

Some Things Worth Knowing from the Great West.

BY D. G. MACDONALD.

DEAR EDITOR.—As many of your readers are interested in this country a few figures relative to its progress during the last decade would be interesting reading. Although last year was a most discouraging one to wheat growers the average for the ten years gives good returns, and one of the distinguishing characteristics of the people of Manitoba is hopefulness, and Prof. Whidden, who brought light into our home by his visit the other day, says that they are "much more ready to forgive Providence than the people of the East." A man of my acquaintance sowed 900 bushels of wheat last spring and threshed only 490 in the fall, but he is not discouraged on that account. He is looking for a big crop next year.

This is a country of great extremes. Our near neighbor, five years ago threshed 52 1/2 bushels per acre of a field of wheat, but this year a lot of his wheat was not worth cutting. When I wrote you in June last I was trying to keep cool under the shade of an oak with the mercury 107° in the shade and the mosquitoes much in evidence. Last week we were trying to keep warm with the mercury 45° below zero and not a mosquito in sight. Notwithstanding these extremes and uncertainties the country is making steady and rapid progress.

The following figures will show the yearly increase in the average under cultivation and the average crop each year:

Table with columns: Year, Acreage, Yield per acre, Total yield. Rows for Wheat from 1891 to 1900.

Table with columns: Year, Acreage, Yield per acre, Total yield. Rows for Oats from 1891 to 1900.

Table with columns: Year, Acreage, Yield per acre, Total yield. Rows for Barley from 1891 to 1900.

The attention of the people is not confined wholly to grain growing, as the following figures relating to stock show:

Table with columns: Year, Horses, Cattle, Sheep, Pigs. Rows from 1893 to 1900.

Table with columns: Year, Cattle. Rows from 1894 to 1900.

The butter-making has grown from 529,812 lbs. in 1895, and valued at \$85,652, to 1,254,511 lbs. last year, valued at \$541,661, and the cheese product of last year went over the million lb. mark.

The sale of lands during the last decade is another item that shows the progress made. This I cannot give in full, but some conception of it may be had by the sales of the C. P. R. Company alone, which grew from 97,240 acres in 1891 at a cost to the purchasers of \$414,945, to 413,986 acres in 1900 costing \$1,377,715. Their aggregate sales for the ten years reached the enormous amount of 2,173,359 acres, for which there were or shall be paid the sum of \$7,284,145. When you add to this the sales made by all the other companies, and the lands sold and given by the Governments, you will see that the development has been rapid and large.

Lands are rapidly increasing in value also. Two years ago I could have bought a somewhat rough quarter section of land near our home for \$900. This fall, notwithstanding the failure in crops, it was sold for \$1,600.

There is much land yet to be possessed although in the past ten years the population has grown from

152,506 in 1891 (the census of 1881 gave 62,660) to about 290,000 at the present date. And still they come—a cosmopolitan mass of every kindred and nation and tribe and people. May the Lord help us to give them the blessed gospel of Jesus Christ, that unifies and saves.

I have been writing "things worth knowing." In an article previously written I intimated that I was laid aside from work. Maybe I ought to change the heading of this article before writing anything about myself, but a few words will not be out of place. On the 19th of October I was suddenly seized with an attack of sciatica. I continued preaching for ten nights, though compelled to lie in the day-time. A few days at home and the pain left me. On Lord's day, the 4th of November, I felt as well as ever, drove thirty miles, preached twice, and administered baptism at the Lord's Supper, and felt none the worse. On Monday about 9 o'clock the pain returned with increased intensity, and I have been prostrated ever since. It takes some grace to reconcile me to this enforced idleness in view of all that there is to do, but He knows. For the past ten days I have been comparatively free from pain, but it requires absolute stillness to keep me so. I am happy in the love of my blessed Lord, and am being prepared, I trust, to bring to him greater glory here or yonder. I much enjoy the visits of friends that are near and the letters of those that are far away. Just at this moment I received a twelve page letter from a very dear brother living on the shore of the Atlantic, containing a generous gift which is much valued and expressions of love which are valued more. The visit of Professor Whidden, above referred to, produced much joy. His life is already telling upon the Christian life of "the wheat city." Great pleasure was given also by the unannounced visit of Bro. Wm. Baglow, all the way from the dear little Isle where I was twice born. These letters and visits would be enjoyed any time, but the present confinement adds to the enjoyment they produce, and not the least enjoyed, I assure you, brother editor, is the silent, regular, weekly, potent, visits of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR, bearing the impress of the editor's steady hand and thoughtful brain.

I heartily wish you and every one of your readers a very happy and prosperous new year. Austin, January 10.

That Unbelief is The Sin of Sins.

A fortnight ago we quoted our Lord's utterance on the Holy Spirit, "When He is come He will reprove the world of sin because they believe not on Me," characterizing it as the New Testament doctrine which is at once most supremely difficult and most unmistakably plain. We endeavored frankly to set forth the difficulties, difficulties never more keenly raised than now. It is our part to show that, difficult as the doctrine is, its evidence is plain and commanding. The appeal must be to what is elemental in human nature and experience. Content to be judged by that appeal, we maintain that the conscience bears witness that unbelief is the sin of sins. If ever conscience speaks out it is when this sin is committed on the levels of human life. As Bunyan puts it, they shut up Mr. Conscience, they blind his windows, they barricade his door, they cut the rope of the great bell on the house-top which he is wont to ring, that the town of Mansoul may not be disturbed. But sometimes Mr. Conscience escapes and rings the bell.

For the sin of all sins to which the conscience bears witness is the sin of mistrusting and despising love. There is so little love in this world, and there is such a hard need of it. Multitudes have to go through life famished for lack of love. Even the most favored have very few really to love them. If we have no love, human or Divine, then indeed life ceases to be worth living. "I would rather," said one, "be condemned to be led out and hung if I knew one human soul would love me afterwards than live half a century and be nothing to any living creature." Yet is there one of us who is not guilty in this matter? Is there one of us who has not sinned against human love? Even when we prized it, even when we were glad and proud and grateful for it, did we do enough to require it when the time for requital was? When the pitcher is dashed in pieces and the light streams from it in the act of its perishing, who is there that does not mourn that he loved so poorly and gave back so interruptedly here? When years and years have passed, when time has dulled the keenest feeling, something on which one falls, a lock of the hair that drained the sun for gold," an old letter, dim and blurred with age, from a hand long since crumbled into dust, and all the past is back again in a blinding light. Often it is far worse than this. A true remorse awakens at the thought of the faithful, gentle, patient, and constant love that was beside us, and that we never know, or held but a light thing. This is an experience of the lives that seem most ordinary and insignificant. "George, my dear," she just breathed out, "I am a poor, silly girl, but I always loved you." He stopped her instantly with his kisses, but death had stopped her too. Three months passed, and one image was ever before his eyes. What self-accusations! Of what injustice had he not been guilty! Gone, forever gone; gone before he had been

able to make her understand how much he really loved her, and so send her to sleep in peace." Oh! to be able to say, "She knows now, dear child, how she is missed from this cold November world."

"So I hid my face in the grass, Whispered, listen to my despair: I repented me of all I did— Speak a little."

But when men mistrust a great love, and do it to death we are in presence of the crowning tragedy of the world. The very highest literature is concerned with this. The story of Desdemona will move men's hearts to the end of time. They will never cease to thrill at her proud gentleness, her purity like snow, her glorious truth of love. "I am very sorry that you are not well." "I have not deserved this." "I do not know—I am sure I am none such," till at last she says, "A guiltless death I die." Each sentence is a sword and Othello knows the truth, "Thou hast killed the sweetest innocent That e'er did lift up eye,"

he could live no longer. He is looking at the pure white dead face.

"O ill-starr'd wench! Pale as thy smock! when we shall meet at compt, This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven, And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl! Even like thy chastity.—O, cursed slave!— Whip me, ye devils, From the possession of this heavenly sight! Blow me about in winds! roast me in sulphur! Wash me in the steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!— O, Desdemona! Desdemona!"

It is only the passion of his despair that makes it possible for us to forgive Othello. But his sin is not so far from us as it seems. "Men and women, if they do not murder one another, do actually in everyday life for no reason whatever come to wrong conclusions about each other, utterly and to the end of their lives misconstrue and lose each other. Nay it seems to be a kind of luxury to them to believe that those who could and would love them are false to them. We make haste to doubt the divinest fidelity. We drive the dagger into each other, and we smother the Desdemona who would have been the light of life to us, not because of any deadly difference or grievous injury, but because we utterly and wilfully reject. The tale evermore is

"Of one whose hand, Like the base Indian threw a pearl away Richer than all his tribe." And that is the sin of sins.

If this is true about human love, how much more true it is about Divine love! However much we may grieve over human affection, the greatest need of the human heart is the need of God and his love. That love moved toward us in Jesus Christ. In him the stored-up wonder of the great eternal years was made manifest. He came to bring us the knowledge that God loves as the most loving man or woman on earth loves, but infinitely more. It was love that brought Christ down from heaven to earth, and led him through the weary journey to the garden, the pavement, the death sweat, and the tree. It was for love of us that the Lord laid himself on the hard bed where pain racked every bone. It was for love of us that the Father bruised the first-born Son, and he cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" It was for love that he bowed his head in the last agony, when there was no hand to wipe away the drops that hung on his brow. It was for love that when the course of his sad years was run, he lay in the tomb over which his angels of peace kept guard. It was for love that he rose again and climbed the hills of heaven. It is for love that he stands and pleads for us before the eternal throne. Our ransom had to give his life to redeem a single soul, and each one amongst us is known to him and dear to him, as much as if there had been no other to seek and to save. When we see him die amid darkening skies and rending veils and opening graves, it is for us to say, "For me he trod that weary way, and died a thousand deaths in passing one." It was for love he thirsted in the greatness of his way. When it was refused him, his agony found vent in cries and bursts of pain. When it was given him in the scouter measure, he was thrilled with gladness. At the table of Simon, when the despised woman came to wash his feet with tears, he put away the banquet for what was better than wine. Out of weakness he was made strong when he won the Samaritan's heart. And this is still his passion, still his gladsome labour, to bless in the unkind and rebellious world the loveless hearts of men.

When He the Spirit of Truth is come he reveals the Lord Jesus Christ as a living person. Our faith does not lie at the mercy of critics in Germany or elsewhere. If Christ had been merely a man amongst the race it might have been reasonable to say that there might have been dispute about his claims in the same way as there is dispute about the claims of Plato and Shakespeare. As it is, critical questions about Christ are not vital. For Christ is still living, and every day disclosed to faithful souls in the fulness of his grace and truth. The Holy Spirit brings him before our eyes as one who became Incarnate, and was made dead, and lives for ever that we may live also. He shows us that in him we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. He interprets to us the mystery of his life and

death. He is lifting up of the world, against the world. "Door." He is no way, and that has been veils as faire that spiritual clay. Wafts kingdom of love, at last, after love,

"Oh Is th And we kn of sins. It ness. He has into repentant soil. Remon Repentance i Truly repenti the past D and chiefly d nored and re were part "Oh! Jesu Who with cl The blood th And declare The faint and our hea hope We h childhood. he power to ly.

A log of v holds, fire at socket, fleck and gives a li unless there day religion, that resemble Lord said Ch to shine. R flaming. Th light to a affected by though, per The impress are lacking i the world. produce con value of a p never grow i stinet of goo bow reveren argument of many a book why then is is because o and shinin attention an ity is unim Christian h world; it i Perhaps it w is a great d a high ideal never bow th visible and that can aff said that n few minutes greatest ma makes itself no less than The lack fervor. Th a high level ing quality mere correc availing lit Heat sprea Christianity get flame w flaming life a spending John the B burning in n never come whether in costs pain a of body and of pathos o moved his r they were v flame.—The