



ST. MARY'S CHURCH, ASPDIN.

## OUR PARISHES AND CHURCHES.

NO. 76.—ST. MARY'S CHURCH, ASPDIN.

**F**AR away in the backwoods of Muskoka, in a neighbourhood which nature has endowed with more than its fair share of hills and rocks, stands the Church of St. Mary's, Aspdin. The stranger who in such a district naturally expects to find one of the unpretentious, wooden edifices which abound in country places, is agreeably surprised to see a fine, well-proportioned stone church, in which simplicity and dignity are marvelously blended, and whose solidity is attested by the fact that its walls are four feet in thickness. Situated on the top of a high hill, it is a beacon visible at great distances, and as the farmer wearily plods his way o'er his fields, he can see its tower pointing as a silent witness to Heaven, crowned with the symbol of that faith which is earnestly preached within its walls. But great as is the surprise to one who sees this "backwoods cathedral" for the first time, still greater is his wonder when, passing through the porch, he beholds the interior. As he enters, the first object that meets his eye is the font, surmounted by a handsome oak cover, bearing the motto, "One God, one Father, one Baptism."

And then, as he gazes up the church, he sees the chancel screen, and in front of it the faldstool where the priest can kneel between the porch and the altar, and say the solemn Litany, and through the arches of the screen he sees the handsomely equipped altar, here, as it should

be everywhere, the most prominent feature in the church. One glance at the interior of St. Mary's is sufficient to show that the congregation believes in the Holy Catholic Church, and acts up to its belief.

And if it be asked how comes it that here where men are content to live in humble log cottages, and have to earn their living in very truth by "the sweat of their brow," the House of God is so "exceeding magnificent," the answer is easily given. God, in His mercy, gave St. Mary's Church, as its first priest, the Rev. Wm. Crompton. This veteran missionary came to Canada in 1873, and was ordained by Bishop Fauquier in 1875.

At an age when many men are beginning to look forward to a well-earned rest and a

comfortable old age, Mr. Crompton began a work which soon assumed gigantic proportions, and must, during the fourteen years he carried it on, have tried even his indomitable energy. During that period 22 churches were built, and an almost fabulous sum of money was collected from friends in England and Canada. In all weathers and under all circumstances, Mr. Crompton persevered in his toilsome journeys, preaching the Gospel of glad tidings, administering the sacraments to the eager people, and bringing joy and comfort to many a home. In 1885 a lady in England sent out the sum of £600, and on September 30th the foundation stone of the present church of St. Mary's was laid. On August 15th, 1886, the church was opened with enthusiastic services, and since then it has been consecrated by Bishop Sullivan. A tower was afterwards added, and from time to time the interior has been beautified by many costly gifts from England, including some of the handsomest embroidery that is to be found in Canada.

In October, 1889, Mr. Crompton resigned and went to England, where, it need hardly be said, he is not idle.

After a brief interregnum, the Rev. H. P. Lowe, a recent graduate of Trinity College, was appointed incumbent of the mission, (which at present consists of four stations), and he has ever since carried on the work of the mission on the lines laid down by his predecessor.

SIR ISAAC NEWTON is reported to have said, "We account the Scriptures of God to be the most sublime philosophy."