

BRITISH COLUMBIA AS A MISSION FIELD.

We have just received a letter from a friend in British Columbia, of which we give the following extract. The writer, a young man of intelligence, earnestness, and piety, is a Nova Scotian, a native of West River. He has been labouring in British Columbia for several years, alternately as Teacher and Catechist, and is well qualified to speak of the moral and religious condition of the people there. The suggestions are worthy of consideration. If charity should begin at home, there is ample scope for the exercise of it in spending at least part of our missionary efforts on our *redskin* brethren, of heathen creed and practice, although under our Dominion flag.

"I think it would be difficult to-day to point to a more promising field for Mission work than that which British Columbia presents, by its thousands of Indians who are not yet reached by any Christian Agency, though their appeals for instruction are urgent and numerous. The Indian population of the Province is variously estimated at from thirty to sixty thousand. It is very difficult to arrive at a true estimate, but probably the former may be the more correct one. They live in greater numbers on the coast, but are found everywhere all over the interior. Several of the tribes on the coast have received more or less Christian instruction, but the majority are yet left destitute. The Roman Catholic, the Episcopal, and the Methodist Churches, have several mission stations among them which are very successful and promising, but they are far from being able to occupy all the ground that is anxiously and expectantly waiting for being supplied, and it is a pity that the Presbyterian Church in Canada has not yet given any attention to the claims and appeals of a field so extensive and promising, and in every respect so destitute and needy as more remote ones for whose benefit they have been spending lives and means for a great number of years. But I believe if the matter was properly brought to the attention of the Church it would receive due consideration. Of course nothing can be expected from the Presbyterian Church in this Province, as it is merely in its infancy, and has to be largely sup-

ported to maintain its existence. Perhaps I should except Rev. S. McGregor's church, but I rather think that even it is not yet entirely self supporting.

Mission Valley, where I am now stationed for 21 months, is a pleasant place but very lonely. It lies in the Interior, east of the Cascades, about four hundred miles from New Westminster. I am teaching school since I came to the valley. The nearest school-house to the one here is 150 miles away, that at Nicola Valley where there is also a little church built about a year ago, under the care of Rev. G. Murray from Roger Hill. He paid a visit to this valley, and gave us a sermon last summer, but I am afraid he will not repeat his visit in a hurry, for he could plainly see that the good people of this community do not believe much in going to hear sermons. I was here over 12 months without hearing a sermon, and if I remain here I think very likely I shall not hear another for the next 12 months. This is a French community, and there is a Catholic Mission established here for a number of years. The good old priest is not very friendly towards the school, but still we are on pretty good terms. [I went at first occasionally to Mass but I never go now.] The morality of the community is very low indeed. The Sabbath is *the day* for shopping, drinking and gambling. Nearly all the settlers have Indian women living with them, some of whom are married, and some are not, and this is the prevailing custom all over the Province. My school is mostly made up of half-breeds, some of whom are very bright and intelligent, but they all seem to incline more to the Native than to the European element. I have got along very well with the school so far, and found much kindness from the people since I came among them. But I would not care to live here very long, and I sometimes think I am here long enough now. I long very much for Christian fellowship and privileges again. But if spared and well I will spend the coming winter here whatever I may do in the spring. The winter here is pretty cold but pleasant and entirely free from snow storms similar to those of Nova Scotia. The summer season is very warm, and the last one was exceedingly so. Very little rain falls, and people have to irrigate.