

Many stories of individual self-sacrifice and devotion to the church might be mentioned if space permitted, but the generous donation by Deacon Asa Benedict of all the lumber he had gotten together for a house on his farm, is perhaps the most marked contribution to the building fund. Upon completion, the church was dedicated in an appropriate manner, Nov, 30, 1864. For the years 1872-1880 the organization flourished under the short pastorates of J. H. Parker, R. C. Bedford, T. L. Brown and F. W. Dickinson. Rev. H. R. Williams was called to the pulpit in 1880 and remained six years. He was a quiet, deeply spiritual man and greatly beloved by all. Rev. David Beaton who came to Vermontville directly from St. Johns, Newfoundland, was, probably, one of the most brilliant and scholarly men to fill the pulpit. During his stay it was decided to build a parsonage, the L.C.A. taking the initiative with the whole society cooperating. Mrs. Henry Martin and Mrs. George Browning were appointed a soliciting committee, their division of the work being on the basis of Mrs. Browning's providing the conveyance and doing the driving and Mrs. Martin to do the talking." Be that as it may seem, they proved a persuasive and successful couple, raised the fund needful and the present substantial dwelling on South Main Street, built by Mr. Daniel Allen and helpers, now shelters those who come as pastors to the Church.

Rev. S. L. Smith, A. O. Cossar, W. H. Spence, F. J. Estabrook, D. D. Gorton and Wm. Haynes followed Dr. Beaton as pastors and the church maintained its influence under their guiding hands. Mr. Spence remained but a short time resigning to take a theological course at Oberlin. After a space of some years during which he rose to prominence in the Congregational ministry, he wrote back gratefully of the "training school" Vermontville had been to him and said "I went to Vermontville a callow youth; I left it a chastened soul."

It is well within the ability of present Vermontville residents to recall the pastorates of St. Clare Parsons, N. M. Pritchard, Robert Dalzell, F. H. Bridgewater, H. W. Hunt, H. B. Johnson, C. C. Mitchell and W. A. Briggs. Each brought his own talents to the work and left his impress on church and society.

During his four year's pastorate St. Clare Parsons made himself so at one with Vermontville, its history and its people that even after twenty-five years absence, he is still held in friendly recollection and esteem and is to be the chief speaker on the program of Pre-Centennial Sunday.

The present occupant of the pulpit, Rev. J. R. Stein, is a newcomer to the town but gives evidence and promise of enthusiastic devotion to the church he has come to lead.

It is impossible to speak, even briefly, of the organizations within the society which have been active in its maintenance; the Ladies Christian Association always at the front in every undertaking, the Choir which provided music for all services under the leadership for sixty years of Henry J. Martin; the young people's Society, and Sunday School. All have had their part.

Though at the present time, due to modern conditions and drawbacks to the work of country churches, the organization has lessened in numbers, a faithful band of devoted workers still loyally "carries on" as best it may.