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## Contributors and Correspondents.

### NOTES FROM THE NORTH-WEST.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—My last letter was hurriedly brought to a close, as we were approaching Winnipeg on Monday last. I embraced a few moments leisure, before starting on a visit to several of our Mission Stations, to continue my notes up to the present date.

I am sorry to say that my fears regarding the failure of the crops in and around Winnipeg are more than realized. The grasshoppers have left nothing behind. In many cases the farmers saved nothing of importance whatever—in other cases their labor has been in vain. The destruction is limited to the vicinity of Winnipeg. At Portage La Prairie, and other districts 80 or 100 miles from Winnipeg, the crops are said to be remarkably good, but around Kildonan and Winnipeg there are no crops whatever. The season otherwise gave promise of more than usual abundance. While in Ontario we have suffered from want of rain, here in Manitoba they have had more than usual. Notwithstanding the great disappointment and severe loss, the people are in good spirits, and hope that for some seasons to come they may not be free of this terrible visitation. It is a sad drawback to newly arrived emigrants, and cripples the pecuniary resources of our Mission Stations. Several of them, that would have been self-supporting at an early date, are thus rendered entirely dependent upon the resources of the Church at large, and must remain so for some time to come.

On Tuesday we made a visit to Kildonan parish, where Mr. Black has labored so faithfully and successfully for the last 22 years, and also to the college and school. The road from Winnipeg to Kildonan is very beautiful, and the houses of the settlement are for the most part delightfully situated on the banks of the Red River. The farmers at and around Kildonan are very comfortable, and will feel the loss of this year's crops less than perhaps in any other part of the district. The church is a substantial stone building, rough cast, accommodating some 400 or 500 people. Around it, enclosed in a stone wall, is the burying-ground. When the church was begun some 20 years ago, it was agreed that the patriarchy of the congregation should dig out the foundations. Accordingly they assembled with spade and axe, and prepared the way for the erection of the walls. Now these godly men have all passed away; their dust depositing peacefully around the building which was so sacred in their eyes.

When Mr. Black's church at Kildonan was built there was no other near it, and no indications of the great future of Manitoba. Now, at a distance of only 5 miles, Winnipeg has sprung up within the last 5 years, and other localities are being rapidly populated. The future of Winnipeg depends very much on the direction of the railway. If made one of the principal termini along the route, its rapid growth is assured; but if, as some predict, Little Britain (where Mr. Frazer now preaches) be selected, Winnipeg may not fulfil all the expectations of its inhabitants, and become the great city of the North-west, as is now predicted. In any event, as the seat of government, it will always be a place of importance, and must of necessity have lines of railway communication into the interior of the country.

Our first impressions of Winnipeg are favorable. Everywhere there are indications of amazing energy and commercial activity. Houses are building in all directions, and inhabited before they are half finished. The prices asked for land are fabulous, and house rents are at least triple what they are in Ontario. The cost of living is great—eggs from 25 to 30 cents per dozen; butter, 40 to 50 cents per lb.; sugar, 18 to 25 cents per lb.; butcher meat from 20 to 25 cents; tea about the same as in Ontario; fish, abundant and cheap; wearing apparel some 20 per cent in advance. It is said, that but for the flat-boats that come periodically from Minnesota, selling all sorts of groceries and fruits, living would be even much higher. The competition between these flat-boat men and the merchants helps to keep things somewhat below the line of extortion.

The Wesleyan-Methodists have built a very neat church and parsonage at the end of the town. The Church of England and our own Knox Church worship in rather shabby structures. About a mile and a half down the river side, on the way to Kildonan, stands the cathedral and residence of Bishop Machray, with St. John's college close at hand. The Methodists

have also commenced a High School, intended to be the nucleus of a College. Already the ground for the building and materials have been purchased, and in a short time the College will be in operation. The Baptists have just sent out a colony and a missionary, who preaches in a school house in Winnipeg, and at other points in the neighborhood. So far as I can gather, our own denomination is as yet in advance of all the others.

It is to be regretted that the government have not seen their way clear to the establishment of a Provincial unsectarian College at Winnipeg or some other convenient place. Already there are as good as established 3 denominational colleges, neither of which can possibly be efficiently equipped by their respective Churches, and which are struggling for the pre-eminence. In a new country like this, where sectarianism has already been productive of so much evil, and where there is the greatest necessity for the evangelical denominations working harmoniously together, such a state of things is, to say the least, unhappy. I presume matters are too far advanced to admit of any radical change in collegiate education, but the necessity of a national system, in which all can unite, without sacrificing their respective tenets, will sooner or later force itself upon the powers that be, and compel action.

On Wednesday we met with the Presbytery of Manitoba in the Kildonan Church, and had the pleasure of meeting Bishop Machray at the house of Mr. Black. The members of Presbytery were all present save Mr. McNab, who was detained by sickness, and Mr. Vincent, whose distance from the place of meeting precludes the possibility of attendance, unless at very rare intervals. The business before the court consisted in reports from the various Mission Stations, as to the sums promised to aid in the support of their ministers, and arranging for the Commission to visit as many places as possible during their stay, and a conference on the college question. On Sabbath first we begin public labors in Winnipeg and Kildonan. Next week we hold conferences, with the College Committee, and extend our visits to Little Britain, Portage La Prairie, Palestine, and other districts, holding missionary meetings and preaching as far as practicable. We hope, in addition to our special duties connected with collegiate education in Kildonan and Winnipeg, to meet with all the brethren and address most of their congregations.

Passing from ecclesiastical to agricultural matters, our observation so far as regards the richness of the soil, agrees with all that has been written. It is of a heavy black clay, yielding, we are told, very large harvests for the space of twenty years in succession, without the aid of manure of any kind whatever. Indeed the manure is hardly in any case taken to the fields, but is buried or destroyed in the easiest manner possible. The average crop of wheat runs from 40 to 50 bushels to the acre, and other cereals and roots in proportion. Old settlers (in spite of the grasshoppers) testify that it is the richest and most fertile soil anywhere to be found, and that where, through the grasshoppers, the entire crop may be lost one year, in the next they are certain to have a double crop, more than making up for their previous loss. The richness of the soil, however, has its drawbacks, especially after 5 or 6 hours of rain. To say that the roads are impassable, gives but a faint idea of the actual facts. The mud is of the toughest and most adhesive nature. Unless provided with top boots of the largest pattern, walking is out of the question; and even then the weight increases at every step, making the journey exceedingly irksome and exhausting. It is so in the town of Winnipeg as much as in the country, for sidewalks are few and far between. A Red River cart—certainly not the most approved and easy mode of locomotion, for it has no springs—is in such circumstances a perfect luxury. As Archbishop Tache is reported to have said to Dr. Lachin Taylor, "If you do not stick to the country, the country will stick to you." Although but 3 days in Manitoba, we have experienced the literal truth of the remark.

On Wednesday the town and neighborhood was visited by a severe thunderstorm, and torrents of rain, which continued for several hours. As in Ontario we cannot equal the facility of soil in the North-west, neither can we approach its rain storms and tempests. To look over these boundless prairies and see the forked lightning leaping madly from cloud to cloud, while the thunder peal, crash upon crash, roars out with all intensity of volume in describable, and the sky is dark as night, and the foundations of the great deep are broken up, and the windows of heaven

opened, is a sight at once grand and solemnizing. In the winter season also high winds are prevalent, and cause great alarm among the residents of balloon frames, situated on the verge of the prairie. There being nothing to break its force, it sweeps over the town with a terrible power and destructiveness. As the country begins to fill up, the violence of these prairie winds will be much less felt, and possibly the rigor of the climate rendered less severe.

Coming along the river to Winnipeg, we passed on either side numerous houses of the French half-breeds, of the most primitive style of architecture. These people seem destitute of all ambition. If they simply exist from day to day it is enough. As the few crops they had sown last spring are a total failure, the coming winter must be one of peculiar hardship, and render them entirely dependent on public charity. In the town of Winnipeg and neighborhood the "poor Indian" is seen in all his natural barbarism and repulsiveness. On Tuesday they had a procession to their hunting grounds; a motley crowd of men, women, and children, fantastically dressed, uttering the most unearthly sounds, and accompanied by the most wretched music. It does seem that efforts to Christianize these people, in this country as elsewhere, have but little results, compared with the missionary labor in other directions. The English half-breeds are a very different people, and in many cases equal in intelligence and industry our Canadian population.

Near the town, there was pointed to us on the banks of the river, Father Richard's Church and parish; then the former residence of ex-President Riel; then, near the landing, St. Boniface, where Archbishop Tache holds sway; and lastly, the spot where poor Thomas Scott was brutally murdered by the rebel government. No Canadian can visit this spot without intense indignation, and a desire that the guilty parties may yet be brought to justice. We are still hopeful that measures may be taken in this direction. Recent events have shown that in the person of Lieut. Governor Morris the new Province has found a man not afraid to execute law. By all parties, he is spoken of in the highest terms.

Winnipeg has been greatly excited during the past week with the case of the so-called "Lord Gordon," which is still before the court. Full particulars from day to day have been telegraphed, the Ontario press in regard to his being violently taken from British to American territory. It may be that "Lord Gordon" is all that his American bondsmen represent him; but he is the greatest scoundrel that ever lived, he has civil rights which ought to be respected. Our American neighbors are indeed a great nation, but to kidnap British subjects on British soil, without due process of law, is a little too much for neck Canadians to tolerate. Nothing has happened for a long time better fitted to teach our friends across the lakes that the strong arm of British law will be thrown around every subject, until guilt is proved and proper measures taken for his transference to foreign soil. Attorney General Clarke and Mr. Cornish have certainly very ably prosecuted Mr. Gordon's captors, and no doubt of their guilt remains. It is expected that no bail will be accepted for the prisoners, but that they will be committed to Fort Garry to await a regular trial. Rumours are also prevalent that the government in Ottawa will demand the recall of the American consul at Winnipeg who has very imprudently mixed himself up with this high-handed outrage. Long before this reached you, however, the case will have closed for the present and the result be known in Ontario.

Yours very truly,  
W. C.

WINNIPEG, Manitoba, July 18, 1873.

### A VISIT TO THE TOMBS, N. Y.

(COMMUNICATED.)

Along with an esteemed clergyman whose Christian sympathies led him to this abode of criminals I visited the Tombs. We alighted before a large stone building, which occupies a whole block, having a street on each side and quite unconnected with any other building. It is a massive structure; no window opens on any other street, externally all is plain dead walls, relieved by a few recesses and a cornice with pillars at the corners. Besides the main entrance on the north side, there is a side entrance on the west, and at the south-west corner another gate leading into the prison grounds. The corresponding gates on the east side are not used, but the recess of one of them

is filled up with a shed fitted up as a barber's shop. Passing through an iron railing we ascend the solid stone stairs and find ourselves in a spacious hall, among a motley crowd of vicious-looking men, and degraded or dejected women, officers of justice and ordinary citizens. On the left hand are officers where evidently lawyers are busy; in front is the court of Sessions; on the right hand the Police Court. We make inquiry and are informed that in order to see the unfortunate subject of our inquiry we must go to another part of the building. Accordingly we go by the side entrance into a passage or small hall where everything that meets the eye is stone or iron. Here are a few people waiting, and on the left hand a desk where a record is kept of all commitments. Having ascertained that our man is here we must see the Marshall and get permission to visit him in his cell, No. 116. Then we turn to an iron railing which separates the hall from another passage—within the railing sits a powerful keeper, of not unpleasant aspect, but who never smiles, and several assistants. He opens the gate and when we are safe within he gives us a ticket each, saying, "Show these when asked, take care and keep them to me." Others are passing in and out, every one showing a permit before coming in. Just before we entered a man in a blue coat and cap passed through, and we saw him no more. Across the stern passage a turn of stairs leads to a heavy iron wicket gate and as we pass it just wide enough to let one person pass at a time it; gates on its hinges, opens for us, and showing our tickets we pass through. We are in the prison yard; stone walls on every side, but a few plants and flowers flourishing even here, to remind us that God's rain and sunshine have not quite abandoned even the worst. Prisoners are lounging around and among them visitors. Following our guide we enter the ward for male convicts. We pass through the iron gates, each one locked and locked again behind us, showing our tickets every time. We reach the lowest tier of cells. On the left secured by an additional strong iron railing are those cells where the condemned murderers are confined. Up a stair and through a gate; up another and a second gate; and then another stair, for cell 116 is in the fourth tier. And now while my companion is engaged in his errand of mercy I take a survey, and ask a few questions of the keeper. A long narrow corridor has cells on each side in four tiers. A gallery passes quite round each tier, and ventilating shafts go up through a skylight in the roof and the stoves and stove-pipes are seen in the centre of the corridor, nothing else. I count nineteen cells on each side, and four tiers, in all one hundred and fifty-two cells. I examined from the gallery one of the cells. Each is intended for two prisoners. They are about 9 feet square, lighted from behind by a narrow, horizontal slit of a window in the solid masonry, properly protected and at the top of the cell. Stone above, stone below, stone on the sides. Kept clean, with a faucet supplying water, a tin dish to drink out of, a coneystone fixed on a large ring pipe, an iron bedstead with a straw bed and coverlid, and two benches. That is all. The doors are double and of iron, the inner solid, the outer of strong grating. The inner door is open during the day. Besides some of the doors on the gallery are plain wooden seats, and on these some women are sitting; sad sight! They are visiting some of the inmates of the prison. They speak through the grating. Some look sad and distressed; yet I do not see a tear, some are hardened and indifferent, none are laughing. One spreads her handkerchief on the grating and lays her cheek against the cold iron, while she speaks and is beside the man whom she cannot forget even in his guilty misery. I look into several cells. Some of the criminals are lying carelessly on their beds, others are reading papers and books, some are sleeping, some looking curiously through the gratings to see what they can, two are fooling and playing in their cell, and one of them rudely accosts me as I pass. The appearance of most of them is not repulsive, sharpness and a kind of intelligence are indicated and most of them are young; that is to say, they have not got far enough in crime to have long Pentecostal commitments. Some old men there are, however. As I am looking, the gate on the gallery below is opened, the officious young man comes out and goes to be tried. And now we are through. Back we go; again at the iron gates are unlocked and clank behind us and are locked again as we pass wicker after wicker, we feel that but for these tickets we too were prisoners and escape impossible. We pass through the court, through gate second and gate first, are once more in the open passage and

breathe freely on Franklin street—we go to see the lawyer.

After investigation my friend concludes that the evidence against the prisoner is so strong that it is not his duty to interfere further. Still for our satisfaction I return in three days to hear the trial. The court is to meet at 10 o'clock a. m. I take a seat as far forward as possible at ten minutes before the hour. About a quarter after ten the Court Room was nearly full, several lawyers are on hand, and the "Hats off" indicates the arrival of a Judge. The Clerk of Sessions takes his seat, but the Judge waits on a side seat. There is no dock for prisoners. They enter by a side passage behind an iron railing and if found guilty go out by the same, if discharged come out into the open Court Room. Now the judges, three in number, have taken their seats. No robes, but plain clothes, morning dress for gentlemen. They are three fine looking men, and as the work of examination goes on prove themselves shrewd, wise, firm, benevolent and just. "Silence" and their orders are called with amazing rapidity; very often the prisoner appears only to be told "you may go," that is when the prosecutor does not make appearance, or the Judge has been satisfied out of court. Again the lawyer asks delay and the prisoner is remanded till Saturday. No case occupied more than twelve or at most fifteen minutes, and that case was protracted by the principal witness being a German boy who had to be examined by an interpreter, and was stupid besides. There is no Crown or I should say State prosecution. The process is very simple. If an officer is a witness, he is sworn and states what he knows and then any other witness is heard. If a defence is attempted the panel goes to the witness box, or rather chair, and tells his story; the lawyer for the defence makes his plea. Then judgment is summarily passed and the thing is ended. Some cases of assault, many of larceny, were tried. In many cases the issue whether of discharge or condemnation seemed unexpected. A snail was visible on the face of some who were acquitted but not one that was condemned showed any feeling. Some trifling cases were dismissed, such as stealing a peach from a stand, I presume the incarceration already suffered being deemed punishment sufficient; and two or three were found not guilty. Among those last, to my surprise, was the man in whom I was interested. Of his guilt (on inquiry) my friend had no doubt, and my attempt, however slight, on the part of the prosecution to commit him must have proved successful. As it was, there appeared against him only one witness, testifying to having found the stolen goods on the man. His evidence was conclusive. The only defence put in by the lawyer was, that he had learned from a highly respectable friend of the prisoner's, who had conversed with the prisoner, that the goods were given him by another party and that he did not know they were stolen; that prisoner was, as counsel was informed, a respectable young man, religiously brought up, whose parents were all that was good; and that his character was excellent, as he had been informed by prisoner's friend. In a word, the lawyer told a parcel of untruths, of which he did not pretend to personal knowledge, and on this evidence, said to be the opinion of an absent gentleman, of known purity and worth, the prisoner's story was believed and he was acquitted. I have no doubt such failures of justice must often occur. The Court sat just two hours, and fifty cases were disposed of, of which as many as a dozen were sentenced to the penitentiary for two, three, or six months. One pleaded guilty and was fined—some repulsive-looking children were sent to the Reformatory or the Refuge.

I left the Tombs with a sad heart. Vice is rampant; these are little better than wild beasts held in check by the wire cage, the baton and the revolver. Much is being done; but what is it when we know that in New York City there are more than 50,000 people who live by crime directly, besides the multitudes who aid and abet them. It is easy to criticize, but I would rather admire what is good and cherish the hope that in some way or other some means may be found of drying up the foundations of crime and preventing the development of such repulsive looking specimens of human nature as I witnessed here. The good people of this city have much to bear and much to do, and theirs is an arduous, thankless, unromantic struggle with wickedness such as God's people in other places know nothing about. The Tombs with its gloomy cells, its officers, and Courts of Justice, is indeed a sad witness to man's depravity; but it is also a testimony to the earnest, resolute determination of the better classes to save their city and country, if possible.

New York, July 29, 1873.

### PRESBYTERY OF MONTREAL.

This Presbytery held a special meeting at Valleyfield on the 31st July last, and agreed—1. To translate the Rev. Donald Stewart from Lancaster to the Presbytery of Ontario, for induction into the pastoral charge of the congregation at Emiskillee and Cartwright. 2. To induct the Rev. Alexander Young into the pastoral charge of the congregation of St. Louis and Valleyfield, on the 4th inst. 3. To ordain and induct Mr. James Wellwood, licentiate, at Cote des Neiges, on 16th Sept. next. Mr. Wellwood, along with Messrs. R. D. Fraser, A. M., D. H. McLennan, B. A., J. McIntyre, G. M. McKay, and Hugh McGregor, was licensed by the Presbytery of Montreal on the 10th July last.