

the Spirit, he described the peace as "a grace which would keep a man sweet and even, though he should not get a room to suit him or table waiting which deprived him of the opportunity of exercising patience." The accommodation was remarkably good, considering the crowd, yet every one understood the allusion and gave it a good-natured recognition. Between these great congregations there were many lesser ones under the trees upon breezy "Round top" behind the Seminary, or in private rooms, seeking light from the Word or power at the throne.

THE CLOSING DAY

was probably the best of all. Its chief theme was "The Church at work under the guidance and energy of the Holy Spirit" as described in the Acts of the Apostles. The book was searched from beginning to end for light upon this subject by men of learning and experience, and old and new truths brought out clearly and forcibly, which cannot but be remembered by the eager crowd of listeners, so soon to return to their varied fields of labour. The afternoon was given to a great prayer meeting for divine direction and blessing for all Christian workers, and, for an hour and a half, fervent supplication ascended, interrupted only by special requests or an occasional hymn. This over, this remarkable gathering dispersed refreshed for future labour.

WORKERS' MOVEMENTS.

Mr. Moody's programme for the coming season does not seem very definitely settled, but he will probably spend the three autumn months prior to the Presidential election, in Canada, beginning with Nova Scotia and working his way westward. He will not be accompanied by Mr. Sankey, who goes to England for two months or more, but probably by Mr. Stebbins or Mr. Towner, both of whom have been prominent here upon the singers' platform, and are first class leaders and soloists.

Mr. J. Hudson Taylor, of the China Inland Mission, whose addresses have contributed greatly to the spiritual interest and profit of the occasion, has been enlisting recruits for his foreign field. After visiting a few other points in this country he will take a run through Canada, beginning at Stratford and thence eastward by Toronto, Montreal, etc. He is accompanied by his son and Mr. Reginald Radcliffe, of Liverpool. A few words in closing may be given what might be called

NORTHFIELD IDEAS,

though not confined to its locality or atmosphere. Prominent among these is the necessity of reform in methods of Christian work, especially in regard to a lengthened college course in preparation for missionary work in home or foreign fields, which is regarded, not only as unnecessary, but prejudicial to success, as tending to cool the fervour of first love enthusiasm. Instantaneous obedience to the divine call, like that of Philip in Acts viii, is recognized as the apostolic model, and some eminent modern college professors, such as the late Dr. Wayland, president of Brown University, are quoted in support. The new language will be learned on the spot and training at the same time acquired in the work. The scanty and tardy fruits of work under the old regime are pointed out in confirmation. The lack of higher education will be more than made up by power from on high. Tarry (Acts ii. 7.) till that be got—no longer. Speaking of Peter at Pentecost, and Stephen, "the man with the shining face," whose sermon, though a "layman," is so fully recorded, Mr. Moody exclaimed, "I would rather have one drop of Holy Ghost power than all the intellectual power in the world." Great stress was put upon preaching of the apostolic type, which laid down firmly as the four corner stones of the Christian Church, Christ's death, resurrection, ascension, and return to rule and judge. Along with this was emphasized the importance of going to God in prayer for everything, including the men and means and measures essential for aggressive movements, commensurate with the Church's great commission to "disciple all nations." It must be allowed that there is much to be said in favour of these views, and that, ably advocated and illustrated by such men as Moody, Pierson, of Philadelphia, Hudson Taylor, Guinness and Spurgeon, they are gaining ground and command the attention of thoughtful minds, however they may run counter to hoary custom and prejudice.

August 10, 1888.

HARDSHIPS OF THE NORTH-WEST MISSIONARIES.

The following letter was sent recently to the secretary of the Women's Home Missionary Society of Zion Church, Brantford. It will be read with interest by many who sympathize with the hard struggles of our missionaries in the North-West:

A missionary's life here is decidedly a hard one. Much toil, many difficulties, and not much encouragement. For the past three or four years crops have been miserably poor, and the farmer had, in nearly every case, a hard fight to keep the wolf from the door. Debts grew larger instead of being paid off, and as nearly no money came in, clothes had to be worn mean and threadbare ere new ones came. In this state of things, where was the minister's salary to come from? People could not give what they had not got.

Then owing, I suppose, to bad business arrangements, the money sent to supplement the missionary's salary from the Home Mission Fund, always came late—at the middle and sometimes the end of the quarter. You can fancy this trying position for an honest and sensitive man, who likes his accounts paid at the date they are due, and I consider it important that a minister should stand perfect in this respect, as well as any other, before the eyes of his people. I had lately the pleasure and privilege of ministering for a day and a night to the wants of a good old servant of the Lord, who labours in a dreary field, about sixty miles off Moosomin. That gentleman had received no money for over seven months, and he told me he felt ashamed to go amongst his people in the suit he wore. He had not been able to pay his board for quite a while, and he had some fears that he might lose his horse and buggy on this account. My heart ached for him, for well I knew his position. Had we not had some private means when we came here, we must have often known real want. The missionary's wife has also her part of the burden to bear. On such limited means proper help cannot be afforded, thus I know what it is to be my own housemaid, nurse, cook, and washerwoman, and often I have felt very much discouraged, and very weary, physically as well as mentally.

But this is the darkest side of the picture that I paint first. The past year has been a good one, and an abundant harvest has been reaped. It has given hope to many a weary struggling one, but more good years are yet needed ere prosperity can be amongst us. The battle has been so long, and the wounds of debt and general poverty so deeply laid that it will take several favourable years to bring about a healthy state of things. Many of the folk are, I believe, willing to pay something for the cause of Christ, and would do so liberally did their means permit. These trials have to be endured by the pioneers in any new country, and the sympathy of brethren and friends in more favoured circumstances would lighten the burden much. Your letter was the first of the kind I had received during nearly six years, and the knowledge that some kind people really did think of the labourers out here in the wilds and sympathize with us did me good. Moosomin is a village of about 500 inhabitants. We have some good stores and hotels, a mill and an elevator. But here the missionary finds his task even more arduous than in the outlying stations. There is less wholesome restraint felt here than in older Provinces, and the free and easy life often leads to sin and immorality in many a form. Strong drink is smuggled into the town, and a good deal of drinking is done privately. For want of better men, Justices of the Peace were made here of men who never would have held the office in the places they came from. Those whom we have now favour the cause of the whiskey-seller where they can, and the result is sad in the extreme. Our police-officer here, a most worthy man, complained to my husband the other day that one of his men got a severe sentence last week from two of our Justices of the Peace, when in the simply doing of his duty, but by some catch they are able to fine him, and they did so.

My husband has three stations to supply, but when he came here first he had six. He has driven forty-four miles with the thermometer standing at forty-six below zero. He has long drives now every Sabbath, one to a station nine miles off, and the other, sixteen miles off. In summer the work is much pleasanter

than in the winter months. The prairie is, in some places, lovely beyond description; the wild flowers are many and beautiful, and we have many very pretty, and, to me, strange wild-birds. Most garden flowers grow here, and we can raise excellent vegetables of all kinds. Tomatoes, pumpkins, citrons, squashes, melons, etc., have all done well this year, and wild berries of all kinds have been very plentiful. I should like very much to send you a jar of jelly from our native fruit next summer. If the frost would only keep off till the middle or end of September, all years would be good here, but it does not come early every year, and with some more hard fighting, and patience, and plodding, I think there is yet a good future for the Great Lone Land. I shall be pleased to answer any questions you might like to ask at any time.

THE SIX MONTHS' LIMIT.

MR. Editor,—“Montrealer” writing under the above caption in your issue of the 18th ult., says among other things, “It is one thing to have the right to advise, and even urge, congregations. It is quite another thing to dictate and impose. Congregations know their right in this matter, and if the Presbytery intrudes, by appointing a man to labour amongst a congregation, without consulting the wishes of that congregation, they (the Presbytery) had better be prepared at the same time with that man's stipend.”

The concluding part of the above quotation—i. e. the “stipend” part—is certainly a potent lever. It moves Presbyteries; and no mightier black thorn or shillelah can be used for the defence of the right of congregations to call (or not to call) a minister. With your permission, Mr. Editor, I will give two illustrations of the successful (?) working of the present system of settling vacant congregations and the influence of the “be-prepared-with-that-man's-stipend” consideration.

1. A certain congregation under the care of one of the Presbyteries in connection with “the Presbyterian Church in Canada” has existed as an organized congregation for twenty-three years. It reports more than seventy families. The families are generally large. When there is service, from 250 to 300 (sometimes more) attend. During the period of its existence, the congregation had a settled pastor for only three years. It is now vacant—and has been for years. In fairness to the congregation, it must be said that it extended one call, which was declined.

In this case the Presbytery did “advise and even urge,” yet it has been vacant for twenty out of twenty-three years. The congregation is often three (and at times more than three) months without any supply whatever. When the congregation is informed that a suitable probationer can be secured for several Sabbaths or months, the reply—though perhaps not so boldly stated—is in strict accord with “Montrealer's” sentiment—“be prepared with the stipend.” The writer knows whereof he affirms; he has visited the field, advised, urged, encouraged the congregation to secure a settled pastor, yet it is vacant; and the Presbytery's Convener reports concerning the field: “They will not receive a probationer in order to save money for some other purpose.”

2. Another congregation became vacant twelve years ago. No call has been extended to any minister during that time; and no effort has been put forth by the congregation to secure a pastor. About five years ago—when the congregation had been vacant for seven years—the Presbytery, seeing the sad condition of the field, took initial steps for the securing of permanent supply. Correspondence was had with a minister who was supposed to be available. The brother in question was well recommended by those who knew him and his labours. He gave his consent to go to the field for one or two years to begin with. The necessary grant was voted by the Home Mission Committee. The Presbytery, glad that a needy field was about to have regular Gospel ordinances, were about to proceed with the appointment when the potent question was put: “Do the Presbytery suppose that this congregation will give for the support of a minister whom they have not called?”

The right of the congregation was respected. They continue to exercise that right (?) still, with this result, that to-day the probability—if not certainty—is that no Presbyterian minister will ever be settled there. Will “Montrealer” please indicate what course should be adopted for the best interests of the above and similar cases? No one disputes the right of a Presbyterian congregation to call a minister; but the question is, When a congregation fails to exercise the right and to perform duty, should not the Presbytery act in the interests of that congregation? And if it should, what is the limit to be granted to a congregation—six months, six, twelve or twenty years—which?

If a husband has no right “to plunge a weapon into the heart of his wife,” has a congregation a right to destroy itself? Though claiming no wisdom,

August, 1888.

ONE OF THE EAST.