

## BOOK III.

GENESEE CONFERENCE, 1810-1820.

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### CHAPTER I.

SUSQUEHANNA DISTRICT.

WYOMING CIRCUIT.

At the time of its organization the Genesee Conference was divided into three districts, Susquehanna, Cayuga, and Upper Canada.

We have seen that the conference relations of the territory which we have under review had been subject to a variety of changes, and that the sessions of the conferences which held the jurisdiction over this territory were always at a distance. To be obliged to go to New York, Philadelphia, or Baltimore to attend the sessions of conference in the spring, when the roads were unusually bad, and to go the whole distance on horseback, was no inconsiderable burden on the preachers, and necessarily deprived the people of their pastors for a long time, often for three months every year. The organization of the Genesee Conference changed this condition of things very materially, relieving the preachers and the people of a heavy pressure.

In addition to this advantage the work was henceforth to become a unity; no longer under the government of different conferences, nor supplied by preachers of a great variety of views, growing out of a diversity of education and domestic and social prejudices and habits. There was to be no more exposure to a rotation of New Yorkers,

Southerners, and Yankees from New England. The young men born in the country, who were rapidly entering the ranks, were soon to take a leading part in conference business, and to exercise a controlling influence in molding the Church, and giving character to her local institutions. There would soon be Genesee preachers, Genesee Methodists, and, in a sense, Genesee Methodism, all things of home growth. But we need not anticipate the advancement, consolidation, unity, and stability of Methodism in our territory, growing out of its distinct identity and independence. These things will come out in the form of history as we follow the new conference in her development and progress.

The preachers on this circuit in 1811 were Noah Bigelow and William Brown. Nothing of special interest marked the history of this year.

1812. The Rev. George Harmon is presiding elder this year on the Susquehanna district. John Kimberlin and Elisha Bibbins are the preachers on the Wyoming circuit. Both made their mark. Kimberlin was a large, muscular man, and a man of considerable intellectual strength. He was retiring, and often appeared unsociable and even crusty. He visited but little, and when spoken to upon the subject he pleaded the divine direction: "Go not from house to house." A child cried when he was preaching in Plymouth; he paused, ran his fingers through his hair, and said: "I would as lief be in a hornets' nest as among crying children." During the early part of his ministry he had a fancy for bombastic words and phrases. The following is a specimen of an opening of one of his sermons, still remembered by living witnesses: "I have a physical evil in my organic structure; I must, therefore, avoid prolixity and study compendosity." The class at Pittston got into some confusion, and he burned up the class-paper, informing the members that they were all turned out of the Church, but if any of them would promise to behave themselves as Christians and Methodists they might join again.



He preached powerful sermons, which made deep impressions, and are still remembered.

We are happy to be able to present to the reader a survey of the Wyoming circuit as it was in 1812, from the pen of the Rev. Elisha Bibbins, prepared especially for this work:

"I have long thought of addressing myself to the task of furnishing you a few scraps for your history. I therefore begin with what was formerly Wyoming circuit. It was on that circuit I commenced my itinerant career in the year 1812, having as my colleague and preacher in charge Rev. John Kimberlin. The farthest point down the river was Newport, about ten miles below Wilkesbarre. There was but a small class in that place.

"We preached at a school-house not far from the dwelling of Jonathan Smith, an exhorter. There was an elder brother whose Christian name I have forgotten.\* He too was a member of the Church.

"The next appointment in order was Wilkesbarre. Here we had a small but good society. There were some daring veterans of the cross; among them, particularly worthy of notice, were Mothers Gridley and George. Sister Gridley was modest and somewhat retiring, yet in the discharge of her religious obligations to the Church and the world she was firm as a rock and fearless as a lion. She was greatly respected by the Church, and also by many in the higher walks of life beyond the pale of the Church.

"Sister George was by birth and education an English woman of the Yorkshire stamp. She acted, as long as I knew her, voluntarily as steward, both among the church-members and those who were not professors, in collecting funds for the support of the ministry; and such were her manners and language that the better part of wisdom was to ask her what was the least she would take.

"Father George's house was a home for the preachers in those days. There we could find a quiet retreat, for they

\* Martin.

had no children; and especially was it such to Brother Kimberlin, as he was not very partial to children; and moreover particularly interesting to him in view of a good cup of coffee, for which Sister George was deservedly famous. On one occasion Brother Kimberlin called, and was accosted by the old lady in the following quaint language: 'O John, I know what you love; you love a cup of coffee strong enough to bear up an iron wedge!' If my memory serves me correctly Comfort Cary was class-leader at this time.

"From Wilkesbarre we went to Pittston, and thence to Providence; and from Providence we went over the mountain, following a footpath, to the mouth of Tunkhannock Creek, about eleven miles, and crossed the Susquehanna, and put up either with Rev. John Wilson, an Englishman, or with Rev. Newton Smith. At this place Brother Kimberlin and myself were accustomed to meet once in two weeks. Here, too, one or the other of us was in the habit of preaching, and the lot generally fell upon poor Jonah, for it was next to an impossibility to get Brother Kimberlin to preach, from the fact that he was a man much afflicted with diffidence, and withal suffered intolerably from the *blues*.

"From this neighborhood we went up the Tunkhannock to Stark's Settlement, where we had a society and a preaching place. From this place we wended our way over hills and through narrow vales to what was then called Hopbottom, *now* Brooklyn, or, as some of the people would have it, *Hoppingbottom*. The former name, *Hopbottom*, was given to the place probably in reference to the great quantity of hops that grew in that region, and afterward the suffix *ing* was added as illustrative of the manner in which the Methodists exhibited their joy, in times of the outpouring of the Spirit, in leaping up and down. In these journeys we had fine opportunities for studying nature in some of its boldest and most rugged forms. I read many a page while traveling over these hills on horseback; I say 'on horseback,' for a man would have cut a sorry figure in



attempting to travel in a buggy in those days over those hills and among the rocks and roots, over logs, and around fallen trees.

"Here we found an excellent home at the house of that most devoted servant of God, Edward Paine. At this place we had a most excellent society, full of faith and the Holy Ghost! Here we had some seasons of great rejoicing and triumph in the Lord. They not only expressed their joy by loud shouts of triumph, but some of them would leap for joy, as intimated above. We had another appointment within about eight miles of the Great Bend, in what was then called Crowfoot's Settlement. From this place we returned to Hopbottom.

"Our next appointment was at Springville, thence to Leyman's Settlement. From this place we went to Meshopen. To reach Meshopen we had to ford the Meshopen Creek.

"I remember in the month of March, 1813, while on my way to my appointment, I came to the creek and found the water very high, and after riding some distance through the water I reached the east bank of the creek, and found a large body of ice on which I could stand free from the water. The water was too deep and swift to undertake to ride my horse through. This threw me into a quandary for a few moments. But I was soon relieved. I found three boards on the upper point of the island of ice on which I was standing. I took the longest one and ran it up the stream, and with the aid of the current succeeded in lodging the farther end of it on the end of a tree or log that projected into the stream from the other side of the creek. Then I put out the remaining two boards, and making me a long leader of my bridle, girths, and halter, and having carried my saddle across on the bridge which I had prepared, I went back to commence the perilous undertaking of getting my horse across. I then took my long halter and passed down among the trees to the ford, and then commanded my horse to come to me, and at the word

he plunged into the turbid stream, and by our combined efforts he came safely over.

"Our next appointment for preaching was at Braintrim, in the neighborhood of Captain Kinney's; from thence we passed up the Tuscarora Creek into the neighborhood of Father Cogswell's, and thence we went to what was called Hunt's Ferry. Here we had some very devoted members. It was in this vicinity that I first became acquainted with Rev. George Evans, at that time an unpolished stone in God's spiritual building, yet a man of much native talent.

"I omitted to state that we had an appointment at Brother George Hall's, about a mile and a half up the river from the mouth of the Tuscarora. At this point permit me to relate an anecdote of Brother Kimberlin. Be it known, then, that he was no lover of *blue stockings or blue dye*. Sister Hall, preparatory to meeting, had set the 'dye-tub' under the bed, and while Brother Kimberlin was ministering to the people in spiritual things, a mischievous urchin belonging to the household, with less of heaven in *his* thoughts, probably, than Brother Kimberlin, was employed far otherwise; for, whether by mishap, or of set purpose, or otherwise, he upset the *dye-tub* and spilled its unsavory contents upon the floor, which proved too much for the refined olfactories of Brother Kimberlin, and he was obliged to cease preaching.

"Our next appointment was in the neighborhood of Rev. Samuel Carver's, a most excellent man and a good local preacher. He was a bright and shining light wherever he was known. Brother Carver was one of the mighty hunters of those days. Hence he often brought in savory meat, such as bears and coons. Now my colleague had an implacable aversion to coon's flesh. It so happened that on one occasion, about the time that Sister Carver had prepared a dinner of coon's flesh, Brother Kimberlin came in, and of course seated himself at the table with the family, asking no questions, (whether for conscience' sake or not deponent saith not.) He ate most heartily, when about the



close of the repast Sister Carver inquired how he liked the meat. He replied, 'Very much.' She then informed him that he had been eating coon's flesh, and, with the muscles of his face distorted, he exclaimed, 'Sister Carver, why did you do so?' and it was with some difficulty she could pacify him for the deception she had practiced upon him.

"Our next place of preaching was at Kingston and Plymouth. At the latter place I became acquainted with Rev. G. Lane, he having located some time previous, and was engaged in the mercantile business. Here, too, we found a small but most excellent society. Among the members here were some of the best women I ever knew. From them I received great help in trying to preach; but for them and Brother Lane I believe I should have turned back and gone home. There were four widows, namely, Sisters Harvey, Woolley, Turner, and Hodge, the mother of Rev. James Hodge. They were not ashamed to own Christ anywhere. Their memory is as ointment poured forth. May I meet them in heaven! We sometimes went from Central Kingston up into or over the mountain to a place called Harris's Settlement, and preached to a few families, but at what precise point I cannot now say.

"And now, doctor, after you have run your base line nearly from southwest to northeast, and have found your angles, right angles, and obtuse angles, and all other angles you can think of, you will have traveled about two hundred miles; and then take into account crossing the Susquehanna in warm, pleasant days, or swimming your horse by the side of a canoe amid cakes of ice for the space of three-quarters of a mile, or sitting in your saddle and swimming him across; or if you please to hold a moment and look on you will see the young itinerant on his horse riding up to one of the tributaries of the Tunkhannock; he pauses a moment to look at the swollen and turbid waters; he hesitates, but then he says it won't do; the people are now assembled for preaching only three-fourths of a mile ahead. Now

look. He takes his saddle-bags from under him, throws them over his shoulder, and then kneels on his saddle, and in they plunge, horse and rider; the waters break over the stern of his horse; now if you listen you can hear him say in mild, but firm tones, 'Steady, Major,' and in a moment they are across the stream, and the itinerant is among the people of God singing:

'Through creeks and rivers swift and wide,  
Both high and low I have to ride;  
Sometimes beat down some way before  
I can safely reach the other shore.'

"We had no revivals on the circuit this year, except at Brooklyn. At that place the work of God continued through the year with increasing power.

"My colleague was a man of first-rate preaching talents, and a man of considerable reading; and sometimes he soared so far above the people in his discourses that the common people could not understand him. I recollect at a quarterly conference held in Kingston, when the question was asked, 'Are there any complaints?' Father Bidlack answered 'yes,' and proceeded to say that Brother Kimberlin fixed the rack so high that the old sheep could get no food, much less the lambs, and that he himself was compelled to find out what he meant by going to the dictionary. Sometimes Brother Kimberlin was very eloquent and overwhelming in his public ministrations.

"At this time the house of Mr. Slocum, in Wilkesbarre, was a home for the preachers. His wife was a Methodist, and three of his daughters afterward became the subjects of converting grace, and joined the Methodist Church.

"The Plains was four miles up the river from Wilkesbarre. Here we had, as near as I recollect, a small class. Also a small class at Pittston. At Providence we had a class, and used to put up at the house of an old gentleman by the name of Ireland."

In 1813 Marmaduke Pearce was the preacher on Wy-



oming circuit. The northern portion of the circuit was constituted a new charge, called Bridgewater, and Wyoming was reduced to a two weeks' circuit with one preacher. Two local preachers from the state of Delaware, Caleb and Robert Kendall, settled in Stoddardsville, sixteen and a half miles east of Wilkesbarre, at the point where the East-on turnpike crosses the Lehigh. Mr. Pearce was requested to establish regular preaching at this place, which he did, formed a class, and embraced it in the regular plan of the circuit. Gilbert Barnes was converted and joined the class, and from that time was one of the most staid and devoted members of the church in the circuit. He was for many years a class-leader and Sunday-school superintendent in Wilkesbarre, and died there much respected and beloved by all. Mr. Pearce, as a preacher, possessed talents of a high grade, and commanded an unusual amount of public attention.

In 1814 Benjamin G. Paddock was appointed to Wyoming circuit. He was a young man and a splendid singer. He waked up great interest among the young people. This year the records of the quarterly-meeting conferences were entered in a book which was used for that purpose for thirty-eight years, and is labeled on the outside: "The circuit steward's book for Wyoming circuit." The first entry in this book purports to be a record of "the first quarterly meeting, held as a camp-meeting, at Plymouth, September 3, 4, 1814." The records for several years are in the handwriting of Mr. Pearce, and are all beautifully written, and the accounts are businesslike.

The camp-meeting of this year was the second which had been held in Wyoming, and was rendered a blessing to the circuit.

1815. Marmaduke Pearce is presiding elder on the Susquehanna district this year, and George W. Densmore is preacher in charge. He was an earnest and eloquent preacher, and was very useful.

1816-17. Elias Bowen labored on this circuit. At the

close of the last year of Mr. Bowen's term of service a camp-meeting was held on the road running from the village of Wyoming to Northmoreland, on land then occupied by a man by the name of Amey, now owned by Samuel Darland. The number of tents was not large, but the meeting was crowned with a blessing. The word preached took effect, and a goodly number of sinners were awakened and converted to God.

A company of young people from Forty Fort had a tent on the ground, and, for persons who made no pretensions to religion, were unusually interested in the exercises. At the close of the meeting it was evident that the Spirit of God was at work in their hearts. Not being sufficiently humbled to come out and seek religion openly, and yet feeling so deeply awakened as to resolve upon a change of life in some form, the leading spirit in the circle fixed her plan to escape from the camp-ground early on the morning of the close without exposing herself to the observation of the multitude, and to seek religion at home. The Myers tent was early taken down, and everything was in readiness to lead the procession of wagons and carriages down the mountain into the settlement. Betsey was so deeply wounded that she lost her power of self-control and wept bitterly. In passing through the deep ravine called Carpenter's Notch she sobbed and cried aloud. As the carriage moved out of the dense shade and entered the outskirts of the valley settlement, her cries became so loud that they were heard by those who were next in the train. The carriage paused, and on the invitation of a female friend, a daughter of Colonel Denison, Betsey Myers alighted from the wagon and fell upon her knees in the shade of a clump of oak and pine shrubs by the side of the road, crying, "God have mercy upon me a poor wicked sinner!" The way was soon blocked up. The whole train was arrested, and the attention of all was attracted to a little group of young ladies by the wayside weeping and praying. The preachers came along and they found agreeable work upon their hands



there on their way from the encampment. Other penitents joined the group, and there the voice of prayer, earnest prayer, ascended to heaven. It was not long before shouts of victory and songs of praise varied the exercises, and now here was the rare scene of a miniature camp-meeting by the wayside.

The attention of the neighborhood was attracted, and people came to the spot to see what was the matter who there sought and found salvation. For several hours the scenes of the camp-meeting altar were witnessed in that apparently chance collection of people on the highway. Cries of penitents were succeeded by shouts of deliverance, until some ten or a dozen were happily converted to God. Hundreds and thousands of times since that interesting morning has "the little camp-meeting" been alluded to in love-feasts and other social meetings. The Betsey Myers of the wayside meeting is now "Mrs. Locke," of Kingston, who is always in her place at the church.

The fame of the appendix to the camp-meeting spread far and wide, and a gracious religious influence was felt throughout the charge. The cause was in good hands. The Rev. George Lane, who had rendered good service at the camp-meeting, and had been present and deeply interested at the wayside meeting, took charge of the work while the preachers were at conference. He was then a local preacher and resided in Wilkesbarre. "Father Bidlack" and "Brother Lane" did the preaching, while Darius Williams managed the prayer-meetings. Influential families became interested in the revival and were identified with the Methodist cause, portions of them becoming members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Mr. Lane took the names of those who wished to join the society and reported them to the preacher after conference.

1818. This year, on the application of Marmaduke Pearce, presiding elder, the writer of these pages was appointed to the Wyoming circuit. He reached his new field of labor and was hospitably received at Darius Williams's, in Kings-

ton, at the foot of Ross Hill, rendered memorable as the place where the first Methodist society was formed in Wyoming. His first Sabbath was divided between Kingston and Plymouth. This was the 9th of August. He found a good work of religion in progress at several appointments. The work at Forty Fort was in a most interesting state, and at Stoddardsville was sweeping everything before it. A wicked young man by the name of Lewis Stull had been frightened by what he considered an apparition of the devil in the woods at a shingle camp. He had thenceforward begun to pray, and the news of his awakening had made a profound sensation through the mountains among the lumbermen. Many were awakened and were turning to God. At our first appointment at this place we had a time of great power, and had several conversions.

The appointments returned were, on the west side of the river: Kingston, Plymouth, Bedford, now Truxville, Dallas, C. Conkle's, and J. Whittock's, in Northmoreland. On the east side: Wilkesbarre, Hanover, Lehigh, or Stoddardsville, Jacob's Plains, Pittston, Providence. The revivals at Kingston and Stoddardsville resulted in an addition of about sixty members to the charge. It was a good year on the whole; the additions made to the Church really increased her strength.

The calls for more preaching considerably enhanced our labors. We resumed the old appointments which had been dropped at Carver's, New Troy, and Newport, and established a preaching place in Abington, at Leach's.

This year concluded the disciplinary term of M. Pearce, our presiding elder.

1819. George Lane was readmitted and appointed to the charge of the district, and Marmaduke Pearce was appointed to the Wyoming circuit.

A camp-meeting was held in September of this year in Carpenter's Notch, on the hillside, just above Sweetland's Mills. Among the effective efforts from the stand of this meeting was a sermon from M. Pearce and an exhortation



from G. Lane. The sermon was well argued, and closed under a high degree of excitement which electrified the whole encampment. The exhortation was a melting and overwhelming appeal to the unconverted. Many hardened sinners yielded to the call and were converted. The meeting was greatly blessed, and resulted in permanent additions to the Church.

Mr. Pearce was a delegate to the General Conference which was to sit in May of the present conference year. He traveled regularly for three quarters, and G. Peck was called from Bridgewater to supply his place for the last quarter.

The religious interest had somewhat declined on the circuit, although there had been no instance of backsliding among the young converts. The class at Providence was reorganized. The preaching was now at the Widow Hutchins's, and a Brother Buttolph was appointed leader; he had recently come in from the East and seemed to be an excellent man.

1820. This year and the following Elisha Bibbins was again appointed to the Wyoming circuit. There being a demand for more labor than one man could supply, Jacob Shepherd was employed to assist Mr. Bibbins. Bibbins was a great exhorter and Shepherd was a keen polemic. The condition of the circuit was considerably improved, there being an increase in the number of willing hearers and an improvement in the tone of piety among the members.

A camp-meeting was held this year upon the same ground which was occupied for that purpose the year before. This was also a profitable meeting. Darius Williams, Jun., was struck down and lay helpless in his father's arms for two hours, and when his strength was restored, smiled and said God had blessed him. He, by a process which we shall not attempt to explain, has turned out a Presbyterian preacher, and considers *shouting and falling mere fanaticism*.

## CANAAN CIRCUIT.

In 1811 John Kimberlin is appointed to travel on Canaan circuit. We know little of Mr. Kimberlin's success this year, but for some reason a decline in the numbers on the circuit of one hundred and forty-seven is reported on the Minutes of the following year. It is probable that from bad health, or some other cause, he only spent part of the year upon the circuit, as on the stewards' book for that year Samuel Thompson receives quarterage as preacher, and nothing is said of J. Kimberlin.

1812. Loring Grant and Orrin Doolittle are on Canaan circuit. In the Minutes an increase of seventy-one members is reported for this year. The entries on the stewards' book are made by Mr. Grant.

1813. Joseph Hickok and Robert Minshall are stationed upon Canaan circuit. They were worthy men and successful laborers. This year J. Hickok organized a class of six members in North Canaan and established a preaching place at Vena Lee's. The names of this class were, Vena Lee, Polly Lee, William Griffin, Sabrina Griffin, Stephen Blatchley, and Betsy Blatchley. Mrs. Lee, usually called Mother Lee, was a leading spirit, and decidedly better known than any other private member of the Church in the circuit. She was converted in Connecticut, and lived at different periods in Winsted, in Guilford, and in Middletown. In all these places she was well known in Methodist circles. In 1813 she came with her husband to Canaan, Wayne county, where a small class was soon organized. Here she lived until the death of her husband in 1852. She departed in peace in Carbondale in 1858.

Mrs. Lee's house was ever the home of the preachers and their families, and they were always made to feel that they were more than welcome. She was an earnest, determined Methodist, and always ready in every way to do her part to sustain its interests, its institutions, and its usages.

Mother Lee was distinguished by several peculiarities.



She loved to exhort after the preacher had concluded his sermon, and, if she was not stopped off, her voice would be heard the moment he closed. Her exhortations were fluent, earnest, sensible, and generally well received. She strenuously adhered to "old-fashioned Methodism" in the simplicity of its exterior, and in its doctrines and spirit, and often contended for it with more zeal than was pleasant to many of our modern Methodists. She persisted in telling people of their faults; nor did she always spare the preachers. Her feelings were somewhat variable; she was subject to great depression of spirits, but she still kept her course. She was a ruling spirit, decidedly, but not in a bad sense, a *strong-minded woman*. She was a friend to the poor, and a great nurse. Much of her time during the latter part of her life was spent in visiting the sick, to whom she often rendered most acceptable aid. On one of her pilgrimages to the sick room she was thrown from her carriage and dislocated her right elbow. The joint was not properly adjusted by the surgeon, and her arm was long almost useless. She was finally led to pray for the restoration of her arm. But how was this to be done? That she could not tell. It was, however, finally done by what seemed to be an accident. She had a hard fall upon her lame arm, and the effect of the fall was to remove the difficulty, and restore her arm to its original power of motion. We saw and examined her arm when it was almost useless, and after its restoration, and had the manner of the cure from her.

Mrs. Lee had her defects, but, taken all in all, was a striking instance of the triumphs of grace over a rugged nature, and for long years she led a life of great devotedness to the cause of God, and was very useful in the Church.

She was present at all the quarterly meetings within her reach, often going forty and fifty miles, and driving her own carriage, or riding on horseback. Her husband was a quiet, good man, who let his wife always have her way, for two good reasons: One was because he thought her way right, and the other because he knew very well that she would

have it any way. They lived together in the utmost harmony, and we have no doubt are reunited in heaven.

1814. James Gilmore and Israel Cook are the preachers on Canaan circuit. Gilmore was eccentric, but full of energy, and inclined to bold experiments. As a specimen of what is told of him on that circuit we give the following: A young woman, the daughter of a good Methodist brother, obstinately refused to be converted, or even to kneel in family prayer. He tried in various ways to move her, but all was in vain. "Well," said he, "you are determined to go to hell, and if you will go, then the sooner you go the better." This rather shocked her; but she was utterly astounded when he prayed in the family to hear him call her name, and tell the Lord how wicked she was, and then ask the Lord, "if she would not repent, to kill her and take her out of the way of others whom she was hindering."

She got out of his way as soon as prayer was over, and went off in a great state of excitement. She told the story to a young friend, and, fretting and chafing, said "she thought as likely as not that the Lord would kill her," adding that "if he did she would lay the blame all to Gilmore." The poor girl finally became penitent, and lived and died in the Church.

1815. Ebenezer Doolittle stands connected with Canaan circuit this year. He is assisted by Robert Montgomery, a hard working man, but unsuccessful.

1816. Israel Cook is the preacher, and William Brandon assistant: the first a good little man, the second a shrewd old Irishman, who had once been returned on the Minutes expelled, but was permitted to try his hand again as a supply.

1818. Isaac Grant stands connected with Canaan circuit. Mr. Grant was an earnest, faithful, and successful laborer. He was a man of great faith, mighty sympathies, and untiring perseverance. Under the labors of such a preacher the Church would not be likely to be in a state of spiritual death.



A camp-meeting was held, early in September of this year, in Salem, which, on the invitation of our presiding elder, we attended. We crossed Cobb's Mountain in a considerable company of men and women on horseback, led by our magnificent presiding elder on a mammoth horse. All in all it was a novel scene to us, and there was a sprinkling of romance in a train of travelers on saddles, composed of men and women, old and young, climbing the mountain and clambering over rocks, upon which the old Yankees trod when they first visited fair Wyoming, and upon which they dropped their sweat and tears as they fled from the murderous savages. Many of them crossed this mountain on foot, we were well mounted; they traveled in peril of their lives, we in safety.

The encampment was small, the ground rough, and the tents poorly built. Everything was rude and primitive; but God was there. The work of awakening and conversion soon commenced, and the groans of the wounded and the shouts of the saved resounded through the forest of tall hemlock and beech trees. How many were converted we did not learn, but we were happy in subsequent years to find some who were there brought to God, bright and shining lights in the Church.

The first time we ever saw Mrs. Vena Lee, for many years generally known as "Mother Lee," was at that camp-meeting. She prayed, exhorted, and shouted until she all but fainted, over and over again.

There we saw a young man converted after a palpable insult which was enough to wake up the devil in him. The young man was standing by the altar, leaning upon the railing, making sport at the exercises inside. "Father Caleb Kendall" approached him, and said in a taunting, provoking manner, "You are a pretty fellow, standing here and making game of sacred things, with your ruffle sticking out of your bosom; *as likely as not it is not paid for.*" We thought the old gentleman would be knocked down, but nothing of the sort occurred; the fellow sneaked away.

That evening a young man was found by this same Father Kendall in great distress near the altar. The old gentleman took him into the preacher's stand, and prayed for him long and loud. Finally he was converted, and arose and shouted. When his face and breast were exposed to the light he was discovered to be the same young man whom Father Kendall had given such a terrible blast in the afternoon; but his ruffle! it had parted with its starch and had assumed the color of the ground, upon which he had rolled in agony under a fearful load of guilt. Father Kendall, whose chosen method with transgressors was that of rough dealing, of course was confirmed in his habits.

1819. This year Abram Dawson traveled Canaan circuit. He was a good preacher, but his success was not marked.

1820. It was the lot of the writer to travel Canaan circuit this year. He found it a very hard field. The roads were terrible, the country new, the people poor, and the rides tiresome and often perilous. At Bethany, the county seat for Wayne county, was an aged and talented Presbyterian minister by the name of Gershom Williams. He was soon discovered to be a foxy enemy to Methodism. The first appointment for the year in the village occurred during the session of the court, and Judge Scott, the circuit judge of the district, had the kindness to speak a good word for the new preacher at his boarding-house. When he entered the court-house, which was the only preaching place in the town, he saw his friend, Judge Scott, of Wilkesbarre, with a number of lawyers, and all the notables of the town, with a crowded house, seated and waiting. The congregations through the year were large and respectable, and the old dominie showed the Methodist preacher special marks of friendship. The next year he fell into disgrace.

Canaan circuit was now a two weeks' circuit, with ten regular appointments. The people were simple-minded, kind-hearted, and there was a good religious feeling throughout the circuit. Some of the people came far to meeting, and enjoyed with a relish what cost them hard toiling and



sacrifices. The country and the people were improving rapidly. It was a hard, rough circuit, but was still vastly in advance of what it was when traveled by Anning Owen, Gideon Draper, and George Harmon. The preacher received during the year in grain, meat, meal, maple sugar, and other articles, too numerous to mention, about one hundred dollars, all told.

## BRIDGEWATER CIRCUIT.

In 1813 Bridgewater circuit first makes its appearance on the Minutes. John Hazzard and Elijah Warren are the preachers. We recollect Hazzard well, as he commenced traveling on Otsego circuit. He was evidently a very pious man, but a very poor speaker. He had the worst habit of stammering which we recollect ever to have witnessed in a public speaker. It was absolutely painful to listen to him. Warren had a wonderful tendency to follow *impressions*. It is reported of him, that upon passing a house which was situated some distance from the road, he had an impression that it was his duty to go to the house and converse with the people on the subject of religion. He passed on and began to feel that he was grieving the Spirit. He turned about, and fastening his horse to the fence, deliberately let down the bars and went up to the house. He was very devout, prayed for success with the inmates of the house in his contemplated effort to win them over to the ways of religion. He knocked at the door, but received no answer. He knocked again, but still all was silent within. Upon examination, to his utter confusion, he found that the house was vacant! It was a lesson to the brother which, it may be hoped, he never forgot.

1814. This year the preachers upon Bridgewater circuit were Elisha Bibbins and Wyatt Chamberlayne. The circuit was large, and the preachers labored earnestly and ably for the good of the people. Hopbottom was famous for the spirituality and zeal of the membership. This was the center of the circuit, and gave tone to the whole. Some of

the meetings, to the eye of an outsider, were scenes of confusion. There was much of holy zeal there, but a little mixed up with something like fanaticism. The jumping spirit was often witnessed in the Hopbottom society, and some of the best members, male and female, were occasionally under its influence. When much excited they would commence moving up and down, apparently without effort or a knowledge of what they were doing. The movement was perfectly graceful, and yet evidently unstudied. It was one of the phenomena which attended the great religious excitements of early Methodism.

Three hundred members were returned upon the Minutes at the close of this year.

1816. There was a camp-meeting in September of this year on the land of Edward Paine, in Hopbottom, which we attended. This was "the cold summer," and it was a season of scarcity and gloom. Frost had destroyed the crops in this part of the country, and the prospects of living appeared dull and doubtful. The nights and mornings were cold, and there scarcely seemed to be enough of the fire of the Holy Ghost in the souls of the people to counteract the chill from the atmosphere. M. Pearce, the presiding elder, preached a powerful sermon on the evidences of Christianity, from the words of Nicodemus: "We know that thou art a teacher come from God." A few souls were converted, and some Christians quickened.

1818. Ebenezer Doolittle and Edward Paine were the preachers. Doolittle was a considerable Scripturist, but without tact. This year a singular preacher of the Baptist denomination, by the name of Solomon Dimack, began to attract attention along the Susquehanna, between Tunckhannock and Wyalusing. He broached various heresies, which Mr. Doolittle did not fail to attack, sword in hand. This brought the two champions together, in a public debate, at the forks of the Mehoopany. One of the questions discussed was the divinity of Christ. Dimack maintained that "Christ was not the eternal God, but the eternal Son of



God." Doolittle was too much for his antagonist, and he was finally left in possession of the field, as being armed with "too much human larnin'" for the redoubtable Dimack, who was only "taught in the school of Christ." The affair made a great stir, but resulted in little good. The orthodox generally considered that Doolittle acquitted himself passably, and had the decided advantage in the argument.

1819. This year the preachers on Bridgewater circuit were George Peck and Edward Paine. We regarded this circuit with a sort of horror, and made only one request of the presiding elder, and that was not to be appointed to Bridgewater circuit. When the appointments were read off we felt badly whipped. Brother Paine was in raptures, and took us in his arms and laughed heartily. Father Kemberlin seemed to delight in torturing us. "O George," exclaimed he, "you will starve to death; they will feed you on sorrel pie." The young wife to whom George had been but a few weeks married had not been used to living on "sorrel pie," and what should be done with her? We returned from conference with a heavy heart.

It was a year of great trials, but of some triumphs. It seemed a settled fact, that wherever we came into contact with any other denomination there was opposition to be encountered. Methodism had been long in existence in this region of country, but still it had to dispute every inch of ground, and, indeed, efforts were made to drive it from ground which it had long occupied.

The class in Hopbottom had been diminished and weakened by removals, and here we met with active hostility from Presbyterians and Universalists. Elder Davis Dimack was firmly intrenched in his stronghold at Montrose, and from that point spread himself as widely as possible in all directions; and wherever he came he was tolerably sure to strike a blow at Methodism. We heard him preach on a week day in Springville, and were chagrined to hear him fall upon "the Methodists" in a style of misrepresentation

and abuse. The occurrence resulted in a voluminous correspondence between us. "Sol Dimack," as he was familiarly called, vented his spleen in right down vulgar style. We heard him deliver one of the most confused, shapeless discourses we ever listened to; and after the service closed, being introduced to him by a mutual friend, had a regular set-to with him. He had any amount of confidence, but was most lamentably ignorant.

In spite of all the opposing elements, we had seals to our ministry, and a rising in the Church at all points. Our excellent colleague labored faithfully, and did much good. After concluding the labors of the third quarter, we were removed to Wyoming circuit.

A camp-meeting was held just before conference, in what is now called Lymansville, which we attended. Samuel Budd was present, and, in his slam-bang way, preached and exhorted, with considerable effect. Edward Paine delivered a most thrilling exhortation on the stand, which seemed to move everything.

Our conference was at Lundy's Lane, in Upper Canada. On arriving at the place we were overwhelmed with sorrow on receiving the information that Edward Paine had been drowned in the Susquehanna, on his way to the conference.

A just tribute is paid to the memory of this good man in a memoir, written by Rev. George Lane, and published in the Methodist Magazine for November, 1820, from which we will make a few extracts:

"Edward Paine was a native of Connecticut, and was born the eighth of February, in the year 1777, of respectable and pious parents. He was awakened to a sense of his lost condition when about fourteen years of age, by the sudden death of a sister. From this time he set out to seek the Lord, and soon obtained the pardon of his sins, and was enabled to rejoice in the love of God. At fifteen he joined the Baptist Church, of which he continued a member for several years. At length, becoming acquainted with the



doctrines of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and considering them to be more consistent with the Scriptures than those embraced by the Church to which he belonged, he withdrew from the Baptists and joined the Methodists.

"In the year 1809 he removed with his family to Waterford, Susquehanna county, Pa. Methodism was at this time in a low state in that place. Brother Paine, who about this time received license to exhort, discovered an uncommon solicitude for the salvation of those around him, who were perishing for lack of knowledge. He soon established meetings among them for prayer and exhortation, and labored day and night to bring them over to the faith of the Gospel; and, to his unspeakable satisfaction, it soon appeared that his labor was not in vain. The few that professed religion appeared to take encouragement, and set out with fresh ardor in the service of God. Awakenings also took place among sinners, and the cry for mercy was soon heard in almost every direction, and in a few months there were about forty added to society; the wilderness rejoiced, the solitary place was made glad, and the desert blossomed as the rose. He was soon licensed as a local preacher, and extended his labors to the adjacent settlements, where he was rendered a blessing to many.

"After having labored several years in the capacity of a local preacher with great acceptance, he began to be exercised about joining the itinerant connection, that he might labor more extensively. His motives on this occasion were undoubtedly the most pure. At home he possessed a good living, was highly esteemed by all his neighbors, was honored with the office of Justice of the Peace, and, above all, was greatly beloved by his family, for whom he felt the strongest attachments. But these, however strong their claims, were insufficient to deter him; he resolved to sacrifice all for the Church of God and for the souls of men."

He was admitted on trial in 1818, and traveled two years on Bridgewater circuit.

1820. John Griffing was stationed on Bridgewater cir-

cuit this year. He was one of the most powerful exhorters in the conference, and was always successful in winning souls to Christ. Under his labors the tide in favor of Methodism set in strongly at several points where its influence had been but feeble. A revival had commenced under the labors of the preceding year at Skinner's Eddy, and several of the family of Sturtevant had experienced religion. They were Methodists in sentiment, they were the fruit of our labors; but Elder Davis Dimock by some means succeeded in getting them into the water. This year they came home, and remained firm and influential members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The foundation was then laid for an excellent society, and finally an independent charge.

#### TIAGA CIRCUIT.

The preachers appointed to Tiaga circuit for 1811 are John Wilson and Samuel Thompson; in 1812 Marmaduke Pearce and Abram Dawson. Broom circuit being formed this year, and being almost wholly composed of the territory embraced in the northeastern portion of old Tiaga, the latter is consequently considerably contracted. Settlements were constantly multiplying, and demands for preaching increasing, so that while the territory was contracted the number of appointments remained the same. The following communication, showing what Tiaga was in 1818, is from Rev. Andrew Peck, of the Oneida Conference:

"You ask, brother, a contribution to your forthcoming work: a sketch of old Tiaga circuit, and to tell something about our lamented friend, the Rev. John Griffing; some wild stories of the Cattaraugus swamps, etc.

"Now it so happens that I have no wild stories to tell of that old field of Gospel toil, where so many veterans have lived and labored, and have since gone to their resting place. Indeed, its church geography and history during a single year is all of which I can speak definitely, beyond what is known by yourself and others who are living witnesses.



"I find, however, in my biographical sketches (a manuscript which has slept quietly during these few years, and which it is likely will sleep on, and on, while its author and subject shall himself rest as quietly in his narrow home) the following, which I give with slight additions and alterations :

"The first year of my itinerancy (being then in my nineteenth year) was with Brother J. Griffing, on the Tioga, a four weeks' circuit which extended from Spencer, then the county seat, and several miles to the west and north, and Owego, N. Y., on the Susquehanna, as its northeastern boundary, and settlements on the upper waters of the Towanda Creek in Pennsylvania, and several miles further as its south and southwestern extent. At one point we traveled some twelve miles through an unbroken wilderness, where we were met by female hearers who walked about the same distance to enjoy the sermon and class-meeting. From this we returned to our starting place on the Towanda. This Pennsylvania part included about one half of the circuit which embraced twenty-six regular, besides occasional appointments, and required some three hundred miles of travel to meet them. In all this extent of country we had two so-called meeting houses. The walls of one, situated on Sugar Creek, consisted of hewed logs, with a door, floor, seats, and pulpit 'to match.' The other, in the town of Tioga, was called 'Light's Meeting-house,' from the venerable man living near who furnished the land upon which it stood, and with his worthy companion lived to an advanced age, to occupy their places in this movement of daring zeal of the early Methodists of that country. This house was actually roofed and inclosed, and whether the floor was really laid, or whether it consisted of rough, loose boards, as did the seats, I do not at this distance of time recollect. The Tioga circuit forms a sample of the first six of my itinerant labors, commencing with the year 1818, and throughout the bounds of those six large circuits we had only one finished house of worship in which to preach the

word of God, (and that costing twelve hundred dollars all told,) unless I except the log-church on Sugar Creek, which in its way was, I believe, a finished house. Our weekly and semi-monthly worship was held chiefly in school and private houses, both being often of the rudest character as to materials and construction. The quarterly and extra meetings were, usually held in barns. Indeed, all and every part of our work then formed a striking contrast with the accommodations and elevated character of our worship now, both as to the appearance of the congregations, and as to the houses where we assembled. But the difference is chiefly exterior, while the Spirit and power of the Gospel were then exactly what it now is.

“Of our presiding elder, the reverend and lamented Mar- maduke Pearce, whose labors blessed and encouraged us during this year of our early toil in old Tioga circuit, much might be written both of interest and profit, but I leave this responsible task to other pens. But of my colleague I cannot refrain a few words. The Rev. John Griffing, a most worthy and excellent minister of Jesus Christ, sleeps with his fathers. His fervent piety, his *powerful* exhortations and prayers, gifts in which he greatly excelled, his point and pathos in reproof, his tender and gushing sympathies for the erring of all classes, yea, those eyes which were used to weep, are mementoes ‘graven on my mind and heart’ as ‘with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever.’ Truly, ‘the memory of the just is blessed.’”

The territory of Tioga circuit was, at different times, divided up and other charges constituted, and we shall now proceed to notice portions of the territory under other heads, and more particularly mark the progress of the work.

#### BROOME CIRCUIT.

In 1812 Broome circuit—taking its name from Broome county, New York—is formed, and Elijah King stands as the preacher.



The circuit then extended across the Susquehanna at the Great Bend, as we have the evidence that Mr. King formed the first society in Gibson in 1812 or 1813. The names of the members were, George Williams, leader; Margaret Bennet, Sarah Willis, (subsequently the wife of John Belcher,) Susanna Fuller, and Jemima Washburne.\*

1813. George W. Densmore and Peter Jones are the preachers. These were both working men, and were very successful. Densmore was an eloquent and powerful preacher, and Jones, an honest Dutchman, was simple-minded, and a great man for personal efforts and religious visits. There was an increase of members reported this year of 230.

1814. Broome circuit this year is within the Chenango district, William Case presiding elder, with G. W. Densmore and Israel Chamberlayne preachers. The work progressed this year upon this charge. The increase is 175.

1815. William Cameron is the preacher on the Minutes; Isaac Grant was employed on the circuit by the presiding elder. This was a year of sifting, and the numbers declined 144.

Mr. Cameron was an excellent preacher, but a stringent disciplinarian, and numbers who were united to the Church the two preceding years of revival were this year discontinued.

1816. Elisha Bibbins and George Peck are the preachers this year. This was our first year in the itinerancy, and was to us a most interesting period, though a year of some unforeseen trials.

Mr. Bibbins was deeply devoted, and applied himself to his work with great earnestness and industry, and some souls were converted and added to the Church; but great havoc was made in one of the best societies by the agency of two fanatical preachers, who called themselves *Christ-ians*, by the names of John Taylor and David Foot. The society

\* Letter of Rev. William Round.

referred to was the one at Page's, five miles above Binghamton, on the Chenango.

Taylor and Foot professed to have a special mission to break down the old rotten Churches, and build up a new pure Church of Christ. They explained the book of the Revelation, which they professed fully to understand, declaimed against articles of faith, creeds, and disciplines, and bawled Union! union! They vociferated, ranted, jumped, and danced. They first made an impression upon several enthusiastic females who had great prominence in the society; then upon several weak-minded men; and finally produced almost universal distraction among our people. The society was mostly composed of persons not well read in theology, and not well informed on general subjects, and who seemed to be peculiarly exposed to that particular kind of influence which was brought to bear upon them. Some immediately quit the Church as a sink of iniquity; some hesitated until they lost their enjoyment and their moral power; some became discouraged, and others removed; so that it was but a few years before the class was broken up and the appointment abandoned.

The seceders were ruined. Some of them went to the Shakers, some to infidelity, and others back to the world. Taylor and Foot ran into one excess after another until they reached the ordinary terminus of heresy and fanaticism, an utter abandonment of the restraints of religion and virtue. They became objects of loathing and popular indignation, and finally, having done all the mischief possible, they absconded. Their footprints however still remain.

We have followed this terrible demonstration of heresy and fanaticism through a few years subsequent to the one under immediate review, as we have learned the history of events within the last few years, that the moral of the movement may be seen. Those "Christians" were such a scourge on the Church and whole region round about as we hope never to see inflicted again. The whole affair was an instructive lesson to us. It was then new and strange to



see persons who had stood high in the confidence of the Church, for whom the preachers had labored with great self-denial, and who had made many strong professions that they loved and revered the instruments of their conversion, so blinded and befooled as to forsake the counsels of their pastors and follow a couple of madmen.

There were some most excellent official members on the circuit. Dr. Grant, of Smithville, was an old Methodist, a man of great good sense, and deeply pious. He was the friend of the traveling preachers, and his counsel was always wise and safe. He was a local preacher and a sound theologian. Larnard Livermore was a local preacher of considerable talents, and a man of great influence in his neighborhood. Samuel Gurnsey and Ely Osborn were the leading stewards; they were men of means, and of large hearts and generous impulses. Moses Dyer and Isaac Turner were young married men, and young Methodists, but men of good character, stable, true to the Church, frank and free.

Nathaniel Lewis, a local deacon, was rough as a mountain crag, but deeply pious. He could read his Bible, and fathom the human heart, particularly its developments among backwoodsmen. He was fearless, shrewd, and often witty. His labors were incessant and widely extended. Rev. E. Goodell says: "Obtaining information of a place where there had been no religious worship, some distance from his place of residence, he visited the place. He went from house to house, inviting the people to come out to meeting. He took for his text: 'Ye uncircumcised in heart and ear, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.' Many were pricked in the heart, a great revival followed, and *seventy* souls, who were happily converted to God, dated their conviction from that sermon."

In the year 1812 there was a great scarcity of provisions in the neighborhood. On one Sabbath morning Mr. Lewis was reading his Bible preparatory to preaching, when a deer came near his house. He laid down his Bible, and taking

down his gun shot the deer, dressed it, and divided the meat among his neighbors. He was called to an account before the Church for a breach of the Sabbath. He pleaded not guilty. He asked the brethren who were gravely remonstrating with him: "What do you suppose the Lord sent that deer into my field for?" "Well, I suppose it was to try you," one gravely answered. "No it wasn't," replied the accused, "for the Lord knows that when he sends blessings to me I don't wait till the next day before I take them." They finally let him pass without even a confession.

He was once preaching to a congregation who were disposed to behave disorderly. He bore it for a while, and then came out upon them with an entirely novel reproof. "You are," said he, "a hogmatical set." One of his fellow local preachers happening to be present, after the service was over, and they had retired, gently hinted that he had committed an error in the use of the novel word.

"What do you mean?" demanded the old preacher.

"Why," answered his friend, "hogmatical is not a proper word."

"Yes it is," replied the preacher; "you have heard of the word dogmatical, I suppose?"

"O yes, but—"

"Well," interrupted the old fox, "you can shame a *dog*, but a *hog* you can't."

The explanation, of course, ended the controversy. This same "Uncle Nat Lewis" was a most useful preacher, and the instrument of the awakening and conversion of many souls.

Joe Smith, the Mormon prophet, married a niece of Mr. Lewis. After the story of the golden Bible and the miracle-working spectacles had come out, Joe undertook to make a convert of "Uncle Nat." The old gentleman heard his tale with due gravity, and then proceeded: "Joseph, can anybody else translate strange languages by the help of them spectacles?"

"O yes!" was the answer.

"Well now," said Mr. Lewis, "I've got Clarke's Com-



mentary, and it contains a great many strange languages; now, if you will let me try the spectacles, and if by looking through them I can translate these strange tongues into English, then I'll be one of your disciples."

This was a poser, and the only way Joe had to escape from "Uncle Nat's" net was to get away and run.

Reuben Stevens was a local deacon in Randolph. He was rather a poor preacher, but was considered a very good man. He subsequently left our Church and united with the Protestant Methodists.

Sela Paine had been a traveling preacher in the southwest. He located and came to Oquaga, and settled on his father's farm this year, and began to preach wherever openings presented themselves. He had ideas, but was tediously long in bringing them out; his sermons being from two to four hours in length. He was a singular genius; always quarreling with some one. He managed to marry a Miss M'Alister, near Harrisburgh, a most estimable lady. He was in good standing at this time, received the preachers at his house, and treated them with great kindness. Judge Harper, of Windsor, experienced religion and united with the Church this year. He was a man of influence and of great simplicity of manners.

Among the women who exerted a good influence and enjoyed the confidence of the Church we place at the head "*Mother Grant*," the wife of Dr. Grant before mentioned, and mother of Isaac and Loring Grant, two of our old traveling preachers, the latter at the time of this writing still living, and one of our contributors. Mrs. Grant was a woman of great faith, a most devoted Christian, a true-hearted Methodist, and a great *exhorter*. The common idea was that she could *preach* if she had only been disposed to try. The venerable couple lived united and happy, as like Zechariah and Elizabeth as could well be imagined, to very advanced age, when they went home in triumph.\*

\* Doctor Isaac Grant died at the house of his son, Rev. Loring Grant, in Albion, Calhoun county, Michigan, November 9, 1841, aged eighty-

The circuit embraced twenty-eight regular appointments, and in meeting them we were required to ride over two hundred miles. We traveled around once in four weeks, and preached on an average seven sermons a week. This was probably a fair specimen of circuit work at this period.

The last four years, from 1817 to 1820 inclusive, had upon the whole been prosperous years upon Broome circuit, as the Minutes show an increase of two hundred and two members.

#### WYALUSING CIRCUIT.

The following carefully prepared sketches, from Rev. C. E. Taylor, of the Wyoming Conference, supply many interesting particulars of great historical importance, and so far as they go leave but little to be desired.

Mr. Taylor says: "I have been making considerable effort to obtain a correct knowledge of the introduction of Methodism into what was first called Wyalusing, but now Orwell circuit.

"The first Methodist minister that came into these parts was invited here under the following peculiar circumstances: In the year 1812 a younger married man in the state of Connecticut, who was about emigrating to these parts, was offered a new saddle by his father if he would have Methodist preaching in his house when he should get settled in the new country, and though he was a prayerless man the offer was accepted. The name of this man was Nathaniel Chubbuck. Soon after his arrival here and he had had time to erect a little log-house, he began to make inquiries for Methodist preachers. He was informed by William Myer, Esq., of Wysox, that one preached occasionally at a Mr. Gore's. He then called at Mr. Gore's and prevailed on him to get the preacher to send an appointment to his house on his next round; the appointment

one years seven months and five days. Mrs. Hannah Grant died at the same place October 30, 1841, aged seventy-six years eight months and six days.



was sent. The day finally arrived and quite a number had collected. Some began to express their fears that the preacher would not come. But just before the time arrived a stranger was seen coming through the woods. The man of the house went out to hail him. The stranger inquired, 'Can you tell me where Nathaniel Chubbuck lives?' 'Yes, sir,' was the reply, 'he lives here, and I am the man.' 'Well, were you expecting Methodist preaching here to-day?' 'Yes, sir, and the people are now waiting. Come, I will take care of your horse and you go right in.' The name of this minister was Marmaduke Pearce.

"A number of Methodists had moved in from New England, and from this time they had occasional preaching, but were not formed into a circuit until the year 1814."

Mr. Taylor next proceeds to introduce us to the old stewards' book, and makes from it several extracts which show the condition of the charge.

The title-page reads: "Circuit stewards' book; Joseph Ross, Joseph Utter, circuit stewards, Wyalusing circuit.

The minutes are: "Minutes taken at a quarterly meeting conference held at Joseph Ross's, Middletown, September 24, 1814. Present, George Harmon, presiding elder; Renaldo M. Everts, circuit preacher; Joseph Ross, Joseph Utter, stewards; Timothy Coggins, Edmund Fairchilds, exhorters; Ezekiel Brown, Andrew Canfield, Uriah Gaskill, leaders.

"*Collections*: A. Canfield's, \$3 12½; E. Brown's, \$3 20; D. Ridgeway's, \$1 34; J. Bull's, \$0 22; S. Gore's, \$0 50; Squire Smith's, \$2 45; A. Verbeck's, \$2 56; Lane's, \$0 87½; U. Gaskill's, \$2 99; total, \$20 41. Public collections \$3 15, less 87½ cents for the elements, \$2 27½; total, \$19 53½, from which deduct expenses, \$4 91; being \$14 62 for R. M. Everts's quarterage.

"Here then we see the old Wyalusing circuit as it was at first, its officials and its contributions.

"But an important inquiry here arises: What extent of territory was embraced in this circuit at the time of the

above date? We answer, all that is now included in the following charges: Owego, Nichols, Barton, Waverly, Factoryville, Athen's, Litchfield, Apalachin, Windham, Orwell, Skinner's Eddy, Rome, and the present Wyalusing circuit, being in extent about forty miles by twenty.

"The next quarterly meeting was held at Widow Gaskill's, Owego, December 25, 1814.

"The same presiding elder and preacher present. It appears that for all this vast territory they had but two stewards from September 14, 1814, to March 9, 1816, when Hiram G. Warner's name appears as steward.

"At a quarterly meeting held at Tioga, at the house of Mr. Nicholas Munday, June 3, 1815, Hiram G. Warner's name appears for the first time as an exhorter. By the minutes of a quarterly meeting held at Amos Verbeck's, Windham, September 30, 1815, it appears that there had been a change of presiding elder and preacher; Marmaduke Pearce's name standing as presiding elder, and E. Bibbins as preacher. The number of classes had increased from nine to eleven.

"Though there is no minute when H. G. Warner was licensed to preach, yet his name stands as a local preacher in the Minutes of a quarterly conference held March 9, 1816.

"At a quarterly conference held at the Widow Gaskill's, in Owego, October 5, 1816, while the name of Marmaduke Pearce stands as presiding elder, John Griffing's name appears as circuit preacher.

"In 1816, December 14, Aaron Chubbuck, now Judge Chubbuck, appears as circuit steward.

"It appears from the document before me that a quarterly meeting was held on the 17th of May, 1817, at Daniel Shoemaker's, in the town and county of Tioga, at which time the Rev. Michael Burdge was present as a substitute for the presiding elder.

"In 1818 the name of Elijah King appears as preacher on the circuit. But his name appears in the minutes of but



one quarterly conference, (October 9, 1818,) and at the next quarterly meeting (December 19, 1818) the name of E. Bibbin's appears as circuit preacher. M. Pearce still remains presiding elder.

"In the conference year of 1819-20 the circuit was supplied first three quarters by its two local preachers, namely, E. Buttles and J. Brainard, and they were visited by no presiding elder until their fourth quarterly meeting, which was held June 24, 1820, when G. Lane was present as presiding elder, and Ebenezer Doolittle and H. G. Warner as circuit preachers; at which time the name of Sophronius Stocking appears as exhorter, also Waitsdell Searle. In the minutes of this quarterly conference appears the following interesting note: 'Jephthai Brainard is absent; his license is renewed as local preacher until the next district conference, upon condition that he gets his infant children baptized.'

"At a quarterly meeting held in Tioga, October 21, 1820, G. Lane stands as presiding elder, and Asa Cummins and John Sayre circuit preachers."

This year, 1820, Spencer circuit is organized and first appears on the Minutes.

## OWEGO.

The following facts are communicated by Rev. George M. Peck for this work:

"In answer to your inquiries for facts connected with the early history of Methodism in Owego I forward the following, received from Mrs. Fanny Thurston, who was a member of the first class formed here. Mrs. Thurston came to Owego in September, 1813.

"The first Methodist preacher that preached in Owego was a Brother Fiddler, in 1813; he preached once, and an objection being made by an old man, who said, 'We hain't got any Methodists about here, and for my part I don't want any,' he did not return. There was no praying person in Owego at that time. Soon a local preacher, Hiram G.

Warner, came in and kept the ferry; he soon joined the conference and traveled away from home. Brother E. Bibbins preached occasionally. About 1815 Brother J. Griffing came. In 1816 there was a revival on the south side of the river, six were converted, and the first class formed, consisting of seven members: David and Fanny Thurston, Polly Warner, Abigail Thurston, Maria Thurston, her daughter, (now Mrs. Daniel Shoemaker,) David and Patty Darling. Brother J. Griffing formed the class and established regular preaching at the house of D. Thurston, who was appointed leader and steward. Soon Brother Griffing sent a young man by the name of Scovell. Then a man by the name of Cole came a few times; next a Brother Doolittle in the same year. Brothers Griffing, Judd, Bibbins, and Agard preached till the church was built. In those days our class was small and persecuted. Our meetings were held in a little school-house near the spot now occupied by the Methodist Episcopal Church in Owego. The appointment was for Brother Doolittle to preach; when our people came to meeting the house was well lighted up with candles in large silver-plated candlesticks, and shortly a smart dashy Episcopal minister, who had lately come into the place, came in preceeded by a martial band, and putting his hat on the bass drum took his place in the desk. After a while Brother Doolittle arose and said that it was publicly known that this was the evening for a Methodist meeting, and we had feelings as well as other people, and he did not understand the present appearances. Mr. Camp came forward in defense of the Methodists. The Episcopal minister read his credentials, and proposed to preach first and have Brother Doolittle preach afterward; he preached and dismissed the congregation, and left with the band and his friends, after which Brother Doolittle preached and our people had a good meeting and got home about twelve o'clock.

“On another occasion the schoolmaster and others got up an exhibition with the representation of grotesque characters.



The Methodists were compelled to remain and witness the performance or quit the ground; they remained and held meeting after the clowns had left.

"The last interruption of our meeting was the appointment of a writing school upon the evening of preaching. Brother Warner was to preach; the house was divided into two apartments by a swing partition. In the center of the room usually occupied for preaching sat the writing-master surrounded by twelve or fourteen little lads. Brother Warner asked him to retire, for it was public meeting night; he said he would not, for it was a public school. He said to Brother Warner: 'Go on with your preaching and we will with our writing.' Brother Warner would not, but he and the congregation went into the little room. As soon as he began meeting the urchins would snap a rope that ran through both rooms, making a noise like the discharge of a pistol; then they would run and kick against the partition, but Brother Warner kept on praying. Then a troop would scamper out doors and set up a shout, when the master would rap on the window and they would come thundering in again; but some of the mothers of the boys were at meeting and carried home the news; the fathers were incensed, and some of the boys were punished. In the morning Brother Warner went to Judge Burrows to get a warrant for the schoolmaster. The judge went with Brother Warner to see the young man, who confessed that he was urged on by others and promised to do so no more, so he was released. Since that time the Methodists have worshipped in peace."

The Northumberland, Lycoming, Shamoken, and Bald Eagle circuits, in 1820, were transferred to the Baltimore Conference. The large tract extending from the mouth of the Juniata up to Wyoming on the north branch of the Susquehanna, and embracing Buffalo Valley, Penn's Valley, the Bald Eagle country, and the valley of the west branch, was taken from the Genesee Conference without its consent, and attached to the Baltimore Conference. We doubt if

there has ever been just such a case in the history of Methodism, and there certainly has been nothing like it since 1820. When large portions of annual conferences are detached it has always been done by the concurrence of the conference.

It was a matter of no special importance at the time to the Genesee Conference, for she had territory enough, and too much. In addition to the territory now contained in five annual conferences, she had both provinces of Canada under her supervision, and little reason for instituting a quarrel about four circuits on her southern wing. This is probably the reason why the thing passed off so quietly

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## CHAPTER II.

### HOLLAND PURCHASE AND CALEDONIA.

1811. Loring Grant, Elijah Metcalf, and Marmaduke Pearce were appointed to this charge this year. The reader will be able to form a tolerably correct idea of the condition of things in this frontier field after perusing several scraps and two letters with which we have been furnished. The scraps are partly from letters and partly from conversations, all from the actors in the scenes described.

Mr. Grant set off for this new field of labor from Black Walnut, on the Susquehanna, with a young wife, on horseback. Mrs. Grant rode a beautiful little animal, a present from her father, which was called Fancy, and was as spry as a deer. She rode extensively over the circuit with her husband, and often followed his sermons with an earnest and melting exhortation. Of course the riding over log bridges and through almost bottomless mud-holes was toilsome, and often dangerous, and their lodging places were miserable, half-finished cabins, and their fare, of course, *the best that the country afforded*. We will now give a few specimens, which will illustrate the points above noticed:



Mrs. Grant once lodged with her husband at "Uncle Sol. Morris's, in Tonnawanda." Their house was a log cabin with a lean-to. The main building was erected for a barn, the appendage was both parlor and dining-room, but was without a floor. The ground had been packed down with a mall, and afforded a tolerable support for the feet; but upon sitting down you would find your chair sinking into the ground, and, unless you were fond of a very low seat, you would be under the necessity of frequently pulling your chair out of the yielding soil and trying a new place. This operation was often repeated by Mr. Pearce, whose corporeal weight run up to the figure of three hundred pounds. Of course Mr. Pearce was famous for smashing chairs and bedsteads, and very frequently found it the more comfortable and safe measure to do his sleeping on the puncheons or split logs which constituted the floors.

The bedsteads were made of poles inserted in a post at the end. Long strips of elm bark were strained over the poles, which answered the double purpose of holding them together and of supporting the bed. Upon the occasion referred to Mr. Grant and his lady enjoyed the luxury of sleeping upon one of these primitive bedsteads, while Mr. Pearce slept on the floor without blanket or pillow.

Next we will give a tale or two about the mud. Mr. Pearce set off on his tour, and having proceeded some four miles, came to one of those terrible sloughs which were so common in the country, and which a traveler might reasonably doubt whether he could pass without being fatally mired. Our itinerant had trained his horse to navigate the seas of mire alone, while he with his portmanteau upon his arm would find his way around among the trees. In this instance his horse proved unfaithful, for, having forced him into the slough and taken his zigzag journey around through the woods, on reaching the road on the opposite side, he saw to his great consternation that his truant beast had turned around and taken to his heels. He had now no alternative but to retrace his steps and walk back to the place which

he had left. This time he compelled his rebellious animal to plunge through the mire with his enormous load, which was almost enough to break the back of an ordinary beast of burden. This was Mr. Pearce's first year in the itinerancy, and this was the manner of his breaking in.

Mr. Grant set off on Fancy, trusting to her great agility for a passage through the sloughs. In one instance, however, he was brought up. Fancy lost bottom and went down to her mane and her hips. Appearing to be hopelessly mired, Mr. Grant alighted and found a sort of crust over the mud which would support him. He had great difficulty in relieving the animal of her saddle and bridle, but finally succeeded. He took his saddle-bags upon his arm and proceeded on several rods as though he intended to leave his pet animal to die in the mire. Fancy indicated her objections to such a fate by a furious whinny. Mr. Grant turning about called out with energy: "Fancy, come out of that!" The animal made a mighty effort, and came out completely plastered with the mire. Glad was the perplexed traveler to come off so. The mud upon his horse and his trappings and upon himself were small evils. He was soon mounted again, and went on his way rejoicing.

Mr. Grant says: "This charge included all the present Genesee Conference and nearly all the Erie Conference; all of Western New York from the Genesee river; one county in Pennsylvania, (Erie,) and all below Cleveland, in the state of Ohio. The part in Ohio, however, was not explored to any great extent. We had 'labors more abundant,' and thank God we had success, the eastern part increasing from three to six hundred." Again he says: "There we had mud, log-houses, smoky cabins, and hard fare, as described in a letter which I received a few days since from Brother Pearce."

We are happy to be able to present the reader with the letter referred to. A portion of it is not specifically upon the subject now under consideration, but is so characteristic, and full of point, that he will not regret its appearance entire.



MONTGOMERY, LYCOMING Co., Pa., *May 16, 1850.*

"MY DEAR BROTHER GRANT:—Your letter, after going the rounds, reached me about two months ago, and I should have answered sooner, but by some means it was mislaid, and I did not know where to direct to, but two days ago I found it, and now hasten to reply. I was truly glad to hear that you and dear Sister G. were in the land of the living, and, I trust, bound for the heavenly inheritance. As to myself, I am a poor, helpless old man, seventy-four years old, crippled with the rheumatism, and hardly able to crawl about.

"Since I saw you last, in Pittsburgh, I think, I have had a world of trouble; but I have, by the blessing of God, nearly got through. My present wife has been sick altogether since we were married, thirty-one years ago, nearly half the time. This has been a source of great affliction to us both. I suppose you know something about such afflictions. Our three sons are doing well, which is some comfort. John, the youngest, has been traveling about five years, but was compelled, by bad health, to become a supernumerary last spring. He is married, and wife and myself live with him in this place, four miles below Williamsport, a place I suppose you have been in.

"The preachers in this country are nearly all young men of whom you know little or nothing. They are first-rate fellows, full of fun and very genteel; so much so that you can't get them to sell even a hymn book for fear it would look like peddling, and that would be a burning shame! The Presbyterians act differently. They have a place of deposit for their books in every church, and employ 'col-porteurs' to hawk their Calvinism about, and the preachers themselves are not too big to do a little at it. The consequence of all this is that our books are getting scarce, and the standing order are going ahead, preaching, praying, visiting from house to house, circulating old raw-head-and-bloody-bones, fitting it up and dressing it up until it looks like Methodism!

"When I reflect on these things I want to take the field, sword in hand, but it is no go. Here I am decrepit, crabbed, praising old things, and old times, and old preachers, and scolding the present preachers, and all they do, and what they don't do, but all to no purpose; so I have pretty nearly given it up, perhaps the sooner the better. I often think about the old Holland Purchase. O the good times we had at Tonawanda, Father Hoy's, Braddock's Bay, Bethany, Uncle Sol. Morris's, Father Hawkins's, Flisher's, Father Shafer's, Bronson's, Bennet's, Barlow's, and other places! and O the cold houses. the snow, the mud, the sage tea, the baked beans! These things, the recollection of them, is like 'the music of Carol, pleasant and mournful to the soul.'

"Let us, my dear brother, thank God for all that is past, troubles and all, and trust him for all that is to come. Give bushels of love to Sister G., all the children, and to all old acquaintances, if there are any in your place. Write again, and believe me to be,

"Very affectionately, yours, M. PEARCE."

This letter is instructive. It reflects the spirit of the itinerancy of half a century past, and the condition of things then in the great Genesee country. It shows with what tenacity the old preachers hold on to the usages of the olden times, and how the recollection of those times wakes up the lion in these old heroes as they lie upon the shelf, worn and maimed, awaiting their final release. God bless the veteran soldiers of the cross, and smooth their passage to their final resting-place!

The year 1811 is the last year the Holland Purchase appears on the Minutes. Thenceforward that vast and interesting field undergoes divisions and subdivisions until it becomes a territory of cities and towns; and instead of one great mission it is an aggregation of stations into a large and respectable conference.

We have a communication from Mrs. Lydia Seager, late



consort of Rev. Micah Seager, dated February 24, 1851, illustrative of the rise and progress of Methodism in the Holland Purchase, which we will here give the reader. Mrs. Seager's maiden name was Bennet. She was one of a family famous in Methodism in the Genesee country. She says:

"When we crossed the Genesee River it was said that the Sabbath had never crossed it. However, it crossed then, for my parents were Methodists of the right stamp. They imbibed their Methodism in Vershire circuit, Vermont, where Thomas Branch, and others of the like precious memory, were our circuit preachers, and Shadrach Bostwick and John Broadhead our presiding elders. James Bennet held the offices of class-leader, steward, and exhorter in Vermont, and subsequently in Bethany, Holland Purchase, until he departed this life in 1818. Rev. James Mitchell, now Dr. Mitchell, of Philadelphia, was the first itinerant that found us; this was in 1809. He was affable and ardently pious. He made friends everywhere, persuaded some to become truly pious, and gathered many into the Church; some Presbyterians and Baptists, who, when Brother Kimberlin came on, wished to be excused, alleging that they had joined Mr. Mitchell and not Mr. Kimberlin. The two men were quite dissimilar; Mitchell was very accommodating and courteous, while Kimberlin was a blunt Dutchman, resolved to have Methodism right up and down or not at all.

"Brother Mitchell labored a year, held a camp-meeting in East Bethany, attended with some good, and when he left the field he left his name embalmed in the affections of the people.

"I am pretty sure the first quarterly meeting was held at Middlebury; the communicants were James Bennet and son, Cyrus Story, and Jesse Vanorman and wife. Brother Story was then a local preacher, with more than ordinary preaching abilities. He often preached, in those olden times, in our barn. Peter Vannest was one of our early preachers;

his history you know. George Lane, our worthy Book Agent, was a year with us when we had no roads or bridges, and had poor fare. He visited our log-cabin on the bank of the creek. We often had the satisfaction of entertaining him, and of dividing with him our venison. I well remember the impressions made on my young heart by the truly Christian deportment and godly admonitions of our mutual friend. He made full proof of his ministry in the wilderness, and will doubtless meet souls in heaven whom he was there the instrument of bringing to Christ, and who shall be stars in his crown for ever and ever.

"Gideon Draper was long a presiding elder here. I have heard him preach with great power. When he canted his head on one side we unconverted folks expected to tremble. He was a hearty Methodist in doctrine and practice. When the quarterage was divided he would say, 'Well, I have enough to pay my toll over Genesee River.' The preachers of those days thought if they had money enough to pay their toll and postage, and a little more, they did very well.

"Loring Grant came to our circuit in 1811. He was zealous and successful. His amiable and pious young wife traveled much with him on horseback, and often followed his energetic sermons with an earnest and moving exhortation, which was always well received by the people.

"Several of the old members deserve particular mention. John Morris, of Warsaw, was a sound Methodist and a hearty supporter of the institutions of the Church. Benjamin Barlow, of Bethany, was a respectable local preacher and an every-day Christian. He was father of Rev. William Barlow. Father Waller and Brother How came from Wyoming to Batavia, now Elba, about 1811; they brought Bible religion with them. The former has gone to God, after serving his generation well as class-leader and exhorter. The latter, almost ninety, is waiting to see the old chapel, where many souls have been



born into the kingdom, come out in a new edition, and to see a new parsonage, which is to be built the present season."

These jottings are not only valuable as a historical record, but as evidence of the impressions which a minister of Christ is constantly making upon intelligent young minds. These impressions are generally truthful, and certain it is that they are enduring. The minister who mortifies and displeases the children is making an unenviable reputation, and a clouded, if not a dark history.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### GENESEE DISTRICT, 1812-1820.

THIS year Cayuga district disappears from the Minutes, and Genesee and Oneida appear. The creation of a new district necessarily resulted in the diminution of the territory embraced in the Susquehanna district. What was called "the lake country" was embraced within the bounds of the Genesee district, and the Susquehanna was constituted of territory lying in the northern part of Pennsylvania and the southern part of New York.

Gideon Draper was appointed to the charge of the Genesee district, and George Harmon to Susquehanna.

This year the Holland Purchase ceases to appear on the Minutes, and the territory is now divided into three separate charges: New Amsterdam, Chatauque, and Caledonia. New Amsterdam was the name given to the small town near the foot of Lake Erie, now Buffalo city; and this name was appropriated to the charge which extended from that point east and north.

The year 1812 is distinguished in American history by the declaration of war with Great Britain. The work on the line between the United States and Canada necessarily

experienced considerable interruptions in consequence of the constant alarms which agitated the people, and the disturbed state of the settlements.

Anning Owen stands for New Amsterdam this year, but did not go to the charge to remain. He attended Gideon Draper's quarterly meetings while he went to the south upon private business, and after Draper's return retired to his home in Ulysses. James Gilmore succeeded him.

We have already given some specimens of Gilmore's eccentricities. On his way to his charge he preached several times on Caledonia circuit. He came to Attica on the Sabbath and found the people all at their work, and the grist-mill running. He sent out a boy to publish that a new minister would preach at a certain place. The house was full, and Gilmore laid on the lash in his own peculiar style. Among other things of the same sort, he said: "Tell your miller that if he don't stop grinding on Sunday he'll be ground to all eternity. Hell will be the bed-stone, and God Almighty the runner." Some were awakened, and a considerable excitement was raised.

Gilmore visited the hospital in Buffalo, and conversed with the sick soldiers. An officer ordered him away with profane language. Gilmore replied: "If you do not stop swearing God will kill you and send you to hell." The guard presented his bayonet, and threatened to run him through. Gilmore stood his ground, reproving him for his blasphemy, and the officer repeated his threats. When the courageous messenger of God was ready he left, but in such wise as to prove that he had not been frightened away.

He called on a lady in Hamburg, who had been sick nigh unto death. She was not aware that he was a minister. Something having been said by the lady in relation to her dangerous illness, he asked her how she felt at the time. She said she must confess she did not feel as well as she could wish. He prayed with her, and before he left gave her some earnest words. This interview led to her conversion, and her conversion to that of others, who be



came valuable members of the Church. The lady is said to be still living.

Mr. Gilmore's manner of visiting was to take the houses by course. He came in, and without being seated, asked, "Have you any religion here?" If the answer was not satisfactory, he added: "You must repent or you will go to hell. Good-by." His warnings were often considered as a foreshadowing of coming judgments, and sometimes resulted in salutary awakenings.

He preached in a place called Naples, and was so outspoken and fearless that the people concluded that he seriously interfered with their pleasures, and resolved to drive him from the place. At one of his meetings, after the service had commenced, a leading citizen swung his hat and hallooed "hurra!" All was confusion in a moment, and Mr. Gilmore finding it impossible to restore order left, and put up with a friend in the place. Before he retired he prayed with the family, and, referring to the disturbers, prayed that God would kill them and send them to hell, as they would probably never come to repentance. Fourteen of the rioters and their connections died suddenly within a short time. The facts were put together by the survivors, and the opposition ended.

1813. This year Gideon Lanning was upon New Amsterdam circuit. He was encouraged to preach to the soldiers at Buffalo by Generals Scott and Brown, who were among his regular hearers. His manners were modest and conciliatory, and he was treated with great respect.

On the last of December Buffalo was burned by the British, and there was a great scattering among the inhabitants all through that portion of the state. The people in the neighborhood of Buffalo fled to Batavia, and when they arrived there they found the people packing up to go on further east. There were many rumors of danger, and great consternation filled the minds of the timid, while brave-hearted and strong-minded men armed themselves for resistance. The general apprehension was that the Indians

would overrun the country, and murder indiscriminately men, women, and children. But a few brushes with the brave men, who were armed and organized for the defense of their hearths, sent the cowards across the Canada line. It was but a short time before the people took heart and returned to their homes, and quiet was restored.

Glezen Fillmore was then a circuit steward, and in the old stewards' book the following record is found:

"Owing to the British invasion, the burning of Buffalo, and the threatened spreading calamities of war, a general flight of the inhabitants of Niagara county took place, and consequently the quarterly meeting was not held; but after the return the following collections and disbursements were made. The aggregate is \$21 25."

1817. This year James Hall was on Eden circuit, and visited Buffalo and Black Rock. He formed a class of eight or nine at the former place, and four at the latter. The people at the Rock had raised a subscription of \$60 for him, and requested him to return. This was doubtless a liberal subscription for the time and place, but Mr. Hall did not wish to return.

1818. This year Glezen Fillmore was received on trial in the conference, and appointed to Buffalo and Black Rock; but where was he to preach? and to whom? We shall see presently.

Mr. Fillmore says that when he first visited Black Rock the people seemed, not much taken with his appearance. They intimated strongly that he was not the man they had asked for, and as to doing anything in the way of his support, that was very doubtful. Mr. Fillmore, however, gave out an appointment and preached, and the people concluded that after all he would do.

He visited Buffalo on the Sabbath, and, after some inquiry, found the little class together, consulting as to what they should do to secure the visitations of the preachers; for they had heard nothing from the conference, and were not calculating on any such good luck as having a preacher stationed



at Buffalo. Of course they were overjoyed with the prospect.

There was no church at Buffalo. The Presbyterians occupied the court-house, and the Episcopalians the only school-house, and this was private property. Mr. Fillmore obtained leave of the proprietor to occupy the school-house when the Episcopalians did not want it. He called upon Mr. Clark, the minister, and he gave his consent that it should be occupied for Methodist meetings when he did not occupy it. So Mr. Fillmore appointed a meeting in the school-house "at sunrise," and another at "early candle-lighting." He had quite a congregation. It was not long before the Methodist meetings began to make quite a stir in the little town, and, as would seem, awakened some jealousy.

The Presbyterian minister sought an opportunity to speak with Mr. Fillmore, and, after a brief introduction, asked him if he intended to have regular appointments in Buffalo. The answer was: "Certainly; nothing short of it." He then proceeded to say that Buffalo was a small place, and could do no more than support the preachers who were already settled there, and he wished Mr. Fillmore would have the kindness to *leave*. Mr. Fillmore replied that he could not do that by any means. He was sent there by the bishop; he had a small membership, of which he was appointed the pastor, and he could not desert his post. "Well, sir, you cannot be supported here," urged the minister. "Well, sir, I will then preach without a support," answered Mr. Fillmore. The next movement of the minister was to crowd in a prayer-meeting in the school-house on Sunday evenings, and so to take away the only available plank the intruder had to stand upon.

Being shut up to the necessity of a bold experiment, Mr. Fillmore proceeded to lease a lot for a church, and to contract for the building. A church twenty-five by thirty-five was commenced on the eighth of December, and was dedicated on the twenty-fourth of January following. This was

the first church erected in the Holland Purchase; and when it was dedicated, and was known to be a fixed fact, it was a matter of universal astonishment. Mr. Fillmore stood personally responsible for the estimates, and much more. He had, as he says, "no trustees, no time to make them, and nothing to make them of."

The people of Buffalo were poor, the place not having yet recovered from the fire and the prostration of business occasioned by the war. Still he found willing hearts, and obtained a considerable sum, for the circumstances of the people. He wrote to Thomas Mason, in New York, who was then book agent, and he begged and forwarded to him one hundred and seventy dollars. He then applied to Joseph Ellicott, Esq., and after a somewhat singular interview, obtained a donation of three hundred dollars.

The little church was filled with willing hearers, and the work of God went on gloriously. He preached at Black Rock, in a room fitted up for a school-room, in the barracks, and had good congregations.

1819. Mr. Fillmore was returned this year to Buffalo and Black Rock, and enjoyed a pleasant year. For his services the first year he received seventy dollars, and the second one hundred and fifty; and at the end of the second year returned eighty-two members.

#### RIDGEWAY CIRCUIT.

The following interesting account of the condition of another charge west of the Genesee River is from the Rev. Dr. Paddock:

"In 1818, being then a little past my nineteenth year, I was admitted on trial in the 'Old Genesee,' and appointed to the Ridgeway circuit, in company with the Rev. Parker Buell as preacher in charge. When, however, I was told, as I was soon after conference, that I was appointed to 'Ridgeway,' I had no idea of the magnitude of the circuit, and indeed scarcely any of its locality, beyond the simple fact that it was somewhere in 'the wilds of western New



York,' and some two or three hundred miles from home. Though *very* domestic in my feelings, and local in my attachments, I started off from my father's house, in Warren, Herkimer county, for my distant field of labor, with all the cheerfulness and courage I could possibly command for the purpose; though in both qualities, it must be confessed, I was little better than a bankrupt. On horseback, and to a Methodist preacher there was then no other mode of conveyance, it took me nearly a week to reach my circuit. After two or three days of inexpressible loneliness I found appropriate company. Converging roads brought together several young preachers, and ere I had got half way to the Genesee River, I was happily associated with Revs. Alvin Torry, Samuel Belton, and C. N. Flint, who were on their way to distant fields of labor in Upper Canada. Though up to this time we had been utter strangers, we were soon all over in each other's sympathies. Truer friends could not be imagined. We went on together, praying and strengthening each other's hands. Passing through Rochester, then a village of only a few hundred inhabitants, we struck off upon the Ridge Road, and found refreshment a little after noon at the house of Brother Ketcham, in the town of Murray. Here it was soon ascertained that we were now actually in the Ridgeway circuit, and that the easternmost appointment therein was at a school-house only a few rods from our resting-place. But I had no plan of the circuit, and must go on into the town of Royalton, near the center of it, where I should probably find one. Accordingly, after dinner and prayer, we went on together. My traveling companions now became my *guests*, and I must provide for them. Good enough quarters were found at a log-cabin near 'Oak Orchard village,' where we passed the night, and then parted. The adieu of that morning had a pathos in it, the remembrance of which now, after the lapse of more than forty-one years, brings the tears to my eyes. In silence, and with averted faces, the dear young brethren mounted their horses, when one of them turned to me and

said, the tears running down his cheeks: 'Ah, Brother Paddock, if we could only stay at home as you do.' Only think of it, young brethren of the present day; there I was, a youth of nineteen, between two and three hundred miles from my father's house, and in the woods, among strangers; but was still at 'home,' simply because I did not have to go with them over the Niagara River, some one or two hundred miles into the dominions of George IV. Contrasting my destiny with theirs, I did indeed think I had been somewhat petted by the good bishop. But they were brave young men, and in their several fields of labor did honor to the cause of Christ.

"But my special topic is Ridgeway circuit. That this was at that time something of an *institution* will be readily seen, when it is stated that it extended from near Clarkson Corners on the east to the Niagara River on the west, a distance of full sixty miles; and took in, upon an average, about eight miles each side of the Ridge Road, the north side being little else than an unbroken forest, without roads, quite down to the shore of Ontario lake. To go around it involved a ride of nearly three hundred miles; each preacher delivering forty-five sermons every four weeks, a fraction over eleven sermons each week. At least this was the case at the end of the year, for we had taken in several new appointments.

"Some idea may be formed respecting what would now be considered the privations of those times, when it is stated that there was but one single lathed and plastered room in the whole circuit that invited the occupancy of the weary itinerant. Where there is now, almost literally, a succession of princely palaces, there were then merely log-cabins, covered with barks of trees, or with what the back-woodsmen call '*puncheons*.' It was no unusual thing for the young preacher to find his dormitory in the loft of one of these rude cabins, through whose multitudinous interstices it was an easy matter for him to count the stars. Nor was it unfrequent that he found the snow, when he



arose in the morning, two or three inches deep as well on his bed as on the chamber floor. But these were 'light afflictions,' as it was easy to take his pants from the pin, or from his bed-post, if indeed he chanced to have one, and with their lower extremities sweep the snow from a spot sufficiently large for personal occupancy while he dressed himself.

"Persecution, in some of its forms, was then the daily portion of 'the circuit rider.' He expected it as much as he expected his daily bread. Gibes, and groans, and derisive songs and amens were to him mere matters of course. Intending the remark specially for the preacher's ear, the miserable persecutor, generally prefixing or suffixing a horrid oath, would exclaim: 'There goes a young Methodist priest!' Such salutations have often entered his soul like the cold iron. To avoid 'running the gauntlet' of these sons of Belial at work upon the highway, for association strengthens vice as well as virtue, he has more than once taken a back road and gone materially out of his way. Sometimes, however, the quaintness of these sallies would, by a kind of counter-blow upon the sensibilities, excite mirth rather than give pain. In the autumn of 1818 the writer was riding along the Ridge Road late in the afternoon, when, feeling rather pensive, and supposing no one near, as there was a dense wood on the one hand and only a partially cleared field on the other, he began to sing a kind of melody very popular in those days, called 'The Gloom of Autumn,' beginning:

'Hail, ye sighing sons of sorrow,  
View with me the autumnal gloom.'

He had sung but a verse or two when a man, doubtless of the class just referred to, started up from behind the fence and vociferated at the top of his voice: "Amen! amen! brother, my soul says amen!" meanwhile clapping his hands earnestly *a la* warm-hearted Methodist. The whole performance partook so largely of the ludicrous that

so far from adding to the melancholy of the preacher he was provoked by it to laughter. The consequence was that in a much more than usually cheerful mood he went to his evening appointment.

"But a kind of persecution came from a class of persons who professed to be followers of the Saviour, and who probably were, on the whole, good people. The country was new, and those who first settled it had belonged, before their emigration, to different religious denominations. Notwithstanding their strong partiality for their own 'faith and order,' however, they *must*, in many localities, attend the preaching of the itinerant or go to no meeting at all. But then, woe to the poor preacher if he could not pronounce 'shibboleth' according to the most approved nomenclature of their respective doctrinal systems. As soon as the service was concluded some offended hearer, not unfrequently a pious old lady, *pious* in the judgment of charity, would come forward to the stand, or await the egress of the preacher from the house, and say to him: 'If I understood the elder'—*elder* he was, though only a licentiate, and still in his minority—'he said thus and so. Now *my* Bible does not read in that way, but says so and so.' Thus the gauntlet was fairly at his feet, and he must defend himself, or what he regarded as the cause of truth would suffer in the estimation of no inconsiderable part of the small assembly who would generally pause to hear. At this distance of time such things may seem amusing, but they were then full of painful interest to the young preacher. He wanted to please his neighbor for his good to edification, but was often distressed to find himself a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.

"But those were times not particularly distinguished for catholicity among the different Churches. Anything like ministerial courtesy was scarcely looked for outside of one's own communion. The ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in particular, were regarded and treated by those of most other Churches as 'blind leaders of the blind'



At Lewiston, then the west end of Ridgeway circuit, every effort was made to keep 'the circuit riders' out of the little academy, which was about the only place in which a meeting could be held by any denomination. The Rev. Mr. S., pastor of the Presbyterian Church, and by no means a bad man, would find himself under the necessity of changing his appointment from one hour in the day to another, so as to meet some special emergency; but generally in such a way as to keep out these interlopers. By the time the itinerant had changed the plan of his circuit so as to harmonize with the new state of facts, the Lewiston wheel would turn back again, thus necessitating another change in the plan of the circuit, or obliging the circuit rider to take a belligerent attitude, which of course he was very reluctant to do.

"This same gentleman had the misfortune to get his thigh broken. He was overseeing some men who were employed in felling trees for him a few miles east of the village, when, by a rebound, the butt end of a small tree, then falling, struck and maimed him in the way indicated. He was confined away from home, was suffering much bodily pain, and was really an object of pity. Now, thought the young preacher, I will show him that I am his friend so far as I can do so by calling upon him and assuring him of my heartfelt sympathy. The visit was accordingly made, prayer was offered, and all the kind words said that could be thought of. The interview did seem to have a good effect all around. But before it was closed the Rev. Mr. C., then passing through the place, and since somewhat distinguished in the literary world, called in to see and comfort his brother in his affliction. The patient introduced to him the young itinerant, who rose to his feet, but was barely recognized by as cool a nod of the head as can be easily imagined. The Rev. Mr. C. talked piously to his unfortunate brother and then took his leave, by extending his hand to all present *save* the young preacher, toward whom he was careful to keep his back till he left the room. The

incident is now smiled at, but then occasioned an amount of mental suffering which would have been gladly avoided. Probably both men, if they still live, would now act a very different part.

"But in spite of these little trials we had good times on Ridgeway that year. Full one hundred were added to the membership of the Church, several new societies were formed, and matters put in train for securing that general *growth* which has since so wonderfully blessed that interesting portion of the Empire State.

"The manner in which one new class originated and was formed, will probably never be forgotten by the preacher while he remembers aught of earth. At the close of a Sabbath service at Oak Orchard village, a man came forward and spoke to him, praying him to come down into the woods and preach to a small neighborhood about equidistant from that village and the shore of Ontario. He was a backslider, but wanted to return to his duty, and would be glad to have his neighbors saved. They had never had preaching, and there were large children there who had never even seen a minister. It was in vain that he was told the preachers had not a single spare afternoon or evening, that the place was several miles one side from their route, and that an enlargement of their field of labor was almost utterly out of the question. *Preaching they must have.* If the preacher could not come in the afternoon or evening he could in the morning. They would turn out to hear him at any time. The preacher yielded, and told the applicant if he would meet him when he came round again, at a given time and place, and conduct him to the destitute neighborhood, he would preach to them on Wednesday morning at 10 o'clock. The proposition was accepted, and at the proper time the minister was conducted through the woods to the place of meeting. It was a little bark-covered cabin, so low between joints that one had to stoop, hat off, when he entered. But it was well filled; the whole neighborhood, men, women, and children, being present. The children



stared as if they had expected something unearthly in the person of the minister. All however, old and young, were quiet and attentive. At the close of the meeting the preacher took special pains to speak to all present, wishing to show them that he was interested in their individual welfare. At the second and third meeting all were present again; each occasion being more interesting than the preceding. Finally, all seemed glad to see the preacher, and urged a request that he would somehow contrive to spend a night with them, to the end that they might see more of him and get further religious instruction. By making sundry alterations in the plan of labor, it was found practicable to comply with their invitation. The next meeting, therefore, engrossed an afternoon and evening, the latter being devoted to a social meeting. The adult part of the neighborhood met at a house that promised the most comfortable quarters for the preacher, and the evening was spent in singing, hearing the preacher tell his experience, and in familiar conversation. As the company had come together from a distance of several miles around, they could not walk home without refreshments. A meal must be prepared, and all the women present volunteered a helping hand, some doing one thing and some another. Such were the simple, who will not say *lovely*, habits of the new country. While they were thus engaged, the preacher, scarcely thinking what he did, sang a verse from a hymn very popular among the warm-hearted Methodists of those days:

'I'm glad that I was born to die,  
Glory, halleluiah!  
From grief and woe my soul shall fly.  
Glory, halleluiah!  
I long to quit this cumbrous clay,  
Glory, halleluiah!  
And reign with Christ in endless day,  
Glory, halleluiah!'

"Supper was now announced, and all were invited to 'set by.' When the meal was ended, the preacher drew back

from the table, and perhaps forgetting that he had sung it before, sung the same verse again. Ere it was concluded, however, a lady screamed out in unutterable agony, and falling to the floor called upon the preacher to pray for her. He was soon on his knees and all the company with him, each one crying for mercy. The whole scene was not only unique but quite indescribable. But the struggle was brief, for in the course of some twenty or thirty minutes all was calm again, when one after another arose and said, 'The Lord has spoken peace to my soul.' All were saved, and all were soon after formed into a class. The lady who cried out subsequently told the preacher that though when he first sang the verse her hands were in the biscuit-dough, she was at the point of falling to the floor, and probably would have done so had the singing continued a moment longer! Wonder whether the society then and there formed still lives?

"An allusion has been made to the wonderful changes that have taken place in the physical aspect of the country embraced in the Ridgeway circuit forty years since. A single fact will sufficiently illustrate this. Precisely where the city of Lockport now stands, the writer remembers to have got down from his horse under the shade of the trees, one warm day in the early autumn of 1818, rested himself, gathered nuts, read his Bible, prayed, and made ready to fill his appointment some eight or ten miles distant that afternoon. Probably there was then not a single house within a mile of the spot."

#### LYONS CIRCUIT.

In 1811 George Harmon and Palmer Roberts were appointed to Lyons circuit. There was an appointment about two miles from Vienna in a small place called Conger's settlement. A revival commenced at this appointment which influenced the minds of the people extensively over the surrounding country. The preachers were invited to preach in Vienna, and Mr. Harmon accordingly sent an ap-



pointment to that place. A Baptist preacher withstood him, and challenged him to a public debate. Mr. Harmon in those days always faced the enemy, and without hesitation accepted the challenge.

At the appointed time the gentleman who gave the challenge was not present, but sent on a friend to fight the battle. The champion did not wish to enter into any particular preliminary arrangements for the management of the debate, but preferred that Mr. Harmon should preach his sentiments first, and leave him to his option either to assault his opponent or defend himself, as he might judge expedient. Mr. Harmon made no difficulties, desiring to join issue with him in some way, and he cared but little about the mode of proceeding if the end could be reached.

Mr. Harmon proceeded to preach, taking for his text, "I also will show you mine opinion." He proceeded to give his views of those doctrines which are peculiar to the Methodists, or those to which the Baptists are especially opposed. His work was mostly to lay down his positions, leaving their defense for a reply.

His antagonist proceeded to review the sermon, and passed rather lightly over everything until he came to the subject of baptism. He professed to be utterly astonished at the views advanced. He then laid down the position with emphasis, that "no one was authorized to baptize who had not been baptized himself." Could he prove that Mr. Harmon had no right to administer the ordinance of baptism he would easily dispose of him and take the ground. Mr. Harmon wished "to ask a question." Consent was promptly given. He then asked, "Who baptized the apostles?" "John the Baptist," was the answer. And "who baptized John the Baptist?" asked Mr. Harmon. The gentleman was confounded, and left highly excited.

Mr. Harmon took the ground and formed a society there of one hundred members. Major Granger, Major Hawks, and other influential citizens were among those who united with the society at this time.

## GENEVA.

"In 1812 the Rev. William Snow, a superannuated preacher of the East Genesee Conference, who now resides in Geneva, being in charge of Lyons circuit, maintained preaching in this village once in two weeks. After preaching it was customary for the preachers to meet the members in class, and thus ascertain from personal inquiry the real state of piety in the Church. Also all serious persons were invited to attend, and thus whatever religious feeling or conviction which might exist was carefully cultured and encouraged. Thus also both the leader and class were encouraged.

"In those days our preachers were entertained while in Geneva by Mr. Negley, a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church, but whose wife was a Methodist. Mr. Negley was a gentleman of respectable standing in society, at heart a friend to the Methodists, and an earnest well-wisher to the cause of vital religion. He has often cheered and encouraged the ministers who labored there when the prospect of continued preaching in the village looked doubtful, and for years together his house was the home of the preachers. His name is justly classed with the friends and supporters of Methodism in Geneva.

"Those who are acquainted with our economy know well how to estimate the importance of a class-leader's office. On large circuits, where the absence of the preacher from each particular society during most of the time is unavoidable, the class-leader's office is next in importance to that of the pastor. Often a faithful leader, with sound judgment and piety, has accomplished as much in holding together and building up an infant society as the pastor himself. Under the peculiar circumstances of the case, the death of Mr. Loomis, the former leader, already noticed, had defeated for the time the hopes of the little class in Geneva. Years passed away before another suitable person could be obtained to fill his place. Mr. Edward Pratt was, indeed, subsequently appointed, but he did not long retain the con-



fidence of his brethren, and again the regular meetings were discontinued.

"These repeated disasters greatly damped the ardor and beclouded the prospects of the few friends who, with only occasional pastoral aid, endeavored to introduce Methodist meetings in Geneva. But the time was at hand when these unhappy vicissitudes were to terminate, and a more permanent order of things to be established.

"In 1818 the present society was organized by Rev. Ralph Lanning, then preacher in charge of Lyons circuit. At its organization it numbered only thirteen persons. Jenks Philips, now a local preacher in Wyoming county, was leader, besides whom there were Jonathan Chapin and Dorothy his daughter, Sarah Gregory, Hannah Gregory, David Osborne and wife, Silas Chapin and Deborah his wife, Elizabeth Dean, and a colored woman by the name of Mary Van Rensselaer. Such was the beginning of the present Methodist society in Geneva. Of all this number we believe but one survives, Mrs. Deborah Chapin, who still resides in Geneva, waiting in hope till her change come. She is a daughter of Judge Dorsey, of Lyons, in whose barn the first Genesee Conference was held. She was accustomed to wait on Bishop Asbury, sit on his knee, fetch him his slippers, kiss him good-night, and still holds some relics of the venerable bishop, among which are an old and well used pair of spectacles which the bishop superannuated long before his death.

"At first our society occupied the Mechanics' School-house, which stood upon the ground afterward occupied by the first Methodist church edifice. After worshiping here for a time they removed to a room in a cabinet shop on Water-street, kindly given to them for the purpose by Hiram Dox, Esq., who on more occasions than one befriended this infant Church. From this place, after the lapse of a year, they returned to the Mechanics' School-house. It was soon found, however, that their place of worship was insufficient to accommodate their growing congregation, though the

erection of a suitable church edifice was an enterprise wholly beyond their capabilities. In this situation, what was to be done? Without wealth, without a large inheritance of public favor, they saw no near prospect of being able to 'enlarge the place of their tent.' At this important moment Providence opened their way. The Mechanics' Society of Geneva was an incorporated institution, in possession of the school-house and premises already mentioned, together with some funds. Chiefly through the influence and agency of the late Richard Hogarth, Esq., then president of the society, an act was obtained from the Legislature dissolving the corporation, and transferring the property to the Methodist Society, by which they came into the possession of a lot and about one hundred and twenty dollars in funds. Mr. Hogarth was a man of public influence, of a liberal and ingenious mind, and well deserves the gratitude of Geneva Methodists for the generous interest he manifested in their behalf on this and other occasions.

"In 1821 Geneva appears for the first time on the annual Minutes. It was then united in a circuit with Canandaigua and some other places, and supplied by the pastoral labors of Rev. Loring Grant and Rev. Chester Adgate; the latter long since gone to his blessed reward; the former is still a superannuated preacher of East Genesee Conference, residing in Milo, Yates co., N. Y. Brother Grant, the preacher in charge, set himself at work at once and resolutely in rearing a house of worship, and after great labor and sacrifice the society beheld with inexpressible delight every difficulty surmounted, and a convenient edifice made ready for their use. The house was dedicated by Rev. Jonathan Heustis, now deceased, on Christmas day, 1821. On this occasion the Rev. Dr. Axtell, pastor of the Presbyterian Church in the village, attended and offered the opening prayer. He was a man of catholic spirit, and without disparaging his peculiar attachment to his own order, it is due to his memory to say he participated in a friendly interest in behalf of our Church.



"In 1828 the Geneva society was first constituted a separate pastoral charge, or station, with a membership of seventy-two whites and three colored communicants. During the first two years the pastorate was filled by Rev. Manly Tooker, who still moves in the effective ranks of our itinerancy. Through his faithful ministrations and prudent oversight, not only was there a state of general peace, but a more consolidated union, with some additions. At the end of two years the numbers were reported at eighty-seven."\*

## CORTLANDVILLE IN CAYUGA CIRCUIT.

"Rev. William Case was appointed presiding elder in 1810, and Anning Owen took charge of the circuit. Genesee Conference had now been organized, and Cayuga district was included within its bounds. The other districts were the Canada and the Susquehanna. The whole number of members in the conference was ten thousand six hundred and eighty-three, of which Cayuga circuit contained four hundred and eight.

"During these years the little band at Cortland had not increased as its members had hoped, but still they were far from being discouraged. They knew full well that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, since help cometh alone from God. The standard of the cross, under which they had enlisted, had here been planted, and from it they would not revolt. Anew their cry went up to God for help, and he in his mercy heard their prayer, comforted their souls, and led them on to battle and to victory.

"Elijah Batchelor was appointed preacher in charge at the next conference, with John Hazzard as his colleague. During this year the first quarterly meeting was appointed for this place. It was understood that the presiding elder would be present, and, as the members from the surrounding towns were expected, it promised to be a season of unusual interest to the families residing in the settlement.

\* Rev. F. G. Hibbard, in Northern Christian Advocate.

In this they were not disappointed. The meeting was held in an unfinished barn, where a large congregation convened for public worship. Mr. Case selected for his text on the Sabbath, Rev. viii, 4: 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.' He is said to have preached with such a measure of the Divine Spirit that multitudes were not able to resist the appeals which he made, and from that day a deeper religious influence pervaded the community than had before existed. Elder Case did not visit Cortland again in the discharge of his official duties during his stay on the district, but the labors of that day were not in vain.

"The progress of the society had, for a few years, been hindered by difficulties among its own members. These finally resulted in the expulsion of one or two who failed to exhibit the spirit of the Gospel, after which harmony was again restored. The dark cloud which had overspread the little company of believers now began to give way, and a brighter day dawned upon the interests of Methodism in Cortland.

"In 1812, the period to which we have now arrived, the settlement of Cortland had scarcely begun to assume the appearance of a village. There were, at most, but twelve or fifteen houses, constructed according to the rude customs of the times, and located at considerable distances from each other. Numerous farms were being cleared up, and great improvements made with each successive year; but the forest still covered by far the greater portion of the surrounding country. The village was without any regular streets except those formed by the public highways leading to and from the place, and these would poorly compare with those of the present day.

"Cortland county, which had been previously included in Onondaga, was organized in 1808, and Cortland village selected as the county seat. The erection of the public buildings gave a new impulse to the business of the place,



and furnished assurances that at no distant day a thriving and prosperous village would arise into being.

"As will be readily seen, the religious privileges of the community were comparatively limited. Most of the inhabitants of the town who were pious resorted to the upper village as their place of worship, and as the Baptists had built their meeting-house between the villages, Cortland was in a great measure unprovided for. This circumstance caused Homer to become early distinguished for the excellence of its moral and religious character, while the settlement here became equally noted for the opposite qualities. The preachers on Cayuga circuit came regularly once in two weeks, and their ministrations constituted nearly all the public services with which the citizens were favored. Up to the time of the erection of their church the Baptists had occasionally preached here, but their meetings were now removed. In the minds of many no field was so unpromising as this, and such persons turned their attention and directed their efforts elsewhere. But amid all the wickedness that abounded, a few faithful souls were earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, and trusting in God for the revival of his work and the upbuilding of his Church.

"The little class formed by Mr. Hill eight years before now contained about fifteen members. These were scattered over a considerable extent of territory, and were not able to sustain as they might otherwise have done the spiritual interests of the Church. Though they encountered a strong opposition, and found but little in the surrounding circumstances to encourage them, they were fully resolved to push the war to the enemy's gate. At the conference held this year James Kelsey was appointed preacher in charge. He was a man distinguished among the pioneers of Methodism for the untiring energy with which he engaged in the work of the ministry, and the glorious success that ordinarily attended his labors. Though not noted for the extent of his theological or scientific attainments, he

possessed an unusual adaptation for the work to which he was called. Almost every charge where he labored was favored with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the conversion of sinners. Many that were brought into the kingdom of Christ through his ministry yet remain in the Church below; while hundreds have died in the Lord, and are already gone up on high.

"Mr. Kelsey had preached in Cortland but a few times before tokens of the Divine presence began to appear. Those familiar with the workings of the Spirit felt that the coming of the Lord was at hand. And they were not mistaken. A revival commenced which extended in its influence throughout this entire region of country. The progress of the work was so powerful that almost every family was visited with the grace of God, and great numbers were brought to the knowledge of the truth. So generally was the religious influence shed abroad in the hearts of the people that the work did not seem to be carried on by any particular branch of the Church, but was participated in by all who feared God and desired to promote the glory of his name. The exact number of conversions cannot now be ascertained. More than one hundred united with the Congregationalists at Homer, and almost an equally large number with the Baptists. A few only connected themselves with the Methodists, but among them were some who have remained pillars in the Church to the present day. At the close of the revival the society contained about twenty-five members."

Methodism continued to advance but slowly in Cortland during the period now under review. The meetings were held in the public buildings as soon as there were any; first in the school-house, then in the court-house, or the academy hall.

In the mean time there had been considerable revivals at different points in Cayuga circuit, and Methodism had become strong and influential in the country generally, but the towns were slow to receive this form of Christianity, for the reason that other denominations preoccupied the ground.



## CHAPTER IV.

## ONEIDA DISTRICT, 1812-1820.

WILLIAM CASE was appointed presiding elder on the Oneida district in 1812. It embraced the same ground over which he had traveled for the two preceding years, under the name of Cayuga district, with the exception of Cayuga and Scipio circuits.

The work was enlarging very much in the Black River country, which at this time was embraced within the bounds of the *Oneida district*. The following communication looks back two years previous to the present date, but is not inappropriate here, as it is a specimen of the breaking-up process which continued in this northern country for years.

## BLACK RIVER.

In 1810 Methodism in the Black River country was comparatively in its infancy. The country was new and poor, and the hard frosts and heavy snows in winter made it most laborious traveling. There were two circuits in that country when the Genesee Conference was organized—Black River and Mexico. The process of breaking up new fields there may be tolerably well understood from the following communication from Rev. I. Fairbank, dated 1851:

"I was one among those who stood in the itinerant ranks from the year 1810, when I received an appointment from William Case, presiding elder, on the Black River circuit, with old Brother Willis, which embraced the most part of the Black River territory. I preached in my own dwelling, it being a preaching place; and in 1811 was received on trial, and appointed to what was then called Mexico circuit. Reuben Farley was my colleague. This circuit

embraced a large territory: a part of Sandy Creek, Readfield, Camden, Bengal, Williamstown, Salmon River, Richland, Mexico, and as far west as Oswego Falls, having to pass through a twelve mile dense wilderness twice every tour around the circuit. This was a year of labor, sacrifice, and suffering, but of great spiritual prosperity. Although we had to preach often in log-shanties, yet we found warm receptions, warm hands and hearts, and were made welcome to the best their cabins afforded. There was more in those days than a cold 'How do you do?'

"One circumstance I will relate. At one of my Sabbath appointments an old Brother Bennet, who had come ten or twelve miles to meeting, requested me to preach in his neighborhood on some week-day; the place was ten miles through the woods on Salmon River, and was a fishing ground of ten or a dozen families. On visiting the place I found a people that had no Sabbath or religion, but abounded with family and neighborhood quarrels. But preaching being a novel thing, we had a full house. After preaching I told them that it made us twenty miles extra travel to preach to them, and we had no other object in view but the salvation of their souls; and if they would unite in society as seekers, we would give them regular preaching. They might have four weeks to think on the subject. I would leave an appointment for my colleague in two weeks, and would come again myself in four weeks, when the question would be determined. My colleague reported favorably, and when I visited the place again I found a good attendance. After preaching I read the Discipline and explained it; then wished all who desired to join society to arise. To my surprise all the congregation arose but one man, and he left the house. I suppose all were unconverted except Brother Bennet. One of the new members said to me he thought the man who left the house was much to blame that he would not join society, seeing we took so much pains to come and preach to them, and he would talk with him for that. I felt in singular circum-



stances; but told them I would preach in the evening, and met the class. The pine forest was literally illuminated with torches. I gave them a short talk, and proceeded to meet our new class. I found some deeply impressed in their minds, and they wept; but some very raw materials. I reported the state of things to my colleague, and told him to take into the class the balance of the neighborhood if he could. He did so, with the exception of one family, and he found that God was at work in power among the people; and, in short, before the year closed it was one of the most spiritual and deeply experienced societies on the circuit; some professed entire sanctification.

"To give a specimen of their zeal: At our last quarterly meeting in that year, which was held in June or July, they started with two sleds, with two yoke of oxen to each, a distance of ten miles; the women rode, the men went on foot, and they were the happiest company at the meeting. Brother William Case was our presiding elder. I received \$25 quarterage that year, and at the end of the year I owed nothing. We lived with the people; when they had venison we had it, when they had salmon we shared with them. I learn that this society has ever been held in high esteem for their Christian fidelity, and we have in its origin a proof of the benefit of that rule that admits all who desire salvation to join on trial. I think we received about one hundred on probation."

#### OTSEGO CIRCUIT.

In 1810 William Jewett and Seth Mattison traveled on Otsego circuit. The writer was then thirteen years of age, and has a very distinct recollection of the men, and of their manner in private and in the desk, or rather *behind the chair*; for there were no pulpits or desks then, but the preacher stood behind a chair, and usually hung his red bandanna handkerchief on the back. Jewett was as handsome a man as ever walked; erect, or a little inclining backward, rosy cheeked, and sociable. He was called proud; this character,

he used to say, was given him for the only reason that God had made him a straight man. He articulated in a very rapid manner, so much so as to be indistinct. He was zealous and useful.

Mattison, physically if not mentally, was a perfect contrast to Jewett. He was stooping, lank, long-featured, drawing, always sighing, and appearing to be almost anything but an inhabitant of this lower sphere. His preaching was full of sympathy, and often attended with great power. He found occasion for all the grace he had in hearing the constant succession of eulogies which were pronounced upon the person and accomplishments of his colleague.

This was a year of prosperity to Otsego circuit. When a boy we were a close observer of the manners of the preachers, and from the remarks and discussions which were common in the family circle and social gatherings to which we were admitted in our father's house as a licensed spectator, we gathered what we now believe to have been the true standing of all the preachers, and their peculiar characteristics. The conversations of the preachers and the members, the spirit of the meetings, and the reports of conversions, all indicated unusual progress.

While editor of the *Christian Advocate and Journal* we applied to our old friend Jewett for a plan of old Otsego circuit. He furnished two; the last is as follows. We publish the whole verbatim:

"New Lisbon, S. Abbey, Sunday morning, school-house.

"Craftstown school-house, Sunday afternoon.

"Ostewa, Young's, Monday.

"Butternut, Chapin's, Tuesday afternoon.

"Bedient's, Tuesday evening.

"Johnson's, Wednesday.

"Burlington, Rawson, Thursday.

"New Lisbon, Gross, "

"Burlington, Bloss, Friday.

"Rose's, "



"Richfield, Morris, Sunday morning.

"Steward, Patent, school-house, afternoon; lodge at Elwood's.

"Warren, Talcot; German Flats, Voorhis; German Flats, Lewis; Manhiem, Hendricks; Fordsbush, Arnold's; Minden, Howland's, Nicholson's and Johnson's; Springfield, Walrod's; Bowman's Creek, Wheeler's; Charlestown, Williams's and Mattison's; New Sharon, Van Schaick's; Bowman's Creek, Champlain's; Cherry Valley, Storms's; New Boston, school-house; East Hill, Ross's; Cherry Valley village, Farley's; Middlefield, Peck's, Blair's, Green's, and M'-Allum's; Bowerstown, Raxford's; Milford, Bivens's; Hartwick, Algar's and Lippit's; Pittsfield, Crane's; Piertown, Knowlton's; Cooperstown Village; and then ride to Middlefield for rest. We had a few occasional appointments I do not name. Yours in the Gospel,

"W. JEWETT.

"September, 1851."

Here we have the dimensions of one of the two oldest circuits within the bounds of the Genesee Conference, when that conference was organized, and an ample field it was.

In the summer of 1810 a camp-meeting was held in Minden, about twelve miles from our native place. We were present at the commencement and the conclusion of the meeting, and while there saw much that was done, and deeply felt the power of the truths which were delivered and of the devotional exercises.

When Cayuga district was formed, in 1808, Otsego circuit was a part of it, and Peter Vannest had been presiding elder on that district for two years, when the Genesee Conference was organized. At the camp-meeting referred to William Case, then a young man, was presiding elder; but Peter Vannest was present, and had considerable to say. It was with him a sort of farewell festival, as from this meeting he left the cold north and took his place in the Philadelphia Conference. He had then reached the period of grave age, and was called *father* by the younger class.

We should judge the camp-meeting was a decided success. Two of the Middlefield girls, Betsy Peck and Polly Blair, were converted, and came home happy in God. This was a matter of great rejoicing in at least two of the old Methodist family circles.

The following winter "Father Green," who had been in a backslidden state for several years, broke down under a powerful sermon by Seth Mattison, at M'Allum's, and after a severe struggle came out rejoicing. We were right glad of this, although we were then a wild youth. The whole scene is now as vividly in our mind's eye as though it were an affair of yesterday.

In 1811 Isaac Teller and Samuel Ross came to Otsego circuit. The news that Ross was college-bred came on in advance of him, and great expectations were raised, for an educated Methodist preacher, in the technical sense, was then "a rare bird." The rumor of Mr. Ross's literary accomplishments was unfortunate. He made his first debut at the house of Luther Peck on a week-day evening. A full house was gathered at short notice, and some one else preached. Ross was well dressed; his jet black hair hung in curls on his shoulder; he was tall, his figure was imposing, and his countenance benignant, but his manner was singular. While the preacher proceeded with his discourse, Ross held his face in his hands, and often sighed and groaned. All that was well enough, as it was common, but scarcely met the idea of a man from college.

The sermon concluded, Ross arose, and before he was fairly up began,

"Soon as from earth I go,  
What will become of me?"

Mr. Peck, the old chorister, led off, and all the congregation as usual sung. The singing finished, the new preacher poured forth a torrent of fire and brimstone upon us, which made the outsiders writhe and dodge as if the house was being shaken down by an earthquake. In our boyish



Methodistic simplicity we thought the thing well and thoroughly done up, but so thought not the multitude. When the preaching was on the turnpike at "Uncle Peck's" the smart folks of Middlefield Center came out; and this time they criticised and grumbled woefully. When Jewett preached his farewell sermon in the old Methodist castle but a few weeks before, and often broke down for weeping, and made everybody else weep, the neighborhood was loud in their praises of the fine young man; but when Ross made his appearance in a thunder-storm of warnings and premonitions of "fiery indignation," the tune was changed.

This, as near as we can judge, was a fair specimen of Ross's reception throughout the circuit. Teller was a plain, earnest, wordy man, and did not turn the tide. Ross was removed before the year expired, and John Hazzard, a good man, but an intolerable stammerer, was sent on in his place. Upon the whole it was a hard year for old Otsego.

1812. This year Ebenezer White and Ralph Lanning were appointed to Otsego circuit. Mr. White had the reputation of a revivalist of the old stamp. It was said that he always had revivals, but it was not by clap-trap, or eccentricities, or even protracted meetings, for they were not then known, that he produced revivals; but by the old apostolic Methodist method of preaching the truth in simplicity and earnestness, and everywhere breathing the spirit of holiness.

When Father White came on the tone of religious fervor began to rise immediately. The old devout members in the Middlefield class talked of his first sermon as a feast of fat things. The sermon was on a week-day afternoon, and few of the young people heard it; but the earnest conversation about it on the part of the Church members created an interest in their minds and a desire to hear the great preacher.

On his second or third round Mr. White visited the house of Mr. Peck, the class-leader. While Betsy was combing his long black hair, and the younger members of the fam-

ily were timidly skulking in corners, where they might hear what was said without being observed, the apostolic man began to catechise the class-leader.

"How many of your children have been converted, brother?"

"Only the one combing your hair, among those who live at home," was the answer.

"Do you pray in your family?"

"I do."

"Do you pray for your children?"

"I try."

"Have you given them to God in baptism?"

"Only that part of them born in Connecticut."

"Why have you not had the others baptized?"

The answer was simple and straightforward. "After coming to this country I lived for some years in a careless way, and thought but little about it, and now some of them are growing up in sin and are not fit subjects of baptism." Sundry of the children felt, That means me. After some godly council to parents and children, which the occasion demanded, and a fervent prayer, the venerable man departed; but the words he had spoken were like nails fastened in a sure place.

Soon after the new preacher had left Mr. Peck's house, Polly, a little girl of about eleven years, came to her mother in tears and asked her if she was "too wicked to be baptized." The answer was: "If you wish to be baptized, and will repent of your sins, and pray for mercy, and try to be good, Father White will baptize you." The dear child began to read the Bible, and weep and pray in secret. Andrew, about thirteen, conversing with his sister, caught her spirit and followed her example. The next Sabbath evening in the prayer-meeting the two children knelt and wept aloud. They were commended to God in the prayers of the members of the Church, and received comfort to their wounded hearts. A conversation with Andrew on the next day melted our hard heart, and we became deeply penitent.



From this beginning the work spread, and the children of the Methodist families shared largely in the reviving influence. When Father White came around the next time we were all ready for the baptism. He preached a glorious sermon on Heb. xi, 24: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter," etc. After the sermon a large number of adults and infants were baptized, and all who desired were received on probation in the Church. We, children of Methodist parents, Blairs, M'Allums, Greens, Pecks, and Ricters, were a class by ourselves, and a happy company were we.

The fire spread over the circuit. The same mode of visiting which we have described was pursued elsewhere with the same success, and an army of recruits was gathered into the Church before the first quarterly meeting for the year. That quarterly meeting was in a barn in Minden, in the month of December, and a warm time it was in the old barn, although it was severely cold without. On the stage were William Case, Ebenezer White, Ralph Lanning, and Jonathan Huestis, all now safely landed on the blessed shore.

Whenever Father White came round we had a pentecost. He drew large congregations, and great power attended his ministrations; and by the members of the Church, young and old, he was almost idolized.

This conference year, in the month of May, Ebenezer White finished his course. He died suddenly of a prevailing disease, and literally "ceased at once to work and live." Those who had been brought to God during the year felt themselves almost orphans, and were ready to exclaim like Elisha when Elijah went to heaven in a chariot of fire: "My father! my father! the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." This man held so prominent a position in the Genesee Conference, and exerted so wide an influence in the Church, that something more than a passing notice is necessary to do justice to his memory.

## EBENEZER WHITE

was one of the first class of Methodist preachers raised in the interior. Although he died at the age of forty-two, such was the gravity of his character, and his paternal solicitude for the lambs of the flock, that for some years previous to his death he was called by all classes *Father White*.

Mr. White was a native of Blanford, Massachusetts, and was born May 18, 1770. He was converted to God, and became a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the twenty-fourth year of his age, soon after the first entrance of the Methodist preachers into the field which we are endeavoring to explore. We believe he was a man of family before he was converted; and although he soon began to feel the burden of souls hanging upon his heart, manifested gifts for public speaking, and received license first to exhort and then to preach, yet he did not enter upon the work of an itinerant preacher until he had officiated in a local capacity for several years. The prospect of a meager support for a growing family, the necessity of being absent from home nearly all the year round, or of removing from circuit to circuit, and then finding no parsonage, were difficulties which staggered his faith, and called for very serious deliberation before he could consent to devote himself wholly to the work of the ministry.

He felt the woe of Paul upon him; but when he felt the sympathies of a husband and a father, saw his reluctant companion shrinking from the heavy responsibilities of training up her children and meeting their wants, with the small aid which a traveling preacher could afford in those days, he was ready to say, "Lord send by whom thou wilt send, but not by me." He sought to satisfy his conscience by preaching on the Sabbath, and laboring with his hands through the week to supply the wants of his family. This course, however, he came finally to see was not in the order of God. As a chastisement for disobedience to the call of duty, as he ever supposed and often said, he received an in-



jury in his thigh by the fall of a tree from which he never fully recovered. While writhing under the pain of a fractured limb, but more deeply distressed in his conscience under a sense of the divine displeasure, he made a solemn vow to God, that if he would raise him up he would devote himself wholly to the work of saving souls.

The Lord mercifully heard the prayer of his servant, and so far restored him that he was able to enter upon the active duties of a traveling preacher. In 1802 he was admitted on trial, and stationed on Mohawk and Herkimer circuits, with Benjamin Bidlack and John Husselkus. This field can now scarcely be defined, but we suppose it must have embraced nearly the entire Mohawk Valley, with considerable territory south and north.

Mr. White's residence was some three miles north of Cazenovia. Here he left his wife and children when he went to his first circuit, and it is believed that he never removed them. Having made for his family the best provision possible under the circumstances, he committed them to the care of a gracious Providence, and went to his field of labor with the utmost cheerfulness. It may be proper here to give a list of his circuits, that it may be seen what fields he cultivated. His first circuit was Herkimer and Mohawk, the second Chenango, the two following years Pompey; this charge embraced his residence. His fifth appointment was Scipio, sixth and seventh Westmoreland, eighth Herkimer, as a supernumerary; ninth and tenth Chenango, and eleventh Otsego.

From this view of his appointments it will be seen that Mr. White traveled over the whole territory of the present Oneida Conference, and was on the largest portion of it two years. All this was done in eleven years, and without removing his family.

According to our information Mrs. White was a feeble and timid woman. We saw her once some time after her husband's death. We believe it was her choice to remain at her humble but comfortable cottage with her little ones,

and endure the long absences of her husband, rather than run the hazard of an almost annual removal. It was a hard lot, but she endured it with the fortitude of a Christian. She was often asked by her little ones, "Why does papa go away, and leave us so much?" On one occasion she replied: "Ask him, and perhaps he will tell you." Accordingly, when he was about to depart, the little things came around him with countenances full of solicitude and sobbed out: "Papa, why do you go away and leave us and poor mamma alone so much?" The man of God paused, and calling them all around him, he proceeded to give them a formal explanation. Said he: "The people in this world are most of them wicked, and if they die in their wickedness they will go to the bad place. God has called me to preach the Gospel to them and get them converted, so that they may go to heaven. It is a dreadful thing for people to sin against God and be lost. O would you not be sorry to have all the poor sinners cast into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, and remain there forever?"

This talk brought about an entire change in the feelings of the little group, one after another saying: "Papa, you may go and preach to the wicked people, and get them converted, and we will stay home with mamma, and will be good, and say our prayers when we go to bed and when we get up. Mamma prays for you very much when you are gone." The apostolic man, always able to command his feelings, was nearly overcome this time; but he rallied and bid the little circle good-by, and went on his way with new zeal. After several weeks' absence he returned, and when he rode up to the door of his house the first salutation from the little band was: "O papa has come! Papa, have you got any sinners converted this time?" What a reception was this! What a question! This eminent servant of God gave this beautiful incident in love-feast the last year of his life. And after repeating the question with which he was met by his little children, being much affected, he added: "Thank God I could tell them that sinners had been converted."



Ebenezer White, in his time, was a great man and a great Christian. As a Christian he is exactly described in these words of the apostle: "Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer." His spirit and presence, saying nothing of his burning words, constituted the severest reproof to impenitent sinners and lukewarm professors. Religion with him was a serious business, and an earnest and hearty manifestation of the life of God in the soul. To the casual observer his piety might seem characterized by an excess of gravity; but those who were favored with a near approach to him, whether old or young, rich or poor, would receive a quite contrary impression. His heart was tender, his spirit kind, and his manners familiar and conciliatory. He often did reprove delinquents with great plainness of speech; but the weak and the wounded, the youthful and inexperienced, always found in him a sympathizing friend.

His prayers were the most perfect specimens of simple, earnest, and believing pleadings with God that can be imagined. They were always pertinent, and seemed to reach every particular case. He was always in the spirit of prayer, his mouth always filled with appropriate words, ready to speak to God without circumlocution, and almost without introduction. On one occasion, when the presiding elder, Rev. William Case, was opening love-feast by prayer, his feelings became so excited that he paused and gave vent to his tears. All hearts were melted and mingled in holy sympathy. A moment elapsed and the voice of Father White was heard. He took up the train of thought where Mr. Case left it, and proceeded for several minutes in the most earnest and devoted strain of supplication; then, on closing a sentence, he paused, and Mr. Case resumed the thread of the prayer and closed. There was a most glorious unity in *the prayer*, for there was really but one prayer made, although the two took a part in it.

Father White was a most excellent preacher. His ser-

mons were luminous expositions of divine truth, faithful warnings, or encouraging invitations, according to the circumstances and wants of his audience. His manner was solemn and impressive. An unction attended his discourses which told upon the hearts of all, and brought crowds to hear him. Perhaps he was as striking an instance as modern times have furnished of the real attractions of an earnest spirit, united with good sense, in giving utterance to the simple truths of the Bible. The worst reprobates would hang upon his lips in breathless silence while he poured upon them a tide of rebukes and warnings.

If there was anything in his sermons which seemed to contemplate awakening in his hearers feelings of curiosity or a love of novelty, it was his frequent use of metaphors and allegories. His taste inclined him to discuss the types and figures of the Old Testament. He studied them thoroughly, and constructed sermons upon them which produced wonderful impressions and excited a world of remark. A key to this tendency of mind, and the great ability with which it was managed, was given us by Father Bidlack. These men were kindred spirits and intimate friends. We once observed to Father Bidlack that Ebenezer White was great on the types. The old gentleman answered: "Yes, and well he might be, for he committed to memory the whole of M'Ewen's book on the types, so that I believe he could repeat it all verbatim." Here he doubtless found the substratum of his great sermons on Moses, Joseph, the good Samaritan, and several portions of Solomon's Song, which were such mighty instruments of good, and are still in the grateful recollections of some who linger upon the shores of time.

Perhaps this may be set down as an instance of the influence of *one book*. One book thoroughly mastered may form a character, and even make *a man of mark*. A man who has thoroughly mastered one great book, and made its great thoughts his own, will really know more, and possess



higher qualifications for usefulness than the one who has galloped through a hundred volumes without receiving a definite impression from one of them.

In labors Mr. White was more abundant. He seldom disappointed a congregation, and often taxed his strength severely by attending to extra calls where he saw openings for usefulness. Excessive labors and exposure frequently caused inflammation in his diseased limb, which not unfrequently made it necessary for him to preach standing upon his knees, on a pillow in a chair, and sometimes sitting. On such occasions he would seem to preach with the same freedom and as much power as when he was in the best possible condition for his work.

In addition to his daily sermons, meeting classes, visiting, and long rides, he found time to attend to the children. He formed them into classes for catechetical instruction, using that excellent little primer, the Scripture Catechism. He had an uncommon sympathy with children, and was able not only to adapt his instructions to their understandings, but to make them attractive. He could completely possess himself of the heart of a child, and his familiar illustrations were among the last things ever to be forgotten.

Father White was far removed from all tendency to rant or extravagance in his language, yet he often shouted aloud the praises of God. Brother G. Lane once related to us the fact, that, after asking a blessing at table, Mr. White became so filled with the Spirit that he could neither eat nor restrain his feelings; and hence he employed himself in what was to him far more agreeable than his necessary food, walking the floor and giving glory and praise to God.

Rev. William Jewett related to us an incident illustrative of the depth of Mr. White's religious feelings. While on Chenango circuit he preached in a neighborhood of Baptists, who were much opposed to what was often called "the Methodist power." This phrase refers to that loss of the power of voluntary motion which was common among the Methodists of those days. They said, however,

that "if Elder White should *have the power* we would believe in it." When he was preaching in that place on a certain occasion he became powerfully excited, and was seized with a strange sensation, which pervaded his whole system. He felt confident that he should soon fall prostrate upon the floor, and he shrank from the idea as being calculated to injure his influence, and consequently to restrict his usefulness. He paused for a moment and then ejaculated: "Stay thy hand, O God!" The nervous tremor subsided, but darkness succeeded, and he was sorely embarrassed through the rest of his sermon. His subsequent opinion was that he ought to have left God to work in his own way, whatever the consequences might have been. This is an incident similar to one recorded of Mr. Fletcher, followed by similar impressions.

Ebenezer White died on the 9th of May, 1813, at the house of Abram Lippett Hartwick. Three days before his departure he preached a powerful sermon from Hebrews iv, 9: "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."

The next quarterly meeting after the death of the venerable White took place at Middlefield, in McAllum's barn. Rev. Charles Giles then preached a funeral sermon on the occasion, of great power, from Rev. xv, 3: "Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!" It was a time of weeping, of mingled sorrow and joy. Mr. Giles had traveled with Father White four years, and well knew his worth. Rev. Seth Mattison published an elegy on the occasion, which, in sweet poetic strains, celebrated the virtues and the triumphs of the great and good man.

The late Rev. Abner Chase says of Mr. White: "He was unquestionably one of the most useful men ever connected with the Genesee Conference. Holiness was his theme in public and in private. But he was not one of those who profess and talk of holiness, and then disgrace or contradict their profession by irritability and peevishness,



or by trifling and vain conversation, or by exalting themselves and denouncing others. He was humble, gentle, and of a meek and quiet spirit; and his profession of holiness was not in word and tongue only, but was most forcibly proclaimed by his spirit and life. His manners were plain, yet dignified; his style in preaching was chaste, manly, and solemn. He aimed to inform the judgment and win the heart; and probably few have succeeded better in accomplishing this object."

Much more to the same purpose may be found in the "Pioneer," by Rev. Charles Giles. Abner Chase and Charles Giles both were Ebenezer White's junior colleagues in 1811 on Chenango circuit.

In 1813 Ralph Lanning and Asa Cummins were appointed to Otsego circuit. Mr. Cummins had been upon the circuit in 1803, and his excellent lady had taught the school, and lived with her children in the school-house. Of course he was an old acquaintance; but his health was bad, and he was getting advanced in life, and his physical strength was not adequate to the labors of a heavy charge. He held on until 1835, when he left the field of toil for a crown.

Ralph Lanning was a young man of good talents and unaffected piety. He was a thorough Methodist and a good disciplinarian. He was always something more than acceptable upon the charges he occupied. He died in Dryden, 1832, in hope of a glorious immortality.

Another camp-meeting, which was a season of power, was held in Minden this year on the old ground. Timothy Dewey, Luther Bishop, and others preached strong sermons, and the work of conversion went on in the prayer-meetings in mighty power, and in them Father White's converts took an active part.

A gracious revival of religion took place in various places on the circuit, under the labors of the Rev. Abner Chase, in 1817. Mr. Chase has left upon record some thrilling incidents connected with this revival which we will here copy: "At this conference I received my appointment to Otsego

circuit, where I was again permitted to witness the displays of divine power and grace in the salvation of many souls. Upon this circuit I found Josiah Keyes, who was then but a lad, and gave him his first license to exhort; who afterward became so famous as a preacher, and died while he was presiding elder on Cayuga district, so universally lamented. At a place called Fly Creek, a few miles west of Coopers-town, there was a little church or meeting-house which was built or formerly occupied by Episcopalians, but was at the time of which I am writing mostly occupied by Methodists. In the month of December of that year we held a quarterly meeting in this little church. There had been something of a move among the people of the neighborhood for a few weeks preceding, and several young persons had professed to find religion or a change of heart. When the quarterly meeting commenced, therefore, the people seemed prepared to avail themselves of its privileges.

"Through the entire meeting, from its commencement, there was a heavenly influence resting upon the congregation. But Sabbath evening was the great and memorable time. The presiding elder, C. Giles, remained with us, and was much in the spirit of the work. At about the usual hour for closing the meeting, while some were relating what God had done for them, an old man by the name of Shepard, who, as he afterward stated, had felt deeply for several days, but had not divulged his feelings to any one, inquired of a lad who had spoken of the mercy of God to him if he thought there could be any mercy for such an old sinner as he was. It seemed that he made the inquiry of the boy because he was near him, and because he had not confidence to speak to any one else. The lad was rather taken by surprise, and did not answer immediately; but another person did, assuring the old man that there was mercy for him, and that he might find it then and there. Upon which the old man fell upon his knees, and many of us bowed with him, and while we were interceding for him God spoke peace to his soul, and he arose and testified it to the congre-



gation. This produced a powerful effect upon many. At the same time there arose a severe storm of lightning, thunder, and rain, attended or succeeded by a storm of snow. The thunder-storm at this season of the year added to the solemnity of the meeting, so that all idea of closing it was given up for the present, and cries and tears, and prayers and praise, were mingled together without intermission for several hours; some having no disposition to leave the house on account of the storm, while many more were induced to stay because of the interest they took in the meeting. Before the next morning dawned many souls in that house were delivered from the guilt of sin, and made to rejoice in God their Saviour. Of this number was Martin Marvin, now a member of the Oneida Conference.

"There lived at this time, in a little village called Millford, situated a few miles below Cooperstown, on the Susquehanna River, a Major Badger, a man who had enjoyed literary advantages above most of his neighbors; and whose mind was stored with general knowledge by reading and observation. But he was an unbeliever in revealed religion, and openly professed and advocated deism. He held at this time the first office in the town, and his influence was great. During the winter of 1817-18 some business had led him to attend the session of the legislature in Albany for several weeks. During his absence his wife had attended a Methodist meeting in a neighborhood at some distance from home, a privilege she could not enjoy with the knowledge and consent of her husband; and at this meeting she had become awakened, and had sought the Lord in secret, and found a sense of forgiveness of sin. But this, for the time being, she kept to herself; and when her husband returned she hesitated to mention what the Lord had done for her soul, fearing his opposition.

"In an adjoining town lived a man by the name of Marvin, the father of Martin Marvin, of the Oneida Conference, whom I have mentioned before. Badger and Marvin had formerly been intimately acquainted, but the latter

having some time before this embraced religion, their intimacy had been interrupted. But it happened, soon after Badger returned from Albany, that some business brought them together. After their business was accomplished, Marvin inquired of Badger if he ever attended Methodist meetings. 'No,' said Badger; 'you know I don't believe in such things, and why should I go?' Said Marvin: 'There will be preaching in such a place on such an evening, which is but two or three miles from your house, and I ask you as a friend to go, and at least for once hear a sermon.' Badger gave him no promise to attend, but on going home he asked his wife if she wished to go to a Methodist meeting. She was so astonished and overcome, as she afterward stated, on hearing her husband make this inquiry, that for some time she could give no answer. But after recovering herself a little, she replied, 'Why, do you wish to go?' 'I do not know that I do,' said he, 'but Marvin has been pressing me to go and hear a Methodist preacher at T.'s next Wednesday evening.' 'Well,' said she, 'if you wish to go I will accompany you.' He replied, 'Well, then, we will make our calculations to go.'

She afterward told me that she could with difficulty suppress her feelings until she could retire to her room, where she poured forth her gratitude to God for this unexpected event—that she was likely to have the privilege to attend a Methodist meeting with the consent of her husband. The evening arrived, and Badger and his wife repaired to the meeting. The preacher was entirely ignorant of the circumstances above narrated, but felt, in a rather unusual degree, the importance of his work, and endeavored to describe the wretched state of man by nature, his need of the mercy of God, and how that mercy could be exercised through Christ, and only through him.

"When the meeting was closed the major came forward and introduced himself to the preacher before all the congregation, by giving his name and the place of his residence, and added: 'If you have heard anything of Millford vil-



lage, you have probably heard that Methodist preachers have been abused there,' alluding to the case of Ebenezer White, who once attempted to preach in Millford and was abused by a mob. 'But,' continued he, 'I wish you to come and preach in Millford, and if you will consent I pledge myself that you shall be well used.' The preacher informed him that on such an evening he could be there, and if an appointment was given out he would, with the leave of Providence, fulfill it. The major assured him the appointment would be made, and requested the preacher to come to his house, and consider it his home while he remained in the place. This was assented to, and so they parted. When the day arrived the preacher came in the afternoon to Millford, and received a hearty welcome to the major's house, who soon brought forward his Bible and commenced stating his deistical objections, and pointing out what he thought to be inconsistencies and contradictions in it, though in a calm and gentlemanly manner. In this manner the afternoon passed, and the hour for meeting having arrived the congregation assembled in a large school-house, with a swinging partition in the center, which was raised, and the house filled to overflowing. The season was solemn and impressive, and all seemed to listen with deep attention. When the services were closed the major called the attention of the congregation, and said he wished to know if they desired the preaching to be continued, and called on those who were in favor to arise. The whole congregation were at once upon their feet, and an appointment was accordingly left for four weeks from that evening.

"After returning to the major's the subject of the Bible and revealed religion was resumed and continued to a late hour. When the preacher came from his room at an early hour in the morning the major met him, saying: 'I have had a fire, and have been waiting for you for some time.' The Scriptures were still the subject of conversation, until the preacher perceived that the major was evidently deeply wrought upon by the Spirit of the Lord. He there-

fore thought it best to leave him for the present to his own reflections, and immediately started for his next appointment, without dropping the least hint that he had discovered the major's agitation.

"On the day next preceding that on which the appointment was to be again met at Millford the major went to meet the preacher at an appointment a few miles distant, and on coming into the house where the preacher had put up he took him by the hand, and bathed in tears, exclaimed: 'I find myself a wretched sinner, undone, without the mercy of God.' After a little conversation they walked together to the school-house, where the meeting was to be held. The text was taken from Phil. i, 29: 'For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.' While explaining the former part of this privilege, given us in behalf of, or through Christ, the major found power by faith to lay hold on the promises of God in Christ; the bonds were broken, and his soul exulted in the joy of pardoned sin. The major stayed for class-meeting; and this being the nearest society to Millford, he offered himself as a probationer for membership before he left the house, and his name was enrolled among them. At the earnest solicitation of the major the preacher accompanied him home that night; and what a scene! Then, for the first time, the husband and wife unfolded to each other their views and feelings on the all-important subject of religion. The neighbors were called in, and praise and prayer, and sighs and tears were mingled together. The next evening the school-house could not contain the congregation which assembled, and the Presbyterian meeting-house was obtained, and many that evening felt that the word of the Lord was quick and powerful.

"To give the particulars of the revival which followed in Millford would fill many sheets; but I will only add, a society was raised, embracing the heads of many of the first families in the place. Among these was Major Eddy, the father of the Rev. L. A. Eddy, of the Oneida Conference.



Major Badger exemplified religion in life for a number of years, and left the world full of glorious hope of a blessed immortality."

In 1814 Charles Giles was appointed to the charge of Oneida district. Mr. Giles describes this district as follows: "It encircled a large tract of country abounding in hills and dales, and wild natural scenery, embracing the greater part of Otsego and Herkimer counties on the south and east, extending through Oswego county along the shore of Lake Ontario down the River St. Lawrence to Ogdensburgh, including all the Black River region, together with Oneida county."

The following brief sketches of the men with whom Mr. Giles was associated on this district will be recognized by those who knew the men as truthful delineations:

"The district included eight circuits, on which were stationed sixteen preachers. James Kelsey was one among the number, a zealous, warm-hearted pioneer, who has since been called away to the pilgrim's rest in Abraham's bosom. Abner Chase was another; a social friend indeed, renowned for goodness, who talked truth into the hearts of the people so pathetically that they could not refrain from weeping. Zenas Jones and Ira Fairbank stood like pillars on my right and left, courageous as lions, persevering and industrious as bees. Chandley Lambert was there, a soldier of the *cross*, famous for order and Methodistical things, who was so strict and stood so straightly while administering discipline, that the enemies of strictness said tauntingly, he leaned over backward. Seth Mattison, a shining star in the constellation, with his sympathizing spirit and poetical imagination, ready to pour consolation into my heart. Goodwin Stoddard was also among them, a stanch advocate for the truth, fearless as David, who drove on like Jehu. Nathan B. Dodson was a brother indeed, diligent and watchful, who fed the sheep in the wilderness. Isaac Puffer was there also, plain in style and manner, moving like a telegraph, with much of the Bible in memory, which flowed with chapter and verse from

his tongue like electricity, producing shocks and commotions among the conflicting creeds. And there was George Gary, also a faithful friend, cautious and deliberate, with a head full of thoughts and a tongue to tell them; a youth, though he had traveled and preached several years before. While in company with myself and others, all on our way out to conference, Brother Gary was seated on a large horse, with his flaxen hair playing in the wind. As we were passing some laborers near the road, they, on seeing us, respectfully stopped their operations and gazed wondering as the sanctimonious company passed along, knowing that we were Methodist preachers. While looking at us they beheld Brother Gary, our Benjamin, in the midst, attracted by his youthful appearance, which excited the workmen so that one said to the others, 'They have got the boys along too.' Being so near them, we haply heard the remark."

All these men are now numbered with the dead excepting one. So far as we know, N. B. Dodson still lives.

The following is an account of the work of God on the district in 1817:

"In September last we held a camp-meeting on Litchfield circuit; the season being cold and rainy, rendered our situation in the tented wilderness very unpleasant; but these gloomy circumstances did not impede the work of grace: both preachers and people were zealously affected in the good cause from day to day. At the close of the meeting about one hundred souls were found who professed to know that their sins were forgiven. Indeed, all our camp-meetings have been attended with glorious consequences: hundreds are now rejoicing that they ever saw those consecrated groves, where they were awakened to see their vileness, and where they first felt the renovating power of grace.

"In the revivals on Black River circuit the preachers have added three hundred members to the Church this year; and it is worthy of notice, that one of the subjects who has a place among them is a young man both deaf and dumb, who had a very remarkable view of the glory of heaven



and the misery of hell, which he communicated to me and to others by certain expressive signs. He appeared very happy and devoted to God. Another subject of this work was a man who had been a long time in despair: for several years he had wholly neglected his temporal concerns, but in the revival his bands were broken, and his soul released from the power of sin and Satan. On a memorable evening succeeding a quarterly meeting on Westmoreland circuit, twenty-three souls were brought into the kingdom of grace. To God be all the glory!

"At a certain time on Otsego circuit an effort was made to illustrate and enforce this text: 'As he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled.' The assembly was large and very attentive, and while the discourse was coming to a close there was a wonderful move among them: the Spirit of God was evidently working on the hearts of the people. After the exercise was closed, as we were descending the pulpit stairs, I saw an aged man coming toward the altar with an anxious appearance; as I moved toward him he grasped my hand and earnestly inquired, 'Is there any mercy for such a sinner as I am?' I pointed to the Bible which lay on the desk, and assured him that it contained many promises for sinners; then with greater earnestness he seized my hand with both of his and said: 'Is it possible that such an old sinner can find mercy?' I continued to show him that God would save all who come to him through Jesus Christ. This moving event caused many in the congregation to wait. The aged penitent stood there in a state of bodily and mental agitation till he was requested to kneel at the altar. Then the congregation was invited to attend to the opening of a season of prayer in behalf of the subject at the altar. The exercise commenced immediately, and while our prayers were being offered for the aged sinner, others felt the same convincing influence of the Holy Spirit, and began to cry for mercy likewise; soon the mingled voices of prayer and lamentation filled the house. The scene was truly affecting.

While some lay helpless under the overpowering operations of the Holy Spirit, others stood weeping around them; parents and children, husbands and wives were mingled in the scene; they were mourning and rejoicing, singing and shouting, but fortunately there was no confusion in the house, no one was there to oppose. Jehovah reigned and wrought, and all was right and all was good.

"From the time of the commencement of this work, which was about three o'clock in the afternoon, there was no cessation till eleven o'clock that night. Eight souls were converted, still some went away sorrowing under the burden of their sins; soon afterward they came into the kingdom of grace rejoicing. Some who were converted that day were triflers in the morning. How wonderful are the works of God!

"One thousand members have been added to the Church this year on our district, but in consequence of numerous removals to the western country, the Minutes will show an increase of only seven hundred and forty."

Paris, or Sauquoit station had two years of great prosperity under the labors of the Rev. Abner Chase; Conference years 1815 and 1816. The following summing of the results of his labors on this charge Mr. Chase gives us in his "Recollections of the Past." Speaking of the conference for 1816, he says:

"At this conference I was reappointed to Paris, and the work of God in the awakening and conversion of souls went gloriously on during the whole of the following conference year. Many particular instances of the power of divine grace might be given. I shall not attempt, however, to detail the individual experience of any, but only state a few cases as they stand connected with other circumstances which I judge worthy of notice. There were two brothers, of the name of Smith, who had recently become citizens of that town, and who sustained a fair and respectable character. Both of these men became subjects of the revival, and shortly after they had united with the Church a gentleman



called on me, while I was laboring under a severe attack of quinsy, who was an entire stranger, and commenced a conversation on the subject of Dr. Clarke's Commentary, and wished to know whether I thought the doctor was in sentiment what was called a Trinitarian; to which I answered in the affirmative. This seemed greatly to displease him, as he made some ungentlemanly remarks in reply. I, however, was not in a situation to converse much, and therefore attempted to waive the subject. But he continued his remarks, and asked me if I held the views which I had ascribed to Dr. Clarke. To which I again answered in the affirmative; upon which he started from his seat, and laying hold upon the tongs which were standing by the fireplace, he raised them over my head in the most threatening attitude, and held them there for some time. My family were greatly alarmed; but I expostulated with him in few words, and desired him to put down the tongs, and be calm, and let me know the cause of his being so much excited. He by degrees became more cool, and ultimately let out the secret. He was a Unitarian preacher, on whose ministry the two brother Smiths had attended previously to their removal to Paris, and he charged me with having influenced them to embrace the Trinitarian doctrine, which he held to be false. Before he left, he acknowledged his rudeness, and stated that he was an Englishman, and had often preached in the church which was built for the celebrated John Bunyan. When he left me I advised him, if he wished to contend for the Unitarian doctrine, by all means to use some better argument in its support than the tongs.

"The Christian names of these two brother Smiths were Seth and Nathaniel; the former was the father of Professor A. W. Smith, of the Wesleyan University. He finished his earthly course in peace July 7, 1826, witnessing to the last the power and grace of the divine Saviour. See his memoir, written by the Rev. Z. Paddock, in the ninth volume of the Methodist Magazine. I may also mention, as the fruits of this revival, the Rev. Z. Paddock, of the

Oneida Conference; the wife of the Rev. E. Bowen, of the same, and the wife of the Rev. M. Tooker, of the Genesee, who, with many others I could name, have done honor to themselves and to the Church. But here memory calls up the names of many, both male and female, of those who so cheerfully, faithfully, and successfully wrought with me, by day and by night, in carrying forward, under God, this gracious revival. And where are they? Some of them are gone. 'Gone, but not lost.' Gone to receive the reward of their labors, the inheritance purchased by the Redeemer, and a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

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## CHAPTER V.

### CHENANGO DISTRICT, 1814-1820.

In 1814 Chenango district was formed from the northern part of Susquehanna and the eastern portion of Genesee. William Case was the presiding elder.

#### SCIPIO CIRCUIT.

The strength of Scipio circuit lay principally in the influence and zeal of the enterprising farmers who inhabited the fertile country east of the Cayuga lake. The village of Auburn, lying on the outlet of the Owasco lake, presented no opening for Methodism until the year 1816, when the Rev. James Kelsey organized there a small society.

The following facts have been furnished us by Talmage Cherry, Esq., the first class-leader:

Names of the first class: Talmage Cherry, then single; Jerusha Cherry, Enos D. Cherry, Mother Erwin, a widow; James Sawtle, Maria Jewett, a widow; Daniel Miller, Brother Sprague.

The Church was incorporated when Rev. Z. Jones was



on the circuit, 1817 or 1818. The class remained together until 1820, when it had increased to eighty members. It was then divided into four classes. Methodism had a severe struggle for existence in this growing town, which was the Presbyterian head-quarters from an early period. Auburn first appears on the Minutes as a station in 1820, Joseph Baker, preacher. With much difficulty the little society finally erected a comfortable church.

## CHENANGO CIRCUIT.

In 1813 Chenango circuit was favored with the labors of two earnest and laborious preachers, Loring Grant and Elisha Bibbins. This year it was embraced within the Susquehanna district. In the spring of 1814 Luther Peck removed from Middlefield, Otsego county, to Hamilton, Madison county, and settled on a ridge near the Brookfield line, in a somewhat new and secluded neighborhood. There were eight in the family who brought with them certificates of membership. There were no Methodists in the neighborhood, and no regular religious services. Mr. Peck immediately established a prayer-meeting on Sunday morning and Thursday evening. The preachers were next invited to come and preach in *the old log-house*. They came on without delay, and Mr. Grant organized a society of about a dozen members, embracing a few who lived in other neighborhoods. The people flocked in, and we had crowded congregations and most interesting meetings.

Here it was, at the parental fireside, that we formed our earliest acquaintance with our excellent old friends Grant and Bibbins. Here Dr. Dempster made some of his early efforts, and won some souls to Christ. And here "the preaching family" took their first lessons in theology, and made their first efforts in the way of warning sinners to flee from the wrath to come, and here they won their first triumphs in the name of the Lord. The class increased and "Father Peck's" became a regular appointment, and continued to be so until he left the country.

In the summer of that conference year a camp-meeting was held for Chenango circuit near Windsor's, on the hill east of the Unadilla. It was a season of refreshing, and a considerable number were converted to God. The preachers were indefatigable, and the word was attended with the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

John Eastwood was "captain of the guard," and a great curiosity he was. He organized his guard into first, second, third, and fourth "relief," and called in a voice like thunder for each relief. This he would often do in time of preaching. He was always bustling about, usually bare-headed, with his hair bristling like the quills of an enraged porcupine, and when he spoke it was with authority. He prayed as lustily as he called for "the relief of the guard." He was an old revolutionary soldier, and he was now a brave old soldier of Christ. Everything about him conspired to make him an interesting character.

There we saw John and Heman Bangs for the first time, and heard them preach. They were then local preachers, and lived not far away.

The next year, 1814, Ralph Lanning and Nathaniel Reeder were our preachers. Lanning was a sensible man, a sound theologian, and a systematic preacher. Reeder was earnest and eccentric. Another camp-meeting was held this year on the same ground which was occupied the year previous. Here Michael Burge appeared as elder in the place of William Case, who was making preparations to take charge of the Upper Canada district. Burge came from the South, and was impetuous, assuming, and overbearing. It was first supposed he came with the expectation of taking charge of the Chenango district the next year. If he had any ambition in this direction he was disappointed, for he did not take with the preachers, and never had anything in the conference but hard circuits. At the camp-meeting referred to Burge preached a slam-bang sermon, which made more people angry than it converted, while popular and telling discourses were delivered by George Harmon,



Israel Chamberlayne, George W. Densmore, and others. It was a time of power, and much good was evidently accomplished.

Here we received our first license to exhort, and from this time proceeded to appoint meetings here and there in school-houses and log-cabins, as the way opened and duty called. At this period the weekly meetings at "Father Peck's" were crowded and divinely blessed. Sinners were converted and added to the society who became bright and shining lights.

#### CORTLAND CIRCUIT.

In 1816 Cortland circuit was formed, being constituted mostly of the west half of Lebanon circuit. We here commenced our itinerant labors on the first day of April, and traveled until July, under the directions of Rev. George Harmon, the presiding elder, with Loring Grant and John Hamilton, the preachers on Lebanon circuit. Several new appointments were taken in, and Cortland was left in the form of a four weeks' circuit.

The Rev. William Cameron lived within the bounds of the new circuit, and was appointed to the charge of it the first year.

1817. Elisha Bibbins and George Peck were the preachers. The following is the description of the circuit: Cazenovia village; B. Williams's, two miles south of Cazenovia; Togg Flats, three miles east; John Bailey's, west of "the Gulf;" Allen Smith's, Fabius; Norton's; Wilson's, on the hill west of Keeney's Settlement; Keeney's Settlement; Keeler's, Truxton; De Ruyter village; Burdick's, on the hill southeast of Keeler's; Truxton Hill, Miner's; Albright's, on the turnpike east of Cortland; Cowles's, McGrawville; Greenman's; Captain Anderson's; Rev. William Cameron's; Abram Mead's; Wier's; John Campbell's; Cincinnatus; Deacon Punderson's or Squire Stratton's, Brackel Creek; Fairchild's or Brewer's; Charles Jones's; Julius Hitchcock's, Lebanon Hill; Nathan Bailey's; D.

Prout's, J. Sales's; Salisbury's; Brown's. The last five appointments east of Cazenovia.

This was a laborious circuit, and withal not very rich; but there were souls to be saved, and many were converted during the year. There was a considerable increase in the spirituality of the members. Mr. Bibbin's labored with untiring zeal and great acceptability. The junior preacher had an attack of inflammation of the lungs, and lost three months.

The courts had been removed from Cazenovia to Morrisville, and the vacated court-house was for sale. Elder John Peck, a Baptist preacher, occupied it as a preaching place, and seemed unwilling that the Methodists should have the privilege of using it at all, although it was the property of the county. A quarterly meeting was appointed in the village, and we went to Elder Peck and requested him to give the ground to us for one Sabbath, but did not succeed. The answer was short and decisive: "My appointment has been there for years and cannot be changed."

There was a vacated distillery a little east of the main corners, in the side hill. The floor of the second story was about on a level with the ground next to the street. Negotiations were entered into with the owner, and in a few hours the two preachers, with Benajah Williams, then a local preacher, and some others, with their coats off, were hauling lumber, and fitting up the place. Rough boards were laid down for a floor, seats were constructed of slabs, and a joiner's work-bench was prepared for a stand.

On Saturday everything was in readiness, and our presiding elder, Rev. George Harmon, preached us an encouraging discourse at eleven o'clock A. M. At the prayer-meeting in the afternoon we had a good time. In the love-feast on Sabbath morning a shower of blessings fell upon us.

At eleven o'clock Elder Harmon addressed a crowded congregation of seven or eight hundred, and came out in his very best style, laying heavy blows on several of "the five points of Calvinism." The discourse was a very effective one, and produced happy results. Our being driven



into the old distillery won us the sympathy of the public, and brought in many hearers who probably would not otherwise have attended the meeting.

Mr. Cameron the preceding year had formed a small class in the village, consisting mostly of young people. They were zealous and united. Several others united with the class before the first quarterly meeting. John Rowland, his wife and two daughters, Grace and Hannah; Eunice Parsons, subsequently extensively known as the devoted "Sister Cobb," whom we had the honor of receiving into society; Stephen Dodge and his sister; Luany Martin, Dolly Codwell, with a few others whom we cannot now name, together with some half a dozen who lived out of the village, composed the Methodist Episcopal Church of Cazenovia in 1817. Mr. Rowland owned the old grist-mill on the outlet, and was a man of some means; the remainder of the class were poor, a majority of them single persons.

The project of purchasing the old court-house for a place of meeting was conversed about and finally carried into effect. The property was to be sold on a given day, and our men had by some means ascertained that the Baptists intended to buy it, and expected to get it at about their own price. Several of the most able Methodists on the north part of the circuit were consulted, and manifested a deep interest in the undertaking. A bond was drawn and signed by John Rowland, Benajah Williams, Isaac Parsons, Joseph Keeler, Martin Keeler, and, we believe, Father Andrews, of Keeney's Settlement. Upon consultation it was feared that the Baptist brethren's bid would go beyond ours, and another bond was drawn for a larger sum, and that was \$1,810. The signers of the first bond were scattered more than a dozen miles apart, and somebody had to take the bond of the higher denomination to the men who were called "the trustees," and procure their signatures. We undertook the business, and rode one fearfully cold day from Cazenovia to Truxton to procure the signatures of the Keelers.

When the sale came off our agent bid the amount of the first bond. The Baptist brethren were indignant, and demanded of him what he wanted of the house?

"For a Methodist church," was the answer.

"You can't pay for it," was the response.

"That's my business," he rejoined.

"Well, you can't have it," said the Baptist, and bid up. The Methodist bid the amount of the largest bond and reached beyond the instructions of his competitors.

"They can't pay; they are good for nothing," roared the Baptist. The Methodist brother produced his bond.

"That is as good security as I want," answered the commissioner. The transaction was closed, and the Methodists took immediate possession of the house.

We commenced occupying the house early in the spring of 1818. The junior preacher was slow in recovering from his illness, and so soon as he became able to preach once a week he occupied the old court-house every Sabbath morning. The congregation increased until we had a respectable gathering of quiet and willing hearers. This was the commencement of regular Sabbath preaching in Cazenovia village. The old court-room was an awkward place to preach in, but was a decided improvement on the former arrangements for the accommodation of preaching. We had previously shifted about between different private houses and the old school-house according to circumstances.

The Baptists and Presbyterians were strong and influential in Madison county, and it was not uncommon for them to shut the school-houses against the Methodists. When these sectarians were trustees in a school district, which was a very common thing, we looked for no favor. The school-house two miles south of the village this year was locked against us, and we were obliged to preach in an old bar-room. This was the work of two zealous disciples of John Calvin, who happened to have the power to do it.

These measures stimulated doctrinal discussions, pro-



voked assaults upon the doctrinal systems of the prevailing denominations, and hastened on a reaction in the public mind in favor of the weak and persecuted party.

Some time in June a camp-meeting was held in Truxton, which was quite successful. The sermons from the stand were decidedly strong efforts. George Harmon, Timothy Dewey, James Kelsey, and others delivered telling discourses, and many were awakened and converted to God. A good revival followed in Keeney's Settlement, where our society was strong, containing many respectable farmers who, pecuniarily, were in good circumstances. Methodism had been long established here and in Truxton. We spent two weeks in the revival before going to conference, and were cheered with the conversion of sinners and the enlargement of the society. There was, however, one drawback to our success which was common in that country. A Baptist preacher, full of the spirit of proselyting, came in and persuaded some of the young converts to go into the water. He had no fellowship for camp-meeting religion, and yet it was a good qualification for baptism.

#### ITHACA.

Since the year 1800 there had been no Methodist society in Ithaca and no regular Methodist preaching. In August, 1817, David Ayres came from New York and commenced business in the place. He had been a Methodist about four years. He brought a letter of introduction from Dr. Bangs to Rev. George Harmon, the presiding elder of the Chenango district. Mr. Ayers was a thorough Methodist, was constitutionally and habitually active, and had great confidence in himself. He immediately commenced meetings in the village, on the first occasion reading one of Mr. Wesley's sermons. In connection with the Presbyterians he opened a Sabbath school. On the next Sabbath he hired the ball-room in the hotel for the meeting in the forenoon, and prevailed upon Rev. James Kelsey, preacher in charge of Cayuga circuit, to preach in the evening. The meeting

was held in the upper room of a warehouse, where the Presbyterians had worshiped. The house was filled to overflowing. The sermon was delivered with the preacher's usual earnestness and ability.

After the sermon Mr. Kelsey said, "Here we are determined to make a stand," and called for members to form a class. Mr. Ayres presented a certificate for himself and his wife; then the names of William Dummer, Anson Titus and wife, Elizabeth Sydney, (now Mrs. Bloom,) Maria Wright, and Mary Barber, eight in all. Mr. Ayres was appointed leader.

James Kelsey and John Kimberlin were the preachers on Cayuga circuit, and at the next quarterly meeting Mr. Ayres urged the presiding elder to give them a preacher to remain among them. Mr. Kimberlin's place on the circuit was supplied, and he was sent to Ithaca with the charge to "go and live on the Gentiles." Mr. Kimberlin's first efforts were discouraging. Every family of influence and means was fast in the Presbyterian Church, and the Rev. Mr. Wisner, the minister of that Church, publicly assailed the doctrine and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and used every effort to prevent their securing a foothold. Mr. Kimberlin attended to his own business, preaching a free and full salvation.

The class increased to eighteen, among whom was Jesse Merritt, a local preacher from New York, and his wife. Mr. Merritt was a man of good talents, and his wife was a lady of cultivated manners; but quite retiring.

At the conference of 1818 Rev. George Harmon was appointed to Ithaca, the charge being composed of the village and several appointments taken from Cayuga circuit. Mr. Harmon might have remained another year on the district, but excessive labor had begun to wear upon his health, and he thought to get along with lighter work, and withal to meet a pressing emergency. His first convert was Mrs. Burritt, the mother of the historian of Methodism in Ithaca; the second was James Barber, and the third Henry H. Moore,



who is now living, and has long been an official member and faithful laborer in the charge.

Incipient measures were soon taken for building a church. The first trustees were Josiah Tooker, Esq., James Egbert, Israel Brown, Jesse Merritt, and Daniel Ayres. The first three were members of other charges, residing several miles from the village. At the first meeting of the trustees they resolved to build a house of worship with galleries and steeple, forty-four feet by fifty-eight, estimated cost about five thousand dollars. It was also decided that a subscription should immediately be circulated, subject to the condition that no subscription should be binding unless two thousand five hundred dollars should be obtained.

Mr. Ayres was the only man who could command the courage to undertake the circulation of the subscription, and he was authorized to do the work. He assailed everybody, and took all sorts of commodities in payment, and after nine months of hard work he had upon his book the requisite amount.

General Simeon De Witt gave a lot to set the church upon, and a contract was made with Mr. Tillotson to erect the building, Mr. Ayres being the agent to furnish funds and superintend the work. The corner-stone was laid by Rev. Charles Giles, the presiding elder, who preached one of his stirring sermons to a large concourse. The frame was raised, the roof on, and the window frames in, when the builder refused to proceed without more pay. The trustees had exhausted their home resources, and now what could be done? It was resolved that Mr. Ayres should visit Albany and New York and solicit aid. He went, and as his own account of his labors is a rare document in its way, we will here give it entire:

"Hon. Obadiah German, father-in-law of Rev. George Harmon, was a particular friend of De Witt Clinton, then governor of the state. He lived some eighty miles from Ithaca. In company with Brother Harmon I went to Mr. German, and from him obtained a letter of introduction to

Governor Clinton. Thus armed, I started on my mission, resolved to persevere until I received enough to insure the completion of the chapel. I left in December, and in a few days had the satisfaction of seeing the governor's name at the head of my list for ten dollars, and of knowing that the money was in my pocket. I next called on Daniel D. Tompkins, Vice-President of the United States, and he gave me ten dollars. Then I went to Lieutenant Governor Taylor, who did the same. According to the plan I had struck out for myself, Chancellor Kent being next in office, I called on him and found him busily engaged in examining a chancery case. He did not look at my book, but at once gave me a peremptory refusal. Still I was not willing to leave without his name, and therefore took a seat, urging such arguments as I thought would gain my cause. I presume I staid over thirty minutes, during which time it was impossible for the chancellor to continue his investigations. At length his patience became exhausted, and he turned to me in anger, and said: 'Mr. Ayers, have I not told you more than twenty times I would not give you anything? do you want me to tell a lie, sir?' I, looking him full in the face, said mildly and firmly: 'Chancellor Kent, you know a bad promise is better broken than kept.' Quick as a flash he tapped me on my knee, and said: 'Good, good! that is a good *decision*. I never made as good a one in my life; hand me your book.' He put his name on the list, and handed me ten dollars.

"That night there was a grand political caucus at Albany, and Chancellor Kent, previous to introducing the business of the evening, said he had been called on that day by a 'little backwoods Methodist preacher, who was the most determined beggar he ever met with.' He added: 'I was determined not to give him a cent, but he stuck to me, and was so good-natured, so persevering, that he compelled me to give against my own will and inclination. If he should call on you, my advice is to give him at once, for you cannot get rid of him.'"



"The next morning I called on Hon. Elisha Williams, who directed me to be shown to his room, he being in bed when I called. As I entered he was putting on his pants, with but one leg on. He cast his eyes about him, and said: 'Are you the gentleman who called on Chancellor Kent yesterday?' On being answered in the affirmative, he, without putting his pantaloons on, took out his wallet, handed me a bill, and said, 'You can put it down.' I bid him good morning, and next went to Chief Justice Spencer, whose first salutation was, 'Are you the gentleman who called on Chancellor Kent yesterday?' and immediately, on being answered, said, 'Hand me your book,' wrote his name, and handed me his bill, and I went on my way rejoicing and praising God.

"I called on nearly every officer in the state government, every member of the legislature, and on the principal or leading inhabitants of Albany. The donations I got were all small, from fifty cents to ten dollars. When Albany had been thoroughly canvassed I started for New York.

"Here was a large and difficult field for me to occupy. The preacher in charge and board of trustees—all our churches were then in one charge, and under one board of trustees—were opposed to the circulation of my subscription book, and refused to give me an opportunity to take up a public collection in any of the Methodist churches, so that I knew not how to begin. At last I went to the Book-room, and laid my case before Messrs. Soule and Bangs, who were book agents. They treated me kindly, gave me their names, recommending me to the liberality of the public, and likewise a small donation. At this time there was lying in the hands of the mayor of the city a considerable amount of money, raised to relieve those who had lost their property by the great fire in the city of Charleston, which money the mayor of Charleston had refused to receive on the conditions on which it was sent him. I was informed that many of the contributors to this would not apply for their contributions again, and that the sum yet

unreclaimed was quite large. I went and asked to see the papers containing the names of the donors, and found that most which remained unreclaimed was in small sums, from fifty cents to five dollars. I copied the names; then went to the directory for their residences and called upon each, requesting them to authorize me to reclaim the donations. It was a laborious work to find them out, and often I went a dozen times before they would be at home. With many, I succeeded, but some accused me of being an impostor, and treated me rudely. Nevertheless I persevered and got all I could. I purchased the window glass, the nails, paints, etc., and procured from the old John-street Church the brass chandelier, under whose light I had been often blessed."

The work was resumed, and after about two years from the time of the erection of the station, and Mr. Harmon had given place to George W. Densmore, was completed.

There was no bell in Ithaca, and Mr. Ayres had procured one for the chapel, and all at once the good people of Ithaca were taken by surprise with the sound of a church bell. "What is that?" was the inquiry. "A bell?" "Where is it?" "O it's on Ayres's chapel I'll warrant you." It was so, and the money was soon contributed by the citizens to pay for it.

After due notice the church was dedicated by the pastor, Rev. Mr. Densmore, and a sermon in the evening was delivered by Rev. J. Baker, of Auburn.

On the day of dedication Mr. John Perkins and his lady, from Nova Scotia, united with the society. They were most respectable and estimable people, and were eminently useful members of the Church during their stay in Ithaca. Amid all the turmoils and agitations of the Ithaca society in after years, these truly prudent and devotedly pious people were without reproach, and what was quite singular, enjoyed the confidence of all parties. They finally removed to the city of Norwich, in Connecticut, where they died in hope, and universally regretted.



The society in Ithaca increased in numbers, and the congregation became quite respectable. A difficulty arose between Mr. Merritt and Mr. Ayers which greatly injured its influence and impeded its progress, and continued for several years, but was finally succeeded by a glorious revival which almost annihilated its recollection.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### ROMANTIC ADVENTURES — TWO OLD PRESIDING ELDERS, BISHOPS ASBURY AND M'KENDREE.

GIDEON DRAPER was appointed presiding elder on the Susquehanna district in 1809, and traveled over that large field for three years. It embraced a vast territory on the west and north branches of the Susquehanna, in Pennsylvania, and nearly the whole of what was called the lake country, and the country west of the Genesee River, in New York, up Lake Erie into Pennsylvania. Between the lake country and the west branch there was a wilderness characterized by high mountains and rapid streams. The way most commonly traveled through this terrible wilderness was down the Lycoming. This turbulent stream winds its way through the spurs of the Alleghanies, and makes a way for the traveler on the condition of his fording it as often as it turns across the narrow flats which border it, and rushes against the perpendicular rocks.

Col. Hartley first so cleared away the natural obstructions which beset the numerous passes along this stream that he marched two hundred men through from Muncey, on the west branch to Tioga, on his expedition against the Indians in September, 1778. (See his report, Archives of Pennsylvania.)

The presiding elder was perhaps the only individual who found it necessary to pass through this wild and dangerous

way periodically, and to him it became but too familiar. Mr. Draper once piloted Bishop M'Kendree through this terrible series of mountain passes and dangerous fords. The bishop rode in a chaise, Mr. Draper on horseback. The bishop was no novice in pioneer life, was perfectly accustomed to wild adventures, and of course was not likely to be worsted by any ordinary obstacles or dangers. He followed his guide, passing defiles and fords with great skill and courage, until they found a large maple tree lying directly across the track at the point where they were to enter a ford. Now the bishop laid the plans and gave orders. His horse was disengaged from the chaise, and the bishop brought up the wheels close to the fallen tree, sprang over, and placing himself between the thills ordered Mr. Draper "to push."

The bishop stood on the bank of the stream and pulled, while Mr. Draper lifted it easily for fear of shoving him into the stream. The wheels did not rise upon the log, and the bishop sung out, "Why don't you push?" Mr. Draper then laid out his strength, and the chaise went over, but with so much force that the bishop was forced down the bank into the water over his boots. "What," exclaimed the bishop, "do you mean to drown me?" Mr. Draper apologized and made the best of the matter possible, and they were soon on their way.

It was Sabbath morning and they came to the last ford, but found the water altogether too high for the chaise. Mr. Draper rode across and pushed on to Williamsport, where the bishop had an appointment, intending to procure help and bring him over in time. But it was not long before he drove up. He had found some men who had assisted him over the mountain, hauling the chaise up the steep by hand, while he led his horse. The old western pioneer was ample in resources, and something more than swollen streams and high mountains would be required to keep him shut up in the wilderness over the Sabbath when he had an appointment.

The bishop, however, was so much fatigued that a fit of



discouragement came over him, and while the whole country was in motion, and multitudes gathering to hear him, Mr. Draper was filled with consternation to hear him declare, with great earnestness and apparent sincerity, that he could not preach. It was in vain that Mr. Draper urged the fact that it would be a great disappointment to the congregation, who had assembled to hear *him and no one else*. "I cannot preach, I shall not preach!" was the answer. Mr. Draper was puzzled for a while to know what to do, for he could not endure the thought of preaching himself. He finally hit upon an expedient which succeeded. He had heard that the bishop was a great expounder of the ninth of Romans, and he proceeded quietly to say: "Bishop M'Kendree, there are a great many Calvinists in this country, who are everlastingly repeating passages from the ninth of Romans in proof of their doctrine, and give our people great trouble, who are not always able to meet them. Now preach us a sermon on that subject and it will do a vast amount of good." The bishop seemed to wake up from a quandary. "Do you think that will do?" asked he. "Nothing could be more suitable," replied Mr. Draper. "Well," said the bishop, "I will see." When the hour came he proceeded, and had great liberty. He conclusively refuted the Calvinistic understanding of that passage, and in an overwhelming argument established the Arminian exposition. The sermon was a wonder, to be talked about for years.

Mr. Draper conducted the bishop on his way to Pittsburgh as far as Bloody Run.

The old preachers often passed through ludicrous scenes, which varied the monotony of hard work and exposure, and gave them a little amusement. After a quarterly meeting in Canisteo Mr. Draper set off for Lycoming. He saw a man chopping wood by his door, who no sooner recognized him than he sung out, "How do ye do, Draper. I want you to stop with me and baptize my children." "Baptize your children!" responded Mr. Draper, "you need baptizing or something else yourself, here chopping wood on

Sunday!" Mr. Draper turned in, however, and baptized a lot of poor wild children. The father seemed greatly pleased with the transaction, and complacently remarked, "Now we are not heathen any more."

A poor lazy fellow, who lived on the way Mr. Draper would travel the next morning, came in, and hearing his friend brag of the baptizing, asked Mr. Draper to call at his house and baptize his children. Mr. Draper accordingly called at the hut, and the fellow began to collect the children. After a great amount of blustering all were present excepting one, and he had hid in the brush. The indignant father roared, and applied to the truant sundry unseemly epithets, but he kept close to his retreat. Mr. Draper finally told him that he would be along again, and as he was in haste to proceed on his journey he would baptize those who were present. With some reluctance the father consented, and the service went on; but his anger at the frightened urchin, who had made his escape, continued furious. It was afterward found out that he had crawled under a brush heap.

In crossing the mountain Mr. Draper was obliged to put up for the night in a place called Jones's Settlement. Thomas Elliott, one of the preachers, was with him. They put up at a miserable place. The woman seemed embarrassed, and supposing her embarrassment originated from the fact that she could not give the travelers a comfortable meal, Mr. Draper said they wanted some milk for supper, adding that Mr. Wesley, in his philosophy, said that hearty suppers were unhealthy. The woman seemed relieved, and the matter was soon settled that they would make their supper on stewed pumpkin and milk. Wishing to avoid the use of dirty dishes, Mr. Draper arranged that the pumpkin should be divided through the center, and stewed in two parts. When cooked and cooled, each man took his half and pouring milk into the concave, took a spoon and scooped out the meat of the pumpkin, and thus made his supper. This was an original plan of eating pumpkin and milk, and very convenient withal, especially as it enabled the travelers



to avoid the use of wooden bowls which probably had never been washed since they were made.

The Rev. George Harmon took charge of the Susquehanna district in 1812, and traveled upon it three years. The following incidents and adventures we have taken from "a short sketch" of the life and labors of Mr. Harmon, written by himself, from the papers of his daughter, the late Hester Ann Harmon, and from Mr. Harmon's mouth on a late visit at Camillus.

In relation to his district Mr. Harmon says: "I commenced on the south end, about one hundred miles north of Baltimore. It extended north to within twenty miles of Utica, in the State of New York, and from the Delaware River on the east to the Genesee on the west. It was at least one thousand miles around it. Such roads! such hills! such mountains! I broke down several horses during my term of service on this district."

The great point of adventure and romance in real life was the Lycoming route, between Western New York and Williamsport, on the west branch. Towanda Creek, Sugar Creek, and Lycoming head near together; the two former emptying into the north branch below Tioga, and the latter into the west branch near Williamsport. From the head of the Lycoming to its mouth is about thirty miles, and in passing down it had to be forded thirty-four times. It is a deep and rapid stream, upon which small rafts of lumber were run in the spring. One of Mr. Harmon's perilous trips through this route he gives as follows:

"I held a quarterly meeting on the north part of the district, my next being on the south part. I had to pass through the sixty mile wilderness. I took what was called the Lycoming route. It was in the winter, the snow between two and three feet deep. I lodged all night at Spaulding's tavern, near the head of the Towanda. I started early the next morning and rode some eight miles to Brother Soper's, on the Lycoming, and took breakfast. I then set out for Williamsport. When I came to what was considered the

most dangerous crossing place on the route, I found the river frozen over about one-third of the way on each side. The snow, as above stated, was from two to three feet deep, and no one had passed to open the road. I paused but for a minute. I could not go back to Brother Soper's, some ten or fifteen miles, the last house I had passed; the sun had gone down. If I could cross there was a log-tavern within about one mile. I knew the greatest danger would be in getting on the ice on the other side, for should the ice break I and my horse would both go under. I must venture it. I saw no other course. I was on a very spirited and powerful horse. I urged him forward, and when his feet touched the bottom his head went under water. As he arose on his hind feet I put both spurs into his flanks and he at once bounded off into the river. The water was so deep that it ran over the tops of my boots as I sat upon his back. I got through without further difficulty.

“When I reached the tavern my first care was to have my horse attended to. But when I attempted to take off my boots they were frozen to my stockings. I succeeded after a while in removing them. I had, not long before, read Dr. Rush on the use of spirituous liquors. That great man acknowledged they had their use in certain cases, but there could be no case in which it would not be better to pour them in the swill-pail, and put both feet in, than to drink them. I bought half a pint of rum and bathed myself with it. I slept comfortably and took no cold. But my poor horse! the fatigue of worrying through the snow, and so often fording the river, so affected his limbs that I had to part with him at a great sacrifice.”

The next spring Mr. Harmon held a quarterly meeting for Canisteo circuit at Squire Bulkley's on the Cowniskey. He says: “My next meeting being at or near Williamsport, I resolved to take a new route through the wilderness. I passed through what is now called Wellsborough, a flourishing village and county seat, but at that time the enterprising pioneers were just commencing their settlements.



When I reached the last house in the settlement it was about one o'clock. I took some refreshment and fed my horse. The family told me it was doubtful whether I could get through, it being early in the spring, and there being nothing to guide me but marked trees. Not even a footman had been through since the last autumn, and it was probable that the path would be blocked up with fallen trees.

"Being on an excellent horse I ventured on, but had not gone far before my difficulties commenced. Trees were blown down, and the path, at best a blind one, was blocked up. In some places I had to ride ten or fifteen rods around to get through, and then work my way on to find the path again. At length it began to be dark, and in a short time I could not see the path or the marked trees. My horse seemed bewildered. In the midst of my perplexity I thought I heard the sound of an ax. I started for it as straight as possible, and soon saw a light and a man chopping. He had taken up a lot in the wilderness, there being no house within six or eight miles. He had built a large fire and was chopping by its light. As soon as I thought I was near enough to make him hear me I hailed him. He was astonished to hear a human voice at that distance in the wilderness, and told me to stop immediately, as I must be on the brink of a precipice. There was a gulf between us and he would try to get to me with a torch light. Of course I came to a full stop. When he reached the place I was astonished to find that not more than a rod before me there was a yawning gulf, and a steep pitch of some fifteen or twenty feet down. The cold chills ran through me. The good woodsman hunted around and found the path. If I could have crossed the gulf with my horse I should have stayed with the man in the woods, but that could not be done, and it was unsafe to leave my horse alone, as he might be devoured by the panthers, wolves, and bears. So I concluded to try to get to the black house, some six miles ahead. The black house was a mere whisky shanty.

"When I reached the desired house, behold! the family

had deserted it, and I had no alternative but to push ahead. Some six or eight miles farther across Laurel mountain I found a stopping place. Here I found a comfortable log-tavern, with good accommodations for man and beast. It was then about eleven o'clock. I had my horse well taken care of, eat a good supper, prayed with the family, went to bed and had a refreshing night's rest. The rest of the route was more pleasant, and I reached Williamsport in safety."

The following incidents and adventures are selected from Miss H. A. Harmon's papers :

A TRIP TO QUARTERLY MEETING IN OLDEN TIMES.

"In the spring of 1814 my father attended a quarterly meeting at Painted Post, in the northern part of Pennsylvania. His next was eighty miles distant, and the streams were so high that it was impossible for him to go the usual route across the wilderness.

"Should he remain where he was, or make an attempt to attend the quarterly meeting ?

"Very proper inquiries, but somewhat difficult to answer, for the best of reasons—he did not know how he should get to it. He pondered the matter some time without arriving at any conclusion.

"He, however, had his horse made ready for a start, and mounting him, rode to Tioga Point, where he met with Brother Minier, who was going down the river with lumber. He invited my father to go down with him on his raft.

"Accordingly he embarked with his horse and baggage. The raft was pushed out into the stream, and they were fairly on their way, floating with the swift current down the majestic Susquehanna in a very short space of time, sweeping now under the shadows of the trees along the shore, which were just putting on their spring dress, and anon over the broad, glassy surface, where the bright sunlight was reflected most dazzlingly on the water.

"The majestic river, through its whole course, is accompanied by ranges of hills and mountains, which renders the



scenery grand, wild, and majestic to an extraordinary degree; for the abrupt and lofty precipices plainly indicate where the pent-up waters have forced their way through the rocky barriers. For several miles the chafed and troubled stream literally fills the narrow chasm which, in the northern part of Luzerne county, constitutes the valley of the Susquehanna, there not being space sufficient for the track of the wild deer along the sides of the steep declivities. Then the highlands fall off from their abruptness, and recede to a greater distance, so that the valley is broader; and islands more beautiful than any in the world here and there divide the unruffled stream.

"The Susquehanna has been called a most beautiful summer river; but when swollen by winter torrents there are no bounds to its furious raging. In the depth of winter it freezes over from its rise to its mouth; and as snow falls to a great depth on the mountains among which it winds its devious course, when the spring thaws come on the ice is broken up, and sweeps everything before it to destruction. Fences, and bridges, and even buildings are carried away by these sudden breakings up; the trees along its banks are often cut asunder by the immense sheets of ice. Rafts are often exposed to great danger by the swift current, and by encountering breakers and shoals.

"The first night the company landed at a place that is now called Skinner's Eddy. At that time there were a few log-houses, scattered about, and a tavern. The ax-bearing pioneer was reclaiming the wilderness round about.

"There were so many companies got in before them that it was near midnight before their turn came to eat supper. It was rather scanty fare, for the table had been cleared, and the landlady said her cupboard had been gleaned of every thing eatable—that she had done the best she could for them.

"There was a woman at the house that knew my father; she had seen him at quarterly meeting; she placed a large arm-chair in the corner by the fire, and told him to take that, for there was no bed to be had. They were all taken

Twenty, or thirty, and even fifty miles was not so far off, but they would make an effort to attend, and look upon it as a great privilege to go to quarterly meeting. They would come on horseback through the woods, and from the settlements and towns in their great old-fashioned wagons, drawn by oxen very often, and crowded full; sometimes they would come down the river in canoes. They came with their hearts alive to God, and every one was ambitious of excelling in getting nearest to, and in doing most for God and truth.

"Consequently many sinners were converted before the meeting closed. Such exhortations and prayers, such shouting, for old-fashioned Methodists would shout. Their thorough enjoyment, their genuine tokens of holy delight, their ready responses, always expressed in a hearty manner, bore the preacher onward to success. To preach tamely before such an audience would be an impossibility. No Christian could slumber in such a vivifying atmosphere, no aspirations become weary, no ardor grow cold.

"During the preaching on the Sabbath there was such a peal of shouts broke out from the audience, that a school-teacher, seated in the hay-loft, who had lately come into the place, and who thought himself a little above par, was so startled that he sprang from his seat, and down he came, heels over head, right in the midst of the congregation, knocking several off their seats, and raising quite a commotion. This frightened the fellow still more.

"'Where's my hat—my hat,' said he; but no hat appeared, and he made a bound for the door.

"'Lord have mercy on him, and alarm him to some purpose,' cried a good old gray-headed brother.

"'Amen,' rang out from a score of voices.

"At this the poor fellow was so frightened that he fell prostrate, and they had to carry him out.

"The meeting proceeded with its usual interest; the interruption was only for a minute or two, and the preachers in those days were so accustomed to interruptions and criticisms,



expressing gratification or displeasure in very decided terms, that it seldom confused them. Such expressions as, 'That's the truth,' 'I believe it,' 'It's so;' and occasionally, 'I don't believe that,' would echo from some part of the audience.

## PROVIDENTIAL ESCAPE.

"It was in the gloomy month of November that my father was on his way to attend a quarterly meeting in the northern part of his district. He expected to have reached Dr. Grant's, on the hills, some three or four miles from Oxford, before night. He was a stranger, and unacquainted with the country. Night was closing in, and he was riding slowly along through the thick forest, scarcely knowing what direction to take. At length he came to where several wood roads branched off in different directions. He stopped and cast an inquiring and eager gaze around, but he saw no alternative except to make choice of one of the roads and go on; but he soon found that he had missed his way.

"'This is abominable,' said he, as he pulled the reins to stop his tired beast; 'I should be quite unwilling to make a supper for some hungry wolf or bear; it would be a most inglorious end to my journey; but perhaps there are no such prowlers here, and at all events it is a straight path; I can try it a mile or two, and if I see or hear nothing of the house I am in quest of I can return and try another road; it must be somewhere in this region; I'm sure I can't be far from it, so come on, my tired dapple.'

"It was very dark, and he could only ride slowly, and with great caution, as the stumps of the trees often stood many feet high and much impeded his progress. He descended a tedious hill and crossed a stream of water; and after going on some distance farther, his horse came to a full stop, and he could not urge him on. He got off his back to find out what the difficulty was, and he found, by feeling round, that a tree lay right across the path, and that his horse was completely wedged in among the limbs. He began to be seriously alarmed, and for a minute he was

at a loss to know what to do, when the thought struck him that he would climb a tree, perhaps by so doing he might discover some signs of human beings. But suddenly a bright light shone through the underwood at no great distance. He threw the bridle around a limb, and springing over the tree, made his way toward it, and saw, to his delight, a comfortable-looking log house. He stepped quickly to the door and knocked.

"'Come in,' said a voice, and the traveler entered.

"'Will you give me shelter for the night, sir,' said he; 'I think I must have lost my way, and my horse is worn out with this day's travel?'

"'With pleasure, sir,' was the reply.

"Upon inquiry he found to his joy that it was the house of Dr. Grant's son, and that the old gentleman lived near by. He procured a light, and Mr. Grant went with him for his horse, which was getting very restive, for the rain was falling fast. It was with some difficulty they got the horse loose, and around the fallen tree, which had filled up the pathway entirely. Mr. Grant told the wearied preacher to go immediately to his father's, and he would take care of the tired beast.

"Soon after he had taken a seat by the comfortable fire Dr. Grant began asking him about the road, how far he had traveled, etc., etc. The preacher told him his route through the forest.

"'Why,' said the doctor, 'you have come several miles out of the way. How did you get across the creek?'

"'I crossed on the bridge,' he replied.

"'It can't be possible,' said Dr. Grant. 'That is an old foot-bridge that has not been thought safe for a man to pass on for a long time.'

"'Well,' said the preacher, 'my horse brought me safe across. I did not know but it was a good bridge, for it was so dark that I could not see my horse's head, and I let him take his own course.'

"'How in the world your horse brought you safely



across that old rotten string-piece is certainly mysterious. The hand of Providence was most certainly in it, brother, said Dr. Grant.

"Mrs. Grant set out her table, and placed upon it the plain fare of the new country. The weary, hungry traveling preacher thought he never made a more delicious meal. This kind family eagerly exerted themselves to make him forget the dangers and discomforts of his journey, and taste the sweet solace of the hospitable hearth. It is easy to forget discomforts, or only so to remember them as to make them enhance the zest of brighter things that follow."

At the session of the Genesee Conference in 1814, Mr. Harmon says: "Bishop M'Kendree wished me to procure a horse for him, old Gray having seen his best days. I succeeded in getting a very valuable young horse, but he had never been properly *broke* to the saddle. As I had to accompany the bishop through my district, he wished me to take charge of his young horse and break him. Accordingly we made a pack-horse of my beast and I mounted the colt. He was a little headstrong at first, but a day's labor on the road sobered him down so that he became a very pleasant saddle-horse.

"After we had traveled about a week in company, the bishop insisted on mounting the colt. I tried to dissuade him, but it was in vain. He would have his own way, so we exchanged horses. He mounted the colt and seemed pleased with him. We had, however, traveled but a few miles when the colt took fright at the old gentleman's big white hat, as he took it in his hand, and threw him upon a pile of stones. The bishop received an injury in one of his hips from which he never fully recovered. I immediately went for assistance: I hired a one-horse lumber-wagon, and with a rope made a swing bed, and drove about ten miles to a very convenient place with a good Dutch Methodist family. I remained with him about a week and then left him in the care of the family. This was at the place known as the Warrior's Mark, in Pennsylvania, between Bellefonte and Pittsburgh."

In the journeyings of Bishops Asbury and M'Kendree through our territory many interesting incidents occurred which are remembered and related. Bishop Asbury was sometimes stern and almost testy. But he would, not unfrequently, unbend himself and appear not only free in conversation but quite amusing.

He once came to Father Giles's, in Brookfield, through the rain, in company with Bishop M'Kendree and several presiding elders. George Harmon was the pilot. After leaving Saquoit Mr. Harmon called at a school-house for directions, and a young lady, the teacher, came to the door. In answer to his inquiries the lady told him that they must keep on down the river about four miles, and then turn to the right. They traveled on at least seven miles, and did not find the road which the young lady described. The bishop called out: "O George! George! you must look out for these girls, for I am quite sure one has deceived you this day!"

In due time the company reached "the preachers' home," and Bishop Asbury took his seat in an arm-chair, but soon hastily arose and called "Betsy," who had taken great pains to seat him on a fine cushion. "Here," said he, "you girl! what have you put pins in my chair for?" Half-frightened out of her wits, Betsy said she was sorry indeed if there were pins in the cushion, she knew not how it had happened. She examined the cushion, and others examined it, and found no wicked pin sticking in it anywhere. The bishop took his seat again and was again disturbed. Upon farther examination he found the annoying little instrument was in the skirt of his coat, where he had put it himself to prevent it from being soiled by falling upon the sweaty side of his horse. "Where," said the bishop, "is that dear child? I must see her immediately!" Betsy was called, and she entered expecting another reproof for some cause, she could not tell what. But when she came the old gentleman said: "O my dear child! will you please to forgive me for charging you with something which I did myself? That naughty pin was in my coat; I put it there myself and



had forgotten to take it out. Pardon me, child, will you?" Betsy, who in her mind had accused the bishop with peevishness, and even rudeness, now returned, and with tears said to her mother: "What a blessed old man Bishop Asbury is! he has been asking my pardon."

After dinner Bishop M'Kendree sat in his chair with his fingers locked upon his breast in a meditative mood, while Bishop Asbury was walking the room interesting the preachers with stories. All at once he looked at Bishop M'Kendree, as though the difference between himself and his dignified colleague had just struck his mind. "I suppose," said he, "the people here will think that Bishop M'Kendree has a great deal more religion than I have, and so he has; but if I should be as sober as he is I should not live a month." The preachers laughed, while Bishop M'Kendree smiled, but made no reply.

On one occasion Bishop Asbury was traveling through the lake country with a company of preachers, among whom was Benjamin Bidlack, then a venerable, portly man. The company were to stop for refreshments at the house of a respectable Methodist. As they approached the place Bishop Asbury led the train. The gentleman saw them coming, and as he met the bishop he said: "You pass on, sir, and open the gate for the bishop;" and walking up to Father Bidlack he addressed him most respectfully: "Please alight, bishop, and I will order your horse to be taken care of, and will bring in your saddle-bags." By this time Bishop Asbury had sprung from his horse, opened the gate, and as the gentleman came along with his hand under the arm of the man whom he took for the bishop, the man at the gate bowed respectfully saying, "Walk in bishop, I will see that all is right with your baggage." Father Bidlack did not object to an innocent joke and he preserved his gravity and acted the bishop until the merriment of some of the company broke over the barriers of strict etiquette and called for an explanation. The hospitable old gentleman at first was mortified at his mistake, but when he saw how it acted upon Bishop Asbury and amused the whole company he laughed as heartily as any of them.

Bishop Asbury was very infirm and yet performed a vast amount of labor. Although an invalid and a cripple, he rode thousands of miles on horseback over the most wretched roads, and often being subjected to the most wretched fare. From the Paris Conference, in 1811, he passed down through Pennsylvania, conducted by Gideon Draper through the Susquehanna district. He rode a pacing jade, carried his crutches, and when it rained he covered himself with a large cape of calf-skin, which extended below his knees. On the road between Oquaga and the Great Bend his leg became so painful that he stopped at a small log-house and bathed it with vinegar. They came to the Great Bend in the rain, and, as the bishop says in his Journal, "found shelter under the hospitable roof of Lawyer Catlin." Mr. Draper says: "Squire Catlin and his son literally took the bishop off from his horse and carried him into the house." The bishop lectured beautifully in the morning, to the admiration of his intelligent host, and greatly to the edification of all present. Indeed, in spite of his infirmities, he preached almost daily while passing so rapidly through the country.

Mr. Draper relates an interesting incident of the bishop at a conference in the city of Philadelphia. When the conference was about to adjourn the morning session the bishop remarked: "There will be no session of the conference this afternoon as I am to preach to the preachers' wives." When the hour arrived the preachers with their wives were present. In his discourse the venerable man drew a vivid picture of the privations and sufferings of the preachers. This of course deeply affected the ladies. He then turned to the peculiar trials and hardships of the preachers' wives, and took occasion to point out to the preachers the manner in which they should treat their wives. "It was," says Mr. Draper, "a melting time." The preachers and their wives, and all others present, wept freely, and the parties for whose benefit the discourse was designed resolved to be more brave and more patient under their peculiar trials.



## BOOK IV.

### PROGRESS OF THE WORK, 1821-1828.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE OLD WYOMING CIRCUIT.

WE have now taken a general view of the development and enlargement of the Church to the year 1820, inclusive. From this point facts multiply with such amazing rapidity that the difficulties of history are proportionably increased. Some relief is furnished by the comparative recency of the facts, and the existence of our periodical literature. Memory furnishes some materials; the Methodist Magazine and the Christian Advocate and Journal furnish some. The revival intelligence in these periodicals is exceedingly rich in facts which illustrate the influence of Methodism as an institution of modern Christianity and an agency of reform. The rapid filling up of the work, and the consequent multiplication of districts, circuits, and stations, will be remarked as a characteristic of this period.

The old Genesee Conference has lost a large territory on the south, which was annexed to the Baltimore Conference by the General Conference of 1820. The Canada Conference is formed in 1824, which further contracts our territory; but still we have a vast field embraced within our bounds, and that field constantly increasing in interest and multiplying the number of members and the number of charges.

The Susquehanna district is now one of nine which are

embraced within the bounds of the Genesee Conference. It contains eight charges; George Lane, presiding elder.

WYOMING CIRCUIT AS DURING THE PRESENT PERIOD.

The Rev. Elisha Bibbins had charge of the Wyoming circuit during the years 1820 and 1821. The following statement of the plan of the circuit and the progress of the work was communicated by him for this work:

"In 1820-21 I was returned to Wyoming as a part of the old circuit that I had traveled in 1812, Bridgewater circuit having been cut off from it previously. The following were the appointments, as near as I now remember: Wilkesbarre was the center of operations. Thence we passed to the Plains, thence to Pittston, thence to Providence, thence we crossed the river into the neighborhood of Brother Wilson, as stated in reference to my first term on this circuit. Thence we passed up on the mountain to Centre Moreland thence down to Kingston, and preached at Forty Fort meeting-house, thence to Plymouth, then back on to the mountain to Dallas. From this place we went down to Hanover, preached in the neighborhood of Comfort Cary's, and occasionally preached in the region of Captain Lee's; thence to Wilkesbarre.

"The first year I was on this circuit, the last time, I had as my helper Rev. Jacob Shepherd. He was a man of more than ordinary preaching talents, possessed of a fearless spirit, and was prepared to meet all the *isms* of the day, especially *Calvinism*. At any time he would rise from his meals and enter the lists of controversy with great zest. During the first year we had good times at most of the appointments, especially at Wilkesbarre. In this place we had to hold our prayer-meetings at private houses, and were often annoyed by some of the would-be *elite* of the place, who, if they were now alive, no doubt would be ashamed of their conduct.

"Still we had some staunch friends, who, though they were not members of the Church, yet occupied high posi-



tions in society. Such were General Bowman, Judge Scott, Joseph Slocum, and others.

"During the second year we gathered into the Church about eighty members. They were mostly young persons, but notwithstanding their youth they were the most active young converts, as a class, I ever knew. Among the number were Z. Bennett, Hannah Slocum, L. Butler, S. D. Lewis, Anning O. Cahoon, and others I cannot now name. These, and others that joined, were mighty in faith and prayer. I remember Judge Scott once remarked to me in reference to these converts: 'You can convert the world with such a company of Christians.'

"It was at or about this time that Brother Samuel Griffin was brought into the fold of Christ. Some of his friends were strongly opposed to his profession of religion, and especially to his uniting with our Church. His relatives were Quakers; hence their opposition. He desired baptism, and accordingly I baptized him in the Lackawanna; and when I was about to baptize him I turned his back up stream, or was about to do so; he said to me: 'I want to go *forward*,' or in other words, 'Baptize me *face foremost*,' and accordingly I did so.

"I ought to have mentioned that from Wilksbarre we used to go to Stoddardsville. Here we had a small but good society. You will observe that we traveled thirty-four miles to accommodate a very small society and a very small settlement, but we got ample pay at each appointment in the outpouring of the Divine Spirit. We had some glorious seasons of refreshing from the presence of our God."

A letter to us from Mr. Bibbins, which we have preserved, dated Wilkesbarre, October 8, 1821, gives a glowing description of the work of God on the circuit:

"I know that you will rejoice to hear what the Lord is doing for the people on Wyoming circuit. Our camp-meeting commenced on the 13th of September, on Spring Brook, about two miles from Ebenezer Marcy's. After the first discourse our brethren began their prayer-meetings. Even

before preaching they had begun to pray in their tents. God soon began to pour out answers of prayer, both in the awakening of the careless and comforting the mourning. On Saturday the work became general. Abi Slocum, Ann Ike, Caroline Scofield, Sally Perkins, Ziba Bennet, and others were converted to God. The work spreads like fire in dry stubble. Hannah Cortwright, her sister, and one of their cousins found rest to their souls. William Hancock was awakened, and has since found peace.

"On the Sabbath, at twelve o'clock, it began to rain. The rabble were driven off, and the praying people, together with the serious, were driven into the tents, where they went to work, and God was very present to heal the lame, to bind up the bruised, and to raise the dead to life. Among those who found rest that night were Nancy Hancock, Mary Colt, Miss Pruner, Miss Chrisman. John Colt came forward; also Augustus Gordon, Benjamin A. Bidlack, James Gallup, Mrs. Cahoon, Mrs. Bowman, Mrs. Ely, and Mrs. Raynor. I suppose there were not less than fifty that found rest to their souls. The work is still going on both in Wilkesbarre and other places.

"We received twenty-two at camp-meeting. Last Sunday I received Ziba Bennet, Peter Williams, Platt Hitchcock, Mary Colt, Miss Dennis, and Fanny Taggers. Nancy Hancock is very much opposed by her friends, but I hope her way will be cleared before her, for she seems very much engaged. When the Lord converted her soul she *shouted and screamed* as loud as she could. So did Polly Colt; and they are shouting happy yet.

"Our camp-meeting had a most awful and yet glorious effect on the people. Judge Scott and Judge Fell were almost brought over to the faith. Judge Scott told me that if he had stayed all night he should have made as much noise as any of us; and I should not think strange if he should yet become a Methodist. I did not know but Betsy and Temperance would go crazy. For a while Betsy screamed as loud as she could. Temperance set to jump



ing soon after she saw me, and seized me by the collar of my coat, and I believe she would have thrown me down if I had not held on to some that were standing by.

“Your affectionate brother,  
ELISHA BIBBINS.”

To those who have been acquainted in the Wyoming Valley for thirty or forty years past this letter will have a peculiar interest. And for the information of others we would say that nearly all the names above-mentioned have had a history which is instructive. Some few failed to carry out their convictions and purposes, and became as careless as ever. Some ever after maintained a sort of semi-religious character. Some united with other Churches, but the greater part of them held on their way. A part of these have passed the flood, and the remainder are worthy and influential members of the Church.

Among those not named in the letter, who were brought into liberty at that camp-meeting, and who deserve a permanent record, are Laura Smith, sister to General Bowman's wife, and subsequently married to William Hancock. During her life she was a most ardent Christian, and active member of the Church. She died in peace in Kingston. Robert Miner, son of Asher Miner, Esq., was a beautiful little boy when he was converted, and united with the Church; but even then he had about him the gravity and the dignity of mature years. He was a devoted and consistent Christian, and for years class-leader and steward in the Wilkesbarre charge. He died in great triumph in the prime of life, and was universally lamented. He was one of the few of whom no one ever said anything but good.

This camp-meeting revival gave an impulse to Methodism in Wyoming, which has gone on with the lapse of years and still remains.

In 1822 the preachers were John D. Gilbert and William W. Rundell, and in 1823 George Lane and Gaylord Judd. During these three years the cause of religion was in a state of steady progression, but there was no general revival.

The Rev. Fitch Reed had charge of the Susquehanna district this year.

In 1824 the preachers were Morgan Sherman and Joseph Castle, and George Peck had charge of the district. The Susquehanna district then embraced the following charges: Ithaca, Spencer and Wyalusing, Owego, Bridgewater, Broome, Tioga, Bainbridge, Caanan, Wyoming, and Caroline. The district was bounded by the Delaware on the east, Bainbridge and Norwich on the north, Ithaca and Wellsborough on the west, and Wyoming on the south; embracing a considerably larger amount of territory than is now contained within the bounds of the Wyoming Conference. This year Wyoming circuit exhibited strong marks of healthy progress. The Church was awake and the congregations were large. There was an increasing interest toward the latter part of the year in various parts of the circuit.

In 1825 John Copeland and Philo Barbary were the preachers. The year opened with unusual indications of the divine blessing. Souls were awakened and converted. A camp-meeting was held in September, near Truxville, on ground owned by the late Jacob Rice, which proved a great blessing to the Church. The Church was prepared for a strong effort at this meeting. The ground was rough and unpromising, but it was soon made evident that, like the place where Jacob laid his head upon a pile of stones, it was "the house of God and the gate of heaven." The first prayer-meeting in the altar resulted in the conversion of a prominent citizen of Kingston, Reuben Holgate, Esq., and the penitent cries and tears of many others. From the commencement to the close of the meeting the work progressed without interruption. Every sermon, exhortation, and prayer-meeting was a triumph. Souls were brought into liberty in the altar, in the tents, and in the woods.

On Monday the crowd had retired, but there was still a large number of earnest listeners to the services on the ground. In the morning, after an appropriate discourse, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered. It was



a melting occasion. After the service the mourners were invited into the altar, and although it would contain a hundred persons it was soon filled, and numbers hung upon the railing weeping. The poles were removed, and when those who desired prayers, and those who came forward to labor with them, were upon their knees, a large space extending from the stand out among the seats prepared for the congregation was densely filled. Now a murmur was heard coming up from the mass of earnest oppressed spirits. One led in prayer until his voice was drowned with the wailings of the seekers and groans and intercessions of the pious who were mingling among them, and fully entering into their sympathies. A scene of holy confusion now followed. It was a deep-toned roar like the voice of many waters. One incessant tide of prayer and praise rolled on for many hours. No pause was called for, either for refreshment or for preaching. One and another, and sometimes half a dozen together, would break their chains and shout "Glory to God!" and then commence laboring for others. The prayer-meeting was only interrupted at twelve o'clock for a *midnight cry*, and was then resumed and continued until sunrise.

Many saw the sun rise for the first time with truly devout feelings. Before leaving the ground one hundred came forward and testified that God had power on earth to forgive sins, and ninety-seven offered themselves to the Church as probationers for membership. Before the final close about forty again presented themselves as subjects of prayer, and many of them were converted before they left the place. The people took down their tents, but the prayer-meeting before the stand went on; and when compelled to leave, we heard the sound of prayer and praise until we were half a mile from the ground.

The work spread over the circuit, and extended to adjoining charges. Meetings were continued every night in Kingston for several weeks, and those meetings were seasons of refreshing and of salvation. Darius Williams was

in his glory. He prayed, exhorted, shouted, and sung in a manner peculiar to himself. On one occasion he declared he believed the work would go on until the millennium. A mighty man he was in a revival. There was more salvation, awakening, and converting power in his singing than in that of any other man we ever heard sing.

The camp-meeting at Rice's is still spoken of as "the great camp-meeting." We now frequently hear in love-feast, "I was converted at the camp-meeting at Jacob Rice's;" "I was awakened and resolved to seek God under 'the midnight cry,'" and the like. Few fatal backslidings among the converts of that blessed revival have been witnessed, but many who were then brought to Christ have gone to glory.

1826. The conference held its session this year in Palmyra, N. Y., June 7. At this conference we requested the bishop to release us from the charge of the district, and recommended Rev. Horace Agard as a suitable person for the place. The change was made, and we were appointed to the charge of Wyoming circuit. After spending one quarter in performing the regular rounds, the society in Wilkesbarre petitioned the presiding elder to appoint us to labor exclusively in that place. This was done, and Daniel Torrey was employed to labor on the circuit.

The society had suffered serious inconveniences for want of a suitable place of worship, and during the present year they petitioned the county commissioners to give them a lease of a hall in the upper part of the court-house for a chapel. By the kind aid of Hon. David Scott, Hon. George Denison, and others, we succeeded, and turned the old place of music and dancing into a house of God.

The lease is now before us. It is dated March 8, 1827, and is signed by Deodat Smith, Arnold Colt, and John Bittenbender, commissioners; and David Scott, George Peck, and Sharp D. Lewis, trustees. It held for ten years and the consideration is the nominal sum of ten cents per annum.

1827. This year the conference held its session in Wilkesbarre, commencing June 14. This was the first annual con-



ference ever held in this part of Pennsylvania, and of course was an object of great public interest. Bishop George presided, and Rev. John Emory, subsequently Bishop Emory, was present as book agent. Both preached on the Sabbath, greatly to the edification of the people.

The best families in the place opened their doors for the reception and accommodation of the preachers. Several Presbyterian families, as also some members of the Protestant Episcopal Church, made liberal provisions for the accommodation of the conference, and the citizens generally manifested great interest in the occasion. Everything moved on pleasantly until a sermon came off against "*Calvinism*," which was not suited to that meridian.

A member of the conference had been appointed at the preceding session to preach a sermon at this session on *Natural and Moral Ability*. The sermon was prepared under certain irritating causes, and assumed the character of a furious assault upon "*Calvinism*." The different denominations in Wilkesbarre had been upon good terms, and the general feeling was most kind toward us as a Christian denomination. This sermon came upon us all like a clap of thunder from a clear sky. The Presbyterians were irritated, the Methodists were grieved, and everybody regretted the affair.

The next morning we were waited upon before breakfast by several of the Presbyterian brethren, and asked if we "approved of the sermon." We stood upon our dignity, and refused to answer, alleging that we had no responsibility in the matter, and if they had any complaint to make they should go to the preacher, who was of age and could speak for himself. They concluded that we were right, and left in as pleasant a state of mind as could be expected. That terrible sermon is still referred to as a most unfortunate affair by persons of all shades of opinion.

We were appointed this year to Wilkesbarre, where we labored for the term with great comfort and with some success. The support was small, exceedingly small. We re-

ceived during the year *less than one hundred dollars*, but with good economy and the assistance of kind friends we managed to live. The members of the Church were generally poor. A few exceptions there were. John Cary and David Richards, who were old residents, and Moses Wood, who came from England, a Wesleyan Methodist, and settled one mile below Wilksbarre, in what is now called after him, Woodville, were all men of respectability and of means. Mr. Joseph Slocum was a hearty supporter of Methodism; his wife and three daughters were members.

In 1828 Joseph Castle and Silas Comfort were the preachers, Wilkesbarre and Wyoming being united. This union continued for two years, when Wilkesbarre was again made an independent charge, which thenceforward it continued to be.

#### CANAAN CIRCUIT.

In 1821 John D. Gilbert traveled on Canaan circuit. He was a man of considerable preaching abilities, and succeeded very well upon the charge, as he usually did. He finally left us and united with the Protestant Episcopal Church, since which but little has been known of him in Methodist circles.

In 1822 and 1823 Elisha Bibbins labored on this circuit. A brief account of the work of God during these years upon Canaan circuit, has been furnished us by Mr. Bibbins which we here insert:

"In 1822 and 1823 I had charge of Canaan circuit. This circuit embraced the following appointments: Canaan Four Corners, Mount Pleasant, Bethany, Cherry Ridge, Salem, Sterling, Bennet's Settlement, Lackawaxen, and the Dutch Settlement. Rev. Solon Stocking, a local preacher, was my colleague the first year. He was a most devoted and untiring servant of God, and an excellent colleague. We had a good year. At most of the appointments we had seasons of refreshing.

"At Bennet's Settlement there was a sweeping revival; every man and woman, and every child old enough to under-



stand the power of pardoned sin, were brought to a knowledge of the truth except two. God wrought wonders for Canaan circuit that year.

"At Bethany our people were very much annoyed for a time by the son of a Baptist deacon and another young man. They were accustomed to remain in the room where we held class-meeting, but would not come within the bar; we occupied the court-house. On one occasion when I was present they remained as usual. While singing I walked to where they were sitting in one corner of the room, and after singing I addressed the deacon's son as follows: 'Did you ever experience religion?' 'No, sir.' 'Do you not intend to seek the pardon of your sins?' 'Yes, when God's time comes.' 'Will you be as good as your word, and seek religion now if I prove to you that God's time has already come?' 'Yes.' I then quoted: 'Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.' And getting upon my knees requested him also to kneel, appealing to him as a man of honor. I made the request somewhat imperative, demanding that he should *get down*. But, though he appeared confounded and knew not what to do, he would not kneel down. I prayed for him, however. They embraced the first opportunity to leave, and we were not troubled with them afterward.

"The second year I was on this circuit I was supernumerary and had a colleague and preacher in charge, Rev. Hiram G. Warner. Brother Warner is still alive in this state (Illinois) and is laboring among the Congregationalists, and has been for some years past."

In 1824 Joshua Rogers and Mark Preston were the preachers. There was no general revival, but a good state of religious feeling prevailed on the charge.

In 1825 Joshua Rogers, Sophronius Stocking, and Joseph Castle stand on the Minutes in connection with Canaan circuit. Joseph Castle, however, did not travel upon the circuit, but supplied Bethany, the county seat.

This year a camp-meeting was held in Canaan, commenc-

ing on the seventh of September, which was a great blessing to the circuit. The following is our report of this meeting, as published in the Methodist Magazine for this year:

A good degree of engagedness was manifested among the preachers and members from the commencement of the meeting. Many felt the need of a deeper work of grace in their hearts. All the exercises were spiritual and impressive. At an early stage of the meeting several presented themselves as penitents, and desired the prayers of the people of God. A travail of soul increased. The thunder of the law sounding from the stand, accompanied by divine influence, alarmed the conscience, and the light of Gospel truth flashing from the tongues of the heralds of salvation proved a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Many of the gay were pricked in their hearts, and many cried, "What shall we do?" The work of conversion in many instances, though deep, was gradual, and the evidence at first not so clear; but in general light increased until joy and gladness filled the soul.

There were several instances of powerful conversion, and some instances of persons who had not sufficient confidence to come into the prayer-meetings, but went into the woods to pray, and were there set at liberty, and came into the encampment and testified how great things God had done for them.

On Sabbath morning a number who had become cold, had lost their first love, and had got into the spirit of the world—some of them members of our Church and others of the Presbyterian Church—presented themselves with the mourners as subjects of prayer. They felt the necessity of being renewed, and to them the Lord graciously appeared the second time without sin unto salvation.

It was a time of general grace, and we trust will be of lasting benefit to many individuals and to the circuit generally. Nearly forty professed to have been converted at the meeting, and many, we trust, seriously resolved to seek the Lord.



## BRIDGWATER CIRCUIT.

This circuit continued in a reasonable state of prosperity, being supplied by men of medium talents, or those who were rather young in the ministry, through the term of eight years. The leading events of this period are those connected with a camp-meeting held in Lyman's Settlement, Springville, in 1826. The Rev. Philetus Parkus, the preacher in charge, was lying upon a sick bed in the parsonage in the neighborhood, where he remained until he was called to his glorious reward. The circuit was deprived of the services of its regular pastor, but there was a good degree of life among the membership. We had some strong sermons, among them was one from Mr. Castle, now Dr. Castle, of Philadelphia. Rev. Elisha Cole, of Towanda, then commonly called "Father Cole," preached a characteristic discourse from the "cloud coming up from the sea the bigness of a man's hand." In treating his subject he said he should first philosophize it, second analogize it, and third theologize it. It was a singular sermon, but quite ingenious, and not without practical effect.

There were many interesting cases of conversion during the meeting; but one particularly interested us. A young couple attended; the wife was awakened, but the husband seemed as hard as a stone. He undertook to force his wife away from the ground, but she was so deeply affected as scarcely to be able to support herself. He had hard work to get her along, she weeping, and begging him to let her remain for at least a short time. He finally said, "You may stay an hour if that will do you any good." Several preachers were standing around, to whom she looked imploringly, and exclaimed: "O do pray for me *now, right away*, for the time is precious;" and, falling on her knees, she began to cry mightily to God for mercy. She was in a tent; her husband took a seat, and she, as she knelt, laid her head upon his knees. Fervent prayer went up to heaven, and before the hour expired she was blessed. She

arose, and smiling, said to her husband, "Now I am ready to go home." He was not now in so great haste to get away, but remained to witness the songs of praise and shouts of triumph which naturally followed. Before the meeting closed he sought and found the pearl of great price.

A high degree of religious interest followed the camp-meeting in Brooklyn, the place formerly called Hopbottom. Rev. E. Bibbins was residing there at the time, and was very useful. Accompanied by the Rev. J. Castle, we visited the place and spent a few days there. At an afternoon meeting an interesting little girl of perhaps ten years of age was converted and was very happy. She was on a visit to her uncle's, James Noble, Esq. Our friend Bibbins invited us to attend the child with him to Mr. Noble's, who was a friend to the Methodists, but not a professor of religion. We were anxious to witness the meeting of the uncle and niece, having no idea of the manner in which she would conduct herself. All doubts were soon settled, for the moment she saw him she threw her arms around his neck exclaiming: "O my dear uncle, the Lord has blessed my soul!" Mr. Noble was evidently taken down. He blushed, and for a moment hesitated, but finally responded: "Has he, indeed? I am very glad;" and being seated he took her in his arms, and struggled hard against the emotions of his soul. The sweet face of the little joyful convert was bathed in tears, but they were tears of gladness. At the next meeting the squire came down upon his knees. We have the following scrap from the pen of our friend Bibbins, in relation to the revival in Brooklyn, which we have no doubt will be acceptable to the reader:

"In 1825 I resided in Brooklyn, on Bridgewater circuit, sustaining a superannuated relation. The Rev. Philetus Parkus was preacher in charge. I was put in charge of the Brooklyn society. In the course of the year a most glorious revival of religion took place, as you will recollect. A niece of Squire J. Noble was brought to a knowledge of the truth when you and Brother J. Castle were present.



Many were converted to God. Rev. Mr. Marsh, a Universalist minister, was in the habit of attending our evening prayer-meetings. One evening, as we were walking together to meeting, he remarked that he would like to speak in our meeting if there were no objections. I replied that he was at liberty to do so provided he would confine himself to experimental and practical godliness; and he did so, but he seemed like a man in a straight jacket.

"I am confident he was greatly excited, and no marvel, for there was an awful sense of the majesty of God pervading the minds of the people. Squire Noble and his excellent wife, and many others, were fruits of that revival, many of whom I have forgotten."

James Noble, Esq., died in triumph, in Williamsburgh, while we were in the Book-room.

From this point the Brooklyn society continued to prosper until a new church was erected and Brooklyn became a station.

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## CHAPTER II.

### OLD TIOGA CIRCUIT.

OLD Tioga circuit had been divided and subdivided until 1827, when it lost its identity and its name. Several strong circuits and stations had been constituted of the territory which was originally embraced within the bounds of Tioga. We shall next proceed to inquire into the origin and progress of such of these charges as originated previous to the year 1828, together with those which have taken the places of such charges and superseded their names on the Minutes.

### WYALUSING CIRCUIT.

"In 1821 G. Lane still remains as presiding elder, and the preachers are Asa Cummins and Gaylord Judd. The local preachers are S. Stocking, Elihu Buttles, and J. Brainard.

"In 1822 Brother G. Lane still remains as presiding elder, and John Griffing and James Hodge appear as preachers. On the minutes of a quarterly conference held September 28th of this year, appears for the first time the name of the late Joseph Towner as exhorter. He had been class-leader since 1819, and thus was rising step by step to that position of eminent usefulness at which he has since arrived. Our system is wonderfully adapted to the development of the intellectual and moral man. Brother Towner was one of nature's noblest sons. But his early opportunities were small. When he was converted it was with difficulty that he could read a hymn; but by persevering effort he obtained a tolerable knowledge of the English language, and he became one of our most popular and useful men. His gift was more for exhortation than preaching, and often under his powerful appeals the vast multitudes would melt like wax before the fire. His knowledge of human nature was wonderful; and if a camp-meeting became uncontrollable, if his services could be secured peace would soon be restored. But he has finished his course, and gone the way of all the earth.

"In 1823 the name of Nathaniel Chubbuck appears as exhorter. This is the man that was hired by his father for a new saddle to have Methodist preaching at his house. A few years after this he was powerfully converted to God, and soon his brethren saw fit to give him license to exhort, which license has been renewed from time to time for the space of about thirty-four years, and he has been among the most useful exhorters. He is now, in a good green old age, still holding on his way."—*Rev. C. E. Taylor.*

The church was built in Nichols, near Judge Coryell's this year.

In 1824 Spencer and Wyalusing were connected, and John Griffing, Caleb Kendall, and Philo Barbary were the preachers. This was a strong charge, and was well manned.

A camp-meeting was held for this charge in Nichols, just



before the session of the conference, commencing on the 11th of August, which was a great blessing to many. The following account of this meeting may be found in the Methodist Magazine for this year:

From the commencement the preaching was plain and pointed, and the prayer-meetings characterized by warmth and ability; but nothing unusual occurred until Sabbath afternoon, though the way was doubtless gradually preparing for some signal displays of divine power and goodness. At this time a cloud of blessings broke upon the assembly. The mourners were called into the altar, which was soon filled to overflowing. Their cries and bitter lamentations were enough to melt the hardest heart, and to excite the feelings, and call forth the sympathies of the most philosophical and stoical Christian. With the groans, sobs, and cries for mercy soon began to be mingled some shouts of victory. These increased until at length they prevailed. The whole mass seemed to experience a shock of divine power which burst the bonds of the poor captives, and brought them at once into liberty. The work went on gloriously to the conclusion. Thirty-seven presented themselves as converts. As several had retired, the number converted was probably near fifty.

Our parting scene was truly affecting. Several, who had not done it before, bowed themselves and asked our prayers. For one of them in particular great solicitude was felt; and for him prayer was continued while the people were taking down their tents and dispersing. He has since become happy in God. The appearance of many indicated that they left the place smitten with a sense of their sins.

## SPENCER CIRCUIT.

The following interesting details of the origin and progress of Methodism within the bounds of Spencer circuit are communicated for the present work.

"The first class formed anywhere in this part of the country was formed in 1807, about four miles to the southeast

from Spencer, now known as Pleasant Valley. When this class was first started there were but seven members in it. They have now nearly all gone to their reward. But one or two of them still linger, and these live with one foot in the grave.

"The names of all are dear to those that survive. Particularly so are the names of Peter Lott and his wife, or 'Father and Mother Lott,' as they are familiarly called. Of these much might be said, as they were significant characters when this country was new, and especially as they did so much toward laying the foundation of the Church of God in these parts. We hear nothing of Methodism, and but little of any other religious body previous to this time.

"Father Lott was born in Salisbury, Connecticut, where he experienced religion about the year 1790. His wife started for heaven the previous year. There they lived for some time, and gave good evidence of a change of heart. From that place they emigrated to this country and settled in Pleasant Valley, and there commenced laboring for God. Shortly after the class was formed in their own vicinity. Father Lott commenced traveling over the hills and through the valleys to tell the story of the cross, while he labored through the week on his farm.

"He was a man of deep piety, fervent zeal, and strong to work for God. His wife was equally famous for her devotion to the cause of Christ. Like Zachariah and Elizabeth of old, they walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. They generally went together to meeting; he would preach and she would shout, and as soon as he was done she exhorted with great power and effect. It is a very common remark among the people that they loved to hear them shout, for it came from the heart, and reached the heart of those that heard. They traveled from ten to twenty miles on foot to his appointments and to the quarterly meetings. If a camp-meeting was held in any part of the country they were sure to be



there, and they were always ready to work for God. They did not have to go there to be converted every year, or to warm themselves by the fire of others, but with the armor on they went to join the army of the Lord. After Father Lott had formed the classes in this region of country the traveling preacher would take them into his plan. The class in Spencer village was formed in 1809. The names of Andrews, Dean, Gary, and Purdy were among the first who joined. For years their weekly prayer-meetings were attended by Father and Mother Lott, while they lived four miles up the valley. At or about this time the preachers came from the river up here. It then belonged to old Tioga circuit."

In 1811 a class was formed in Danby, at Father Wyatt's, and was for the time supplied with preaching by the preachers of Cayuga circuit, but soon fell into Tioga and afterward into Spencer circuit. Rev. William Wyatt says the class consisted of Nathaniel Wyatt, leader, Amy Wyatt, his wife, Fanny, Clarissa, and Anna Everett. Father Wyatt soon after he settled in Danby mounted his horse and set off in pursuit of a Methodist preacher. He found John Hazzard near Auburn, some forty miles distant.

Mr. Wyatt had been converted under the labors of Freeborn Garrettson, in Newburgh, at an early day, and was ill at ease until his house was turned into a sanctuary, and his neighbors were called there to hear the word of God. Having been educated in Methodism under Abbot, Garrettson, and the Woolseys, he was a thorough Methodist and a thorough Christian. With him the preachers found a home while he lived.

## BROOME CIRCUIT.

The facts the most material to history connected with Broome circuit during the period now under review, are those which relate to the introduction of Methodism into Binghamton. This old town resisted the advances of Methodism

until the conference year of 1818. It was during this year that the first class was formed by Ebenezer Doolittle, when he traveled Bridgewater circuit. The members of the class were: Joseph Manning, leader, Lydia his wife, Sallie Manning, Peter Wentz, and Margaret his wife. The meetings were in the third story of Mr. Manning's house.

In 1821, toward the close of the year, a revival took place under the labors of John Griffing and James Hodge, the preachers on Broome circuit. Luther Whiton, a respectable mechanic, was converted and united with the society, and by his earnestness and holy living rendered the small society great aid. For years he was a useful official member in Ithaca, where he died in the full assurance of hope. The society soon acquired a good degree of strength and influence.

Among the papers of the late Ely Osborn, Esq., have been found several old documents of no small interest, which are now before us, and for which we are indebted to the kindness of his grandchildren, Mr. and Miss Bump. One is the minutes of "a meeting held in the village of Binghamton, in the county of Broome, and state of New York, the first day of March, 1819, pursuant to legal notice." At this meeting a society was organized, trustees appointed, and a resolution passed to make application for a legal incorporation to be styled, "The trustees of the first Methodist Episcopal Church of the towns of Chenango and Union." This document is duly attested, and was recorded May 4, 1819.

This corporation was superseded by another constituted November 24, 1821, styled "The first society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Binghamton," and was admitted to record by the commissioner, in the clerk's office of Broome county, the second day of July, 1822. The trustees were: "Ely Osborn, Isaac Page, and Moses Dyer, of the first class; Josiah Mushprat, and Sela Paine, of the second class; and John Whitam and Charles Stone, of the third class."



We have also the original conveyance by Joshua Whitney to the above trustees, for the sum of *two hundred dollars*, of "that certain piece or lot of land lying on the east side of Chenango River, and on the south side of Court-street, in the village of Binghamton, described as lot number forty-two in the plot of said village, containing two acres of ground, be the same more or less."

We also have a bill of moneys received and paid out, with an account of subscriptions due, which shows that the trustees purchased and removed to their lot a chapel, and fitted it up to suit their convenience. For removing the chapel a charge is made of \$194 66. This is what is at the present time called the Henry-street Church. The acting trustees were Sela Paine, Charles Stone, and John Whitam. The final statement was made up at a meeting of the above trustees, held at Peter Wentz's, in Binghamton, December 19, 1822.

Binghamton remained an appointment upon Broome circuit until 1828, when it first makes its appearance on the Minutes as a separate charge.

The Methodists now had a church in Binghamton, but it was a circuit enterprise. The trustees all lived out of town, and were members of other classes, and the funds were raised by the agent in small sums by traveling over the country generally.

WINDSOR was an old battle-ground of Methodism long before there was a Methodist in Binghamton, although it does not appear on the Minutes as a charge until 1832. We shall now attempt to trace the early history of Methodism in this old town.

The first school which was kept in the river settlement was a very important institution. There two boys studied their spelling-book, reading-book, and arithmetic, and made good proficiency; these were George Lane and Sela Payne. Their highest ambition was to prepare themselves for school teachers, a business in great demand in the new settlements. Lane was an excellent hand on the farm, and hired him-

self out to labor through the summer, and finally tried his hand at school-keeping during the winter. He was engaged by Putnam Catlin, Esq., at the Great Bend, during the summer of 1802. Mr. Catlin was in the habit of entertaining the Methodist preachers, and it is probable that young Lane's acquaintance with the Methodists commenced here. We well recollect hearing him relate the fact of a visit to Squire Catlin's, when he lived with him, of three of the old preachers, Benjamin Bidlack, Ebenezer White, and John Husselkus, on their way to Philadelphia to conference. From the Minutes we learn that these three men had traveled together on Herkimer circuit this year, and this point would be in their way. The particular fact which Mr. Lane referred to in the visit of these itinerant preachers was, that they resorted to the barn for a sort of prayer-meeting, and that they returned to the house full of the spirit of praise. They seated themselves on the stoop and began to sing. And such singing as that was! They had great voices, splendid voices, and they made the whole neighborhood ring with heavenly melody, occasionally interrupted with shouts of praise. We can realize this scene, for we have heard with our ears their melodious voices, and our poor heart has felt the overwhelming power of their songs of praise and their shouts of triumph.

Lane felt that these were extraordinary men, and that God was in their prayers and their singing. After he was converted and became a preacher, Squire Catlin often made merry over the witty remarks of the young man when he lived with him. On one occasion he jokingly said: "I am going to be a Methodist preacher, and I'll make the tears roll out of the old women's eyes." But young Lane made an end of his joking and frolicking soon after this.

The following winter, that is, the winter of 1802-3, Mr. Lane engaged in a school in the neighborhood where Kirkwood now stands. We here give an authentic account of his conversion, and of the events which followed, communicated by Rev. William Round:



"Mrs. Moore, of Kirkwood, says that she experienced religion and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church while George Lane was teaching school near where Kirkwood now stands, in 1803. Brother Lane experienced religion himself during that winter. He was absent from the school a few days, and when he returned he told his scholars that he had experienced religion, and exhorted them and prayed with them, and a great revival broke out immediately. There had been a small class there previous to this, consisting of Asa Rood and wife, Peter Wentz and wife, Clara Mapes, and Thomas Gray. The first preacher she recollects was Frederick Stier. Father Lewis preached to them also."

At this place Methodism has existed from the date of Mr. Lane's conversion, but has never acquired any great strength.

The following interesting account of the introduction of Methodism into Randolph, is communicated by William Goodell, Esq., of New York, in a letter to his brother, Rev. Ezekiel Goodell. Mr. Goodell is the only surviving member of the first class in that place, and speaks from personal knowledge.

"The first sermon I can remember to have heard was from a Methodist preacher, a Mr. Dunham. I suppose it to have been the first sermon preached by him or by any Methodist minister in Windsor, or at least in our part of the township called Randolph. He may have preached a sermon previously at some place 'on the river,' but I am sure that this was the first in Randolph. Notice of it reached our neighborhood a week or two beforehand, and was the topic of earnest conversation and interest. The day arrived, and most if not all our family were in attendance. The meeting was held in a private house, which was on the 'main road' toward the river, the residence then, if I mistake not, of a Mr. Jewell, the same house afterward occupied, I think, by Mr. Bidwell. I well remember the appearance of Mr. Dunham. He was dressed in a suit of dark 'bottle green' with a black vest. His deport-

ment was remarkably serious. He gave out a hymn from his pocket hymn book, and led in the singing. He prayed fervently, and after a second hymn opened his pocket clasped Bible and read his text? 'For the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?' Rev. vi, 17. I remember something of the outline of the sermon. He noticed a number of great events of past times that might properly be denominated days of God's wrath, such as the flood, the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, the destruction of Jerusalem, each of which he described with marked effect. 'But,' continued he, with increasing solemnity, of manner, 'the GREAT day of God's wrath,' alluded to in the text, 'is yet to come, and we shall all see it.' He then recited a number of passages of Scripture relating to the final judgment, the final separation and contrasted destinies of the righteous and the wicked. With a brief statement of the way of salvation by Christ, and an earnest exhortation to escape from the wrath to come, the sermon was closed.

"Notice was given that Mr. Leach would preach at the same place in two weeks, and the appointment was fulfilled. We attended again. I remember Mr. Leach as a man of portly appearance, pleasant countenance, and a largely developed forehead. On his taking his text the audience were struck with the utterance of the same words they had listened to a fortnight previous: 'For the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand.' The plan of the discourse I do not so particularly remember, but the great practical application was the same. From these two sermons a deep impression was made on many minds. Professors of religion of different sects were awakened to a greater seriousness of deportment and circumspection of living. Religious conversation became common. Some, like myself, had heard the preaching of the Gospel for the first time. Others who had not heard it for years had heard it again. From that time we had preaching once in two weeks from Messrs. Dunham and Leach, alternately.



"The place of preaching was soon removed to the house of our uncle, Roswell Higley, who then resided on the same road about a mile farther west, and about the same distance from our residence, north; the place afterward owned by Mr. Beecher, near 'the Bennet neighborhood.' This stated preaching of Messrs. Dunham and Leach was in the spring or summer of 1799. I was then in my seventh year, and the impression on my own mind was never effaced. In the autumn of that year I passed through a dangerous sickness, which left me an invalid for a long time, and my recovery was very slow. The beginning of my religious life and experience dates from that sickness, the winter of 1799 and 1800.

"The preachers on that circuit for 1800 were Jacob Gruber and, I think, — M'Caine, or M'Kean, the latter now residing (I am informed) in Saratoga county, and father of Judge M'Kean. J. Gruber (the only one whose name appears on the Minutes) was a Dutchman from Pennsylvania, and was quite young. Notwithstanding his youth and broken dialect, he gave promise of the life of usefulness for which he was afterward distinguished. Our preachers for 1801 were Gideon A. Knowlton and Moses Morgan; for 1802, Joseph Osborn and Sharon Booth; for 1803, J. Heron, Samuel Budd, and John P. Weaver."

"A quarterly meeting was held at Windsor Village (as it is now called) early in the spring of 1803, before the sleighing was over. The exercises were held partly in the new Presbyterian meeting-house, then in an unfinished state, and partly at the house of David Hotchkiss, Esq., where the love-feast was celebrated.\* This I suppose to have been the first quarterly meeting held in Windsor. It was, I think, soon after this quarterly meeting that the society was regularly organized. It was at the house of our

\* It was held in the bar-room. William Colbert was the presiding elder. That part of Mr. Colbert's diary which covers this period is wanting. We find him in December following holding quarterly meeting at Noah Hoadley's, in Randolph.

uncle, Roswell Higley. The names of those who joined were Mrs. Molly Andrews, wife of Levi Andrews, Reuben Stevens and his wife, our parents, Frederick and Rhoda Goodell, and myself. I can distinctly recollect all these, and am not certain that there were any others who joined at that time, though several joined not long afterward, as our cousin, Isaac Higley, Uncle and Aunt Higley, and William Gurnsey. Reuben Stevens and wife, who had just come into the place, had been Methodists in Connecticut. Mrs. Andrews too had been, I think, connected with the Methodists. Our father had been educated a Congregationalist in Connecticut, but I do not know that he had been a Church member, though a religious man. Our mother had made a profession with the Baptists in Dutchess county.

“Reuben Stevens was appointed class-leader, and with the assistance of our father conducted meetings when there was no preaching. The meetings were removed to Noah Hoadley’s. Another quarterly meeting was held at his house in November or December, 1803.

“I have no remembrance of *other* than Methodist preachers in Windsor, especially in Randolph, until after Messrs. Dunham and Leach came among us in 1799. Messrs. Bushnell, Badger, Andrews, and Willeston, from Connecticut, came as missionaries at an early date from the Congregationalists of New England. I remember to have heard Mr. Andrews once on the river above Windsor Village, and Seth Willeston several times in Randolph. Mr. Sage was settled as Presbyterian minister at the village (or preached statedly there) during some part of the time included in the above sketch. I remember to have heard much of a Presbyterian preacher at or near Great Bend, commonly called ‘*Major* Buck,’ said to have been a godly and useful man, but I think I never heard him. I am told that he had preached in Randolph before the arrival of Messrs. Dunham and Leach.



## CANDOR CIRCUIT.

The able manner in which Spencer circuit had been served, under the divine blessing, had resulted in great enlargement both as to the numbers and resources of the Church. Candor had become a strong point, and demanded more ministerial service than could be afforded at an appointment upon the circuit. Accordingly in 1834 it was constituted an independent charge, and that good man, Gaylord Judd, was the first preacher in charge.

The following account of the rise and rapid advancement of the society in Candor is communicated by Rev. D. C. Olmstead :

"In 1826 Hiram G. Warner and William D. Overfield were the preachers on Spencer circuit. In the fall of this year, at what has since been known as 'the Red School-house,' two miles below Candor village, the first revival under the auspices of Methodism commenced. Rev. Thomas Hewitt, a local preacher, long and familiarly known in this region, was honored of God as a main instrument in the promotion of this good work. Brother Overfield preached, Brother Hewitt exhorted and prayed, and so powerfully did the Holy Ghost come down upon the people that some eight persons were converted the first evening. The work so encouragingly commenced went on and prevailed. A class was soon formed, of which Moses Darling, lately deceased, was appointed the leader. A few members of this class continue to this time, but the greater number have fallen asleep.

"From this point the work of revival extended northward to Candor village, and it was deemed advisable to form a new class in or near the village. This was done by Brother Hewitt, at the house of Brother Jared Smith, where the Methodist preachers have found a 'prophet's chamber' and a hearty welcome ever since. Brother Hewitt was appointed the leader."

In 1827 John Griffing and Joseph Towner, and in 1828

John Griffing and Miles H. Gaylord were the preachers, all men of mighty faith and prayer, and of eminent qualifications for usefulness. Under the ministrations of these faithful servants of God, all of whom have since been called to their reward, the cause of Methodism continued steadily to prosper in Candor. The society experienced no little opposition and persecution from a few scoffers, and from bigoted professors of religion as well. But, like the children of Israel in Egypt, "the more they afflicted them the more they multiplied and grew."

Candor has a church and parsonage, and an excellent membership. Here lived from the commencement of the station, and here died, the Rev. Gaylord Judd, one of the most pure-minded and unexceptionable Christian ministers of modern times. His death is reported in the Minutes for the year 1859. He died on his knees while engaged in family prayer, a mode of dying which he would doubtless have selected if he had had his choice.

#### BARTON CIRCUIT.

The following account of Barton circuit is communicated by Rev. N. S. Dewitt:

"Barton circuit was formed in 1829 from territory embraced within the bounds of Spencer charge, for the especial accommodation of Rev. John Griffing. He had labored long in the regular itinerant work and had suffered much. The advancing infirmities of age rendered it proper that his field of labor should be a little more circumscribed than in the days of his early vigor. Besides, he had purchased a small farm on the west bank of the Susquehanna, a short distance below the village of Owego, on which his family was located, and it would be convenient that his field of labor should be contiguous to his home. Accordingly Barton circuit was formed, embracing all the territory on the west bank of the Susquehanna from Owego to Athens, thence up the Chemung Valley to Elmira. This territory in those days was regarded as a small circuit—almost a station. Mr. Griffing



humorously styled it his '*turnip-patch*.' This circuit has been repeatedly divided and circumscribed until it contains but five appointments, known respectively as Barton, Ellistown, Smithborough, Taylor's Settlement, and Oak Hill. The history of the societies at these places will carry us back to a period considerably anterior to the time when they became a part of the Barton circuit.

"The society at Ellistown was formed by Frederic Stier and Timothy Lee, in 1805. It was the result of a general revival of religion which swept along that portion of the Susquehanna Valley under the labors of these men of God. The class originally consisted of nine members: John Hannah and wife, Luke Saunders and wife, Ebenezer Ellis and wife, Samuel Ellis and wife, and Sarah Bingham. Samuel Ellis was appointed leader, and continued in this relation many years. John Hannah was a marked character in this little band. He was a Scotchman by birth, but obtained religion among the Methodists, and became a devoted and hearty supporter of this form of Christianity. For many years after the organization of the class his house was the preaching place of the neighborhood. He died at the advanced age of one hundred and one years, and his remains sleep in the rear of the Ellistown Church. His numerous family are now mostly members of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

"The Society at Barton was organized, as nearly as we can ascertain, coterminously with that at Ellistown, and by the same men. Among its early friends and members may be named, Mr. J. Bensley, who died some years since; Mr. Mills, also dead; Nathan Smith and Gilbert Smith, still living in extreme old age.

"A class was organized some two miles east of the present site of the village of Smithborough rising of fifty years since. For many years the only preaching place was a private dwelling. The house of Mr. S. Light was the place where the ark of God long rested. Subsequently the neighborhood school-house was used as a place of worship. Still

later a meeting-house was built, which was owned jointly by the Methodist and Baptist denominations, and occupied by each on alternate Sabbaths. Mrs. Amy Brooks, who was a member of the first class formed in the vicinity of Smithborough, was gathered to her final rest about a year since, at the advanced age of seventy-nine years. She was a Methodist of the primitive stamp, often traveling the distance of thirty and forty miles on horseback to attend quarterly meetings. She often went as far as Oxford, N. Y. Her son, Mr. Benjamin Brooks, and his excellent family, still remain at Smithborough, and are the principal supporters of Methodism in the place. Father Bonham, who has held the post of class-leader at Smithborough for the last forty years, is still alive, though bending beneath the weight of age and infirmity. Though his mind is much clouded, he often speaks with great interest of a remarkable revival of religion which swept along the Susquehanna Valley some forty years since, which caused the stoutest sinners to bend before the power of truth as bends the sturdy oak in the midst of a gale. These old Methodists are passing away, and will soon be gone. It is well to obtain from them all the information respecting the early history of our Church that they are able to give. It is worth preserving, and will soon pass beyond our reach."

#### NICHOLS CIRCUIT.

Nichols is a township in Tioga county, N. Y., lying on the southeast side of the Susquehanna, ten miles below Owego. It embraces the Mauhontowango Flats, of Indian notoriety. Here Daniel Shoemaker and Judge Coryell settled in an early day. Shoemaker married a M'Dowell, sister to Daniel and Robert, mentioned in his journal by Mr. Colbert, who found one on the Chemung, and the other at the head of the Cayuga Lake. Judge Coryell was an officer in the Revolutionary war, and was a man of talents and high standing. The Coryell and Shoemaker families finally became enlisted in the interests of Methodism, and several



individuals from each family became devoted Christians and very useful members of the Church. Rev. V. M. Coryell is a son of the judge. William Colbert, who organized Tioga circuit in 1792-3, extended his labors to this locality.

It is said that Valentine Cook and John Broadhead preached in this place in 1795, but there seems to have been no society formed here until 1819. The class was formed by John Griffing, and consisted of four persons: Elijah Shoemaker and his wife, Daniel M'D. Shoemaker, and Ann Shoemaker.\* An appointment was established there and was taken into the Wyalusing circuit, to which it continued to be attached until it became an independent charge in 1835.

Among the older class of preachers who bestowed much labor upon this place, and whose labors were greatly blessed, are Griffing, Bibbins, Agard, and Judd.

A church was erected near Coryell's in 1823, which is called Asbury Chapel—the first new church built and finished, and belonging exclusively to the Methodists, within the present bounds of the Wyoming Conference.

Here, in 1825, *Rev. Horace Agard* made his earthly home, and here are deposited his earthly remains. He was a man of great purity of character, of extensive information, and of fine talents. He was received on trial in the Genesee Conference in 1819, was an effective preacher for nineteen years, and for eleven of these years held the office of presiding elder. He was a well-bred gentleman, a thorough theologian, and an unexceptionable Christian. He could be trusted; he never deserted the post of duty, never shrank from responsibility, never forsook a friend. He was untiring in labor, and saw much success. The whole of his ministerial life, with the exception of one year, was spent within the present bounds of the Wyoming Conference, and wherever he labored he enjoyed the affections, confidence, and respect of the people. His modest and dignified deportment secured him a passport to the best families and the most elevated

\* Communication from Rev. O. M'Dowell.

circles of society wherever he sojourned, and where he was the best known he was most esteemed.

Hard service and exposure finally impaired the constitution of our old friend, and in 1838, with great reluctance, he asked for and received a superannuated relation. Relaxation brought no relief to his failing physical system. A partial paralysis, followed by a derangement of the nervous system, occasioned a decline of his mental vigor and a depression of spirits, and for some two years he indulged in the most gloomy forebodings with regard to his eternal state. No reasoning on the part of his friends could rally him. Two days before his death his gloomy apprehensions all vanished, and he exclaimed: "Praise the Lord!" "Glory to God!" "Jesus is precious!" "Precious Saviour!"

"I'll praise him while he lends me breath,  
And when my voice is lost in death  
Praise shall employ my nobler powers."

On different occasions he uttered the following triumphant exclamations: "I see heaven open before me!" "I gaze on sparks of dazzling light, which are undimmed by the gaze!" "Yes, I shall go to heaven!" "O the prospect! It is worth a whole life of toil. Glory to God! glory to God!" "Beautiful! beautiful! beautiful!" His last words were: "Amen! halleluia! halle—!" On the last triumphant exclamation the power of utterance failed, and he was removed to the world of the blessed to complete it. "Mark the perfect man and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace."

#### CAROLINE CIRCUIT.

The Rev. Loring Grant informed us that the oldest appointment in this charge is Rawson's school-house. Best and Kimberlin, the preachers on Tioga circuit, preached there and formed a society in 1808. In 1809 Mr. Grant preached there himself. Here he found John Griffing, then a local preacher. The Methodists scattered through the



neighboring settlements belonged here; Mrs. Lucas at Berkshire, and the Whitings on Whiting Hill; Eleazer Valentine, and others.

Caroline circuit first appears upon the Minutes in 1821, Benjamin Landon, preacher. The two following years it was connected with Ithaca. In 1822 Fitch Reed and Dana Fox, and in 1823 Loring Grant and William W. Rundell, were the preachers. In 1824 Caroline was a separate charge; Loring Grant and John Wiley were the preachers. The charge then embraced Caroline, Slatersville, Speedsville, Jenks's, Berkshire, Newark, Richford, and several minor appointments.

During the conference year of 1824 a camp-meeting was held in Caroline, which was very successful. Some apprehended a failure, but God was present from the beginning. A goodly number of awakened persons presented themselves as subjects of prayer in the intervals of preaching. Numbers were soon powerfully converted and praised God aloud. The congregation was perfectly orderly, and there was not the least opposition. The prejudices which had existed against the camp-meetings were demolished, and all felt that God was evidently present to bless his people. At the conclusion between thirty and forty professed to have found the pearl of great price during the meeting. A blessed influence went out from this meeting, and a revival of religion extended to several parts of the circuit.

#### SPEEDSVILLE.

The following is communicated by Rev. R. Van Valkenburg for the present work :

"A little more than half a century ago this now beautiful rural district was one unbroken wilderness, where the savage roamed in sullen and solitary pride, and nought was to be heard but the scream of the panther or howl of the wolf, excepting when the stillness was broken by the crack of the hunter's rifle, or the rustling of the breeze through the forests.

"But soon the sound of the pioneer's ax and the crash of falling trees were heard, and the mighty forest vanished away as by magic; beautiful cottages were erected and dot here and there the landscape, and now there is to be found all the arts and luxuries that accompany the highest stage of human refinement.

"But no sooner had the hardy pioneers entered this region than the Methodist itinerant found his way among them, and began his mission of love and mercy, proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ. A few were converted, but there was no society formed till 1821, when Rev. Benjamin Landon and Caleb Kendall came and preached at Caroline Centre, and formed a class of about twelve members, and attached them to Ithaca. John James Speed and wife, Martha Nicholson, William Jackson, widow Rich, Jeremiah Kinney, John Kinney and wife, and Mary Cole, were among the first members. John James Speed was the leader. Most of this number have gone to join the Church triumphant above, others are in distant lands, and there is not a single member now belonging to the society that first joined it. The next year there was a revival, and a goodly number added to the Church; but they are all gone except one, that is, Calvin Clark, a venerable father in Israel, who yet remains among us to bless the Church and the world.

"The corner-stone of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Caroline Centre was laid by Dana Fox in 1822, and the work progressed until the house was so far completed that it was occupied for a place of worship, but it was never finished or dedicated. The place has been blest with a number of revivals, but at present there are only twenty-five in society, many having died, and others removed to distant lands."

#### BERKSHIRE STATION.

In 1827 James Kelsey and Gaylord Judd were the preachers on Caroline circuit. In 1828 Berkshire was con-



stituted an independent station, and Gaylord Judd was appointed to the charge of it. The following facts are communicated by Rev. R. S. Rose:

"The Methodist preachers commenced preaching at Berkshire about the year 1809. A Methodist class was formed about the same time, and there has been a class and preaching ever since.

"A Mr. Heman Smith was leader for a time, and then Samuel Smith was leader for many years; but both of them long since departed this life in peace.

"The first settlers of the town of Berkshire were mostly from New England. As Methodism began to grow and prosper, it met with opposition and persecution from the Congregational society. They considered the Methodists as intruders, and consequently assailed their doctrine, worship, and members with ridicule and sarcasm.

"A Rev. Mr. Osborn was pastor of the Congregational Church, and missionary, perhaps, for some years along in 1808-9-10, etc.

"When the Methodist itinerant was coming to fill his appointment, Mr. Osborn saddled his horse and rode some distance to meet him, in order to ride in his company, that he might abuse him. He asked questions like this: 'Are you not ashamed to be going about the country living on the people, teaching such and such doctrines?' Mr. Osborn, after being convinced of his wrong, confessed his abusive treatment, as described to Brother Wm. Whiting and others.

"But Mr. Osborn's becoming convinced of his wrong and confessing it did not counteract the poison that in some way was diffused in some of the members of his congregation. A Captain Leonard, on being asked by his boys on Sabbath if they might go to Methodist meeting, replied: 'There are the hoes, and you may take them and go into the field to hoeing; but you cannot go to Methodist meeting.'

"A Mr. Manning, of Middlefield, observed he knew the Methodists were a crazy set, for he was knowing to their

throwing down about twenty rods of old log fence hunting for the Saviour."

Rev. Fitch Reed was stationed on Ithaca and Caroline in 1822, and was the first Methodist preacher who made a very deep impression on the minds of the staid people of Berkshire. Under his ministry several influential families were won over to the interests of Methodism, among whom was the family of Collins. In 1824 we attended a quarterly meeting in the old school-house, and then the interest was high in favor of our doctrines and usages. Revs. L. Grant and J. Wiley were the preachers on Caroline circuit, which then embraced Berkshire.

"The Methodist meeting-house was commenced in or about the year 1823. When Brother Joseph Belcher commenced circulating a subscription for it, an old Mrs. Waldo observed: 'If you will build a meeting-house for the Methodists, I wish ye would set it on Methodist hill.' This is but an index to the spirit that existed as to the house.

"The house remained unfinished for some five or six years. Then Brothers E. Scott and J. Belcher took it in hand, and completed it at an expense of about one thousand dollars above the regular subscription. The first quarterly meeting held in the house was probably September 21, 1829."

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## CHAPTER III.

### OLD GENESSEE.

#### CAZENOVIA.

THE first principal of the Cazenovia seminary was Rev. Nathaniel Porter, a young man of good education, pleasing manners, and a thorough acquaintance with Methodism. He often preached in the seminary chapel, and as a preacher attracted general attention; and his character and talents,



both as principal of the seminary and a preacher of the Gospel, made favorable impressions on the minds of the citizens of Cazenovia in relation to Methodism. Up to this point the Methodist Episcopal Church had been considered by the respectables of this village as a Church for the poor and the ignorant. Now public sentiment was rapidly undergoing a revolution upon this subject.

Mr. Porter married into a respectable family of the place, which very much strengthened his influence. Professor A. W. Smith (late President Smith, of Middletown) was employed as a teacher. His learning and talents as an instructor, correct habits, and gentlemanly bearing procured him universal respect. He also married into one of the best families in town, and with results similar to those which followed the marriage of Mr. Porter. Their ladies both united with our Church, and became heartily attached to the doctrines and institutions of Methodism.

Several respectable families soon became connected with our society, and gave it their hearty support. Among these we may mention David B. Janson, Esq., and his wife; Doctor Josiah Natton and his wife; Doctor Wright, and others.

The duties of Mr. Porter in the school were so onerous as to make it impracticable for him to preach regularly in the chapel for any considerable length of time, and hence the little society began to contemplate an application to the conference for a preacher to reside among them, whose only business should be to attend to the spiritual wants of the people who might be disposed to wait upon his ministry.

In 1825 the Rev. Fitch Reed was stationed in Cazenovia. The society was feeble and the support small; but Mr. Reed soon won his way to the hearts of the people, and gained a large share of public confidence. The seminary chapel was his preaching place, and he there had, embracing the students, a congregation highly respectable both for numbers and intelligence. In the Advocate for October 7, 1826, Mr. Reed writes:

"The Lord has graciously visited this place, and filled the hearts of his people with gladness. A good work has been gradually progressing for some weeks past. As the conference located our seminary in this village, our friends have long felt a peculiar anxiety that the cause of religion might prosper, and give a tone to the literary establishment. Their many prayers have been answered, and God is enlarging the borders of Zion. The society in this place consisted of twenty-four when I came here, and we now have about seventy; and more or less are uniting with us nearly every Sabbath. Our young brethren, students in the seminary, have been rendered a peculiar blessing to the people by their fervent prayers and godly examples. Between thirty and forty have given evidence of a gracious change, and many others are anxiously inquiring what they shall do to be saved."

## AUBURN.

1828. Rev. Manly Tooker writes to the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, February 13:

"The Lord has recently made bare his arm in this hitherto afflicted and unfortunate station. In entering upon the duties of my charge in this place (July, 1826) the state of affairs presented a most gloomy aspect. The society had suffered much in consequence of the apostasy of some of its most prominent members, which, together with the embarrassed and unfinished state of the house, served to depress my spirits, and scatter thorns over the desolated field of my labors. To extricate the Church from a considerable debt, and to finish the house of worship, which had lain waste for several years, were objects which, in their bearing upon our future success, appeared indispensable. After making several unsuccessful efforts to enlist some person for this enterprise who could truly feel its importance, and who could accomplish it without prejudice to 'the word of the Lord,' we were in doubt for some time whether misery and destruction were



to be feared, or joy and prosperity hoped for. Necessity having been laid on me, I have not whereof to glory in saying that, at an expense of labor and anxiety more than equal to my health, our chapel was completed in a style of simple elegance, and dedicated to God on Sunday, 25th of November, 1827.

"After addressing the congregation on Sunday evening, Jan. 27, from 1 Kings xviii, 21, 'How long halt ye between two opinions?' we called for such as were decided in favor of the Lord's service to approach the newly erected altar, where the people of God would join in solemn prayer for his pardoning mercy. In a few moments the altar was thronged, and before the meeting closed three professed to have obtained the knowledge of God by the remission of sins. On Thursday evening following four more were added to the number of the justified, and many are now anxiously inquiring, 'What must we do?' We have received thirteen to probationary membership who have professed faith in Christ, and who are earnestly waiting for greater displays of the power of God among us. Let all who 'pray for the peace of Jerusalem' be joyful in their King."

#### REVIVALS AND ENLARGEMENT.

From the year 1824 to 1828, inclusive, was a period of great spiritual enlargement within our territory. The old Genesee district embraced the territory which, in 1828, was divided between Genesee, Ontario, Chenango, Oneida, Black River, and Potsdam districts, and a part of Susquehanna. During the period above alluded to the results of the labors of long years became more fully developed than at any previous period, and the fruits of recent labors were unusually abundant. These years were characterized by wonderful outpourings of the Holy Spirit, numerous conversions, and, consequently, the multiplication of circuits and stations. We can only occupy space for a few specimens, in addition to those we have already given, by way of illustration of this position.

In the summer of 1826 a great revival occurred in ITHACA, under the ministry of Rev. Benjamin Sabin. The work commenced at a camp-meeting in Asbury, Cayuga circuit, and went on with great power, as related by Mr. Sabin in the Christian Advocate and Journal, and may be found in Burritt's History.

The following paragraph, copied from a communication from Rev. Horace Agard, is a brief and comprehensive review of the work and the power with which it was carried forward:

"At our quarterly meeting on the first Saturday and Sabbath of this month, we think that at least twenty-five found peace with God in two days in our society alone. It appeared that the glory of the Lord descended on the congregation of the saints, while weeping penitents in great numbers crowded to the altar for prayer. Their convictions were generally deep and rational, and their conversions clear and free from enthusiasm. On the fourth day of this month one hundred and sixty joined the Methodist Episcopal Church, and thirty-nine the Presbyterian. This work is glorious indeed."

In August, 1827, a camp-meeting was held in Danby, under the direction of the presiding elder, aided by the preachers and leading members of the Ithaca charge. The revival in Ithaca had attained great notoriety, and a large gathering from all parts of the country was the result.

This camp-meeting had more of art and external comfort about it than had then been common at meetings of the sort in the interior. It was withal a very successful meeting. We were present, and distinctly recollect the great efforts on the stand. There were present three presiding elders and one who had retired from the field at the preceding conference. The great efforts of the occasion were a sermon by Rev. Robert Burch and one by Rev. George Gary. These sermons produced deep impressions. It is affecting to think that nearly all the preachers who took a part on the occasion are now in the land of spirits: Horace Agard,



Abner Chase, George Gary, Benjamin Sabin, John Griffing, Dennison Smith, Dr. Bartlett, James Kelsey, Gaylord Judd, Joseph Tower, and perhaps others.

A communication in the Methodist Magazine from Rev. Goodwin Stoddard, presiding elder of the GENESEE DISTRICT, dated February 9, 1825, gives a summary view of the work of God in this district :

"Our affairs at Rochester are much more favorable than formerly, and several have been recently converted and added to our Church in that place. On Sweden and Batavia circuits we have some happy revivals, and also on Perry and Geneseo, especially in Geneseo village. Indeed, there is not a single circuit in the district but has had more or less converted, and appearances of revivals commencing."

Letters from Rev. Asa Abel, presiding elder of this district, written to the Christian Advocate and Journal in November, 1827, and March, 1828, contain encouraging accounts of revivals, and increased attention to the Sabbath-school and tract interests upon the district.

Rev. Z. Paddock writes from Rochester, under date of January 9, 1828, cheering intelligence from that rapidly rising town. He states that under his predecessor, Rev. John Dempster, "the number of penitents became so great that it was difficult to find room for them to kneel at the altar. The work went on with great power until some time in the spring. Before conference not far from two hundred members were added to the Church as the fruit of the revival."

Mr. Paddock further says: "Every week since conference has witnessed the conversion of some immortal souls."

A communication from Ontario district to the Methodist Magazine by Rev. Abner Chase, the presiding elder, dated July 1, 1824, bears cheering tidings. The following is a specimen :

"But we have the greatest and best news from Lyons circuit. Brother Sabin, the preacher in charge of that circuit, writes as follows: 'We have on this circuit five

chapels and one parsonage, thirty classes and eight hundred and fifty members. Some of them were among the first-fruits unto God under the labors of *Wesley* and *Fletcher* in Europe; others the first-fruits of Methodism in the Southern States. In them we yet discover many lively traits of that pure love and zeal which characterized those holy men and ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"How many have been converted cannot now be easily ascertained. About two hundred and eighty have joined the different societies on the circuit the present year. The work has been gradually progressing for eight or ten months; perhaps the seed sown years ago by the servants of the Lord is now springing up and ripening. Indeed, we have been all the year harvesting, and are yet in the midst of the harvest, and who can tell what the Lord will yet do while his people pray and believe!"

In 1827 Mr. Chase gives an account of revivals at the Sulphur Springs, Palmyra, Penn Yan, Ulysses, and generally upon the district.

The ONEIDA DISTRICT shared in the reviving influences of this period. A letter from Rev. Joseph Baker, dated Camden, February 11, 1825, speaking of a revival in that place, says:

"This glorious work commenced last June, at a camp-meeting held in this town, when about thirty professed a saving change, and many others were deeply awakened. A number of the converts belonging to Camden carried the holy fire to that town, and in a few days an awful solemnity was depicted on the countenances of old and young, and scarcely a meeting was held in Camden for months afterward without some instances of awakenings or conversion in our congregations."

In a letter from Rev. Charles Giles, dated New York Mills, March 26, 1827, we have the following encouraging account:

"A powerful work of the Lord is now going on at this place. A great engagedness of soul has been manifested



in the church during the winter, and an unusual solemnity has pervaded the congregation for some time past. On the day of our quarterly fast the cloud broke and sinners began to cry for mercy. The quarterly meeting coming at this favorable time proved a powerful auxiliary in carrying on the work. All the exercises were remarkably moving, and tended to increase the excitement. Saturday and Sunday evening sinners were crying for mercy around the altar, and a number found peace. Our meetings are attended, from time to time, with the power of a Saviour's love unto salvation. About twenty within a few days have given evidence that they have passed from death unto life."

Rev. John S. Mitchell communicates cheering intelligence of the work of God at Paris under date of January, 1828.

The BLACK RIVER DISTRICT shared in the reviving influences of 1825. Rev. Dan Barnes, the presiding elder, gives interesting details.

The work continued under the administration of Rev. Goodwin Stoddard, Mr. Barnes's successor, and is by him duly reported.

Several communications from Rev. B. G. Paddock give glowing accounts of the power and progress of the work in Potsdam and the neighboring charge, in 1827.

Rev. Isaac Puffer writes from the Black River circuit under date of June of this year:

"This circuit has been greatly blessed the past year. In several of the societies the Lord has poured out his Spirit. Christians have been quickened; several have professed to experience perfect love, and others are seeking to obtain it. Several camp-meetings were greatly blessed in the conversion of souls. Upward of a hundred have been received into society, and some have joined the Presbyterians and Baptists. Among the converts is one who was formerly a Universalist preacher; but now, knowing the terrors of the Lord, is striving to persuade men."

The enlargement of the work in this part of the conference called for a new district, which was formed, and appears upon the Minutes for 1828, and is called POTSDAM DISTRICT, B. G. Paddock presiding elder.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### HOLLAND PURCHASE.

In 1821 the old Holland Purchase circuit was constituted a district, called Erie, Glezen Fillmore presiding elder. The country was then comparatively new, and the work of the preachers consisted in strengthening feeble societies and introducing preaching into new places. During Mr. Fillmore's four years' term the increase was not large, but a foundation was laid for a magnificent superstructure.

In 1825 the name of the district was changed from Erie to Buffalo, and Loring Grant was appointed presiding elder. A season of revivals followed which resulted in a large annual increase.

A letter from Mr. Grant, dated November 25, 1826, published in the Christian Advocate, reports revivals in Ridgeway circuit, Gainesville, Batavia, Barton, Buffalo, Black Rock, and other places, the work being very materially aided by a series of camp-meetings.

In April of 1827 Mr. Grant reports that "Buffalo district is still rising." Another series of camp-meetings was blessed in the conversion of souls and the enlargement of the Church.

Mr. Grant writes (December 31, 1828) that the series of camp-meetings for the district had resulted in the addition to the Church of "nearly three hundred" members. Church building had been progressing. "A good sized brick church is to be completed this winter in the flourishing village of Le Roy." "In the village of Scottsville a neat



and convenient brick house has been erected." "In the village of Brockport a very commodious, well-finished brick church has recently been erected."

Mr. Grant claimed to have one of the best set of workers in his district that could be found, and certain it is that they were greatly owned and blessed of God. It was a period of rapid growth and church extension. The wealth of the Church in this rapidly rising portion of the state of New York had greatly increased, and was advancing with constantly accumulating force. Many good churches were built, and comfortable accommodations for the congregations were rising in all directions. God shed down his blessings upon the labors of his servants, and a mighty army was raised up to fight the battles of truth and of righteousness.

We are only able to occupy space for mere glimpses of the progress of the work of God in this region during the period now under review in this interesting portion of our field. It was a wilderness for some years after Methodism had made considerable progress east of the Genesee River, but from 1820 to 1828 it fairly rivals the older portions of the field in the rapidity of its progress and the power of its influence. At the commencement of 1829 it was a great country for Methodism and Methodist churches. Ministerial labor was largely demanded, and the want brought the supply. Stations were constituted in the towns, and circuits were multiplied by divisions and subdivisions.

The old Holland Purchase circuit now constitutes the Genesee Conference; and what was the little town of Buffalo from 1810 to 1820 is now a powerful commercial city, and the seat of the General Conference for 1860. Well may we look back and with adoring wonder exclaim, "What hath God wrought!"

## STATISTICS.

In 1810 the numbers in society stand as follows :

Susquehanna district.....	3,966
Cayuga district .....	4,124
Upper Canada district.....	2,603

Traveling preachers, 57. Members 10,693

In 1820 there were :

Oneida district.....	4,556
Chenango district.....	5,103
Ontario district.....	3,047
Genesee district.....	2,536
Susquehanna district.....	3,048
Upper Canada district.....	2,558
Lower Canada district.....	2,999

Traveling preachers, 117. Members 23,947

In 1828 the numbers reported are :

Ontario district.....	4,078
Oneida district.....	5,303
Chenango district.....	4,873
Black River district.....	4,128
Susquehanna district.....	4,424
Genesee district.....	3,905
Buffalo district.....	5,228

Traveling preachers, 138. Members 31,949

The Canada districts, which had been constituted a separate conference, reported this year 9,678 members and 48 traveling preachers, making altogether a total of 41,627 members, and 186 preachers. Upon a careful calculation it will be found that the numbers more than double in ten years.



## CHAPTER V.

## C H A R A C T E R S.

## JOSIAH KEYES

Was born in Canajoharie, New York, December 3, 1799. He was received on trial in the Genesee Conference in 1820. He was twice elected to the General Conference, and died April 22, 1836. When that body was in session in Cincinnati we learned that our dear friend had gone home. As he was about to leave the world he said: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

He was a man of an earnest spirit and unaffected piety, and was a successful preacher. The characteristics of his mind were marked by strength, patient investigation, and perseverance in application to study. He had an unconquerable thirst for knowledge, and in its attainment overcame great difficulties.

Soon after he commenced the work of the ministry he formed a resolution to study the dead languages. He only had the opportunity of occasional assistance in his course, and was placed from year to year upon laborious circuits. Under all these disadvantages he proceeded first to the study of Latin. Then he studied Greek and Hebrew through the Latin. It was not many years before he became familiar with the Greek Testament and the Hebrew Bible, and had read nearly all the Greek and Latin classics.

Our acquaintance with his character and habits commenced in 1825, while he was stationed at Owego. He always had his Greek Testament at hand, and when he visited in families every interval of conversation was improved in reading Greek or Hebrew.

After he had once fairly mastered a principle he never

lost it. He remembered words, and quoted and used what he had read with great facility. His knowledge of the classics, and of the best writers in the English language, enabled him to enrich his discourses with rare and beautiful illustrations. Upon controverted questions he referred to the original, and here he never failed to show himself a scholar.

Josiah Keyes was a powerful preacher. When in his happiest moods he would enchain a congregation for two hours together, and produce the most powerful impressions. He held the office of presiding elder for several years, and in presence of the great crowds at his quarterly meetings he was sure to come out in his best style, and then his eloquence was often overwhelming.

The subject of our sketch was artless, frank, and ingenuous, and in childlike simplicity had few equals. We once heard him debate the question of capital punishment before a debating club. He doubted the justice and expediency of capital punishment; but, to accommodate matters, he took the affirmative. He constructed an argument which was so overwhelmingly conclusive that he won the decision, converted his opponents, and converted himself. He afterward ingenuously confessed that he had changed his mind; that the argument which he had advanced had reacted upon himself and won him over to the side which he had taken, not from conviction, but merely to carry on the discussion, as there was no one willing to take that side. Lawyers and doctors were opposed to him, but he was victorious in the argument, and then yielded to the force of his own logic.

Our friend had his eccentricities, and they were of the class which are often found in hard students. He was absent-minded and careless of appearances. We have seen him walk in the middle of a dusty street when there was a clean walk on each side. His horse and equipage always looked neglected, often were in a most horrible plight. When on Owego station he visited Deacon Mersereau, who was notoriously peevish.



"Brother Keyes," said he, "why don't you grease your carriage?" Keyes laughingly replied:

"Why, does it need greasing?"

"Need greasing! I should think so, when it squeaks so loud that it can be heard half a mile." "Come along now," added the deacon, "and I'll help you. It's a burning shame for a Methodist preacher to drive such a carriage."

Mr. Keyes really took time to go through the operation, and was much surprised to find what was the real condition of the parts which are exposed to friction and need frequent lubrications.

Mr. Keyes was a tall and rather majestic figure, but his walk was ungainly, and his manners generally quite unstudied, sometimes uncouth. His voice was coarse and heavy, and his movements in the pulpit were measured and often ungraceful, but were not artificial. They were the natural workings of an engine of great power, a soul convulsed with an irresistible tide of excitement. He had a keen black eye, black hair, a bilious complexion, and a staid, thoughtful countenance. See him alone, driving on the highway, or walking the streets, and you would take him at once for a man of study, and almost wholly abstracted from the objects and scenes around him. Speak to him pleasantly and he would smile; tell him something amusing and he would laugh. He was a pleasant companion, a true friend, a lover of good men, a brother of the race.

A noble specimen of a man was Josiah Keyes; by nature a great man, by grace an eminent Christian. He was cut down in the zenith of his usefulness; his powerful physical frame was early worn out by the over action of his mighty soul. He died in consequence of a derangement of the functions of the liver, brought on by exposure and excessive labor. He lived long enough to make his mark upon the mind of the age, and actually did the work of many years during his brief career.

## GEORGE EVANS

Was of Welsh extraction. He was born in Milford, Pike county, Pennsylvania, January 31, 1790. It may be said that he had *no* opportunities for education until he was converted, and that was when he was nineteen years of age. Until that period he ran wild, never having learned to read, or scarcely ever having worn a shoe.

Religion aroused his manhood, and he immediately betook himself to the means of improvement which were within his reach. It was soon made evident that under a rough exterior was concealed a diamond, which under proper circumstances might be made to shine and sparkle among the brightest gems of genius.

He commenced exhorting his fellows to turn to God, and at the same time made excellent progress in learning to read the Scriptures. He was licensed as a local preacher, and the first knowledge we had of him he lived in a log-cabin near Hunt's Ferry, on the Susquehanna. Here he toiled for a living, running small rafts of rails and posts down to Wyoming, and there carrying on a little trade with the farmers.

In the spring of 1819, at the time of the last quarterly meeting for the year, we were seated on the stoop of the old Myers house, at Forty Fort, in company with Marmaduke Pearce and Mr. Myers. A stalwart, ill-clad raftsmen came up the bank of the river with his collar open, and his coat upon his arm. His feet were partially protected by an old pair of shoes tied up with bark; he wore no stockings. He was sun-burned and unshaved, with a brown linen shirt and pants of the coarsest fabric. And what did this rough looking mountaineer do but walk up to the presiding elder and Squire Myers, hold out his brawny hand, and address each with as much confidence and familiarity as if he had been a lawyer just from the city. He took a seat and talked freely, and made not the slightest apology for his appearance. He had brought a raft into the eddy, and



evidently had made his calculations to be at the quarterly meeting. On our way to church Mr. Pearce touched us with his elbow, and in an under tone said, "I intend to set George to exhorting after me." The sermon as usual was short, and George was called up into the high old-style pulpit and told to exhort. Nothing daunted, he proceeded. He soon fired up, and his words told upon the hearts of the people. He was generally known, and no great surprise was expressed; but all were pleased, and many a hearty "Amen" and "Glory to God" cheered on the rustic exhorter until his soul was in a perfect blaze. His language was lofty, and the power of his eloquence was overwhelming. Mr. Pearce wept and laughed together, and shook with emotion through his entire frame.

Mr. Evans was employed by the presiding elder to travel on Tioga circuit in 1824, and in 1825 was admitted on trial. When his probation expired he failed to satisfy the committee of his knowledge of the prescribed course of study, and came near being dropped. The next year he came up to conference well prepared and was received.

He traveled twenty-four years, and was generally returned a second year. His range, with the exception of two years, was through the Susquehanna district, and wherever he was appointed he was received with open arms.

He was a man of reading and study, and finally became a thorough theologian and considerable of a scholar. On great occasions he sometimes broke out in strains of eloquence which astonished everybody. At camp-meetings he often preached *the great sermon*, which was matter of animated conversation for years. At night on a camp-ground, when the pale moon began to peer above the horizon, and the stars were seen twinkling through the leaves of the trees, he would make his highest flights. On one occasion the star-bespangled arch of heaven was "God's chandelier;" and on another, after the most brilliant description of God's handiwork in marshaling the hosts of heaven, "the star-studded canopy was but the under side of God's temple."

George Evans had a great fiery Welsh soul. When fully on a blaze the flames ascended high, and excited mighty sympathies in the hearts of his entranced hearers. His voice at first was a little husky, but when fully brought out was like the sound of a trumpet.

He died January 25, 1849. His last words were: "My heavenly Father knows best what world to have me in; I enjoy a blessed peace, a perfect reconciliation."

The following truthful character of our subject has been prepared by Rev. Asa Brooks, one of his old colleagues:

"His personal appearance was not prepossessing. His dress was always plain, and evidently of home manufacture, and he was a little careless how it was put on. He rode an old horse, over which was usually thrown the old-fashioned saddle-bags well filled with books and articles of clothing. And as he rode along strangers would have taken him for a root doctor rather than a Methodist preacher of modern date. But those who knew him would recognize in that homely attired man in the distance, jogging along slowly and steadily on 'Old Roan,' the respected and loved pastor of Windsor circuit.

"As a pastor he had but few equals. His visits were usually short, but he contrived in a brief interview to leave a good religious impression on the mind of each member of the family. He was instructive, and hence the religious impressions made were lasting, being based upon some important truth impressed upon the memory.

"Faithful dealing with souls over whom the Holy Ghost had made him overseer, was a rule which he never violated, though occasionally in the discharge of duty he gave offense. At one of his appointments the wife of the class-leader was notorious for her habit of backbiting. Whenever the preacher called at her house he was compelled to listen for an hour or more to a recital of the wicked deeds of her neighbors, not one of them escaping. On one of his visits Father Evans had been listening to her a while, and his righteous soul became exceedingly vexed, and stepping up to



her he exclaimed in a voice of authority : ' Woman, stop ! stop ! don't you know that your tongue is too long ? I advise you to cut it off this moment. Why, it is so long that it reaches to every one in the neighborhood, and stings them like an adder.' This silenced her. She left the room and ever after refused to see him. But we heard no more of the woman's scandal, and the society had peace the remaining part of the year. During the year we labored together we had a precious revival ; and though it was not convenient for him to be present much at the extra meetings, he did great service by his visits at the right time and place, and so framing his discourse on the Sabbath as to help on the good work. He would also manage so to bring into exercise the gifts of the Church and young converts as to make them very useful. To his skill as a pastor may be attributed in a great degree the prosperity of the Church during that year.

" He drew large congregations, no small share of which was composed of the most intelligent classes. It was no uncommon thing for members of other Churches to leave their own ministry to hear him when it was his turn to preach. His style was somewhat peculiar. He had a rare faculty of illustrating and rendering instructive his discourses by important principles in science ; and it was this, no doubt, that made the intelligent so eager to hear him.

" There was also an adaptation in his theme and method of treatment which could not fail to make his discourses useful. At one appointment the Scottite excitement had broken into the society and drawn off some of the members from the Church, and others were disaffected. We held an extra meeting in the neighborhood, which the disaffected and seceding brethren attended. In his discourse at this meeting Father Evans compared the Church to a well-regulated household, where the mother, ever watchful over the welfare of her children, arranged everything in the best order possible for their comfort. He said : ' Children sometimes think they know more than their mother, and want to have things their own way. Sometimes when the mother

is absent they will change the position of every article of furniture, so that when she returns she will hardly know that she is in her own house.' And then he spoke of the folly and ingratitude of such a course. He then made the application of the comparison instituted in such a way as to bear directly on the disaffected members present. This was all done with such a spirit and in such a manner as not to offend, while at the same time it had its designed effect. We lost no more members that year at this appointment, and those who had left ceased almost entirely their opposition to the Church which had nourished and brought them up.

"Father Evans sometimes made a failure in preaching, but never except when he was preaching to a small congregation. He needed the stimulus of a large and intelligent audience to bring out his powers. We held several grove-meetings, and multitudes gathered to them. On these occasions his eloquence was overwhelming, and the vast assembly would leave the spot in breathless silence, unbroken save by the sobs of the stricken penitent."

#### MARMADUKE PEARCE

was of Irish extraction. His ancestors were Protestant soldiers, who entered Ireland from England with the army of Cromwell in 1649. Receiving confiscated lands in part pay for military services, a portion of the family settled near Enniskillen, in the province of Ulster. In 1690 his great-grandfather, in company with eight brothers, entered the army of William III., and fought shoulder to shoulder with Huguenots and English Blues against the Catholic king, James II., at the celebrated battle of the Boyne.

The subject of this sketch was born at Paoli, Chester county, Pa., August 18, 1776, and was baptized in St. Peter's Church by its first pastor, Rev. William Currie, June 15, 1777.

Born in the midst of the Revolution, in a country constantly overrun by English soldiers, and which did not



recover from the ravages of war for many years after peace was declared, he received little scholastic education; but having a taste for books and study, he improved himself until he became qualified to teach a country school. He excelled in penmanship, and when quite a young man was employed by the proper authorities to transcribe the records of Chester county, which occupied him about one year.

About the year 1805 he engaged with General Benner, an extensive iron-master in Center county, Pa., in the capacity of a book-keeper.

About the year 1808 the Methodist preachers preached at Benner's iron-works, near Bellefonte, Center county, Pa., when he became convicted, and after seeking the Lord for six months, during which time he lost sixty pounds of flesh, he was converted to God.

Soon after his conversion he was deeply impressed with a belief that it was his duty to preach the Gospel, and with this impression came a proposition from citizens of Bellefonte to teach the academy in that village, and for said service they would pay his board and give him five hundred dollars per annum. Here was a trial of his faith and the genuineness of his call to preach Jesus: to become a poor Methodist preacher and wander about from place to place, without receiving perhaps fifty dollars a year, or to become the teacher of an academy, with a good salary, in a pleasant village. He resolved to take his stand on the walls of Zion and declare the unsearchable riches of Christ. His first efforts at exhortation were failures, and he frequently retired from the congregation to the woods ashamed and mortified, praying God to relieve him from the work.—*S. Pearce, Esq.*

His convictions of a call to the ministry were clear and satisfactory, but such was his natural timidity and desire for retirement from the public gaze, that he resisted the call until he became convinced that disobedience would result in the loss of his soul. He received his first license to preach in June, 1811. The same year he was received on trial by the Genesee Conference, and appointed to the Holland Pur-

chase; in 1812 to Tioga; in 1813 he was ordained deacon, and appointed to Wyoming; in 1814 he was appointed to Shamokin; in 1815 he was ordained elder, and appointed to the Susquehanna district, where he remained four years. In 1819 he had his appointment on Wyoming circuit; in 1820 Shamokin, in the Baltimore Conference; in 1821 Northumberland; in 1822, Chambersburgh; in 1823-4 Carlisle; in 1825 he was appointed to the Northumberland district, where he remained four years. In 1829 he was appointed to Baltimore circuit; in 1830-31 to Baltimore City; in 1832 to Northumberland circuit; in 1833 to Owego, Oneida Conference; in 1834 to Pittston; in 1835-36 he was connected with the Wyoming circuit as a supernumerary. In 1837 he became superannuated, and remained so until his death.

Mr. Pearce's manner in the pulpit was simple and unstudied. He talked straight on in the most unimpassioned manner. Every word meant something, and was in the right place. There was no effort for effect or display of learning. His object was to instruct and improve his hearers. When he grappled with a difficulty in criticism or in reasoning he did it with the strength and skill of a master, but always without any flourish of trumpets. Although in general his manner was quite dispassionate, he would, upon great occasions, soar to the higher regions of the pathetic and the sublime. When this was the case he would raise his voice and employ violent gestures. We have heard him roar like a lion, and seen him clap his hands and stamp his feet, and pour out a flood of tears. When he became thoroughly aroused, and his soul was set on fire and became overwhelmed with some sublime thought, or a tide of passion, his utterances produced amazing effects upon his audience. One burst of feeling, which might not last ten minutes, would raise a storm which would career on and on, while he would sink into silent adoration, or seek relief from the pressure of excitement in tears.

Our subject was withering in his rebukes and sarcasms. A Baptist preacher in Bradford county, Pa., in 1818, pub-



lished an offensive attack upon Arminians in connection with the minutes of an association. Mr. Pearce gave the author a most killing rebuke in a sort of fly-sheet, couched in plain Quaker language, and signed "Obadiah Broadbrim." The elder had unfortunately charged the Arminians with a spirit of persecution. Obadiah retorted his accusation upon him, and presented as many facts from ecclesiastical history to show where the spirit of intolerance and persecution had always been manifested in the controversy on "the five points," as could well be crowded into the same space. The paper was scattered broadcast over the country, and whether the redoubtable assailant of the Arminians was annihilated, or hid himself, we know not; but we believe he gave the *persecuting* Arminians no more trouble.

Mr. Pearce was very sensitive on questions of order and promptness. He would never wait for the tardy. We have known him to commence and conclude his service by the time the people had begun to come. At a quarterly meeting in Kingston he woefully disappointed a large congregation, on Saturday, at eleven o'clock, by this course. But he made ample amends by giving them a rich discourse at two P.M., at which the old church was full in due time, and a powerful sermon on Sunday. Anything out of order made him uncomfortable, and was sure to bring from him a scathing rebuke. Replies were useless; the utmost that the victims of his reproofs and sarcasms ever attempted was to charge him behind his back with "scolding."

Quite frequently Mr. Pearce suffered from hypochondria, but prayer or good company would always bring him relief. He sometimes, but not often, broke down in the pulpit, but he was sure to gain by the operation. Once at a camp-meeting, after he had become superannuated, he was put up to preach. He read his hymn, made a short prayer, and announced his text. He preached with great deliberation for a few minutes when a streak of the *blues* came over him, and suddenly he came to a pause, and, turning his back upon the audience, said, "I can't preach!" Picking up his

hat he immediately left the ground. Thinking, and praying, and weeping over the matter through the night, early the next morning he made his appearance again on the camp-ground. He found his way to the stand, and, addressing the presiding elder, he asked, "Will you let me try again?" "O yes, certainly, Father Pearce," was the answer. He took the stand again and read the same hymn, knelt, and made about the same prayer, took the same text, commenced with the same introduction, but made a very different finish. This time he had a clear sea, and he made a successful voyage. His sermon was closed amid tears and shouting. Everybody rejoiced to see the old lion shake his mane and rush upon the prey, after being ensnared and well-nigh taken captive by his adversary.

Mr. Pearce was a companionable man; he loved his friends and enjoyed their society. He could tell a good story, and enjoyed true wit and humor; but no man could appear to be more unamiable than he in the presence of conceited fools. Such persons were sure to pronounce him "cross."

Marmaduke Pearce was both a man of genius and a man of study. As a preacher, he had few equals. His mighty mind would grasp the contents of a volume, and compress them into a sermon with such skill that the sermon would give a better view of the subject than the book. He loved the old English authors. With Butler, Sherlock, Tillotson, Taylor, Horsley, and many others of the same class, he was perfectly familiar. His memory had a tenacity which allowed nothing of importance to escape. He was a master of English style, and a most able critic in grammar, logic, and rhetoric. But he made no display of his learning. He sought the shade, wishing, as he once expressed himself, if he could not be *little* to be *unknown*. He was constitutionally diffident, and if this tendency sometimes betrayed him into a shrinking from great responsibilities, it still acted as a safeguard to strong passions and a mighty will.

Our brother was a man of earnest piety. He prayed



without ceasing. He had a rugged nature to struggle with, but grace was adequate to the conquest which he sought. The latter portion of his life was marked with severe bodily afflictions and great spiritual conflicts. Toward the closing scene the enemy thrust hard at him. Infidelity, with its grim visage, came up to make a last desperate assault upon his faith. He had put to flight this cruel foe a thousand times, and he did not fail in the final conflict. After the struggle was over he said to his old friend, Rev. G. Lane: "Brother Lane, the Lord has given me the victory. Glory be to the Father! glory be to the Son! glory be to the Holy Ghost for the glorious deliverance he has wrought! Satan has desired to have me, that he might sift me as wheat. He has tried to destroy my faith in the Holy Trinity, the Divinity of Christ, the great atonement, and all the fundamental doctrines of our holy religion; but God has given me the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. \* Glory be to his name forever! How wonderful that such a being, so great, so wise, so holy, could condescend to hear the groanings and supplications of one so utterly unworthy of his notice!" When almost gone he whispered, "Happy! happy! happy!" and the last words which fell from his lips were, "Come quickly!" Thus died Marmaduke Pearce on August 11, 1852, aged seventy-six years and twenty-four days.

After his death a paper was found with his signature attached to it, dated July 1, 1852, giving particular directions in relation to his funeral and burial. And, should his sons see proper to put a tombstone over his grave, he wished the following to be put on it, "*not one word more or less:*"

“The mortal remains of Marmaduke Pearce lie beneath this stone; the immortal part lives where the weary are at rest. He was born in Wiltstown, Chester county, Pa., August 18, 1776, and died in \_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_

“Reader, prepare to meet thy God. M. PEARCE.”

His three sons erected a stone by his grave, with the inscription upon it which he had prepared.

## GEORGE GARY

Was born in Middlefield, Otsego county, N. Y. His mother died when he was an infant, and his father being a man of very intemperate habits, he was adopted and raised by an uncle in New England.

When Mr. Gary was a small boy he attended Methodist meetings, and there being an awaking among the people he became a subject of the gracious influence which was abroad. One evening, the meeting being in a private house, and the place much crowded, he took his seat on a pile of wood in the corner. As the meeting waxed warm his heart became deeply moved. As he often described his feelings, his little heart was as full of sorrow as it could hold, and he thought if some of the good people would only pray for him it would be a great favor; but he could not hope that they would notice a poor wicked little boy. Finally, some one seeing him weeping, asked him if he did not want the people to pray for him. "O," said he, "how glad I was of an opportunity to kneel down and be prayed for." He struggled for a while with unbelief and temptations, and then found relief.

The boy, George Gary, was soundly converted, and soon began, with many tears, to tell how great things God had done for him. There was a beauty and a pathos in the relations of his experience and his exhortations which excited universal admiration and produced deep impressions. He was encouraged by the preachers, and soon put up to exhort at quarterly meetings. His hair was very light, and he had a young appearance for his years, and his exhortations were a marvel.

In 1809 his name appears on the Minutes in connection with Barre circuit, Vermont district, New England Conference. He was then in his sixteenth year. In 1813 Mr. Gary was ordained elder and transferred to the Genesee Conference. In 1819 he was appointed presiding elder, and continued to hold that office for many years.

In 1843 the condition of our mission in Oregon was



thought to demand the supervision of some person of financial ability and practical wisdom. Mr. Gary was applied to and consented to take the appointment, and took passage in a vessel and sailed around the Cape. He remained in Oregon four years, and then returned. He resumed his position in the Black River Conference, and served the Church with his usual ability.

Mr. Gary was a man of great shrewdness, and a profound judge of human character. He read men most accurately, and knew well how to approach them. He was cautious almost to the verge of timidity, and was seldom committed to an untenable position. He could plan a campaign, but did not much like to head it unless the ground was perfectly clear, and there was no doubt with regard to his men. He was a shrewd calculator of chances, and never overrated his prospects of success. He was a wise counselor, a safe adviser, a firm friend, and an agreeable companion. He was pleasant in conversation, sometimes jocose, loved specimens of genuine wit and humor, and had a fund of these commodities to dispose of upon suitable occasions. He had a mean opinion of sour godliness, and believed it no sin to indulge in a good hearty laugh when in a select circle. Once he was taken to task by a brother minister, who never laughed, for his "light and trifling" manners. He heard the rebuke with due gravity, examined himself, and looked the whole matter through, and finally came to the conclusion that his friend had become "righteous overmuch," and that an excess of good cheer was quite as tolerable as monkish austerity and uncharitable judging.

In the pulpit George Gary was a strong man. Not that he always preached great sermons. He sometimes fell below himself, and when this was the case no one knew it better than he did; at others he was quite above himself, and he then created a great sensation. Usually he preached with much deliberation, and was simply instructive; but on great occasions his soul fired up and he was overwhelmingly eloquent. His fort was in the pathetic. When

he became thoroughly moved his efforts were the very soul of passion. Persuasion, melting, overpowering eloquence, is the creature of passion, and we never witnessed a more perfect triumph in this line than was often achieved by our much loved friend when in the zenith of his ministerial life. On the camp ground thousands have melted under his burning words; saints shouted, and sinners stood aghast.

There was only one thing wanting in our subject to have placed him among the greatest men of his time, and that was the habits of a hard student. These he had not, although he was respectably read. He talked of men and books in a way to impress the uninitiated with the idea that he was a reader. But much of what he knew was gathered from conversations with scholars and readers. What he heard said he never forgot, and by a synthetical process which seemed natural, he put things of the same class together which were gathered from distant points and at different periods.

Mr. Gary stood high in the confidence of his brethren in his conference. He led the delegation in the General Conference of '52, the last one that he attended, and was there put forward by his friends as a candidate for the episcopacy. The Genesee, Oneida, and Black River Conferences gave him their suffrages for that office in the general ballot, although he never sought the nomination, and no one knows that he would have accepted the office if he had been elected.

His health was far from being what it had generally been when at the General Conference, and it continued to decline. At the conference of 1854 he asked for and received a superannuated relation. The remarks upon the occasion were truly affecting, and produced a profound sensation in the conference. He finished his course with joy on the 25th of March in the following year.



## ELISHA BIBBINS

Was born in Hampton, Washington county, N. Y., July 16, 1790, and died at Scranton, Pa., on the 6th of July, 1859, of disease of the heart, aged about sixty-nine years. He was converted November 8, 1805, under the labors of Rev. Bradley Silleck; was licensed to preach in January, 1812, and was admitted on trial in the Genesee Conference in July of the same year. He was for twelve years of his ministry in the effective ranks, three years a supernumerary, and, including the present year, thirty-two years a superannuated preacher. He, however, did much valuable service in the way of filling vacancies during the years of his superannuation. During this period he preached many sermons, and won many souls to Christ. The last twenty years of his life he spent in the state of Illinois. His strong attachments to his old friends, and a desire once more to visit the fields of his early toils, led him to form the resolution to be present at the session of the Wyoming Conference to be held in Newark Valley. This purpose he executed, although he was very feeble; so much so that perhaps prudence would have dictated his remaining at home in the bosom of his family.

He met his old friends and fellow-laborers with the genial spirit, the same hearty "God speed" which characterized his early conference associations. He considered it his last visit, but still bade the brethren "farewell" without any indications of gloomy forebodings.

Soon after the close of the conference Dr. Everets, of Nichols, after a thorough examination of his case, informed him that there was every evidence that his heart was diseased, and he would die suddenly. The information did not startle him in the least, although it seemed to be new. His cheerfulness abated not for a moment, and he subsequently referred to this medical opinion as one well founded, but with no other remark than, "I am trying to be ready for the summons."

He traveled slowly, and with intervals of rest, with his friends, through Bradford county to Tunkhannock, where he spent the 4th of July. Here the blandness of his manners, and the freedom of his intercourse with the people, excited great admiration.

On the morning of the 5th, rather suddenly, he resolved that day to visit the writer at his home in Scranton. At eleven o'clock A. M. of that day he was seated in our study. During the afternoon he spent the time in free and cheerful conversation. At a few minutes before ten o'clock he prayed with us and retired. The house was alarmed in the night by a call from his room. We hastened to him with a light, and found him in a violent paroxysm of coughing, and freely expectorating blood. He was in a severe chill, and expressed a desire to be where there was fire. We immediately removed him to our room, kindled a fire in the stove, and sent for a physician. Medical aid relieved his sufferings, and he seemed disposed to sleep. We staid by his side for a short time, and when we next noticed him, which was at early dawn, he had quietly fallen asleep in Jesus. He had not changed his position in the least, and from every appearance died without the disturbance of a muscle. A post mortem examination verified the opinion of Dr. Everets; he died of ossification of the heart.

The Rev. Elisha Bibbins was a man of good natural abilities. His powers of perception were quick, and his reasoning faculties vigorous. His sensibilities were strong and well disciplined. He had a strong sense of the ludicrous. He readily formed unusual associations, and exhibited a striking tendency to wit and humor, a tendency which showed itself to the very last. He was capable of the most biting sarcasm, but seldom indulged this dangerous faculty to the annoyance of his friends. His cuts were usually modified by so much good-humor that they inflicted no pain. He was a man of great energy of character and great industry. He was always in earnest. It was this which gave almost overwhelming power to his sermons,



exhortations, and prayers. He was a good theologian, but a better preacher. In his best moods and his highest flights he poured out a torrent of eloquence which would melt the very rocks. He was a good singer, and in his prime his singing had fire and power in it, and was often the means of awakening and conversion.

Many souls were brought to Christ by the instrumentality of this zealous and faithful minister of the Gospel. The fruit of his labor is thickly scattered over the fields which he occupied as a pastor or as a temporary laborer. Influential members of the Church, and ministers of high standing, now doing good service, acknowledge him as their spiritual father. The Rev. George Landon, on the occasion of his funeral, gave an interesting account of his awakening and conversion, and in the most affecting language claimed the man whose mortal remains lay before the desk as the means, under God, of that great change. So literally true is it that "he being dead yet speaks" in and through those "living epistles, known and read of all men," who were redeemed from sin and death through his instrumentality.

He was of medium size, well formed, with a prominent nose, a piercing but benignant eye, of a nervous temperament, and but for the excess of the sensitive in his nature might have done good service down to old age and enjoyed good health. But the sword was too sharp for the scabbard. The fire within consumed him. His great efforts in revivals early reduced a splendid physical organism to a wreck; still there was life in him, which manifested itself in efforts to do something for God and the world to the close of life.

His piety was sincere, deep, and earnest. He prayed without ceasing, and trusted in God. His religion was of the hopeful, cheerful cast. I have known him under great pressures, but never knew him to lose heart. In poverty and want, in sickness and sufferings, he was happy, often buoyant and even playful. He had a young soul in him, and was a brother and companion even to the children when he was old and gray-headed. He enjoyed himself,

enjoyed the world, and enjoyed God, in spite of a hard lot and many adverse winds. He was a man of a thousand, a man of noble impulses, of a great soul, of a genial nature, of a lofty spirit, of a strong will, and of inexhaustible patience. As a husband, a father, a brother, and a friend, he occupies an elevation which few have reached. He rests from his toils and his works follow him.

#### GEORGE LANE

Was born in the state of New York, not far from the Hudson, after his parents had set off from Massachusetts for the wilds of the Susquehanna, on the 13th of April, 1784. His father was the first white settler in Oquaga, Windsor, Broome county, New York.

The early history of George Lane was marked by the toils, hardships, and exposure common to the life of a boy in a new country. The common fate of all, old and young, then was hard work, coarse garments, simple food, often deficient in quantity, and few of the means and appliances of intellectual improvement. In those disadvantages he shared a common lot with his fellows. The Puritan morals, piety, books, and reading of his excellent mother exerted a strong moral influence upon his mind while very young; yet he lived in a state of impenitence until 1803, when the Methodist preachers began to make decided impressions upon the population scattered through the wilderness of Northern Pennsylvania and Southern New York.

During this year he was awakened under the preaching of James Herron, and received into the Church by Samuel Budd. He was admitted on trial in the Philadelphia Conference in 1805, and located in 1810; readmitted in 1819, and again located in 1825; and readmitted again in 1834. In 1836 he was elected assistant book agent, and for sixteen years served in this capacity, or that of principal agent. In 1852 he retired from active duties, and from this period experienced a physical decline, which enfeebled his mental powers. He died May 6, 1859.



His religious habits were so deeply imbedded in his nature that they never forsook him. He often asked a blessing at the table, and prayed with as much propriety as when in health. The day before his departure he prayed twice fervently and eloquently. He died suddenly in convulsions.

Our excellent old friend, for about the term of twelve years, was treasurer of the missionary society. In this latter capacity he was not content with merely keeping the funds, but was deeply interested and earnestly engaged in the means of procuring them.

When Mr. Lane took charge of the missionary treasury it was laboring under a heavy debt. The debt continued to increase from fifty to sixty thousand dollars. All the means which could be spared from the funds of the Book Concern were loaned to the society until the debt became unmanageable in that form. He applied to two of our most worthy and generous citizens to indorse the treasurer's notes in bank, but they declined. Such, however, was the confidence reposed in him at the banks, that one of the heaviest of these institutions gave him all the money he wanted upon his own individual security. He thus became responsible for more money than he was worth, and went on paying drafts and trusting in God. His good management and his graphic appeals through the Advocate in behalf of the cause, were principally instrumental in bringing money into the treasury, until, after years of painful effort, the society was declared free from debt. Such was his concern for the missionary cause, and such the earnestness and consistency of his appeals in behalf of the treasury, that he was not unfrequently entitled "The Father of the Missionary Society," and the society called "Brother Lane's pet." Having seen the society through a fearful crisis, he then favored extension, and zealously urged the duty of entering every open door.

Such is a mere outline of the official history of Rev. George Lane. What remains is a brief survey of his character as a Christian, as a minister, as the head of a family, as a business man, and as a member of civil society.

As a Christian our old friend and brother was conscientious, earnest, and uniform. He was emphatically a man of prayer. His communion with God was deep and constant. Whether in the pulpit, in the family, or in the closet, his prayers were characterized by deep agony of soul and firm confidence in God. His piety was a burning flame, which arose to heaven and shone out as widely as his name and his fame were known.

As a preacher he was thoroughly orthodox, systematic, and earnest. His sermons exhibited a thorough acquaintance with the Scriptures and with the human heart. In the palmy days of his itinerancy he was often overwhelmingly eloquent. Sometimes under his powerful appeals vast congregations were moved like the trees of the forest before a mighty wind. Many a stout-hearted sinner was broken down, and cried aloud for mercy under his all but irresistible appeals. His language was unstudied, but chaste, correct, simple, and forcible.

As a business man our friend was conscientious, prudent, industrious, economical, conciliatory, and persevering. These qualities made him successful as a merchant, and gave him the confidence of the Church and the public generally as a book agent and as missionary treasurer. Everybody considered him both prudent and honest; and hence it was often remarked, in all sorts of circles, "Brother Lane is a very safe man." Under his carefully considered measures the publishing house at 200 Mulberry-street rose from feebleness to strength, from comparatively small beginnings to gigantic proportions. He kept his own secrets, made little noise, but touched the springs which commanded the channels of business, and brought in a tide of success. His business intercourse in his office and at the conference was characterized by promptness, courtesy, forbearance, and dignity. He dealt with men as men, ever conceding to them the rights of men of honor and principle until they had evidently forfeited all claim to that character.

As a husband and father he was kind, liberal, and emi-



nently religious. He provided well for his own household. Small attentions were not spared, great pains and large outlays, when called for, were not withheld. The education of his children, their comfortable settlement in a profession or a business, and the arrangements for the comforts of his home, were provided for without parsimony.

Socially our dear old friend was grave and dignified, and yet perfectly accessible. He was frank and free in his intercourse with men. He was a man of simple manners, chaste conversation, and a charitable spirit. He was a *Christian gentleman* at all times and in all places. No one could be long in his society without feeling for him something more than common respect; and Christians could not long commune with his spirit without feeling the power of his sanctified sympathies and holy life. He was a most profitable companion and trustworthy friend. His hospitable dwelling was ever open, and all its comforts as free as air. He was emphatically "a good man, and full of faith and the Holy Ghost." He won many souls to Christ, and laid the Church under lasting obligations of gratitude.

After a most intimate acquaintance of more than forty years, with the Rev. George Lane, observing him under a great variety of circumstances, and some of them exceedingly difficult and trying, we can say, what we can say of only a few individuals, that we never saw in him anything to reprove, or anything which, all things considered, deserves to be characterized as a *fault*. We love to contemplate the history, both the inward and the outward life, of this holy man and eminent servant of Jesus Christ. He has a high seat in heaven. He "turned many to righteousness," and he "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever." He was, in deed and in truth, our friend for many long years—we loved him—and now that he has gone to heaven in a chariot of fire may his mantle fall upon his sons in the Gospel!

## CHAPTER VI.

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE GENESEE CONFERENCE.

THE original Journal is before us with the following title-page: "Journal of the Genesee Conference, which met in session at Captain Dorsey's, Lyon's Town, State of New York, July 20, one thousand eight hundred and ten. At which Francis Asbury and William M'Kendree presided."

The first record is as follows:

"*Friday*, nine o'clock A. M., July 20, 1810. According to an appointment of Francis Asbury and William M'Kendree, bishops of the Methodist E. Church in America, the Genesee Conference, composed of the Susquehanna, Cayuga, Upper and Lower Canada districts, met in session at Captain Dorsey's, in Lyons town, state of New York. A majority of members being present, William M'Kendree took the chair and proceeded to business."

An old rule of the Discipline prohibited a traveling preacher from publishing anything without first obtaining the leave of his conference. Under this rule the Genesee Conference, at its first session, provided a weighty committee, composed of nine members, five from the United States and four from Canada, "to examine all compositions prepared by any of its members for publication, and that those compositions shall or shall not be published according to the resolution of the committee."

To make the Church entirely safe, it was on a subsequent day resolved that the committee "shall not without the concurrence of four fifths of its number in the states, and three fourths in Canada, permit any publication to be made." This does the whole thing up strong. If scribblers had been as numerous in those days as they are at present the committee



of censors would have been tasked with an onerous duty; but then writers among the traveling preachers were few and far between. This committee was kept up from year to year until the rule was abolished in 1824,\* but never had anything to do. Then Methodist preachers within our bounds gave themselves to preaching and prayer. These duties, with their long rides and a little necessary reading, used up their time. Then we had no periodicals through which to communicate with the public, if the preachers had been disposed to write, and a new publication of any sort by a Methodist preacher was a strange thing. Still the press must be guarded. The whole thing now seems little less than ludicrous; but those were days of simplicity, of caution, and of timidity. If we have not now reached the opposite extreme we are but too near it. The old caution, like the old defenses, is gone, and what is exultingly called a *free press* is often a rampant invader of the old foundation and the old landmarks. We would not wish for the return of the old restrictions upon the press, but we would like to see the old feelings of brotherhood prevail, and the authorities and doctrines of the Church respected as of old. Precisely where the liberty of the press ends and its licentiousness begins is sometimes a delicate point, but one that needs to be studied at the present time.

The Genesee Conference was called by the bishops in the interval of the General Conference, but the "institution" of the new conference was not a finality. The act was subject to be reconsidered by the General Conference, and the bishops, it would seem, considered it important to fortify themselves against the charge of rash and arbitrary administration in the case, by an act of the conference itself, which should set forth the grounds of the proceeding. A committee of three was appointed "to prepare a resolution expressive of

\* Then the General Conference placed this subject upon its true basis, by passing the following rule: "Any traveling preacher who may publish any work or book of his own, shall do it at his own responsibility, and he shall be answerable to the conference for any obnoxious matter or doctrine therein contained."

the opinion of this conference relative to its institution by Bishops Asbury and M'Kendree." The report of the committee is an argumentative document, but contains nothing more than we have already presented upon the subject.

1811. July 20, the conference met in Paris, at the old meeting-house in Saquoit, Bishop M'Kendree in the chair.

The judicial proceedings of the conference were not so conformable to proceedings in civil causes as such proceedings are now in annual conferences. Here is a specimen :

"*William Hill* was charged with intoxication, and of having indelicately censured his wife.

"The first charge was sustained by certificates from S. B., G. T., and M. T.

"Hill acknowledged their testimony to be correct.

"In confirmation of the second charge, William Jewett stated that Hill's wife told him, in the presence of Seth Mattison that Hill, her husband, did indelicately censure her, and ordered her out of doors.

"*Resolved*, That William Hill be excluded from the Methodist connection."

This is the whole record. The charges are sustained by no specifications. The first is proved by *ex parte* evidence. Indeed, acknowledged "to be correct" by the accused, probably on being catechised. The second is sustained by second-hand testimony. These would be strange proceedings in an ecclesiastical court now; but we should not hazard much in saying that the ends of justice were then answered, to say the least, as often as now.

The conference was strict, if not severe, in the examination of characters. One was tried for faulty business transactions; and, in another case, it was resolved that "the chair inform Brother — that conference thinks that he is not so solemn and profitable in families as he ought to be; and that he manifests too great a wish to accumulate money."

There was liberality in the body. The last act of this primitive little conference, previous to adjournment, was to



raise "a subscription for the poor and needy preachers." "The subscription amounted to \$144." This was a noble expression of generous sympathy.

The delegates to the General Conference were Elijah Batchelor, Wm. B. Lacy, Jas. Kelsey, Anning Owen, Timothy Lee, and Abram Dawson.

July 25 the conference adjourned.

In 1812 the conference was to meet at Niagara, in Upper Canada; but in consequence of the declaration of war with Great Britain, on the part of the Congress of the United States, the session was held at Judge Dorsey's, in Lyons, in the building occupied by its first session. The conference opened July 23, Bishop M'Kendree in the chair.

There is but one act of this session out of the common routine of conference business, and thus specially noteworthy. It is as follows:

"*Resolved*, That this conference shall give their assistance in procuring materials for composing a history of the Methodists." Had this resolution been carefully acted upon, much material for "a history of the Methodists" might have been saved which has gone into oblivion. The conference adjourned on the 27th.

In 1813 the conference assembled at Westmoreland on July 9. Bishops Asbury and M'Kendree were present.

There is in the Journal a particular account of the proceedings of the conference in the case of William B. Lacey, who had left the Church and joined the Protestant Episcopal Church. He was charged with "attempting to make a schism in our Church," "Leaving his circuit without permission," and "Dissimulation." A committee to whom the case had been referred for examination reported the facts as they were stated by witnesses, who were all members of the conference, and a statement of the case, to be inserted in the Minutes. The following is the record which was transferred to the Minutes:

"Wm. B. Lacy took his station on Herkimer circuit in 1812; after about five or six weeks he left his circuit in an

unofficial manner. In the examination of characters it appeared that he absented himself from conference, and we had no regular representation of him; but it satisfactorily appeared to the committee appointed to examine the case that he had attempted to sow discord among the people of our charge, and left the connection in an improper manner. If this conduct entitles him to the wisdom of the serpent, does it not deprive him of the harmlessness of the dove?"

The last minute before the adjournment is as follows: "It was stated by a member that dissatisfactions have arisen in consequence of preachers talking too freely of cases and circumstances during the sitting of conference.

*"Resolved,* That we will be more cautious in future."

Conference adjourned on the 13th of July.

In 1814 conference met at Genoa, July 14, Bishop M'Kendree in the chair.

Heretofore the conference had appointed "a Committee on Temporal Economy," to manage the fiscal concerns. This year we have the following record: "James Kelsey, Abner Chase, and Jonathan Huestis were chosen a committee, under the name of *stewards*, to transact the temporal business of the conference."

At this session it was

*"Resolved,* That the members of this conference shall sell no books but those belonging to our Concern."

Conference adjourned July 16th.

In 1815 the conference met at Lyons, June 29, Bishop M'Kendree in the chair. This year the following persons were elected delegates to the General Conference: W. Case, H. Ryan, G. Harmon, C. Giles, T. Madden, D. Barnes, Jas. Kelsey, S. Mattison, A. Chase, I. Puffer, C. Lambert, and G. Gary. Conference adjourned the 3d of July.

In 1816 the conference met at Paris, July 17, Bishop M'Kendree in the chair. Nothing out of the common order is found upon the record. Conference adjourned July 22.

In 1817 the Conference met in Elizabethtown, Upper Canada, June 21, Bishop George in the chair.



The state of the Church in Canada at this time excited considerable interest in the conference. During the war the British Conference had been addressed by some of the loyal Methodists in Canada and requested to send them preachers. That conference had listened to the application so far as to send missionaries to Kingston and York, and to some other principal points. Upon the conclusion of peace between the two countries the English missionaries had made a party, and continued to keep their posts, and the natural consequence was collisions between the two classes of Methodists. The American preachers labored under the disadvantage of not being able to perform the marriage ceremony, and of lying under a weight of prejudice as *aliens*. These circumstances naturally led to a desire on the part of the Canadian Methodists to have an independent existence as a Church, that they might enjoy the privileges of other dissenting bodies, and be recognized by the laws, and under them possess the rights and privileges of a body of Christians, composed of the subjects of the British crown, and enjoying its protection. The conference was memorialized upon this subject this year, and a committee was appointed to respond to the memorialists, who reported "an address to the members of the connection in Canada, also an address to several persons who had petitioned the conference for a separate establishment, which were severally canvassed and adopted."

The conference adjourned the 26th of June.

In 1818 the conference met at Lansing, July 16, Bishop Roberts in the chair. A committee was appointed to take into consideration the state of the Church in Canada. It was also voted that a committee of seven be appointed to report measures for an incorporation "to receive donations and legacies." The reports of both committees were adopted.

A resolution was passed against the circulation and encouragement of "any hymn books or songs except such as are published by the Book Agents, or authorized by the conference."

A resolution was also passed for the second time during the brief history of the conference against joining the Masons or frequenting the lodges.

Conference adjourned on the 20th of July.

In 1819 the conference convened at Vienna, New York, July 1, Bishop Roberts in the chair.

A committee of six was appointed "to take into consideration the state of our societies within the bounds of this conference."

A Missionary and Bible Society, auxiliary to the Missionary and Bible Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was organized, to have its "center at Ithaca." George Harmon was made "vice-president of the parent society at New York."

"It was resolved that the Genesee Conference take measures to establish a seminary within the bounds of this conference." A committee was appointed, consisting of Charles Giles, Abner Chase, Wm. Barlow, Jonathan Huestis, and Thomas Madden, to consider and report thereon. The report was adopted.

Eleven delegates to the General Conference were elected, as follows: Charles Giles, Wm. Case, Abner Chase, M. Pearce, H. Ryan, L. Grant, J. Huestis, J. Kimberlin, W. Barlow, I. Chamberlanye, and Ralph Lanning.

By compromise between the parties the delegates were selected both from "the old and new school" on "the Presiding Elder question." The first five were in favor of the old plan, while the others were for a modification of the rule; and those of them who attended voted for what is known in the history of the General Conference of 1820 as "the suspended resolutions." Adjourned July 8.

1820. Conference commenced its session at Lundy's Lane, Upper Canada, July 20, Bishop George in the chair.

This year William Barlow is reported to have left his charge and united with the Protestant Episcopal Church. It was accordingly "Resolved, that William Barlow left the Methodist Episcopal Church in an irregular, unofficial man-



ner," and that "his case be referred to a committee to be called by the presiding elder of the Ontario district, and that they report to the next annual conference."

The old court-house and grounds in Cazenovia, purchased in 1817 for a meeting-house, were embarrassed by debt, and the trustees, who were personally responsible, petitioned the conference for relief, upon which the following action was taken :

"The subject of the Cazenovia house brought before the conference. It was stated that after the resolutions of conference last year, and after the committee had prepared subscriptions, the subscriptions were forwarded at a late period, and but little exertion had been made by the preachers and very little had been subscribed; and that the house purchased by the brethren in Cazenovia was deeply involved in debt, and unless those brethren might be relieved the house must be sold.

"*Resolved*, That the presiding elders and preachers in different parts of the conference use their exertions, by circulating subscriptions, to obtain money to save the house. Adopted."

The Methodists in Canada, having been brought to God by the instrumentality of the preachers from the States, desired to hold a connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church. But the disabilities under which they labored, and the advantages maintained by the British missionaries over them in competing for the desirable positions, led many of the people to desire some arrangement by which they would not be obliged to receive their pastors directly from the United States.

Their grievances had been duly laid before the General Conference in May, and that body had appointed Rev. John Emory as a delegate to the British Conference, with instructions to represent the condition of things in Canada, and desire that the Wesleyan missionaries might be withdrawn, particularly from the Upper Province. The arrangement was made, but was long in being carried into full effect.

The General Conference also sent a conciliatory letter to the Canada brethren, and assured them of their continued pastoral oversight. The case had its difficulties, and was a subject of consideration at each session of the Genesee Conference, from the time of the origin of the feud in 1812.

This conference passed a resolution in favor of the organization of a separate annual conference in Canada. Its passage at this time was designed to allay an unpleasant excitement, which continued to be fermented in certain localities in Canada.

An elaborate report, forwarded from the General Conference, "on literature," was presented by the bishop and spread upon the Journal. It is the embryo of our present system of education by means of conference seminaries and colleges.

A series of resolutions was passed on the subject of the *dress* of the preachers, etc., which in practice, like many conference resolutions, amounted to little. The old-fashioned round-breasted coat, flat white hat, and smooth hair were doomed usages, and all efforts on the part of the old-style preachers to keep them up were in vain.

Conference adjourned 26th of July.

1821. The conference met at Paris, N. Y., July 19, Bishop George in the chair.

The most important measure adopted at this session was a resolution to establish a seminary of learning at Ithaca, Tompkins county, N. Y. The conference had previously resolved to locate the seminary at Cazenovia, Madison county. This year a petition came up through "certain friends from Ithaca," and large promises of funds were made, and the conference was induced to change the location, and yet to give some hope of relief to the trustees of the "Cazenovia house." The following are the votes of the conference on the subject: "Voted, that the site of the contemplated seminary heretofore fixed at Cazenovia be relinquished. Voted, that the site of the seminary be fixed at Ithaca." A committee was appointed "to confer with the trustees of the



Cazenovia house." It was voted "that David Ayers be appointed to the superintendence of the subscription."

A splendid castle was now built in the *air*, and the poor Cazenovians, who had less *gas* than "certain friends from Ithaca," were left to grapple with some grave matters of fact which they felt pressing upon them.

Conference adjourned 25th of July.

1822. The conference met at Vienna, Ontario County, N. Y., July 24, Bishop Roberts in the chair.

The conference formed "themselves into a missionary society under the following title: The Genesee Conference Missionary Society, auxiliary to the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church." Considerable agitation in the annual conferences had grown out of the conduct of the Rev. Joshua Soule in the General Conference of 1820. That gentleman had been elected bishop, and after the conference had passed a rule providing for the election of presiding elders, he signified his scruples with regard to the constitutionality of the rule, and declared that, should he be ordained a bishop, he could not carry it out. This movement was known to have the sympathy of Bishop McKendree, and a great excitement was produced in the body. Finally, the measure was suspended for four years by a vote of "forty-five to thirty-five."

From this case originated the question of a constitutional test. The General Conference invited the annual conferences to recommend to the next General Conference the adoption of "a rule for the determination of constitutional questions." The New York Conference originated a series of resolutions upon the subject which were laid before the Genesee Conference by the bishop. The resolutions were postponed to the next session, and then postponed indefinitely.

A communication from Bishop M'Kendree was also presented to the conference by Bishop Roberts, objecting to the said "suspended resolutions," on the ground that they infringed upon the restrictive rule, which prohibits the General Conference from so altering the form of our gov-

ernment as to do away episcopacy or destroy the plan of our itinerant general superintendency.

The following resolutions in relation to the bishop's paper were drawn up by Rev. Israel Chamberlayne, and were presented by him, seconded by Jonathan Huestis:

"Whereas Bishop M'Kendree, in his communication to this conference, has pronounced that the resolutions of the last General Conference relative to the election of presiding elders are, in his belief, an infringement on the constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church: therefore,

"*Resolved*, 1. That, in the opinion of this conference, there is nothing in the said resolutions that makes any infringement on the constitution or restrictive regulations of our Church.

"*Resolved*, 2. That the restrictive regulations do not, in our opinion, prohibit or restrict any changes or new modifications of the episcopal powers or duties: provided such changes or alterations do not do away episcopacy, or destroy the plan of our itinerant general superintendency."

These resolutions were discussed *pro* and *con* by the ablest speakers of the conference, and finally passed by a considerable majority, which showed that the Genesee Conference had gone over to "the new school."

The Ithaca seminary had grown into a college, and already stood in a doubtful attitude. The reports of the agent and of the trustees were given to a committee, and as favorable a report as possible was made, and Rev. Dan Barnes was appointed agent. Jesse Merritt, as the representative of the trustees, appeared in the conference, and, by invitation made a speech in favor of Ithaca as the location of an institution, but gave it as his opinion that an *academy* and not a *college* would be the true policy of the conference. He made a neat and sensible speech, the suggestions of which were followed by the committee in their report. The Cazenovia brethren stood before the conference again and received some kind words.

The conference adjourned on the 2d of August.



1823. The conference met July 15 at Westmoreland, Oneida county, N. Y., Bishop George in the chair.

A committee was appointed "to take into consideration the business of the seminary." By this time the Ithaca scheme had fizzled out, and Rev. George Gary, having made Cazenovia his residence, had entered with spirit and ability into the enterprise of a seminary in that place in the old court-house. The scheme, nearly ruined by counter influences and long delays, now presented the only ground of hope for a conference seminary. The report of the committee embraced a plan for the fitting up of the building and opening the school with all convenient dispatch. The report was adopted and the question settled.

The conference elected sixteen delegates to the next General Conference. The following are the names: Jonathan Huestis, Fitch Reed, Joseph Baker, Wyatt Chamberlayne, William Snow, George Peck, Israel Chamberlayne, George Harmon, George W. Densmore, Seth Mattison, Benjamin G. Paddock, John B. Alanson, James Hall, Gideon Lanning, Isaac B. Smith, and Loring Grant.

The conference adjourned 23d of July.

1824. The conference met at Lansing, Tompkins county, N. Y., Bishops George and Hedding being present.

In the election of the delegates to the General Conference, which sat in May of this year, the old presiding elders in Canada, Ryan and Case, were left out; but two other members who were identified with the work in Canada, Isaac B. Smith and Wyatt Chamberlayne, were elected. Messrs. Ryan and Case came on to the General Conference in the character of "messengers," with petitions from certain parties for the organization of an independent Church. Their petitions were received and referred; but when an effort was made by a friend, S. G. Roszel, to allow "the messengers from Canada" to address the conference, it was not successful, it being considered that the regular delegation were fully competent to represent the interests of that portion of the work. The condition of things in that country,

it was thought, by the General Conference, would be materially improved, if the wants of the people would not be fully met, by the organization of an independent conference. This was accordingly done. The Lower Province, in the arrangement made by Dr. Emory, had been given up to the English missionaries, and the Canada Conference simply embraced the Upper Province. This conference remained in connection with the General Conference for four years.

A committee on the business of the seminary was announced by Bishop George as follows: George Peck, Dan Barnes, B. G. Paddock, John Dempster, and Zenas Jones.

The committee reported the condition and wants of the institution at Cazenovia, which was now fully organized. The committee requested the privilege of making an appeal to the conference for immediate aid. Rev. G. Gary, Rev. Dr. Bangs, and Bishops George and Hedding addressed the conference, when a subscription was taken up for the object. Conference adjourned on the 3d of August.

Here terminates the first volume of the journals of the Genesee Conference. The "report of the committee of safety," passed by the General Conference, and required to be spread upon the journals of the annual conferences, is the last thing in the book. It is designed to keep the conferences up to the standard of Methodism, both in doctrine and administration. It contains some things which are now obsolete: a reference to economical rules which the General Conference has since done away, but the spirit and objects of the document are above all praise. It shows how jealous were our fathers of innovations upon the principles and usages of Methodism, and with what tenacity they adhered to those primitive practices which, to many, may now seem to be of small consequence.

1825. The conference met this year at Asbury Chapel, Lansing, Tompkins county, N. Y., 17th of August, Bishop Hedding in the chair.

Much time was occupied by the conference in the consideration of mutual charges, presented by C. Giles and E.



Bowen. The case was finally disposed of according to a plan proposed by Dr. Emory and consented to by the parties. The conference settled certain law questions which had been matters of difference between them, and they settled their personal differences between themselves.

A communication from the Church in Ithaca resulted in the appointment of a committee to visit the place and report the state of that Church. The report was made and adopted, but not being spread upon the journal, we are not able to give its substance here. We think it related to a difficulty in the Church on the subject of singing.

It was voted that George Lane have his portrait inserted in the Magazine.

The session was closed 26th of August.

1826. The conference met at Palmyra, 7th of June. Bishops M'Kendree and Hedding were present.

This session of the conference is noticeable as the one in which Bishop M'Kendree made his appearance among us for the last time. He was at the first session and signed the journal. He had presided at the sessions up to the year 1816, inclusive, since which he had not paid us a visit. He came to take leave. He opened the first session, made an instructive address in the form of an exposition upon the lesson read from the Scriptures, and finally gave us his valedictory. In the journal for Monday it is recorded that

"Bishop M'Kendree delivered a very appropriate address to the members of this conference, which he supposed to be his valedictory." It did not prove to be, as he supposed, his valedictory! He appeared in the conference on the last day of the session, as the following record shows:

"Bishop M'Kendree having addressed the conference on the importance of missionary exertions and Sunday schools, therefore,

"*Resolved*, That this conference heartily concur in the sentiments expressed by the bishop, and pledge themselves to use their influence to promote the cause of missions and

of Sunday schools throughout their respective circuits and stations."

The following resolution is added:

"*Resolved*, That the conference rejoice that the valuable life and health of Bishop M'Kendree have been spared to visit us again, and that a vote of thanks be given him for his attention to the affairs of the conference during its present session."

He was quite feeble, and his splendid frame had begun to bend under the pressure of years; but in reviewing the past, and referring to our small beginnings, and what we had become, his soul seemed to take fire and he was almost young again. He exclaimed with emphasis and pious gratitude: "What hath God wrought!" and shaking hands with the brethren, with manly tears glistening in his eyes, he said: "Farewell! God bless you!" and was conducted through the aisle. He signed the journal with Bishop Hedding.

Conference adjourned 14th of June.

1827. The conference met at Wilkesbarre, Luzerne county, Pa., June 14, Bishop George in the chair.

A motion for a committee to take into consideration the subject of the division of the conference was lost.

The following persons were elected delegates to the next General Conference: Loring Grant, Horace Agard, George Peck, Josiah Keyes, Robert Parker, Morgan Sherman, Edmond O'Fling, Ralph Lanning, Isaac Grant, Zechariah Paddock, James Hall, Manly Tooker, Gideon Lanning, Seth Mattison, Israel Chamberlayne, George Harmon, John Dempster, and Jonathan Huestis.

A resolution was passed at this conference "that we use our influence to prevent young preachers and local preachers who have no business with this conference from attending the session of the conference in future, that they may stay at home and pursue their regular work." This was in the spirit of the olden time, but at the present would be thought quite proscriptive. Conference adjourned June 22, having assem-



bled at five o'clock A. M., and we having received our appointments before breakfast.

1828. The conference met at Ithaca, N. Y., July 24, Bishop Roberts in the chair.

The most important act of this conference was that which related to the division of the conference, and resulted in the organization of the Oneida Conference. The delegates from the Genesee Conference, although they had no specific instructions upon the subject from their constituents, had procured the passage of an amendment to the report on boundaries, which provided for the division of the conference in the interval of the General Conference. A committee was appointed on the division of the conference, who made the following report:

"The committee to whom was referred the subject of the division of the Genesee Conference beg leave to report, That in consideration of the magnitude of the conference, the length of time necessary to be devoted to its annual sessions, the burdens imposed upon our friends in those neighborhoods where our sessions are held, arising from the supporting of so large a body of men during a week or ten days together, with the amount of time and money which must be spent in going to and from the places where its sessions are held, are of opinion,

"1. That it is expedient that the conference be divided.

"2. That if divided it be so divided that the Genesee Conference be composed of all that part of the state of New York lying west of the Cayuga Lake, not included in the Pittsburgh Conference; and so much of the state of Pennsylvania as is included in the Genesee and Buffalo districts.

"3. That the remaining part of the territory now embraced in the Genesee Conference be denominated the Oneida Conference.

"4. That a committee of five be appointed by the body to petition the honorable Legislature, at its next session, to pass an act to change the name of the seminary at Cazenovia from that of the 'Seminary of Genesee Conference,' to

that of the 'Seminary of Genesee and Oneida Conferences,' and also to pass an act to change the title of 'The Trustees of the Genesee Conference,' to that of 'The Trustees of the Genesee and Oneida Conferences.'

"5. That if the Legislature shall grant the prayer of the petitioners, the committee shall immediately thereafter announce to the bishop and conference, through the medium of the Christian Advocate and Journal, the passage of the act prayed for.

"6. And that in case the above prayer shall be granted, then in that case the conference shall be divided as above recommended, and the Genesee Conference hold its next session in —, and the Oneida Conference in —. But in case the petition be not granted, then the Conference, not being divided, shall hold its session in —."

The report was adopted, the first blank being filled with Perry, and the second and third with Cazenovia. A committee was appointed to memorialize the Legislature, the necessary legislation was obtained, and the division was consummated.

THE END.