

of their vigilance, however, copies of the Scriptures found their way at last into the country and into the hands of some of the people. In 1862 several young men were arrested in Granada and in Mziaga for having copies of the Spanish New Testament in their possession, and were condemned to the galleys for life, a sentence changed by the Government into banishment from the country. Amongst these were Matamoros and Carrasco, converts of the Edinburgh Spanish Evangelical Society. The more enlightened portion of the Spanish people who had long groaned under the tyranny of Rome both in Church and State, at last resolved to secure by force what they were unable to obtain in any other way, from the weak and wicked Isabella II. In September, 1868, General Prim landed in Cadiz, and, having collected an army, proclaimed the Revolution. The Queen fled into France, the royal troops were utterly routed at Puente de Alcolea, and

#### RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

secured for the first time since Rome held sway in Spain. In the constitution afterwards made in Madrid, liberty of conscience was placed among the first of its statutes. The Evangelical Churches of Europe and America at once sent their agents to carry into that dark land Bibles, tracts, etc., and hundreds of thousands of these were sold and distributed—halls were fitted up in the large cities for preaching the Gospel, and crowds thronged them to listen to the good news. Since then this work has been going on with more or less success. Protestant churches have been formed and pastors placed over them; schools have been opened and teachers appointed. But we must leave for another letter some account of the work which has in this way been accomplished, and of the agencies which continue to operate, amidst many difficulties, in this still benighted country. T. H.

Paris, Dec. 12th, 1883.

#### MISSION WORK IN THE NORTH-WEST.

MR. EDITOR,—On the morning of the 24th Sept. the Rev. Mr. McWilliam and myself left Winnipeg to go to Prince Albert. By rail we went to Qu'Appelle, about twenty miles east of Regina. Here and at Indian Head the Rev. D. W. Ramsay laboured last summer with much acceptance. At Indian Head a fine brick church was erected and a commodious frame church at Qu'Appelle. Next morning we took stage and reached Prince Albert in seven days, the distance being about three hundred miles. At noon of the first day we stopped at Fort Qu'Appelle and accepted of the hospitality of Mr. Archibald McDonald, chief factor of the Hudson Bay Company. The night was spent twelve miles beyond. The country passed through was rolling prairie with occasional ponds and clumps of trees. The Qu'Appelle valley is about a mile wide and 250 feet below the prairie level. The river flows through it, widening into a chain of lakes which swarm with delicious fish. This enormous trench appears to have been cut when the waters of the lake that covered the prairie from the high lands to the east of the Red River to the Rocky Mountains in the west, were being drained off. The houses of settlers seen out on the open prairie or nestling among the bluffs told that the land was taken up. "Breaking" had been industriously carried on during the summer, and a good area was "backset"; but the few grain stacks told that the settlement was new. The late Mr. John Brown, student of Knox College, laboured in this field last summer and his services were much appreciated. One who is somewhat exacting said to me of him: "His appearance may be somewhat against him at first, but after you have heard the man and seen his earnestness and find how well he knows his Bible, you only think that you have a man of God who is anxious to do good. I listened to him with far more pleasure than to your polished orators." This testimony was given while Mr. Brown was still labouring at Fort Qu'Appelle.

The following day we passed through a district of country that is still unoccupied and halted for the night at Touchwood Hills. From Mr. McBeth, the Hudson Bay Co.'s officer at that point, I learned that quite a large settlement is forming at the Round Plain about ten miles from the Hudson Bay post. The Round Plain is a choice piece of arable land, about seven miles wide by fourteen in length, and is almost all taken up. There is a large area of fertile land in that locality, however, abundance of timber and good water, and the people require only railway facilities to

have a flourishing settlement. In less than two years the Manitoba and North-Western Railway, it is supposed, will be built as far as that point; and should settlement go on the home market will not leave much to export before that time. Quite a number of the people are Presbyterians and they are anxious to have a missionary appointed. The Rev. D. M. Ramsay and others preached a few times there last summer, but the settlement is too important to depend on occasional supply.

The next day's drive brought us half way across the Salt Plain, a treeless expanse of thirty-five or forty miles. Much of the land is fit for the plough, and everywhere there is fine pasture and meadow. For the night we put up at a rude structure, built to afford shelter to the stage driver and his horses. Here we were met by three teamsters with their horses from the bush. The horse stable was crowded and so was that appointed for the human subjects. Mr. McWilliam and myself got some fresh hay, which we spread over the earth floor, spread our robes and blankets over this and "turned in." But with the lying down and rising up, the biting, tramping and kicking of horses, from which only a board partition, with its openings, separated us—with the sleep-talking and snoring of teamsters there was not much sleep. I am getting accustom to this—to my companion the sounds and smells were new.

On the following day as we halted for dinner we met the Rev. Mr. Sleveright, who gave us Prince Albert news. By night we reached Humboldt. We heard that the stopping place there had too many tenants, and that as we valued peace the rest of the trip we had better take shelter with the Telegraph operator. The cook had the reputation of being "mussy," and as he was to be superseded by one that accompanied us we insisted on the new cook being installed at once. Supper over he was looking about the room for something. The driver asked him what he was looking for. "The thing in which he washes the dishes," he replied. "The thing in which he washes the dishes! I have been driving for eighteen months over this road and I never saw any dishes washed." The night was spent with Mr. Matheson, the telegraph operator, whom we found very kind and hospitable. The clean and attractive apartments would never suggest the "back." From Humboldt for some distance we followed the telegraph line, built along the old projected line of the C.P.R. Here one has a good opportunity of observing the configuration of the country through which we were passing. It consists of a series of basins of fifteen or twenty miles in diameter. Inside the margin of these are found a number of shallow depressions or ponds and fine tracts of arable land. The basins fill in spring with water from melting snow and the overflow of the higher is received by the ponds lower down. At the bottom are found one, two or three ponds of larger size. The rains of summer keep these small ponds well filled with water, but in autumn almost all but the largest are dry. Two ponds may be found not a hundred yards apart with a difference of six or eight feet in altitude. Drainage in such circumstances would be very simple. There are no creeks, the water being carried off by evaporation. We crossed only two creeks between Qu'Appelle and the South Saskatchewan in a distance of 250 miles.

The next night we slept on the edge of a bluff with a partial covering spread over some bent trees. We found that stones grow in a marvellous way in a single night. We could find none when we lay down, and yet we awoke because something hard made sleep impossible. It was too cold to get up and a change of position was sought. Sleep was resumed, but shortly afterwards that stone considerably increased in size, found its way underneath again, and the intruder had to be ejected before there was any guarantee that sleep would be continuous.

As we approached the South Saskatchewan crossing we passed a Roman Catholic Church. The congregation had just been dismissed and there were about 250 or 275 persons. They were neatly dressed, and in appearance clean and comfortable. There was only one hat among the ladies, and this had been used at least two summers previous to that of 1883. Not a bonnet could be seen anywhere. The orthodox black shawl constituted the head gear of the French half-breed ladies on the Saskatchewan as well as on the Red River. There were a few carriages and buggies and a good many buckboards. Several of the men were mounted. These people are settled on both sides

of the river and are evidently doing well. Along the Saskatchewan are several pieces of scenery of rare beauty. The stream is about 800 or 900 feet wide, and crossed by a primitive ferry on which the passengers must do a good deal of the poling and oaring. We noticed large quantities of grain in stack, but considerable was yet in stook.

At Duck Lake, about six miles from the crossing, we spent the night. Here is a good half-breed settlement and a large Roman Catholic church. The land is very fertile and a good deal of it has been brought under cultivation. The harvest was late and much of the grain was yet in the field. A twenty-mile drive through a belt of firs brought us to Cameron's, on the edge of the Prince Albert settlement. The soil on which these firs grow is light and sandy and full of ponds and springs. Seventy-three miles more bring us to the town of Prince Albert, which is about 500 miles north-west of Winnipeg. But of it I will speak in another letter. The weather during the whole trip was frosty but pleasant. The roads were excellent, and hence an average of over forty miles a day was made. Some land was passed not suitable for agricultural purposes, but very little waste land was seen. The vastness of the North-West begins to come home to one as he travels in this way day after day. The great mission of the churches of the Dominion just now is to give the Gospel to the people who shall reclaim this wilderness and make it like the garden of the Lord.

JAMES ROBERTSON.

Winnipeg, January 1st, 1884.

#### FRENCH EVANGELIZATION.

MR. EDITOR,—Some time ago, in an editorial, you kindly alluded to the paramount importance of the work entrusted to the Presbytery of Quebec. Situated as we are in the midst of a dense Roman Catholic population, every minister of this Presbytery feels that he is doing French evangelistic work, indirectly, if not directly. We are endeavouring to educate our people on the Roman Catholic question; to inculcate Protestant principles, to circulate Christian literature, and to retain or reclaim some of our people who, by reason of mixed marriages and other circumstances, are drifting into Romanism.

The Quebec Presbytery has under its supervision two French fields; the first is the city of Quebec, under the care of the Rev. Mr. Allard; the second is known as the St. Francis district, and includes Sherbrooke city, Lennoxville, Ditchfield, and other stations. A very important work, both educational and evangelistic, is being done in Ditchfield, where we have a group of French Canadian Protestant families. We have obtained a grant of fifty acres of land from the Government. The erection of a building was begun some months ago, which is now partly up. It is the intention that it should answer the purpose of school-house, church and residence for a missionary teacher. The cost is to be below \$400. We have been compelled to stop building operations to defer indefinitely the opening of what would be the only school in the district, for want of funds. We now feel compelled to take our missionary, who, during the past month visited 105 families, away from his legitimate work, the preaching of God's Word in his various stations and from house to house, to send him out to collect funds. The field must of necessity suffer by reason of his absence from it. Will not some friends of Christ's cause help us in our necessity and place at our disposal the small sum of money required? As convener of the Presbytery's Committee of French Evangelization, I appeal to the friends of this work for aid in behalf of this important object. Let not this promising enterprise go to the ground for the sake of a few dollars. I shall thankfully receive and acknowledge any sum of money that may be sent me for this cause.

CALVIN E. AMARON.

Three Rivers, Que., Jan., 1884.

ON Christmas morning a parcel was sent to the house of the Rev. Jolin Abraham, Whitby, accompanied by a note, signed in behalf of the members and adherents of St. Andrew's congregation asking him to accept the present as a token of their kindest wishes and esteem for him as their pastor. The parcel when opened was found to contain an elegant Persian-lamb-skin overcoat. This is only one of the very many evidences of attachment, and appreciation of his services, which the Whitby congregation has shown to Mr. Abraham during the four and a half years he has been with them.