

EDMONTON AND ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

Extract of Letters from the Rev. Thomas Woolsey, dated Edmonton House, December 23rd, 1857, and January 6th, 1858.

Yours, of May 5th, was indeed the welcome messenger of good news from a far country. Amidst much toil and privation, I was more than cheered by the exceedingly kind and encouraging manner in which you addressed me,—“In the name of the Board, the Church, and the Conference.” That such a triumvirate should so far consider me worthy of their confidence is truly exhilarating; but when that is perpetuated by an investiture of authority to extend my labours, if deemed politic, even to the shores of the Pacific Ocean, you will allow me “to mean the thanks I cannot speak.” How highly privileged to be permitted to unite with fellow-labourers of sister Churches in blowing the Gospel-trumpet in that portion of this vast continent, and thus instrumentally hasten the time when there shall be a glorious shout of “harvest home,” in the conversion of multitudes of those blood-bought spirits who have, to a great extent, long uttered the doleful cry,—“No man careth for my soul.” Truly—

“Great duties are before me, and great aims; And, whether crowned or crownless when I fall, It matters not, so that God’s work is done.”

There is, nevertheless, truth—telling truth, in the remark that “our itinerant system is contrary to every principle of our nature. Nature is kind, bountiful, invites people to choose for themselves, build houses, marry a wife, raise children, and live and die among them,” but a voice more authoritative than that of nature, has said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.”

That I have not relinquished the itinerary, you will gather from the following extracts from my Journal.

May 18th, 1857. Arrived at the Mission. Comparatively few goods had been abstracted, although the premises had been forcibly entered. Saddle-bags had been cut up for shoes, and soap, tobacco, pounded, meat, &c., had been removed. A Stone Indian, who took the provisions, left an intimation on a piece of bark, in the Cree Syllabic characters, that starvation was his only apology, and that he hoped to return the

favor some day. Poor fellow! Really civilized man would not have been so considerate.

30th. Several families arrived a few days ago, and were prevailed upon to cultivate the soil. Wheat, barley, and oats have been sown, as also the following seeds—turnips, beets, cabbages, lettuce, onions and celery. About 2 lbs. of potatoes have been cast into the earth, being all we had at our command. I have toiled early and late to effect this. The Indians do not relish manual labour.

31st. Sabbath—Two public services. Taught School morning and afternoon. Had a meeting for about two hours, on the subject of class meetings.

June 1st. Re-commenced day-school.

14th. Sabbath—Met four Crees and their wives in class. To witness eight roving Indians, “clothed and in their right mind,” was, indeed, a pleasing sight. All were decently clad, and presented a very cleanly appearance. Each spoke “the language of a soul with soul.” One said that, long before he saw a Missionary, he believed in an all-wise God and in a future state; but that now he rejoiced in having obtained salvation through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Another observed, that during my predecessor’s stay amongst them, he had often heard of the love of Jesus, but never experienced “the saving power of saving grace,” until recently. All of them were deeply affected whilst speaking. One of the sisters, a Stone Indian, gave her experience in Cree, to the no little astonishment and gratification of her husband, who had never heard her speak in public, except in her own language, such forcibly reminding me of the interrogatory put on the day of Pentecost—“How hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born?”

24th. Provisions being scarce, we all left for the Plains on the 15th, but have subsisted principally on bull-rushes and other vegetables hitherto. A moose has just been killed, but will only furnish a very limited supply to each family.

29th. Hunters unsuccessful. *Feeling*