

**MISSION WORK ON THE UPPER OTTAWA
—FORT TEMISCAMINGUE AND THE
REGIONS BEYOND.**

MR. EDITOR,—My only excuse for troubling you or your readers with any more of the Upper Ottawa is, because the country itself and the condition and circumstances of the people in every respect, and more particularly, religiously, are so little known to our Church at large; and seeing that we have undertaken to keep a missionary there, it is taken for granted that for that reason, if for no other, many in the Church will be glad to know more about this part of our Home Mission field.

The term Upper Ottawa, is something like "The West," it is rather difficult to fix just where it begins. As it is supposed to designate a region somewhere on the outer limits of Canadian civilization, we people of Pembroke naturally conclude it does not begin just here, but at the very least, a few miles above us. For missionary purposes, this is the case, and it is clear that it must terminate where the Ottawa terminates, that is where it begins (paradoxical as this may appear). Since our missionary, the Rev. S. J. Taylor, B.A., was settled in Mattawan in May last, I have been most anxious for my own sake, as well as to cheer and encourage Mr. Taylor in his lonely and laborious work to, take the round of his field, in whole or in part, in company with him. Every obstacle being at last overcome, on the morning of Sept. 30th, I left Pembroke, full of interested anticipation with respect to the work before us. As the dull and hazy autumn, or to use an expressive Canadian word, fall, morning brightened up into the warm, clear, shining day, the woods on both sides of the river shone out in such varied, picturesque and resplendent beauty as made all around look more like an enchanted land than a reality. Never have I seen autumn woods more fascinatingly beautiful. My Canadian enthusiasm and admiration would not shrink from challenging any part of the world to produce anything of the same kind to equal it. Before proceeding to our starting point, the village of Mattawan, two hundred miles above Ottawa, I may just say for the benefit of any tourist who may visit this district, that the sail from Pembroke to Des Joachins is decidedly the finest part of the hundred miles from this place to the little village spoken of.

On Wednesday Mattawan was reached, and in the evening, the usual prayer-meeting was held and was well attended. When the church was opened in March last the inside walls showed only the bare and unattractive logs, no pews, no convenient approach; now it is plastered inside and looks bright and cheery, a few comfortable pews, sufficient for the present, have been put in; the large boulders which obstructed the entrance have been cleared away, and everything indicates interest, taste and push on the part of those who lead our people at this place. Here I was joined by Mr. Taylor and from this place we were together. Our objective point on this occasion was Fort Temiscamingue and the region beyond, and being all ready to start at any moment, we only waited the opportunity to go. That not appearing on Thursday, we visited a number of the people expecting to move onward the next day. The next day accordingly, about 11 o'clock a.m., we started in one of the Hon. Hudson Bay Company's canoes, which had arrived the previous evening with Colin Rankin, Esq., the head agent of the Company in this district, who with the kindness and courtesy characteristic, not only of him as an individual, but of all their officials, now in the handsomest manner made good a promise long ago freely given to take me up the river when any of their canoes happened to be down. Our company consisted of the wife of one of the employés of Mr. Rankin, in rather delicate health, with a baby two and a half months old, Mr. Taylor, four half-breed Indians and a shantyman going up to his winter's work, as canoe-men, besides the writer. In addition we had three tents and their belongings, blankets, cooking utensils, provisions, and other lading. We had eighty miles before us, and with no head winds, expected to reach our destination late on Saturday night or early Sabbath morning. The river for several miles above Mattawan is broken by rapids, and soon we came to the first portage. Here for the first time I saw portaging done scientifically. The moment the canoe is landed and the last passenger is safe on shore, the loading is handed out with great quickness, every man seizes a tump-line, a sort of strong leather thong, several feet in length, with a band of two and a half or three inches wide in the

centre of it, binds this round a bag, or box, or whatever may be handiest, and swinging it on his back, rests the broad part of the line on his forehead, then piling on the top of bag or box, first one thing, then another, and another, until you wonder he does not sink, starts off for the head, as the upper end of a portage is called, at a half run, and repeats this process till all is over and in the canoe again, which has also been portaged, or led round, or towed up the rapid. Meanwhile the passengers have portaged themselves, and are ready when the canoe is. But what of this two-and-a-half months old baby and the frail mother? Whether it was owing to natural selection, or the eternal fitness of things, or some other profound and equally mysterious reason, deponent saith not, but somehow it always fell to his lot to portage the baby, and whether it was owing to the skill and tenderness with which it was done, or to natural endowment, is not for me to say, but I can bear testimony to the good nature of, at least, one Canadian baby. I flatter myself that, if our expedition should have no other result, I have earned the everlasting gratitude of the mother of this youngster. All went well till we came to the last of the portages on this stretch of the river, that at the Mountain Rapid. Here, while the canoe was being towed up by three of the men, the other two managing it, suddenly it swung round broadside to the strong and rapid current, in a narrow passage between two rocks, and began to fill, narrowly escaping an upset, but wetting all the cargo, which was not portaged here. Night was coming on, and the men, wet and tired, having got the canoe round to the head, determined to camp for the night. The good humour and pleasantry of the Indians, as they laughed, chatted, and joked, in their native tongue, while they built a blazing, crackling fire, set up the tents, hung out the things to dry on the bushes, made the tea, fried their pork, and prepared generally for supper and bed, was beyond all praise. Nothing like this life for giving an appetite. I actually caught myself in the very act of breaking the tenth commandment, looking with wistful eyes at the pork sputtering in the frying pan. Soon we had tea, though no pork, and we did ample and impartial justice to everything set before us, asking no questions, but not, I am afraid for conscience' sake. After tea, all gathered round the tent door and the account was read of Joseph and his brethren, then we had prayer, and all turned in for the night. This was my first experience of tenting in the camp ground, and I must confess that, what with the hardness of the bed, the novelty of the situation, the fire blazing near, the Indians laying close by, not in a tent, but under the open sky, wrapped up in their blankets, and the sound of the water rushing among the rocks, sleep was but an occasional visitor that night. At about half-past two next morning we were called up. The fire was cheerily blazing, breakfast steaming, the stars shining bright and clear, and going down to the river we performed our morning ablutions, and prepared for our early meal. To one unaccustomed to it, stealing up the river in so frail a craft, the darkness as yet unrelieved, except by the light of stars, the silence broken only by the regular measured dip of the paddles, and the water lapping against the canoe, the shadowy forms of the high dark banks ahead or slowly creeping past us, the feeling of far-awayness, if I may coin a word, all impart a weirdness to the scene and excite the imagination. Day at last broke, and while it was yet quite early we again drew up on shore. I exposed my ignorance of this mode of life by asking what this was for, and was told that we were going to have breakfast. Eating four times a day, with now and then five times, is the rule in this kind of travelling, and the beauty of it is, that you are always ready, and nobody dreams of grumbling. We were now on Seven League Lake, and at the head of this lake is the Long Sault Rapid. "Men are but children of a larger growth." While crossing this long portage, Mr. Taylor and myself—the mother and baby remained in the canoe—whiled away the time by unloosing a great boulder from its bed on the brow of the hill which formed the river bank, and at last down it went bounding, crashing, tearing, breaking and smashing to the bottom. O, it is fine to be a boy again! At a certain point the rapid is so rough and strong that everything had to be taken out of the canoe, and it is worth while going a long way to see four strong fellows working the tiny craft up through, among, and over concealed boulders, against the whole force of the strong swift stream. I stood and watched it with intense interest; every man standing up, wielding with sure and desperate energy a long stout

pole, hats off, hair blowing about, straining every muscle to its utmost; now they push altogether, sending her powerfully onward, now they hold her, now she is forced back, over she goes, no not quite, at it again and up she darts, slowly but surely; at last she is in smooth water, and the brave fellows, sweating, breathing hard, but cool, turn to cooking dinner.

Next morning was Sabbath and we were at the foot of Lake Temiscamingue about forty miles from the Fort, our destination. We were disappointed in having to spend the sacred day on the lake, instead of holding a service with the people at the end of our journey, but the only help was to make the best of it. Early in the morning we landed at a most delightful spot to breakfast. Meeting here a French Canadian who had come out with his gun to look after some traps he had set for foxes, we were told of a Protestant family about three-quarters of a mile away. We at once started to see them while breakfast was getting ready. We found a very kind, pleasant, and intelligent household, consisting of husband and wife, and two hired men. With them and the Frenchman and his wife we read and expounded the scriptures and prayed, and then after breakfast with them, which we could not refuse, hurried back at top speed to our canoe and went on our way. The day was one of surpassing loveliness and gave the lake, which is one of charming beauty, the fairest setting. The sail might be made a great many times, I should suppose, without finding a combination of so many elements to give continual interest and ever varying beauty to the scene. I can never forget it. I have heard it called a monotonous kind of beauty but I did not, nor can I imagine my ever feeling it so. It is a beautiful sheet of water from two to four or five miles wide. It glistened and sparkled in the sun; the shores changed in appearance every hour; now on the one hand, they receded in a rising upland to the distance of a mile or more, covered to the summit with many and gaily coloured foliage, bordered in the foreground with a line of pure white sand; on the other hand, they would now project into the lake in bold headlands of granite, solid and hard as iron, or broken into immense masses by the power of frost and heat, then they would stand up in a perpendicular, or even overhanging wall, frowning high above us; then you came upon some pretty island, seen reflected almost as clearly in the water below as it appeared above; and now you heard the brawling of a river as it tumbled over the rocks into the lake, and here and there, but at long intervals, appeared a dwelling or a mill. Autumn leaves lay floating idly or gently swaying up or down upon the bosom of the lake, and close by, the water would suddenly be broken into ripples by some fish darting up to catch a fly. And so the day passed, not without much silent and adoring worship of Him who "makes gay the solitary place, who has made the beauties of the wilderness as well as the fairer forms which cultivation glories in." At sunset the fort was reached, where we were hospitably welcomed and entertained by the family and household of Mr. Rankin. After supper all were gathered in, and with reading of the scriptures, exposition, exhortation, and prayer, the day was closed.

W. D. BALLANTYNE.

Pembroke, Oct. 1879.

THE congregation of St. George's Church, Edinburgh, has been looking round for a successor to the Rev. Dr. Stevenson. To expedite matters, a committee was recently appointed and it has recommended the Rev. Dr. Donald McLeod, Park Church, Glasgow. As many of our readers are aware the Doctor is a brother of the more celebrated "Norman," whom he succeeded as editor of "Good Words."

REV. JACOB ABBOTT, after a long and useful life, has passed away. His name has been known throughout Christendom for many years. The years which he spent in what is known as "the ministry" were but few, but his entire life was a ministry. By his pen he reached thousands whom he could not have reached by his voice, and his influence was ever for good. His first work was "The Young Christian," and it made its mark at once, and many copies of it have been scattered here and there. But it was only the beginning. It is said that he has written and published more than two hundred different books, and they are all designed for the young. To him certainly the words were applied, "Well done, good and faithful servant."