

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

IN MEMORIAM.

MRS. MACHAR.

MR. EDITOR,—Kindly allow me space for a few sentences concerning Mrs. Machar, in addition to the appreciative notice which has already appeared in your columns. Having been privileged to know her intimately since the beginning of my college days, and to receive unspeakable benefit from intercourse with her, it is perhaps fitting that I should, however imperfectly, bear testimony to her singular worth.

Mrs. Machar had lived just fifty years in Kingston, having come out in 1833. She was born in the manse of Barry, some nine miles from Dundee, her father having been minister of that parish for nearly half a century. Coming from the Scottish manse to be the wife of one of our most honoured ministers, the late Rev. John Machar, D.D., of St. Andrew's Church, Kingston, she proved herself to be both to the congregation and to the community all that "the minister's wife" is expected to be. Since Dr. Machar's death in 1863, she has continued to reside in Kingston, spending the summer for some years past at Ferncliff, Gananoque, where she died on the 6th October last, after an illness of precisely one year—the result of a severe fall, occasioned by insidious paralysis.

Mrs. Machar was no ordinary woman, whether we consider the outward aspect of her life and work or her spiritual character. She devoted herself unremittingly to the work of ministering to the bodily and spiritual needs of the poor and the sick, the careless and neglected. From the time of her coming to Kingston she was connected with a society called "The Female Benevolent Society," which eventually became merged in the "Orphan's Home and Widow's Friend Society," in the organization of which Mrs. Machar took a leading part, and of which she was president till the close of her life. For twenty years she was at the head of the "City Mission and Poor Relief Society," and for a longer time president of the "Ladies' Bible Society." She took an active interest in the Ladies' Missionary Society of St. Andrew's Church during the whole of its existence, and was president of the Kingston Woman's Foreign Mission Society from its beginning until the time of her death. Mrs. Machar's connection with these various societies did not mean simply the attending of the meetings of boards or committees, but constant personal intercourse with the needy, the sick, the sorrowful, the erring. She was, indeed, "a succourer of many"—"full of good works and alms deeds which she did." Very truly did Prof. Williamson say in his address at the funeral service: "The death of no one in this city would be felt with anything like the same universal concern by all classes and denominations. Others have done well, but none have laboured for the good of the community so long and devotedly as she."

This was the outward aspect of her life. Those who had the privilege of knowing her intimately knew what were the secret springs of this life of active well-doing. Mrs. Machar lived near to God. Her spirit fed constantly on the bread of life. One could not be in her company without realizing that there was a spiritual atmosphere about her. The reading of the Bible was with her not simply a matter of devout routine. It furnished food for constant reflection; she was ever finding new treasures in the precious Word, and calling others to rejoice with her. She often spoke of the Psalms, and of the benefit of having committed them to memory in childhood. More than most Christians, she meditated on the law of the Lord day and night. Possessing a mind of great breadth and grasp, she took an active interest in theological discussions, bringing every view presented into the light of God's Word, and seeking to find out its bearing on the spiritual life. She saw clearly how much of controversy is about words rather than about realities, and she always sought to check the spirit of mere intellectual gladiatorialship. There are many of us who have reason to know how wise she was in counsel, with the wisdom born of love and of the realization of God's presence. She appealed always to the highest motives and sought to set common duties in the light of God and of eternity.

Son and daughter mourn her loss, and many spiritual sons and daughters unite with them in blessing God for the life and influence of such a mother in Israel. At the annual meeting in connection with the

Orphans' Home, held a few days after her death, many loving words of remembrance were spoken. The remarks made by Principal Grant on that occasion will express the thoughts and feelings of many hearts:

"I came here to-night solely to pay a tribute to the memory of her whose loss we mourn—to drop, as it were, one little flower on her grave. As the resolution was read, her face and form appeared before my eyes and yours; that well-known face, so strong and gentle, so grave and sweet, so full of spiritual light and practical judgment. There is a sense in which this society and the city of Kingston have lost her. When I heard of her death I felt that a great moral and spiritual force had been taken from the community. But she is not really lost to us. She is still here, in every one of her good works, in every family assisted by her, in every institution built up by her wise and loving care, in every soul to whom she had been a minister of God. This is the difference between the selfish and the unselfish life, and in the difference we see the unspeakable dignity of the latter. When the self-seeking man or woman dies, what is left? Absolutely nothing. All that they have eaten and drank and toiled for is gone. There is nothing to show for it, and, as a matter of necessity, they are forgotten. But how supremely different is it with the Christ-like life! Mrs. Machar will live in as many of those children as may be inspired to walk in her footsteps. She will live in all those who shared her labours and who are animated by her spirit. She will live in the Orphan's Home and every good cause with which she identified herself. We are now divided from herself. We are now divided from her for a little time by the narrow stream of death, but her example will stimulate, and her memory will be a precious inheritance to every one who knew her."

D. J. MACDONNELL.

St. Andrew's Manse, Toronto, 1st Nov., 1893.

THE RELIGIOUS SIDE OF RAT PORTAGE.

MR. EDITOR,—The people of Ontario have been so much deluged with Rat Portage during recent months that modesty would prevent me trespassing on your space did not justice demand it. You have had the boundary question *ad nauseum*, and the political side of our life without stint; but I have seen little or nothing of the religious side, and I dare say it may be news to some that we keep the Sabbath in much the same old-fashioned way as you do in Toronto. Blood-thirsty as we were pictured, law-breaking as we were reported, yet we always had, and still retain, a sneaking regard for the Ten Commandments, and endeavour, as a community, to adhere to them. Our Sabbath is outwardly fairly kept, our churches well attended, and our children are gathered into the Sabbath schools. The greatest hindrance to the labour of our pastor is the Sabbath-breaking of respectably respectable people from Winnipeg who came on the Saturday train and spent the time intervening until the departure of the Monday train, as if they had never heard of the fourth commandment. The unsettled state of the Boundary Question and consequent lax jurisdiction have prevented any steps being taken to enforce the Sabbath law: thus, the unlicensed sale of liquor, and the prevalence of the social evil are the moral wrongs entailed on a much-suffering community by delay in the question.

The different denominations are doing their part for the good of the town. The Methodists have had a mission here for over three years and have now a neat church, a parsonage, a good congregation and a large Sabbath school. The Episcopalians have held regular service for the past eighteen months. The Roman Catholics have a good church and residence.

The Presbyterians commenced service here at a very early period of its history, and among the first missionaries was our present secretary of Home Missions for Manitoba, the Rev. W. D. Russell. Following him the Rev. Dr. Collins laboured here for nearly two years, and there are abundant traces of his labours. During his pastorate it was determined to build a church, a subscription list was started, and soon reached \$1,500. On this basis an appeal was made to the Church and Manse Building Fund for a grant, and \$1,200 was promised. At this time a change of missionaries was made, and it was found that the change entailed a manse. The people accepted the responsibility, and cordially going to work, in two months as neat a little manse as there is in the North-West was finished; and within another month, and a fortnight before the contract demanded

it, the church was opened. The regular congregation is not more than 120, the families not more than twenty. Have they not done well? And this has been done in spite of the fact that we have been crippled in our chief industry—lumber—by one mill being burnt, another lying idle all the summer through the detention of the logs, from the very low water, and yet a third going under in the financial crisis of the past year.

Our people have manfully set their shoulders to the wheel; and, in despite of the general depression, believing in the future of the town, and the necessity of religious ordinances to make that future spiritually bright, they have done as indicated above, and are prepared to do more.

Aided by the Rev. Messrs. Gordon and Silcox, of Winnipeg, the church opening was a great success, and since then our congregation is increasing and our Sabbath school has almost doubled.

Your missionary here is at present isolated from his brethren, the nearest station to the west being Selkirk (110 miles), and to the east Port Arthur (400 miles), but next summer a student should be sent in to the district of Rainy River, and another to itinerate along the track from here to Port Arthur, as there are little groups of settlers, lumbermen, and railroad employes, who should not be kept without service.

My letter is already too long, but I have been so often remonstrated with by friends far and near for living in a place with such a name, that a word in regard to its origin may be interesting. About a mile from the present town site there were, before the saw-mills started, large shallow inlets filled with wild rice. They were so shallow that they froze solid in winter, so the muskrats had to seek deeper water in which to lay up their winter store. Between one of these shallow inlets and the deep water was a narrow barrier of rock, and over this the rats carried their winter store; and any visitor who wishes to verify the story can see the track himself from which we derive our name.

16th October, 1893.

C. T.

AN ELDER ON LEAKAGE.

MR. EDITOR,—The supplying of ministers to vacant congregations is a matter of such vast importance to our Church that I think we owe the Rev. Mr. Hastie a deep debt of gratitude for bringing it so ably and prominently forward in your columns.

Before considering the means for the settlement of vacancies the Church ought to enquire into their cause, and then, if possible, should apply a remedy. We find ministers resigning their charges after labouring diligently and successfully for years in them, for the most trifling reasons, some of which that have come under my observation I may instance.

In the first place: an able and zealous man, after working for years without seeing any marked results from his labours, became discouraged, and began to look about for a fresh field, thinking his labours were not appreciated. This produced coolness, and in a year or two resulted in a vacancy. Whereas, had he laboured on, nothing doubting, leaving results in the hands of the Master, all would have been well.

Again, a minister is seriously disturbed in his charge by some troublesome member or church officer, the difficulty becomes local gossip, and then not only is he obstructed in his duty, but his private life is rendered uncomfortable, and he concludes the only remedy is—he must move; and thus a vacancy is made. Evidently the minister should have taken a different course. The difficulty should have been met with patience, in time it would, no doubt, have been overcome. As for all gossip, it should be allowed "to go in one ear and out at the other."

Again, a vacancy had been caused here by the Presbytery and Home Mission Committee bringing influence to bear on the minister to go to the North-West, alleging that good men were wanted out there, while, "as for the congregation, it could easily get another minister." That minister went out from a large charge here to a small charge there, where he may remain a life-time and not have the opportunity of doing the good he was doing here. How much, then, does the Church gain by such a change as this?

In these cases there was no sufficient cause for making a vacancy. The remedy is obvious. Presbytery should refuse to translate, unless the change is an evident benefit to the Church.

In regard to the filling of vacancies. If a congregation fails to call say within six months, Presbytery