

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

A SABBATH IN EDINBURGH.

And this is Edinburgh! The city of boyish dreams! The beautiful modern Athens! Yonder is the castle: there ran the blood of martyrs; down the street is the manse of John Knox, the greatest of Scotchmen. Yonder are the memorials of soldiers and bards, and here of travellers, philosophers, and literary men. These men have made Scotland great.

FORENOON.

But it is the Sabbath morning; the sun has broken through the clouds, and the clear sky makes us glad. Where shall we worship? At last we decide that to begin we shall take Free St. George's—remarkable as having been the congregation of him who was the brain of the great religious movement of '43, as Chalmers was the arm. It is but a step to the church, on which a most substantial stone spire is being built. Collection given at the door—a strange sight for Canadians—we fall into the crowd who are strangers waiting for eleven o'clock, after which all seats are free. The church is well filled on floor and gallery by a congregation unsurpassed, we should say, in appearance and standing by any in Edinburgh. In a short time the preacher—Dr. Whyte, lately married, and but last year made a doctor—appears. It is stated that when the registrar of the University sent, as is the custom, for the list of works of the new doctor, Dr. Whyte returned the annual report of St. George's; and from all accounts, a fully attended prayer-meeting, a successful Bible class, and all parts of the Church's work thoroughly organized, are the striking features of Dr. Whyte's work in this powerful church. Dr. Whyte's sermon was what we in Canada would consider decidedly heavy. It was on Job xi. 7: "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" The sermon was apologetic in tone, seemingly the first of a series of winter sermons on leading doctrines. The preacher's mode of treatment was on the old lines. God may be known, within certain limits, from the natural world, from conscience, from providence, in Jesus Christ. With a sonorous Doric tone, and good firm voice, the preacher read rather closely, and with a sort of measured cadence, a good but by no means remarkable sermon. A good point was made in the statement that, vast as these four different regions are, as we pass upward through them from nature to Christ the feeling of uncertainty vanishes; that while sorely bewildered and perplexed in nature, we find reality and certainty in Christ. As we seek for God in nature, we reel and stagger at its immensity; and, said the preacher, "the firmer-footed we think ourselves, the more we reel." Conscience the doctor defined as God in the soul, and refused to enter into any analytic consideration of conscience. We should much prefer Calderwood's view. Dr. Whyte seemed to us hazy and indefinite. The treatment of the third field was scanty—Providence is a vast sphere in which each of us is a point. No interference with one of its points, but it is felt to the outmost limit. The treatment of the fourth head was the usual one. The impossibility of man seeing God directly—God revealed by the only begotten Son. One of the best parts of the sermon was that which dealt with the necessity for a proper state of receptivity would we find God. The sermon was solid, instructive, and in some ways powerful, but we can recall congregations in Canada where such preaching would not be well received. A striking feature of the singing of the congregation was that it was begun and maintained by several persons in the very midst of the church; and although there was no instrumental assistance, and the tunes were somewhat difficult, the singing was general and the harmony good.

AFTERNOON.

In Scotland, in many of the leading churches, the second service is held at a quarter past two. It was the duty of your correspondent to take the afternoon service in St. Cuthbert's (Established) Church. St. Cuthbert's is the largest church in Edinburgh, having a seating capacity of 3,000. It is decidedly quaint, both as to exterior and interior. It is situated in the midst of the beautifully kept cemetery which lies immediately below Castle Rock. The present building is said to be about 150 years old. It was in use in 1745, when the Pretender was in possession of the Castle just above it. Neil McVicar was the Whiggish pastor at the time. Orders were given that in all the

churches prayers should be offered up for the young prince. The proximity of the Castle guns suggested to the recalcitrant pastor that "discretion, and so on," and he cut the knot by the following prayer: "As for this callant that is come among us seeking an earthly crown, Lord, speedily send him a crown of glory." Good old Neil's portrait still hangs in the vestry. In the porch of the church is a memorial stone of Napier of Merchiston, the inventor of logarithms, and among the graves outside is that of Thomas De Quincey. We have said St. Cuthbert's is a large church—the congregation fills it. It has 2,700 communicants. Dr. McGregor, who has lately been travelling with the Marquis of Lorne, is senior minister. Rev. Jas. Barclay, who, two Sabbaths ago, preached before the Queen at Balmoral, is his colleague, and there are besides two assistants. Your correspondent took as his text Isa. xxxv. 1: "The wilderness and the solitary places shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose." No doubt many of the hearers subjected the sermon to as free criticism as has been done with Dr. Whyte's, probably with more disastrous results. In the evening we discussed with Mr. Barclay many features of church life in Scotland. The Church of Scotland, which was almost completely paralyzed in the cities after the disruption, by the necessity for thrusting the "mere camp followers and hangers on," in many cases (the expression is not mine), into the vacancies created, has increased vastly since a younger race of men has grown up, and now the Established churches, I am informed, are as well filled as the other churches. The abolition of patronage has had a considerable effect. Many who dislike what they call "candidating," long for the return of the old system, but they admit that the change was inevitable. Your correspondent had the pleasure of spending a night lately at the castle of a member of the Scottish nobility, a few miles from Edinburgh, who is an elder of the Church of Scotland, and was greatly pleased with the evidences of domestic piety and the strong interest in the advancement of the Church's work shewn by this gentleman and his family. You may look for an occasional letter from us, if you care for it, as new scenes and other churches fall under our notice. G. B.

NORTH-WEST.—I.

MR. EDITOR,—It has occurred to me that it might not be uninteresting to many of our Presbyterian people to know something more of the mission field in the North-West than is found in our ordinary reports; and that a more intimate acquaintance with the work would awaken sympathy with those occupying the outposts, and evoke a generous response for the vigorous prosecution of the work. With your permission I will use THE PRESBYTERIAN as the means of communicating such information. Having visited the most of the stations north of the Assiniboine River, as far west as Fort Ellice, I shall follow the course I took in travelling. As I write from my notes, the use of the present tense in some places will be explained.

After my appointment by the General Assembly I made inquiries as to the most economical method of visiting the different stations consistent with efficiency. The railroads reach but few of the settlements yet. Stages charge ten cents per mile, and run only along one or two trails. Livery stable-keepers charge \$4 per day, even when you feed, as you require to do when absent for a time. I have concluded that the best and cheapest way of undertaking the work was by purchasing a conveyance of my own. I was confirmed in this opinion by the practice of such as go out through the country to explore from time to time. They purchase a horse and buckboard, or buggy, and when they return dispose of the outfit for as much as it will bring. Knowing that although I would not be apt to lose myself, yet that I might lose the trail and have to spend the night on the prairie, I deemed it wise to provide myself with a tent, some provisions, a hatchet, etc. Thus equipped, I started from Portage la Prairie, August 12th. From the worthy pastor of Portage la Prairie, Rev. A. Bell, I received valuable assistance in preparing, and suggestions about camping, etc. After travelling about nine miles, I stopped at Mr. Hugh Grant's, Burnside, for dinner. Burnside is one of the oldest Canadian settlements in the Province, and few are more flourishing. A large area is under cultivation, and the crop this year is very fine. Mr. Grant entertained Mr. McRae (the missionary in charge here) and myself with stories of his experiences in early

times. His house is on the west side of Rat Creek, on the north side of the trail, and of course such a locality is a favourite place for freighters and settlers for camping. Such travellers are often not very particular as to how or where they get what they want, provided they are supplied. Hence, if the grass is bare, why should one hesitate to help himself from the neighbouring field? If he lived in Burnside that might be called stealing, but since he is only going west or returning for his family, and his oxen are hungry, no such ugly name should designate the act. To boil the kettle or keep one warm during the chilly night, who would hesitate to take a rail, or more if necessary? And if one has no axe, or is too tired or lazy to use it, why should he not help himself to all the rails he requires, crossing them and putting a fire in the centre? This may destroy fencing, and open fields to the cattle; but when one does not know the man, or better still, when he does not know him, why should one bother? Mr. Grant seeing some travellers camped on the road one evening, went down to see that the fences were all right. It was dusk. He saw a man on the road a short distance from him, and heard him talking to some one. As he approached, the man moved away. His companion kept talking, and on coming to the place where he was, Mr. Grant saw that he was in his field cutting oats. The stranger remarked, "I think I have enough. I wonder what the feller would say who owns these oats if he saw us?" "Never mind," replied Mr. Grant, "he has lots of them. Take plenty, he won't know." The man rose to his feet instantly and would have fled, but Mr. Grant told him to stop and take what he had cut, for it would do him no good. An apology and promise of amendment followed. Mr. Grant tells of a company that came to his house one cold winter night. One man knocked at the door and asked lodgings. He was invited to stay. Another soon rapped, and on the door being opened made the same request. A third followed, and a fourth. Mr. Grant said: "Stop! how many are there of you?" "Fifteen." "Why did you not all come in at once?" "We were afraid that you would refuse us because of our number, and so concluded to try this plan." After consulting with his family they were all invited to stay, and they stowed themselves away upstairs as best they could. Travelling in the North-West is likely to test a man's Christianity, whether it is plated ware or solid gold. Roughing it soon removes the plating. It is only the genuine article that stands the wear. Leaving Mr. Grant's, I followed the South Saskatchewan trail going due west. The road was good, dry, and smooth, but it bore evident traces of not being always so. The country is low, level, and wet. A good deal of wood is found on either side of the trail. I pitied those who had to travel west with loaded teams when the roads were bad. Cattle and horses died by the dozen from fatigue, and, I fear, abuse from those who knew little of the country or the power of endurance of beasts of burden. Happily the railway will put an end to much of this now. Passing Cook's Stopping Place and Pangman's, I got to McKinnon's (Kintyre Hotel) about six o'clock. I concluded to camp, and two young men who were there waiting for the train volunteered to help me. The country about McKinnon's is high and rolling. The soil is somewhat light, but much of it is fit for cultivation. There is a good deal of wood and plenty of good water. McKinnon came from Wardville, Ontario, settled here several years ago, and certainly has done well. He has over 100 acres under crop this year, and it has a fine appearance. It is ready to cut, and provided with a self-binder, he is eager to begin. He tells me that there are sixteen claims taken up near him, that six or seven families are settled south of him, but that there is no likelihood of the settlement being large, owing to the land being wet and rough. His claim is in Tp. 11, R. 11, and just within the boundary of the old Province of Manitoba. There is no school, and children are without the advantages of an education. After supper all about the house gathered in the parlour, and I had service with them. It is only when some minister is passing that the people have an opportunity of attending a religious service. I slept soundly and felt well for a day's journey. Breakfast over and Tom (my horse) fed, I started for the west and travelled through a country that is hilly and unwinning. There is much good land, however, although the soil for the most part is light. There is a good deal of wood in some places, and plenty of good water. Crossed the railway track at several points—in fact it would seem as if the engineers for some distance had followed the