

The Inglenook.

FOR DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN.

A Manitoba Storyette.

It was a beautiful fall day. The Manitoba sun was flooding the prairie, with its summer grasses and flowers, like a molten sea of glass. B—— the summer fair was in progress. All the country side was there; men of the hay and meadow fields dressed in their best and accompanied by the happy wife and laughing children. And where can you find a laugh so cheerful as that unlimited laugh of a prairie child. It rings in every ear to-day. Others too were there. Here come the railway men who guide the destiny of many a party riding over those steel rails to Manitoba beyond. How determined they are. They are being hailed by Mr. Newton the Presbyterian missionary of that district. Welcome, however, is in their demonstrative handshake and now Mr. Newton turns to meet an undemonstrative little man who also has an eager hand. None but those who have tasted the loneliness of the backward parts of the west, know how delightful the hand of the minister is and none but those on whom fortune's sun never shines can appreciate the wonderful sunshine which a minister who is bred in sympathy and has trod the lonely path himself and who has come from the outside world to tell the poor, God's people, of the riches laid up for those who endure.

"It is a beautiful day, Mr. Maxwell," said Mr. Newton.

"Yes, it is a beautiful day."

"How are the boys?"

"They are well—both here, and Jennie also," said Mr. Maxwell without a smile.

"What a gathering that will be when we all meet in the exhibition day of Heaven," said the minister softly.

"What a gathering," said Mr. Maxwell very softly and then repeating the words almost to himself, "what a gathering."

They had drawn apart by this time from the merriment and happy shouts and songs of the merry-makers and Mr. Newton using almost the soft tone of his parishoner, as if he were entering a holy place, and even as he spoke his footsteps were hushed and he paused, said, "and how is Katy to-day?" "Katy is well," Mr. Maxwell said, and his face lit up with a wonderfully sweet smile. That relieved the weather beaten face of a toiling man of some of its hardness and made it like a child's face. Then grasping the ministers hand he said, "what a gathering and Katy will be there." Poor Katy, for many months her bed had been her place of abode. Mother, father, sister, brothers all loved her and whispered of her.

To-day she had, as Mr. Newton learned, refused to allow any one but her mother to stay with her, but begged them as a favor to go to the yearly fair and see the neighbors. It was indeed a happy day to them. The day wore on. The games and exhibits were in full course. The boys of Mr. Maxwell and Jennie were enjoying all very much. Mr. Maxwell had for some time been watching a cloud not much bigger than a man's hand rising above the tree tops away to the north, for in this particular part of the west trees and grass were in abundance. Mr. Maxwell's home was about ten or twelve miles straight north from B—— and surrounded by forest, small trees to be sure,

mostly poplar, the only clearing being a few acres around his house and barn. Mr. Maxwell continued to watch with silent eye, and the cloud grew steadily larger. At length he sought his young people and told them he would go home, when asked the reason he pointed to the gathering cloud. Just then the minister returned. He now had his buggy. He said, "I have a prayer-meeting at my north appointment to-night, Mr. Maxwell and will stop at your place for tea." Then said Mr. Maxwell, "I will go with you if you please," and turning to the children added, "stay the day out, but don't be late."

The sun, as they drove along, was beginning to be discolored by the clouds of smoke. Now and then athwart the sky the fire lightning leaped and penetrated the dark doom towering yonder in the northern sky. The minister now saw and trembled. Mr. Maxwell was as usual silent but his face was a little whiter than usual. The minister urged his horse but the flame was coming faster. It was getting darker—the fire was nearer than they thought. Could they get home was the thought of both. And the minister thought of Mr. Maxwell's home and Katy ill in bed and only mother with her. The horse was galloping now. "On, on," he cried, "we'll make it yet, for half a mile more and we turn west and we will be out of the direct track of the flame." But with a crash came the sound of falling trees, a terrible roar. Both men sprang to the ground, turning the horse south, they threw themselves into the ditch along the road and held their breath as the river of flame rolled over them. For one mad moment they feared they had been devoured by the flame, then it was past. They staggered to their feet; before them a blackened, devastated waste; behind over the road, which a moment ago they were traversing, a roaring avalanche of fire, carrying death and destruction in its path.

But what of home. They did not mind singed clothing nor blistered hands nor face, what had become of Katy and her mother? Were they in the track of the holocaust? On they rushed. A silent prayer on the lips of each. All black. All burned. The trees blistered. The foliage gone. The green withered. Now they got a glimpse; the stable is a mouldering heap of blackened ruins. "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me," cried the broken hearted father. "Come on," cried Mr. Newton who was a few paces ahead, for the little town was seen by him evidently unharmed. "God has not forgotten nor forsaken us yet." "Katy is sound and mother too"—what a meeting! Then after silent the minister fell on his knees and thanked the dear Heavenly Father for what he had done that day for them.

The story was soon told. Mrs. Maxwell had let the cow out of the byre when the fire drew near and then as it came closer she went in to tell Katy how near to death they were. Brave Katy said "dear mother, God can care for us as he cared for the Hebrew children. You do what you can and I will pray." And Mrs. Maxwell let down the fances and Katy prayed and God heard and answered.

Roland, Man.

As the couch is to the weary so is faith in God to the troubled soul.

Music at the World's Fair.

Preparations upon a large scale are being made for the music which is to be made a feature of the St. Louis Exposition in 1904. There are to be indoor orchestral concerts and organ recitals, open-air band concerts,—for which there will be no admission charge,—and performances of choral music on a large scale. The idea of the committee in charge of the musical arrangements is to aim at appealing rather to the popular taste than to the more limited demand for music of the highest class, although there will be no sacrifice of dignity in the programmes. Considerable attention will be paid to works by American composers, which, it is hoped, will give a decided impetus to the best creative endeavor in native music. Competent conductors are to be engaged for the orchestral concerts, among whom, it is expected, will be one of the celebrated "báton prima donnas," as they are called abroad, of Europe. For the organ recitals, in which the most eminent American and foreign organists will take part, a special instrument will be constructed; it is to contain nearly 150 stops, and will be, it is said, the largest organ in the world. The orchestral and organ concerts are to be held in Festival Hall, the centre of the main group of buildings.—Harper's Weekly.

Economy and Extravagance.

BY PRISCILLA LEONARD.

One of the rarest gifts in life is just a sense of proportion. Out of the thousands of young men and women who study art, how few are those who have a natural discernment of the right balance and relation of each part to the whole, and how long and laboriously must the majority learn the laws of proportion. Yet we expect each man and woman to be a wise economist, and shake our heads over extravagance, without ever considering the blank ignorance from which it usually springs. If the science of proportionate expenditure could be taught in our public schools, it might change conditions for many families in the future; but as it is, most human beings stumble along as best they can, saving or spending with an entire lack of education on the whole subject.

Economy, through this ignorance, has gained rather unpleasant associations, as of cheese-paring closeness, and the poorest cuts of meat. But "economy" means, in the original Greek, simply the management or control of household or community incomes. The good economist is the wise spender, not the grudging saver. The proportion of the part to the whole, of the daily expenditure to the yearly revenue, of the unessential luxuries to the essential necessities—this is the field of the economist. It is not how much we spend or save, but how and why we spend or save it, that marks us as good or bad economists. A man who economizes on the education of his children to spend on furnishing his house, for instance, economizes very badly indeed. The woman who economizes on the family food so as to spend on the family clothes is a still worse economist. Such a mother comes to memory, with nine children and a pitifully small income. The children had shoes and clothes enough to quite deceive the neighbors, but the table went bare, and to the remonstrance of a friend who knew the inside facts, the mother only replied:

"Folks don't see when the meat isn't on your table; but they do see when the shoes aren't on your feet!"

It was shrewdness, but not wisdom—rather the very poorest of poor economy. The