

COLPORTAGE LABOUR IN THE FREE GRANT DISTRICT.

BY MR. JAMES BADGER, COLPORTEUR.

The accompanying report, from our colporteur in the above district, was not written by him for the publicity which we feel it our duty now to give it. It presents a candid and interesting account of the arduousness and importance of his services, and must impress upon the mind of every supporter of the Bible Society, the value and the necessity of such labour as Mr. Badger is called to perform in the new fields now opening up for settlement in the "Muskoka Territory." When the Bible Society employs its colporteurs in such sections of the Province as that described below, in some parts of which there is no resident minister of the Gospel, and some of whose settlers "have no minister living within thirty miles" of them,—it is carrying out its trust in a way which must commend itself to every supporter of the Society. Other colporteurs are performing similar duties among the lumbermen in their distant shanties, and in many parts of the country, remote from Depositories, or Branches, in each of which Bibles and Testaments can be procured at first cost, and consequently, the visits of colporteurs are not required.

GENTLEMEN,—On account of many unavoidable circumstances, I was unable to take the field until the 12th of January. On leaving home, my first visits were to the Townships of Croft and Hageman, until I could get my trunk taken up into Spence. Since I was here, the Government have opened a road from McKellar Falls to Ryerson Junction, a distance of seventeen miles. This is a great improvement to the country, and a great boon to the settlers, by bringing them twenty miles nearer to Parry Sound. In the Townships of Spence, Croft, Chapman, and Ryerson, three of which I have visited this month, the settlers are very much scattered, and many of them have gone out for the winter, and a number who were expected in, did not come or account of the scarcity of work here. It is well they did not, unless they had means for support. The grasshopper plague last summer, and dullness of business this winter, are causing some suffering. This scarcity of money accounts for smaller sales than usual. But while I do not sell so many books, I believe my labours are highly appreciated by the people, especially by the sick and the dying. In the Township of Chapman, I found one of the poor settlers in the last stages of consumption. I asked him of his state of mind and his prospects for the future. He told me that he had been a professor of religion when very young, but that he had lost all good impressions, and his heart was hard, and his mind was dark, and he had refused to hear the Word of God read by his wife. I read a portion of the Scriptures, prayed with him, and directed him to the living Saviour who died to redeem him from the curse of the law; who came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. I left him, I trust, lifting up his heart to God in prayer. Within twenty-four hours he died, and before I left the settlement, I was called upon to bury him. I improved the occasion as well as I could, in warning the living, and directing them to Christ for salvation. They have no minister living within *thirty miles*. Rev. Mr. Buttrick, from Rousseau, visits them occasionally, but his field is too large to give them much service. There is no other minister in these parts. May God grant me health and strength of body to carry the Word of Life to the farthest settler of the Free Grant District, and grace to discharge my duty, both to your noble Society, and also to the people who are so destitute of religious privileges.

Yours sincerely,

16th February, 1874.

JAMES BADGER.