

Northern Messenger

VOLUME XXXVI., No. 43

MONTREAL, OCTOBER 25, 1901.

33 Cts. Per An. Post-Paid.

Grave of a Canadian.

(By the Rev. A. E. Richardson, late of the Hausaland Mission, West Central Africa, in 'The Church Missionary Gleaner.')

There is always something intensely interesting or pathetic in the first effort, the first issue, or the first example.

But with what feelings, with what strange awe do we cast our eyes upon this picture of the first Christian cemetery in Hausaland. The first, implying that some day there will be a second, a third; the first, reminding us of the centuries that have rolled past without any call for a Christian grave in that wonderful land. Yes, the first and only graveyard. There is no other cemetery in the whole of the land, either Christian, or Moslem, or Heathen, for the Hausas bury their dead in their houses.

May this scene be graven upon the hearts, the minds, the consciences of all whose eyes fall upon this picture. May we learn the

north wall of the town of Gierku—inside the wall, but on the very fringe of that little town. As we view them we are looking almost south, the direction from which reinforcements must come to fill the gaps.

Those two graves lie between the town and the old mission-house (now tenantless and in ruins) which stands decaying outside the north wall. Who will offer to occupy that house?

Whose are these graves? We know whose bodies lie there in 'God's acre.' In the left-hand corner is buried the young Canadian, Gowans. Seven years ago he journeyed up alone into the unknown country, and alone he died far away from home and friends, with none but Heathen and Moslem to perform the last sad and sacred rites. We know not what message he left behind. Perhaps he murmured, as he did over Bishop Hill's dead body, 'I cannot, cannot believe that this is to be the end of all our hopes.'

In the right-hand corner is the grave of

'Am I standing where I ought to be? Am I where God would have me be?' Or it 'may be' that you will be standing 'between' the ruined mission-house and those millions dead in trespasses and sins, whereas perhaps you ought to be in that mission-house leading those men dead in trespasses and sins into the kingdom of everlasting life.

Among the Lepers.

Miss Reed's Chapel.

(Faithful Witness.)

Miss Reed's new chapel, at Chandag, India, which has given very great pleasure to Miss Reed and the lepers, both men and women in her asylum, has been built by the students of the College in Grove City, Pa. It must be a pleasure to Dr. Kettler, the head of the College, and his professors and students to know that the chapel is completed, and to see what a pretty, attractive place it is. It stands on the very crest of a hill, and must be a striking object in that beautiful mountain country. It is provided with fire-places for the cold weather, so that the lepers' comfort will be considered at all times.

We give a short extract from a late letter of Miss Reed's giving some idea of how busy she is.

'By sleeping and resting the first part of the nights lately, because so weary after days so filled with work, and oft-times perplexities, and then rising and setting to work in dead earnest at 2.20 and 3 a.m., I have succeeded in getting this paper ready for you.

'It is needless for me to say I greatly enjoyed Mr. Jackson's visit here. You must know how it helped us all. You can well imagine what blessing his coming brought to us.'

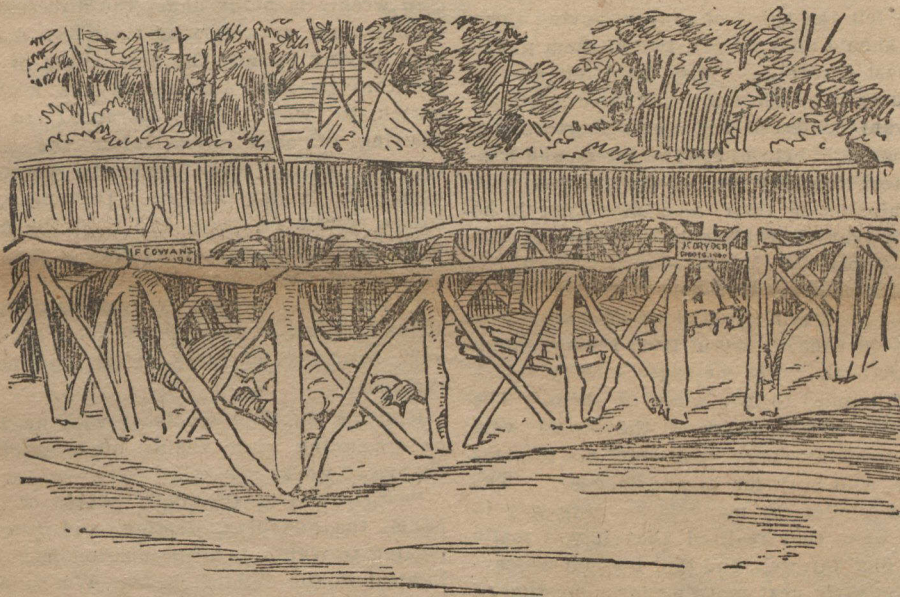
Canadians will be amused to see that in a list of accounts Miss Reed speaks of 'unknown donor, Medicine Hat, no country named.'

We quote from Mr. Jackson's letter:

CHANDAG HEIGHTS.

Soon after clearing the sharp ascent from Bahns the new Church of the Asylum becomes visible on the very crest of the ridge. Miss Reed came a mile down the road to meet me, and after a greeting that was mutually cordial, we soon arrived at the Asylum on the Heights. That evening was devoted to general conversation, except that the women-lepers all assembled out on the snowy ground and waited patiently for an opportunity of 'salaaming' to the new arrival.

The work of the Asylum goes on as usual, the present number being eighty-two, exactly half of each sex, the new features since Mr. Bailey's visit five years ago being the Church and the new house for a worker or for visitors. The Church is beautifully situated on the very crest of the hill and is a pretty and substantial little structure which strikes me as being thoroughly suitable in every respect. It is situated conveniently near the women's houses, and is provided with fire-places so that services can be held with comfort in all weathers. It needs a small bell-tower and bell to finish it. Some



THE GRAVES AT GIERKU.

lessons which those two graves teach us so unmistakably!

Where are these graves? It is a remarkable fact that they lie in almost the exact geographical centre of the Hausa States, as though claiming the whole land for Christ. For remember no man chooses the place of his death. [Stay, do we choose? Are there any of us who will die at home whom God would have die in Hausaland or elsewhere? Is God choosing, or are we?]

But God chose this little obscure village.

Gowans was at Zaria sick unto death. Yet God, as it were, said, 'Go into the village over against you, and Gowans died at Gierku, thirty-four miles south of Zaria.

We would fain have stayed at Zaria too, where Ryder—our colleague in the expedition of last year, the Rev. J. Claud Dudley Ryder—was hale and hearty. But God led us also to that little village 'over against' Zaria. And here God's voice called our brother away. 'Because his "mansion" was ready,' as a little-five-year-old friend of Claud Ryder's put it, 'and God could not wait.'

Those two mounds are just inside the

Claud Dudley Ryder. How different was his lot! 'He' passed away surrounded by those who loved him and whose love he unstintingly returned, with every help that medical skill and tender nursing could afford.

'How sympathetic it will be,' said he; 'two little graves side by side: those of the Canadian and the Englishman. We are fighting side by side too at the front.'

When asked what last message he would like sent home, he replied, 'I think I would say, like Bugler Dunn, "Send me back to the front."'

And his last audible prayer was this, 'O God, grant that this work be not arrested because of this kink in it.'

What is the message of these graves? It is this: It is not by chance that those two little wooden crosses stand up in the centre of Hausaland witnessing to the seed sown—practically the only witness for Christ in the whole of that land.

Take then a last look at that picture. You stand between the deserted mission-house and the deserted graves. Pass it not by without a prayer for the brave Hausas; without an earnest inquiry of your own heart—