

The Church at Home and Abroad.

MARCH, 1897.

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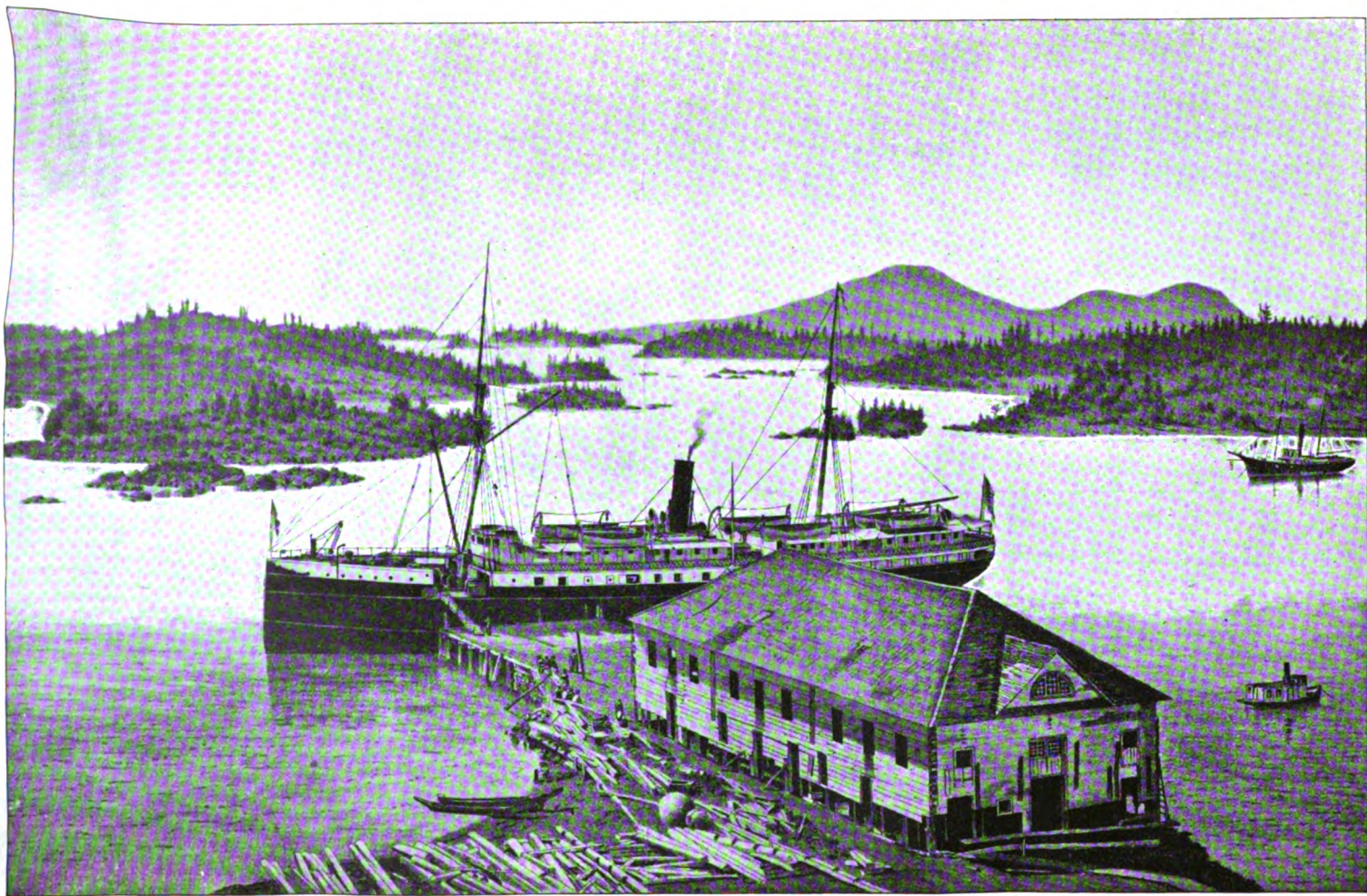
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THE CHURCH

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

MARCH, 1897.

CURRENT EVENTS AND THE KINGDOM.

The Red Cross in Cuba.—Miss Clara Barton's offer of the services of the American Red Cross for relief work in Cuba has been accepted by the Spanish government.

At the Inauguration.—Press dispatches convey the welcome intelligence that, by special request of Major and Mrs. McKinley, wine and other intoxicants will neither be furnished nor sold on the occasion of the inauguration.

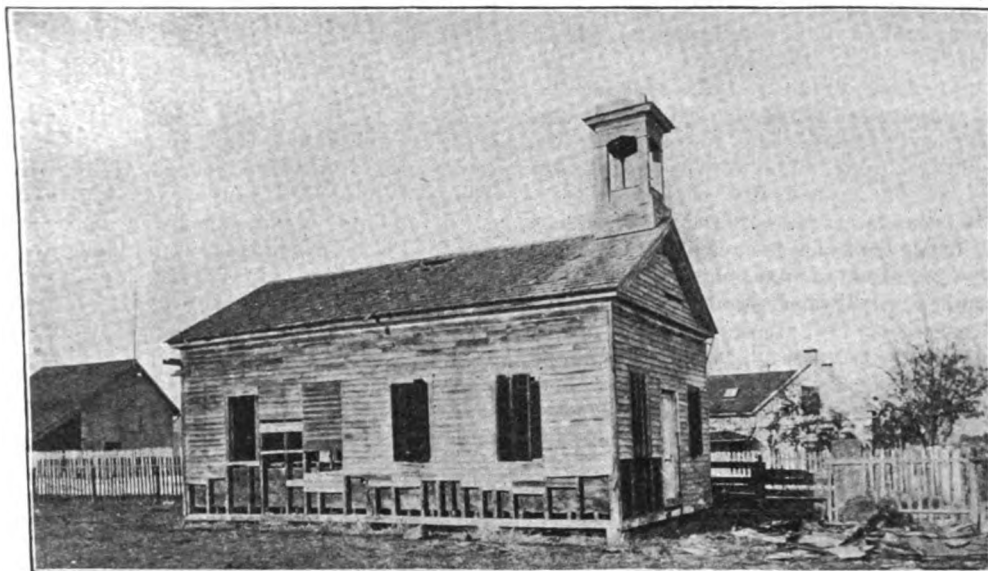
A Large Gift.—The joint indebtedness of the American Baptist Missionary Union and the American Baptist Home Mission Society is \$486,000. At a conference in New York, February 11, of the officers and friends of these societies, Mr. John D. Rockefeller offered to contribute \$250,000 towards the amount needed if others will subscribe the remaining \$236,000 before July 1, 1897.

The Arbitration Treaty.—"One hundred years hence arbitration will rule the world," said General Philip Sheridan in an address in 1887. Prominent men in France are now declaring that they are favorable to a treaty between that country and the United States. Even though the Anglo-American treaty was not promptly ratified, the thorough discussion of the subject has borne good fruit. In the March *Atlantic Monthly* the historian, John Fiske, shows what benefits will come from the treaty. He makes it clear that our past disputes might have been amicably adjusted under such a treaty, and points out how the treaty is the natural ally of commerce and industrial advancement.

Relief for Armenian Orphans.—As a result of the massacre of seventy-five thousand Armenian Christians during the past two years, there are nearly one hundred thousand orphans, many of whom are homeless, friendless and in dire need. Since the Turkish government will not allow them to be removed, provision must be made for them where they are. The case appeals strongly to our Christian sympathies.

World's Missionary Conference.—The conference of officers of foreign Boards took steps providing for a World's Ecumenical Conference to be held in New York city in the year 1900, to be attended by representatives of Protestant missionary societies all over the world. A committee, which has had preliminary correspondence on this project, has received most cordial and helpful replies from a large number of foreign missionary organizations in England and Europe. At a similar general conference held in London, in 1888, 139 different missionary societies were represented. Over 1500 delegates were in attendance. It was felt to be a most inspiring assembly, carried on by a wisdom and strength from above, and the benefits of it far reaching in time and space.

Hope Hall.—This is the name of the home which Mrs. Ballington Booth is to establish for men who have been released from prison. When, on their own invitation, she talked to the prisoners at Sing Sing, eighty-six of the number determined to lead new lives. But one of them said



1st Presbyterian Church, Benicia, Cal.

PRESBYTERIANISM IN CALIFORNIA.

REV. HENRY COLLIN MINTON, D. D.

THE PIONEER PERIOD.

No historian ever undertook a more inviting task than would be that of describing the scenes and incidents of early California. Like ancient Rome and Britain, this modern empire of the West can trace its annals back to a prehistoric age of myth and legend. While the aborigines were feeding on its native fruits and basking in its balmy suns; while Blake was cruising up and down its coast, never dreaming of the resources that lay beyond; while the Russians from the north and the Spaniards from the south were making their little spurts of settlement on its soil; while the old pope-serving *padres* were cloistering in their missions, more mediæval than modern in their quiet solitude; even when our own dashing Fremont cut the jungle of a continent and approached the land of flowers by way of the dreary desert—all this was before our California was born.

The swift succession of events that followed our acquisition of California was most remarkable. In July, 1846, the whole of California, *alta* and *baja*, virtually came under American rule.

"One summer morn a stately ship
Sailed up the sunlit bay
Flaunting a flag which did not dip
To other flag that day;
But high uplifted on the shore
Proclaimed the old dominion o'er."

In 1848, Mexico recognized the situation and formally ceded the territory. In February of the same year, James W. Marshall first discovered the gold deposits in the bed of the American river, at Sutter's Mill. September 1, 1849, General Riley called the Constitutional Convention at Monterey. September 9, 1850, California became a State, and a star of gold was added to the stars and stripes. Neither Mexico knew what it had lost nor the United States what it had won. This unknown land no sooner became ours than, as if by the philosopher's stone, it became the fabled land of gold.

The scenes that followed are unparalleled in history. A populous commonwealth was born in a day. The sands of the Sacramento became the theme of excited discussion the world over. In every port, sails were set for the Golden Gate. Farmers deserted their plows, lawyers forsook their

clients, physicians left their patients to die—or get well—merchants abandoned their wares, and a motley pilgrimage, like a leaderless mob, wended its way to the western slopes of the Sierras. The population quadrupled in five months. Hardship, suffering, danger, death did not stay the madding throng. On they came, seeking gold and finding it for the seeking.

If adventure and heroism and romance and excitement and boundless resources can move the historian to dip his pen, then the history of California should be well and often written.

But they were not all mad in that bewildering crusade for gold. There were those who came, not for the gold, but for the gold-seeker. They foresaw deadly perils, and they came to warn men against them. They knew it meant hard work, but that was just why they came.

There are three reasons why Presbyterians in the East should be interested in the origins of Presbyterianism in California.

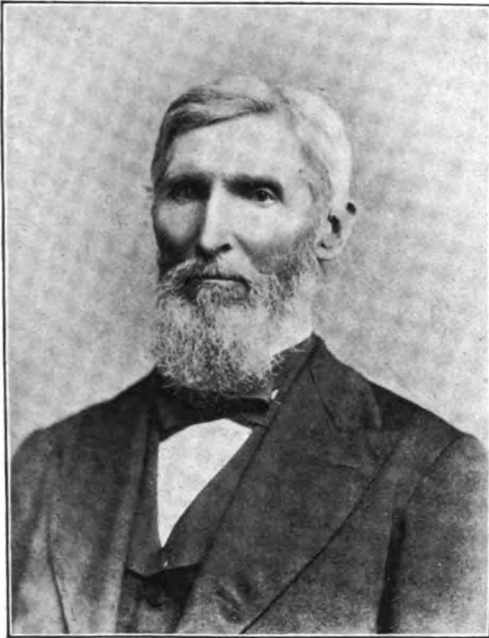
First, because of the intrinsic interest of the story itself. The Californian is often abashed at the consciousness that when he is telling the sober truth, the aliens are crediting him with falsehood. Probably the psychologist would explain how it is that when things which are true in one place and false in another become confused in the mind, there may be occasional confusion in speech as well. California is not to blame for being created the land of big things. From the grandeurs of her Yosemite to the enormity of her squashes, it sustains a consistent character. California's first conscious throb was in a paroxysm of wild speculation. Its eye is chronically focused for large dimensions. One of our pioneer ministers has written that he once carried in each of his vest pockets a couple of fifty-dollar "slugs" of gold, and thought nothing more of it than he did later of as many trade dollars. When small dwelling-houses with canvas roofs and muslin partitions rented for \$200 a month, when eggs were \$20 a dozen, and cooks got \$150 a month for frying them, the whole scale of life was inflated and abnormal. The old Californian scorned anything less than his "two bits," and even now—nor is it said to our credit—one's respectability is somewhat compromised to be seen with a coin of less value than a *nickel*.

There is a thrilling interest, surpassing fiction, in the story of those early days, and it belongs to the narrative of their religious life also. The origins of Protestantism here were unique.

Moreover, those early times, with their peculiar conditions, are gone forever. There could never be more than one California. The "forty-niner" can never be duplicated, and his doings can never be re-enacted. The conditions were altogether singular, and it is but right that those grand pioneers of the gospel should be remembered and immortalized. Carlyle thought that the history of the world is the history of its great men; certainly the history of the kingdom of Christ in frontier California is largely that of a few *good* men. No names are more worthy to be snatched from oblivion, and embalmed in the gratitude of their successors as heroes of no ordinary fibre, frontiersmen of Christianity, with the axe of the woodman, with the seed of the sower, and with the sword of the warrior, clearing the way for the beneficent institutions of the Church of God on these inhospitable but fruitful shores. If old Junipero Serra was worthy of the honors which historians have accorded him, we can name men of faith and action who have laid foundations here, not for superstition and the pope, but for truth and liberty and the free blessings of the gospel of Christ.

And moreover, our eastern friends must not forget that the church out here is a part of our one beloved Presbyterian Church. Nothing that concerns us on the Pacific coast should be foreign to our brethren by the Atlantic. Once they used to talk out here about "the States," as Canadians do, but California is nothing if not intensely American, our Church is nothing if not thoroughly loyal to the grand old banner that waves over us all. The West is the child of the East; there is many a congregation east of the Mississippi that has its son or daughter in our State; our history is a part with your history, our struggles should have your sympathy, our victories should have your thankful joy.

There are not a few who will need to be reminded that when California was young, there were two Presbyterian Churches—happily known now only in history—the "Old School" and the "New School." The reunited Church must regard the early



Rev. Sylvester Woodbridge, D.D.

efforts of both of these as belonging to her own history.

The pioneer, preëminent, of the Old School branch, was the Rev. Sylvester Woodbridge, D.D., who was appointed by the Board of Home Missions in New York and sailed from that city December 1, 1848. Dr. Woodbridge belonged to an honored family of ministers. If his grandfather had only been a minister, instead of a physician, he would have been of the eighth generation in the ministry. He had three brothers who were ministers, one of whom is, we believe, a professor in the theological seminary at New Brunswick, N. J. Dr. Woodbridge was born at Sharon, Conn., June 15, 1813; was graduated from Union College in 1830, and received his theological instruction at Auburn and Princeton. He was for some years pastor in Long Island, first at Westhampton and then at Hempstead. In 1846, when a regiment of volunteers was being recruited for California, he brought to the attention of the Synod of New York, the subject of the appointment of a chaplain to accompany the volunteers to their distant destination. The synod appointed him a committee to look up the whole matter and to act as he

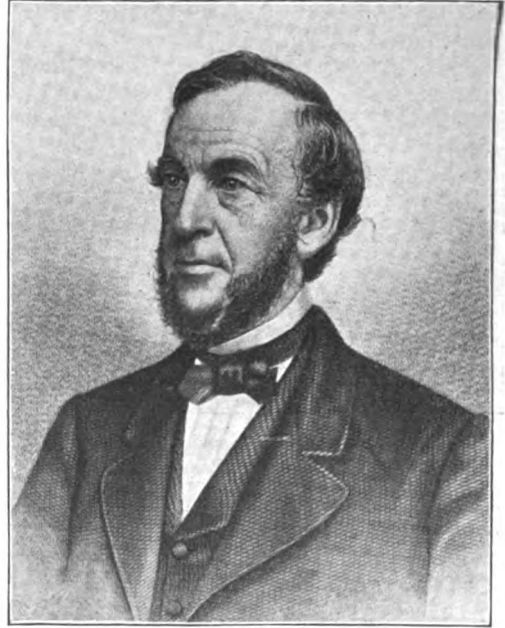
thought wise. In his correspondence with the Secretary of War at Washington, he found cordial support for the suggestion which he had originated. Col. Stevenson was empowered to select a chaplain for his regiment. He appointed a Mr. Leavenworth, who came, and was afterward *Alcalde* of San Francisco. However, it appears that by and by he became engrossed in secular affairs and accordingly he relinquished the chaplaincy. Meanwhile Mr. Woodbridge's interest in California was growing, and entering into correspondence with Dr. McDowell, of the Board of Domestic Missions, he was urged to go himself as a missionary to *Alta* (upper) California. This was before Marshall's gold find had been heard of. He finally decided to go, but both his congregation and his presbytery refused to concur in his decision. It is generally the men who are most wanted where they are, who are most needed where they are not. Dr. Woodbridge was a worthy first apostle to California, in that he did not come for the benefit of his health, or of his wife's health, or of the health of his eastern congregation. His convictions of duty vigorously persisted and, pursuantly, the congregation and the presbytery did the only right thing in the circumstances, and allowed the voice of God in the soul of his servant to be obeyed. At its next meeting, the presbytery by a majority of one voted to let him go. He came across the Isthmus, reaching Monterey on the first mail steamer February 23, 1849. Five days later he reached San Francisco. Here he found 2000 or 3000 unsettled and half-settled people, but much to his surprise he found another Presbyterian minister already at work. The record fails to disclose the inevitably ubiquitous Methodist minister as the first man on the ground in this notable instance. Dr. Woodbridge displayed his wise and aggressive energy from the first; he saw no need of two ministers in one place when there were so many places without any. At that time there was a point forty miles northward on the bay, which many believed was destined to be the site of the coming metropolis of the West. Accordingly, our pioneer pushed forward to Benicia, reaching there March 9, and preaching the first sermon two days later. On the 15th day of April, 1849, during a visit to Benicia from the Rev. Mr. Williams, who

had in the meantime reached San Francisco, Mr. Woodbridge organized the first Protestant church in California. For a time the little congregation worshipped in a school-building which was converted into a chapel. He was installed pastor at the first meeting of the Presbytery of California (O. S.), February 21, 1850. A new church building, materials for which, already framed, were shipped from New York in January, 1850, was dedicated March 9, 1851. Here Dr. Woodbridge remained as pastor until 1869, having some time in the early sixties begun work in the neighboring town of Vallejo, in connection with his pastorate at Benicia. He came from there to San Francisco in 1870, and was pastor of the Howard Street, now Trinity, Presbyterian Church, 1870-75, and of the Woodbridge Church from 1876 till his death, April 1, 1883. For the last two years of his life, however, he was disabled from active work.

Dr. Woodbridge, in addition to his pastoral duties, for several years edited the *Occident*,* the press organ of our Church on this coast. The first number was issued January 4, 1868. He was a man of great ability, of untiring energy and of deep and intelligent zeal for the cause of Christ. He was happy only when he was busy, and he seems to have had that indomitable pluck which is the supreme gift of grace among frontier difficulties, and in the midst of distracting and discouraging forces on every side. The name of Woodbridge will surely be held in veneration by all who love the Presbyterian Church and who know the story of its beginnings in California.

The second Presbyterian (O. S.) minister who came from the East was the Rev. Albert Williams, who received his commission from the Board of Education and Missions, February 1, 1849, and sailed from New York four days later. He was a Princeton man and had been for ten years pastor at Clinton, N. J. He entered the Golden Gate, April 1, 1849. He very soon began work looking to the organization of a Presbyterian church in San Francisco, and in this he found much support from a number who had been his fellow-voyagers from the East. Having been present at the organization of

Mr. Woodbridge's church at Benicia, he returned to San Francisco to bring his work to the same point as speedily as possible. The first formal conference was held in the office of Frederick Billings in the Old City Hall Hotel. On the 20th day of May, 1849, after a sermon in the Public School-



Rev. Albert Williams.

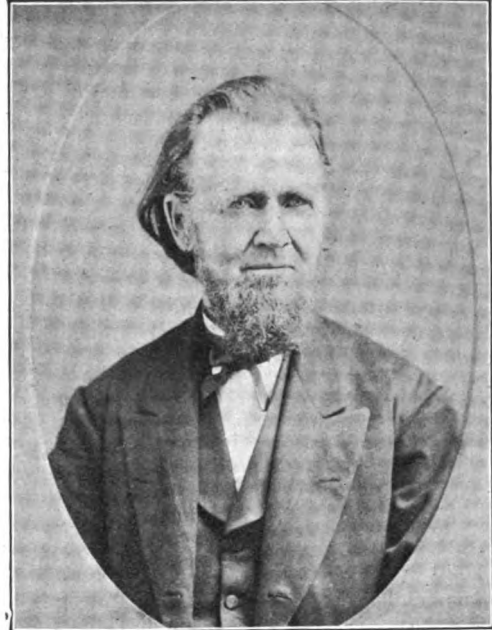
house, the First Presbyterian Church of San Francisco was organized with six members. It was prophetic of the cosmopolitan character of California churches ever since, that these six members hailed from six remotely separated parts of the world, namely, Massachusetts, Michigan, China, Pennsylvania, Vermont and Chile. This is the oldest Protestant church in San Francisco, though it has been affirmed that the Baptists were ahead. Mr. Williams himself (*A Pioneer Pastorate*, p. 60) names the churches whose organization followed his in this order: Baptist, Episcopal, M. E. and Congregational. In the correspondence between Mr. Williams and his congregation on the occasion of his resignation as early as 1854, the words occur repeatedly, speaking of their church—"the first Protestant church in San Francisco." Mr. Williams for a few months taught the town school, though there were

*The first Presbyterian organ published on the coast was *The Pacific*, founded August 1, 1851, by Rev. Isaac Brayton (N. S.), who succeeded Mr. Douglas at San José, in 1851. *The Pacific* is now the Congregational organ on the coast.

not a score of children in the town. He organized the Sunday-school, June 11, 1849, with the inauspicious number of thirteen. The houses of worship belonging to this congregation had a strange succession of calamities in the way of storm and flame, but the church grew rapidly with the growth of the city under the care of its faithful founder. He was installed pastor at the second meeting of the Presbytery in September, 1850, and remained till the impaired condition of his health forced him to retire in 1854. He died at West Orange, N. J., June 4, 1893, at the age of eighty-four.

The third to come, completing "the three W's" and making possible the Presbytery of California, was the Rev. James Woods. It is a singular fact that there are distinct grounds upon which each of "the three W's" may be regarded as *the* pioneer. Dr. Woodbridge was commissioned in October and Mr. Woods a week later, in 1848, but the former came the quick route by the isthmus, while the latter came "around the Horn," and was at sea nearly eight months. Mr. Woods built in Stockton the first Presbyterian church in California, dedicating it May 5, 1850. This was the second church on the Pacific coast, the first having been built at Clatsop Plains, Oregon, in 1846, by the Rev. Lewis Thompson, who is now the honored patriarch of our Oakland Presbytery. However, though Mr. Woods *built* the first church, Dr. Woodbridge *used* the first church in California. But Mr. Williams was the man to whose lot, in the providence of God, it fell to lay the first foundation-stone of organized Protestantism in the great and growing city of San Francisco.

Mr. Woods seems to have been the most stirring of the pioneer triumvirate. He was a sort of *avant-courier*, a synodical missionary, without synod and without commission. He organized a church at Stockton, 1850; at Los Angeles, 1854; at Santa Rosa, 1856, and at Healdsburg, 1858. He was pastor of the last-named for four years, leaving it in 1862 on account of failing health. Mr. Woods was a staunch pioneer with an eye for incipient opportunities and with a determination to stick to his purpose to preach the gospel in the midst of temptations, such as most men would have succumbed to, to speak the word and become



Rev. James Woods.

rich. He has left us a volume (*California Recollections*) which is replete with graphic accounts of his varied experiences. He was moderator of the Synod of California at its first meeting in 1852. He died at Winters, Cal., October 10, 1886, aged seventy-one. His son, the Rev. James L. Woods, of Mendocino, is a graduate of the San Francisco Seminary, and is doing his part to perpetuate and promote the good work which his honored father did so much to inaugurate.

Lest some critic, two or three hundred years hence, should disprove all the early annals of primitive Presbyterianism in the Golden State, let one or two things be made a matter of distinct record. When it is said that Benicia had the first church building in California, and again that Mr. Woods built in Stockton the first church edifice in California, let the critic take note that the Benicia chapel had been erected before Dr. Woodbridge's arrival, to be used as a schoolhouse, and that, when his church was organized, he secured it and appropriated it to the purposes of divine worship.

Again, when it is said that the Benicia church was the first organization in California, and then when some one truly says that the First Presbyterian Church in San

Francisco is *the oldest church in California*, let the critic pause to note that, in the vicissitudes, incident to ecclesiastical affairs in California, the church at Benicia—a town that never realized the expectations of its early champions—became extinct.

It has been intimated that Dr. Woodbridge found a Presbyterian minister already in San Francisco when he arrived. The Rev. T. Dwight Hunt, a New School Presbyterian, anticipated Dr. Woodbridge by four months, coming from the Hawaiian Islands, where he had been in missionary service. When he reached San Francisco he entered into an arrangement for one year, by which he was to serve as chaplain for the town, keeping up a "Union Service," to be supported by everybody generally. The one condition upon this contract was that during that year he should not organize a church of any denomination. In the year 1850 (June 25), the first "council" was called to install Mr. Hunt pastor of the First Congregational Church of San Francisco, which had been organized September 2, 1849. The council was

three-fourths Presbyterian, having as its members the Messrs. Williams, Willey and Hunt, Presbyterians, and the Rev. J. A. Benton, Congregational, of Sacramento. Mr. Williams describes the council as having "one Congregationalist and two Presbyterians, to constitute a Presbyterian clergyman a Congregational pastor" (*A Pioneer Pastorate*, p. 115). Thus it appears that Congregationalism in California had a Presbyterian christening and the warm, fraternal relations between the two Churches have always been such as become those who are indeed brethren in the Lord.

NOTE.—Although the writer was requested to confine himself, as far as possible, to the early days and founders of the Church in California, and to the careers of men not now living, he was not a little embarrassed by the wealth of material and the insufficiency of space within the necessary limits. It would have been a labor of love to continue the narrative to later days, and to have given deserved honor to living men worthily continuing the work begun by the pioneers.

PIONEERING in the far Northwest in the nineties is different in many respects from the pioneering in the far Southwest in the fifties. Digging gold out of the mines or washing it from the sands is not so prominent an industry in the State of Washington as it was with the "forty-niners" in California. There is a great difference of climate also, causing differences in the domestic necessities and the social conditions. But essentially the same human needs, the same moral exposures, the same spiritual dangers and opportunities are found in every climate and in every place and time. Mr. Charles Shepherd, a Sabbath-school missionary, laboring in Puget Sound Presbytery, Washington, writes:

These shingle and logging camps are often temporary affairs. The "shaks" are of rough lumber, built as cheaply as possible with very limited accommodations. The "bunk" house, where the single men sleep and spend their hours when not working, consists of a long, low building, with shelves along the wall for the men to sleep upon. The beds are mostly straw, covered with dirty blankets and yellow-covered literature. In the centre of the room is a huge fireplace, often made from an old cast-off boiler. The floor is strewn with old boots, shoes, old clothes and dirt. Along the side are benches, where the men sit reading, smoking, chewing and telling yarns and how the government is going to the dogs. A table stands near one window for card playing. The men are a mixed multitude from all nations, ready to believe

everything except the Bible. In winter they earn but little over their board, and that little is too often spent in the nearest saloon. They are very ignorant in everything pertaining to their souls' salvation. As I always try to get them out to the nearest Sabbath-school, I stop a day or two at the camps, paying my way and so gain their good will. It requires a great deal of tact and skill to answer their objections to the Scriptures—they are so various and sometimes so absurd, but I trust some good is being done by these visits.

The mills are surrounded by "homesteaders," and after the timber is sold and logged off good substantial farms will be the result, though it is a slow, tedious process. These communities are utterly unable to give support to regular ministers, and so the Sabbath-school missionary is gladly received, as this is their only means of religious instruction. A few of the older Sabbath-schools have developed into churches. The schools require constant care and watching, as the officers and teachers are oftentimes obliged to go away in search of work, and new ones must be found to take their place.

FOR notes on Home Missions, an article on *The Older States* by Secretary McMillan, an account of a precious work of grace among the New York Indians, by Mrs. S. L. Trippe, and a number of interesting letters from home missionaries, see pages 205-208. See also the first editorial note on page 161.