

and comment. This Convent belongs to the Sisters of Charity, known in Canada as the Grey Nuns. These heroic followers of Christ, animated by a degree of courage and devotion which Catholicism alone can inspire, journeyed to this remote spot to dispense among the youth of their own sex, and among the population in general, the blessings which they diffuse wherever they go. The amount of good effected in this establishment, the mild and salutary influence exercised by the sisters in the bosoms of families, the thousands of good deeds which the eye of the world sees not, because the charity which prompts them seeks the veil of humility, can never be fully told. In this Convent young ladies are boarded, and receive, I do not say a passable education, but an education suitable for the middling classes of the most civilized countries. They are now twenty in number. This school, in which the intellect is trained to a knowledge of the beautiful, the useful, and the agreeable, while the education of the heart is not neglected, is, I have not the least doubt, by far the best in the whole colony of Red River. Even those persons who are afraid to acknowledge it openly, are fully aware of it. Besides the boarders, the sisters maintain and educate (in a separate apartment, unconnected with that of the boarders) fifteen poor orphan girls. This admirable work is achieved by sacrifices of all kinds, self imposed by the adopted mothers of these poor children; and what is here beheld will forcibly illustrate the triumphant working of charity even without extraneous aid. In addition to the education thus afforded to thirty-five inmates of their house, a day-school is kept for all the little girls of the parish who are desirous of instruction. Moreover, besides the labor thus bestowed on education, the Sisters of Charity are unwearied in the services and attentions which they minister to suffering followers of Jesus Christ. The following short note may give an idea of the good done by them in this behalf:

| | Sick persons attended. | Visited at their own abodes. | Wounds dressed. | In hospital. |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| From Oct., 1856, to Oct., 1857..... | 175 | 210 | 53 | 21 |
| do 1857, do 1858..... | 157 | 130 | 58 | 21 |

A knowledge of these facts should accompany Professor Hind's remarks, at page 366 of his report, in order to enable you to form an idea of the salubrity of the climate, in accordance with the rule laid down by that gentleman. To these numerous, important, and nearly gratuitous services rendered to the population of this parish by the sisters at St. Boniface, we must add the strong influence which they exercise over the community. To their lessons of industry, economy, &c., we must attribute the very perceptible change which has taken place in the population since the arrival of these generous nuns. The internal decorations of the church and other objects of art and taste, are the work of the inmates of this vast convent, around which certain persons can see nothing but well cultivated vegetables.

2. St. Norbert.—This new Parish has a population of 700 souls. The Rev. P. Lestane is the Pastor of this little flock. The chapel, built of wood, is an edifice of 90 feet in length, by 33 in breadth. At one end are the apartments of the Priest, the teacher, (who, in this case also, is happily a brother of the Christian Schools. This good brother has 31 children to teach. The girls, 29 in number, are confided to the care of the Sisters of Charity, who have their dwelling near the Church; a happy symbol reminding us that the only true and solid education is that which is based on religion.

3. St. Francis Xavier.—This Parish dates from 1824. The population consists of nearly 1200 souls, permanent residents, not including several hundreds of hunters who pass the year on the prairies, but at certain times visit the colony. Some no doubt take up their abode in other parishes, but most of them stop short at St. Francis Xavier. This parish is known by the name of the Prairie of the White Horse. The old wooden chapel, now too small for the population, threatens to fall. We have accordingly begun to collect materials for a new church. The senior of our missionaries, Mr. Thibeault, my Grand Vicar, is

the Curé of this parish. He has exercised his sacred office in this diocese for twenty-six years, speaks the Cree language very well, and understands that of the Sautaux. This knowledge is indispensable in his situation, as a great number of those who require the exercise of his sacred functions know no other language. The Parish of St. Francis Xavier has only one school, which is kept by the Sisters of Charity. Here 13 boys only and 26 girls receive instruction.

4. St. Charles.—This Parish contains only 210 persons. There is neither church nor chapel. Divine service is performed in a house which serves as a temporary chapel. The congregation have neither school nor resident Pastor. When it is practicable, a priest proceeds thither from this place to officiate. In other circumstances, the worshippers are obliged to go to St. Boniface or St. Francis Xavier.

LAKE MANITOBA.

To these details I may be permitted to add a few words concerning another establishment, commenced last summer at the extremity of Lake Manitoba, for the convenience of 30 or 40 families who are settled there. This small community have built a chapel. Mr. Gascon resides at the post, and has so much the greater merit in his good deeds, that although connected with the colony, he derives no advantage from the connection.

I have thus, my dear Sir, given you a full account of the religious comforts afforded to the Catholic population of Red River. Far then from being neglected in this respect, they possess a full measure of this essential blessing. Considering the sparse character of the settlements, the schools would need to be increased in number in certain districts, but the absence of any law relative to education, and of zeal in the people themselves, renders it utterly impossible to do more. I venture to assert what all reasonable and impartial persons must, in view of what is done, acknowledge, that the result far transcends the means which we can command. The truth is that, but for the unselfish zeal of some who devote themselves without fee or earthly reward to the arduous and meritorious task, it would be absolutely impossible to keep up the schools. So far, scarcely one child in ten has paid for his schooling, although the charge does not exceed ten shillings per annum, and I am certain that if we insisted on the payment of even that trifling sum, many of the scholars would leave the schools, such is the carelessness and indifference of the parents in that respect, notwithstanding our oft repeated entreaties and the sacrifices which are made in that behalf. This indifference concerning the education of their children and neglect of the many advantages afforded them is a standing reproach which may be justly cast on our population. I do not say that this is their only fault. Alas! the history of mankind, study it where we may, gives us much food for regret on the score both of omission and commission. I am desirous here to correct an error sorely injurious to us, into which nearly all the writers on this country have fallen. A fixed idea seems to have been entertained by them generally, at least a stereotyped expression of it appears in all their works, intended to establish an humiliating and unjust comparison between the half breeds of French Canadian parentage, and those of a different origin. I have neither the wish nor the time to controvert all the absurd things that have been said on this subject. One word only I shall say relative to this idea, as it is propounded in one of the best books which I am acquainted with on this country. In his Arctic Searching Expedition, Sir John Richardson remarks at page 273-4: "In character the half breeds vary according to their paternity; the descendants of the Orkney 'laborers' being generally steady, provident agriculturists of the Protestant faith; while the children of the Roman Catholic Canadian 'Voyagers have much of the levity and thoughtlessness of their fathers, combined with that inability to resist temptation, which is common to the two races from whence they are sprung." It is not necessary either to have been the inventor of gunpowder or to have enriched the domain of science by any important discovery, in order to detect, at a glance, the tendency of these remarks, and the spirit which dictated them. For my own part,