Brother Windham was not the man to be silent in such a state of things; he zealously moved the brethren to rise and work. It was agreed that the gentlemen should attend to the external, and the ladies to the internal, repairs. For the former, there was but one line of action—to make up the necessary funds by subscription; for the latter, a less direct proceeding must be resorted to, in order to procure the money. So the old question of fairs, festivals, concerts, etc., was forced upon us again, and debated warmly in private circles and in a meeting specially called to consider ways and means. There was formidable opposition to a fair—it opened too wide a door for doubtful measures, and was voted down. A supper, to be prepared by the ladies and governed by a committee of matrons, was finally accepted as possibly defensible on religious grounds, provided none of the excitements often admitted should be countenanced—that is, there was to be no auction, no "post-office," no courting-parlor. It was simply to be a supper, two dollars admittance, eat as much as

you please, enjoy yourself as well as you can, and go home without feeling, as people sometimes do, that you have been taken in and fleeced for the glory of God. A concert was also decided to be proper, to be arranged and controlled by our own musical ladies—of whom, by the way, we had a number of the best in the State. After due preparation, both of these money-making occasions came and passed away—the results being highly satisfactory to providers and partakers, and specially gratifying in available profits. And the work was done—all done neatly and well. The greatest imaginable change in internal appearances was effected by modernizing the old three-story pulpit; it let the preacher down from his lofty perch to within reasonable range of his audience. We all wondered how in the world we had endured the old-fashioned thing so long; and we thought may be Brother Windham would not scream and bawl so loud now as he did before: it did not let *him* down a bit.

It began to be talked among the leading men, during the latter half of this year, that the school was not in as sound a condition as it was supposed to be. The income had not been meeting expenses lately; the trustees had taken all available means to pay teachers, and had thus postponed important improvements. This cramped state of the treasury had prevented certain additions to apparatus and other fixtures, so that other institutions were offering a damaging rivalry; and then, the trustees had borrowed a few thousand dollars, anticipating better days, and now were likely to be pressed for pay-

ment. The state of the case was simply bad—the property was in danger of alienation from the Conference. These facts depressed and troubled the brethren, but we were in no condition to remedy them. Perhaps, we said, something will be done at Conference to place the school on a more permanent basis.

CHAPTER XXII.

Twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh years—Retrograde motion—The case explained—Cheap preacher—Professor Smith, pastor—Too much to do—Something neglected—What makes history?—Social perfection—Society "made for man"—Music again—An obstinate fight—Brother Waters favors—Brother Standby opposes—Brother Fitz-James explains—Organ voted in—Brother Hardwill implacable—Was prayer answered?—Hard work and poor pay.

WHEN the preachers came together at Conference this fall, and compared notes, and reported statistics, it appeared that Sandburg Station was behind its former standard. This was a surprising revelation to the Bishop and his cabinet. It was, too, a mortifying fact, as it indicated a falling off in the products of a hitherto fruitful field; for our station had long ago been set down as among the very best in the Conference. "What is the matter?" was more easily asked than answered. The Presiding Elder, who lived eighty or ninety miles from us, and, in his short visits, had failed to get an accurate knowledge of our present condition, inquired of Brother George Waters, one of our stewards, who had gone up with the preacher, to look after the interests of the charge. Brother Waters explained the matter, "and rehearsed it in

order," about this way: "The simple truth is, we are not in as good a condition as we used to be. Some of our most liberal members have died; two or more have moved away; two have fallen from the faith, and are no longer of us; and, though we show an increase in numbers, we are really weaker in money matters than we have been for fifteen years. It pressed us to the last inch to square off our claims this fall. The few of us who are left would have met the demands after a struggle, but the fact is, we were all pressed. It has been a hard year, financially—the monetary affairs of the State are not at all satisfactory—and if we have next year as heavy expenses as we have had this, I do not see how we are going to meet them. We want you, if you please, to do the best you can for us. We must have a good preacher, of course, but a heavy family will break us down. Try to lighten our load till we can recover our strength."

This explanation and request being communicated to the cabinet, they began seriously to consider what ought to be done. They tell me that there are two problems in the work of a Bishop's cabinet: Problem first—to find the preacher for a place; problem second—to find the place for a preacher. It was problem first, this time, that made the trouble—a good preacher, for a large place, at a small expense.

At last a bright idea struck the Presiding Elder, and he hastened to compare views with the vigilant steward. "Brother Waters, how would you all like to have Professor Smith for your preacher?" "Very

well, indeed; he can fill the pulpit and attend to matters generally, but, of course, cannot do much pastoral work. He is at home, too, and has a pretty good income from the school, and will not expect as much quarterage as a regular pastor. It will suit first-rate; let us have him."

And so it was done. After the lapse of eleven years, the professor found himself nominally and officially pastor of Sandburg Station again. And I might as well say here what would have to be said at another place—the arrangement was so far satisfactory that it was continued through the next year.

To understand the weight of work that fell upon Brother Smith, we must remember certain modifications which had taken place in the resources of Our Church. The presidency of the school had changed hands, and the chair was now filled by a layman. Brother Smith was the only minister in the institution. Our local preachers had all gone to other fields: there was not one left of the valuable and available men whose presence was formerly such an adjunct to our clerical strength. The pastor, therefore, had all the pulpit labor to perform, together with the extra work of funerals, visiting sick, official and week-night meetings. This, added to his professional engagements in the school, occupied his whole time and attention. It was, in many features of the case, an impolitic arrangement. The people were well enough satisfied with the Sunday work. The professor was personally a popular man, and held the Church together, and, to

some extent, built it up in word and doctrine; but the highest and most efficient functions of a pastor he could not perform. Many nameless items of interest were neglected—some, perhaps, went astray whose first wrong steps would have been discovered and corrected by a vigilant pastor; but, as far as possible, he watched, and instructed, and exhorted the flock with such energy and judgment that, at the end of two years, there was a small increase in numbers.

That portion of a country's history which furnishes most matter for the pen of the writer is generally the most crowded with disasters. The machinations of treason, the tumults of rebellion, the tramp of armies, the bloody deeds of great captains, the sack and ruin of proud cities, the desolation of populous countries, supply themes for the historian, and fill his pages with exciting descriptions; while whole eras of peace, of order, of the reign of law and loyalty, supply but scant material for his delineating pen. It is easier for a painter to display upon canvas the thundering cataract, or the plunging and foaming rapid, than to portray the peaceful current of the same stream through vales of flowery beauty and fields of prolific harvest. So I find in tracing the annals of Our Church—the periods that furnish most abundantly facts and occurrences for record, are not those periods which were most fruitful of good, most Christian, most lovely; many things that fidelity to truth compels me to record, are the very things which I would wish had never transpired. The period now under

review was emphatically an era of peace. With one solitary exception—the music question, to which we must refer again—all was peace within our borders, while our relations to other denominations, and to society at large, were on such sure and well-defined foundations as to be wholly barren of incident.

In fact, about this time, and including a year or more before, and several after, there prevailed in our Christian population as faultless a state of social life as it has ever been my fortune to enjoy. There was a high order of intelligence among both the ladies and gentlemen of our communion, without the pomp and formality sometimes affected by literary people. There was a most decided devotion to doctrinal and practical Methodism, which effectually repelled the insidious advances of proselyters. There was an open, republican frankness in social life, which rendered society free and easy in intercourse, and edifying in conversation. We were entirely free from the pompous, purse-proud aristocrat, and the canting, grumbling plebeian: all were on equality—an equality of merit; all felt how completely the Church leveled fictitious distinctions; and seeing the grand advantages of this, our religious code, over the adventitious distinctions imposed by the world, all admired the beauty and confessed the excellency of our system. I am not able to say how far this condition would have prevailed if there had been really extremes of social elements in our communion. But in truth, except a few rich ones, who had grace enough to conceal

their pride, if they were proud, and a few very poor families, who avoided intercourse with the better sort—for reasons best known to themselves—our membership was remarkably equal in most of the qualities that guarantee position in good society. Hence we were happily free from envy, jealousy, tattling, backbiting—those devilish tempers that so often bring unrest to the soul, and strife and distraction to the Church. Truly the triumphs of Christianity are the triumphs of peace. When there is less of the conspicuous and observable in its current affairs, it is then spreading its benign and invigorating influence out far and wide into the very fibers of social life.

It may have occurred to the thoughtful reader that these details are leading me beyond the legitimate limits of my record. But he will find, on reflection, that the facts here presented come fully within the lines proposed to be observed. For what our Lord declared of the Sabbath is equally true of every other institution of his religion—"It was made for man." And since man is eminently a social being, a religion which failed to reach and sanctify this attribute of our nature would have been both an irrational and an inadequate provision for his wants. Christ himself "adorned and beautified" the simple walks of life, by mingling freely with the people in their homes, and showing an interest in their domestic welfare. And surely it is not only a lawful, but a highly commendable and even an imperative thing for his followers to imitate his example, by conforming the laws of society

to the higher laws of his religion. Can we form a purer conception of the universal reign of Christ than this, which carries him and his spirit into the homes of the country, and enthrones him ruler in social life? I record with profound satisfaction, and with grateful recollections, the elevated social order that prevailed at this date among our people.

The one exception to barrenness of events in these years was, as before stated, the reöpening of the music question. This time the subject was agitated with earnestness and determination on both sides. Those in favor of using an instrument in our public worship were more fully than ever resolved on carrying out their views; while those who objected were more outspoken and relentless in their opposition. A meeting was called for the purpose of discussing and deciding the question. The pastor presided — counseled mutual respect for each other's opinions, charity for each other's prejudices, and a wholesome regard for the good of the cause of Christ—that care be exercised not to offend in debate by indulging in personalities instead of arguments, and that all present should remember in what house they were assembled, and in what great name they were about to act. Before direct action was proposed on the main issue a resolution was offered that all should agree in advance to acquiesce in the decision of the majority, whatever that might be. There was so much plausibility in this proposition that it was unanimously accepted. Then some one presented a resolution "That it is right and expedient that we have instru-

mental music in our public worship." This opened the question upon its merits, and the debate began in good earnest. The resolution was advocated on sundry grounds: the lawfulness of the thing for Christian worshipers, since instruments were used in the ancient Church by divine appointment and with divine approval; the current experience of the Church universal, the organ being a universal appendage to public worship throughout the Protestant world, and proving no clog nor hindrance to growth in grace and the conversion of sinners; and the expediency of our adopting it as a means of right worship, and of interesting our young people. This last argument was amplified, and very forcibly urged. "You send your daughters to school," said Brother William Waters, "and give them the best musical education that money can buy and the country afford. They are taught there the principles of music, they learn to sing with an instrument, their vocal powers are trained by the notes of the piano or parlor organ, and thus all their ideas of singing are inseparably associated with instrumental music. How will you ever convince them that what is an accomplishment in the school and in the parlor is bad taste in the Church—that what is right all the week is a sin on Sunday? If we deliberately decide that it is wrong to sing hymns of praise to God, guided by the notes of an organ, we condemn the whole system of education, and vote ourselves abettors of a sin against our children's souls. The evil, if it is an evil, lies behind the question now before us, and embraces the

whole question of music in private homes, as well as in the Church. But if a musical education is right, an accomplishment and an ornament, why discard its benefits from the public service of song? Why make this antagonism between our educational system and our religious devotions? How can we expect the young, who are taught what correct singing is, to hear a sweet tune robbed of its beauties by an untrained congregation without disgust? Let us vote the choir an instrument, to guide them and to lead the congregation."

Brother Standby opposed the motion vigorously. He said we were doing well enough—that an organ was an innovation on old Methodism—that a choir with their note-books was bad enough, but with an organ they would expect to monopolize the singing, they would take in members merely because they had good voices, and not because they had pious hearts, and thus this whole part of public worship would be surrendered to a few vain and perhaps ungodly young people. All sorts of irreverence and levity would prevail, he predicted, in the choir. They would come together on Sunday, not to praise their Maker, but to gain the praise of the people—they would sing, and sing admirably, perhaps, but it would have no element of worship in it; for the stimulating motive would be "to be seen of men," and not to offer up devout thanksgiving and homage to Almighty God. Brother Standby was a good speaker, and his whole heart was thrown into his talk. Brother Fitz-James explained that no one wanted, nor would the advocates of the organ

permit, the choir to do all the singing—we only wanted a leader that would be loud enough to control the multitude of voices, and at the same time to guide them correctly—and that nobody would be invited to sing in the choir who was not statedly invited to sing in the congregation. "As for disorder," he said, "if those who belong to the choir have not self-respect enough to behave themselves, the Church has the moral strength to enforce the laws of propriety. And as to the argument about old Methodism, that was more specious than real. It only meant that we had never had one here before. Mr. Wesley was a great lover of fine Church music, his people in England used organs, and there are hundreds of them now in Methodist Churches—Churches as holy and as progressive as ours—all over the land."

I will not attempt a farther sketch of the *pros* and *cons*. After all had said all they wished to say, the vote was taken and the resolution adopted almost unanimously. Thus was the vexatious strife ended, except that Brother Hardwill, who would not attend the meeting, considered himself free from the promise to acquiesce, and free to say all the hard and harsh words that came into his unyielding head. The last time I saw him he was grumbling about the organ—called it "brazen-face," "Satan," and other ugly names, and longed for the privilege of chopping it to pieces with an ax, and making a bonfire of the ruins. This, I suppose, he has never done.

Toward the close of his second year the teacher-

pastor made an appeal to the Church to "pray the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." No long time thereafter two young men made known their desire to enter the ministry. They are now in the field—both are reputable and useful men. Was this an answer to prayer? What will modern *scientists* say?

It will be remembered that the appointment was made for this and the preceding year for financial reasons. The Church had retrograded in ability to pay, but not in ability to appreciate the spoken word. To keep up the standard of pulpit attraction, which had for so long maintained their respectability compared with other denominations, without incurring the expense usually connected with a preacher sufficiently advanced in life to have attained that standard, was the problem they strove to solve. It worked out badly in three respects, which I will set down without comment.

1. The stewards, knowing that their preacher had a home and a living, grew careless without intending it—without feeling any want of good-will toward the pastor. It is so natural and so easy to put off duty when duty can be conveniently put off.

2. The people, those who were called upon for quarterage, did not feel the obligation as pressingly as heretofore. One brother spoke the sentiment felt, perhaps, by others, when he said, "Why should I give my hard-earned money to Brother Smith? He makes more by his teaching than I do by my labor—he is worth more, now, than I am—I love to

hear him preach, but that is his duty. I sha'n't pay a cent of quarterage." Thus many lost sight of the idea—the gospel idea—of the close connection between preaching and support. A modern word defines our condition—we were financially *demoralized.*

3. The preacher was wounded. He thought his labor worth more than he received, but he was too humble, or too proud—which was it?—to say so. He felt, moreover, that his brethren had not properly estimated his self-sacrifice, and it stung him to the quick. He knew, for I heard him say it, that he had injured the Church and damaged the next preacher by consenting to fill the station. They would not know how to go about supporting a pastor as a laborer worthy of his meat.

Howbeit, in this he was slightly mistaken—or, at least, his prediction failed of realization by reason of a healthful reaction. Some minds perceive truth more distinctly when they see the opposite error than when it is placed before them in its own naked form.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Twenty-eighth year—Dr. Easton, pastor—Big preacher—Five children—Litany!—A business meeting—Great agony—Advanced ground—*A parsonage*—The Doctor's appearance and style—Could n't talk—Did n't know the children—Union effort—Two *only* Churches—Pastor's wife needs improving—What is the matter?

THE thunder and scream of the train brought its customary crowd to the depot, one cool November evening, and among the waiting throng are assembled several thoughtful, anxious faces. They are well-known business men in Sandburg—well-known official men in Our Church. They have been talking over "What Conference will do for us," but had wisely sent no agent to lobby for an appointment. Now they expect Brother Smith on this train, and he will bring them the news Sure enough, he arrives, and, before hand-shaking is half done, they begin to "interview" him on the subject. "Who is our station-preacher?" "Rev. Dr. Easton." "What, the Dr. Easton who was formerly professor in Blank College?" "The same man—he was stationed, you know, last year ir Williamstown." "Why, he is the biggest sort of a preacher—how about his family?" "He has a wife and four or five children—is considered among the

ablest men in the Conference—no doubt you will all be delighted with him." "Four or five children! Mercy on us! what *can* be done with him?" "That 's for you to determine, brethren," replied Brother Smith. "Well, well!" said Brother Waters, "we must face the music. Let us have a meeting of the stewards to-night, and see what we can do."

"Children are a heritage from the Lord—happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them," is the sentiment of David. "From a preacher who has a house full of them, good Lord deliver us," is the litany of too many Church-members.

The stewards held their meeting that night, as Brother Waters suggested. It was a full meeting—all were present. It was a serious meeting, for all felt that a crisis was upon them. It was a *business* meeting: they were men who knew the price of supplies and the cost of living, who loved the Church too well to allow their pastor to be pinched and mortified by shabby arrangements for his family, and who knew how to grapple with financial difficulties when necessity forced them to action. It was a wise meeting: the fruits thereof remain to this day.

After much earnest conversation, and the rejection of this scheme and that suggestion, Brother William Waters—the best financier in the board, and as true a man and as loyal a Methodist as ever lived—delivered his opinions after this fashion:

"Brethren, I have looked at this matter in all its bearings, and see but one way out of the difficulty—but one thing we can do: we must go right to work

and build a parsonage. I see you are surprised at this sudden and formal declaration. You might as well get used to it. We all ought to be surprised that we have never thought of this before; it should have been done long ago. But you say, We are not able to do it. I say, We *are* able; and if we have the mind and the heart to go about it, we never did any thing in our lives more easily than we can build a parsonage. Let us begin this business like we begin our own private business, and work at it as we do at our own, and we shall see how soon it will be done. Well, it will cost, to build such a house as we need and must have—a neat brick cottage, one story, four good family-rooms, with cook-room and servant's-room back—about two thousand dollars. And what is that paltry sum divided among the members of Sandburg Station? I am sure we spend more than that every year in foolish and needless self-indulgence. Here are seven of us—we can raise half the amount right here to-night, I am sure: then the balance will be easy, after the brethren understand the matter. It is the *cheapest* plan we can adopt. If we undertake to board Dr. Easton, we are stranded. Look at the figures: we can't find a private family that will take him—we must board him at the hotel—he will need two rooms—there are seven in all; seven times twenty are one hundred and forty—that is, it takes one hundred and forty dollars a month, which is sixteen hundred and eighty dollars a year—nearly as much as a parsonage will cost us. If we rent a residence for our pastor, we must pay at least three

hundred dollars for it, which is a loss of at least a hundred dollars, even if we borrow two thousand dollars at ten per cent. But this we shall not have to do. We can raise every cent of the money, and pay for the house. Let us do this, and be done with this annual agony. Besides, the support of the station will be an easier job every other way. Our country brethren will send in supplies—fresh meats, butter, eggs, potatoes, a milch cow, etc., all which will make the pastor more comfortable, and relieve us of a world of trouble. What say you all, brethren, to my proposition?"

There was but one thing to say, and they all said it: "We must have the parsonage." The plan pleased the whole Church as well as it did the stewards. The necessary sum was soon subscribed and the work contracted for—sooner than Brother Waters had predicted; and, as rapidly as workmen could ply their skill, the neat and cozy manse was pushed to completion. When the Doctor arrived, temporary arrangements were made for him till his home could be put in readiness—into which he moved in due time, amid the congratulations of the brethren. Let us now get better acquainted with our new pastor. His *personnel* was very unique—short, thick-set, dark complexion, shaggy brows, very black eyes, tolerably good features, unexpressive face when in repose, restless, and quick in motion, a pace rather than a walk when he moved about. His mental caliber was as singular as his physical—he grasped the outlines of a subject, but never analyzed its details; was satisfied, even sur-

feited, with a theme when once he had seen its general features. What he did with his mind, between these brief periods of outline-thinking, was hard to tell, for he seldom read a book. Occasionally he conned an old Greek or Latin text, and sometimes glanced hurriedly over the newspapers. His preaching was eminently suggestive. An attentive hearer would often lose the thread of the discourse while following the suggestive thoughts thrown out in huge, massive proportions by the speaker. To the unreflecting part of the congregation—those who want the preacher to do all their thinking for them—he seemed insufferably dull. There were occasions, however, when a flood of glowing thought would burst upon him, and thrill his whole frame with electric emotion; then he poured forth strains of pealing and startling eloquence, which roused and transported his audience. It was marvelous to witness how quickly and calmly he could subside into moderate manner and cold, emotionless sentences after these passionate bursts of oratory. There were no rolling billows lashing the shore, and falling gradually to peaceful rest, after the wild tempest ceased to rage: it was an Alpine wind, sweeping, resistless, over a mountain lake, succeeded by calm and sunshine. The people soon learned to look and wait for these grand displays of thought and passion, and so they attended his ministry in goodly numbers. There was no diminution of our congregation.

Dr. Easton's chief hindrance as a pastor was his lack of tact and power in conversation. He had

extremely little talent in this line—was dull and uneasy in company, and hence visited but little. Children were strangers to him; he did not understand their language, their feelings, their wants—had no sympathy with their fresh, young life. To the children of his Sunday-school and congregation he appeared very much as the distant Blue Ridge did to me in boyhood—a huge, unapproachable, incomprehensible affair—something great in size, but cold and unlovable in nature.

He lacked another gift essential to success—the gift of exhortation. His sermons were full of theology, his exhortations full of lifeless platitudes. Being largely destitute of feeling himself, he could not infuse it into others. His sermons were discussions of themes; he seldom appealed to experience, or sounded the heart-depths of his hearers. When the bulky proportions of the discourse were presented, his work was done, and he managed himself somehow or other (no one knew how) through the week. When Sunday came again he was in his natural element, fresh and vigorous, but only to lie like a ship becalmed in mid-ocean through another six days of inaction.

How much the Church flourished under this administration I have no need to say. If one was added to our roll I am not aware of it. There was, indeed, more or less animation at times, and the membership remained steadfast and uniform in life, but we made no stride forward into the field of conquest—took no spoils from the enemy

Howbeit, we were not without influence in the

community. There was some vitality in our meetings, and the presence and consistency of so many worthy professors could not fail to impress the outside world in favor of religion. Our relations with other communions were pleasant, and in one case cordial. The Presbyterians were on very good terms with us. Their present pastor was a frank, candid gentleman, free from cant and guile—a decided improvement on his predecessor. We always attended their service, and they ours, when a vacant Sunday or an extra occasion opened the way. The Baptists were not so cordial; they had imbibed certain high-church notions, and discovered that they were the *only* true Church on earth, and had the *only* authoritative ministry and ordinances, and therefore it was unlawful for their ministers to associate officially with ours. Their pastor was a kind-hearted, pious man, and when applied to by the Methodist and Presbyterian pastors to join them in a *union effort* to awaken and save sinners, he replied: "You know what my Church holds on that subject; but, as we are all sinners alike, I reckon it will be no harm for us all to pray together." So he attended the prayer-meetings, but declined inviting us to his house of worship. We could not clearly see the distinction between praying together and preaching together; but we respected his peculiar opinions, and often enjoyed his earnest prayers.

We could not help smiling at our good Baptist brothers when, about this very time, there came to Sandburg a very distinguished prelate of another exclusive denomination, and declared his Church to

be the *only* true one, and his ministry the *only* true, apostolic, divinely authorized administrators of the ordinances of religion. He held this authority directly from the apostles of Christ, and therefore all others—Baptists included—who presumed to preach and baptize without the sanction of his Church, were intruders, heretics, sectaries, whose acts were utterly destitute of saving grace. The people got somewhat confused by these two *only* Churches; but I believe that the earnest testimony of our members in favor of a holy life and a sound experience, as a better guarantee for heaven than an ordinance or a form, did more to maintain the truth and impress the people than the most successful controversy could have done. Neither of the *only* Churches gained much advantage.

It is an ungrateful task to write any thing but good of a Christian woman, but the record of this year's affairs would not be complete without a statement of the part taken by the pastor's wife. She was a lady of culture, and of an active, energetic temperament; but not being a native of our latitude, she did not understand the habits of society; and, acting upon her indigenous views of things, oftener gave offense than pleasure to the sisterhood. Moreover, she was disposed to give advice, to propose new measures, to find fault with established customs, to compare her *raising* with ours—of course, to the disadvantage of the latter; and, worse than all, she indulged occasionally in confidential tattling, and thus endangered, for a time, the peace and harmony of society. This was deplorable, and had there not been in our communion a large number

of prudent and pious women who loved each other, and loved the Church too well to suffer interruption in their intercourse for insufficient reasons, no one can estimate the extent to which our interests would have been damaged. As it mercifully turned out, the threatened, and doubtless unintended, evil was averted by that spirit of confidence and fellowship which repels insinuations of wrong against loved and trusted friends. It is due to this incautious lady to say that she was a model housekeeper. The new parsonage was kept in neatness and order worthy of emulation. She was also a good mother: her children were trained to good manners and moral deportment, and grew up to respectable position, as I have since ascertained.

If time does not cure evils, it often removes them. Not that I am pronouncing Dr. Easton's administration an evil—it was not exactly that, but it was not positively the opposite. He was capable of larger results than he accomplished. The brethren often inquired among themselves: "How is it that a man of his talents, learning, and acknowledged pulpit ability, produces such a vague impression on his congregation? He is sober, serious, thoughtful, and all that, but his sermons do no execution—his life wins no one to admire and desire religion." They did not understand the man—he was an unsolved problem of human character. I can suggest no solution. He was the only pastor we ever had to whose heart I could never find the door—often wondered if it had any door. "To his own Master he standeth or falleth."

CHAPTER XXIV.

Twenty-ninth and thirtieth years—Brother English, pastor—Meets expectation—Wild delight—Wins the children—New life—"Servant of the Most High God"—Precious season—Scene in a boarding-house—Sick comforted—Sin rebuked—"Surely once the garden flourished"—His second term—Gets sick—Is patient—Brother Edwards goes home—Liquor-dealer's death—High-school wanes—*Hic jacet*—Thirty years ended.

WE glided imperceptibly from the Doctor's pastorate into that of the Rev. Mr. English. Every thing was so ready for his reception that no stir was created by his arrival and induction into the parsonage. It was scarcely known that the advent of a new preacher had created any public interest till Sunday's immense throng indicated the general recognition of the fact.

And right well did Brother English meet our highest expectations. In the pulpit he showed himself publicly for the first time—a comely person, six feet high, pretty well proportioned, with light hair, deep blue eyes, aquiline nose, and a bold, manly expression of countenance. His voice was sonorous and strong, well modulated, and of sympathetic tone. His enunciation was remarkably distinct, his language nervous—words well chosen and aptly uttered came forth in sentences full of clear

and unmistakable meaning. Best of all, there was spirit in his words. There was no mistake about it —we had a man of power in our pulpit once more. This was so manifest that none could doubt. The citadel of all hearts was carried in the first assault. We were full of joy. Some of the brethren, who had seen Sandburg Church in former days, could scarcely contain themselves, so delighted were they to hear the word of God spoken with power again. From that day forth Brother English was "master of the situation." Men naturally admire and submit to superior abilities: all were ready to accept this man as a "captain of the host;" for all those whose hearts the Lord had touched felt the sympathetic thrill of heart answering to his heart-born words of gospel admonition and comfort, and were willing henceforth to be guided by his godly counsels. Mutual congratulations followed the service—brethren even called upon one another that afternoon, to see if each felt as pleased and happy as the other, until the question, "How do you like our new preacher?" was asked and answered by a large majority of the brotherhood.

Brother English, having no secular cares to occupy his time—for the parsonage was ready, and supplied with all manner of store—went forthwith to work in his vineyard. He sought the poor, and went into their lowly abodes; visited the rich, but not to feast on their dainties. He divided his time between out-door work and office work—read with diligence and care the best theological books, and wrote his best thoughts out in carefully-expressed

detail. Thus, though approaching the meridian of life, he was daily growing in mental stature and moral vigor—his "profiting appeared to all." He had a peculiar art in winning the hearts of children. They loved him—his face carried sunshine into the family circle, and in the Sunday-school he was a regular, vigilant, encouraging pastor, as well as a diligent teacher.

Our congregations, nearly always good, even under unpopular preachers, were now thickly jammed into every available portion of the house. The older members no longer attended worship from a sense of duty, without the additional incentive of expected benefit; nor did the younger go from habit or from denominational pride: there was *life* in the worship and zeal in the worshipers that made "the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable."

This one thing was observable in our pastor—he never failed. If he never rose above a certain plane, he never fell below it. We knew right well at what elevation to expect him, and seldom were we disappointed. We anticipated every Sunday a carefully-studied sermon, thoroughly weighed and digested in its practical bearings, without a single effort at display, and delivered with a sincerity and a directness which commended both preacher and sermon "to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

Besides this, he was forcible and authoritative in appeals to the conscience, on the one hand, and to the authority of God, on the other—caring not so

much to convince the reason as to reach the heart, and declare the divinity of religion.

What more than this did Paul require of Timothy, when he exhorted him to "make full proof of his ministry?" This proof of a divine call is found more convincingly in the matter, manner, and fruits of a man's preaching than in a long and doubtful chain of prelatical antecedents. I have known preachers who held and executed the visible office for many years, about whom there was all the time an unspoken question whether or not they were rightfully invested with these sacred functions—to whose bitterest invectives against sin malignant spirits seemed to say, "Jesus we know, but who are ye?" I have known others—and, thank God, these latter are more numerous than the former—who bore their credentials about, not in lofty claims and arrogant assumptions, but in the meekness and gentleness of Christ, receiving the unasked suffrage of all men: "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who show unto us the way of salvation." Brother English was one of these.

The fair promises of this auspicious beginning were not disappointed. I do not now recollect how many months were spent in this diligent culture before the fruits began to appear; but they did appear before very many moons had waxed and waned. It was not quite so deep and powerful as some revivals Our Church had enjoyed, but it was, nevertheless, a grateful season of refreshing to believers, and the birth-date of many precious souls. The children and youth were numerically the largest

beneficiaries. They flocked to the altar of prayer, and gave their young hearts to God in holy covenant, and happily testified to his power to bless and save. In one Christian house were four or five young ladies, boarding—pupils in the female academy. During the progress of the revival, one Sunday afternoon, one of these young ladies applied to the brother with whom they boarded for instruction, stating that she felt that she was a sinner, and desired to seek forgiveness. He talked with her awhile, then began to sing. This brought the others into the room. Soon all were weeping and praying for mercy. Two or three brethren, living near, were called in, and all engaged in praying for and directing these mourners. In a few hours four were rejoicing in the love of Jesus, and the fifth obtained peace that night. Thus the good work went on over town, and nothing was more common than for those who went from church sorrowful to come to the next meeting rejoicing. It was delightful to mingle in these private scenes of prayer and praise, where the parlor or the family-chamber became, for the time, "none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven."

Brother English possessed, in a high degree, a talent for comforting the sick. He seemed to know intuitively how to address words of consolation to all grades of people in distress—removing doubts, encouraging hope, strengthening faith, and stimulating Christian fortitude. In those hours when Christians feel the greatest need of a pastor, he was prompt and cheerful to administer such relief as the

"sure word of promise" addresses to those who are in affliction.

Perhaps a rarer gift still was his ability to rebuke sin and retain the good-will of the sinner. He was blunt and positive in his dealings with error, and held all slack and wavering members to the line of duty, or caused them to get out of the way. I thought then that he was sometimes too stern, and did not mix enough mercy and forbearance with his reproofs and disciplinary dealings; yet I am not prepared to say that he dealt unjustly with any, or compassed the pruning off of any who were not already dead branches. Of these there were a few cases hurtful to the cause of Christ, to have neglected which would have been a standing reproach.

Thus all the varied departments of pastoral work —the pulpit, the Sunday-school, family religion, the altar of penitence, the sick and sorrowing, the delinquent in duty—having vigorous and judicious attention, the former days of our highest prosperity dawned again upon our loved and cherished heritage. I know not that at any era in these thirty years there was more of spirituality in worship, more devout application to duty, more fidelity to privilege, more evening and morning sacrifice on family altars, more distinct recognition by the world of our genuine Churchship, a clearer and more convincing testimony against wickedness, than during the pastorate now going to record. And this applies as truly to his second year as to his first, for there was such manifest propriety in his return that it was so ordered without a dissenting voice.

There is, then, no reason why I should enter into details of our affairs—the routine and matter-of-course affairs that make up the history of this year's transactions. They were, in most points, like those of the last.

Some little hindrance was experienced by the long sickness of the preacher; but his patience and meekness under the rod of affliction produced a favorable impression on all minds, so as to add, if possible, to his influence with the congregation when restored health replaced him in the pulpit. If it is pleasant to a preacher to know that his labors are appreciated, the overwhelming crowd that greeted his reäppearance must have been most grateful to our popular pastor; but no one could tell how this affected him, for he was one of the few on whom applause makes no visible impression.

We lost, this year, one of our purest men—Brother Edwards—who died of consumption, in the prime of a blameless life. His patience in suffering, his calm trust in the Saviour while gradually approaching the gate of death, were beautiful illustrations of the power and sufficiency of the Christian's hope. Grace abounded to him—God caused him to triumph through Jesus Christ. What else than grace can disarm the king of terrors? "Our people die well," was a fact in which Mr. Wesley exulted as an evidence of genuine conversion. May Methodism never forfeit this testimony! How different from this was the final hour of poor old Mr. Couch! Many years ago he had been excluded from the Church for selling whisky. This bad traffic he de-

fended and continued till failing fortune stripped him of his possessions and left him the poor reward of age and want—an "ill-matched pair," as Burns declares. He struggled hard to find some peace of mind, begged the prayers of the Church, expressed a faint hope of pardon and acceptance, but died without leaving a satisfactory assurance that all was well.

I exceedingly regret that I must allude, at this date, in humiliating terms, to the condition of our Conference-school. When last mentioned in this narrative, its finances were embarrassed, and fears of the future were forced upon its friends. No one charged that its intrinsic merits were less than formerly; but changes had passed over the country, railroads had brought up other centers of trade and education, so that our institution no longer enjoyed the monopoly of Church-patronage with which its career began; and, indeed, the very success with which our school was crowned in the first years of its existence contributed to its overthrow by stimulating the erection of others. Instead of concentrating on one, the Conferences adjoining undertook to provide each for its own wants, and thus Sandburg Institute was weakened, fell behind expenses, and went into other hands for its debts. The *hic jacet* of its doom ought to have taught Methodists a wiser lesson than they have learned therefrom; but perhaps we shall have to bequeath our experience to yet another generation before the Church will profit by the failures of the past.

We are now to bid farewell to Brother English

and his noble wife—a helpmeet for her preacher-husband—as they take train for Conference. Under the law, he cannot return to our charge, but we suggest that he be appointed Presiding Elder of the District, and make his home in Sandburg. I would gladly follow his grand career as an evangelist—gladly tell of the years that have gone over us since his departure—but I find that my promised record of *thirty years* is complete, and my task finished by limitation. These years form an era more eventful to many than the "thirty years' war" was to kings and princes; and lives of heroic action and sublime endeavor appear in these simple annals, far more glorious than the bloody exploits of Gustavus Adolphus or Wallenstein. Precious are the memories of the treasured past!

CHAPTER XXV.

Reflections—Gratulations—Deductions.

THE design of these pages would be inadequately accomplished were they to close with the simple statement of consecutive events to a given date. History furnishes *data* for reflection—its teachings can be properly understood only by patient digestion of its facts. For these facts the writer is not responsible; for just conclusions and profitable deductions from them, he and the reader are alike accountable to man, whose deeds they portray, and to God, whose providence they declare. The fathers have lived in vain if succeeding generations learn no wisdom from their example.

It must be pleasing to the reader, as it is most grateful to the writer of these annals, that they close at a time of peace and prosperity in and around *Our Church*. Had our task been to write a fiction, we might have sought or invented a tragic scene on which to drop the curtain. Had the lines fallen to us in less pleasant places, it might have been our lot to stop amid the ruins of our people and the desolations of our Zion, and, like weeping Jeremiah, to stand among the shattered relics of past magnificence and indite another "Book of

Lamentations." But, thank God, "who giveth us all things richly to enjoy," if we were pained to acknowledge a feeble beginning, and to record errors, and faults, and ignorance along the way, we have been cheered by success, encouraged by victory, enriched by conquest, and have shouted to see "the pleasure of the Lord prosper in our hands." The narrative ends at a time when there is "peace upon Israel," when the firm foundations of our Zion bid defiance to her foes, when God "has made our mountain to stand strong." We have seen a living Church—planted, nurtured, trained, by a living ministry—grow up "in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, holding forth the word of life," and commanding even the unwilling admiration of the wicked. The manifest presence of the Master wrung, at times, from scoffers and infidels, an acknowledgment of its divine original and superhuman constitution.

The influence of a living Church and a spiritual ministry is not confined within denominational limits. The spirit of Christianity is too large for the narrow domain of sectarian effort. Hence I believe, for I have seen, that our zeal provoked other branches of the Church to preach and seek after a higher religious life, and thus aided in vitalizing those organizations which were older than Methodism, and were growing effete with formalism. Nor is this fact a newly-discovered or a vainly-claimed glory of our form of doctrine and discipline. Long before the date of which I speak, and in reference to this same effect of Methodism in a wider field, the great

Chalmers pronounced it "Christianity in earnest;" and four years before the date at which my narrative opens, Bishop McKendree addressed the General Conference in the following language: "But the utility of our ministry and plan of spreading the gospel is not confined to our own Church. Our example and labors have a beneficial influence upon other denominations. It must be admitted that many who were formerly opposed not only to our traveling ministry, and the doctrines which are denominated Methodist doctrines, but also to that experimental and practical religion which is supported by the direct witness of the Spirit, and for which we contend, are now warm advocates for missionary preachers, and speak favorably of virtue and piety, and even imitate us in many things. Thus the propriety of our system is admitted; and in this I do rejoice, and will rejoice. To what can this astonishing change be attributed with more probability than to the beneficial influence of the example of the Methodist ministry on other denominations?" What the venerable Bishop claimed then for our ministry generally was true in the locality of Sandburg; and what he applies to the ministerial office is equally true of a living and working membership. Many professed Christians of that day, doubtless honest and sincere in their belief, held our doctrines in contempt, laughed at our emotional demonstrations —sometimes, perhaps, justly chargeable with extravagance—and pronounced the name of *circuit-rider* as the synonym of vagabond. I have lived to see them embrace our doctrines, profess and rejoice

in our experience, and sit enraptured under the ministry of our preachers. "Thanks be to God who always causeth us to triumph!"

But little is said in the foregoing narrative concerning the visits and labors of our Presiding Elders, for the reason that these occasional benefits were enjoyed by us in common with other charges in the District. Once or twice their presence and sermons are mentioned, when these exerted a direct and manifest influence on our condition; yet, in the summing up of the forces applied in our culture and development, and in striving to render to each its just merit in the grand aggregate effect, it seems to me highly proper, if not necessary, to allude to this wisely-ordered division of ministerial labor.

During the thirty years through which Our Church has passed under review, we had, if I remember accurately, some twelve or fourteen different Presiding Elders. My recollection is not very distinct as to a few of the first years, especially while we were connected with the circuit. Our "elders," as they were formerly called, were changed according to the exigencies of the work, for individual convenience, to meet modifications in the District boundaries; or, in a few cases, as death brought release and reward to toil-worn itinerants. A few of these officials were weak-minded men and inefficient workers, who had received the appointment through a misapprehension of their fitness for its duties; but they were, nevertheless, good and true in intention. Their pulpit efforts did no damage, except so far as their falling below the standard of public opinion

led to conclusions unfavorable to the resources of the Conference. The discipline is so plain that it is difficult for a Presiding Elder to commit a serious blunder in administration, if he exercises common sense and abides by the letter of the law. Only one of all our elders was ever subjected to discipline for immorality. Perhaps he was innocent of the crime, but he lacked prudence and dignity, and henceforward worked in less conspicuous places. One was, confessedly, too sour in disposition, too fond of reproving thoughtless hearers, and too harsh and insulting in so doing. He dealt continually in bitter and harrowing tirades against fashion, making sad havoc of feathers, flounces, and ruffles, consigning all who wore them to a worse place than purgatory. This made him unpopular with the ladies, as well as with gentlemen who could see much beauty and no sin in extra millinery. Our congregations were small at his quarterly meetings. People do not love to be abused for their shortcomings. They go to church, indeed, expecting to hear their sins rebuked; they do not object to unvarnished denunciations of practices which they know to be wrong, but to have their tastes called in question, and classed along with mortal crimes, is considered by the world generally as exceedingly offensive. I cannot say that we condemned our Presiding Elder for his untiring crusade against what he termed the infidel fashions of the day, but we did express to one another a wish that he would mix a little fatherly affection with his condemnations, so as to win, by loving admonition, those whom he could not drive by threatened dam-

nation. No doubt Our Church was too closely conformed to the world in this respect—a thing much to be deplored, deeply to be repented of, but never to be cured by sepulchral groans or acidulated invectives. The fact is, our elder had become a monomaniac on this subject; it was a hobby which he rode to every quarterly meeting, and he kept his "head-quarters in the saddle" as long as he remained.

With these exceptions, our Presiding Elders were men of ability—ministers of Christ, who came in his Spirit and magnified his name. Some of them were men of mark, who would have adorned the ministry in any age, who would have been the first of their class in any profession. Their preaching set forth the grand principles of the divine government, the deep mysteries of redemption, the moral necessity for regeneration, the just requirements of a holy law, the wholesome doctrine of justification by faith alone, and the sublime virtues of a holy life as essential to a saving hope in Christ—all with such clearness of statement, such force of argument, and such unction of the Holy Spirit, that believers were wonderfully built up, sinners were mightily convinced of sin, and mourners were brought to Jesus in holy and saving trust. Their visitations were seasons of grace—high festivals on the fat things of the gospel—times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Such ministers as these, especially where they labor officially, and under a sense of responsibility—a larger responsibility than the local pastoral office imposes—cannot fail to impress

the public mind in favor of godliness, and to exert a quickening and encouraging influence on younger ministers and on the Church. As surely as Methodism is providential, the Presiding Eldership is providential; and as long as this honorable office is conferred only upon true and worthy men, so long will they continue to infuse life and health into the districts with whose spiritual guardianship they are invested. This is my deduction from thirty years' observation.

In the preceding pages the names, characters, and works of twenty-six different ministers are put upon record. These I need not review; but my long and familiar intercourse with men of this holy calling, and my earnest endeavor to assign to each one herein mentioned his full credit for influence exerted upon the community, have forced upon my mind certain convictions in regard to the *Christian ministry* which I must beg leave to write down in order.

1. The ministry is not of the Church, though coming forth from it. It is of God—a calling of God—and must originate in a divine impression made upon the heart by the Holy Ghost, in order to be genuine and real. The Church cannot confer upon any man the *right* to preach; he has the *right* only when God makes it his *duty*. All the Church can do in authorizing one of its members to preach the gospel is to indicate, by some significant act, its belief in the divine call of the candidate. Licensing and ordaining mean this much, and no more: that we believe the brother thus set apart to expound the Scriptures and teach the same has re-

ceived "a dispensation of the gospel," and we thus acknowledge him as a minister, instead of making him one.

2. There is great diversity of gifts and functions among true ministers. It is the special work of one to convince sinners and warn them to flee from the wrath to come; of another, to expound the way of salvation, and lead men directly to Christ; of another, to instruct the Church, to admonish and encourage believers, and build them up in word and doctrine. It is true that every one may at times preach on subjects involved in the peculiar mission of the others, and do so profitably; but each man succeeds best when he speaks on those themes that unfold themselves most clearly to his mind, and impress themselves most strongly upon his heart. There are some, I doubt not—there were several among the twenty-six who preached to us in Sandburg—who have a whole commission, who can preach equally well on all themes; but I speak of the general law that appears to me to prevail. Many scriptures will occur to the clerical reader confirmatory of this opinion; were I arguing the point, I would quote them, but I am only recording the impressions of experience. And if this opinion is correct, is not the itinerant system, by which every function of the ministry comes in contact with every portion of the field, the most in accord with the divine order, and best adapted to the work of spreading the gospel?

3. The secret of success is not found in learning, in eloquence, in manner, in address, or in any ad-

ventitious means, modes, or measures. These, one or all, are good, and not to be despised. In a very grave sense, some degree of learning—the higher the degree the better—may be said to be needful to the accomplishment of good. But neither this nor any other acquired gift, nor any natural talent, is the secret of power in the pulpit. "The unction from the Holy One" is the source of power: the indwelling Spirit gives point and force to the spoken word, so that it both wounds and heals. A polished and eloquent discourse may please the taste and excite the feelings, and even feed the thought of the hearers; but if Christ is not in the sermon, the glow of feeling produced by it is as evanescent as the morning cloud. One or two of our most learned Sandburg pastors did less to promote the kingdom of Christ than some who knew less of literature, but more of spiritual religion; while those who combined the two, each in its highest state of culture, were men of the greatest power, and left by far the most durable monuments of their toils.

4. Unworthy men sometimes get into the ministry. Of these, a part are mistaken in their own impressions, and the Church errs in too hasty a sanction of their claims; and a part are deceivers, "false brethren, unawares brought in," who hypocritically impose upon the Church. The first sort, if honest and sincere, do little or no damage; the second are spots and blemishes on the fair scroll of the Church, till they are detected, convicted, and expelled. The wonder is not that any should suc-

ceed in these false pretenses, but that so few make the attempt. But the greatest mystery to me has ever been that the preaching of hypocritical impostors seems to be effective for a season, and that some are brought to repentance by their word. Is it because God will honor his word, even when proclaimed in solemn mockery by a lying prophet? Is it because Christ thus thwarts the designs of Satan, when he puts the livery of heaven upon these minions of perdition, thereby to waste and spoil the kingdom of God? Who can give a better solution than is implied in these questions?

5. A zealous, earnest, studious, praying pastor always succeeds. He may not see the fruits of his labor at the time and in the manner he desires; but the fruits will mature—his "profiting will appear"—perhaps under the administration of another. I have seen preachers toil and pray through a whole year, and go away sorrowful because so little good seemed to be done: their successors, entering into the field thus carefully tilled, gathered a glorious harvest. These results appeared to superficial observers to be obtained solely by those who were the present and visible instruments of the work, when the truth was, as our Lord affirms, "other men labored, and these entered into their labors." And even if these conspicuous results are not seen to follow such a ministry, there is good of a less observable, but no less valuable, kind affected. The Church is kept wakeful and active; infidelity is rebuked and silenced; conscience asserts its power in the unconverted, and checks their excesses; virtue

is made beautiful and attractive; and men respect the religion which they defer to seek. How closely —how almost inseparably—fidelity in the ministry stands connected with Church prosperity, with public morals, with all the noblest and tenderest interests of mankind!

The full results of such efforts can never be known. Even if there are no marked advances, are not retrograde motions prevented? Is not "good kept from going back?"

> What's done we partly may compute,
> But know not what's resisted.

And this resistance of evil—this check upon the madness of the world—this firm stand against the threatened charge of the foe—is often a grand victory. He who holds a people in awe, makes sin less easy, gains time in men's hearts for sober reflection, breaks the headlong force of bad habits, and brings salvation nearer.

It must be confessed that our labors in Sandburg were not entirely successful—all the people were not converted. But suppose there had been no Church and no preaching: what, in that case, would have been the situation? All vice, no virtue—base passions indulging brutal lust — no society but such as sordid interest cemented—no security but that confirmed by force—no sublime manhood in men, no lovely womanhood in women—no virtue but selfishness and strength—the animal enthroned, the soul degraded. "Ye are the salt of the earth!" saith our Lord to his people.

One of the most gratifying recollections of these times that passed over Our Church is, that the *pastoral teaching was uniform.* With some unimportant exceptions, they "walked by the same rule, and minded the same things." No preacher had to correct the errors or remove the heresies of his predecessor. Each man, on entering upon his official career, knew what doctrines had been declared by those who had stood in that lot before. No doubt this unity of doctrine is one of the sinews of Methodism, strong, healthy, flexile, which has secured to it remarkably similar action in Europe and America. As a distinctive announcement of religion, as a vital system of Christian propagandism, Methodism began its aggressions with a perfectly-defined theology; and having no doctrine of which to be ashamed, no complicated and involved proposition needing learned exposition or belligerent defense, it has invested its energies in proclaiming and declaring these simple and scriptural truths. Its preaching, therefore, being largely declarative and hortative, has ever been an appeal to scriptural authority on the one hand, and to the feelings and consciences of men on the other. A true Methodist preacher has more need of boldness to declare to the proud sinner, "I know that thou believest" the Bible to be true, than of logical *acumen* to convince the reason of the Divine authenticity of the book.

Hence our Sandburg pastors were, with the few exceptions candidly noted, men of power in the pulpit. They all proclaimed the majesty of God, the authority of his law, the greatness, freeness,

and richness of his mercy, the power of his grace, the sacrificial death of his Son, the gift and pervading presence of his Spirit, the fall of man, the deadly nature of sin, the necessity of repentance toward God and faith in Christ as a condition of pardon, the justification and regeneration of the believing penitent, and eternal rewards and punishments. They taught all that to be happy they must be holy; that the simplest idea of religion involved a reformation—a great, thorough, total reformation —"an upright walk and a godly conversation." I do not remember one who could be accused of even hinting at a compromise with the world, or offering a truce to the flesh and the devil. Their testimony was, therefore, an unbroken chain of solemn and distinct witnessings for God and virtue, and against all forms of sin and wickedness. This is a history which any denomination might covet.

The class of laborers known as local preachers had a large share in the training and development of Our Church. This class is peculiar to us—no other denomination possesses so efficient and reliable a reserve corps of ministerial strength. They occupy a middle ground between the people and the pastor; they understand the needs of the one, and sympathize with the burdens of the other; they fall into places made vacant by sickness or absence of the regular preacher; they occupy outposts and advanced stations, and thus duplicate the labors of the pastor; they are among the people in times of affliction, and carry the consolations of the gospel to the dying and bereaved when this could not oth-

erwise be done; indeed, I hardly conceive of a condition in the Church and community in which their functions could be dispensed with without loss.

During these three decades Our Church was greatly blessed in its local preachers. Some of them were men of no mean abilities—some were men of deep piety and fervent zeal—all of them contributed largely to our spiritual influence and to our general success; and when, not long before the time at which our history closes, the last of these ready workers moved out of our bounds, we felt that he had left a *vacuum* that could be filled in no way but by one holding the same office as worthily as he had done. I have heard intelligent members of other Churches expressing their admiration of ours as an aggressive form of Christianity, and attempting to assign the cause of our extraordinary success. They usually attribute it wholly to our itinerant system, which they pronounce "the best system of home missions in existence;" but they overlook that part of our economy by which we occupy so many advance-posts at once, and fail to credit the local preacher with the efficient and invaluable aid which he contributes to the cause. Without fee or reward, without salary or quarterage, after working through six days "for them of his own household," he gives the seventh to the Church—to mankind—for the Lord's glory and man's salvation.

The names and memorials of those who lived and labored in fellowship with Our Church ought to be as imperishable as those of our pastors; but

while the ministry, of every grade, is the prime and chief agency ordained of God for the propagation of the gospel, it is by no means the only agency—it is in no sense an omnipotent force. The people, the collective body of the Church, must work together with the preachers in "the defense and confirmation of the gospel." When "the Churches"—the believing men and women in the first century—"walked in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost," they "were multiplied." I have witnessed the grandest displays of saving grace, of convicting and converting power, under the ministry of feeble men, when the Church was alive and active—when "prayer was made without ceasing by the Church" for the salvation of sinners. And I have seen the most zealous and persevering efforts of able ministers utterly fail in accomplishing any immediate and visible good, when the membership were cold, careless, prayerless. Whenever the people of God recognize their high-priesthood, and bear the souls of men upon their hearts before the mercy-seat, then the Lord "answers by fire," shedding forth the influences of his Spirit to awaken and convert the "dead in trespasses and in sins." This dependence of the ministry upon the coöperation of the laity is one of the mysteries of our holy religion. Where there is no Church, where no "light has shined," where no "salt of the earth" has touched the moral putridity of heathen masses, there the preacher stands solitary and alone in responsibility for a faithful declaration of the word of life; but when once a Church is established, they become

witnesses of the resurrection and saving power of Jesus Christ, and the preacher is their spokesman, to proclaim the joint testimony of Jesus and his witnessing people.

To attain the glorious ends set before us, we must heartily embrace and vitally feel this doctrine of aggregate and individual responsibility. Every Christian has his share of the burden to bear, his share of the work to do, if he hopes to realize a share of the glorious reward. The dear communion, whose annals I have here traced, should have been a thousand-fold more fruitful—hundreds who went from our midst to the "land of deepest shades" might have had hope instead of despair in the hour of death had the Church been all the time as faithful, and holy, and diligent, and persistent in its work as the tremendous issues involved imperatively demand.

During all these years Our Church entered upon no field so fertile, pursued no enterprise so fascinating, performed no labor so remunerative, as the Sunday-school. From the date of its reörganization, after Sandburg became a station, there was never an *interregnum*. Some years were more marked by prosperity than others, but the institution was as constant a part of our religious duty as public worship. When first undertaken, the fruitfulness of the work was not adequately understood, and some who doubted its utility, but yet devoted themselves to it, lived to see rich returns accrue from their exertions. A well-managed Sunday-school is to a Church what a nursery is to an

orchard, a stream to a reservoir, a recruiting-office to an army; it continually supplies the waste that death and other causes make in numbers, filling the places with intelligent and devoted members.

I have seen, many times, the altar crowded with penitents who were all Sunday-school scholars; and from these very children of the Church, thus brought to Christ, I have seen, in after years, nearly, if not quite, every office known to local Methodism supplied with mature, wise, and devoted workers, while some of the same trained soldiers went forth as chosen captains, to lead the hosts of Israel; and my experience compels the conclusion, that in no way can the Churchship of a denomination be more fully vindicated than by this reproductive fruitfulness by which its faith and usages are perpetuated in vital and unbroken succession from generation to generation.

THE END.