

Our Contributors.

THE SWEET REASONABLENESS OF MR. AND MRS. WOODBEE.

BY KNOXIAN.

The Woodbees lived in the village of Smith's Corners. They were rather pretentious people. They had firm convictions on just one point, and that was that the Woodbee family was much better than any other family in Smith's Corners. They tried to establish their superiority in two ways—they ran down everybody and everything at the Corners and claimed to be on very familiar terms with big people in neighbouring towns and cities whose names they happened to know. Having neither brains nor energy to make a position in the world for themselves, they tried to hang on the skirts of those who had a recognized place in society. Picking one's teeth on the steps in front of the Rossin House does not by any means prove that one has dined there; nor does flippant familiarity with the names of people of position prove that one ever spoke to them. A would-be gentleman once tried to establish himself at an Atlantic watering-place as a man of distinction by familiarly alluding to the Blakes as "Ned" and "Sam." In his talks around the hotel with Canadian and Yankee politicians he always contrived to drag in the names, "Ned" and "Sam." He may have known these distinguished gentlemen by sight, though chances are a million to one he never spoke to either of them. He didn't make a distinguished man of himself by saying "Ned" and "Sam." Distinction is not won in that way in this country. The Woodbees tried to prop themselves up in that way, and put in an additional prop by sneering at Smith's Corners. Among other things that they habitually sneered at was the church in which they professed to worship. Whatever else they missed they never missed the church.

The Rev. John Faithful was one of the ministers of Smith's Corners. It was his dire misfortune to have the Woodbees in his congregation. They were and had always been a nuisance. They never did any work. They never paid any money. Their pew rent had not been paid within the memory of any living treasurer. They did nothing but put on airs and sneer. Heaven knows they never prayed. When they came into the little church they always looked around with a patronizing air which seemed to say, "You common people of Smith's Corners ought to be very thankful that you have the Woodbees here." The Woodbees thought their presence was worth much more to a congregation than power from on high.

Mr. Faithful had three stations, and drove nearly twenty miles every Sabbath. He had done this for many years. He was a good man and had done good, solid work. The pious, sensible people of the congregation were much attached to him. He had helped most of them in severe trouble, and had preached to them as well as he could. His influence in the community had been of the best. The good people in all the other denominations greatly respected him. Of late years some of Mr. Faithful's intimate friends had begun to notice that his health was not vigorous. His long drives in all kinds of weather were beginning to tell. At times he felt discouraged. The family had increased, but the salary remained the same. He had no money to buy books, and his mind was losing its freshness and elasticity. His long, weary drives unfitted him for study. He had never taken a holiday for the best of all reasons—he never could get one. He didn't mind hardship himself; but it did grieve him when he saw his companion, once as fair and lovely a bride as ever stood at the altar, worn and weary, and likely to break down in middle life. It grieved him too to think that his children were not likely to get a fair start in life through their father's poverty. What worried him most, however, was the systematic persecution of the Woodbees. They never ceased to do all in their power to make his life bitter. Mrs. Woodbee was fiendishly cruel. One of her favourite ways of torturing Mr. Faithful was to go over a list of ministers whose names she saw in print—some of whom were most conspicuous failures—some of whom would have been "hoisted" ten years ago if their people could have hoisted them—some of whom would never get another call if they were hoisted—and say: "If we could only have a minister like them."

Mr. and Mrs. Woodbee took a short trip during the holiday season and visited a neighbouring city. Though the Woodbees had no money to spend, and no brains to weary, they always took a trip to some city to keep up their tone. It was generally understood that they pinched themselves eleven months in the year to take a trip in the twelfth. When in the city they went to hear Dr. Boanerges. The Doctor had just returned from a three months' tour in Europe, and was at his best. His nerves were steady, his brain clear, his voice flexible and the whole man in capital working trim. His people had given him a warm welcome home, the church was crowded and all the circumstances such that a man could hardly fail to preach well if he had any preach in him. During his absence he had gathered up some capital texts obtained in various ways, and made a first-class sermon on one of them. He had thought for weeks on the text, and when his mind was full had dashed off a capital sermon which he actually wearied to preach to his people. The time had now come, and the service all through, as well as the sermon, was of the highest order.

The Woodbees loomed up from a back seat into which one of the ushers had thrust them. They tried their very best to look like distinguished people. The effort was a dismal failure. Distinguished airs did not sit kindly on Mr. and Mrs. Woodbee. The clay was common, and no amount of posturing and attitudinizing and grimacing could make it look like anything else. They met with some serious mishaps. The Doctor read a selection from one of the minor prophets, and Woodbee could not find the place. He turned and turned until he became nervous and flushed in the face, but it was no use. Nahum would not come to the front. Mrs. Woodbee was in a similar difficulty, but her womanly tact saved her. When two or three efforts failed to find Nahum, she pretended to have it and looked quite confidently at Ecclesiastes. No man would ever have thought of doing that. When the service was over Mr. and Mrs. Woodbee had a long dialogue on their way to their boarding-house which we reserve for another week. The dialogue brings out their sweet reasonableness.

FROM THE FAR WEST.

NOTES BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF REGINA.

ORDAINED MISSIONARIES.

Several missionaries labouring within the Presbytery of Regina are to be ordained at the Presbytery meeting to be held next week in Regina, N.-W. T. This step augurs well for our mission fields. Baptisms, marriages and, in many cases, the celebration of the Lord's Supper have to be attended to even in the farthest-away outposts, and in such places; far from any settled charge, the missionary who does not possess the authority and privileges of the regular ministry not only labours under personal disadvantage, but sees his own position looked upon with some degree of suspicion and the work correspondingly hindered.

THE MOUNTAIN MISSION.

Mr. D. C. Cameron is reinforced, though for three or four weeks only, in his interesting work in the Rocky Mountains and along the C. P. R. Rev. D. McLeod, of Pricville, at present on a visit to the West, after taking a trip through the prairies, has, at the request of members of Presbytery, consented to help to break ground in the mountain field. It is probable that Mr. McLeod will spend his time mainly at Donald, Rogers' Pass and Farwell, Mr. Cameron meanwhile supplying Cochrane, Kananaskis, Canmore and Banff. Presbytery at its meeting next week will be asked to appoint an ordained missionary for the winter term, as Mr. Cameron starts for college next month.

GLEICHEN.

The first Presbyterian service ever held at Gleichen was conducted at that place by one of our missionaries a few days ago. Gleichen is a divisional point on the C. P. R., between Medicine Hat and Calgary, and is quite an interesting town—as these hamlets along the railway of a half-dozen or a half-score houses are universally called. Gleichen comprises a round-house, with accommodation for eleven locomotives, a machine shop, station buildings, dining rooms, a library and reading room for employees, two small stores, a post office, a few bachelors' shacks,

and about half-a-dozen other houses. A well 500 feet deep supplies the community with water that tastes at once of alkali and of mineral impregnation. A C. P. R. experimental farm is also to be seen here, with wheat, oats, potatoes and garden vegetables, all in splendid condition, the dry summer notwithstanding. In the neighbourhood is the large ranch of General Strange, commander of the Alberta forces of last year's Indian rebellion. Adjoining is the Indian reserve, where in their "tepees" on the banks of the Bow River, with Crowfoot and Old Sun as their chiefs, live in two settlements the restless, warlike but loyal Blackfeet—pagans all of them, well fed, childish in their paint and beads and finery, delighting in horse-riding and gambling, tenacious of their heathen sun dances and war dances, and scornful for the most part of the paleface and his ways. Poor Crowfoot, with the astute impenetrable Roman profile! He told his people years ago that they were doomed, when whispers of the coming railway reached his ears; and to-day he mourns over the death in his own lodge of his friend Poundmaker. The agency buildings on the Blackfoot Reserve are very fine and the views entrancing. East a few miles is the mission house, where, amid discouragements, but in faith and hope, live two worthy missionaries of the Church of England, while in the lower part of the reserve the Roman Catholics labour, and conduct also at High River, half-way between the Blackfeet and the Bloods, an industrial school for the education and training of Indian children. How discouraging meanwhile is the work may be inferred from the fact that no Blackfoot is known to have yet openly renounced paganism.

Our missionary had a very pleasant meeting in Gleichen, with good singing, excellent attendance, and general interest. A large proportion of the people are Presbyterians, who are much pleased at the prospect of having occasional service. Gleichen may be set down henceforth as one of our preaching stations; so that our work is already outgrowing the recently-issued mission map of Manitoba and the North-West Territories. The service was held in the commodious reading-room of the station.

FORT M'LEOD.

Fort McLeod, now generally known simply as McLeod, is an intensely western town, of not much over 200 inhabitants, centre of a large ranching country, and having close connection with the United States. In former times it has been a refuge for all kinds of hardened characters, some of them fugitives from justice, and is the headquarters for Canada of all that is typically western and wild. Here, in isolation and amid unhelpful surroundings, laboured for nearly eighteen months bravely and well Mr. W. P. McKenzie, from Knox College, Toronto. Shortly before he left, the place was visited by Rev. James Robertson, Superintendent of Missions, by whose exertions a church was built, seating upward of fifty, at a cost of \$1,150, all paid, and all of it but a small grant made up by local subscriptions, all denominations joining in. Rev. A. Currie has been labouring in the field this summer, and doing faithful and self-denying work amid rather depressing surroundings. The congregation is small; there is not a single communicant; vice and indifference and scepticism abound; it is the day of small things in McLeod. Pincher Creek, thirty-five miles away among the Foot Hills, is a prosperous little settlement, and here our missionary has service every alternate Sunday with more encouragement and a larger congregation. The whole field is a rather perplexing one, and the difficulties are augmented by the fact that living is very high—so high that the Church in the East has no idea of it, and an ordinary salary becomes utterly inadequate here. The whole situation will probably come up for discussion in Presbytery; meanwhile and in any case no retrogressive step should for a moment be thought of.

COST OF LIVING.

The cost of living all through the Far West is very much higher than is commonly known throughout the Church. The rent of a small house of six rooms, one suitable for a small family, is from \$20 to \$25 a month. Butter sells at 40 cents and 50 cents a pound, eggs, 35 cents a dozen, and other things accordingly. Local papers are \$1 a month; ferry charges across the rivers are high, and the country is nearly all rivers, and only some of them are ford-