

III

The Response of the East

Has the Church at large in the East heard the call of the West? Has that voice of distress gone through the ranks of our Catholics like the shrill cry of the bugle call? Has it awakened our Catholics from their torpid lethargy and quickened their sense of responsibility? Has the call been answered, or has it gone out like a cry in the wilderness, lost in the noise of our busy world, stifled by the clamour of other voices, buried under other diocesan and parochial claims?

In the Church of Canada there have always been generous and noble souls for whom the missions of the West have had a mysterious attraction. Who can read without emotion of the heroic deeds of the first Jesuits who followed the explorers and *coureurs-des-bois* in their perilous adventures? What tribute of admiration and gratitude do we not owe to the Oblate missionaries who lived and died with the wandering children of the plains, who have kept the fires of Faith burning from the banks of the Red River to the Pacific Coast, from the winding shores of the Missouri and Mississippi to the everlasting snows of the Arctic. Their lives of heroism furnish a bright splash on the rather drab and bleak landscape of what was known as the North-West Territories. The Church of Canada will ever remain indebted to these noble pioneers of the cross, apostolic bishops and priests of the first hour; their saintly lives are forever emblazoned on the pages of Canadian history; the western trails murmur their names in gratitude and the children of the prairie still bless their memory by the dying fires of their camps.

Indeed the Province of Quebec for years sent her money to help the struggling schools of Manitoba. The Catholic Church of Canada pledged itself in the Plenary Council of Quebec to help the Lutheran cause; the Catholic Church Extension Society of late years is enlisting the sympathies of Eastern Ca-