CHAPTER XXIII.

BRINKWORTH DISTRICT, 1833-43.

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS.

PERSECUTION—but persecution not without its alleviations and compensations is what we wish to write of in this chapter. If the question were simply this:—"How does this particular southern district of England compare with other districts you have passed through, in regard to the amount of persecution the Connexion's missionaries met with in doing their work?" there could only be one answer. "It compares unfavourably with other districts, and for the reasons already stated. You must take your Persecution Map and with your brush put dabs of colour on the counties of Wilts, Dorset, Berks, Oxon, Surrey; and on Hants it must be darker than anywhere else in England." We will suppose the brush has done its work. But in reality the somberness of the story is relieved by many touches of brightness, and our Persecution Map gives only half the truth. There is the courage and cheery hopefulness with which the missionaries met their persecutions. There is the success that at last came to them as a reward. If they had persecutors they also had an ever-increasing band of faithful men and women who "through good report and evil," clung to them and the cause. If there were raging mobs and hostile squires and parsons and magistrates, there were here and there humble cottages and farm-houses where they found sympathy and shelter. So the missionary's experience, as he toiled on, was chequered with light and shade like a moonlit path through the trees. This is the impression we ought to gain. Emphasis must of course be laid on the fact that this was connexionally our Persecution Area. Yet we must not forget to put the lights in. To leave them out would be like stopping short with Christ's words: "In the world ye shall have tribulation." We must go on and hear the finish: "But be of good cheer; I have overcome the world," and then we have the darkness shot through with light. Somehow, this passage haunts the mind as we write of Brinkworth District's formation and extension; and it does so because men endured and overcame in cheerful mood as their Master had done.

In the parts already named, persecution was so common as to be the rule rather than the exception. This being so, it follows that all the pioneers of the old Brinkworth District came in for their share of it when labouring hereabout. Some might be more daring, or less prudent and tactful in their handling of the mob; more aggressive in manner and more provocative of speech, being less able to withhold the retort, and given to speaking their mind. No doubt this was so, and perhaps explains a good deal. But even the meekest and most self-restrained evangelist did not always escape; nor
did the gentle women whose sex should have been their protection. Several pious
females were employed on the mission, and broke down in health. "S. Wheeler was
taken out, but could not bear up under the toils. Then Miss Evans, but she found the
journeys too severe, and persecution too violent." Ann Godwin, afterwards the wife
of H. Green, the Australian missionary, was brought to death's door as the result of her
trying experiences. At Childrey "it was grievous to see the young women with their
plain neat bonnets crushed down on their heads and their frocks torn." At Foot
Baldon, in Oxfordshire, a female preacher was knocked down with a stone. As for
Elizabeth Smith (afterwards Mrs. Russell), during the two years—1830-2—she was
on the mission, she moved about amongst the rough crowds as though she had
a charmed life. At notorious Ramsbury she walked up the avenue to the barn where
she was to conduct the service, singing with great sweetness and pathos. The path
was lined with men provided with stones, eggs, and other missiles ready to fling;
but as their ringleader saw and heard the preacheress, "dressed in the characteristic
garb of a Friend," he was overawed, and turning to his followers, he said with
authority: "None of you shall touch that woman." And this disarming of opposition
as by the mere efflux of her own personality was an incident often repeated. In
referring to Miss Smith as associated with Thomas Russell while pioneering in
Hampshire, Mr. Petty writes: "It may be questioned, however, whether his excellent
and devoted female colleague, who laboured with him in the gospel, was not still more
successful than he. The novelty of female preaching attracted crowds to hear her;
and her modesty and good sense, her clear views of evangelical truth, her lucid
statements, and her solemn and pathetic appeals to the heart and conscience, under
the Divine blessing, made deep impressions, and rendered her very useful among the
peasantry in Hampshire." With this well-deserved tribute we take leave of one of the
most attractive figures in our history. Elizabeth Smith's all-too brief life ended
February 21st, 1836.

We have spoken much of John Ride, and Mr. Petty in his history devotes very
considerable space to the doings and sufferings of Thomas Russell, as we too have done
or shall have to do. But the portrait-group of some of the Brinkworth District
pioneers—all of whom we believe ended their days at Newbury in the very heart of
the country they helped to evangelise—should serve to remind us that neither
John Ride nor Thomas Russell had a monopoly of toil and persecution. They
were but the first among many brethren. For besides the veterans of the group,
referred to, there were others, their compeers, who also did their part in the same work
and bore the brunt of opposition in doing it. The names of some of these will
come before us. With all this mass of material to choose from, all that we can hope to
do is to single out what may rightly be regarded as typical examples of persecution.
As these examples are to stand as representative ones in our annals, they may be
considered almost in the light of documents which must be handed down in the
very form in which they were received. First then, in the order of time, we give
what should be known in our annals as "The Chaddleworth Case, 1830." The
persecution which clothes itself under legal forms is more hateful than mob violence
and it is harder to bear. It admits of less excuse, and is felt by the sufferer to
be a deeper outrage. Chaddleworth, in Berkshire, affords a glaring and typical example of this kind of persecution of which Thomas Russell was the victim. He was sentenced to three months' hard labour, ostensibly, for selling without a licence, but, really, because he would persist in preaching the gospel in the streets of Chaddleworth—that is the fact as it stands forth in its shameful nakedness. It was a "put-up job" on the part of the clergyman and a magistrate. The phrase used has vile associations and may look objectionable in print, but the writer knows no other phrase that will quite so well convey the meaning intended. It was known that Mr. Russell occasionally sold denominational magazines and hymn books to his people. Here was material to hand for the making of a cunning trap. But the official representatives of Law and Religion would not themselves set the trap. That work was assigned to the parish constable, who was a tenant of the magistrate. Unsuspectingly, Mr. Russell walked into the trap. He was, as we have said, sentenced to three months' imprisonment with hard labour in Abingdon jail. But even then he might have been let go, had he but consented to give an undertaking not to preach any more in the neighbourhood. But that undertaking he would not give; so he was stripped, made to put on a felon's garb, and sent to work the treadmill. When appetite and health both failed, the prison doctor said: "He came here to be punished, and punished he must be"; and he was ordered back to the wheel.

But this prison episode is not without its touches of brightness. It called forth sympathisers and protectors, and was overruled for final if not immediate good to the cause which was sought to be crushed. The Nonconformist ministers of Abingdon—
Mr. Wilkins (Congregationalist), Mr. Kershaw (Baptist), and Mr. Loutit (Wesleyan), made themselves fully conversant with the facts. They were deeply concerned as well as interested, and at once brought the case under the notice of the Religious Protection Society of London. Mr. John Wilks, the secretary, energetically bestirred himself in the matter, with the result that Mr. Russell was liberated from prison on June 5th, 1830, when he had served but one month of his sentence. Some little time after his release Mr. Wilks sent to request his presence in London, and remitted him money, through Mr. Kershaw of Abingdon, to bear his expenses thither. Mr. Russell accordingly repaired to the metropolis, and had several interviews with Mr. Wilks. At last, Mr. Wilks asked Mr. Russell what he wished to be done. Mr. Russell replied: "All I wish is to go on preaching unmolested by the magistrate." Mr. Wilks rejoined: "Mr. Russell, your spirit is that of a Christian, and your wish shall be granted. Go on, sir, in your work, and we will protect you." At parting, Mr. Wilks kindly gave Mr. Russell three pounds to meet his expenses, and Mr. Russell bade him adieu with a grateful heart, and returned with fresh courage to prosecute his missionary work in Berkshire. The good work had progressed during his imprisonment, and a powerful camp meeting, the first held in the county of Berks, was held on Bishopstone Down, near Ashdown Park, on Sunday, May 30th, 1830. Some thousands attended in the afternoon; much divine power attended the word preached, and great good was effected. At night, an excellent lovefeast was held at Bishopstone, and several persons labouring under a burden of sin, found peace in believing.

Let us note that what we see at Abingdon—the sympathy of the Free Church leaders taking a practical form—was repeated again and again in other parts of the Persecution Area. So it was, as we shall see, at Faringdon, at Shaftesbury, and notably at Winchester. More, perhaps, in the Southern counties than in other parts of England, prominent leaders of the Free Churches made it quite clear on which side their sympathies lay. They came forward as vindicators and protectors, moved to action not merely by a feeling of common humanity but by enlightened self-interest and the elementary instinct of self-preservation. They had the discernment to see what were the issues involved; what were the aims, the tendencies, the possibilities of the new movement. They were not slow to recognise in it a new, and what in the end might prove to be a valuable ally. It therefore behoved them not to allow a movement of so much promise to be crushed before it could acquire strength and show its power.

The story of Thomas Russell's savage handling by the mob in King Alfred's native Vale of the White Horse may stand as a typical case of its kind.

"Mr. Russell entered upon the Faringdon mission in full expectation of severe persecution, in which he was not deceived. Before four o'clock in the morning of the third Sunday in April, 1832, he prepared for his journey to the scene of his intended missionary operations. His mind was oppressed with the burden of the work before him, and the dread of persecution and suffering; but he was supported with a sense of the Divine approval and the hope of success. When he arrived at the summit of a hill about ten miles from Wantage, he saw the town lying before him, and instantly a dread of what awaited him well-nigh overcame him. He met two men who knew him, and they advised him to return on account of the severe persecution which they expected he would have to encounter. He thanked them for their sympathy but went
forward on his journey. At nine o'clock he stood up in the market-place and began to sing a hymn. He next knelt down and prayed, and concluded without molestation. But ere he commenced preaching a number of ruffians surrounded him, and he had not spoken long when a more violent company arrived and pushed him from his standing-place, driving him before them like a beast. He heard some of them cry, 'Have him down Mill Street!' and suspecting, perhaps properly, that they intended to throw him into the river which flows at the bottom of that street, he determined if possible to prevent being driven down it, and managed to keep in the market-place. After being driven to and fro an hour or more, his inhuman persecutors paused, when Mr. Russell threw open his waistcoat, and in the true spirit of a martyr cried: 'Lads! if the shedding of my heart's blood will contribute to your salvation, I am willing for it to be shed on these stones.' At this moving statement those who were nearest him drew back a little, and seemed to relent; but a violent gang outside the throng pushed forward and urged the rest to reaction (sic). A respectable looking person, who Mr. R. afterwards learned was the chief constable, came to him and said: 'If you will leave, all will then be quiet.' Mr. R. replied: 'If I have broken the law, punish me according to the law, and not in this manner.' The constable then withdrew without ever attempting to quell the lawless mob, who again assailed the solitary missionary with ruthless violence. At length the beadle came and seized Mr. Russell by the collar, and led him to the end of the town, and there left him. Mr. Russell's strength was almost exhausted with the violent usage he had suffered in the market-place; but determining if possible to address those who had followed him thither, he stood upon the side of a hedge and preached as well as he was able. But his persecutors were not yet satisfied; they pelted him with stones, eggs, mud, and everything they could render available for the purpose. Even women, unmindful of the tenderness of their sex, joined in this cruel treatment; some of them took the dirt out of their patten-rings to cast at the preacher! When Mr. Russell concluded the service he was covered from head to foot with slime, mud, rotten eggs, and other kinds of filth; and his clothes were torn, and his flesh bruised. As soon as he got alone by the side of a canal, he took off his clothes and washed them. Then putting them on wet, 'enduring hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ,' he proceeded to Faringdon, where similar treatment befell him. When he came to a pool of water outside the town, he washed his clothes a second time, and then went five miles further to Shrivenham, where he was met with another violent reception. At a brook he cleaned himself a third time, and then proceeded to another village, where he preached in peace, except that a person threw a stone or other hard material at him, which cut his lip. After this he walked six miles to Lambourn to rest for the night. He had been on foot eighteen hours; had walked thirty-five miles, had preached four times, and had gone through an amount of suffering such as none but a strong, healthy man could have endured. Next day, however, he walked twenty miles to the other side of his mission, and during the week preached at several fresh places."

The story does not end here, for on the following Sunday Mr. Russell again visited Wantage and Faringdon, only to experience similar treatment. At Faringdon, especially, he was so savagely baited that a respectable inhabitant of the place could not help exclaiming: "If I had a dog which had to suffer what that man endures, I would cut off his head to put him out of his misery." Yet when Mr. Fox, a member of the Society of Friends, deeply stirred by the inhuman treatment Mr. Russell was subjected to, wrote to a clerical magistrate on his behalf the only answer he got was: "The
people have as much right to take the course they do as the preacher has to preach in the streets." This magisterial dictum deserves to be placed on record; as a specimen of callous feeling and perverse thinking it would be hard to beat. If these were the sentiments of the magistracy no wonder the mob waxed bold and wantoned in their excess. Still, in spite of mob and magistrates, Thomas Russell held on to Faringdon, and his tenacity had its reward. In June, 1832, Mr. Wiltshire was added to the staff of the mission and its borders were enlarged. Under the labours of Messrs. G. Price, W. Hervey, and W. Peacefull so much success was realised as to justify the mission's being formed into an independent circuit, and as such it stands on the Minutes for 1837, with H. Heys, Thomas Cummin, and M. Bugden as its preachers.

It is time to put the lights into our picture of the conditions under which Shefford Circuit was formed and extended, lest a wrong impression be left on the mind of the reader by its unrelieved sombreness. Over against the fact of the prevalence of persecution must be set the compensating fact that a constantly increasing number of adherents were won for the cause whose sympathy and co-operation augured well for still greater success to come. It would be a mistake to suppose the missionaries to have been men of a sad heart and rueful countenance, having no helpers, and conscious of fighting a losing battle. So far from that being so, they knew they were on the winning side, and were persuaded that opposition would gradually die down, and in the end die out altogether. They were men of faith; so in Thomas Russell's phrase they "tugged at it," and bore persecution and privation in good spirits as being part of the day's work. Even the "Vale," as they called it—the Vale of the White Horse—was for them something more than a metaphorical vale of tears. How often at the close of a powerful service the doxology was sung for those who, in the expressive phrase of the time, had been "brought in!" Nothing cheers like companionship and belief in ultimate success; and Shefford Circuit was succeeding and, consequently, the company of the faithful was being steadily enlarged. In this country, which John Ride and John Petty had surveyed, and Ride and Russell had prayed for at Ashdown, there were now, at the end of 1832, eleven missionaries at work and some eight hundred members in church-fellowship. As yet sparsely dotted in this tract of country, were cottages and farm-houses which were veritable houses of refuge and pilgrim-inns, where the weary and often buffeted missionary was sure of a hearty welcome and of the best the house could afford. These Gaiuses of the pioneer times who ministered out of their poverty and, in some cases, out of their comparative abundance, have almost as strong a claim on our remembrance as have the men to whom they ministered, since without them it is difficult to see how the bounds of the Connexion could have been widely extended in the Southern counties, or Primitive Methodism have rooted itself amongst the villages as it has done. We can only make brief mention of a few of these successors of "the well-beloved Gaius." There were such in Wiltshire—at the generating-point of this wide-spread evangelistic movement. For example, under the powerful ministry of Samuel Turner, Miss Asenah Ferris was converted. She discarded her fashionable attire and cast in her lot with the contemned Primitives. Subsequently she became the wife of Mr. Smith of Wootton Bassett. She and her husband became local preachers; their house was always open for God's
servants; they did much in helping to build the chapel and to found and maintain the Day Schools afterwards established. After Mr. Smith's death in 1845 the widow continued her good works, and, in 1849 was married to Mr. Abraham Woodward of Broad Town, member of a family to whom the Primitive Methodism of Brinkworth Circuit owed much.

Another Wiltshire guest-house was the home of Mr. John Davies, on the Marlborough Downs, where the little flocks often met for shelter and for worship in the time of persecution at Ramsbury and neighbouring places. It was at Ewin's Hill Harriet Maslin of Ramsbury gave her first public exhortation. She was, we are told, diligent in attending the five o'clock services, which were held all the year round, and took her turn in speaking with the rest of the new converts. In 1834 she came on the plan, and in 1837 became the devoted partner of Mr. George Wallis.

A simple incident in the life of George Wallis, who was one of the gains of the Wootton Bassett revival, and, as a young man of twenty-one, became one of Shefford's first staff of preachers, brings us into Berkshire, and at once illustrates the scarcity and the value of these hospitable homesteads of those early days. Sometimes an incident like this illumines past conditions as no number of generalised statements could do. Like a snap-shot, true to the actuality of things, it has a vivid suggestiveness as to the past out of all proportion to the apparent unimportance of the incident itself at the time it occurred. "A few miles from Newbury there stands an old farm-house, then occupied by Mr. Simon Goddard, who espoused the cause of the missionaries and threw open his home to them. One evening Mr. George Wallis, who had been preaching at a distant village, made for this hospitable house, but reached it to find the inmates had all retired to rest. Not caring to disturb them he crept into a heap of straw for the purpose of passing the night. Later on came along Mr. Thomas Russell who had been unable to find shelter elsewhere. The family were soon roused by the new-comer, and the youthful missionary, like John following the bolder Peter, left the straw for more comfortable quarters." We have no report of the table-talk that took place on the morrow when the family and guests assembled at meal-time. Such a report is wanting to complete the picture; but we may be sure the talk would turn on the progress of the work of God; on the latest additions to the roll of converts; incidents of the campaign would be related; and the latest novelty in persecution described. We can imagine how Thomas Russell would tell how some one at Faringdon, with a turn for calculation, had estimated that no less than two sacks of potatoes had been flung at the preacher and his congregation in the streets of that place, and we can picture the zest with which he would round off the story by the
statement that some of the thrifty people of Faringdon had picked up and planted these tubers and were calling their produce "Faringdon-Russells." Our pioneers were not altogether devoid of the sense of humour, and many incidents happened in the 'Thirties in the persecution-area, which would appeal to that wholesome sense, like the incident just given.

In this connection respectful mention should be made of Mr. G. T. Phelps of Hungerford, who is one of the very small number still surviving who have sustained an active connection with the Church in this part of the country since the early days of struggle. Much might be said of the character and work of Mr. Phelps and his excellent partner. What is emphasised here however is the fact that for forty-eight years Mrs. Phelps was the light of a home whose hospitality was unceasingly and ungrudgingly dispensed. No wonder that, under the influence of her saintly and beneficent life, her children should turn out well. When she died in 1898 three of her sons were ministers of the gospel—one of them being Rev. T. Phelps, a well-known minister of the Salisbury and Southampton District—while her three daughters were the wives of Primitive Methodist preachers. One of her last utterances, disclosing what had been the bent of her life, was: "Always make room for the preachers"!

We get glimpses of other early befrienders of the cause: of the Alexanders of Ramsbury, one of whom offered his joiner's shop for the first meeting-place, which offered necessitated another journey to Salisbury to get it licensed; of William Hawkin, who, when he was an agricultural labourer earning but six or seven shillings a week, lost his
employment for entertaining the preachers, but he took care to keep his integrity and his religion, and lived to become a prosperous farmer; of George and Thomas Waite and Isaac Hedges who, with several others, started for a service in a gravel-pit at Hoe Benham in 1830, and became "eminent in the good cause"; of Mr. Kirby who invited the Primitives to Bradfield, and of Mr. Nullis of Ashmanstead who "became a great helper in our chapel-building at Burnt Hill, and whose son, Isaac, became mighty in the ministry with us." The reference to Bradfield is interesting because, as Thomas Russell asserts, from Bradfield the work opened out to Reading.

The name of Isaac S. Nullis brings before us a remarkable personality. His life was an intense one though, measured by years, it was not long. It was his companion, George Smith, who induced him to attend a prayer meeting in Mrs. Ann Street's cottage, Quicks Green; and here the great "turn" in his life was experienced. This humble cottage is connexionally historic and as such we have pleasure in giving a view of it, especially as it also shows us "Nancy" Street herself—a notable figure of those days. Isaac Nullis and George Smith both became local preachers in the Reading Circuit. The latter was a useful travelling preacher for thirty-nine years (ob. 1897), while Isaac Nullis also toiled successfully as a home-missionary for a few years. He died in 1868, leaving testamentary gifts to his Church, and his remains lie in the graveyard opposite the cottage where he found the Saviour. There too is buried the mortal part of Ann Street. The "Life" of Isaac Nullis has been written by Mr. Jesse Herbert. It shows us a man whose course was marked by consuming zeal in seeking the souls of men: it also contains many instances of remarkable answers to prayer. Those amongst us—and surely they are an increasing number—to whom prayer is a subject of absorbing interest, who seek to investigate its achievements, its laws, its possibilities—should keep Isaac Nullis in remembrance. His life has instruction for us and, it is to be feared, admonishment as well.

In turning to Hampshire, we cannot do better than preface our account of the fierce persecutions our pioneers underwent in this county, by describing a journey which Hugh Bourne took along with Thomas Russell in September, 1832, from Shefford across the North Western borders of Hampshire on to Salisbury. To us the story of the advance of Primitive Methodism from county to county has all the interest of a moving drama, and so the description of this journey comes in at this point with all the appropriateness of an Interact, equally related as it is to what has gone before and to what it foreshadows as about to happen. But let us give Thomas Russell's narrative:—

"Mr. Hugh Bourne was frequently requested to pay us a visit; but from the press of business and calls elsewhere he did not visit us till Monday, September 10th, 1832. However, his coming then was very opportune, for surely no men needed fatherly counsel and comfort more than we did; persecution raged on every side, and our lives were often in danger. Nor can I forget his arrival at Shefford the morning after our quarterly meeting. Brother Samuel West, who had come to see his friend [John Ride] and assist us at the quarter-day, was praying at full stretch and in the
full glory. Faringdon and Wantage mission was then the burden of our cry, and many a hearty "amen" ran through the house, when suddenly, at a quick pace, in walked a man with a broad-brimmed hat, all covered with dust, a brown top-coat that had weathered many a blast, an umbrella which had been stretched against many a storm, and a well-known carpet-bag. No sooner was he in than he was on his knees, and with loud responses he joined in our devotions. The voice was familiar to myself and Messrs. Ride and West; and when we rose from our knees we gave him a hearty welcome, and announced him to the rest of the brethren, and most tenderly and affectionately did he listen to our tales of success, and those of woe about the persecutions then raging, particularly in the vale of Wantage. He gave us good counsel, and most earnestly prayed for us, and the preachers then separated for their appointments. On Friday, September 14th, I drove Mr. Bourne into Hampshire to Hartbourne [Hurstbourne?], to Squire Blunt's. I was delighted with the ease and freedom as well as ability with which Mr. B. conversed with the good gentleman on Cobbett and other authors, as he had a large and valuable library. In the evening, at my request, Mr. Bourne preached [in Mr. Farr's house at Bindly] from 'the Great White Throne,' and many felt the force of truth. The next morning I accompanied him fourteen miles towards Salisbury. In all the journey I found him very conversable, and as we crossed the Hampshire hills, where the boundary-line parts it from Berkshire, he said: 'That might form the boundary of two circuits, and you might take Hampshire.' But I said, 'No, sir'; and I went on to explain that I was very much attached to Mr. Ride and that we wrought well together. Besides this, I wanted Shefford Circuit made stronger before a separation; Mrs. Ride, too, was a great counsellor. We prayed by the wayside at parting when within seven miles of Salisbury, and I returned with redoubled resolution to my station, and was glad that in some measure persecution had begun to abate, and the way to open in new places."

This record gives us an authentic glimpse of the past. We see Hugh Bourne, as he crossed the Illsley Downs, manifesting the same habit of close observation of the natural features which met his view as he had shown when he strode over the twenty miles of wild country between Penrith and Alston Moor. No fox-hunter or general had a keener eye for the salient features of a landscape than he; but to him, as he jogged along in his chaise, these hills did not suggest sport or strategy, or even picturesqueness—they presented themselves to him as the natural boundaries of circuits. We see, too, that at the time to which this incident belongs, as the result of Thomas Russell's and Elizabeth Smith's short tentative missions within the borders of the northern division of Hants in 1831–2, some useful adherents had already been won, that houses were available for preaching, and that guest-houses stood open—in short, we see that a base for future labours on a larger scale had already been secured. As early as 1831, when Thomas Russell made his excursion into Hampshire, two families were won whose adhesion was of the greatest value to our Church in the trying days that were to come. For if persecution had by this time somewhat abated in the Vale of the White Horse, it was yet to gather and break in Hampshire. On his first visit to Linkenholt Mr. Michael Osmond showed himself very friendly, and united with the society that was formed, as did also his brothers Richard and Stephen,

and his sister—afterwards Mrs. Tasker. Messrs. Richard and Michael, we are told, at one time rented the whole of the parish of Linkenholt, and were able to retire with a competence when none of the subsequent occupiers succeeded. Stephen Osmond entered the ministry and travelled for some years; while Richard, after having been an active and efficient local preacher in the Andover Circuit, on his retirement from business removed with his family to Bath, and interested himself in mission work in a neglected part of the city. A building was secured, and a congregation and Sunday school formed. After her husband’s death in 1865, Mrs. Jane Grundy Osmond felt it a sacred duty to carry on the work initiated by her husband. She and her family liberally aided in the erection, in 1881, of Claremont Church and school buildings, which became Bath Second Circuit. Mrs. Osmond died December, 1892.

Among other of the earliest converts of Thomas Russell were Mr. and Mrs. Farr of Bindly, in whose house Hugh Bourne preached his famous sermon on “the Great White Throne.” No less than two hundred persons are stated to have been converted in that farm-kitchen. Miss Farr, who had strong mental powers and had received a superior education, became a local preacher, and in 1837 was married to George Price, one of the makers of the Brinkworth District. He it was who, in 1838, took charge of Shefford Circuit when John Ride moved on to Reading; he purchased the Union Chapel, Newbury, which for thirty-eight years served the uses of the denomination until superseded by the present handsome Gothic church during the superintendency of Mr. Edward Alford. Mr. Price died suddenly in full harness in 1869, while his widow survived until 1895, dying at the residence of her eldest son, who was at the time the Steward of the Croydon Circuit.

For Hampshire the curtain rises in the spring of 1833 on scenes of mob-violence and legal oppression that throw a lurid light on the social and moral condition of that part of England in the ’thirties. Already, since 1832, Shefford had had its branch in Hampshire of which Mitcheldever was the centre:

now, at its March quarter day, 1833, it was resolved to send George Wallis and W. Wiltshire to begin a mission at Andover. Nothing will be gained for our
purpose by keeping these two missions rigidly distinct, since they were contiguous to each other and were being pushed forward at the same time. All we can hope or shall attempt to do is, by samples, to convey a sufficient impression both of the amount and virulence of the persecution, in its two forms, with which Shefford's devoted missionaries had to contend on both branches before they became circuits—Mitcheldever in 1835, and Andover in 1837. On three successive Sundays Mr. Wallis visited Andover. His first service, on May 5th, was held amid a scene of great disturbance. On the second Sunday a godless gang broke up the service and knocked the preacher down. On the third he was pulled down while preaching in the marketplace and he and his colleague were dragged through the streets by the beadle and the constable, while the mob, with discordant cries, struck them with besoms, sticks, and whatever came handy. The skirts of their coats were torn off, and there is a record, in the circuit books, of a grant of money for making good their sartorial loss. Years after, Mr. Wallis pointed out to his son the place in Old Basing where he had taken his stand and was thrice knocked down by a mob who trampled upon his body till they thought life was gone, and then ran away. Once it was his lot, with others, to be drenched with bullock's blood! At Alresford, some seven miles from Winchester, certain of the inhabitants had in readiness against the coming of Mr. Watts, six dozen of rotten eggs, a tub of coal-tar, and two bundles of rods. "On his approaching the place where he intended to preach, they hailed him with shouts of rage and madness. He called at a friend's house, which was instantly beset by the mob, and to escape their violence he was obliged to conceal himself; they broke the windows, and covered one of the room floors with eggs." Fortunately some of the persecutors left their devil's work to go to church; then Mr. Watts made his escape, but was followed by numbers who stoned him more than a mile. Primitive Methodism has had its revenge on Alresford: it has planted there its first Orphanage. At another village in this same county the clergyman threatened to prosecute the preachers should they dare to preach in his parish. When, undeterred by his threats, Mr. Watts duly made his appearance, the haughty priest went round ordering his parishioners "to go into their houses and shut their doors and windows:" and they did as they were told. Further south, at Stockbridge, persecution was no less virulent. Here, William Fowler, a young preacher, who soon after finished his course with joy, was violently assailed. He and his friends were enmeshed in a rope flung round them and were being dragged towards the river. When some of those enclosed drew their clasp-knives and cut the rope, they were beaten with the pieces, and then pelted out of the place. At St. Mary Bourne, in order to escape further ill-usage, Mr. Fowler and his followers deemed it advisable to put on the smocks of some labouring men, and thus get away from their persecutors.

But enough, and more than enough of such incidents as these, which, though they are but a few out of the many that might be given, yet revolt us by their brutality and weary us with their monotony, since they lack even the poor merit of the inquisitors' torments—ingenuity. The facts are set forth, not to raise pity, except for the poor neglected misguided men who, by a strange perversity, abused their best friends. Rather are they given to show that Hampshire sorely needed the Gospel at this time, and that our missionaries willingly braved much, and counted not their lives dear unto them in the attempt to supply that need.
But a few words must be said of the much more reprehensible attempt to set the law in motion against the missionaries—to compromise them and their work by confounding them and it with the machinations of revolutionaries, at that time a quite legitimate reason for alarm. Perhaps the worst case of the kind that occurred in Hampshire—at any rate the one of most notoriety—was that in which Messrs. John Ride and Edward Bishop were the sufferers. On Tuesday, June 8th, 1834, the quarterly meeting was held at Mitcheldever and it was arranged to hold a missionary meeting at its close. As the cottages available for services would not accommodate the congregation expected, it was arranged that the meeting should be held on a piece of waste ground on which services were accustomed to be held. Despite the notice affixed to a neighbouring cottage prohibiting the meeting under legal penalties, it was agreed, after serious deliberation, to hold the meeting as arranged. The speakers confined themselves strictly to the subject of missions and the meeting closed in an orderly and peaceable manner. For all this, shortly afterwards, "says Mr. Bishop," a summons reached us, under the hand of Sir Thomas Baring, Bart., of Stratton Park. This legal instrument charged John Ride and Edward Bishop, on the oath of Thomas Ellery, with leading and leading a riotous mob at Mitcheldever—with being armed with bludgeons, and that they did, by force and arms, put His Majesty's peaceful subjects in fear—that they obstructed the thoroughfare—and that they were a nuisance.

The sequel of the story shall be told in the words of Mr. Richard Heath, from whose work we have already quoted.*

"On such a charge John Ride and Edward Bishop were cited before the magistrates of Winchester on July 19th, 1834. No breach of the law being proved against them the magistrates offered to let them go, if they would promise not to preach again at Mitcheldever. Refusing to do this, they were bound over to be tried at the Quarter Sessions, and during the twelve days they were finding bail, they were kept in the same prison in which the victims of 1830 had been confined.† I do not suppose they had any idea of the dignity of their martyrdom, or how really they were being associated with the sufferings of Christ. For we must not expect the thoughts of even the poorest among English evangelists to rise above the level of nineteenth century Christianity. However, no one can preach the Gospel of the Kingdom or sincerely pray that that Kingdom may come without helping to bring about a revolution of the most radical description."

We may smile at, while we forgive the implied assumption that John Ride and E. Bishop were simple-minded evangelists who were incapable of understanding the relations and issues of the events in which they were leading actors. Never was there a greater mistake. We doubt whether even my Lord Bishop of Winchester himself was as wide awake to the "condition of the people question" in his diocese as was Edward Bishop.

† "The fortnight we spent in that county jail was the best portion of college life with which we had ever been favoured."—E. Bishop.
This is clear from his published views and from what we know of the man; and in far-sightedness, "in understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do," in mental vigour, E. Bishop was but one of a number of men who in the wide old Brinkworth District laid the foundations of the Connexion deep and strong—men like S. Turner, C. T. Harris, and many others who might be named.

Connexionally as well as nationally better times came to Hampshire. Andover, with its missions extending to the New Forest and the Solent, became one of the widest circuits in the Connexion and did good work. As for Winchester, it was long a struggle to gain a Connexion foothold in the ancient city, but in 1852 Mitcheldever made another vigorous attempt to mission it, which proved successful. Through all these years of persecution and struggle the Rev. W. Thorn, Congregational minister of Winchester, had shown himself our vindicator and friend:—His church having built a new sanctuary on a portion of the site of the old prison where Messrs. Ride and Bishop were incarcerated, their vacated chapel was secured on most favourable terms, and Mr. Thorn, Dr. Beaumont, and E. Bishop were among those who took part in the opening services. The occasion naturally lent itself to retrospect and to comparison.

"Let any Christian man," says Mr. Bishop (and we must remember the words were written in 1853), "calmly contrast the religious state of this country now with what it was nearly thirty years ago, and he will find facts which must cause his heart to rejoice. The religious and educational efforts which have been employed for the benefit of the people have produced great results. Religious services and Sabbath schools have been greatly increased. There are villages in which we found, in 1832, only one religious service on the Sabbath day, and no week-evening lecture, and no Sabbath school; in which there may now be found four or more religious services on the Sabbath, two or more on week-eveings, and two Sabbath schools; and he must be under the influence of strong prejudice who will not admit that the labours and sufferings of Primitive Methodist preachers have, under God, had much to do in producing this happily altered state of things. Let this be admitted or denied by erring men, the record of these brethren is on high, and their work with their God."

The Windsor Mission of Reading Circuit will furnish our next sample of persecution. April 12th, 1835, is given as the date when the first effective move was made on Reading. On that Sunday a full day's services were held on Forbury Hill, the
preachers being Messrs. Ride, Bishop, Kirby (of Bradfield), and, in the evening, Mrs. Ride. From this day began Mr. Jesse Herbert's life-long connection with the Reading Circuit. For some time he was engaged in home-mission work like his friend Isaac Nullis, but, his health breaking under the strain that work imposed he returned to Reading in 1841, and henceforward, until his death in 1896, did much to extend and consolidate Primitive Methodism in the town and neighbourhood. He was a local preacher for fifty-nine years, and the founder, in 1858, of the Young Men's Bible Class—the greatest work of his life—of which he had charge for thirty years. As an active and public-spirited citizen of the biscuit-town he was respected and trusted, serving as a member of the School Board for fifteen years, and being rate-collector for twenty-three years. Mr. Edward Long, the father-in-law of the late Rev. R. W. Burnett, and Miss Mary Bovaston (Mrs. Joseph Coling) were also amongst the earliest members and local preachers of the Reading Society. Mr. Long was for many years the Steward of the Circuit, and died in 1897.
In October, 1835, St. Giles' Hall, in London Street, was taken on rent for religious services and served until 1839, when a building in Minster Street, formerly a Baptist chapel, was secured. This more commodious building formed the chief centre of the society until 1866, when a hall was purchased and converted into the present chapel in London Street. Meanwhile, Shefford had made Reading a circuit. This was done in March, 1837, just two years from its opening. The circuit began its career with 450 members and four preachers, John Ride being the superintendent. His transference from Shefford to Reading was not effected until Shefford's other missions—Mitcheldever, Faringdon, Andover, and Wallingford—had all likewise been constituted circuits. His transference to Reading, therefore, showed that another stage in the advance of the Connexion on London and the home-counties, from this side, had been reached, and that Reading was regarded as a convenient base for pushing the advance still further. Hence it is to be noted that it was in 1836, just before these changes were made, that Shefford Circuit reached its acme. On the stations for that year it has twenty-three preachers and 2031 members, thus ranking next to Hull, which the same year had twenty-five preachers and 4438 members.

During its first year an outrageous case of persecution (of which we can give no particulars) cost the Reading Circuit the sum of £150. Despite this untoward event, a mission in the county of Surrey was resolved upon. On April 17th, 1838, Messrs. Ride and Aaron Bell * set out on their pioneer journey, walking thirty miles as far as Guildford. On their way, John Ride accosted an old lady, a native of those parts, and a dialogue took place, of which the following is a specimen:—

*Mr. Ride.—“Do you know anything of Jesus Christ?”

Aged Woman.—“There is no man of that name living anywhere about here.”

*Mr. R.—“Do you know the way of salvation?”

Aged Woman.—“I have lived here many years, but I have never heard of such a way yet. But there are some men making a new road down yonder; you had better ask them if that is the way of salvation.”

After this, one can well believe the statement of Mr. John Guy, who in June succeeded Mr. Ride on this mission: “The people were the darkest I had ever met with.” Reading Circuit continued to prosper. In 1839 it employed eight preachers and reported 600 members. In 1840 the number of its preachers had risen to twelve and its membership to 871. The circuit was enabled to enter more extensively upon missionary work through the liberality of Mr. Thomas Baker who, though a member of another community, contributed the sum of £100 towards the employment of five missionaries in the neighbouring counties. Messrs. Guy, Hedges, and Grigg were appointed to the Windsor Mission in 1839. “Their labours were hard, their privations many, and their persecutions neither few nor small.” As a concrete illustration of this statement of Mr. Petty's, let us give a leaf from the experience of Mr. Grigg, one of the pioneers of this mission. In his experience we have the same combination of light and shadow which we have met with elsewhere.

On the 24th of September, Mr. Grigg went to preach at Winkfield-row. He had

*This devoted young minister lost his life in August, 1838. In passing through Eton he turned aside to bathe in a back stream of the Thames, and was drowned.
previously heard of the moral degradation of many of the inhabitants, and they had been informed of his coming to preach to them. He selected the Green in the centre of the village for the purpose—but ere he began the service, he sat down on some logs of wood to rest a little and to read a portion of the Bible. Mrs. Searle, a woman of great physical strength and of a generous disposition, but not then renewed by Divine grace, came to ask him whether he were the gentleman that was going to preach. Being answered in the affirmative, she strongly advised him not to make the attempt, assuring him that he would be "roughly handled." Mr. Grigg replied that he was often cruelly treated, and that he could not conscientiously leave the place without attempting to preach. "Then," said his generous adviser, "I will lend you a chair to stand upon, and you had better stand near my garden gate." Mr. Grigg did so, and began to sing a hymn. He had sung one verse in quietness, when a number of young men came out of a public-house opposite, and one of them overturned the chair upon which Mr. Grigg was standing, by which he was thrown upon the ground. His kind female friend, not having yet learned that the weapons of the Christian warfare are not carnal but spiritual, struck the disturber on the back of his head, and knocked him down. Then seizing the chair with one hand, and Mr. Grigg with the other, she pulled him within her garden gate, and said, "Stand and preach there." Mr. Grigg proceeded with singing, and the persecutors began to pelt him with flint'stones and other missiles, and to besmear him with the sediment of a horse-pond close by. When he had finished singing he knelt down to pray; and while in this solemn act of devotion, his godless persecutors rushed through the gate, seized him, tore his coat, and dragged him out of the garden, and along a flint road about fifty yards. Turning to the ringleader, the suffering missionary inquired what he had done to be served in that manner. The persecutor candidly replied that he could assign no reason for the ill-treatment,—and apparently conscious that he was liable to be prosecuted, and fearing the result, he expressed a hope that
Mr. Grigg would not "do anything in the affair." The latter replied that if he and his companions would promise never to molest him or any other preacher any more, he would freely forgive them. They promised that they would never interfere again, and he shook hands with them, and returned to his former standing-place, where, though his coat was torn to rags, his person besmeared with filth, and blood was flowing from his wounded face, he preached to those who were willing to hear. After the service, his kind friend took him into her house, procured him water to wash himself, cleaned his clothes as well as she was able, whilst her husband prepared some tea for his refreshment. They expressed their deep sympathy with him in his sufferings, and regretted that they could not accommodate him with lodgings. He thanked them for their kindness, prayed with them, bade them good night, and then tried all the public-houses, and several of the farmers and cottagers in vain to obtain a night's lodging. Being at length told that no one dare entertain him, through fear of the most influential persons in the parish, he ceased to inquire further, and being too remote from the residence of any friend, he walked on the road till midnight, and then went into a field, where he slept till five o'clock in the morning. But his patient endurance of the inhuman treatment he received was not in vain. He shortly afterwards received a written invitation from Mrs. Henry Osman and her mother-in-law, Mrs. R. Osman, to visit Winkfield-row again, engaging, if he did so, that bed and board should be found and a room provided for the services. These two good women were true to their promise: they took a house and furnished it with forms and candlesticks and everything that was necessary, and became responsible for the rent. When the room became too small, Mrs. R. Osman gave the use of her dining-room till the present chapel was built. From that time, until her death at the great age of 89, Mrs. H. Osman continued to take the deepest interest in the cause. For years she provided the school-treat, and at the time of her death she had money put aside for that purpose. Her eldest son, Mr. H. M. Osman, became a local preacher in 1858, and has been the mainstay of the cause for many years. The farm is still in the family, and "the prophet's chamber" has been kept for the use of the preacher from that day to this. It is pleasing to know, too, that the Amazonian, Mrs. Searle, afterwards became a convert, and that her two sons are, or till recently were, local preachers with us. So trial and suffering pass while the good they yield are abiding.

By its Thame mission, Wallingford, made a circuit in 1837, carried Brinkworth District into the southern projection of Oxfordshire and into Bucks. This geographical extension enlarged the persecution area; progress had its attendant shadow. Bicester and Ambrosden, in Oxon., should be marked on our connexional map with crossed swords as though they were battle sites, for at these
places two of the very worst cases of persecution recorded in our annals took place. For the credit of our countrymen, and also for the sake of our readers, we are glad to say they are also the last cases we shall need to refer to in this chapter. Not that it is affirmed there was no persecution after 1843, but only that the cases that did occur after that date were isolated ones, all taken together not being numerous enough to compromise a county, or characterise a period. With the close of the first period, persecution, as quite an ordinary thing to be expected and reckoned with, went out—and went out flagrantly and stormily.

The date of the Bicester man-baiting was July 31st, 1843. Already, in the March of the same year, Mr. George Stansfield had served seven days in Dover jail for having sung and prayed in the streets of Margate—the happy hunting-ground of nigger-minstrels. Let it be noted that it was the rector of St. Peter’s who, as the spokesman of the Bench, announced its decision. So little did Mr. Stansfield look like a misdemeanant that the prisoners took him, from his dignified and gentlemanly bearing, to be some one who had come to inspect the prison. The chief victim of the savage attack at Bicester was S. West, the joint re-opener of Bristol, the remissioner of Oxford, and the man, who, of all who preached at the Conference camp meeting at York in 1853, made the profoundest impression on C. C. McKechnie.* This was the man who bore the brunt of the Bicester baiting, his colleague, C. Elford, having succeeded in escaping into a friendly house. As for S. West, he was treated in much the same way as Thomas Russell was treated at Wantage, but with aggravations. He was made a spectacle to scoffing ladies and gentlemen (!) who saw him driven from one side of the market-place to another—soused with water, and buffeted. In their small way, they behaved as heartlessly as the spectators in the amphitheatre, whose upturned thumbs gave the signal for the dispatch of the gladiator, “butchered to make a Roman holiday.” “It is as much fun as a bull-bait,” was their delighted comment, as they saw Mr. West driven from under their window where he had vainly thought he would find protection. Though the chief actors in this disgraceful scene escaped all legal pains and penalties, men noticed with awe how soon, by the act of God, retribution came upon some of the ringleaders.

The sufferer in the Ambrosden case was Isaac Hedges. In the early days—Brinkworth District grew its own preachers. It was largely self-sufficing and was extended by those who were the first-fruits of its own missionary labours. Men like James Hurd, George Wallis, W. Brewer, E. Rawlings, J. Guy, G. Oben, T. Cummin, J. Best, the brothers Harding, and many others, became the successors

*“Of all the preachers Samuel West produced the mightiest impression. He attracted an immense concourse and preached with extraordinary unction.”—MS. Autobiography. By a slip Mr. McKechnie has written “Nathaniel West,” but he disappeared years before. S. West was a delegate to the York Conference.
of the pioneers by whose instrumentality they were won. Such was Isaac Hedges, a plain, fear-nought, laborious preacher, who never forgot the gravel-pit where he was converted, and who did his best to bring men and women out of Nature's quarry. For standing in front of a wheelwright's shop at Ambrosden in Oxfordshire and preaching to five persons, on July 16th, 1843, Isaac Hedges was sentenced to twenty-one days imprisonment, with hard labour, by the Rev. A. B. Matthews and Mr. W. Davis, surgeon. We give the names, and not dashes, and let the record stand without comment.

As a sort of appendix to this chapter, a few words must be written concerning Brinkworth's resumption of missionary labours, which resulted in the enlargement of the District in another direction. The reference to these productive labours has been deferred until this point in order that we might uninteruptedly follow the development of Shefford Circuit. After parting with Shefford, Brinkworth Circuit seemed to be suffering from a temporary reaction, and missionary labours were suspended. But it was soon borne in upon the minds of its leading officials that a circuit only "gains strength as it goes." In June, 1832, Messrs. S. Turner and J. Baker were sent to open Chippenham. Though, at this time, Mr. Turner had but just entered the ministry, he soon gave proof of possessing, in happy combination, qualities which afterwards made him one of the most successful superintendents of the Brinkworth District. With the zeal and courage of the evangelist he united the prudence and discernment of the man of affairs. The missioning of Chippenham was successful despite the ill-concealed opposition of the magistrates. A collision with the authorities was, however, avoided, without any sacrifice of principle. A society was formed at Chippenham on October 2nd, 1832, and the way soon opened for the purchase of the Friends' meeting-house which, with the enlarged accommodation supplied by the putting in of galleries, served the uses of the society until 1896, when a handsome church was erected. Marshfield and Calne were also successfully visited; and five months after entering upon the mission, Mr Turner was able to write: "We now preach at thirteen places, three of which are market-towns; the work of conversion is going on, and we have one hundred members." In 1835 Chippenham became a circuit with 350 members and employing three travelling preachers.

A famous union camp meeting of the Brinkworth and Shefford Circuits, held on Bishopstone Downs—one of many such historic gatherings—coincided with and inaugurated a yet bolder enterprise, the missioning of Bristol. The two Samuels, West and Turner, whom Mr. Petty describes as "zealous, laborious brethren," were designated for this important work, which, under the Divine blessing, proved successful. On Sunday, July 14th, 1832, the mission was opened in Poyntzpool (one of the lowest parts of the city). Here Mr. West preached. In the afternoon Mr. Turner preached in Queen Square, and
in the evening his colleague stood up at the Drawbridge. From the first the services were fruitful in conversions, nor do we read of any special persecution being encountered. The first Bristol society was formed on August 4th, and on the 25th, an old building called Dolman's Chapel was opened by E. Foizey. This building, dating back to the middle of the eighteenth century, had formerly been used by John Wesley, and also, it would seem, by Dr. Ryland, and was more or less in use by our people until 1849, when Ebenezer Chapel was opened, under the superintendency of C. T. Harris. No one has left a deeper impress of himself on Bristol Primitive Methodism than C. T. Harris, eleven years of whose remarkable ministry were spent in the city.

The first chapel in this neighbourhood was built in 1841, at Kingswood, which, along with Bedminster and Fishponds, shared in the labours of the pioneers. In 1835, Bristol was made a circuit, but its progress was comparatively slow. In 1843, it had but two preachers and 284 members, and though, for convenience, we give here the views of its chapels, they belong to a much later stage of its connexional development. It was not until the last year of the nineteenth century was reached that Bristol became a Conference town, while Reading had its first Conference as early as 1841.

The Reading Conference of 1841 is noteworthy. It was held at the time when, and in that part of the country where, the evangelistic movement we have been following
was nearing its completion. We do not know much about the Reading Conference, there were troubles, we are told; and as the thorny Stamp Case had to be dealt with, it is likely enough some minds were lacerated. But the most significant thing about the Conference is, that it was held at Reading. No Conference had ever been held so far South before—a plain proof that the Connexion had made notable advance in this part of the country, and had effectively occupied the county town of Berks, though that town had been the head of a circuit only four years. The time and place of this Conference are significant, too, when we notice how the district, for which Reading was one of the chief generating stations, was the focus on which various lines of evangelisation were evidently converging. Some of these lines, extending far from their base, had been interrupted, and in some cases even broken off, but the vigorous Brinkworth District had resumed them and carried them forward. The statement of a few facts will make this plain.

Burland still held on to its Northampton mission, and Hull to Bedford; but Hull and Driffield's mission to Hertford was, in 1840, taken over by Reading and greatly extended, so as to include Rickmansworth, Watford, St. Albans, and other places. Academic Oxford, which was "stormed" by W. Bellham in 1825, was remissed from Witney in 1835, by Joseph Preston, who bluntly calls it "a sink of iniquity." The society he then formed had, in 1838, become extinct, though three local preachers resided in the town. S. West, the superintendent of Wallingford Circuit, visited it that same year and re-formed the society. Mr. Dingle—one of the local preachers already referred to—erected a small chapel for the use of the society, which was taken on rent, and in 1845, Oxford attained circuit independence. As for Witney itself—it formed part of the Brinkworth District at its formation in 1833. In 1836, Joseph Preston, its superintendent, successfully missioned Chacombe, and other places, in north Oxfordshire, which, in 1840, were constituted Banbury Circuit. In 1841, Witney became a branch of Wallingford and remained such till 1844. We turn to Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire. On April 21st, 1839, while still a branch of Shefford, Aylesbury began its mission in the straw-plaiting towns of Luton and Dunstable. S. Turner and H. Higginson were ourconnexion pioneers in these towns, and were favourably received by the inhabitants. In Luton especially, rapid progress was made. Seven months after the first sermon had been preached in the town, a flourishing society had been raised, and a chapel built. Aylesbury became a circuit in December, 1839, and about the same time took over the derelict mission of Buckingham belonging to distant Congleton. At one time Aylesbury was an immense circuit extending over a large part of two counties. In such a circuit there was room and need for the display of Mr. Turner's qualities as an evangelist and administrator. When, after a four years' term, he removed from the circuit in 1842, he left 435 members more than he had found, and ten chapels where there had been none. High Wycombe affords yet another instance of the complementary and terminal character of Brinkworth District's work at this time. As early as 1811, Hugh Bourne refers to Wycombe as the location of a society. We hear nothing more of the town until April 8th, 1835, when we find James Pole, one of the preachers of Hounslow Circuit, then belonging to Norwich District, after a walk of twenty miles, preaching in Queen's Square. This extension into Bucks was the salvation
THE PERIOD OF CIRCUIT PREDOMINANCE AND ENTERPRISE.

LUTON CHAPELS

HIGHTOWN LECTURE HALL

CHURCH ST

GEORGE ST

CARDIGAN ST

PARK TOWN

HIGHTOWN

MOUNT TABOR

H. MOODY, PHOTOGRAPHER
of the Hounslow Circuit, which now took the name of High Wycombe, and continued to form part of the Norwich District until 1840. Then as a branch it too came under the protection and governance of Reading until 1848, when it resumed its status as a circuit.

These facts will suffice to show what was the part taken by Brinkworth District in the geographical extension of the Connexion. It fell to its lot to cover the last lap of the course; to round off and wind up a movement which had been going on for just a generation. When, in 1843, we see Hull and Reading—two great missionary circuits—handing over their missions to the newly established Missionary Committee, and when we see John Ride removing from Reading to Cooper's Gardens, we feel we have seen the end of the Period of Circuit Predominance and Enterprise, and that the Period of Consolidation is about to begin.
BOOK III.

THE PERIOD OF CONSOLIDATION AND CHURCH DEVELOPMENT.
INTRODUCTORY.

THOUGH we speak of the Period of Consolidation, a more thorough analysis of the facts of our History will show that, since 1843, in reality there have been two well-defined periods in that History—one of which closed in the memory of many yet living. Indeed, the very description of the period we have given, like a binary star, is clearly resolvable into two; for Church development implies something more than Consolidation. The establishment of Foreign Missions, of a Connexional Orphanage, the entrance upon Social work in London and other large cities—these, to name only a few of the new departures of the later years, are signs, not so much of consolidation, as they are signs of a functional equipment for those higher duties which have come into view along with the attained consciousness of true Church life. There may be a "Society"—there may even be a large "Connexion"—with no Foreign Missions, and without any provision for higher ministerial education, and the advancement of Christ's Kingdom in social forms of service. But there cannot be a true Church without these things. Hence, the History of Primitive Methodism, from first to last, is viewed by us as the setting forth of the process by which what began as a purely evangelistic movement gradually evolved and organized itself into a Church. The movement, in its first form, had been animated with a spirit of evangelism so aggressive that it could not rest until it had practically overrun this country from Berwick to Penzance, and from Kings Lynn to Monmouth, with extensions into Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and the great continent of America. When this movement closed in 1843, it did not at once attain to the full consciousness of Church-life. It entered upon its second phase, one intermediate and largely preparative and transitional. It had taken just one generation to secure the area for future working and more thorough cultivation; to get together the material which was to be fashioned and wrought into another wing of the building of God. It was to take yet another generation of strenuous endeavour to conserve the gains of the past, to acquire the needful "plant" for future work, to get rid of particularism, whether in the form of circuit or district prejudices and partialities, and to become possessed with the "Connexional spirit," as we term it—the sense of our participation in a corporate life with all its enjoyments and responsibilities. Then, and not till then, did we come to feel that the union of heart and purpose we had arrived at in our Church relations, was too real and spiritual a thing to be fittingly described by a word so suggestive of material and artificial attachments as the word "Connexion." If we be asked: "And when, pray, did your denomination arrive at this consciousness of Church-life?" it may be difficult, or even impossible, to answer the question, just as we may be unable to tell the precise day or hour when the consciousness of our own individuality first dawned upon us. It is certain the consciousness of Church-
life is enjoyed and claimed now. It is printed on every quarterly ticket of membership. There stands the claim—"Primitive Methodist Church."* More significant still: while every digest of the laws of the denomination, up to and including 1892, had been content to use the word "Connexion," the latest Consolidated Minutes—those of 1902—ousted that word wherever possible in favour of the word Church. Now, official endorsement almost invariably lags behind the communal consciousness; it follows rather than leads public opinion. It is a fair inference therefore that there must have been a strong church-sentiment at work for some years before its emphatic official endorsement.

We have already written: "In the century's evolution of our Church we have had in turn the flourishing and energising of the Circuit, the District, the Church; just as in the order of Nature, we have first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear" (vol. i. p. 159). We can be in no doubt as to when the second period began, nor shall we be far wrong if we make its close approximately coincide with the passing of another generation—1876. The relaxation of the stringent rules relative to the stationing of preachers, which began in 1872, by the concession of invitations to preachers within their own districts and ended by the levelling of district "barriers," as they were significantly called—these successive enactments marked the opening of the era of Connexionalism, as we have already defined that term.

There is no need to delay the narrative by seeking to point out the various characteristics—the drawbacks or the advantages—of Districtism: some of these will meet us as we proceed. One feature of the period however should be pointed out, as it has an interesting bearing on the sequence of events. The very segregation of the Connexion into Districts, for a generation, was an ultimate advantage. Each District being more or less like a garden enclosed, naturally tended, within limits, to develop itself in its own way under the influence of its dominant minds—the typical "District-men of the 'fifties and 'sixties." It is no mere fancy that would find in each of the leading Districts of that time, a physiognomy and tone of its own; it had its ideal, to be kept ever in view and striven for. It might be better chapels, as in the case of Hull District; or African Missions, or ministerial education, as in the case of Norwich and Sunderland and Manchester Districts. Though this District individuality might sometimes have its inconveniences, and even dangers, in the end it served to enrich the Church as a whole. Thus we shall see how almost every District became a contributor to the general good, and how the District Period naturally merges into the Church Period.

* The ticket is shown vol. i. p. 112.
CHAPTER I.

THE PASSING OF THE PIONEERS.

The Conference of 1842 deemed it prudent to superannuate both Hugh Bourne and William Clowes. The event was significant of the changes the years had brought and prelusive of the still greater changes that were to follow. To Mr. Clowes superannuation would come as no shock, since he had virtually been superannuated as long ago as 1827. The Hull Circuit’s Quarterly Meeting of that year, perceiving plain signs of failing strength in Mr. Clowes, had decided that “he should be without ministerial charge, and receive his usual salary; but if his health permitted him to labour in other stations, at special services, then the remuneration received for his services should be paid into the Hull Quarter Day.” The arrangement then made had continued until 1842, so that to Mr. Clowes superannuation meant little more than that he must now look to Connexional Funds rather than to the Hull Circuit for the very modest provision needful for his support.

But to Mr. Bourne, superannuation came as a painful surprise; as a strong man armed. “It was contrary to his wishes and repugnant to his feelings.” He had not sought it, nor, when it came did he like it, though he submitted to it. Mr. Walford is of opinion that the superannuation was premature, and that though Mr. Bourne was now seventy years of age, there were no signs observable of failure of power, either physical or mental, sufficient to justify the step taken by the Conference.* But Mr. Walford is scarcely an impartial witness. The presumption is in favour of the Conference’s having tried to do the right and just thing; and if it be suggested that even the Conference is not always infallible, then we must add, that acquaintance with all the facts of this particular case will not dispose us to challenge either the sincerity or the wisdom of the Conference’s action. Even in 1838 the course now taken had been foreshadowed; for, in recording the appointment of Hugh Bourne as Editor, it was added: “But if Hugh Bourne, through indisposition, be unable to fill the office of Editor, that John Flesher be called in to assist.” This same Conference of 1838 took another significant step in the same direction. Up to that time the appointments of the General Committee Delegates to the various District Meetings had invariably been made by the General Committee itself. These appointments had almost invariably been given to Messrs. H. and J. Bourne and W. Clowes; but by far the largest number of District Meetings were attended by Hugh Bourne. Now, however, the Conference of 1838 took the appointment of General Committee Delegates into its own hands. H. Bourne was deputed to attend the Tunstall and Brinkworth District Meetings of 1839; W. Clowes the Hull,

W. Garner the Sunderland, James Garner (1) the Norwich, and John Hallam the Manchester District. Thus a partial devolution and distribution of official authority took place which distribution became the usage.

"But," it will be said, "Hugh Bourne lived ten years after 1842, and during that decade he performed an amount of labour truly astonishing. He was always on the move; travelling from circuit to circuit. That did not content him; he even crossed the Atlantic to visit the mission stations in Canada and the United States; he threw himself with enthusiasm into the struggling cause of Christian Temperance. Does not all this look as though Mr. Walford was right and that the Conference was wrong in superannuating Hugh Bourne in 1842?"

All this is true, and the question is a perfectly natural one. No one can look with any other feeling than admiration on the sight of the brave septuagenarian toiling to the very end on behalf of the cause he loved so well. But the history of this period will remain something of a puzzle unless we recognise that the declining age of our founders, with its limitations and infirmities, created difficulties which the men of the transition period had to face and deal with as wisely and as considerately as they knew how.

Old age may bring with it other infirmities besides dimness of vision or stiffness of limbs. It may bring with it infirmity of temper or of judgment; and surely these infirmities are just as valid disqualifications for holding a position where self-control and sober judgment are essential as colour-blindness would disqualify a man for being a signal-man. In order to convey the meaning intended, it will be sufficient to give one illustration of the friction and embarrassments caused by this personal factor, which those who had the guidance of affairs at this time had to reckon with. The incident is not the only one that might be given, nor is it by any means the most painful. Indeed, it has its humorous side, and it may also have the further use of suggesting the dangers that might be lurking in the District system—the danger of "Particularism" as we have called it. In passing, we need not do more than allude to the Newcastle Conference of 1833, when Hugh Bourne made a three hours' vehement attack on Clowes and his policy.* Mr. Walford does not make the slightest reference to this Conference, nor, as far as we can find, do any of the later biographers of Hugh Bourne, who have largely followed Walford. The incident has little interest for us now,—since Christian forbearance prevented any serious consequences resulting therefrom; its main value

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* The evidence for the statements made in the text, and the evidence for much more than is there stated, is supplied by various letters and documents of the time now in our possession. Chief amongst these are a number of memorandum books, in which, with his own hand, W. Clowes narrates the facts, and replies, one by one, to the charges made against him and the Hull Circuit. W. Clowes writes in an admirable spirit. He indulges sparingly in invective and confines himself mainly to a defence. These valuable documents, which include letters of Clowes, Flesher, and others, were long in the possession of J. Bywater. At his death they came into the hands of the late Rev. G. Shaw, who, in the presence of the late Dr. J. Wood, handed them to the writer on the understanding that they should ultimately become the property of the Connexion. The importance of these documents cannot well be exaggerated, and, in view of their disclosures, less could not well have been said than is said above.
consists in its showing how, in Hugh Bourne's case, the stress of the years had disturbed the fine balance of imagination and judgment, imparting to his anxiety for the welfare of the Connexion an element of morbidity, and making him look at men and things through an atmosphere of illusion, especially at all that related to W. Clowes and the Hull District. There was nothing in the affair that need disquiet the reader. The incident has now sunk to the dimensions of a storm in a tea-cup, although at the time it might look portentous enough.

Soon after this Conference a circular bearing the imprint of the Bemersley Book-Room appeared with the strange title:

A FEW PLAIN FACTS.

Faith and Industry superior to High Popularity,
As manifested in the Primitive Methodist Connexion between the Conference of the year 1824, and that of 1833—nine years.

Tunstall, Norwich, and Manchester Districts were the Low Popularity Districts, and Nottingham, Hull, and Sunderland, the "High." Nevertheless it was sought to be shown, that, despite their elevation and prestige, the Districts of "high degree" had in nine years only added some 276 members to the Connexion, while in the Districts of "low degree" there had been an increase in the same period of 14,814 members. "If any error be discovered, please to make it known," said the circular. Copies were disseminated, and in due time, found their way to Hull. W. Garner was one of the ministers in the town at the time. Speaking of the circular, he says:

"This eccentric missal answered its purpose for a moment. It was no doubt aimed at William Clowes, and it hit the mark. It wounded his spirit . . . . He keenly felt the stroke, and expressed his astonishment at the unprovoked and needless attack. But he did not allow it to do him much harm. We nevertheless thought it best not to allow the document to be circulated and remain silent; and therefore decided to put in a rejoinder. The circuit records were accordingly examined with a view to ascertain the numerical result of Hull Circuit's labours, apart from those of the entire District."
Mr. Garner goes on to say, that the result of his examination showed that from the day Mr. Clowes entered Hull, in 1819, to 1835, that circuit had raised 14,116 members, or about one-fourth part of the entire Connexion. These findings were published on the Hull Circuit plan.

From this it will be seen that Primitive Methodism has had its "fly-sheets." Mr. W. Lister gives us a glimpse of the Sunderland District Meeting which, in 1835, was held at Northallerton. Hugh Bourne was G. C. D. of that assembly, and here the fly-sheet made its appearance, and was duly dealt with, as the following extract from Mr. Lister's Journal will show.

"It was the first time I had met with Hugh Bourne in a business meeting. He was firm but I thought a little captious, and at times his movements were not likely to promote brotherly-kindness. He had a paper which he had got printed—[Here follows a description of the circular.] In the midst of a discussion on decreases of members he introduced the paper for the Secretary to read to the meeting. This led to some angry remarks. Mr. Dawson took up the subject by asking—Who the author was? What was the design for wishing it to be read? etc.

Mr. B., finding himself taken to task and pressed with questions, begged to have the paper handed back and the matter to drop. To me there appeared a lack of judgment, whatever might be said in favour of an anxious wish for the prosperity of the cause. The whole thing was calculated to provoke disaffection and I fear would do no good."

The Conference of 1842, as we have said, "deemed it prudent to superannuate both Hugh Bourne and W. Clowes." After superannuation—death. There may be a considerable interspace between the two events, as there was in the cases of our founders; but the interval, though of interest to the biographer, may be passed over by the historian, as it has no direct bearing on events. It is significant that Clowes' Journal ends with his superannuation, though he continued to visit the Churches as much and as long as health and strength would
perm. He resided in Hull, where he led his class, and went in and out amongst the people by whom he was affectionately known as "Father Clowes." How great was the value of his prayers and holy life to Hull Primitive Methodism who shall estimate? The last meeting he attended was one in Mason Street Chapel to make arrangements for the erection of a new chapel in Jarratt Street, better known as Clowes' Chapel. In February, 1851, he was stricken with paralysis and died March 2nd, 1851, sixty years to the month and day after John Wesley.* As Parkinson Milson stood in the death-chamber he noticed upon his coffin-lid, representations of quivers filled with arrows. "I was much affected," says he, and thought: "How he hurled the arrows of Divine truth." Of him it might have been said: "Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee." His remains were followed by a large concourse of people and, amidst tokens of the deepest respect and reverence, were laid to rest in the Hull General Cemetery. Messrs. Harland, Bywater, and Lamb took part in the service at the grave.

The old table-tomb, which was erected by subscription, has given place to a worthier memorial. At the initiative, and mainly through the exertions of Rev. W. Smith, a lofty obelisk of granite (unveiled September 29th, 1898) now marks the spot where W. Clowes lies; and clustered round it are the resting-places of many noted adherents of our Church—so many indeed, that the sacred spot is known as "Primitive Corner."

Hugh Bourne did not long survive his old friend, but he was full of work almost to the last. There is something pathetic in the circumstances of his death. He suffered excruciating pain in his foot. Nature was at last exacting a full penalty. Yet, as we look upon the scene, we do not think so much of Nemesis as of vicarious suffering. We are reminded of the words of the dying De Quincey who, as the attendants were moving him in bed and lifting his feet, said:

* By a strange blunder March 4th is given as the date of Clowes' death on the Funeral Card printed at the time, shown on the other page.
"Be gentle; be tender. Remember that those are the feet that Christ washed." So those poor much abused feet remind us of the Christly service they did all through the years—running to and fro doing the Master's will. Unlike W. Clowes, speech was not denied him in the extreme hour, and his last words show how the mind harked back to the scenes and figures of the past. He was heard to murmur—"Old companions! Old companions! My mother!" He died October 11th, 1852. His body was taken to Englesea Brook for burial. The whole country through which the cortege passed from Bemersley was moved. It was computed that in Tunstall market-place 16,000 persons were present as Mr. Leech gave the address. At Englesea Brook hundreds filed past the open coffin; and the great number of Sunday school children present was a most appropriate feature of the occasion. Messrs. Sanders, T. Russell, and Higgins committed the body to its rest in the graveyard of the Englesea Brook Chapel; and a subscription tomb was afterwards, largely through the exertions of Mr. Flesher, placed over the grave.

We shall not attempt here an estimate of our two chief founders or draw out the contrast between them—striking as that contrast was. This has already been done by Mr. Petty in his History. He had personal knowledge of both Hugh Bourne and W. Clowes, and it is right that his summing up of their characters and work should be handed on to another generation of readers than that for which he wrote.

"His own denomination owes him a great debt of gratitude for the sacrifices he made for its welfare and the energetic and efficient manner in which he promoted its interests. He was not indifferent to the prosperity of other communities, in whose well-being he sincerely rejoiced; but believing that the Providence of God had called him to labour among the community in whose formation he had taken so prominent a part, he consecrated all his powers both of body and mind to promote its weal. His life was bound up in its prosperity; his constant study, his unvaried aim was to minister to its usefulness; his toilsome and zealous labours were all intended to enhance its well-being. And it is difficult to calculate aright the amount of good which he accomplished by his caution, his forethought, his energy of purpose, and his determined perseverance. The regulations he successfully sought to carry into effect for the benefit of the community, in some cases, bore hardly upon the regular ministers, and it cannot be denied that a few of them presented an aspect of severity which it would be difficult, if not impossible, to justify; for instance, one which provided that if unpleasantness should arise in any society which should call for investigation, and a travelling preacher should be found faulty in the least, he should pay all the expenses attendant on the inquiry, though other parties might be far more blameable than he: an example of partial legislation which a later Conference saw proper to abolish; but, notwithstanding imperfections of this character, which Mr. Bourne's measures occasionally displayed, his influence in the management of connexional affairs was, on the whole, salutary, and even eminently beneficial. For many years he was the leading spirit in the denomination, and took an active part in its most important transactions. In pulpit and platform efforts Mr. Clowes was incomparably superior to Mr. Bourne; in legislative or administrative ability he was immeasurably inferior. Both exerted a powerful and beneficial influence in the Connexion, but it was in some respects different. Both commanded veneration and esteem by their years, their manly piety, their eminent usefulness, and their high
position in the Body; but Mr. Bourne's influence was exercised with more apparent authority, and with occasional harshness and severity; Mr. Clowes' with more paternal kindness and with a winning sweetness of disposition and manner. Mr. Bourne sometimes erred on the side of severity; Mr. Clowes occasionally on the side of leniency. The former had much of Luther in his temperament; the latter, more of Melancthon. Their difference of views in certain cases, and the different course they pursued in some matters of discipline, unhappily caused a measure of estrangement between them for some years; and in moments of severe trial, Mr. Bourne sometimes spoke of Mr. Clowes in unwarrantable terms, for which, on more than one occasion, he had the manliness and grace to express his deep regret,—and in his calm moments he frequently spoke and wrote of his early friend in the highest strains of eulogy. In many respects, however, these distinguished men greatly resembled each other. Both were actuated by a pure and ardent desire to promote the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. Both were zealous in an extraordinary degree in their efforts to snatch perishing men as brands from the burning. Both looked for present effects, through the blessing of God on their labours. Both used great plainness of speech in their public addresses. Both enforced with uncommon clearness and power, the doctrine of a present salvation through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Both were firm believers in the theology of Wesley, and great admirers of his character and labours. Both were mighty in prayer, and strong in faith. Both were eminently prudent in the management of societies and the erection of chapels. Both were men of strong determination and of fixedness of purpose. And well was it for the body of which they were the principal founders, that both of them were permitted to live to a good old age, and to promote its well-being by their sanctified wisdom and growing piety.

"Who, of the two, was the more useful we presume not to determine. Their talents and acquirements materially differed, and so did the sphere of their labours. Mr. Bourne had more strength of mind; Mr. Clowes more fire of imagination. The former had more learning; the latter a richer command of language, and a more fluent utterance. Mr. Bourne took a much larger share in the management of the Connexion than Mr. Clowes; the latter did incomparably more than he in active labours to extend its borders. While Mr. Bourne was efficiently serving the denomination as the editor of its magazine, and as the ruling mind in its General Committee and annual assemblies, Mr. Clowes was pursuing evangelical labours, or Home Missionary operations, with apostolical ardour and success. Both excelled in their spheres of operation; both were eminently adapted to the work respectively allotted to them. Mr. Bourne could not have accomplished what Mr. Clowes effected; Mr. Clowes could not have performed what Mr. Bourne achieved. The Connexion has abundant cause to "glorify God in" both of them, and to render Him unfeigned thanks for the incalculable benefit derived from their judicious counsels, their extraordinary labours, their earnest prayers, and their fervent piety. They were holy and useful in their lives, and in their death they were not long divided. Their mortal remains do not indeed rest in the same sepulchre; but their immortal spirits have met in the regions of the blessed. They mingle, we doubt not, in the blood-washed throng before the throne of God, and unite in the loud hosannahs chanted to the Saviour's name."
CHAPTER II.

MEN AND CONFERENCES OF THE TRANSITION—1843-60.

On the retirement of Hugh Bourne and W. Clowes the direction of affairs naturally devolved on those who were themselves no longer young; who indeed were veterans of such long standing that, if they were not the actual founders of the Connexion as a distinct community they had, nevertheless, worked side by side with the founders; men who had been the makers of the Connexion and the pioneers of its geographical progress during the period of circuit predominance and enterprise we have been following. We may call these men the Men of the Transition, since the terminal points of their activity fell on either side of 1842, overlapping and bridging the two periods. As a matter of course some of these men became holders of connexional offices, and so they head the succession of Editors, Book Stewards, and Missionary Secretaries, whose grouped portraits are given in this chapter with the double purpose of being convenient for present and future reference. Still, it is not the offices these men filled we are now considering, but rather their fitness and inevitability for office, as being the chief representatives of the Men of the Transition to whose lot it fell to be the shapers and directors of the Connexion until the early 'sixties.

All through this period the governing power, so far as the Conference was its depositary and organ, was exclusively in the hands of the Men of the Transition—ministers and laymen. In this respect the Conference presented a marked contrast to the District Meetings, which were elected on a much broader suffrage and which, consequently, grew in popularity and influence, while the Conference was little known, jealously guarded its deliberations from publicity, and did its best to wrap itself in obscurity and mystery. It is in the contrast between the District Meetings and the Conference, in the explanation of this contrast, and in the consequences practical and sentimental that resulted from this difference, that we shall find the key to the history of the time—a time less familiar to our people than any other in our annals, since it is out of the range of the personal experience of all, except a very limited number, and lies under the still further disadvantage that the material for rightly judging of it is scanty in the extreme.

In 1845 the rules regulating the appointment of District representatives to Conference were revised in the direction of stringency. Hitherto superintendents of three years' standing, and lay officials who had been such for the year immediately preceding, had been eligible. But, in 1845, the time-qualification was greatly lengthened both in the case of minister and layman. It was enacted that no preacher must be sent to Conference unless he had travelled eighteen years and been a superintendent twelve. The layman, too, must have been a member twelve years and an official ten. Such was the law
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CONNESSIONAL EDITORS FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE PRESENT.
determining District representation to Conference until 1865, when it underwent some relaxation. From this it will follow that no one entering the ministry in 1841 or '2 could, or as a matter of fact did, take part in the deliberations of our chief assembly before 1859 or '60. Before they had become eligible on the old and more liberal qualification, the stringent provisions of 1845 came in to bar their entry. When we look down the list of men who were pledged in 1841 we find such names as C. Smallman, S. Antliff, T. Southern, P. Clarke, R. Bootland, W. Yeadon, and D. Ingham. The list for 1842, includes such men as J. Huff, E. Morton, T. Whitehead, J. Holroyd, J. T. Shepherd, R. Church, and J. Mules. All these were prominent District men and some of them attained to connexional eminence, yet it is safe to say of one and all of them: it took twenty years for time to mature their qualifications for Conference. Their qualifications blossomed with the coming of the first grey hairs or of baldness. Samuel Antliff was fortunate in making his début in Conference in the nineteenth year of his ministry, while C. C. McKechnie was not eligible—because of the twelve years' superintendency requirement—until he had actually travelled twenty-seven years.

The value of a knowledge of these facts consists in their enabling us to picture the composition and almost the personnel of the Conferences of the 'fifties. We see that the assembly has on it the aspect of maturity and even of age. It is a Gerusia—a senate; made up of old officials, of men whose connexional record goes back into the preceding period. It is an assembly with conservative tendencies, having in it many who think the old times were better than the present. The younger rising men are not here. Their time is not yet come. As yet they are finding an outlet for their energy in Circuit and District administration, with the result that Districtism is being fostered at some expense to Connexionalism. Some day the rôles of District Meeting and Conference will be inverted; but that as yet is in the future.

If we pass from the constitution and composition of the Conference to look at the way it hedged itself about with restrictions so as to secure the minimum of publicity, we shall better understand why we know so little of these early Conferences and their doings. The endeavour seems to have been to make them as much like meetings with closed doors as possible. Certainly Conference hearers were not encouraged. How far they were to be allowed was regulated by the same Conference of 1845, which decided that the first and second oldest local preachers residing at a town within fifty-one miles of a Conference-town might be admitted as hearers on showing a certificate properly signed. These certificates were closely scanned, for the post of door-keeper was a responsible one, and any laxity in the discharge of his duties rendered him liable to censure and even fine.*

To all this must be added that the published records of the transactions of the Conferences of this transition time seem to have been prepared on the principle of giving the minimum amount of information such as contemporaries find most interesting and the historian most helpful. We look in vain in the Minutes of 1841 for any

* It is fair to say that the stringency of the rule was somewhat relaxed in 1850; but only in favour of Male travelling preachers, and other leading officials of the male sex.
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reference to the "Stamp Case"; or in the Minutes of the early 'Fifties for information as to the genesis of the Hymn Book of 1853 and the controversy which grew out of its publication.

To get to Conference has always been a legitimate and laudable ambition. Men were moved by this ambition even in the early Middle period of our history when, in comparison with the Conferences of these later days, our chief assembly was but a numerically small, less popular, and—having regard to the qualification for election—a more exclusive body. Men were not disposed to sit down quietly under their exclusion. "District Meetings were all very well, but, after all, Conference was Conference, and——," in short, they would like to form some of its constituent atoms. Those who were debarred by the existing years-of-travelling rule, and those who were qualified but who, in the number of competitors, felt that their chance of often getting to Conference was but slender, put forth efforts to secure such changes in the law as would obviate for them its exclusive effects. They were not conspicuously successful.

An early and interesting example of such infructuous efforts is supplied by the minutes of an "Association of Travelling Preachers formed at Pontefract in 1845.* Its declared object was to enable preachers who had travelled fifteen years and been superintendents ten years successively, to have a seat and a voice in Conference on condition that they bore their own expenses to the Conference town and supported themselves while there. The Association sought to gain its end by legislation, petition, etc., and there is evidence that in these respects it was not inactive. We have not a list of the members of the Association, but J. Bywater was the Secretary and W. Taylor the Treasurer; and these, together with W. Sanderson and G. Lamb, formed the Committee. It transpires, too, that J. Flesher was an honorary member of the Association, and had given one pound to its "campaign fund"; so that it is evident even some leading men of the transition were in sympathy with the endeavour to enlarge and popularise the Conference, and could have had no part in framing or passing the reactionary rules of 1845. The proposals of the Association were a plagiarism; evidently they were suggested by the Wesleyan Conference, of which the legal hundred is the core. Had the legislation promoted by the Pontefract Association met with favour instead of repeated rejection, then the Primitive Methodist legal Conference must still have remained that part of the composite body which consisted of the permanent members, "the four" elected by the previous Conference, and those duly sent up by the District Meetings. But Conference reform was not destined to come on these lines, but rather by the removal of restrictions and by the method of expansion and evolution.

We have alluded to the Hymn Book of 1853 and to the controversy which followed on its publication. Each of the three chief periods of our History has had its Hymn Book, and each was a characteristic product of its time. The first period had its "Small" and "Large" Hymn Book, not inappropriately bound together like the Old and New Testaments; for the Small Hymn Book went back to the time of our

* The Minute Book of the Association, as also the copies of many letters written to ministers on the aims and progress of the Association by the Secretary, are in our possession.

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GENERAL BOOK STEWARDS TO 1885.
"origins." It was reminiscent of Lorenzo Dow and camp meetings, and was essentially a revival Hymn Book; while the "Large," as it was called, provided a greater variety of hymns for the uses of public worship. The Middle Period gave us Mr. Flesher's compilation, while the "Hymnal" is the worthy exemplar of the Church Period of our history. It is with the Hymn Book of 1853 and the controversy it roused that we have now to do.

The early portion of the Middle Period was a trying and somewhat uneasy one as most transition periods are. The cars rocked as they got on the new rails. Controversies, big and little, there were in plenty; but most of them involved no great issues and have no lessons for us of the present. Such was that which arose in 1847 respecting the founding of a Local Preachers' Provident Institution, which, therefore, it is not worth while dwelling upon. Of a somewhat different kind, however, was the Hymn Book controversy. It did raise an issue of some importance. Altogether apart from the question as to the merits or demerits of the book itself, it was alleged that the Hymn Book had been sprung on the Connexion. It was in the North and especially in Sunderland and Newcastle where dissatisfaction with the book was most deeply felt, and where it took its most active form. C. C. McKechnie—afterwards Editor and President—became the Secretary of an association pledged to secure, if possible, the withdrawal of the book. Trenchant reviews of it were written and the Connexion was "circularised." The circular was signed by Messrs. Thos. Gibson and Joseph Fawcett of Sunderland, and A. McCree and George Charlton of Newcastle. In this circular the third and last reason for the action taken is stated to be:—

"The indifference manifested to Connexional Opinion in that the new Book was authorised, stereotyped, and issued without an opportunity being given for the Connexion to judge of its suitability."

To this the General Committee in its counter-circular to the stations replies:—

"That the statement about the issue of the New Hymn Book manifesting 'indifference to Connexional opinion' is not in harmony with the facts of the case, both the preparation and publication of the book having been directed by duly elected delegates or representatives of the Connexion in Conference assembled, comprising a considerable number of intelligent Connexional office-bearers capable of expressing their views and those of the brethren whom they represented, and who were not distinct from the Connexion, but forming an important and influential part thereof."

From the strictly legal side the circular of the General Committee was a complete answer and put the agitators in the wrong. Undoubtedly the Conference had authorised the preparation of the Hymn Book, and had entrusted the work to Mr. Flesher, though when, and under what circumstances this was done, does not appear. It may be a search through the Conference Journals would show, but the published Conference Minutes and our Histories are silent. Formal authorisation was probably given in 1851, and by the close of 1853 the book was printed and stereotyped and twenty thousand copies sold. But the Hymn Book controversy naturally grew out of the working theory of the Conference in use and favour at the time, and this incident came to reveal its drawbacks and possible dangers. To us the chief value of the incident lies in its bearing
on the history of the evolution of the Conference. The questions as to whether or no Mr. Flesher was the best man who could have been selected for the work of compiling a new Hymn Book; whether he were a poet as well as a great preacher and rhetorician; whether his hymns, and those of his wife, possessed or were destitute of poetic merit; whether, above all, he was or was not justified in mutilating and amending the hymns of others—all such questions have undoubtedly their interest, but just now we are more interested in the aforesaid question of the evolution of Conference. For that there has been evolution here is plain. In the early 'Fifties the ideal Conference would seem to have been a select assembly in which men should deliberate and decide in camera, uninfluenced by the outside non-conferential world, which must be told hereafter as little as possible. How far we have got from such ideas! Instead of seclusion and reticence, the ideal of Conference has become publicity and frankness. We smile at the old restrictions on hearers as we see our people flocking to the Conference town like the tribes going up to the sacred feasts. Representatives of the press are welcomed and even thanked for the fulness and accuracy of their reports.

There can be no question that the Hymn Book controversy and other incidents of the kind have helped to bring about this change of view and sentiment. The controversy had no serious results but closed amicably. The case was taken to the Conference of 1854, where G. Charlton represented the Northern dissentients. But mutual concessions were made. On the one side the withdrawal of the Hymn Book was not pressed, withdrawal being manifestly impossible. On the other side an undertaking was given that some of the most objectionable features of the book should be removed. We agree with the late John Atkinson that it was fortunate for the Connexion at this juncture that the opposition

"Was calmly and fairly met by those who were in official position at the time... The Rev. John Petty, with his colleagues in London, Revs. T. King and J. Bywater, and the Rev. W. Garner, who was then in Hull, by the Christian spirit they manifested, and the concessions they made, earned the gratitude of the Connexion, for they did much to save it from a disastrous agitation. Their efforts were appreciated by the brethren who had taken an active part in the agitation, and a working settlement was reached which restored harmony and peace... And in justice to Mr. Flesher and his work, it must be acknowledged that the book possessed qualities that at first were not recognised, as is evident from the fact that for over thirty years it met the growing needs of our Church life, a very sufficient testimony that it was not devoid of excellence. Another very good effect came out of this controversy. When another hymnal was necessary the Connexion was taken into confidence."*

Perhaps these Conferences of the 'Fifties may be made something more real to us if we give the plan of the Conference held at Sheffield in 1852. The reader, if he has good eye-sight or artificial aids thereto, will not fail to make out many names with which he has by this time become very familiar. There is no breach of continuity; for it must be

* "Life of the Rev. C. C. McKechnie," by J. Atkinson. The best, and in fact, the only published account of the Hymn Book controversy is Mr. Atkinson's chapter on the subject, based on Mr. McKechnie's MS. Autobiography.
THE PERIOD OF CONSOLIDATION AND CHURCH DEVELOPMENT. 373

GENERAL MISSIONARY SECRETARIES.
remembered we are dealing with a Conference composed of men elected on the eighteen years' qualification for preachers, and twelve years' for laymen, so that they are Men of the Transition whose names are found here. Forming our opinion of the Conference by these names, we see at once that, in its personnel, it was a strong Conference. It was the first from which both our founders were absent. Hugh Bourne's name heads the list; but, though he had signified his intention to attend, when the time came he was too ill to do so. From other sources than the Minutes—which as usual are silent about such matters—we learn that the intelligence of his critical condition was the occasion of an impressive scene in the Conference. Mr. John Reynard of Leeds was present as a delegate, and writing to Mr. James Bourne, he says: "This morning a letter was read from you in Conference, giving an account of the affliction and present state of your brother, which was received with deep sympathy by the Conference, and a motion was made that we had a few moments' prayer on his behalf, when Bro. Harland offered up a very powerful appeal to the Throne of Grace, followed up by prayers and tears which I doubt not had audience with Heaven, and prevailed."

An increase of 1,203 was reported for the year 1852, but there was to be no increase again until 1856, so that for a triennium the course of the Connexion lay through a valley of Humiliation. The Conference of 1855 reported 4,126 members less than in '52—2,055 being the loss for the single year '54-5—the heaviest decrease recorded in our annals. The explanation of these facts is in great part to be found in the condition of our land at the time, socially and ecclesiastically. The gold-fields were spreading their
lure and attracting thousands to California and Australia. In one year 672 members were lost to the Connexion from this single cause alone. The Norwich and Brinkworth Districts, in especial, were drained and enfeebled by this exodus, some of the societies being brought nearly, if not quite, to extinction. In the Eastern Counties a series of disastrous storms and floods added to the difficulties of the time. Strikes, abnormal dearth of provisions, must be mentioned as contributory factors to this complication of adverse causes. Ecclesiastically, too, we must remember that this was the period when Ritualism began to exert its baneful influence, and that for Methodism it was the period of strife and disintegration. The Parent Body was disrupted. In one year—1849-50—it lost nearly 57,000 members, and in the five years ending in '55, it was depleted to the extent of 100,469 members. All this was not to the advantage of our Church but very much the reverse. Ecclesiastical strife is a fire which scorches the finer feelings. You cannot come near it without getting the wings of your soul singed. We are glad to record that our Church preserved her neutrality and did not seek to profit by plunder or by others' misfortune. We may be mixing our metaphors but we will write it—All honour to our pilots who skilfully and resolutely kept the vessel's course midway between the rocks and the whirlpool, though it was not done without scathe and strain. That it was indeed a trying time will appear from a part of the Conference Address to the Churches for the year 1854:

"If we have not entered into the arena of religious strife, we have unavoidably occupied its immediate vicinity; and many a missile which has been aimed at other objects has fallen among our tents and created some alarm and misapprehension in timorous and unstable minds. Names have been confounded with things. In the midst of this confusion it has been found impossible, in numerous instances, to correct the errors of good but misguided men. An unskilful captain may navigate a ship in favourable seas and with a fair breeze; but a dangerous ocean and foul winds may baffle the most experienced commander. Nor is it less difficult for organised Churches to make headway in a troubled state of religious society. If progress is not impossible, it is nevertheless unusually difficult."

Among the names of the delegates to this Sheffield Conference we note the names of several who were destined to attain to note and exalted Connexional position. Such were Moses Lupton and Thomas Smith, who began their ministry in 1822 and 1834 respectively. There is another name which calls for special remark—that of William Antliff—who was rising, nay, had already risen into prominence, and was to be, probably, the best known and most influential figure in the middle period of our history. William Antliff came of a godly Methodist ancestry, whose home was at the village of Caunton in Nottinghamshire. William Antliff, the elder, joined the Primitives on their first coming into these parts, but was suddenly removed in the midst of his usefulness. A sentiment graven on his tombstone was objectionable to the High Church rector, who had it
chiselled out, and there the defaced stone stands. Perhaps it was the assurance the erased line gave of William Antliff's eternal safety that gave the offence. Be this as it may, its erasure did not put the good man's safety in question, and was a petty thing to be done by one who afterwards became a famous rose-grower and Cathedral dignitary. The son and bearer of the dead man's name joined our Church when a boy, and "made his first out-and-out attempt at preaching" at Eakring. In 1830, when little more than sixteen years of age, he entered the ministry, his first station being Balderton. We have already seen him winning his youthful spurs at Nottingham in the troublous times of 1834.* W. Antliff was more fortunate than his brother in getting to Conference when young in the ministry. He got there under the old qualification as early as 1838, and it may be questioned whether any other preacher—even Hugh Bourne himself—was officially present at a greater number of Conferences than he. His commanding appearance, his pleasing elocution, his skill in debate, his remarkable knowledge of the Connexion and its laws and usages, all combined to make him a great figure in Conference, and other Connexional Courts. Such was W. Antliff, who was present at this Conference of 1852, and was there appointed "vice" to Mr. Petty, who now, as Connexional Editor, took the place of Mr. Flesher, this year superannuated.

W. Antliff was also at the next Conference—that held at York in 1853. Here C. C. McKechnie, who was present at this Conference as a hearer, along with his friend George Race, had his first opportunity of seeing and hearing the future President, Editor, and College Principal. It was an interesting meeting of two notable men, who, while in many respects they represented different types, and were often found on different sides, were yet both to hold the same high offices, to become leaders of Connexional thought, and the shapers of its policy and policy in the later Middle period of our history. The relations of the two to the existing régime were somewhat different. In his autobiography, Mr. McKechnie notes that Mr. Antliff was "a coming Conference man;" but, while the latter was among the Men of the Transition, he could scarcely be said to be one of them. He was rather the harbinger of the new period already preparing, and was so regarded by the then occupants of the Government benches. As for Mr. McKechnie his development was slower. He had not yet come to the front, except in his own district, and was unknown by face to such men as John Garner and Thomas Holliday, to whom the young Scotsman was now introduced by Henry Hebbron. So, men come and go, and the strangest thing about this wave-like succession is, that those who go may little suspect who will afterwards fill their places.

At this Conference there was a big debate on the Total Question, to which Mr. McKechnie listened with interest. "The preponderance of opinion, and of oratorical power, were in its favour. Mr. Antliff led the Temperance party and he did his duty well. He spoke with fluency and fervour and commanded a good hearing."

Returning to our Plan of the Sheffield Conference of 1852: as we again glance down the names of the delegates, we are struck with the fact that the plan might serve as a biographical epitome of our history up to this time. There is scarcely an unknown name in the list, or one that fails to call up reminiscences or provoke remark. John
Wood of Nantwich, James Broad of Congleton, William Mason of Leicester, Samuel Raines of Winster, David Hodgson of Croydon, William Byron of Louth, George T. Goodrich of Yarmouth, George Wakefield of Scotter, Richard Mason of Edenfield, George Race, John Reynard, George Charlton, Joshua Rouse, Charles Bowman, W. T. Lumley—all these names of notable laymen—and many more besides these, are to be found here. With interest we notice the name of Charles Morse of Stratten St. Margaret’s, in the list of the representatives of the Brinkworth District. For fifty years Mr. Morse was a member and local preacher in Wiltshire, where his son, Mr. L. L. Morse, has more than filled his place as a devoted adherent of our Church and the liberal supporter of its institutions and movements. Thus C. Morse’s name links together the past and the present—1852 with 1896—when his son was elected Vice-President of Conference.

As the plan shows, Mr. W. Lea was the superintendent of the Sheffield Circuit at the time the Conference of 1852 was held. He did good work during his term in the circuit, especially by the erection of new schools for Bethel Chapel (opened October, 1852). We give also the portrait of Mr. J. Spencer, a leading Sheffield official of the time. There are many references to him, and to his hospitable home, in the memoirs and letters of contemporaries. He was a friend of Hugh Bourne, and was present at his funeral. Mr. Spencer was an active and capable circuit official, a member of the Nottingham District Committee, and frequently represented that district in Conference.

1860 was the Jubilee Year of our Church. It had been long looked forward to and was prepared for. The preceding Conference, held at Newcastle, asked the question: “What are the arrangements for the approaching Jubilee?” and framed the answer in some fifteen resolutions, which, for convenience of reference, we will set out in a paragraph, though in a condensed form.

(1) March 11th, 1860, to be set apart as a day for thanksgiving and prayer. (2) One public meeting at least to be held in each station, and attended by an efficient deputation. (4) Sermon or lecture, and collection at each society, if possible. (5) The Fund to be kept
over for four years. (6) A camp meeting to be held in every station on the last Sabbath in May. (7) Stations to be willing to allow their preachers to serve as deputations. (8)(9) Provide for the appointment of Local and District Treasurers and Secretaries. (11) H. Hodge to be the General Treasurer and John Bywater, General Secretary. (12) The objects to which the Fund are to be applied are: (a) The General Missionary Fund. (b) General Chapel Fund for grants and loans. (c) A school for preachers' children and children of members. (d) The education of acceptable candidates for the ministry and itinerant preachers on probation. (13) A Large Committee appointed. (14) The executive to consist of the Hull members and the District Committee. (15) Contributors free to choose the object for which their contribution shall be applied.

It should be added, that a medal to commemorate the Jubilee was struck, both sides of which are shown in the accompanying illustrations.

From all this it will appear that the arrangements for the appropriate and profitable keeping of the Jubilee of the Connexion were not wanting in elaborateness. It was inevitable that the Conference of this notable year should be held on the soil whence our Connexional fathers sprang, and where, through them, our Church had its beginnings. This forty-first Conference had its sessions in the Jubilee Chapel, Tunstall, which had been enlarged and beautified during the year. The Conference camp meeting was held on the historic ground of Mow Cop, on Sunday, June 10th, and on the following morning the Jubilee sermon was preached by Thomas King, the oldest travelling preacher in active work.

By the time the Jubilee Conference of 1860 had come and gone, many of the Men of the Transition had themselves passed off the stage. This was the fact that was present to the minds of the men who assembled at the Tunstall Conference of 1860. The Jubilee celebrations had many aspects, some of them practical enough. There were questions the Jubilee would assist in answering—such questions as: To what extent will this appeal to Connexional loyalty and sentiment be successful? What disclosures will it yield as to the financial resources of our people, or their sympathy with education and the higher training of the ministry? How will the index-finger point? These were some of the questions which awaited their answer then, and some of the points raised by these questions we ourselves may have to look at in another connection. But
somehow, that morning, when the delegates had taken their places and looked round, and were made to realise, by the epochal character of the gathering, how many once familiar faces and figures had gone, their dominant feeling was the feeling of the transitoriness of human life—the life of the generation as well as of the individual. Unbidden, the sacred words came to remembrance—"Your fathers, where are they, and the prophets, do they live for ever?" This feeling found its expression in the Conference Minutes of the year.

"The Conference is impressed with the fact, that not one of the brethren who were life-members of the Conferences, as per provisions of the Deed Poll, has lived to see the Conference of our Connexional Jubilee year, although Mr. James Bourne was spared until the beginning of the present year. The aged pilgrim arrived at the threshold of our jubilant season, but ere we commenced our songs in the militant Church, he joined the Church triumphant in Heaven."

So also Mr. Petty, who brings down his valuable History of the Connexion to the Jubilee Conference of 1860, closes his survey of the course of events by giving brief sketches of several prominent men of long Connexional standing who had passed away during the last decade. These are J. G. Black, J. Reynard, John Garner, Thomas Dawson, James Nixon, Robert Atkinson, James Bourne, and John Day. All these, with the exception of the last-named, were, at the time of their decease, permanent members of Conference, though R. Atkinson was privileged to attend only one Conference in that capacity. He died at Thirsk, August 12th, 1858, in the thirty-ninth year of his ministry.

Mr. John Day entered the ministry in 1821. He was, says Mr. Petty "a man of sound judgment and respectable abilities, and travelled in many of the most important circuits with acceptability and success." In January, 1859, he entered upon the office of Book Steward, at the advanced age of sixty-three years, but died suddenly at Luton, while attending the District Meeting of the London District, after delivering an appropriate address to the young ministers finishing their probation, and assisting in the administration of the Lord's Supper.
CHAPTER III.

REMOVAL OF THE BOOK-ROOM TO LONDON.

FROM SUTTON STREET TO ALDERSGATE STREET.

The changes that took place after, and largely in consequence of, the retirement of Hugh Bourne, were epochal. Probably the supersession, though gradually accomplished, of circuit missions by a General Missionary Committee was the more radical and far-reaching change, but the changes which took place in Book-Room affairs were scarcely less important.

Chronologically, and for other reasons, these new departures call for notice here, and must not be held over until we come to deal with the later institutions of our Church properly so-called. For the functions discharged in our Body by the Book-Room and the General Missionary Committee, and the relation of the one to the other, would be much better denoted by some analogy borrowed from the human organism than by the word Institutions. If we were to call one the brain and the other the motor nerves of our denomination we should not be far wrong. From the very beginning of our history the relation between the two has been exceedingly close and sympathetic. The Book-Room has helped on the Missionary work. With his usual sagacity Hugh Bourne soon saw that this might be, and so he was resolved it should be. Hence he lost no time in bringing about the establishment of a Book-Room, so that, if Institution it be, the Book-Room was our first institution—almost coeval with our first efforts in Church organisation. Events proved Hugh Bourne was right. It is difficult to see how the missions of the Connexion could have spread from county to county without the aid of the Bemersley Book-Room. Many a mission, on new ground, was soon more than able to pay its way because of the astonishing number of hymn books and other publications that were sold. In some cases the mission became richer than the parent circuit, and for a time, their natural relations were inverted; we see the mission subsidizing the circuit instead of the circuit subsidizing the mission. And in more recent years: it is difficult to see how our Church could have done what it has done, or been what it has been, had it not been for Book-Room allocations. If it had not been for the grist the Book-Room brought to the mill there must have been much less grinding done. But returning to the earlier days: not only did the Book-Room help on mission-work by supplying the sinews of war, but it gave it moral support. The Magazines fanned the missionary spirit, spread intelligence of Connexional progress, and brought widely separated labourers into touch with one another. The close connection between the Book-Room and Missions continued even after 1843. They migrated to the Metropolis together. The Book-Room and the Mission House were practically under the same roof in old Sutton Street, and, as we shall see, it was some time before the offices were entirely separated—the Assistant Book Steward being also the Treasurer of the Missionary Fund.
We trust we have given sufficient reasons why we do not relegate the Book-Room and the establishment of the General Missionary Committee to the later section dealing with Institutions; also reasons why they should be treated sequently, the Book-Room coming first.

The Conference of 1842 appointed J. Flesher Editor, and re-appointed John Hallam Book Steward, and James Bourne Connexional Treasurer. The Book Committee for the year was composed of H. Bourne, J. Bourne, J. Flesher, J. Hallam, and R. Jukes, the superintendent of Tunstall Circuit. The new Editor proceeded to Bemersley to take up the duties of his office. Now the troubles of editors are proverbial, and Mr. Flesher had his full share of them. From a MS. book now before us entitled—"Memoranda of certain things which transpired at Bemersley and the neighbourhood, beginning from September, 1842,"—we can learn what was the nature of these troubles. He was hampered by his committee, and by the opposite views held by himself and one member of the committee especially (not Hugh Bourne), as to the style in which it was expedient the articles appearing in the Magazines should be written. What were the committeeman's views on style would have mattered little had the Editor but had a free hand. But he had not. The old rules regulating the mode of preparing the Magazines had been solemnly re-enacted on Mr. Flesher's appointment to the office. Strictly enforced, these rules made the question of an article's fitness or unfitness for publication in the Magazine turn, not on the judgment of the Editor, but on a show of hands of the Book Committee.* Mr. Flesher was counselled and warned that there must not be too great a departure from the old style, etc., lest old friends should be alienated. Now Mr. Flesher was severely conscientious and took a serious view of his editorial duties and responsibilities. He could not listen and smile and say nothing, and allow things to settle themselves, which they often do without our interference. This was not his habit or temper of mind: hence, in committee he did not flinch but stood on his rights as understood by the Conference, and as interpreted by common sense; and as he was loyally supported on this, as on other occasions, by Mr. Hallam, he was not overborne. Yet, if Mr. Flesher was conscientious and determined, he was also keenly sensitive, hence we find him almost plaintively recording:—"My situation as Editor is difficult, not from this source alone, but also from the awfully imperfect style in which most of the original articles are written. I have already repented often that I accepted the Editor's Office."

But bigger troubles were looming, compared with which clashing views on editing and literary style were light as air. Mr. James Bourne's temporal affairs were becoming embarrassed. Once he had the reputation of being a comparatively rich man, and had he but remained content with the safe returns of his printing and farming all might have been well. But he became "entangled with the potters," and there were already ominous signs of the impending crash which, when it came, entailed so much suffering upon Hugh Bourne, although he had neither seen it coming nor was he in any way involved, except as a sufferer. Mr. Flesher observed these signs and notes them in

*This curious regulation remained some time on the Statute Book. In 1849 a parenthetic clause appears—("unless there be an understanding between him and the Committee.") In 1860 this has become incorporated with the Rule. In 1870 the Rule itself has disappeared.
OLD BOOK DEPOT, SUTTON STREET.
his "Memoranda." There was danger lest Book-Room affairs and Friendly Society affairs should be complicated with the concerns and shaky fortunes of private persons. It was highly expedient that the Book-Room should be extricated from the danger of local entanglements.

The inconvenience of Bemersley as the Seat of the Book-Room was more and more making itself felt at the stage the Connexion had now reached in its history. Allied to this question of locality—of fitness and relative convenience—was that of economy. The "Memoranda" recall a session of the General Committee (December 9, '42) at which Mr. Flesher fully delivered his sentiments on this subject. There was a discussion on a matter of finance, affecting the Conference Fund, in which Mr. H. Bourne defended his views on the ground of economy. Thereupon, writes Mr. Flesher,

"I replied, and in the course of my remarks said: Economy was a good thing; that the argument had opened upon me a flood of light which, by God's help, I would improve; and that, as a servant of the Connexion, I would press economy, not only on the Conference Fund, but also on the affairs of the Book-Room, and also on those of the Printing. Having given firm, free, and full utterance to these views, I felt delivered from heavy mental darkness under which I have struggled for some time. I took this deliverance as a signal that God approved of my conduct in notifying my purpose; and I now pray that I may not sin against God and the Connexion by allowing the latter to lose hundreds a year through having its printing executed dearer than the printing of any other Connexion in the Kingdom, while all its other establishments are wrought on the severest economy. . . . I am happy that J. Hallam takes the same views as myself, and is maturing plans to effect an alteration. God, being my helper, I will support him in carrying them out."

After this, and more than this, written in the same tone of high seriousness, we shall probably be right in concluding that the chief factor in the removal of the Book-Room to London was economy. In the extract given, Mr. Flesher writes as though the thought of economy had come to him as a revelation in the meeting of the General Committee; but, doubtless what is meant is, that then and there the thought first found
expression, and crystallised into a resolve by which his mind was relieved from
darkness. But there is evidence to show that, for some time before this meeting, Mr.
Flesher had been revolving the subject and making inquiries, and that the thoughts of
others were turned in the same direction. Mr. W. Harland tells us that young Thomas
Church of London, meditating a modest publishing venture, had obtained specimens
of various styles of printing, with quotations of prices. These he showed to Mr.
Harland, who thought them worth sending to Messrs. Flesher & Hallam. Some time
after, he was requested by them to call on some respectable city firms for the purpose
of making inquiries. Thus, by the interaction of causes and the co-operation of various
persons, the materials were ready at the Conference of 1843 for discussing the question
of the removal of the Book-Room to London, and for coming to an intelligent decision.
That decision was that the removal of the Book establishment to London should take
place as early as possible. The imprint of the Minutes of this Conference is “Tyler
and Reed, Bolt-Court, London,” and the address of the Conference Offices is
“Sutton Street.”

It will be remembered that when John Flesher built Sutton Street Chapel in 1838,

PACKING AND FORWARDING DEPARTMENT, SUTTON STREET.

our Church secured its first Connexional Chapel in London. It was to Sutton Street
inquiring and discerning eyes were turned at this juncture. “Can you by any means
find room for us, so that we may set up our staff by your side?” the look said. We
have the answer in certain resolutions passed by the trustees of Sutton Street at their
meeting held on July 6th, 1842, the gist of which was, that two cottages and the
preacher's house in Chapel Place, of which the trustees were the lessees, should be let
to the Connexion for Book-Room and other purposes. The offer was accepted; forty-
one pounds eight shillings was paid as rent the first year, as the accounts show. Thus
the “central wheel of management” that directed the administrative and disciplinary
affairs' of the Connexion, its missionary operations, and the preparation and dissemination
of its publications, was set up in the vicinage and on the very premises of Sutton
Street. For many years to come notable men in the Connexion would live and labour
here, pass in and out of that gateway, preach and worship in that Chapel, and, from
their modest Offices and Committee Room, keep in touch with the most distant parts of the Connexion. For years to come, too, country Primitives on their occasional visits to London would, as bounden duty, bend their steps to Commercial Road, E., in order to see the great wheel in motion, and those who directed its revolutions. Nor was Sutton Street, apart from its temporary convenience, so unsuitable a location for a Connexional centre at that time as might be thought, or as it afterwards came to be. The East and North-East of London had long been a stronghold of Nonconformity, and the tradition and sentiment of Nonconformity were still a power, though a diminishing one. The Colleges of Hackney and Stepney had been famous in their day, and it would be some time yet before Congregationalism moved citywards and acquired its Bicentenary Memorial Hall and City Temple. Then, after a time, Primitive Methodism will follow in its track and hold its Connexional Committees in New Surrey Chapel—a name redolent of Nonconformist traditions—and then in Aldersgate, close to where Milton once lived and where he lies buried, and hard by Smithfield where the martyrs suffered. A word or two respecting the external history of the Sutton Street Book-Room may be given—the tenure on which it was held and the term of its occupancy. In July, 1850, a lease of the property for twenty-one years was obtained from the Trustees. In 1876 all interest in the property for the remaining term of the lease which would expire in 1897 was purchased, the actual owners of the property being the Mercers Company. But before 1897 came Sutton Street knew us no more. On October 25th, 1894, one of the largest and most influential Committees ever held in the Connexion's history assembled in the Library of the Memorial Hall, to consider the report presented by the Sites Committee. After a prolonged discussion of the comparative merits of various sites and buildings referred to in the Committee's report, the choice fell on a noble block standing at the junction of Jewin and Aldersgate Streets, the property of the Hon. Company of Goldsmiths, from whom the property was acquired for a period of sixty-five years, for the sum of £7850. After structural alterations, electrical installation, etc., the new premises were formally opened on June 6th, 1895, in the presence of a large and representative gathering. The doors were opened by the retiring Book Steward, Mr. J. B. Knapp; the incoming Steward, T. Mitchell, also took part, and the Editor, H. B. Kendall, B.A., gave an address in which the significance of the event in its historic aspects was sketched. But it was only by gradual steps this comparative climax was reached. The two converted cottages with their five small rooms—some of which are shown in our illustrations—grew like a tree, thrusting out extensions here and there, regardless of beauty but with much regard to utility and convenience, until at last both school and chapel of Sutton Street were annexed. In 1861 R. Davies added a large wing with a gallery at a cost of £418. G. Lamb built a further extension of one floor. J. Dickenson annexed the school and J. Toulson the chapel. Finally the Book-Room spread its branches beyond Sutton Street, and a house in Johnson Street was acquired. Until 1857 oil and candles were the illuminants; then for something more than a generation gas reigned; last of all came the era of the electric light. The three successive stages not inaptly symbolise the progress made.

We have the same growth and development in the staff of the Book-Room. At first, probably there was but one assistant, in addition to the two conferentially appointed
PRIMITIVE METHODIST BOOK-ROOM, ALDERSGATE STREET, E.C.
Book Stewards. This assistant was Mr. Brown, who was the permanent manager of the Book-Room, until his death at the Christmas of 1875. In the memoir of Mr. George Baron it is stated that so much of the Bemersley stock as it was thought necessary to remove to London was placed in his charge, by him conveyed to London, and housed in the new Book-Room; that Mr. Baron paid repeated visits to London, as he had done to Bemersley, to help in the management; and that when unable any longer to do this he recommended Mr. Philip Brown for the office. In 1873 there were the manager and five assistants. In 1875 Mr. T. C. Eamer, who had entered the establishment in 1865, succeeded Mr. Brown. For twenty-eight years, under the direction of successive General Book Stewards, he continued to discharge the duties of Manager with much energy and ability. His appointment as Manager of the Wesleyan Book-Room, which took place in 1903, may justly be regarded as a recognition of his business qualifications and as a compliment to the Institution in which those qualifications were acquired and exercised. On Mr. Eamer's translation to City Road, Mr. A. E. Spratt, who also had risen step by step to the position of chief clerk, was appointed to succeed him. All this time, as the business of the Book-Room flowed with constantly increasing volume, additions continued to be made to the staff, until at the present time it consists of the Manager and twenty-eight assistants, while at the monthly packings some twelve others are temporarily engaged.

It now remains to indicate the succession of Book Stewards and Editors from 1843. That succession will most conveniently be set forth in tabular form. But the somewhat complex arrangements that obtained from 1843 to 1848 need a word of explanation. During these five years the duties attached to the various Connexional offices were discharged by four persons. Two of these create no difficulty as, during the whole of the time, John Garner was the Secretary of the Missionary Committee and John Flesher the Editor. There remained four offices for two men. Two of these offices were held
jointly, viz., the Book Stewardship and the Missionary Treasurership, while two offices were held separately—the Secretarieships of the General Committee and of the Book Committee. It is as though Messrs. Bryant and Welford should be joint Book Stewards and joint Missionary Treasurers, while Mr. Welford should retain the Secretarieship of the General Committee in his own hands, and Mr. Bryant should act alone as Secretary of the Book Committee. In 1848 the Book Steward ceased to have a divided responsibility or to be called to perform other functions than those which concerned the Book-
THE PERIOD OF CONSOLIDATION AND CHURCH DEVELOPMENT.
Room. He became its exclusive officer. In other departments, however, co-ordination continued for some time to prevail; one man continued to fulfil diverse offices. On the retirement of John Garner in 1848, William Garner became Missionary Secretary, General Committee Secretary, and Treasurer for the Missions. In further elucidation of the Table it may also be stated there is evidence to show that Thomas Holliday declined to act in Book-Room affairs until 1845; that in 1850, the five years' rule relating to the holding of Connexional office became absolute; that the official year then closed on December 31st, and that the incoming Book Steward was “assistant” for the six months immediately preceding his formal entry on office in January. Finally, it may be mentioned that John Petty’s appointment as Assistant Editor was occasioned by the declining health of John Flesher, and that from the time of his taking up his duties Mr. Petty was virtually the Editor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Stewards.</th>
<th>Editors.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1854. Thomas King.</td>
<td>1862. W. Antill, D.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870. George Lamb.</td>
<td>1887. Thomas Newell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875. J. Dickenson.</td>
<td>1892. H. B. Kendall, B.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890. J. B. Knapp.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895. Thomas Mitchell.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900. Robert Bryant.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table showing the Succession of Book Stewards and Editors from 1843 to the Present Time.

Mr. John Hallam, the first Book Steward under the new régime, died September 8th, 1845. His last days were clouded by anxieties and troubles associated with his office. We have already narrated the circumstances which led to his introduction to participation in Book-Room Management (Vol. ii. p 7), and his appointment by the Conference of 1838 to be General Book Steward has also been referred to. Hence arose one of those minor tragedies of life in which we see a man taken from a post for which he is eminently fitted, and set to fill another for which he is unfitted. Let any one read Mr. Hallam’s papers and journals as found in the Magazine for 1835, and he will find reason to conclude that Mr. Hallam had a genius for family visitation. In his practice it became a fine art. He was an ideal pastor and circuit superintendent. He knew the deep things of experience, and how to handle the human heart, but the intricacies of a big business were a confusing mystery to him. Hence, while he was an excellent man against whose moral character there rests no imputation, in the absence of a capable business manager, he was overweighted by some of the duties of his office.
The method of book-keeping and stock-taking in use from 1838 was defective; so much so that when Thomas Holliday was appointed Joint Book Steward, he declined responsibility until the method in practice had been revised. Mr. Holliday was instructed to point out to Mr. Hallam the defects of the system in use, and to explain the features and advantages of the better system proposed to be adopted. The accounts from January to December, 1844, were kept on this system, and in 1845 Mr. Holliday took joint office. Meanwhile, the accounts from 1838 to 1844 were submitted to careful scrutiny by duly appointed auditors. Mr. Hallam willingly agreed to such a course, and, notwithstanding his declining health, rendered all the aid he could to the investigation. The results showed that an error of judgment had been committed. Mr. Hallam accepted the findings, and in his will made provision for the complete rectification of the error. This is the sum of what can be said against Mr Hallam, and it is better the real facts should be given rather than that wrong impressions should be made by the use of vague general terms. Besides, the episode has its lesson, which should not be passed over. We would vindicate the memory of John Hallam. Here to explain is largely to exculpate. What was the impression the good man had left on the mind of such an acute observer as Thomas Bateman will be clear from the following entry taken from his Journal:

"October 13th, 1845.—Chorley, at two, I preached a funeral sermon to a host of people for my old friend John Hallam. I believe he was a good man, and very useful in the Circuits where he travelled. He always had increases. He was one of the best family visitors I have known, hence his constant success. Quite true his sun has set under a cloud. For some time he has been Book Steward, and it is said there are some errors in his accounts. I don't understand it exactly, but, although I much regret it, yet my confidence in his integrity is unshaken."

It must not be thought that we are going to pass from portrait to portrait in the succession of Book Stewards and Editors and appraise the merits or demerits of each. We shall attempt no such invidious task. Of course, as we—reader and writer alike—look at the portraits, it is almost unavoidable but that we should say of this or that one: Here is a man who was a born Book Steward or Editor; and here is one who was made such by the suffrages of his brethren. But both he that was born to the office and he that was made for it did their best, "and both will get their penny at last." Such thoughts as these, we say, will come to the reader as well as the writer; and to the reader we leave them. But, indeed, the history of the Book-Room with its associated office, is largely an impersonal history; it is the growth and development of an Institution—if we must use the word. The history offers little in the way of piquant personalia or of "secret history." With Canning's Knife Grinder we may say—"Story, sir! There is none to tell." There are no secrets to drag to the light, or many interesting incidents to impart. If we cannot speak of the "fierce" light that beats upon the Steward's Desk or the Editor's Chair, we can say that all has been open to the light of day. And as to the interesting details: We have been struck in consulting our own nine years' experience, and in reading the experience of Editors Petty

* See Dr. W. Antill's clearly-expressed views as given in a Note to Walford's Life of Hugh Bourne, vol. ii. p. 290.
PRESIDENTS OF CONFERENCE FROM 1875 TO 1886.
and McKechnie in their recorded lives, how little there is in an Editor's life to tell. Not that there is not toil, and that in plenty. But the work is monotonous and devoid of incident. The most precious and volatile part of it is diffused, and is now, one may hope, circulating and working in men's lives; and as for the heavier, palpable, and tangible part of the work, is it not entombed or enshrined in that goodly row of volumes? So also is it largely with the Book Steward and his work. The men and their work are lost and absorbed in the Institution they help to direct and extend; and the capital gratifying fact remains that the history of the Book-Room from 1843 has been one of steady and almost amazing progress. It was already a success in 1844 when Thomas Bateman attended the Lynn Regis Conference. One might perhaps reasonably have expected him to be in sympathy with the old régime, and to have looked doubtfully on the new departure. But no! Here is his judgment.

"June 13th.—Some very important steps had been taken by direction of last Conference which were now found to promise much . . . The Book-Room was moved from Bemersley to London. This had been long desired, but there were obstacles in the way. Now, Mr. J. B.'s affairs having taken a strange and unexpected turn to the surprise of everybody, the way was open, and although it had only been moved a few months, it promises well, [Italics our own] the Stewards having sent between One and Two Hundred Pounds for the Mission Fund."

We shall not burden our pages with tables showing the turn-over and the profit of each year's working—even if all the materials for setting forth such a table were available. Nor shall we give a table showing the comparative circulation of our serials at different epochs. We do not do this here because the inferences sometimes sought to be drawn from such figures as these are not to be trusted. The broad fact remains that the volume of Book-Room business has gone on increasing, is pointed to as an example, and that, despite the fact that now and again there may have been a slight retrogression. But, unless this retrogression cannot be accounted for by temporary and contingent causes, it does not afford a safe basis for inference, and it is dangerous and wrong to begin to locate blame. The tide may still be rising though now and again a wave may
VICE-PRESIDENTS OF CONFERENCE FROM 1884 TO 1893.
fall short of the point reached by its predecessor. There is one fact, very soon stated, but yet which means so much that it deserves to be printed in big letters and to be worn as frontlets before the eyes of the Connexion. The gross amount of Book-Room allocations to various Connexional Institutions and objects since 1843, is £167,647 9s. 10d.

And as for Magazine circulation: Figures here too may be deceptive, unless it be incontestably certain that extent of circulation is per se, the unfailing criterion of quality. But our history traverses this canon. There may be a succès d'estime—a general and well-nigh universal acknowledgment of the intrinsic literary quality of serials, while a success of circulation that ought to follow is denied. Why this should be so even experts may find it difficult to say. The causes are complex and are to be found in such considerations as the condition of the Book Market, the competing claims of other printed matter—the degree of Connexional interest in Connexional literature or Connexional prosperity.

Briefly, it may be chronicled that in 1865, during the Editorial term of W. Antliff, the "Christian Messenger" and the "Child’s Friend" were originated, making the magazines issued from the Book-Room four in number. The new ventures met with immediate success, the circulation of the "Messenger" reaching 30,000, and the "Child’s Friend" 21,500. In 1873, during J. Macpherson’s editorship, the "Teachers’ Journal" began its useful course. During what must be called the brilliant period of C. C. McKechnie’s editorship, which extended to eleven years, the Large Magazine was greatly improved both in character and appearance. Now, writers were first paid for their contributions to our serials. The "Christian Ambassador" was transformed from a shilling tri-monthly magazine into the "Primitive Methodist Quarterly Review," selling at two shillings, and soon took high rank amongst publications of its class. "Springtime," the literary child of Mr. McKechnie’s affection, designed specially for the "young men and maidens" of our Church, began in 1886, and at once became a favourite. To Mr. McKechnie also fell the onerous duty of seeing through the press the new Hymnal, to which we shall have to refer in another connection. Since 1892
all the Magazines issuing from the Book-Room have been enlarged and remodelled. The "Large" or the "Sixpenny" Magazine, as it had been called, now became the "Aldersgate," enriched by serial stories by such writers as Joseph Hocking and original articles by writers of good repute. The "Juvenile Magazine" became "Morning"; "Springtime" was adapted so as to become the recognised organ of our Societies of Christian Endeavour, while the "Christian Messenger" has been and is doing a useful work in helping forward the culture and training of our local preachers. Lastly, it may be added that 1905 has witnessed the effecting of still further improvements in the "Primitive Methodist Quarterly Review," which have been received with much favour.

The "Christian Ambassador."

This would seem to be a convenient time for placing on permanent record the facts, so far as they can be recovered, concerning the origin and development of the "Christian Ambassador," with which Mr. McKechnie was associated until his death in September, 1896, though it should be said that from 1894 Dr. John Watson, while nominally only Assistant Editor, discharged the full duties of the office, and continued to do so until his own impaired health necessitated his retirement. He was succeeded in the Editorship in 1903 by H. B. Kendall, B.A.

The Preface to the first volume of the "Christian Ambassador" is worth giving for the light it throws on the circumstances of its origin and the aims and motives of its promoters:

"In the autumn of 1849 several Primitive Methodist ministers happening to meet on a missionary occasion at Sunderland, the conversation turned on various topics relative to the ministry of the Connexion; and, in particular, many remarks transpired on the necessity of something being done to associate the preachers more closely for purposes of mutual improvement, with a view especially to aid and encourage probationers in qualifying themselves for their important work. After this conversation steps were immediately taken to form a Preachers Association in the Sunderland District; and the promptness with which the brethren in the various circuits responded to the appeal, the heartiness with which they have co-operated during the seven years of the Association's existence, together with the beneficent influence exerted upon the minds of the brethren generally at the yearly gatherings and by means of epistolary correspondence;—these considerations lead us to hope and believe that the movement was of God.

"To this Association the present volume owes its existence. The various papers of which it is composed were mostly read at the yearly meetings of the Association. It was judged desirable, however, that they should be circulated in a permanent form, as the younger brethren among us required something of the sort to guide them in their work; and as it was also hoped that a somewhat higher tone might be imparted to the character of our people generally.

"Of these Essays different opinions will be formed. In judging of their merits, however, it ought to be considered that the writers are for the most part unpractised in the art of literary composition; and also, that the audience they specially address is composed of persons who, like themselves, have not been favoured with regular scholastic training."
"If this small work afford direction or encouragement to any young brother in the pursuit of his studies; if it contribute, in however small a degree, towards the development of a higher type of character in the Primitive Methodist churches; if in any way which God may please, it subserve the interest of truth and righteousness—the Editors will be amply rewarded."

Mr. W. Lister was appointed the business manager, and Messrs. Thomas Smith and C. C. McKechnie joint editors. But this arrangement lasted only a short time, Mr. McKechnie becoming sole Editor in May, 1855. As the first volume of the "Christian Ambassador" is now exceedingly scarce, it may be interesting to refer briefly to its contents and writers. The Editor himself has two articles—"The Lamb in the midst of the Throne," and "Religion's Ultimate Design," besides a trenchant review (far too trenchant, one cannot but feel) on Walford's recently published "Life of Hugh Bourne." Messrs. R. Fenwick, J. A. Bastow, T. Greenfield, J. Lightfoot, W. Dent, T. Butterwick, W. Antliff, and P. Clarke, have signed contributions. Of the laymen who contribute to this volume two are yet with us—Robert Foster and John Coward; while George Race has three articles and J. Fawsit one. As might be expected, many of the articles bear on the office and work of the Christian ministry; no less than ten out of the number being of this character.

The first number of the "Ambassador" was published in October, 1854. It was designed to be a bi-monthly publication, and it was expected that two years would see the completion of the volume; but this was not to be. As we have seen, it took two years for the first volume of the Magazine to struggle into existence, and, singularly enough, it took three years for the "Ambassador" to be born. How was this? The answer throws some light on the Transition Period. It shows us that conservative and progressive forces were at work and did not fully understand each other. We see how some of those who had the guidance of affairs, regarded movements, which we can now see had in them the germs of much promise, with jealousy and even alarm, and how they lost their composure as they read the expression of opinions which, to us, appear comparatively mild and harmless. The establishment of a Preachers' Association in the Sunderland District was eyed askance. It was thought the Association "might become a hot-bed of revolutionary ideas and disturb Connexional peace."* Several papers which had been read before the Association were, for some reason or other, declined insertion in the Magazine, and this fact no doubt had something to do with the inception of the "Christian Ambassador." But it was an article by one who afterwards became President of Conference that gave the greatest alarm. Yet really in Mr. H. Phillips' article on "The Present as contrasted with the Past condition of the Connexion" there would seem to be little to alarm anybody. In these days it would be deemed quite tame and innocuous. However, the publication of this article led to correspondence and to the temporary stoppage of the "Ambassador" by the General Committee. After an interchange of views a satisfactory working understanding was arrived at, and being let go, the first volume got itself completed in July, 1857.

In October, 1857, the "Christian Ambassador" began to be published as a quarterly

and, with the exception of one year, when there was a reversion to the old bi-monthly form of publication, it has continued a quarterly ever since. It entered on a further stage of development in January, 1863, as thus described by Mr. McKechnie in his Autobiographic Memoranda:

"In the year 1863, the 'Ambassador' underwent a great change. Previously, though serving a good purpose among many of our preachers and people, it bore a sort of nondescript and ephemeral character. Its general contents and get-up seemed to indicate that it was nothing more than a temporary makeshift. And indeed, this was very near the idea formed of it for the first few years of its existence by its principal supporters. Now, however, in 1863 it, as it were, dropped its temporary features and assumed a permanent form, or at least, a form which promised permanence. While enlarged from sixty-four to ninety-six pages, and bearing the usual marks of regular periodicals, the quality of its literary papers was improved, and the price raised from eight-pence to a shilling. It had now become recognised indirectly as a semi-connexion organ, and though not patronised so generally as we thought its merits deserved, it nevertheless received considerable support. An important circumstance to be noted is, that at this time the Sunderland Preachers' Association, to which the "Ambassador" belonged, surrendered its copyright to the Preachers' Friendly Society, and thenceforth it became the property of that Society, yielding it its profits and subject to its control. Though having more than sufficient to do in managing the North Shields Circuit, I continued to edit the 'Ambassador,' and had every reason to believe that it exerted an influence for good among our preachers and people."

It is hard to repress a feeling of envy when we learn that the Primitive Methodist Quarterly Review started on its career with a circulation of 2,368 and yielded a first-year's profit of £207 to the Preachers' Friendly Society.

Book Committee and Auditors.

The Book Committee, of which the General Book Steward has always been the Secretary, has differed in its constitution at various times and has fluctuated in its numbers. We have seen who composed it in 1843. From 1844 to 1847, inclusive, it was the same in its personnel as the General Committee. In 1848, however, there was a reversion to the old type of Book Committee. All through the Fifties the committee was a small special one composed of persons resident in or near the metropolis. For the three years ending in 1850 it consisted of but three persons—T. Holliday, J. Flesher,
and W. Garner. For a few years after this it was a mixed committee of ministers and laymen, but it still continued a small committee, the persons composing it never exceeding ten in number. Then in 1863 the Book Committee once more lost its separateness and was but the General Committee discharging special functions under the direction of the General Book Steward. This obtained until the formation of the special and influential Book Committee that dates from 1895 and that may be said to be a feature of the latest phase and period of Book-Room administration. This would seem to be the time also to refer to the Connexional Auditors who, as Conferentially appointed officers, have since 1843 been annually closely associated with the Book-Room, in order to examine the year's accounts, setting forth the year's working of the department. The accounts of the Missionary Society have also come under their inspection; but it is with the relations in which they have stood to the Book-Room that we have now specially to do.

At the very beginning of this period the auditors had an onerous piece of work to do, and the manner they discharged their duty tended to inspire that confidence which was the best foundation for progressive development. It may serve a useful purpose to give here in tabular form the names of these men of Connexional standing, approved business ability, and high character, who, in succession, have cheerfully rendered this particular form of service to the Connexion though at an expenditure of considerable time and toil to themselves.

It will be noticed how many of these men we have already met with—men like S. Longdin, J. Sissons, J. Rouse, G. Baron, T. Dawson, G. T. Goodrich. We have seen them rendering distinguished Connexional service in their several localities. The portraits of many of these men have already been given; those of Messrs. J. Jones and J. Coward will be found among the Vice-Presidents, while that of Mr. Joseph Hunt, an influential layman of High Wycombe and former Missionary treasurer, and the portraits of Messrs. Amos Chippendale of Halifox, and J. Brearley of Berwick, are inserted in the text Our three present auditors—Messrs. Chippendale, Brearley, and Greenhalgh—have a long and honourable record of service rendered in their own Districts, and in the general administration of Connexional affairs, and that record does not need to be set out here at large. In fine, the list we give
not only shows who have acted as auditors since 1843, but gives us the names of some
men of Connexional mark in the period of consolidation and organisation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Auditor(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>S. Longdin, J. Sissons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>S. Longdin, T. Dawson, J. Sissons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>S. Longdin, J. Sissons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>Emerson Muschamp, W. Garner, T. Dawson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>S. Longdin, T. Dawson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849-50</td>
<td>J. Sissons, T. Bateman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>T. Bateman, J. Reynard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>Joshua Rouse, T. Bateman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>T. Bateman, T. Dawson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>T. Bateman, W. M. Salt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855-8</td>
<td>T. Bateman, Joshua Rouse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859-60</td>
<td>Joshua Rouse, G. T. Goodrich.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861-2</td>
<td>Joshua Rouse, J. Sissons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863-5</td>
<td>T. Bateman, J. Hunt.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(A Report of the Book Committee begins in 1865 to be attached to the Balance Sheet).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Auditor(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>T. Bateman, J. Hunt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>T. Bateman, J. North.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868-9</td>
<td>T. Bateman, J. Hunt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>T. Bateman, Joshua Rouse.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Up to this point the Financial year ended December 31st, and the audited accounts are given in the Conference Minutes of the year following. Now the Financial year is made to end March 31st, so that 1871 is from January, 1871, to April, 1872).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Auditor(s)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>T. Bateman, Joshua Rouse.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1872-8</td>
<td>T. Bateman, G. Baron.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1879-82</td>
<td>T. Bateman, G. Baron, John Lowe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883-4</td>
<td>T. Bateman, James Greenhalgh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885-6</td>
<td>G. Baron, J. Greenhalgh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>J. S. Parkman, John Jones, J. Greenhalgh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>J. Jones, James Richards, J. Greenhalgh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889-94</td>
<td>J. Jones, John Coward, J. Greenhalgh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>J. Jones, J. Greenhalgh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>J. Jones, Amos Chippindale, J. Greenhalgh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897-1905</td>
<td>A. Chippindale, J. Brearley, J. Greenhalgh.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table showing the succession of Auditors from 1843 to the present.