
ST. JAMES'S PARISH,

WILMINGTON,

N. C.

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SKETCH OF
ST. JAMES'S PARISH
WILMINGTON, N. C.,

FROM THE "HISTORICAL NOTICES" OF THE

REV. R. B. DRANE, D. D.

ENLARGED AND BROUGHT DOWN
TO THE PRESENT TIME

BY
A MEMBER OF THE VESTRY.

NEW YORK:
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PREFACE.

SOME months ago an intimate friend of the writer earnestly solicited him to prepare a sketch of St. James's Parish, Wilmington, N. C. It was urged that such a publication would be of interest not only to the Parish, but possibly to the Diocese. Conscious of his own shortcomings, he hesitated for some time before consenting to the undertaking, but finally yielded, and the result is the present publication. He does not claim for it any literary merit, and certainly makes no pretensions to the dignity of history ; it is simply a narration of events connected with the Parish and with our early local history, and interesting, perhaps, for those reasons. He has used as the basis of his work the Historical Notices of the Parish, by the late Rev. R. B. Drane, D. D., published in 1843, and is indebted for his additional statements to the Parish records, his own recollections, and those of old citizens; and he would here take occasion to tender his thanks particularly to Hon. Hugh Waddell, of Wilmington, and Gov. Henry T. Clarke, of Edgecombe, for interesting information most kindly imparted by them. He can only regret not having made a better use of the materials furnished him.

In conclusion, he desires to state that he has no

60467

pecuniary interest in the publication, and that whatever may be realized is to be applied to some charity of the Church. Its compilation has been entirely a "labor of love" with him, and if he has succeeded in awakening interest in regard to the early history of the Parish, or in affording gratification to any, it matters not in how slight a degree, he will feel amply compensated for the time and labor devoted to its preparation.

ST. JAMES'S PARISH, WILMINGTON, N. C.

THE earliest distinct information which we have of this Parish carries us back to the beginning of the year 1738. Thirty years before that the religious condition of the then Province of North Carolina had attracted the attention of the Venerable Society in England for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and several clergymen had been sent to the more populous precincts of Roanoke and Albemarle. The whole province had also been divided into twelve parishes, and several laws had been passed by the Colonial Legislature for the support of religion. But it was not until the period above named that any decisive measures were taken for planting the Church here.

Wilmington (so called in honor of Spencer Compton, who was Earl of Wilmington at that time, but previously known in the history of the province by the name of Newtown) consisted at that time of only a few houses which had been erected on the banks of the Cape Fear, for the purposes of trade. The Parish of St. James, however, embraced the whole of New Hanover County, and the clergyman was required to perform missionary duty to the distance of many miles in the interior, and along the coast.

The first minister of the Episcopal Church who is known to have officiated here was the Rev. Richard Marsden. In the records of the Venerable Society for 1738 it is briefly stated "that Mr. Marsden had a settlement in the parish (probably a plantation), and, being a clergyman of the Church of England, had officiated here for several years past." The records of the Society also state that, at the earnest solicitation of some of the parishioners, the Society gave Mr. Marsden a temporary appointment as their missionary to St. James, but before he became fully settled under the seal of their authority "they became dissatisfied with *his character*, and withdrew the appointment."

Of this gentleman, who was the first Episcopal clergyman settled on Cape Fear, and the first Rector of St. James's Church, in Wilmington, and against whose character the above injurious statement appears, we have been enabled to gather the following facts, through the courtesy of one closely connected with him.

Mr. Marsden was for many years chaplain to the Duke of Portland. The duke, like many others of his day, was induced to invest very largely in that wild speculation known as the "South Sea Bubble," and having lost very heavily, the ministry, to assist him, appointed him Governor-General of Jamaica, with a salary of five or six thousand pounds (equivalent to twenty-five or thirty thousand dollars) per annum, which enabled him to live, and put out his

estates "to nurse," as it is called in England. His chaplain, like his patron, invested his small means in the same ill-starred enterprise, and, like the duke, lost all he invested, but with this difference, that the duke had estates, which at "nurse" would in a few years reinstate his broken fortunes, while his poor chaplain had nothing to fall back upon. The duke, therefore, urged Mr. Marsden, who still retained his position of chaplain, to accompany him to Jamaica, which he did. In three or four years the duke's rent-roll cleared off his embarrassments, and he returned to England. Mr. Marsden, however, was induced by some planters from South Carolina to come to Charleston, with the view of taking charge of one of the churches in that city, but, either owing to his delay, or some other cause, when he arrived there he found the place filled by another.

The intercourse between Charleston and Wilmington was very great in those days, as Charleston at that time was the *chief importing city on the continent*, and the friends of Mr. Marsden in that city hearing of the purpose of the citizens of Wilmington to employ a clergyman, interested themselves in having him called to the place.

Mr. Marsden came in due course of time, under some promise from the "Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," that he would be permanently settled in Wilmington. He accordingly officiated as Rector of St. James's Parish, and was the main agent in having the church built in

this place, which was called St. James's Church. After officiating for several years (as it was said most acceptably to the congregation) some of his vestry became dissatisfied with him, and made such representations to the Venerable Society as induced them to displace him, and the record says it was because they were "not satisfied with his character." It is, we think, fair to presume that the same members of the vestry who were active in having Mr. Marsden displaced, were they who caused this entry to be made upon the records.

Now this entry did great injustice to Mr. Marsden, inasmuch as it did not *specify the charges*, but used such general phraseology as might admit of the most unjustifiable imputations, as, that he was devoid of moral principle—or a man of loose life—or dishonest;—in short, the phrase used was capable of the cruelest construction which malignity might put upon it.

As an act of simple justice to one long gone to his account, and to many of his descendants who are still living, and who might perhaps feel aggrieved at this imputation upon the character of their ancestor, we will state what we have always understood as the true version of this unfortunate passage in the life of Mr. Marsden.

MB He was the first owner of the plantation situated about eight miles from Wilmington, called the Hermitage, which he improved with great skill and taste, and which from his day to the year 1861, when the Iliad of our Southern woes began, was in the posses-

sion of the Burgwin family, known as the seat of profuse and elegant hospitality. It had been the property of father, sons, and grandsons, a race as celebrated for its refinement and culture, as in some of its descendants it has been rendered illustrious by devotion to the cause of the South on many a bloody field, in one of which a field officer of the race* sealed that devotion with his life's blood.

Mr. Marsden was familiar with the usages of refined society, and, being of a somewhat social turn, took great delight in the exercise of a generous hospitality, and as chaplain to an English duke of vast wealth, was accustomed to such indulgences of the table as were prevalent at that time in England, though certainly not so usual in this colony. Mr. Marsden, as we have already stated, entered with zest into the customs of hospitable society. It was perhaps his weakness, but surely not an unamiable one. He delighted in social gatherings, and frequently gave dinner parties at his home, as was the custom among the gentlemen of those days. Some one, perhaps one of those who thus enjoyed his hospitality, took occasion to report to the Venerable Society that Mr. Marsden was in the habit of drinking too much wine at his own dinner table. It is believed that this was the "head and front of his offending." It was not charged, or even insinuated, that he was ever in a condition that unfitted him for the discharge of any

* General George Burgwin Anderson, wounded in battle, and who died from the effects of his wound.

of the duties of his office, but only that he indulged in a style of living to which he had been accustomed in England, and which was universally prevalent in this country in the higher circles of society.

His case not only shows how necessary it is that a clergyman should be very watchful over his own habits and manner of life, lest he should give occasion to the adversary against himself, but also how necessary it is to *specify* the charges against any real or supposed culprit, so as to leave nothing to the insinuations of the thoughtless or malicious in after times.

As an incident of some local interest perhaps in this sketch of Mr. Marsden, we may add that one of his daughters married an English gentleman of the name of Thomas Haynes, who, soon after his marriage, purchased and settled a plantation near the Hermitage, which he improved very highly, and upon which he erected a fine building called by him *Castle Haynes*, now constantly, but incorrectly, known as *Castle Hayne*. This error has probably arisen from a supposition that it was once the property of one of the distinguished family of that name in South Carolina. But the name is different; besides which, Thomas Haynes had no lateral relations in America. His own descendants are confined to one family—the Waddells of the Cape Fear, who are also the only descendants of Mr. Marsden.

The person appointed in the place of Mr. Marsden was the Rev. Mr. Moir. This gentleman had previously served as a missionary in South Carolina, and

brought with him strong testimonials from the Commissary, and other clergy of that province, as "a person of good life and learning"—a character which he fully sustained during a ministry of ten years in the service of the parish.

The first record of Mr. Moir's ministry in that place is found in a letter of his to the Venerable Society, dated Wilmington, October 29, 1740. It states "that through God's blessing he had arrived safe at his mission in the month of May preceding, and had travelled over most parts of it, which extended a hundred miles along the coast—that he found the inhabitants so scattered it would be impossible to minister to them as he could wish—that the generality of the people were very ignorant, but seemed willing to be instructed, which had greatly encouraged him in his labors, and that up to that time he had baptized two hundred and ten children in his travels among them."

In a second letter, dated May 25th, 1741, Mr. Moir informed the Society that he had twice travelled over the country between the Cape Fear and Neuse Rivers, and performed the duties of his sacred office, praying, preaching, and administering the sacraments—that since his last report he had baptized three hundred and thirteen children and three adults, but the number of communicants was very small, the people being ignorant of religion to the last degree."

In the year 1742, the Venerable Society, finding it impossible to obtain a clergyman for each, resolved to

unite the parish with that of St. Philip in Brunswick, and the two places continued for several years to form one mission, under the care, of the Rev. Mr. Moir. The first letter of the missionary after the change, which is dated at Brunswick, 1743, states, "that during the preceding year he had received into the Church by baptism five hundred and fifty-six children, besides seven adults, and that he had also administered the Holy Communion, at his various stations, to one hundred and twenty persons."

In the same letter, by way of showing the state of religion in his charge, he mentions, "that at least one hundred of the children whom he had baptized were between five and seven years of age." In the same connection he also complains of "the difficulties and discouragements which he daily met with in the discharge of his sacred functions;" sometimes through fatigue and hazard of travelling, and at others through the malice and perverseness of those with whom he had to do." He concludes his letter, however, with the expression of his determination to persevere in the discharge of his duties, adding the charitable hope, "that God would, in his own good time, turn the hearts of these disobedient children to the wisdom of the just."

In the following year (1744) Mr. Moir again writes to the Venerable Society. His letter states "that during the preceding year he had been constantly preaching and officiating at his stations, and that he had baptized two hundred and seventy children and

four adults, after proper instruction. In the same letter he complains that his health had become much impaired by the severity of his labors, and doubts whether he shall be able much longer to bear the hardships of his most difficult mission."

The next notice of this worthy minister is found in the Venerable Society's abstract for 1745. It is there stated, "that the Rev. Mr. Moir, the senior missionary in North Carolina, continues very diligent in his laborious stations, preaching publicly and from house to house repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and that by the sacrament of baptism he had admitted into the Church, during the preceding year, four hundred and eighty white and twenty negro children, besides several adults."

The diligence of this devoted minister in this place and the surrounding country secured to him the warm and grateful attachment of many to whom he ministered. As an evidence of their gratitude for his services, the congregation of St. James forwarded to the Venerable Society, about this time, a letter of thanks, from which we make the following extract: "We esteem ourselves most happy under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Moir. He hath, to the great comfort and edification of our families, and these dark and distant regions of the world, prosecuted the duties of his calling with the utmost application and diligence, adorned his character with an exemplary life and conversation, shewing uncorruptness, gravity and sound speech, so that they who are of the contrary part have no evil thing to say of him."

The time, however, had now come when the people of the parish were to part with their faithful shepherd. In a letter, under date of October 9th, 1747, after acknowledging the receipt of a small gratuity of £10 from his friends in England, and stating his official acts for the year, which included the baptism of one hundred and twenty-seven children, besides several adults, Mr. M. informs the Society "that the impaired condition of his health would no longer permit him to remain on the Cape Fear, and that he should either go to St. Mary's Parish, in Edgecombe county, or avail himself of the earliest opportunity of a passage to London." We are unable to ascertain with certainty which alternative was adopted; the more probable conjecture is that he remained in the province. His name is found on the Society's list of missionaries in North Carolina as late as the year 1765, and his location is St. Mary's,* Edgecombe county, where, it is probable, he died.

Of such a man it is natural to regret that more cannot be known. Though fitted by his talents and education for distinction in his native land, he seems to have given himself literally to the service of the Church in this distant country; and had he accomplished no more than what we have gleaned for the foregoing pages from the imperfect chronicles of the past, he would have left behind him a reputation well

* St. Mary's was the first house of worship erected in Edgecombe County. It was located at Chapel Bridge, on Tar river, eight miles above Tarboro.

worthy the minister of Him "who gave His life a ransom for many."*

Up to the year 1751, the congregation in this town had used the County Court House as a place of public worship, for want of a more suitable place. At this time steps were taken toward meeting this want. Among those who contributed to this object the name of Michael Higgins deserves a grateful remembrance. He was one of the original settlers of Wilmington, a faithful and well tried friend of the Church, and to his bounty the congregation are indebted for the ground which for so many years formed the last resting place of their departed relatives and friends.

The lot which he gave on the corner of Market and Fourth streets not being sufficiently large for the double purpose of a church edifice and a burying ground, the Legislature of the province passed an act by which the vestry were authorized to use thirty feet of Market street for the front of the church; and this will account for the location of the old building, which was removed in 1839. This act, which is the first found on record touching the parish, may be seen at large in Martin's collection of the private laws of the State, and bears date XXV Geo., 1751.

The commissioners named for carrying its provisions into effect were Samuel Swann, Joseph Blake, William Faris, John Sampson, Lewis De Rosset and John Ashe, members of his Majesty's

* In 1760-61 Rev. James Moir was one of the Commissioners for laying out the town of Tarboro, where he resided.

Council. It appears from the preamble of the above act that the church was expected to be built by the voluntary subscriptions of the parishioners.

There occurs, however, about this time, the record of an additional source of revenue to the commissioners, sufficiently singular to demand a passing notice. A number of Spanish privateers, availing themselves of the defenceless condition of the Cape Fear, had, in 1749, entered the river and committed considerable depredations upon the inhabitants. The people of the surrounding country hastily collected and made an attack upon them. During the action one of these piratical vessels was blown up and captured, and a number of valuable effects taken out of the wreck. The proceeds of this property were afterwards applied to the building* of the churches in Wilmington and Brunswick.

Among the curious things found in this pirate was an "Ecce Homo," a painting of the Saviour in one of the scenes of His passion, as described by St. John in the 19th chapter and 5th verse. Strange that such a picture should be found in a vessel of that charac-

* Among other acts of the General Assembly of North Carolina in reference to the building of the church in St. James's Parish, Wilmington, N. C., will be found one passed in 1760, authorizing a lottery to raise money to build the church, and appropriating the effects of this Spanish vessel to the same object. The resort to lotteries for such a purpose may seem strange and immoral at the present day, but it was very common at that time for all purposes: for schools, libraries, internal improvements, and many private enterprises.

ter.* This painting is still preserved in the vestry room of the church, and has been pronounced by some who are judges in such matters to be a work of considerable merit.

How soon the commissioners entered upon the work with which they were charged we have now no means of ascertaining. Of their *progress*, however, we may form some idea from the fact, that the same statute book which contains the record of their appointment, contains another act of the Colonial Assembly, bearing date XI, Geo. III, 1770, ch. xiii, appointing the Hon. Lewis DeRosset and Frederick Gregg, Esq., commissioners in the place of John Dubois and George Wakely, deceased, for finishing the church in Wilmington. Hence it would appear that at least nineteen years must have elapsed from the commencement to the completion of the first parish church of St. James.

This tardiness in providing themselves with one of the first requisites for the decent worship of God, may seem to some not to argue very favorably for the religious zeal of our ancestors; but it should be remembered, that the congregation at that day was much smaller than at present, and that their resources were proportionately still more scanty. It should be noted that much of this time the people were without a clergyman to animate and encourage them in their work. We have seen that the Rev. Mr. Moir left

* It had probably been stolen from some church in one of their marauding descents upon the South American or West Indian coasts.

this place in 1747-8. Seven years at least must have elapsed before his place was supplied.

The person selected as the successor of Mr. Moir was the Rev. Mr. McDowell. Our information of this fact is derived from the records of the Venerable Society for 1755. It is there briefly stated "that the Rev. Mr. McDowell, who had been put into orders last year, at George Dobbs's request, is fixed at Wilmington, the largest town in the province, where he is diligently employed in his sacred office, and much esteemed by his parishioners."

About this time the parish received from the Venerable Society a valuable donation of Bibles, Prayer Books, and other religious publications, for distribution among the people. Among them were two valuable old volumes, bearing on their antiquated covers the royal arms of England, and marked as "the gift of his Royal Highness George, Prince of Wales," afterwards King George the Third. A few of these books still remain in the library of the parish.

It is a matter of regret that we know but little of the progress of the parish under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. McDowell. From the brief abstract of the Venerable Society (our only source of information), we learn that they regarded him as a "highly useful and faithful laborer in the vineyard of his Master, and well worthy of the station which he held." This estimate of his character appears fully sustained by the fact, that, like his worthy predecessor, he ex-

tended his labors to every part of his large mission, and that in the more remote congregations of his charge he established lay reading, to supply that lack of service which his own numerous duties rendered impracticable to himself.

He appears to have continued his residence in Wilmington up to the year 1760, when, at the instance of Governor Dobbs, he was removed to Brunswick, still, however, giving a portion of his time to the congregation here. Mr. McDowell remained on the mission until the autumn of 1763, when he fell a victim to the sickness incident to the country, and passed, as we may hope, from the scene of his earthly labors to reap their reward in a better world.

Tradition reports that he was buried at his own request beneath the altar of the sanctuary in which he ministered—thus, in death as in life, still clinging to the Church. That sanctuary has long been a neglected ruin—trees larger than those of the surrounding forest have grown up within its roofless walls, and where long years ago the voice of praise and thanksgiving ascended up on high, a solemn stillness reigns, broken only by the night-owl's screech, or the whip-poorwill's plaintive cry. The grave of the missionary is undistinguished from those of the numerous congregation of the dead sleeping around him. Time has long since levelled the incumbent sod, and no stone was erected to mark the spot where his ashes repose.

But a nobler monument to McDowell than marble or brass could supply is around us and before us.

It is seen in the prevalence and happy influence of that religion for the establishment of which he gave up his life. This will stand when all earthly monuments have perished and passed away; nor could the graveyard of an abbey furnish a more honorable epitaph for him than that simple phrase of one of the letters which announced his death to the Venerable Society, in whose service he died: "He was a good man—faithful in his sacred office, and well deserved to be a missionary."

In the following year (1764) the Governor of the Province wrote to the Venerable Society in England, "that since the death of Mr. McDowell there were only six missionaries in North Carolina." He earnestly entreated that one might be sent as early as possible to supply the vacancy at Brunswick, and also a clergyman for the parish of St. James, to reside in Wilmington. A similar application was made about the same time by the Wardens and Vestry of St. James to the Bishop of London.

The result of these applications was that in the following year, 1765, the Rev. Mr. Barnett, "strongly recommended by persons both in England and America, was appointed by the Venerable Society as their missionary at Wilmington and Brunswick, to officiate at these places alternately as his Excellency Governor Tryon* might think proper to direct." The first year Mr. Barnett appears to have resided in the

* This was that Governor Tryon who was called by the Indians the "Great Wolf of Carolina."

parish of St. James; but in the next he was removed to Brunswick—continuing, however, like his predecessor, to extend his services to the more remote congregations embraced in the mission.

This arrangement continued until the spring of 1766, when the Vestry of St. James succeeded in securing the services of a clergyman devoted exclusively to their own parish. This person was the Rev. John Wills.

He arrived in Wilmington some time early in the year 1766, and continued to officiate for this parish with great acceptance for about ten years. A record of Mr. Wills's original agreement with the Vestry is still in existence, and as the contract between the parties may be a subject of some curiosity to churchmen of the present day, we copy it herewith.

"At a meeting of the Vestry of the Parish of St. James, held at the Court House in Wilmington, on the 16th day of April, 1766, present, William Campbell and John Devane, Church Wardens, and the Hon. Lewis DeRosset, Cornelius Harnett, Arthur Mabson, William Campbell and William Edward, vestrymen: Agreed with Rev. John Wills to allow him £185 proc. money for one year's salary and house hire, commencing from Easter Monday, and ending Easter Monday in the year 1767, to officiate as minister of said parish in Wilmington eighteen Sundays during said time; at the Sound six Sundays; at Rocky Point six Sundays; at Long Creek, six Sundays; at Black River, six Sundays; and at Welsh Tract, six

Sundays—the remaining four Sundays at his disposal. The minister to give timely notice in writing of the places he intends to preach at.”

This programme of the parson's labors shews us, indeed, that he held “pluralities” here; but those only who know the history and value of proc. money can form any idea of the extent of his revenues. From the accounts that we have of Mr. Wills he appears to have been happily constituted for the times in which he lived and the sphere of his labors. He is represented as a man of a highly finished education, sprightly and engaging in his manners, and peculiarly forcible and solemn in his public ministrations.

We possess no materials from which to judge of the progress of the Church during the ministry of Mr. Wills. His official records, if he kept any, have either been lost or were carried away with him when he resigned his charge. In the year 1770 the Venerable Society made him a gratuity of £30, in token of *their* appreciation of his services, and about the same time the parish received from the same source an additional donation of Bibles and other books of instruction and devotion.

The only matter of interest found on the records of the Vestry at that time is a brief correspondence between themselves and the Governor of the province, touching the induction or institution of Mr. Wills, which, as affording some slight indication of the temper of the times, we will here lay before the reader. The first is a letter from the Governor to the Vestry :

BRUNSWICK, 9th February, 1770.

GENTLEMEN—As the Rev. Mr. Wills, who has been long a resident among you, expresses a desire of settling in your parish, I am to acquaint you that I propose giving him letters of presentation and induction thereto. I would, therefore, be glad to hear from you, gentlemen, whether there are any objections to Mr. Wills in the duties of his sacred office.

I am, gentlemen, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM TRYON.

At a meeting of the Vestry, held on 10th May, in the same year, it was ordered that the Church Wardens return the following answer to the letter of his Excellency the Governor :

WILMINGTON, 11th May, 1770.

SIR—We are directed by the Vestry of St. James's Parish to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's favor of the 9th February last, in answer to which we are desired to inform your Excellency that they are very well satisfied to employ Mr. Wills in the parish as usual, since he is a gentleman every way worthy of his sacred function. *But they cannot agree to his being inducted into the parish, as they humbly conceive, from the best information they can procure, that no power of presentation or induction is lodged in the Crown by any act of the Assembly of this province.*

Your Excellency's most obedient and very humble servants,

JOHN ANCRUM,	}	Church
WILLIAM WILKINSON,		Wardens.

To the foregoing letter the Vestry received the following reply :

NEW BERNE, *July 17th*, 1770.

GENTLEMEN—I have had the satisfaction to receive by your direction a letter, dated May 11th, from Messrs. Ancrum and Wilkinson, the Church Wardens of St. James's Parish, wherein the Rev. Mr. Wills is declared to be a gentleman worthy of his sacred function. In consideration, therefore, of such honorable testimonial and Mr. Wills's desire to receive letters of presentation and induction for your parish, I have complied with such desire, remaining under the clearest conviction that I have a full right so to do, and which I esteem it my bounden duty to perform. Finding, however, from the above mentioned letter that "you conceive, from the best information you can procure, that no power of presentation or induction is lodged in the Crown by any act of the Assembly of this province," I have this favor, gentlemen, to request of you, that you will continue to extend your good offices and friendly attentions to Mr. Wills until a better title to presentation and induction can be set up and established than what I claim under the Crown.

I am, gentlemen, your most obedient and very humble servant,

WILLIAM TRYON.

To the Vestry of St. }
James's Parish. }

The following answer to the above was ordered by the Vestry :

WILMINGTON, *November 28th*, 1770.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY—By direction of the Vestry of St. James's Parish, we are to acknowledge the receipt of your favor to them of the 17th July last, and to inform you that they, as well in regard to your Excellency's instance as to Mr. Wills's merits, will continue their good offices and friendly notice of him. We are, with respect, your Excellency's most obedient and humble servants,

JOHN ANCRUM,* } *Church*
WILLIAM WILKINSON, } *Wardens.*

This letter closed the correspondence between the Vestry and Governor touching the matter of presentation and induction. Its exclusively political bearing is obvious, and exhibits that jealousy at the least attempt to infringe upon their rights, and that determination to maintain them, which so signally characterized the people of this region in the days "that tried men's souls."

According to the English law, the right of presentation and induction belongs originally to the Crown in those cases only where a church or chapel is built or endowed at the *expense* of the Crown. This was

* The tomb of John Ancrum, one of the parties to the above correspondence, is still to be seen at Old Brunswick, where he was buried. It is in a good state of preservation, but the lettering on the marble slab is sadly defaced by time and exposure to the elements. During the war of the Revolution he was, for a long period, chairman of the Committee of Vigilance of the town of Wilmington.

not the case here—the church in that parish was built and sustained by the people; the claim, therefore, set up in this instance by the Governor, as the representative of the Crown, was clearly illegal, and very properly resisted by the Vestry.

This controversy does not appear to have produced any change of feeling in the parish towards Mr. Wills. Though a loyalist, and consequently agreeing in opinion with the Governor, his deportment was so exemplary and his ministrations so universally acceptable, that he not only escaped censure, but retained in a high degree the affections of the people as long as he remained among them.

The last Vestry meeting held under the Colonial Government, of which we have any account, was in December, 1775. Among the proceedings on that occasion we find the following: "Ordered, that the Church Wardens of St. James's parish join with the Colonel of the New Hanover Regiment and the Parson of said parish, to receive the legacy of the late Hon. James Innis,* deceased, and that they hire out the slaves and take care of the other property as they may see best."

This bequest of Colonel Innis was not to the parish of St. James, as might naturally be inferred from the

* Colonel James Innis lived at a place about ten miles from Wilmington, called Point Pleasant. He was very prominent in the old colonial times, and when this will was drawn was in command, at Winchester, Va., of all the troops raised by the States of North Carolina and Virginia, which were intended to operate against the French and Indians on the Ohio.

above record, but for the purpose of establishing a school for the youth of the State. The bequest is in these words, which we copy from his will: "I also give and bequeath two negro young women, one negro young man, and their increase, all the stock of cattle and hogs, half the stock of horses belonging to my plantation, with all my books, and one hundred pounds sterling, for the use of a free school for the benefit of the youth of North Carolina; and to see that this part of my will be duly executed at the time, I appoint the Colonel of the New Hanover Regiment, the Parson of the Wilmington Church, and the Vestry for the time being, or the majority of them, as they shall from time to time be chosen or appointed."

Our narrative has now brought us down to the commencement of the war of the Revolution, the disastrous effects of which upon the Church in this country were long and severely felt. In the popular mind the Episcopal Church had long been identified with the government of the mother country. Hostility to the measures of that government would, therefore, very naturally run into a hostility to the Church.

The effect of this feeling on such of the colonial clergy as remained loyal was embarrassing in the extreme. "Taken as a body, no better friends to their country were to be found in it, none felt a holier interest in her prosperity and happiness, but they likewise felt an interest no less lively in the success

of religion, the best and only foundation of public prosperity. In their minds this was naturally associated with the progress of the distinctive principles of their Church, and they were bound, moreover, by solemn obligations of obedience to the regular authorities in Church and State. But these considerations, however weighty with the clergy, had but little force when weighed in the scales of popular prejudice. The prevalent idea was that all obligations, moral and religious, and all the ties of conscience, are at once dissolved by the exigence of political affairs, and the consequence was that mere neutrality in an Episcopal clergyman was in many cases regarded as sufficient evidence of hostility to the cause of his country."

It is not intended by these remarks to justify such of the clergy as still adhered to the cause of England, for the contest on the side of the colonies was one into which they were forced by the despotic measures of the Home Government, and, therefore, their resistance was right in the judgment of the writer of this. But it seems due at least to say this much in vindication of the motives of a much misunderstood and calumniated class of men who, whatever may have been their errors of judgment, have conferred upon our country a debt of obligation which eternity alone can fully reveal.

In consequence of the state of things to which we allude, many of the clergy were compelled to abandon their cures, the doors of most of our sanctuaries became closed, and the result upon the general welfare

of the Church was deplorable in the extreme. It is believed that few of our parishes suffered longer or more severely than the one whose history we are endeavoring to trace.

The Rev. Mr. Wills, the last of its rectors under the Colonial Government, resigned his charge in 1775-6, and there is no evidence that his place was supplied for a period of twenty years. During all this time the voice of the Liturgy was silent in the sanctuary; no servant of the altar was here to expound to the people the word of life, or to celebrate for them the sacraments of grace.

In 1780, five years after the resignation of Mr. Wills, the town of Wilmington became one of the military posts of the British army in America.* During their stay here the property of the Church suffered every kind of violation. The enclosure of the graveyard was removed and burnt, while the church itself was stripped of its pews and other furniture, and converted first into a hospital for the sick, then into a blockhouse for defence against the Americans, and finally into a riding school for the dragoons of Tarleton.

How long it remained in this condition after the evacuation of the enemy we are unable to ascertain. There is little reason to suppose, situated as the con-

* The dwelling house on the southwest corner of Third and Market streets, now the property of W. H. McRary, Esq., was used as the headquarters of Lord Cornwallis, during the occupancy of the town by the British troops.

gregation then was, that they could be very forward in repairing the injuries of their church. To say nothing of their diminished resources in consequence of the war, they had no clergyman to lead them in such an undertaking, and, what was worse, they had no prospect of obtaining one. Everything wore the aspect of desolation and discouragement.

The parish, indeed, continued to exist, but more than this could hardly be said. Many became discouraged, and abandoned the church; others, however, and a respectable number, were wise enough to wait for the ordinances of Christ in the Church of Christ. They had still the Bibles, Prayer Books, and other religious works, which had been placed in their hands by the missionaries of the Venerable Society, and with these a feeling of attachment to the church of their fathers was kept alive, which on the return of better days proved of no small service in the resuscitation of the parish.

In 1795, twenty years from the time when the last clergyman under the Colonial Government left, the Vestry having reorganized and repaired the church so far as to render it fit for public worship, called to the rectorship the Rev. Dr. Halling, who, for some time previous, had officiated in the church at New Berne.

The old church of St. James could lay no claim to architectural beauty. It was built of brick, and extended about thirty feet into Market street. It was a large square building, with neither steeple nor belfry, with three entrances—one in front facing the river,

one opening on Market street, and another leading into the graveyard. The aisles were quite broad, and paved with large square brick; very many of the pews were of the old English style, being what were called double pews, and would seat quite a large family very comfortably, though compelling a portion of the occupants to sit with their backs to the chancel. There was a high reading desk, and a pulpit higher still, each with red velvet cushions, and a sounding board above the pulpit. There was a plain communion table, made of mahogany; in fact, all the arrangements were of the simplest and most unpretending character. In its outward appearance the old church bore no resemblance to the splendid edifices of the present day, but yet it possessed attractions, due not only to its sacred character, but also to its connection with past times.

Dr. Halling accepted the appointment of rector of the parish, and in this relation he continued until May, 1809, when he resigned his charge and removed to Georgetown, S. C., where, a few years after, he closed his earthly ministry with his life, much regretted and much beloved by all who knew him.

Besides having charge of the parish, Dr. Halling was the first principal of the Wilmington Academy—an institution of learning which owed its existence to the munificence of Colonel James Innis, previously mentioned—an enterprize which was carried to a successful completion by the voluntary subscriptions of the citizens of Wilmington.

After the retirement of Dr. Halling, the parish remained vacant until 1811, when the Rev. Adam Empie, D. D., was called, and entered upon his duties in the month of November in the same year. As a matter of some interest, and as showing the vast increase of labor now performed in the parish, and indicating also the great improvement in the health of the town, we copy that portion of the letter of the Vestry to Dr. Empie, inviting him "to take charge of the parish, at a salary of \$1,200 per annum, with the privilege of spending his summers at the Sound, and holding one service only in town during the sickly season." It is, perhaps, proper to state that most, if not all, the congregation generally left the town during the summer months for the sea coast or the interior, and, probably, the greater portion of the congregation gathered at the Sound, and had the benefit there of Dr. Empie's ministrations.

We have now arrived at a period in the history of the parish to which we may justly apply the words of the Roman poet, "*major rerum nascitur ordo.*" Though the diocese was not yet duly organized, and the congregation, consequently, wanted those incentives to action which are now supplied by the annual visits of the Bishop, and the regular administration of the Episcopal system, yet there is evidence before us to justify the belief that piety and devout attentions to religious ordinances were greatly on the increase, and that among the members of the parish originated those spirited efforts which, aided by zealous Church-

men in other places, and crowned with the blessing of God, have raised the Church in this diocese to its present highly prosperous condition.

The congregation continued to enjoy the valuable services of Dr. Empie until the spring of 1814, when he resigned the rectorship for the chaplaincy of the United States Military Academy, at West Point, New York. During those three years of his residence here the parish improved rapidly, both in members and piety. In 1811, when Dr. Empie first came to its charge, the number of communicants was only *twenty-one*. When he left, in April, 1814, the number was increased to *one hundred and two*. This simple statement is the best commentary upon the success of his labors.

In the autumn of this year, 1814, the Vestry secured the services of the Rev. Bethel Judd, D. D. As Dr. Judd was induced to visit the South mainly for the benefit of his health, the parish enjoyed the benefit of his ministrations only about eight months of the year. There is evidence, however, that his residence here was attended with great benefit to the Church.

It will not be amiss, perhaps, at this stage of our narrative, to take a retrospective glance, and recall a few incidents illustrating the character of the times in those early days of the history of the Church, not characteristic of the Episcopal Church alone, but of other religious bodies. Church discipline was not as rigidly enforced then as at the present day. Mar-

riages were always celebrated at the house of the parties and never in the church, and at all funerals the minister attended at the dwelling of the deceased and headed the funeral cortege to the graveyard. No church in the place could boast of a bell of its own, and the different denominations assembled in their respective places of worship at the same hour, which was indicated by the tolling of the town bell.

The custom of decorating the church at Christmas was so irregularly observed, that on one occasion the colored sexton of St. James's, finding that no one took any interest in the matter, determined to do it himself. With a small gimlet he bored a hole in the top railing of every pew, and inserted therein a piece of holly about two or three inches in length—"only that and nothing more." It was an humble tribute of devotion of his untutored mind to the advent of the Saviour, and was, doubtless, as acceptable on account of the motive as the more gorgeous displays of the present day. It had its effect, also, upon the congregation, for at every recurrence of that holy season there were willing hands enough to decorate the church for the coming of its Lord.

Among some denominations at this time an easy familiarity between the minister and his congregation was frequently exhibited during service, and was not regarded as indecorous or out of place. As illustrative of this it is well remembered that on one occasion, at a public gathering, at the conclusion of the services, the minister announced that a collection would

then be taken up, and called upon two of the brethren to pass round the hat, whereupon a gentleman of much prominence in the community immediately arose in the congregation, and remarked, "These people, sir, came to hear preaching; they did not expect to be called upon to contribute, and are not prepared to do so; I therefore suggest that the collection be dispensed with," which suggestion was promptly acquiesced in by the minister.

Among these incidents, the writer well remembers the following, which came under his own observation, and which, though occurring many years ago, is still vividly impressed upon his mind. The minister had finished his discourse, and had given out a hymn, preparatory to closing the services. The individual who led the choir, and whose duty it was to raise the tunes, struck the key note so high that he was soon compelled to come to a sudden stop. Nothing daunted by his failure, in a few moments he made another effort, and, as is frequently the case at such times, went to the other extreme, and got the tune so low that, after floundering through a few bars, his voice sinking lower and lower at every tone, it finally ceased altogether. A dead silence reigned for a time, broken only by the half-suppressed titterings of the more thoughtless portion of the congregation, when the minister, with a peculiarly bland expression of countenance, gently remarked, "I think—brethren—we had better—pray." Not so thought the leader of the choir, for he immediately exclaimed from his

position in the gallery directly opposite the pulpit, "hold on, brother B., we'll have her up directly," and, making a final effort, happily struck the right pitch, and carried the tune to a triumphant termination.

In recalling these incidents of other days, we hope we will not be accused of any intention to make light of sacred things, or to reflect upon the piety of the "old time" Christians. Far from it, for we are of those who delight in recalling the simplicity of those years gone by, before the era of quiet had given place to that of progress.

It is in our nature to recur with pleasure to the associations of our childhood, and we may be pardoned if those associations assume in our memories a beauty and a charm which the changes brought by maturer years fail to present. We love those good old times, as we are wont to call them, and however the present may or may not have improved upon them, however the intellect may judge between them and the present, our affections still cling to them. Therefore, we say again, let no one suppose that we reflect for a moment upon the piety or reverence of those Christians of old times.

To return from this digression.

The arrangement with Dr. Judd continued until May, 1816, when he resigned, and was succeeded by Dr. Empie, who returned to the charge of the parish shortly after its relinquishment by his predecessor. At this time the congregation had so much increased that it was found necessary to add to the number of

pews, which was done by the erection of side galleries.

From this period onward to the year 1827, when the next vacancy occurred, the affairs of the parish were highly prosperous. Besides the Sunday schools and Bible classes which were instituted and kept in successful operation by the rector, an association for the education of poor children, another for the purchase and gratuitous distribution of Bibles and Prayer Books, and a third for the formation of a parochial library, all came into being, and were sustained with a highly creditable liberality.

In May, 1827, Dr. Empie again resigned the rectorship, and removed to Williamsburg, Va., to assume the Presidency of William and Mary College, to which he had been elected. With feelings of the deepest regret the congregation of St. James parted with their beloved rector. The tie that bound them together was of a peculiarly tender nature. He had come among them when the church numbered but a mere handful, and had been active and untiring in the discharge of the duties of his sacred office, and God had so blessed his efforts that the parish when he left it ranked first in numbers in the diocese. He was endeared to our people also by the ties of consanguinity, for he had married into a family distinguished in our annals for wealth, intelligence and virtue, and children were growing up around him. For fourteen years he had been their counsellor and guide, and we cannot be surprised, therefore, that his

departure from the parish should have been so deeply deplored as it was by all classes of society.*

He was a learned theologian—an earnest preacher of divine truth—an accomplished scholar—a truly godly man. He enjoyed the confidence of Bishop Ravenscroft in an eminent degree, who invariably spoke of him as “that emphatic preacher,” and who deeply regretted his removal from the diocese.† After serving for some years as President of William and Mary College, Dr. Empie resigned the position to accept the rectorship of a new church, which had been built in Richmond for him, and named St. James, in compliment to his old parish of St. James, in Wilmington. There he continued to serve most acceptably until the infirmities of age compelled him to retire from the active duties of life.

Enfeebled by disease, and having passed the age

* At the Diocesan Convention at New Berne, in 1827, Bishop Ravenscroft, in his address, thus refers to this parish: “Much satisfaction had been experienced in his visit to the large and increasing congregation (at Wilmington). The personal attachment of the members to their pastor, their attainments in Christian knowledge and experience, their active exertions to communicate religious instruction by means of their Sunday School and catechetical classes, with the number of orderly and respectable colored communicants, denote such an earnest and zealous engagement for the promotion of the Redeemer's Kingdom as was highly gratifying and refreshing to my spirit, and speaks a language not to be mistaken as to the diligence and faithfulness of him who is entrusted with their spiritual interests.”

† At the Convention of the Diocese of North Carolina, held at Salisbury in the year 1823, to elect a bishop, Dr. Empie was the favorite of the clergy for that high position.

assigned by the Psalmist as the limit of human life, he returned to Wilmington to die among the people to whom he had formerly ministered, and amidst the scenes endeared to him by many of the tenderest associations, and when the summons came which comes to all, the young, as well as old, it found him ready and prepared. Surrounded by his relatives and friends, in the full possession of his faculties, his last words on earth were an exultant expression of an assured immortality—and so he fell asleep.

“Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.”

It is a matter of very great regret that the parish records containing the proceedings of the Vestry, with the names of the different members, have all been lost or destroyed. In examining a few old letters to which we have had access, we find one signed Thomas Callender, and addressed to a gentleman in New York, on matters connected with the Church in this place, and we have thought that a slight notice of Mr. Callender, one of the old vestrymen of St. James, would not be considered inappropriate.

Captain Thomas Callender was an old resident of the town, a prominent man in the community, an active member of the Vestry, and devoted to the worship of the Church. He was the leader of the choir, and, though his voice was not sufficiently cultivated to have pleased the fastidious taste of the present day, it was yet flexible, full, and, like himself, free from affectation. He never attempted effect or display

in the service of the sanctuary, but it was his delight to give full vent to his powers in those simple but beautiful melodies which have now, alas! become nearly obsolete. Unless confined at home by sickness, he was always at his post in church, and his appearance would arrest the attention even of the most thoughtless.

As he stood in the front row of seats in the gallery, his venerable form bowed with age, and his thin locks whitened by the frosts of many winters, he reminded us of one of the patriarchs of old, and, catching inspiration, as it were, from the divine service in which he was engaged, his voice would quiver with emotion or swell with triumph, his right arm rising and falling with the regularity of a pendulum in time with the notes of the music.

He held the office of town clerk for many years, and died at an advanced age, carrying with him to the grave the respect of the entire community.

The Rev. Augustus Foster Lyde, well remembered by many of our readers as a young man of great promise, was a grandson of Captain Callender and a native of Wilmington. He died at a very early age, having barely reached his majority, and while busily engaged preparing for his mission to China. He was the first clergyman of the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country to offer himself as a missionary to that unknown and distant field of labor. He published a book of poems shortly after leaving Wilmington, which were highly commended, several of

which have been republished within a few years past.

Upon the retirement of Dr. Empie from the rectorship of the parish, in 1827, the position was offered to the Right Rev. John Stark Ravenscroft, bishop of the diocese—he to select an assistant. The bishop accepted, but for some reason which we cannot now explain—owing to the loss of records—the arrangement was never carried into effect.

We may well imagine the beneficial results that would have accrued to the parish under the ministrations of such a man as Bishop Ravenscroft. A man of great intellectual strength, force of character and iron will, possessing few of the graces of oratory, but confining himself entirely to rigid argument and sound logic. A stalwart warrior of the cross, fearless of consequences while in the discharge of duty, striking heavy blows against the sinful practices of the age, asking no quarter and giving none; sadly deficient in the "*suaviter in modo*," but possessing a superabundance of the "*fortiter in re*," perfectly honest in his belief, and detesting the appearance even of equivocation or deceit, with a bluntness of manner that bordered closely at times upon rudeness, he was yet keenly alive to the more gentle impulses of our nature, and was the right man in the right place for the times in which he lived and for the responsible duties he was called upon to perform.

He would attract notice in any crowd or any assembly from his commanding appearance and the dignity

of his manner—a dignity that repelled all attempts at familiarity, but at the same time was natural and unaffected. Over six feet in height, with a frame of herculean proportions, indicating great powers of endurance, he towered among men like Saul among his brethren, and, as he walked the streets, the groups that gathered on the sidewalks would turn again to gaze upon that noble specimen of vigorous manhood. His voice was of wonderful power, deep toned and sonorous, and when under the influence of strong emotion or excited by his subject, it rolled forth like peals of thunder. He was a strong man every way, self-reliant and conscious of his powers, and would have gone to the stake without the tremor of a muscle in defence of a principle.

He had peculiarities—or, rather, idiosyncrasies—which displayed themselves frequently, even in the pulpit. In giving out a hymn he would inform the choir that he wished a certain tune to be sung to the words. The tune “China,” for instance, which was a great favorite with him, he would announce thus: “Sing the 75th hymn, to the tune of ‘Chany,’” as he invariably pronounced it, and no other tune but “Chany” was sung—it mattered not whether the tune was appropriate to the words or the reverse, for when a command issued from those lips it was promptly and implicitly obeyed. He would not tolerate the least irreverence in church, it made no difference who the offending parties might be; whether high or low, male or female, the reproof was direct, and in lan-

guage too plain to be misunderstood; and yet, under all this rough exterior, he had a loving heart and tender sympathies.

We remember, during one of his visitations to the parish, the Sunday school classes were ranged around the chancel to be catechised by him, and stood trembling and abashed before his august presence. He noticed their trepidation, and spoke to them in so kind and gentle a manner as not only to reassure them but completely to win their confidence. The writer well recollects a question propounded to him by the bishop, and the answer—quite a long one—which was fluently given. The stern old bishop arose from his chair, and, approaching the youth, patted him gently on the head, remarking, at the same time, “Well done, my lad; if you live to be a man, I expect you will become a bishop.” Candor compels us to say that there is not the remotest probability of the fulfilment of the good bishop’s prognostication.

The Church in this diocese owes a heavy debt of gratitude to John Stark Ravenscroft, its first bishop, for he laid its foundations deep and strong, and the result of his labors is seen in that rigid adherence, which is so conspicuous on the part of its members, to that faith “which was once delivered to the saints.”

In the month of December, 1827, the Rev. T. S. W. Mott was called to the rectorship of the parish, and became its minister, but, in consequence of feeble health, was compelled to leave after serving only

about six months. He retired from the rectorship in June, 1828, and was succeeded in January of the following year, 1829, by the Rev. William D. Cairns.

The various interests of the Church appear to have been well sustained during the incumbency of Mr. Cairns. In addition to those indications of growing strength and improvement mentioned above, it deserves to be noted that in the year 1832 an eligible lot was purchased, and a comfortable rectory provided for the minister. For this very important measure the parish is indebted almost entirely to a sewing society among the ladies of the congregation—an association which through a series of years has scattered its benefactions with a liberal hand over every part of the diocese.*

This society was incorporated in 1833-4 by the Legislature of North Carolina, and authorized to hold property. Upon the lot which they purchased near the church, a commodious hall, for the purpose of a free school, was subsequently erected by the munificence of Governor Edward B. Dudley and P. K. Dickinson, Esq., and presented to the society. It still remains, and is used for educational and Sunday school purposes.

Mr. Cairns resigned his charge in June, 1833, and

* As an evidence of what was accomplished by this association, we will state that the proceeds of their labor (working one afternoon in each week) from 1822, when the society was founded, up to 1st May, 1843, amounted to nearly \$4,500. We have not been able to ascertain the amount realized since then.

was succeeded by the Rev. Thomas F. Davis, late Bishop of the Diocese of South Carolina. Mr. Davis entered upon his duties as rector in the month of November in the same year, and continued in the service of the parish until the Spring of 1836, when he was compelled, by the impaired state of his health, to the great regret of his congregation, to resign his charge. It is worthy of notice that, during the rectorship of Mr. Davis, a portion of the congregation who usually spent their summers at Wrightsville, on the Sound, succeeded in erecting a very neat and commodious chapel, in which public worship has been for years regularly maintained by lay readers, and occasional visits of the rector during four months of the year.

Of this gentleman, who served the parish so acceptably, and who afterwards held such an exalted position in the Church, being one of its honored rulers, we feel that a notice, however slight or imperfect it may be, is eminently due.

The Rev. Thomas Frederick Davis was a native of Wilmington, and was the oldest son of Mr. Thomas F. Davis, a prominent citizen of the town, who was for many years the efficient Clerk of the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions for the County of New Hanover. Mr. Davis graduated with distinction at Chapel Hill, and shortly afterwards embraced the profession of the law. He came to the bar at a time when such men as Hon. John D. Toomer, William B. Meares, Joseph A. Hill, and

others shed a lustre upon the profession. He at once assumed a position among the foremost, and commanded a large and lucrative practice, which rapidly increased as his abilities became recognized, and his powers more matured.

While engaged in the active duties of his profession, and with the prospect of a brilliant future, so far at least as success in this life is concerned, opening up before him, it pleased God, by a visitation of His Providence, to turn his thoughts from the pleasures and enjoyments of this world to the consideration of the next. A diligent search of the Holy Scriptures could lead to but one result in a mind and temperament such as his. Convinced of the vanity and sinfulness of this world, its hollow mockeries, its inability to give peace or consolation to the troubled soul, he turned to that source from which all blessings flow, and recognizing the hand of his heavenly Father in his afflictive dispensation, determined to devote the future of his life to His holy service.

He immediately gave up his practice, and applied himself to the preparations necessary to the performance of the duties of his sacred calling, and was ordained to the ministry, in the old church of St. James, by the Right Rev. L. Silliman Ives,* who

* Bishop Ives was elected, upon the 21st of May, at the Diocesan Convention of 1831, held in the City of Raleigh, and was consecrated in Trinity Church, Southwark, Philadelphia, upon the 22d of September, in the same year, by Bishop White, of Pennsylvania (presiding), Bishops H. U. Onderdonk (assisting), of Pennsylvania, and B. T. Onderdonk, of New York (assisting).

was at that time Bishop of the Diocese. Upon the resignation of Mr. Cairns, as already stated, he became the rector of this parish, and, until his health gave way, was its faithful and efficient pastor.

Accepting a call to St. Luke's Church, Salisbury, he continued to officiate there until his removal to South Carolina. At the Convention of the Church in that diocese, in the year 1853, although he had been a resident of the State not more than six years, he was elected Bishop of the Diocese, and up to the time of his lamented death, in December, 1871, wore the priestly robes of his high office free from spot or blemish.

He was a faithful minister of God in reproof, in exhortation and instruction, bold in the performance of duty, yet most gentle in his daily intercourse with the world. As a pulpit orator he was remarkable for the clear elucidation of his subjects, his powers of analysis and argument, and for the fervent piety that breathed in every word. Those who listened could not fail to be impressed by the deep sincerity of his convictions. By precept and example, by the elevated tone of his morality, and the saintly purity of his life, he advanced the cause of his Master's kingdom on earth, while by his gentle submission to the will of God, under his severe afflictions during the latter years of his life, he was an example to all around him of the Christian grace of patience.

We have now traced the principal circumstances

in the history of the Parish down to the time when the Rev. R. B. Drane, D. D., first became connected with it. This was in July, 1836. When Dr. Drane commenced his ministry in St. James, the old church, which had been built before the Revolution, was found to be in a condition demanding repairs nearly equal to the cost of a new church.

After giving the matter a degree of consideration which its importance demanded, it was judged best by the vestry and congregation to abandon the old site, which, as we have already stated, was partly in the street, and erect a new building on a more eligible lot, a portion of the materials of the old building to be used in erecting the new. With a degree of unanimity rarely equalled in undertakings of this kind the enterprise was commenced, and happily conducted to its completion.

The destruction of the old church, however, though absolutely necessary from its decayed and dangerous condition, was greatly deplored by many of the congregation, particularly the older members. It was one of the landmarks of the town, had withstood the storms of the Revolution, and, though battered by the elements, and gray with the mosses of age, was a connecting link between the present and the past—an object venerable from its antiquity and hallowed by the tenderest associations.

Within its venerable walls the ancestors of those who, with heavy hearts, now witnessed its destruction, had joined in sacred worship and held sweet

communion together. Its broad aisles had echoed to their tread, to their songs of praise and fervent prayer. It was at that altar they had dedicated themselves to the service of the Almighty, around that chancel they had knelt and received the blessing, and through its open portals they had been borne to the adjoining graveyard, surrounding in death the church so endeared to them in life. The feelings excited, therefore, in the minds of those who stood by and witnessed its dismantled roof, its crumbling walls, and listened to the wild winds sweeping through its deserted courts, and syllabing, as it were, the names of other days, were painful in the extreme, and could only find expression in the mute eloquence of tears.

The familiar form of an old time friend, unpretending and quaint, rough and unpolished, and with none of the adornments of modern art, soon disappeared from the scene, and lives now only in the cherished recollections of the past.

The following notice of the laying of the corner stone of the new Church of St. James is taken from the *Wilmington Advertiser* and *Wilmington Weekly Chronicle* of April 5, 1839:

“The corner stone of the new edifice designed for the use of the congregation of St. James's parish was laid in this town on Wednesday, the 3d instant, by the Rev. R. B. Drane, the rector of the parish, in the presence of the Wardens and Vestry and a large number of spectators. At half past ten, A. M., a procession was formed at the lecture room, near the

ground, and proceeded to the site of the new building, at the southeastern intersection of Market and Third streets, where, after appropriate religious exercises, an impressive address was delivered by the reverend rector.

"After expressing his great gratification at the event which had called them together, and the pleasing prospects which were opening before the parish, the speaker proceeded to pay a merited compliment to the good taste of the Vestry exhibited in the mode according to which they had determined to erect their church. The style of the building, he remarked, (which is Gothic), was peculiarly adapted to sacred uses. The experience of ages had proved that it was better calculated than any other to fill men with awe and reverence, to repress the tumult of unreflecting gaiety, and to render the mind sedate and solemn. It was a just remark, that whatever tended to make men serious and devout when they approached the Divine Majesty, was an auxiliary to His service, and the providing of that which produced this effect in the highest degree, was an act by which we, doubtless, honored our Maker.

"This was followed by some appropriate remarks on the hallowed associations which would forever hereafter be connected with the spot on which they stood, and the influence of the peculiar services of the Church in rendering these associations valuable. It was one of the distinguishing excellencies of our worship, he remarked, that many of the prayers:

which it contains had come down to us from the earliest and purest ages of Christianity. They were the prayers of Basil and Chrysostom, of Cyprian and Augustine, of Cranmer, Latimer and Ridley; and it was a pleasing thought that our children would hereafter be able to say of us, as we now say of the blessed men who have gone before us, 'These prayers our fathers have uttered, and this sanctuary, erected by their zeal and liberality, is the patrimony which they have bequeathed to us.'

"At the conclusion of his address the rector read the following paper:

"*Pro Deo, pro Ecclesia, pro hominem, salute.* In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

"This corner stone of St. James's Church is laid this third day of April, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-nine (1839), the Right Rev. Levi Silliman Ives, D. D., LL. D., being Bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina, the Right Rev. Robert Brent Drane, A. M., being the Rector of the Parish, and officiating on the occasion.

"Dr. A. J. DEROSSET, }
"WILLIAM C. LORD, } *Church Wardens.*

"Dr. THOMAS H. WRIGHT, Dr. A. J. DEROSSET, JR., WILLIAM B. GILES, WILLIAM A. WILLIAMS, JAMES T. MILLER, *Vestrymen.*

"The plan of this building was designed by T. U. Walter, of Philadelphia, and executed under the di-

rection of John S. Norris, of New York, by J. C. Wood, as principal mason, and C. H. Dall, as principal carpenter. 'Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ.' 'May the gates of hell never prevail against it.'

"The original Church of St. James stood about fifty yards east of this spot, near the corner of the graveyard. It was commenced in the year 1751, but not completed till 1770. In consequence of its location (partly in the street), its decayed condition, and the inconvenience of its internal arrangements, it was taken down in 1839, and a portion of its materials used in the erection of this building. The lot on which the present church is erected was purchased from Dr. A. J. DeRosset, Sr., for the sum of one thousand dollars, of which sum the Ladies' Working Society and the Juvenile Working Society have agreed to pay six hundred dollars.

"The Right Rev. John Stark Ravenscroft, the first Bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina, a native of Prince George county, Va., was born in the year 1772; was ordained deacon the 25th of April, 1817; and priest the 6th of May following, by the Right Rev. Richard C. Moore, Bishop of the Diocese of Virginia; was unanimously elected Bishop of North Carolina, April 12, 1823, by the Convention of the Church held at Salisbury in that year, and was duly consecrated to the office in St. Paul's Church, in the City of Philadelphia, 22d May, 1823. At the time of his election he was rector of St. James's Church,

Mecklenburg County, Va. Bishop Ravenscroft* departed this life, in the City of Raleigh, on 5th March, 1830, and his remains were deposited under the chancel of Christ Church, Raleigh. He bequeathed his library to the Diocese, and the copy of his works to the Episcopal Bible and Prayer Book Society of this Diocese.

"MARTIN VAN BUREN, *President of the United States.*

"EDWARD B. DUDLEY, *Governor of North Carolina.*

"ALEXANDER ANDERSON, *Magistrate of Police, Town of Wilmington.*

"JAMES F. McREE, ARMAND J. DEROSSET, JR.,
W. J. HARRISS, E. P. HALL, *Commissioners of the Town of Wilmington.*

"JOHN A. LILLINGTON, *Town Clerk.*

"Population of Wilmington, 3,500."

With the above there were deposited in the corner stone a Bible, a Prayer Book, Journal of the Convention of North Carolina, for 1838, Bishop Ives's second charge to the clergy of his diocese, Journal of the General Convention for 1838, Churchman's Almanac, Swords's Pocket Almanac, "The Banner of the Cross," "The Spirit of Missions," "Journal of Reli-

* Bishop Ravenscroft, consecrated by Bishop White, of Penn., presiding; and Bishops Griswold, of Eastern Diocese; Kemp, of Md.; Croes, of N. J.; Bowen, S. C.; and Brownell, of Conn., assisting.

gious Education," "Children's Sunday School Magazine," "Wilmington Advertiser," "Wilmington Chronicle," the Charter of the Wilmington and Raleigh Railroad Company, and several specimens of American coin.

The church whose corner stone was thus laid was so far completed within twelve months as to be ready for consecration. This solemnity was performed by the Right Rev. Dr. Ives, assisted by the rector and several other clergymen, on the fourth Sunday in Lent, March 29th, 1840, and the house thus opened for divine service has ever since been well attended by a large and increasing congregation of worshippers.

The beautiful bronze chandeliers, by which the church was lighted prior to the introduction of gas, as well as the furniture for the desk and pulpit, were the gifts of the ladies of the congregation. The bell and clock—the latter now, and for years past, like its generous donor, silent—were presented to the parish by that estimable gentleman, the late P. K. Dickinson, Esq. The marble font was purchased by the rector, with money placed in his hands by the little girls of his charge. The communion plate of the church consists of one flagon, two chalices, one paten and altar spoon, all of virgin silver, and each, with the exception of the spoon, inscribed with the appropriate motto: "Cruce Christi Confido."

This plate is understood, in the first instance, to have been presented to the parish by the late General Smith, of Brunswick county, formerly Governor

of the State. In 1868 the flagon, being found too small for the increasing number of communicants, was recast with additions of pure silver into one of larger size, surmounted by a globe of rock crystal and a cross of solid gold. The cost of these changes having been in part contributed by the friends of the late General J. Johnston Pettigrew, of the Confederate service, that fact is recorded by an inscription upon the inside of the base.

It will be noticed that the Vestry, at the time of the completion of the new church, consisted of but seven members, instead of twelve, as at present, and of those seven, four have long since paid the debt of nature, viz: Dr. A. J. DeRosset, Sr., William C. Lord, Dr. Thomas H. Wright, and James T. Miller, men prominent alike in Church and State, whose characters shed a lustre upon this community, and whose memories will remain fresh and green long after the marble which records their virtues shall have mouldered into dust.

Of one of these, himself identified with our city for nearly a century, and by ancestral descent for more than a century, a citizen whose term of years exceeded much the utmost limit assigned by the Psalmist, and whose whole life was spent in our midst, without the slightest stain upon his escutcheon, it seems to us eminently proper that something more than the bare mention of his name should be given, as alike due to the memory of the dead, and for the sake of the example to us who follow after.

Dr. Armand John DeRosset, of whom we speak, was born in Wilmington, November 17, 1767. His father, Moses John DeRosset, was Mayor of the town at the time of the passage of the Stamp Act by Parliament, and acted well his part during the troublous times of that period. As illustrative of the character of the Cape Fear people in the "times that tried men's souls," it may not be out of place, even in a work like this, to recall some of their proceedings:

The Stamp Act received the King's assent the 22d March, 1765. The people of North Carolina were so warm in their indignation, and so violent in their condemnation of this violation of the rights of the colonists, that Governor Tryon was afraid to convene the General Assembly. Early in the year 1766 the sloop of war Diligence arrived in the river Cape Fear, having on board the stamped paper destined for the use of this province, and on the 6th of January the Governor issued a proclamation announcing the circumstance, and calling on all persons authorized to act as distributors of the stamps to make application therefor to the commander of the sloop.

But on the first notice of the approach of this vessel, Colonel John Ashe, of the county of New Hanover, and Colonel Waddell, of the county of Brunswick, having embodied the militia of those counties, marched at the head of them to the town of Brunswick, before which she was anchored, and notified the commander of their determination to resist the landing of the stamps.

It was judged best not to make the attempt. A party was left to watch the motions of the sloop, and the rest of the small army marched to the town of Wilmington, carrying with them one of her boats. Having fixed a mast in her with a flag attached, they hoisted her on a cart and drove triumphantly through the streets, the inhabitants all joining in the procession. At night the town was illuminated. On the next day a great concourse of people, headed by Col. Ashe, proceeded to the Governor's house,* and demanded to speak with James Houston, one of the Council, who had been appointed Stamp Master for the Province.

The Governor first declared his intention not to allow it, unless Houston would come willingly, but the people threatened to set fire to the house, and proceeded to make preparations therefor. The Governor desired the Colonel to step in and talk with the stamp master, who, finding himself obnoxious to the people, went to the Market House, where he took a solemn oath not to proceed in the duties of his office, on which the people gave three cheers, and conducted him back to the Governor's.†

In the latter part of February, at a general militia meeting in the town of Wilmington, a barbecued ox and a few barrels of beer were offered by the Gov-

* The Governor resided at that time on the south side of Market, between Front and Water streets, a little above the store now occupied by Mr. H. Burkheimer.

† Martin's History of North Carolina.

ernor to the people, only to have his hospitality contemned. The ox was thrown into the river, and the beer discharged upon the ground.

On the 26th of June, the Mayor, Recorder, and Aldermen of Wilmington presented an address to the Governor, congratulating him upon the repeal of the Stamp Act.

The address ended with a denunciation of the misrepresentations that had been made to the Governor of the conduct of the town. The Governor replied that his impression of the deportment of the citizens of the town grew out of his own observations. To this John DeRosset, the Mayor, and nineteen gentlemen of the Board rejoined: They professed "extreme sorrow at some of the expressions in the Governor's answer, which might be construed to charge the Borough with some marks of intentional disrespect, which they disclaimed, affirming that they should sincerely condemn it, as inconsistent with the dutiful affection towards the King's representative which they should always cultivate, with the grateful return of sentiment which his personal merit justly claimed." They concluded, "that if, oppressed by the late act, some commotion of the county seemed to threaten a departure from moderation, the Governor, they hoped, would not impute those transactions to any other motive than a conviction that moderation ceases to be a virtue when the liberty of the British subject is in danger."

At what point in America was the Stamp Act

more fearlessly or gallantly opposed? No disguise, no stratagem, no shrinking, but straightforward, open, manly resistance.

There are few brighter pages in the history of North Carolina than those which record the actions of such men as Harnett,* Ashe, Waddell, Lillington, Moore, Howe, and others, all of this section of the colony. This manly resistance to oppression in any form was characteristic of our people, and had many noble illustrations in the recent war between the States.

It was amidst such scenes and among such a people that the youthful days of Dr. DeRosset were passed. In early life he had advantages for the attainment of knowledge beyond most young men of his day, attending school in Hillsboro' and matriculating at the College of New Jersey, at Princeton, in 1784. In the year 1788 he went to Philadelphia, to attend the lectures at the Medical College, rendered famous by the genius and skill of the celebrated Dr. Benjamin Rush, and became the pupil of that great man. It was not long before he won the friendship and esteem of his preceptor. In company with Dr. Rush he enjoyed the honor and pleasure of several interviews with Benjamin Franklin.

He received his medical diploma in the year 1790, and immediately returned home, and with character-

* The tomb of Cornelius Harnett is still to be seen in the old burial ground of St. James's. A monument, commemorative of his exalted patriotism, should long since have been reared to this "Samuel Adams of North Carolina," as he was justly termed.

istic energy and industry entered upon the practice of his profession. Just before he opened his office, the venerable Dr. John Fergus retired from the profession, and with him finally disappeared the cocked hat from the Lower Cape Fear. But he left behind him as competitors in his profession Drs. Fergus, Claypole, Cobham, Geekié, Laroque, Nathaniel Hill, and some of these were formidable antagonists. Dr. Fergus had served as a surgeon in the army, and was pronounced by Mr. Jocelyn* "the greatest genius ever raised in the town." Claypole,† Cobham and Hill were all well educated and skilful practitioners; Dr. Hill had received his medical education at Edinburgh, and was gifted by nature with a powerful frame and vigorous constitution. He succeeded to the chief part of the practice of the elder Fergus.

Though the field was thus crowded, Dr. DeRosset, by his intelligence and assiduity, soon secured the public esteem, and obtained a lucrative and respectable share of patronage, second only to that of Dr. Hill.

During the period extending from the close of the Revolution to the second war with Great Britain, the people of Wilmington and its vicinage were distinguished for gaiety, cordiality, generosity and socia-

* Samuel R. Jocelyn, the great equity lawyer of North Carolina.

† Dr. Claypole was brother of the Philadelphia editor and printer, and came over to this country with William Penn. He was a great-grandson of Oliver Cromwell, and grandfather of the late F. C. Hill, of this city.

bility. Many opulent rice planters made the town their residence for a great part of the year. Men of leisure, in conjunction with gentlemen of the liberal professions, moderated and refined the spirit of trade, and gave an elevated tone to society. Their dwellings were plain, furniture simple—not for show, but daily use. There was much hearty social intercourse, and with it a large indulgence in the pleasures of the table. The woods furnished game in abundance, and the river and neighboring ocean many varieties of fish. Racing was generally indulged in, and gentlemen prided themselves rather upon the quality of their horses than the style of their equipages.

Self-poised and temperate in all things, Dr. DeRosset, while he shared the pleasures of his companions, was never known to transgress the limits of propriety and moderation. He, in the whole course of his life, never knew, save by the report of others, what was meant by a "debauch."

In 1822 the doctor was elected a Director in the Bank of Cape Fear, and was annually re-elected until his death. In the discharge of the functions of this office, he was, in the language of the late president of the bank, Dr. Thomas H. Wright, "faithful and regular in attendance at the sessions of the Board, was a fearless and independent officer, and rendered the bank much valuable service."

Years rolled on, and different generations of physicians disappeared from the scene, and new actors made their entry upon the stage, but the "old doctor,"

as he was affectionately called for nearly half a century, held his own well against all comers. His practice was always large and remunerative. In his intercourse with his brethren he scrupulously observed the rules of medical etiquette, was bland, courteous and polite, and ever ready to render them a service; was prompt and punctual in his attendance upon his patients, and in the chamber of the sick he soothed by his sympathy and the almost feminine tenderness of his manner.

He was for many years a member of St. James's Church—one of its main pillars—zealous in its cause, ever alive to its interests, and contributing largely to its support and extension. When the old church was torn down, and a lot purchased for a new edifice, the ground being narrow and confined, the doctor's liberality enlarged it to ample dimensions. When it was determined to erect St. John's, he presented the lot upon which that beautiful structure now rests. The pews in these churches were appraised by the Vestry at sums varying from one to four hundred dollars. Of course this was an appeal to the generosity of the opulent. Dr. DeRosset took a first class pew in each church.

He resided during his whole life in the brick building at the intersection of Market and Third streets, almost beneath the very shadow of that church he loved so well, and there, on the 1st April, 1859, having outlived all his contemporaries, at the ripe old age of four score and twelve years, he was gathered to his fathers, leaving behind him not an enemy in the world.

What an example for the young, the life of this patriarch, passing with unstained robes through the temptations of so long a journey! Surely such a man is worthy of praise, and deserves to be held in perpetual remembrance.

In January, 1843, the Rev. R. B. Drane resigned the rectorship of the parish, and accepted the presidency of Shelby College, Shelbyville, Ky. The Rev. Richard H. Wilmer, now Bishop of the Diocese of Alabama, took charge of the parish, assisted by his brother, the Rev. George Wilmer; but his term of service, owing to the ill health of his family, lasted but a few months. He resigned the rectorship in the spring of 1844, and was succeeded by Dr. Drane, who was most cordially welcomed back by his old parishioners.

Under his administration, and by the blessing of the Almighty, the parish greatly increased in numbers; so much, that more church accommodation was needed than the limits of St. James's would afford. After mature consideration it was determined by the congregation to build another church, and St. John's was the result, a parish organized from St. James's, and indebted almost entirely to the liberality of its members for its erection and completion. Indeed many, if not all, of those who subscribed most liberally to the erection of the new, still continued their connection with the old. Younger members of the same families organized the new parish, while their fathers worshipped in the old, and all joined heartily

in the work of raising this new temple to the worship of the living God.

The corner stone of the new church of St. John's was laid with appropriate religious services on the 21st day of November, 1853, by the Right Rev. Thomas Atkinson, Bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina, assisted by the Rev. R. B. Drane, D. D., Rector of St. James's. The members of the church met at St. James's, and, having formed a procession, repaired to the site of the new edifice, corner of Third and Red Cross streets, where, according to the prescribed forms of the Church, the corner stone was placed in position, there to remain, in all human probability, long after those who were present upon the occasion should have passed away from earth.

After prayer and praise, a document, of which the following is a copy, was deposited in the leaden case, together with the articles therein enumerated, and the box being soldered was placed in the stone, its future resting place:

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

"This corner stone of St. John's Church, in the Parish of St. James, is laid this 21st day of November, in the year of Our Lord, One Thousand, Eight Hundred and Fifty-Three, the Right Rev. Thomas Atkinson, D. D.,* Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal

* Bishop Atkinson was consecrated in St. John's Chapel, New York City, October 17, 1853, by Bishop Brownell, of Connecticut (presiding); Bishops McIlvaine, of Ohio; Doane, of New Jersey;

Church in the Diocese of North Carolina, officiating on the occasion; the Rev. R. B. Drane, D. D., present, and assisting.

"DR. THOMAS H. WRIGHT, }
"DR. A. J. DEROSSET, } *Wardens.*

"JAMES ANDERSON, T. W. BROWN, A. H. VAN BOKKELEN, N. N. NIXON, A. A. BROWN, GEORGE DAVIS, CORNELIUS MYERS, C. W. BRADLEY, *Vestrymen.*

"The plan of the building was designed by Wells and Dudley, Architects, of New York.

"FRANKLIN PIERCE, *President of the United States.*

"DAVID S. REID, *Governor of North Carolina.*

"JOHN DAWSON, *Magistrate of Police of Town of Wilmington.*

"W. C. HOWARD, T. C. MILLER, S. D. WALLACE, Dr. W. W. HARRISS, MILES COSTIN, C. H. DUDLEY, *Commissioners of the Town of Wilmington.*

"RICHARD MORRIS, *Town Clerk.*"

Articles deposited in the corner stone: One Bible; one Book of Common Prayer in the English language, one Book of Common Prayer in the German

McCoskry, of Michigan; and Otey, of Tennessee (assisting). On this occasion the lines of English and American succession were reunited—Bishop Spencer, of Madras, and Bishop Medley, of Frederickton, taking part in the act of consecration.

language, Journal of the General Convention for 1850, Journal of the Convention of the Diocese of North Carolina for 1853, Rev. Dr. Drane's Historical Notices of St. James's Parish, Swords's Pocket Almanac, and Church Register for 1853. The following Church papers: "The Register," of November 19th, 1853; "Church Journal," of November 3d, 1853; "Church Herald," of November 4th, 1853; and the following papers of the town: "The Daily Journal," of November 21, 1853; "Wilmington Herald," of November 19, 1853; "Tri-Weekly Commercial," of November 19, 1853; "Weekly Commercial," of November 18, 1853; and "Wilmington Free Press," of November 11, 1853; together with specimens of American coin.

The services were of a very impressive character. Even the mere worldly man, living only for the transitory pleasures of this life, might have turned from his accustomed path, and gazed upon such a scene with some re-awakening of holier and better emotions. The ceremonies were closed by the Bishop in a series of remarks, forcible, eloquent, and impressive. He alluded to the occasion as one of great interest and hopefulness to the Church, the first instance in the history of the State where the claims of the Church demanded in the same place an additional house of prayer. It was an indication that the Gospel of Christ in this Diocese was awakening an additional interest, and that from her late trial* the Church was moving still onward in the true path.

* The defection of Bishop Ives.

He said that the new building was an honor to the people who projected it, but that in this they were only supplying the necessary wants of the Church, and providing for those whom the limits of St. James were inadequate to accommodate. He alluded in feeling terms to the venerable man who had given the lot upon which the new church was to be erected, and paid a merited tribute to his Christian charity and benevolence. He also spoke in appropriate terms of the erection of houses of prayer, and of the faith and holy conduct necessary in the true believer.

The occasion was a most interesting one, and will long be remembered by those who participated in the ceremonial.

From unavoidable causes it was not until the year 1860 that the church was opened for divine worship. The Rev. Dr. Drane officiated on the occasion to a large body of eager and attentive listeners.

Notwithstanding the organization of this new Parish, there was scarcely any diminution in the numbers of those who still turned their faces towards the hallowed precincts of old St. James. On every occasion of public service its pews were filled by devout worshippers, and the rector's heart was made glad by the evidences, almost daily presented, of the success of his ministrations. But, alas! a heavy calamity was impending over the Church and over the city. In a few short months that flock would be without its faithful shepherd, and the voice of lamentation be heard in our streets.

In the summer of 1862, ever to be remembered by those who were here during that fearful period, the yellow fever raged with terrible malignity, sweeping off many of our most prominent and valuable citizens. All who could do so left for other parts of the country, but numbers remained. The stores were all closed, business of every kind suspended, while pestilence brooded over the place. A sombre mist seemed to overshadow the town, and to fall with a withering blight upon all within its folds, and amidst the heavy gloom that slowly settled down, a cry of agony went up, for there was scarce a house in which there was not one dead. A stillness, as of the grave, reigned in the streets; scarce a sound was heard save the rumbling of the death cart, or the step of some solitary passer on the sidewalk, the hollow echo of whose footfalls made the listener shudder. It was a time of war, of pestilence, and famine—the living were in need of bread, and coffins scarcely could be had to put away the dead. The pestilence was upon us in its fury, but there was no lawgiver, as of old, to send one forth, with burning censer, to stand between the living and the dead to stay the plague. The atmosphere was impregnated with the poison from pestilential vapors and noxious gases, and the gentle breeze that cooled the heated frame brought death in its embrace.

It was a time to call into active exercise the noblest traits of human nature, and among the moral heroes of that fearful period the beloved rector of St.

James was not the least conspicuous. True to himself and to his innate sense of duty, he never for a moment wavered, but stood manfully at his post, and, undismayed by the horrors around him, and regardless of consequences to himself, could be seen at all hours visiting the sick, supplying them with such necessaries as could be obtained, administering the consolations of religion, and closing the eyes of many who had looked their last upon this earth.

Other faithful ministers also gave evidence of their fidelity during that dreadful period. The Rev. Mr. Pritchard, of the First Baptist Church, was unremitting in his attentions to the sick and needy, and fell a victim to the epidemic. The Rev. A. P. Repiton, the Rev. R. E. Terry, of St. John's, until stricken down by disease and compelled to leave the town; the Rev. Thomas Murphy, Roman Catholic priest, were all active and untiring in their devotion to the suffering. Nor should we omit to mention the Sisters of Mercy of the Roman Catholic Church, who illustrated by their actions the precepts they profess.

Though living in another State (S. C.), and utter strangers to our people, they volunteered their services, and, accompanied by the Rev. Dr. Corcoran, came into our midst, and were most active in works of charity and love. It was a beautiful exhibition of Christian kindness and Christian sympathy—virtues which elevate and adorn our nature.

There was death in the hovel and death in the hall; men stood aghast at the ravages of the grim destroyer,

and the very "boldest held his breath." Amidst these scenes of terror and dismay the rector of St. James moved calmly forward on his errands of mercy, ministering to all without distinction of creed, bringing relief to the wearied body, and comforting the departing spirit with words of consolation and of hope, until at length, on the 14th of October, struck by the dread disease, he tottered and fell—fell with his harness on, at the noblest place where man can fall, in the faithful discharge of a sublime duty.

"His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." So died Rev. Robert Brent Drane, D. D., for twenty-five years the beloved rector of St. James's Parish.

Dr. Drane was born in Prince George county, Maryland, and educated at Harvard University, Cambridge, graduating with distinction in his class. It was during his collegiate course that his mind became deeply impressed with the truths of our holy religion, and he determined to dedicate himself to the service of his Maker. Upon leaving college, he applied himself to the preparation necessary for the discharge of those sacred duties, and was ordained to the ministry by the Right Rev. Philander Chase, in Washington City. We have not been able to obtain any correct data in regard to the scenes of his early labors, but while in charge of the church at Hagerstown, Md., he accepted the call from St. James's, Wilmington, where, with a slight interregnum of a few months, he labored most faithfully

for a quarter of a century, when he passed to his rest.

The relationship existing between him and his flock was like that of a father of a family. Children whom he had received into the Church in holy baptism had grown up around him. Their little ones again were being brought into the Church, and, in blessing them, he felt as if they were his own. The success which attended his ministrations as a parish priest is the best evidence of the faithful manner in which he performed the duties of the sacred office. In labors he was abundant, and the fruit of those labors is seen in the prosperity of the parish with which his name will be for all time connected.

He was a man of portly presence and great dignity of manner. More methodical than brilliant, more argumentative than fanciful, he was at all times impressive and frequently eloquent. As a pulpit orator he was distinguished for cogency of reasoning and the earnestness with which he enforced the truths he inculcated. His style was clear, vigorous and forcible, not disdaining ornament, but using it simply by way of illustration. He was a laborious student, a man of decided ability, skilled in dialectics, and remarkable for his strong practical common sense and his knowledge of the world. Like all men of positive character, he made no concealment of his opinions on matters either ecclesiastic or political. Hence, when the war between the States broke out, believing that the cause of the South was just,

he did not hesitate to throw the weight of his influence in her behalf, and to advocate her cause with all the ardor of his sanguine temperament.

He was courteous and affable, not given to levity, but, in the society of friends, enjoyed in the highest degree the charms of social intercourse. A devoted pastor, a true friend, an earnest soldier of the Cross, and a Christian gentleman in the broadest sense of the term.

In 1840 he received a call to Christ Church, Raleigh, and again in 1847 a pressing one to Annapolis, Maryland, his native State, but the ties that bound him to St. James were too near his heart, and could not be broken. Both were declined.

During his rectorship the present church of St. James, and that of St. John, were erected. He took a lively interest in the latter, and by counsel and advice, and liberal contribution, aided materially in carrying forward the work to a successful completion. But it was around the altar of St. James that his tenderest affections clustered. At that altar he had served for five and twenty years; within her sacred walls he had taught his people the blessed truths of our most holy faith, illustrating by his example the purity of his devotion and the sincerity of his convictions. Throughout his ministerial life he was always consistent, reliable and true; his voice never gave forth an uncertain sound, for he could not be influenced either by the fanciful theories or led astray by the progressive doctrines of the present age.

No wonder, therefore, that his people were content to follow wherever he might lead; no wonder, therefore, though willing hands have placed a marble tablet in the Church, near that altar at which he served so long, commemorative of his virtues, that his proudest monument should not be in sculptured marble, but in the love his people bore him living, and the grief with which they mourned him dead.

The following proceedings of the Vestry at their first meeting after the abatement of the pestilence are inserted here as a fitting close to this brief notice of their honored rector.

"At a meeting of the Vestry of St. James's Parish, held on the 8th day of December, 1862, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

"*Resolved*, That in this first meeting of the Vestry held since the death of the Rev. Robert B. Drane, D. D., their late honored and beloved rector, they feel constrained, before attending to any other duty, to record their deep sense of the bereavement which they, and the congregation they represent, have sustained in the removal from among them of that eminently good, and wise, and devout, and useful man.

"*Resolved*, That, having known him long, and known him well, they can bear the fullest and most cordial testimony to his remarkable excellence as a man, as a citizen, and, above all, as a minister of Christ. That he was judicious, energetic, kind, firm, of untiring zeal and immovable steadfastness in the performance of his high duties. That, having lived amongst us for near thirty years, he was regarded

with profound respect by the whole community, while in his own congregation the young revered him as a father, and the old honored and loved him as a wise, sympathizing and affectionate friend, and all looked up to him as a man of God, earnestly and unfalteringly seeking to point out to them, and to lead them in the way to, a better and eternal world.

"*Resolved*, That his death was an untimely, but noble and appropriate termination of his life. He died as he lived, at the post of duty, seeking to alleviate the sufferings and to soothe the sorrows of the sick and the afflicted in the late dreadful pestilence which has desolated this town; carrying the consolations of the Gospel where they were so much needed. The Angel of God found him at his proper work, and called him immediately, we doubt not, to a glorious reward.

"*Resolved*, That a copy of these resolutions be sent to the family of Dr. Drane, and that the *Daily Journal*, newspaper of this town, and the *Church Intelligencer*, of Raleigh, be also requested to publish them."

In compliance with the earnest and unanimous desire of the Vestry, the Right Rev. Thomas Atkinson, D. D., consented, in December, 1862, to accept the rectorship of the parish, with the understanding that it was not to interfere with his official duties to the diocese, and that he should have the privilege of appointing his assistant. The latter part of this arrangement was carried out by the appointment of the Rev. Alfred A. Watson, in March, 1863. In December, 1864, the Bishop resigned the rectorship of the Parish, and the Rev. Mr. Watson was unani-

mously elected to the vacancy—a position which he still holds. We know that we do but simple justice to the feelings of the parishioners when we give utterance to the prayer that his days "may be long in this land."

As an evidence of the appreciation of the services of the Bishop as rector of the parish, the following resolutions, passed by the Vestry, in accepting his resignation, which we copy from the records, will not be inappropriate:

"*Resolved*, That this Vestry deeply regret that circumstances have arisen, and are likely to continue, such as to induce our Right Rev. Pastor to consider it necessary to dissolve his connection with this parish as its rector.

"*Resolved*, That, in accepting his resignation, we desire to place on record an expression of the profound respect and sincere affection which are entertained for him by ourselves and the whole congregation, and of our gratitude for his prompt and unselfish acceptance of the rectorship when vacated two years ago by the death of our former honored pastor.

"*Resolved*, By the rector and Vestry of St. James, that, notwithstanding the retirement of the Bishop from the rectorship of St. James, they earnestly desire him to continue in connection with the parish, and that, therefore, they respectfully request him to consider and make St. James church his cathedral, so far as may not conflict with the rightful claims of the rest of the diocese, or the constitution or canons of the Church."

In 1865 the rector was authorized to engage the services of an assistant, which position was tendered

the Rev. George Patterson, and accepted by him. It was a most happy combination of elements, as evidenced in the flourishing condition of the parish. At Easter, 1870, the Rev. Mr. Patterson resigned the position of assistant minister of St. James, and accepted a call to the rectorship of St. John's Church, Wilmington, where he still labors, to the satisfaction of his flock, and to the advancement of God's kingdom on earth. Mr. Patterson was succeeded, as assistant minister of St. James, after a short interval, by the Rev. J. R. Joyner, in the year 1873, but he resigned the position in 1873, on account of the delicate state of his health. No appointment has since been made.

We have now brought our narrative down to the present time. The condition of the parish, as shown in the parochial reports, is most gratifying and encouraging. It heads the diocesan list in the number of communicants, and, by reference to the scale of assessments, it will be noticed that it is largely in advance of any other parish in the diocese. Under the envelope system but little difficulty is experienced in regard to its finances.

As illustrating the liberality of its members, and as a matter of interest, also, in other respects, we extract the following statement from the report made by the Rev. Dr. Watson to the Diocesan Convention of 1866:

"Previously to the occupation of the city by the U. S. Army, in February, 1865, I had obtained the

Bishop's authority, in the event of such occupation, for the omission of the prayer for the President of the Confederate States. Upon the capture of the city, however, I was required by the U. S. military authorities, furthermore, to use that for the President of the United States. This I felt I had no canonical right to do, and for this reason, and because I would, by its use, have made myself a party to the infringement of the liberty of the Church to direct her own worship, I refused compliance. The keys of the church were then seized by military orders, emanating, I believe, from Major-General Schofield. Subsequently the church was seized by order of Brigadier-General Joseph R. Hawley,* for a military hospital.

"This was not the first calamity of the sort in the history of the parish church of St. James. In 1780, during the occupation of Wilmington by the British troops, the church was stripped of its pews and furniture, and converted, first into a hospital, then into a blockhouse, and finally into a riding school for Tarleton's dragoons.

"In 1865 the pews were again torn out with pick-axes. The pastor and people had quietly, however reluctantly, submitted to the change of authority.

* General Hawley was born in North Carolina, we have understood, in Robeson county. His parents removed to Connecticut when he was an infant. While in command of the post of Wilmington, during the occupancy of the Federal troops, he boastingly remarked that he had returned to his native State to enforce correct principles. This wanton desecration of the temple of God was, certainly, an apt illustration of his idea of correct principles.

There was sufficient room elsewhere, more suitable for hospital purposes. Other hospitals had to be emptied to supply even half the beds in the church, which were, indeed, never much more than half filled.

"Though, by the express admission of General Hawley, I had committed no overt act of resistance to the authority of the United States after the occupancy of the city, yet, upon the grounds of my political opinion and supposed influence with my congregation, I was ordered to prepare to leave the lines—a hardship which was *delayed* by the courtesy of General Hawley, but finally *prevented* only by the rapidly changing fortunes of the war.

"After the surrender of the Confederate forces, and the reestablishment of the authority of the United States Government, I made application to the Secretary of War for the restoration of the church. This he promised upon the condition of the use of the prayer for the President of the United States—a condition with which I was then prepared to comply, at the request of the Bishop. Meantime the efforts of the Rev. Mr. Patterson, who was supplying my place in my absence, had secured the same result from the local authorities. But the church building was very seriously damaged. An estimate of the amount necessary for its repair was forwarded to Washington, with an application for remuneration to that extent, but without success. The congregation thereby was heavily taxed at a time when they

could ill afford it. The work was, however, done, and upon the second Sunday in Advent, 1865, the church of St. James was reöpened for public worship.

"The following is an exhibition of the receipts and expenditures, for the parish, from May, 1864, to the capture of the city in February, 1865—a period of about nine months and a half. The receipts, in Confederate currency, independent of pew rents, were:

At the public offertory,.....	\$14,677 04
By private offering,.....	6,876 96
	<hr/>
	\$21,554 00

Of this there was contributed to—

The Contingent and Episcopal Fund,	\$1,200 00
Diocesan Missions.....	633 33
The Relief Fund.....	4,053 00
Army objects of a religious character.	3,503 91
Parochial purposes.....	9,149 42
Leaving for other purposes.....	3,014 33

From the capture of the town, in February, 1865, to May 1, 1866—a period of about fourteen months and a half—the receipts in United States currency, independently of pew rents, were:

At the public offertory.....	\$1,625 72
By private offering.....	4,643 88
	<hr/>
	\$6,269 60

Of this was contributed to—

The Contingent and Episcopal Fund..	\$350 00
Diocesan Missions.....	300 00
The Relief Fund.....	106 46
Parochial purposes.....	5,308 28
Other purposes.....	204 86

“In explanation of the contribution for parochial purposes, it is well to mention, that by the liberality and forethought of a member of the parish, a quantity of cotton was, before the capture of the city, placed in my hands for the relief of families suffering from the effects of the war. This, by the intervention of friends at the North, and the liberality of the United States Government, was protected, and (by special orders from the Secretaries of War and the Treasury) shipped under my direction, and to my own consignees, at a time when other shipments of cotton were prohibited by order of the Commander-in-Chief. The relief afforded by this measure can scarcely be exaggerated. A contribution of \$100 was also received through Rev. Dr. Corcoran, from Archbishop Spalding (R. C.), of Baltimore, for the relief of sufferers by the war in my parish.”

In connection with this sketch of the Parish of St. James it is not only just but eminently proper that we should mention an act of generosity on the part of one of its members: In 1867, a deed of gift from Dr. A. J. DeRosset, senior warden of the parish, conveying a square of land known as No. 133 upon the plot of the City of Wilmington, with all the improvements

thereon, was presented to the Wardens and Vestry of St. James, to be used as a home for indigent widows and orphans, and for the promotion of other charitable or religious objects. It was an act of genuine charity—a noble offering to the glory of God, and the work of His Church in this parish. The liberality of others aided in repairing the buildings, and fitting them for their intended work. A school house was added in 1871 to the main building. The institution is known as St. James's Home, and its influence for good among the poor of the parish, and of the town, cannot be overestimated. A flourishing school, now numbering about seventy pupils, is admirably conducted, under the supervision of the rector, and by the self-sacrificing devotion of three ladies of the parish. It is a charity that appeals most strongly to the generous sympathies of our nature, and should receive, as it deserves, the most liberal encouragement and support from all who love the Church, and her holy teachings.

The number of communicants reported to the last convention of the diocese was 319. The parish library consists of about 700 volumes, many of them valuable standard works in divinity and general literature. Six persons, natives of the parish, have been admitted to Holy Orders. The whole number of registered baptisms since 1811,* when the present records commenced, is 2,264. 504 couples have been united in holy matrimony, and over the mortal re-

* The parish records before 1811 have been lost.

mains of 1,003 persons the funeral solemnities of the Church have been performed.

The following named gentlemen constitute the Vestry of St. James at the present time, viz:

Dr. A. J. DEROSSET and JAMES ANDERSON (*Wardens*), A. H. VAN BOKKELEN, ALFRED MARTIN, Col. J. G. BURR, Dr. W. G. THOMAS, Col. ROBERT STRANGE, Col. W. L. DEROSSET, JAMES DAWSON, JOHN L. BOATWRIGHT, ROBERT E. CALDER, CLAYTON GILES.

JAMES ANDERSON, *Secretary*.

Col. Wm. L. DEROSSET, *Treasurer*.

The succession of rectors of the parish is as follows:

Rev. Mr. Marsden from.....	—	to 1738
Rev. Mr. Moir.....	1738	to 1747-8
Rev. Mr. McDowell.....	1755	to 1763
Rev. Mr. Barrett.....	1765	to 1766
Rev. Mr. Wills.....	1766	to 1776
Rev. Dr. Halling.....	1795	to 1809
Rev. Dr. Empie.....	1811	to 1814
Rev. Dr. Judd.....	1814	to 1816
Rev. Dr. Empie.....	1816	to 1827
Rev. Mr. Mott from Dec. 1827	to June 1828	
Rev. Mr. Cairns.....	1829	to 1833
Rev. Mr. Davis.....	1833	to 1836
Rev. Dr. Drane.....	1836	to 1843
Rev. Mr. Wilmer.....	1843	to 1844

Rev. Geo. Wilmer, assistant..	1843	to 1844
Rev. Dr. Drane, rector.....	1844	to 1862
Right Rev. Thomas Atkinson,		
rector.....	1862	to 1864
Rev. Dr. Watson, assistant..	1863	to 1864
Rev. Dr. Watson, rector....	1864	still in office
Rev. Geo. Patterson, assistant		
Rev. J. B. Purcell, “	1870	to 1871
Rev. J. R. Joyner, “	1872	to 1873

Many and vast have been the changes in the parish since the corner stone of the church was laid. Customs and codes of ancient date, laws regulating society, long settled and deemed secure, and the form of government itself, have all been swept away, but notwithstanding the convulsive throes of revolutions and the obliteration of nearly all the old landmarks of the past, that church still lifts its turrets to the skies, still firmly stands, the visible emblem of “the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

We here conclude our notices of this interesting old parish. The lesson to be learned from this, as from all Church history, is a lesson of faith in the Author of all truth, the Founder and Preserver of that religion of which the Church is the appointed keeper and witness in the world.

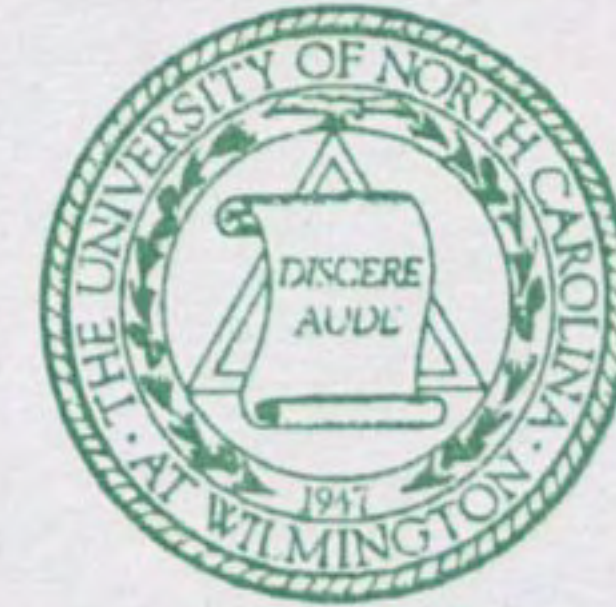
The foregoing sketch, brief and imperfect as it is, will not have been written in vain if it shall lead one churchman, who reads the records of the trials and deliverances of his church, to utter more fervently

those words of the Litany, "Oh, God, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us, the noble works which thou didst in their days, and in the old time before them." "May His continual pity still cleanse and defend His Church, and may the course of this world be so peaceably ordered by His governance that His Church may joyfully serve Him in all godly quietness, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

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