

things for another room. In this latter had been gathered together a bedstead, a bureau, four of the plainest chairs that ever graced a lugger's cabin, a table that was all awry, half-dozen cups and saucers of the heavy white pattern that fourth-class restaurants in frontier towns use, and a parcel of bed-clothing still in the store-keeper's wrapper. In the kitchen was a stove with "his appurtenances." Mr. Davison pointed with pride to a box of kindling and a parcel of matches which his forethought had provided. Six empty rooms, all alike dusty, assured me that whoever were on the committee for supply there were no ladies amongst them. When our boxes arrived I was glad to turn my attention to them lest everything should be crushed like my previous expectations, and we be left without even those things with which we left home.

Mr. Davison left us, for his business could not stand, with the hope that we would find ourselves comfortable and make ourselves at home. I saw that my husband was doing his best to look cheerful, though his laugh had an unreal ring about it, and I resolved not to let him think that I was feeling "put out." He had divested himself of his coat and opened our boxes, and I had swept out a couple of rooms when the door-bell rang. Our first callers! "You are to be neighbours, and I took the first opportunity of calling upon you. My church is seven miles from here, but my daughter stays in town and so I brought her with me to meet you." Mr. Glass looked my husband all over as a tailor might before measuring him, while Miss Glass stared persistently at my poor travelling dress, by this time well-nigh spoiled with the dust. Then she informed me that she had stayed with Mrs. Andrew, the previous minister's wife, for over a year, that this house was just like a home to her, that it looked so dreary now, that she was so sorry when they went away and she had to leave. While she was running on in this strain I could hear her father tell Mr. Junior that there never could come a minister who would do what Mr. Andrew did; that the people deserved to be punished in this way for making him go from here, that he was a big-hearted man who kept a most hospitable table, and so forth.

Another ring at the bell. "This will be one of your people, I guess," said Miss Glass, as she introduced the newcomer. My husband sat himself on a box to give him a chair, and the conversation went on for a time. Then the last-comer remarked to me: "I came round to see if you would have some milk in the morning." I could almost have taken him in my arms, dirty as he was and smelling horribly of the byre. This was Canadian kindness at last, and I was beginning rapidly to reconstruct my dream-pictures while I thanked him for his kindness. "O, I'm the milkman, and I'll let you have a pint a day for a dollar and a-half a month." Alas, for my dreams!

Our visitors only stayed for an hour, in which time they contrived to give us very unfavourable impressions of the place, the people, and the work. Then we were at liberty to proceed with the unpacking and dusting. I was becoming anxious about my dresses, etc., for Mr. Junior had been more concerned about saving room in the boxes than creases in the dresses, and I knew it would be useless speaking to him now about their appearance on the morrow. Dusk came and found us thus engaged, and we had to return to the hotel for dinner. We had been assured that it would not be well for us to stay there over Sunday—"it is such a place." And we could believe this last. We had, therefore, after dark to lay in our provisions for the morrow and a candle or two. Returning to the manse we found a small party of ladies waiting for the list of hymns for to-morrow, and to ask if I would take the organ, as I was expected to do. While my husband went into the church with them, I went into the house and had my first cry. If ever there was a little woman whose hopes had been blasted it was I. I would not complain to him nor let him think that I was disappointed. But, O, how I wept for the time when he would be asleep and not notice my dejection!

Very early next morning a knock at the back door got Mr. Junior out of bed. I could not catch what was first said, but at last came the loud query: "Do you want to drown us with milk at five cents a pint?" He would only tell me that it was another milk dealer, a member of the church, offended because we would not purchase our supply from him.

Breakfast over, we were preparing for church when the door-bell rang. It was the Session Clerk come to take us to church, that building, by the way, being less than twenty yards from our door. What could my husband do? Only seats in one room, and that our bedroom, study, dining-room and sitting-room combined, and our toilet not finished. For once Mr. Junior showed sense. "Wait for us in the vestry, and we'll be with you shortly." We concluded that this must be some kind of formal reception by the Session, or office-bearers, and so he had come for us half an hour before the hour of service. In the vestry our one friend waited for us, and waited with us till the bell ceased; then the organ started a voluntary, and we went our several ways. Mr. Davison went round to the front door, my husband found his way to the pulpit and I to a pew at the side. What I suffered during that voluntary, with fifty pairs of eyes rivetted on me, I cannot begin to tell; nor was my husband's a more enviable condition. It was a fair sermon, but not in his usual style. How could it be after a month of travel and such an experience as ours had been during these last two days? After service one or two people waited to shake hands with us and ask what we thought of the place, how we liked Fieltown and had we been comfortable? Here let me warn my readers

against "is man-trap." "How do you like our town?" If there is any diplomacy in you, you stand in need of it when that is sprung upon you. If you show by heightened colour, or by line of the face, or by faintest hint that "our town" does not come up to your ideas of paradise then you are doomed. You are henceforth a traitor, an enemy in the camp, a spy come to see the nakedness of the land in which you have no right to be since you do not like it. All these questions and more, but never a word of sympathy, nor an offer of help in the way of putting our house "straight." A special service for the Sunday school children and evening service brought to a close the duties of our first Sunday in Fieltown.

For three days we were let severely alone to wander around the place looking for the town, and trying to pick up as many things as would make our house look inhabited. Then came in the bills for the furnishings placed in the house prior to our arrival—down even to the matches already referred to. But furnishing a house was no small matter, as we found out. Fieltown could not boast of its stores nor its stock. These dirty, untidy places were little more than sample rooms, and the equally untidy store-keeper only "guessed" he could get you a suite like this for \$130. Mrs. McClarty was neat compared with some of these gentlemen who came down from some garret to answer the door-bell about five minutes after we had entered. With a half-smoked cigar in his mouth, minus a coat, vest unbuttoned, or with a deep band of dirty shirt showing itself between the vest and trousers, and boots unlaced he would come forward and ask if "there was anythink he could do for you?" And I am sure that the cottage at Glenburnie was clean in comparison with these stores. My husband used to practice free hand drawing on the counters and furniture during these five-minute delays, the thick coating of dust saving chalk or crayon. As he said: "He might as well rub off the dust with his finger as I with my clothes."

During the next few weeks we had visitors enough, though we had scarcely a place to receive them in, or a chair for them to sit on. These visitors did their best, however, in one direction. They warned me against making friends of this one and that one in the congregation and city until almost everybody who had called had been held up as one to be avoided. What a martyr air one of these ladies assumed when I asked her to credit me with common sense enough to know a friend when I found one!

It was about this stage that I learned what a thorny couch a minister's may be. In girlhood I used to think a minister's must be the calmest, least-disturbed of lives. I was brought up in a city where everybody does not know every other body's business, and where we did not have our minister's family matters discussed in every house. We esteemed our worthy pastor for his character and work, and we did not enquire how his wife (or "lady," as we always styled her) managed her kitchen or kept her bedrooms. The city minister, whatever his other troubles, has at least one clear advantage over his brother in a little town. Here we were always under the microscope; there was always somebody discussing my household affairs and letting me know the decision. Of course I resented the interference of so many busybodies, and was forced to let it be known that I objected to have my affairs made public property—as if ours was the corporation and they the ratepayers. But it was only to find that I was making things very hard for my husband. For these offended ladies put their husbands against mine, and his work, already trying in every respect, became many times worse. Cold indifference gave place to active opposition and open ridicule. And his very activity furnished them with a handle for it; for his predecessor used to spend his evenings with these people, but my husband had engagements for almost every evening in the week, and so was reckoned a very John the Baptist for asceticism. Some of the more aristocratic ladies of the place, when they first heard that the minister elect was to be married before coming, had expressed the hope that his wife would be a lady, and that they would be able to associate with her. This was not association in work, I soon discovered, but in gossip: for when I proposed any scheme for increasing the usefulness, or deepening the spiritual life of the Church, I was informed that they never had done any Church work and it was no use asking them to do it. Then each of the sections into which the congregation was divided tried to get me to identify myself with it, and to induce my husband to express an opinion that the others were wrong. But he was not subjected to these tormenting interviews as I was, for his pastoral work called him out so frequently that he was often not at home when the ladies called on me. One of these sections was more influential than the others, in the sense of having more money at command, and it was my lot to offend this clique by preferring to work with my husband rather than dandle with them. From that time they made things as unbearable as could be. I had never dreamt that ladies could be so "nasty" as I thereafter found them.

Three months of this and the work of a large house (for my husband's salary would not afford a "hired help") brought on a serious illness. For a week my husband managed everything while I lay perfectly helpless. He was cook, nurse, scullery-maid and everything combined. Then a good old soul, a poor Scotch widow, came as nurse, and he was cook and housekeeper for three weeks more. During that month a lady would call and ask for Mrs. Junior; but never one offered assistance. One of those who had been loudest in her protestations of friendship before this told my husband afterwards that she understood he was such an excellent cook that she did not think there was any use offering help.

FRAGMENTARY NOTES.

MONTREAL. INAUGURAL SERMON OF THE REV. A. I. MOWAT IN ERSKINE CHURCH.

As is now generally known the call presented by Erskine Church, Montreal, to the Rev. Mr. Mowat, of Fredericton, was accepted, and notwithstanding the severity of Sabbath evening, Erskine Church was filled by the congregation and others to hear the new pastor's opening discourse. The services in the morning were conducted by the Rev. Dr. Warden who has been connected with the congregation for a number of years. To those who have had the pleasure of hearing Rev. Mr. Mowat it is unnecessary to say that on this occasion he fully sustained his high reputation as a pulpit speaker. Mr. Mowat comes to a Church in splendid working order, looked after by a band of elders and managers second to none in Canada. The Session comprises such men as Rev. R. H. Warden, D.D., and Rev. Professor Scrimger, of Montreal College, and a number of other men, well and favourably known throughout the Dominion. The highest hopes are entertained of Mr. Mowat's success in his new sphere, and in a crowded city like Montreal he will have ample scope for his well-known abilities.

ERSKINE CHURCH

is among the most prominent of Montreal churches, and has had pastors of eminence and ability. The congregation was organized in 1833 and for a while met in Bruce's Academy on McGill Street, afterwards in the American church on St. James Street. In 1835 a new church was opened on Lagauchetiere Street, and in 1864 the fine edifice on St. Catherine Street was opened for worship. The first pastor was the Rev. William Taylor, D.D., who commenced in July, 1833. The next pastor was the Rev. J. M. Gibson, D.D., who entered on the work in 1864, remaining ten years. Dr. Gibson is now one of the most prominent preachers and writers in London. The next pastor was the Rev. J. S. Black, who after a successful pastorate resigned in 1884, and is now pastor in Colorado Springs, U.S. He was succeeded by the Rev. L. H. Jordan, who was inducted in May, 1885, and who remained about five years, having resigned last spring. Mr. Jordan left the congregation in splendid shape. He is a polished, eloquent preacher, an earnest worker, and a very good administrator.

Every department of church work is in a most satisfactory condition and the contributions to missionary and other schemes are on a liberal scale.

In 1881 the church debt was finally settled, and the minister and congregation so far as this is concerned are free from hindrances to carry on their proper work. Permit a remark here which I think applies to all similar congregations. Considering the duties demanded, the ministers' salaries are too small: take Toronto, Montreal, Quebec, Halifax, and St. John, N.B., men possessing the same ability in mercantile business or financial circles could not be found for the salaries which the ministers receive.

Montreal may be said to be the city of "brotherly love" so far as the evangelical denominations are concerned. They all meet on a common platform, and in this respect the venerable Bishop Bond holds a prominent place, but it has remained for Woodstock, the capital of a liberal county in Ontario, to set the whole Dominion, and in fact the Christian world, an example of "how good and how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Principles are one thing and practice is another, but the Rev. Canon Wade would seem to understand both. Well, Canon Wade is likely to be brought over the coals, for what? Asking the Rev. Dr. McMullen, ex-Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, to preach to his people on Christmas day. It is an honour for any ambassador of Christ to be asked to preach a "common salvation" whether on the street, in a church, or a cathedral, and no more worthy man could have been selected than the Rev. Dr. McMullen who has laboured in Woodstock for well nigh thirty years, and who is a representative of that Church which the famous St. Patrick established in Ireland, of which our friends of the English Church claim to be the successors.

There is nothing new under the sun. I am not a patriarch, but in my native place in Ireland, in 1848, there was an English Church, which, as was not unusual in that part of the country, was small in numbers, and weak financially, and which had the foresight to ask a Presbyterian clergyman to preach a charity sermon. When I name the divine, the Rev. Dr. McMullen will not feel ashamed of being on the list with him. He was no less a personage than the Rev. Dr. Cooke of May Street Church, Belfast. Dr. Cooke had not only the power of drawing large audiences but also of drawing the money from the pockets of the people. There was a story told in connection with this service which I often heard repeated: that the precentor of the church, Mr. McKeown, was accustomed to repeat the word "amen" in a loud tone of voice at the end of a prayer. He was desirous of continuing the custom. When Dr. Cooke had finished his first prayer the precentor in an audible voice cried out "amen." Dr. Cooke turned round and with a look which would annihilate any ordinary mortal said in an equally audible voice "no more of that, sir, so long as I am here." I will only add in this connection that as a representative of the Presbyterian Church in Canada we could not have a more worthy or dignified man than the Rev. Dr. McMullen, and our only regret is that the very liberal town of Woodstock has been so selfish as to keep and appropriate to themselves a man of his abilities who is eminently fitted for a larger sphere.

It only remains for me to congratulate the English Church for having within her pale a man of such (I will not say broad) sympathies as Canon Wade. This Church has given to the world many noble and learned men who have done much for Christianity and it is specially gratifying to see such fraternal interchanges in these days.

Montreal, January 13, 1891