

CHAPTER VII

IN NEW WESTMINSTER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

IN the year 1890, the greatest happiness of Henry Irwin's life came to him, and also his greatest sorrow.

On January 8th, at the Church of S. Paul's, Esquimalt, Vancouver Island, his marriage was celebrated; the bride, as before said, was Miss Frances Stuart Innes, daughter of Mr J. H. Innes, Superintendent of H.M. Naval Establishment at Esquimalt. Her sister, Mrs Shildrick says: "Mr Irwin was then domestic chaplain to the late Bishop Sillitoe, and assistant priest at Holy Trinity Cathedral. The husband and wife were devoted to each other." The young couple settled in the city of New Westminster, in a pretty little house on the main street which runs parallel with the Fraser River, and on its bank.

New Westminster, known in the Far West as "The Royal City," because the name was given to it by the good Queen Victoria, is a very beautiful town, where one feels it is good to dwell. Carved out from the primeval forest, which still remains to some extent as an adornment to the higher levels of the town, it forms as it were a series of terraces parallel with the Fraser River, intersected by extremely steep streets leading upwards from the main street and the railway track.

Hitherto, the Bishop had lived in Sapperton, a suburb of New Westminster, and ministered in the church there, Archdeacon Woods being Rector of Holy Trinity, New Westminster. But now the Bishop assumed the charge of Holy Trinity, which thus became a Cathedral Church. It was, however, in addition to the episcopal visitations throughout the diocese, too great a burden for the Bishop's strength, already undermined by ten years of arduous work as a

colonial Bishop, with constant harassing anxiety concerning ways and means ; for in spite of the noble generosity of the S.P.G., and the loyal efforts of his committee at home, funds came in far too slowly and in too meagre a supply for the needs of the clergy in the diocese, for whom the heart of their Father in God often bled.

The Bishop entered on his new duties on July 19th, 1889, and the Rev. H. Irwin became assistant curate a week later. The old rectory was demolished to make way for the present commodious See House, Bishop and Mrs Sillitoe still living at Sapperton, a mile and a half away, in a pretty wooden dwelling somewhat like a chalet, and in a large garden, bright with shrubs and flowers. This is the old Archdeaconry House, and is close to the little church at Sapperton thus described by the Bishop :—

“ S. Mary’s Church stands in the grounds of the Archdeaconry House, and is a model of what all wooden churches might be and ought to be. It was designed and built by the sappers who came out on the original expedition under Colonel Moody. It was the ‘ fashionable church ’ of those days. Government House stood near ; officials and their staff had their residences round about ; an English tone pervaded the little society, and they took pride in the church they had built for themselves and in its services.”

The Bishop’s first impressions of New Westminster, are interesting and still very exact :—

“ This is really a very lovely place, though of course we have the advantage of the first fresh brilliancy of summer to heighten its natural beauty ; but the whole situation is well chosen and picturesque. The ground rises suddenly from the river on both banks, so that in the town the houses stand one above another ; every one has a view, and indeed a view more or less panoramic, since abundance of space has given nearly every house a garden. The opposite bank of the river is covered with pine forest, rising suddenly to about a hundred feet above the stream ; and over this ridge, from the higher parts of the town, is seen the snowy summit of Mount Baker, nearly 70 miles away to the south-east. Down the river, to our right, about a mile distant, two

fir-clad islands divide the stream into three great arms and form a basin just above them fully two miles wide, across which we look over to the mountains of Vancouver Island; while up stream to our left, the view is bounded by the mountains of the Cascade range, thirty miles off, and still, at mid-summer, largely covered with snow."¹

There is but little that we can say of the home life of Mr and Mrs Irwin. For the young wife there would be much to do to make and keep the home bright and cosy. Servants are rare in the Far West, and gentlewomen are not afraid to do the necessary work of their own houses. And then there came brighter hopes still to occupy her. A few words from Mrs Greswolde Williams, formerly a resident in British Columbia, speaks of this time:—

“Mr Irwin was essentially an Irishman. His impulsive disposition and love of adventure were genuinely Irish, and that is the key to his character.

“I have heard him say he came to Canada fully resolved to remain a celibate and devote himself entirely to missionary work. But he met Miss Innes, and the ideals of his life somewhat changed, though a missionary he remained to the end.

“All who knew him in New Westminster knew also his intense devotion to his wife,—a devotion that remained unchanged till his death.”

Shall we not say that the very transience of this precious time added to the permanence of its impression? Happy, indeed, and few are those who in their lives can find the memory of a period which perfect love and perfect sympathy have enriched. With the Irwins it was so; the wife's tender grace still remains a pathetic memory, the husband's chivalrous devotion a treasured one, among their friends in the Far West.

And then, sadly, quickly, came the end. A little one who never drew breath in this world; the young mother taken three days after, and the husband and father left alone in the house which had seen so much happiness.

¹ “Church Work in British Columbia,” by the Rev. H. Gowen (Longmans).

The following letter from Mrs Sillitoe who was ever so true a friend to Mr Irwin, will best tell the sad and simple story :—

“ You ask me to tell you what I can about Mr Irwin’s short married life, and the time afterwards that he spent at the See House as the Bishop’s Secretary and Chaplain.

“ Being away from all my papers it is impossible for me to remember exact dates, but I think it was about the New Year 1890 that Mr Irwin brought his bride to New Westminster, to a little house not far from the Church, and which years before had been used for Columbia College, the girls’ school, which was opened soon after the Bishop reached the Diocese.

“ Father Pat and his wife were like two children in the delight they took in everything, in the pride they took in each other and their cosy little home ; and although it was given them to spend so short a time together here below, that time was one of unclouded happiness. This I say from observation and from what Mr Irwin has since told me, for he loved to talk to me of his wife and of their happiness, telling me all sorts of little anecdotes of their life.

“ The All Saints’ Day services, the anniversary Festivals of the Diocese of New Westminster, were always much observed, the Choral Evensong the day before being attended by many from Vancouver and other parishes ; and at the Choral Celebration on the Festival itself there was always an unusually large congregation.

“ At the Choral Evensong of All Saints’ Eve 1890, the hymn, ‘ For all the Saints who from their labours rest,’ was sung for the first time. Mrs Irwin was not feeling well enough to attend the service, but walked over to the Cathedral to listen from outside. She thought she had never heard anything more beautiful than this hymn, the beauty of which lifts us for a while above the small worries and harassments of earth, the last triumphant verses carrying us almost into the Divine Presence. ‘ And to think,’ as Mr Irwin said to me so soon afterwards, ‘ that it should have been sung for her.’

“ The little baby whose advent was to fill up the cup of

happiness already so full, was not permitted to see the light of this world ; and on the evening of a Sunday in November, on which so many prayers had been offered for the safety of mother and child, the little body was laid at rest in a corner of the beautiful cemetery overlooking the Fraser River and snowclad mountains beyond. The grave is now marked by a tiny stone on which is a touching inscription.

“ Three days later Mrs Irwin died, the shock being all the more crushing as she was supposed to be recovering. On the evening of the funeral, Mr Irwin took up his residence at the See House, and here he stayed until early in 1894, when he was called to Ireland, a few months before the Bishop’s death, on account of his father’s severe illness.

“ Of his work during these years there is not much to be recorded. It consisted of the humdrum everyday drudgery, the writing and copying of letters, interviews, parochial work (for he was curate of the Cathedral), and numberless other things too insignificant to mention.

“ The office, a large room in the See House used for meetings and the transactions of business, was where he was usually to be found, although he had a private sitting room. In the evenings he was surrounded by a number of young fellows, for the most part either strangers or down on their luck.

“ Our Sunday evening suppers at the See House were always motley gatherings of all sorts and conditions of men ; frugal meals they were, as indeed was all our fare ; but happy and restful after the day’s work was over. It was a great amusement to Father Pat to tell us afterwards of the remarks that were made, the great simplicity being so different from what was supposed to be *en règle* in an episcopal household.

“ Mr Irwin’s sunny disposition made him a charming member of the family, and the love between him and the Bishop was more that of a father and son, and in all these years I never remember any friction dimming its brightness.

“ Mr Irwin always believed the best of everyone, and his character was to strangers a misleading one : he was so sweet tempered, so anxious to think others right and to

yield his own way, that people were inclined to think that he could be easily led and influenced ; and it was only when they were brought up against his principles that they found themselves face to face before a solid wall round which there was no way of getting. When he felt a thing to be right, there was no shadow of yielding. He was from the first one of my truest and dearest friends ; but although I knew he was out of health, I had no idea that the end, for which he so much longed, was so near. The sorrow for my personal loss could not but be very great, and yet there was happiness in knowing that his many and arduous labours were over, and that in the Rest of Paradise he was re-united to those loved ones gone before.—Believe me, sincerely yours,

“VIOLET G. SILLITOE.”

In a corner of the beautiful little cemetery at Sapperton is a semi-circular headstone, very low and small. In its centre is a sacred symbol, the Cross enclosed in a circle. It is the grave of the nameless little one who never saw the light ; and beneath the symbol are these touching lines :—

“No name had I, O Christ, to offer Thee,
Nor from Thy font received the sacred sign ;
Yet in Thy Book of Life remember me.
I plead my Saviour’s Name instead of mine.”

“CHILD OF H. AND J. S. IRWIN.”

Not far off lie the parents in one grave, with two white marble crosses at head and foot.

CHAPTER VIII

A QUIET TIME

A LINE of black was, as it were, drawn across Henry Irwin's life at this time ; and though his friends tell us that the zest of life was still abundant in him, and that in his work he was ever more and more brave and bright, yet we can note an underlying secret sorrow gnawing at his heart. It showed itself in a restless desire of motion, of hard work ; a longing to throw himself heart and soul, and body too, into the roughest, meanest toil for his brethren. He covered his grief from strangers with utter shrinking from observation, even with simulated indifference. When one who had not yet heard of his loss asked him : " How is Mrs Irwin ? " he replied with a sort of laugh, " Oh ! did you not know, she died last week ? " and turned away. Can we not catch an echo of that laugh, sadder than any tears ?

The kindness of the Bishop and Mrs Sillitoe was beyond words. Mr Arthur Irwin says :—

" During the sad time after his wife's death, the kindness of the Bishop and Mrs Sillitoe was past comprehension, and from that time forward the Bishop treated him as a son and gave him rooms in the See House."

In 1891, he paid a second visit to his home in Ireland, landing on January 30th and sailing again on May 1st. This visit was a sorrowful one, being so soon after his wife's death. Bishop Sillitoe persuaded him to take this change in order to recover his mental tone. It seems to have helped him to do so to some extent, yet his wife was never absent from his thoughts. He would speak of her as " Fanny," exactly as if he expected her to come into the room at any moment.

No one, hearing him speak of her and ignorant of the facts, would imagine that she was dead. Her friends were specially dear to him.

Henry Irwin returned from his short visit home, refreshed and ready for his work as secretary to Bishop Sillitoe.

The life in the new See House, of which Mr Irwin was now an inmate, was happy, simple, and, though homely, much more comfortable in the spacious airy rooms of the handsome wooden building than had been the case in the pretty but small house at Sapperton. In this latter residence, the Bishop and Mrs Sillitoe had been honoured by a visit from the Princess Louise, and her husband the Marquis of Lorne, when on a tour as Governor-General of Canada. They joined in the home life with kindly simplicity.

In the company of his kind and fatherly friend the Bishop, Mr Irwin remained till January 1894, during which time church work in the diocese continued to make steady progress. At the end of 1890 three experienced priests, Mr Croucher, Mr Edwardes and Mr (now Archdeacon) Small, had left the diocese with a view to other work. Their places were hard to fill, especially that of Mr Small, among the Indians at Lytton, British Columbia. In vain the Bishop sent home earnest appeals for a man to come and work among this interesting people; but a school for Indian girls at Yale, British Columbia, under Sisters from Ditchingham in Norfolk, was making progress, and proving what invaluable work it was possible for Christian women to do among their Indian sisters. With this school Father Pat had to do; it was the chief item of his work for the Indians. A new wing had been built to this school at a cost of about £700, of which the Dominion Government gave £300. On December 29, 1890, the Bishop and Mrs Sillitoe went to Yale, and the new wing of the school was dedicated by a procession; the Bishop in cope and mitre was preceded by Aimie, a little half-breed girl of twelve, as cross-bearer, dressed like all her confirmed companions, in white veil and red pinafore. Another child came after the Bishop carrying the school banner; then four choir children, then the remainder of the school, the Sisters, and finally a troop of Indians. These last,

nearly seventy in number, walked in couples and in reverent order and silence. Upstairs wound the long procession, numbering just 100 in all, singing the 67th Psalm ("God be merciful unto us and bless us"), then downstairs again to the refectory and schoolroom, suitable prayers and responses being said in each, ending with a short service in the little chapel where there was hardly standing room. A Christmas Tree followed, and then a magic lantern show of scenes embracing the chief English cathedrals: a red-letter day indeed for the Indians of Yale.

In July 1905 the writer visited the spot. After a hot night in the train, the early morning freshness at Yale was very acceptable, and also the kind welcoming faces of the Vicar and of a lady from the school. Little dark-skinned Indian girls from the village, clad in red cotton and holding Indian baskets with cherries, offered the fruit for sale to the passengers; and very refreshing were the cherries to our parched lips.

A short walk by the Fraser brought us to the school, where a charming welcome from the Sister in charge awaited us. After a rest, we took a walk with some of the Indian girls by the river, which here is deep and rapid and swirls along between romantic mountains clothed with verdure almost to the top. We sat by a brooklet—the girls' favourite spot—which rippled on under fern and moss on its way to the river, and we chatted and told stories and had a happy time. We received an Indian basket from them as a parting gift, and we highly value it as a memento of a happy visit.

There is no doubt that the work done in this school, and in that for Indian boys at Lytton, British Columbia, lately built and endowed by the New England Society and under the care of the Rev. G. Ditcham, is the best foundation for the evangelization of this interesting people in the diocese, by training them to form Christian homes and found Christian families, with habits of decency and order. We owe a debt to the Indian race, and in no way can we pay it better than by aiding such efforts at civilization on the only true basis,—namely, the Christian religion.

In all such work Mr Irwin of course took part, though as we have seen the Indian language was not his *forte*. He had yet to find out the direction in which his work was to prove so striking and unique.

In 1892, Bishop Sillitoe was attacked by influenza—a serious attack, from the effects of which he never fully recovered. It began in February; and though he was able to be out of doors early in March, a relapse followed, and he was obliged to rest from time to time. Still, he went over the greater portion of his diocese in that year, including three visits to Nelson, now the chief town and headquarters of the Church in Kootenay. It is the important centre of a large and growing mining district, beautifully situated at the head of the Kootenay Lake. The work in the diocese went on steadily, and a beginning was made in the mission to the Chinese in Vancouver and New Westminster—a most important work. Thousands of Chinese flock to British Columbia for labour of various kinds; in laundry, gardening, and cooking they excel; and as there are few female servants, the Chinese are invaluable in a domestic capacity. Bishop Sillitoe and Bishop Dart have expressed their deep sense of the obligation laid on Christians in British Columbia to work for the conversion of the Chinese in their midst while absent from their own land, with its temptations and hindrances to Christianity.

A Chinese catechist from Honolulu, S. Ten Yong, began a class in Vancouver; and many friends, first among whom we must name Mrs Greswolde Williams, assisted in furthering the work there and in New Westminster. Bishop Sillitoe had two Chinese servants in his own household.

So quietly and busily passed the time throughout 1892 and 1893. Father Pat was with those who loved and cared for him; he enjoyed his rooms in the See House, and had the privilege of bringing a friend to dinner; and many were the jokes at his expense concerning his use of this privilege; for he was always on the "losing side," and not seldom introduced to the Bishop's table some poor fellow "down on his luck," whom such a reminder of better days might console and encourage. But he was careful before doing so,

to hire a suit of fitting clothes for his protégé, and not to encroach too far on the hospitality of Mrs Sillitoe.

Meanwhile, a change was impending in the happy Irish home. In July, 1892, Mr Irwin's father had a serious apoplectic attack, and the medical attendant had such grave fears of another equally sudden seizure, that Mr Arthur Irwin invented a code of telegraphic communication with his brother Henry. In December 1893 the dreaded attack came, and the word "*Hyac*" (Chinook for *Hurry*) was cabled to Father Pat. The Bishop kindly allowed him to start at once, and he arrived at home on January 8th, 1894, little thinking that he would never again see the Father in God who had been so true a comforter in his sorrow.

Mr Irwin's father recovered slowly, and up to June 1894, Father Pat assisted in the parish and church, relieving his father of work and anxiety.

On July 11 he received tidings of Bishop Sillitoe's death, which came to him as a great shock, and he mourned for him as a son.

The Bishop, as before stated, had never thoroughly recovered from the effects of influenza; and though at the beginning of 1894 he felt stronger and better, his friends were still anxious, and the English committee offered to pay all expenses if he would take the needed rest. The secretary, Mr Mogg, writes: "His answer overflowed with gratitude, but he pointed out the difficulties of leaving, and continued: 'I cannot go away until I have given the parishes the opportunity of confirmations. . . . We must try and make up for the falling-off last year. Again, I do not think I *need* go away for six months. I am now very well; my only trouble some symptoms in my heart; but quiet and, above all, peace of mind, are the best relief for this.'"

He went on bravely with his episcopal duties, but gave up the incumbency of the Cathedral Church, Holy Trinity, New Westminster, to which the Rev. A. Shildrick was appointed Rector, while the West End of the city had now become a district—that of S. Barnabas—under Mr Gowen, with a neat church of its own. Mr Croucher had succeeded Father Pat as domestic chaplain.

While at Lytton, the headquarters of the Indian work, on Whit-Sunday, 1894, though feeling ill and worn out, Bishop Sillitoe braced himself to give to his Indian converts the precious boon of Confirmation. He came to the Indian church at 8.50 A.M., supported by Mrs Sillitoe, went through the service, and spoke briefly but to the point to the newly confirmed. This was his last episcopal act. On Whit-Monday he left for Yale, and the end came rapidly. He endured terrible suffering at Yale, whispering prayers between the awful struggles for breath. On Sunday, May 27, as he sat in his bedroom in the parsonage at Yale, adjoining the little wooden church, he could follow the service heard through the open window. Mrs Sillitoe, of course, was with him.

A flood, owing to the rapid rise of the Fraser from melting snow in the mountains, was causing grave anxiety at this time ; the lower part of Yale was under water, and wooden houses went sailing swiftly down the river. The knowledge of his people's sufferings added to the Bishop's trouble, but when on June 1 he started for home on a river steamer, he seemed to bear the journey well. Soon after his arrival at home he received the Holy Communion at the hands of Mr Croucher, and then lapsed into unconsciousness. Incessant prayers were offered to God on his behalf, and on the Saturday night he calmly breathed his last. The telegraphic message sent home was : "*Bishop asleep,*" and thus a holy and good spirit passed to a better world, and one phase of Church work in British Columbia was ended.

CHAPTER IX

A NEW BEGINNING

IN less than four months after the death of Bishop Sillitoe, Henry Irwin was to bear the loss of his beloved father, the Reverend Henry Irwin, for thirty-one years incumbent of the chapel-of-ease at Newtown, Mount Kennedy, in Ireland. The loss of a dear and honoured parent creates a chasm in a man's life. On that side are all the dear memories of childhood and of the dear and cherished companionship ; on this side,—cold and silence.

Struck down by pneumonia on September the fifteenth, Mr Irwin lingered till S. Matthew's Day (September 21, 1894), and then slept away into rest. The funeral was impressive, and a memorial sermon was preached by the Reverend Canon Robinson on the text : "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy House." In God's House indeed this venerable man had ever dwelt ; his own home had been a house of God, and the church was his dearest home of all : there he taught his flock, old and young, the simple gospel truths, and there he gathered his people to receive the Bread of Life.

Father Pat had been away from his home for a time before his father's death, obeying an urgent summons to help his former Rector, Mr Murray, who was in failing health. Those who saw him at Rugby, and had known him there as a curate, a bright, young fellow, fresh from Oxford, somewhat fastidious in dress and habits, felt that they were in the presence of another being. Even on his first visit in 1888 a change was noticed. His brother says : "He left home in 1885, a smooth-faced, youthful-looking priest of the true Anglican type : he arrived home, two years and eight months

later, looking twenty years older, with whiskers and moustache, and sallow hardened skin, speaking with a somewhat nasal twang," and with a pointed beard which he used laughingly to allude to as his *Saving Point*.

Now, in addition, there were the results of the blow that had fallen upon him in his wife's death. Although that loss was always present to him, and he carried always with him a copy of *In Memoriam*, from its exquisite pages gathering consolatory thoughts, yet he did his best to set his grief aside, and to see God's providence even in the blow. But it had hewn a fresh model from the marble of his nature, and the Father Pat known to the miners would never have been but for that loss.

After his father's death (having been summoned from Rugby on the approach of that calamity) Henry Irwin stayed at Newtown and carried through another work, that of converting the small chapel-of-ease into a church with a parish. Up to the end of 1895, Father Pat's work was to see to the conversion of this church, with its trust funds, into the constitution of a parish, and the dedication and consecration of it as S. Matthias' Church, Newtown, Mount Kennedy. "Having completed these matters to the satisfaction of all concerned, he saw the appointment of a revered clergyman to the vacant cure before his departure again for British Columbia on January 8th, 1896, exactly two years from the date of his landing in 1894."¹

Meanwhile a new Bishop had been appointed to the vacant see of New Westminster. After certain difficulties in the Colonial Synod, which delayed the selection, the choice was relegated to the Archbishop of Canterbury and his assessors, and fell on the Rev. John Dart, who had earned a valuable experience in Ceylon under Bishop Chapman, and as head of the Theological College in Nova Scotia, where he had married a Nova Scotian lady of great personal charm; and at the time of his appointment to the see, he was acting as S.P.G. deputation in the Diocese of Manchester. At the close of 1895, he went out to his new diocese, where great trials, financial and personal, awaited him, to be met with a

¹ From a letter by A. W. Irwin, Esq.

firmness and judicious patience that are the strong characteristic of this prelate.

Soon after Bishop Dart reached his new diocese, Mr Irwin wrote to him to propose returning thither. The Bishop from the first fully appreciated the noble and self-denying enthusiasm of the man; and their intercourse from first to last was marked by an affectionate regard on the part of the superior and elder, by a beautiful respect and confidence on the part of the younger, as testified in each of the letters from Mr Irwin, carefully preserved by Bishop Dart, several of which with his permission are reproduced here.

It was Mr Irwin's wish to devote himself from the date of his return to British Columbia, to good hard work of the pioneer sort; and accordingly the Bishop appointed him as Mission Priest to Rossland, then a rapidly growing mining district in the lonely mountainous country in the south of the diocese, in that half of it nearer the Rocky Mountains and known as Kootenay.

In 1896 Mr Carlyle, Minister for Mines, in his annual report says: "Early in the sixties, the placer mines on Wild Horse, Findlay, and other creeks in East Kootenay, having been discovered, resulted in the rush there of miners, and the constant demand for supplies, as there was no means of communication between the coast and this district, except through the United States, with vexatious delays at the Customs. Mr E. Dewdney, afterwards the Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia, was instructed to survey and construct a trail entirely within British territory, through the southern part of the province, as a passage to the north had proved to be not feasible. In 1865 this trail, since known as the Dewdney Trail, was finished, and in its course it passed about one mile south of the present town of Rossland on its way down Trail Creek to the Columbia River."

The town is now approached by a branch railway, which zigzags most picturesquely up the mountain pass. It joins at Robson the main C.P.R. line over the Crow's Nest Pass.

The mines were found to be rich in ores yielding iron, copper, silver and gold. The chief mines are the Le Roi, the War Eagle, the Centre Star, the Virginia, and the Idaho;

all gracious names, but alas! the things they represent are unlovely enough. As Mrs Browning says of other scenes:—

“ The palpitating engines snort and steam across the acres,
And mark upon the blasted heaven the ruin of the land.”

When ever did a mine not blight the natural beauty of a landscape? Here in the purest of air, on a high tableland overlooking a luxuriant landscape, the rough shacks of the miners, the gaunt engines and black waste of the mines, are as blots before the eye.

Father Pat did not ask for beauty; he only asked for work, and he got it. He settled down among his people only bent on their good, absolutely forgetful and negligent of his own welfare. His flock was of most varied character. An eye-witness¹ says: “ Rossland is eminently cosmopolitan. There were men of all European nationalities, as well as Americans and Chinese. The mining fever had seized them all; but how differently it affected them! There may be seen the pig-tailed Chinaman, fanning himself as he saunters in his soft white shoes along the pavement, his objects and occupations a deep mystery, but certain to be involved in money-getting,—his poorer brother bending under a load of the barbarian’s dirty linen, with his pig-tail twisted for convenience round his greasy brow. There are ‘ the boys ’ back from the mines, with ‘ a good rough on them,’ determined to enjoy the town. There is the German, the plump Jew, the Yankee. Men everywhere in abundance—standing in knots at street corners, sitting outside the hotels or bars, or perched in armchairs, having their boots cleaned in the thoroughfare; and all this crowd, no matter what other ostensible object they might have, had but one craze—the mines.

“ Yet there was want and suffering here sometimes. The prospectors, who love the hills with an instinct that is more sporting than mercenary, are, for the most part, an improvident race;² and if they come back, as many of them do,

¹ Frances Macnab, in “ British Columbia for Settlers ” (Chapman & Hall).

² A Prospector is a man who goes about among the mountains

having found nothing, they return to suffer want. They will help each other to a dinner, but if times are bad with many at once, even this resource may become exhausted. They are distinctly not the men to whom charity could be offered; and if assistance is given by anyone outside the charmed circle of their own set, it must be done most delicately. I was delighted to find in 'Father Pat' (the English clergyman at Rossland) one who thoroughly appreciated and liked the miners and prospectors; a feeling which, I believe, was warmly reciprocated by them. As I walked with him in Rossland, I occasionally overheard scraps of conversation which, perhaps, were not intended for me.

" 'Why, Dick! did I see you in church this evening?'

" 'Yes, yer reverence, I *was* there. The first time for thirty years. I couldn't stand too much of it at a time, though. So just when it was getting a bit long I went outside and had a smoke. I say, yer reverence, it *was* good! I went in again after I'd had a bit of a smoke, and it all came back to me as I was used to it when I was a boy, and I tell ye I did come down on them ah-mens!'

" When I was in Rossland, Father Pat was busy establishing a free library and sitting-room, which he had artfully contrived under the floor of the church. Many a time had we to perambulate down the hillside to admire this library.

" 'A person don't have to belong to my church or Sunday-school,' said Father Pat, delivering his invitations as he went along, 'or any Sunday-school, to be welcome. Doors are always open—books, magazines, are there. All that anyone has to do is to help himself. There are comfortable chairs. I want those young men and others who have no places and no homes to go to.'

" It was instructive to hear Father Pat discourse upon human nature. He was best at this when he sat in the open doorway of the shack in which he chose to reside. The shack, like the library, was always open. 'My experience in this Western country,' he would say, 'is that the more you trust human nature, and treat people like fellow beings, to discover ore. He keeps his discoveries secret till he can find a capitalist to buy his information.'

and not with suspicion, the better you will like them. If I knew a man was a born thief, I would throw the doors open to him and trust him just the same, relying on his better nature not to betray me. Take my advice, young man,' he cried, as a smartly dressed youth in Sunday best was passing, 'and don't be too suspicious of your fellow mortals, especially if they be dressed in overalls and boots. Rather beware of kid gloves and perfumed clothes.'

"The young man thus addressed started and turned his head. On seeing Father Pat, he raised his hat and beamed a silent benediction, and went on his way.

"Possibly Father Pat carries his ideas farther than need be. I was obliged sometimes to remonstrate, but the men understood him. 'He's a good man,' said one. 'We know that. There's nothing we can give him. His reward is ready for him, for all the poor fellows he's nursed and cared for that nobody else would bother about. No one can take it from him. He's recorded *his* claim right enough.'"

Though time works rapid changes in that quickly-shifting country, and men are soon forgotten, yet to this day stories are rife about the beloved Father Pat of the miners, and long may his name be green there as "a spray of Western pine." When Bishop Dart made his first visitation it was a rough road he travelled on to get there: he described it as "a journey in the air with an occasional rest on the seat," such were the bumps of his springless conveyance over the roads often formed of logs laid side by side. He found Father Pat cosy enough in those rooms under the church which were intended for his use, and which, as we see above, he turned eventually into a reading-room. On the Bishop's second visit a poor homeless prospector was ensconced there, and Father Pat had betaken himself to the wretched shack which he henceforth called his home. Could my readers see that shack they would realize what such self-denial meant to a cultured gentleman. A small hut of boards, with rough, uneven wooden steps climbing up a mud bank to the door; the whole in a side alley near the church turned away from all the fine prospect of hill and valley. . . And yet this seemed

to him too great a luxury to enjoy alone ; for he constantly had some sick or needy man to share it with him. As to clothes, he adopted the blue Derry of the miners as his working costume. There is a story of a young fellow fresh from England, who brought an introduction to the Rev. H. Irwin, and who on finding the shack, and its occupant clad in the rough dress of a miner, went away, certain that he had mistaken the place and the man.

The more civilized part of his wardrobe was constantly being diminished by the inroads of his reckless charity. He simply *could* not keep a good hat or coat or pair of boots for himself, when another needed them. It is told that when his congregation became scandalized by the green and threadbare overcoat he wore, they summoned up courage to remonstrate, and begged him to accept a new and warm one which they would provide, better suited to the severe weather. He thanked them heartily and accepted the gift with affectionate gratitude. For a few days he appeared in the grand new coat and expressed his appreciation of its warmth and comfort. But alas ! it was not long before the new coat disappeared, and the old green and threadbare one took its place again. "Where is your new coat, Father Pat?" they asked. "What have you done with it?" A look of contrition came over his face, as he answered:—

"Well, what could I do? I met a poor fellow who had no overcoat at all. I couldn't let him go without one in this bitter weather, and I couldn't give him my old one, could I?" A similar tale is recorded of a new hat; and I was told that once, gazing on a scarecrow in a field, he said jokingly, but with absolute justice, that he might change hats with it with advantage to himself.

His days and nights were given to others. His door was ever open to the men. They might smoke with him, chat with him; and then, in the confidence of such talk, he would lead many a poor fellow to confess his faults, to ask advice, to remember the better life past, the prayers and counsels learned at a mother's knee. Who can tell what such quiet talks among the tobacco-smoke in the rough shack may have done for many a soul?

The wooden church of Rossland is a barnlike erection standing on a small piece of level land on the slope on which Rossland lies. It is below the roadway, below the shops and houses. One goes down a ricketty wooden stairway to it. As is the custom in the Far West, rooms are beneath it, intended (as beforesaid) for the clergyman's use, but given up by him for the parish. The church is perfectly plain in form, a simple rectangle, but a chancel is contrived by a wooden screen, and everything in this extemporized sanctuary is "decent and in order." The evening services are especially good and earnest, and the voluntary choir do their work well.

Such was the church where Father Pat ministered, and such it still is ; but a new one will, it is hoped, be shortly erected under the auspices of the present Vicar, the Rev. H. W. Simpson.

A few extracts from the Rossland *Parish Magazine* of this date, with a diary written by Father Pat himself, may fitly close this chapter :—

"H. Irwin arrived in Rossland from England on January 27, 1896, and having secured the Opera House for service, held mission services on February 2nd, and also went to Trail¹ in the afternoon, but was late, owing to the breakdown of an ore team which blocked the road for the ore wagon on which he was travelling.

"The absence of books made it necessary to print both hymns and canticles ; and this expense, with the rent of the Opera House, made it necessary for him to turn out of the hotel into a shack with four other men for two months, by which time, with the ready help of a Ladies' Guild, the work of building a church for Rossland took shape.

"On May 1st, the first visit to the Kettle River District was paid, and services were held on May 3rd at Grand Forks, where lots were secured for the church.

"On returning to Rossland, two lots were offered for church building purposes, and a subscription list opened with fifty subscribers, a legacy from Bishop Sillitoe, and contributions from S.P.C.K. and Mr Lloyd Graeme, in memory of his son

¹ Trail is a small town at the foot of the track which descends the hill from Rossland.

who died in Rossland, completing the amount required to build.

“On May 27th, church lots were secured at Trail, and a foundation was shovelled out on June 2 and 3.

“Bishop Dart paid his first visit to Rossland on August 16. A building committee was then appointed, and the work of building and furnishing proceeded with; and the first services were held in our own building at Christmastide with great joy.”

The church at Rossland is connected in my mind with an amusing incident. One Sunday evening in August 1905, I attended the service, which was warm and hearty, the building being full to suffocation. It so happened that a Friendly Society named The Brethren of Pythias was that evening attending in state. The Archdeacon of Kootenay, who was officiating, had by some accident not been informed of this fact till he issued from the vestry at the head of the choir. When he began his sermon he expressed a warm welcome to the Brethren, regretting that, not having known of their intention to be present in a body, he was unable to give them an address specially prepared, but he hoped that the one he was about to give would prove suitable and acceptable. He then gave out his text: “Lo! these that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also.”