

II.—THE ANSWER.

"Here am I, for thou didst call me."—1 Samuel, iii:6.

"Thou shalt call and I will answer."—Job xiv:15.

"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"—Acts ix:6.

"God sends men claiht as they hae cauld."—Scotch Proverb.

THE spring of 1822 witnessed an anxious time in our Edinburgh home. The invitation of Presbytery must be answered. What decision to reach was a vital matter. Father, mother and the older daughters talked over every phase of the subject. Earnest prayers for wisdom from above went up from the closet and the family-altar. Many things had to be considered. Very naturally the welfare of the ten children entered largely into the question. Would it be prudent to give up the comforts of the chief city of Scotland for the privations—temporary at least—of pioneer life in the backwoods of Upper Canada? Of the proposed field not much of an encouraging nature could be learned, save its probable opportunities in the future. Beckwith was a bush and the scattered settlers endured manifold hardships. Was it not flying in the face of Providence to think of exchanging comparative luxury in a metropolis for positive necessity in an uncleared township? On the other hand, might not the opening be most opportune? The new country offered a broader field for the girls and boys who must carve their own way in the world. Were the people of Beckwith to be denied the Gospel because their minister could not enjoy the conveniences of life incident to an old community? If missionaries to the heathen braved danger and death to bear the glad tidings to "the dark places of the earth," why not suffer lesser evils in a British colony? Was not self-denial often an imperative duty? Should not His disciples "endure hardness" for Christ's sake? Thus both sides were canvassed thoughtfully, with the result that father signified his acceptance of the call and his intention to start for Canada whenever needful arrangements could be completed.

Everything was settled at last, and we sailed from Greenock in May, on the good ship Earl of Buckinghamshire. A number of ministers and friends stood on the wharf to bid us farewell, waving their handkerchiefs until the vessel was out of sight. There were sad partings, for all realized that few of us would ever again behold our native soil. Three or four-hundred in the steerage and twenty in the

cabin, twelve of the score our family, comprised the Earl's large list of passengers. Nothing especially eventful marked the tedious voyage. Each Sunday father preached to a crowd of attentive hearers. Thirty-eight days brought us to Quebec, where our real tribulations began. Part of the route was by water and many a weary mile by land, over roads and through swamps almost impassable. Barges drawn by horses conveyed us and our goods through the canal. At Prescott the Rev. Mr. Boyd, who lived to a patriarchal age, invited us to his house, but we had to hasten forward. Rev. William Smart welcomed us at Brockville, showing great kindness. Next morning the fatiguing journey, in wagons heavily loaded with furniture and supplies, was begun. It lasted nearly a week, ending on August 10th at Franktown, three miles from our ultimate destination.

The first glimpse of Franktown dampened the ardor of the most sanguine of our party. McKim's log-tavern and three shanties, in a patch of half-cleared ground, constituted the so-called village. Some of my sisters wept bitterly over the gloomy prospect, begging piteously to be taken back to Scotland. Although not impressed favorably by the surroundings, father besought us to be patient, assured that "all things would work together for our good." Yet we formed a sorrowful group and ardently wished ourselves once more in Edinburgh. Certainly our faith was sorely tried. We sympathized heartily with the Jewish captives in their sad lament:

"By Babel's streams we sat and wept,
When Zion we thought on;
In midst thereof we hang'd our harps,
The willow trees upon."

Hearing of our arrival, many of the people came to Franktown to consult about a proper location for their minister. At that time the Government granted each actual settler two-hundred acres of land. Father selected his allowance near the centre of the township, on the sensible principle of "putting the kirk in the middle of the parish." Not a tree was cut and no abode awaited us. It required a good stock of saving grace to refrain from murmuring, after the fashion of the Israelites in the wilderness, whose distressing plight we could appreciate. James Wall, a big-souled Irishman, not a Presbyterian, offered us the use of a small log-house he had just put up. His kind offer we accepted gratefully, moved into the humble tenement and occupied it six weeks. What a contrast was this one-roomed cabin, with neither door nor window, to the pleasant home we had left three months before!

God had cast our lot amid strange scenes and we resolved to make the best of the situation. The cheerfulness of father and mother sur-

prised us. No word of complaint escaped their lips. Their confidence remained unshaken, under the most trying circumstances. The self-sacrificing Moravians in Greenland did not exhibit more admirable submission to the Divine Will. Somehow our stuff was brought from Franktown and soon set to rights in the little shanty. We were not burdened with household effects, having sold the bulk of the furniture in Scotland. "Necessity is the mother of invention." Quilts and blankets, hung over the openings and across the apartment, served as doors and windows and a partition. We cooked on the flat stone, at one end of the building, which did duty as a hearth in the chimneyless fire-place. More smoke stayed inside than found the way out. Millions of mosquitoes and black flies added to our discomfort, obliging us frequently to exclude nearly every breath of air to shut out the pests. The plague of flies in Egypt could hardly have been more tormenting. No one dared venture far at night, for wolves prowled around the house in the darkness, uttering dismal howls. Like the wicked, these ugly creatures "loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." But God watched over us, preserving our health and strength, and we hoped for the speedy coming of better days.

The close of the week saw us settled quietly, our work done, our lessons learned and preparations made for the blessed Sabbath. The call had been answered.

THE OFFERING.

Lord! Take my all—
The gift is small—
For Thee;
What hast Thou done,
O, Blessed One!
For me?

Dare I refuse
My life to use
For Thee,
Who shed Thy blood,
A cleansing flood,
For me?

Would I had more—
Earth's richest store—
For Thee!
Thy love has met
A boundless debt
For me.

—John J. McLaurin.

BE STEADFAST.

Grow not weary on the road.
Christ can lighten ev'ry load;
At the most'twill not be long,
Suffer, therefore, and be strong;
Looking always to the Cross,
Counting earthly gain but loss,
Heed the words the Master saith:
"Be thou faithful unto death."

Jesus lives! Do not despair,
He will all your sorrows share;
Cast your burden at His feet,
Make surrender, full, complete;
As the potter moulds the clay
So be moulded in His way,
Praising with your latest breath—
"Be thou faithful unto death."

—John J. McLaurin.



JAMES B. McARTHUR.

JOHN J. McLaurin.

W. DRUMMOND.

MRS. DRUMMOND.

[This view, taken on October 17th, 1905, shows the site of my grandfather's first house in Beckwith, occupied by the family for a year and then used for a school-room. No trace remains of the humble log building, which stood ten rods from the two-story homestead reared in 1823. Mr. McArthur, who lives on the adjoining farm, pointed out the exact spot, where the four figures stand. He and Mr. and Mrs. Drummond, the worthy couple now and for about forty years residing on the Buchanan farm, kindly consented to appear with me in the picture, dressed just as they had been at work when my unexpected visit took them by surprise.—John J. McLaurin.]