

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

PRESBYTERIAN MISSIONS ON THE CANADA PACIFIC RAILWAY.

MR. EDITOR.—About eighteen months ago the Rev. A. H. Cameron, at that time pastor of a charge in the Presbytery of Brockville, accepted an appointment as missionary to the workmen on Section Fifteen of the Canada Pacific Railway. Not long afterward the contract for

SECTION SIXTEEN

(now known as Section Forty-two or Section B) was let, and the Presbytery of Manitoba at once requested the Home Mission Committee to send an additional missionary. Early in the present month I received the appointment, and left Montreal on the 20th, Toronto on the 22nd, arriving at Emerson on the morning of the 25th. The journey was a most agreeable one for the season; weather fine, roads in good condition, trains always on time, and officials most obliging.

At Emerson I left the train, as it was Sabbath morning. In the evening I went to the Presbyterian Church and heard the pastor, the Rev. John Scott, formerly of Napanee, preach an instructive and thoroughly practical sermon.

Emerson is situated on the Red River, about sixty miles below Winnipeg, and near the southern boundary of Manitoba. It already boasts some 1,200 inhabitants. Four years ago, when Mr. Scott first went to the place, there were only a few houses. Almost every branch of trade is represented. There are five or six churches, and, of course, as many hotels. The town was lately incorporated, the new council holding its first meeting while I was there. The new town's great problem at present is the building of a bridge across the river (at this point about 150 or 200 feet wide), so as to secure the trade of the fertile country lying to the west. If this cannot be accomplished, West Lynne, just across the river, will outstrip it. The Hudson's Bay Company have a post at West Lynne, and their enterprising agent, C. J. Brydges, Esq., is making every effort to build it up. Between the two towns there is a somewhat bitter rivalry. The Mennonite settlement, probably one of the richest and most prosperous in the Province, lies a few miles to the west. Almost every house in Emerson is new, unpainted, and not warm enough for the severe climate, but everyone is busy and the cold is not heeded.

On Monday, the Rev. Mr. Scott called for me, and we drove over

TO PEMBINA, U.S.,

where the thermometer marked 59° below zero during the cold snap at Christmas. Here a handsome church has been erected, at a cost of \$1,300, through the energy of Mr. Scott. It is virtually free from debt.

In these new and rising towns earnest and devoted work is required, both on the part of pastor and people. Young men from all parts are flocking to them. Away from the restraints of religious society and the tender, loving influence of home, and surrounded by manifold temptations, their situation is a critical one. Many will enter the broad road to ruin unless Christian influences are thrown around them. In Mr. Scott our Church has a faithful representative. He has already gathered around him a good-sized congregation and built a commodious and elegant (if we except the pulpit) place of worship. The choir is assisted by a powerful cabinet organ, and the pastor was made very happy the other day by receiving a beautiful communion set from Joseph Mackay, Esq., of Montreal, who had already generously assisted the congregation in church building.

THE PEMBINA BRANCH

of the Canada Pacific Railway is still operated by the contractors, and, in winter especially, trains run very irregularly. A train was announced to leave for Winnipeg on Tuesday, at 11.20, but after waiting until 9 o'clock at night, we were told that no train would leave until 11.20 the following morning. To make sure of my passage, I got breakfast in good time, and it was well for me, physically and mentally, that I did so, for the train came along about two hours before the time appointed, and many of the passengers did not break their fast until we reached Winnipeg, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Several missed the train altogether.

AT WINNIPEG

I was most kindly received by the Rev. J. Robertson, pastor of Knox Church (the first church in the city), and by Professors Bryce and Hart. They are true servants of the Lord, fully alive to the interests of our cause in the Northwest, and self-denying in their efforts to extend the Lord's kingdom. If "Burden Bearer" and his friends could visit this place they would be convinced that there is no institution in connection with the Presbyterian Church in Canada more necessary, or doing more faithful work, than that of Manitoba College, and no Presbytery more economical or harder worked than that which has the immediate oversight of these vast territories.

MY DESTINATION, RAT PORTAGE,

is about 140 miles east of Winnipeg, and over 99 miles of that a train is run once a week. We left Winnipeg at one o'clock on Thursday, and reached Cross Lake about 8 o'clock in the evening. No passenger coaches are yet placed on the road. Ordinary flat cars boarded in, with stationary seats around the sides, are used in their stead. They are far from being comfortable in cold weather unless one is well provided with wraps. Mr. Thom, of Montreal, Messrs. Crowe and Koehler, from the headquarters of Section Fifteen at Cross Lake, myself, and several others, got under the friendly protection of a large buffalo robe, and passed a tolerably comfortable and very enjoyable time. The car was dining, sleeping, and smoking room all in one—principally smoking room. One man took charge of the heating apparatus, whose sole ambition was to make the stove red-hot all over, in which feat he very nearly succeeded more than once. Business was transacted, stories told, and information imparted to strangers like myself, until headquarters were reached. There I was invited in and hospitably entertained for several days. The camps are large and comfortable-looking, but the men suffer a good deal from cold in very severe weather.

THE BRIGHT SIDE

of mission life on the railway is brighter than I had anticipated, but there are obstacles to be overcome, and hardships to be endured. It is most pleasing to find so many of the men intelligent, kind, and glad to see an ambassador for Christ. All here speak very highly of Mr. Cameron and many regret that he cannot find time to preach to them more frequently. As it is, he preaches from three to five times each Sabbath.

I enter upon the work with many misgivings, but at the same time with much confidence. "We can do all things through Christ." I try to leave myself in His hands. May He grant me strength, prudence, and love for perishing souls. In a few hours I hope to meet Mr. Cameron and hear from his own lips the story of his work here. In my next I shall be able to give details of his work and the nature and extent of my own.

W. D. RUSSELL.

Cross Lake, C.P.R., Jan. 30, 1880.

ROMAN CATHOLIC ORDINATION.

MR. EDITOR,—I have noticed with some surprise the rare unanimity with which many Presbyteries have decided the question of Roman Catholic ordination. The Presbytery of Montreal seems to me to be the only one which has fairly and fully grappled with the subject, and of all others it, from its position, is the best qualified to look at the question from the standpoint of a practical knowledge of the difficulties involved. Its decision was the following: "That the ordination of the Church of Rome is confessedly erroneous and defective in its object, yet ought not to be entirely ignored. That the admission of a reformed priest to the status of an ordained Presbyterian without the imposition of hands is re-ordination sufficient." This admits that the Roman Catholic Church is still right in the *form*, however much it may have erred as to the *purpose* and *intention* of ordination. It seems to me that the complete condemnation of Roman Catholic ordination only involves our Church in greater difficulties than before. If Romish ordination be entirely wrong, what becomes of the ordination of the first Reformers? According to Presbyterian ideas of ordination, they could not confer ordination on their successors unless they themselves had first received it; but they only had the ordination which Rome gave them; and some we have reason to believe were only evangelists; yet they organized churches and ordained pastors. If their own ordination were invalid, what right had they, on Presby-

terian principles, to ordain to the office of the ministry? I can see how they could, on Congregational principles, have received ordination from the people over whom they were called to labour, independently of Rome, but this would not have been Presbyterian ordination.

Further, the question of the validity of Roman Catholic baptism is involved in that of ordination. Luther and Calvin, and other Reformers, had only the baptism of Rome; but if the Roman Catholic Church cannot give ordination, then her priests have no right to dispense the sacrament of baptism; because only those who are validly ordained have a right to baptize. It follows from this that the Reformers were neither ordained nor baptized, and consequently on Presbyterian principles were totally disqualified from transmitting such powers to their successors, the Protestant ministry of the present day. Perhaps it may be said that at the Reformation the Church of Rome was a Church of Christ, but has ceased to be one since. If so, this will be news to those who look upon the period immediately preceding the Reformation as the most corrupt period of her history. If she has since ceased to be a Church of Christ, I, for one, should like to know when. When was she cut off as a dead branch from the parent stock by the Catholic Church of Christendom? She professes still to be the Church of Christ. She ordains her priests as ministers of the Gospel, as she understands the Gospel and its ministry. Now the official acts of a minister in any Church, so long as he continues a minister, are recognized as valid *ex officio*, no matter what his personal character may be. Christ recognized the ministerial acts of Judas Iscariot, on his own profession, though, like the Church of Rome, he was altogether wrong as to his object and motives in the performance of those acts. Further, Christ recognized the official acts of the Jewish priesthood, though they had certainly many erroneous views as to the true nature and objects of those acts. On the same principle, so long as the Church of Rome acknowledges the doctrine of the Trinity, including of course Christ's divinity, and claims to be the Church of Christ, her official forms should be recognized. If we deny their validity, how can we maintain the validity of our own, which originally have been received from her? What is the Church going to do with the numbers of converts from Rome who have been received into her pale with no other baptism than that given by Rome? Will she baptize them over again? If, on the other hand, she acknowledges Roman Catholic baptism, how can she consistently deny the validity of the ordination which gives the only right to confer such baptism, viz.: Roman Catholic ordination? The Presbyterian Church acknowledges the ordination of the English Church. The Church of England accepts the ordination of Rome. Let a priest of Rome only enter the Church of England priesthood, stay there a while, and claim admission to our Church, and he would be received without re-ordination, having only received the ordination of Rome. Let him come in a straightforward manner, directly from Rome to us, and, according to many of our Presbyteries, he must needs be re-ordained. I know of no theologian of any merit who denies the validity of Roman Catholic ordination. Dr. Hodge strongly favours it. If, however, I am wrong in my views, I shall be very happy to be set right by some of the brethren who think they are orthodox in repudiating everything from Rome, at the expense, it may be, of logical consistency.

WHY?

OUR COLLEGES.

MR. EDITOR,—I hope you will excuse me for writing you a few lines on the subject of our colleges, which deservedly occupy a good deal of the attention of our Church. When I first came to Canada, nearly fifty years ago, if any one had talked of a Presbyterian college, he would have been considered a very sanguine individual indeed. I don't think there was a Protestant college of any kind from "ocean to ocean" in British North America. Now we have six colleges of various descriptions belonging to our Presbyterian body alone, and all of them, I believe, doing good work. The last of the number, as you are aware, was established at Winnipeg, the capital of the Province of Manitoba, and I am sorry to think that some faint-hearted folks would fain abandon it, or leave it to its own limited resources. For my part, and I feel sure there are many like minded, I say let us support it manfully and liberally, as it is in a sense the very van-