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Contributors and Correspondents

NOTES OF A MISSIONARY TOUR IN THE GATINEAU VALLEY.

BY ONE OF THE DEPUTATION.

MR. EDITOR,—It was thought by the deputation appointed by the Ottawa Presbytery to visit the Congregations and Mission Stations in the Gatineau Valley, that a few notes of scenes and incidents, and of the state of our cause in this region, might be of some interest to your readers. This was to be felt all the more probable, inasmuch as the character of the country and the position of our people, though very similar to what they are in other and large districts of the Ottawa Presbytery, differ widely in many respects from other regions in which Home Missionary work is conducted, and it is especially to the features in which this region differs from others as a mission field that the attention of your readers is called in this communication.

We shall first notice the character of the country, for this affects our work in no slight degree. The Gatineau Valley is the region of country through which the Gatineau River, the largest tributary of the Ottawa, flows. This river has its sources in several small lakes in the most northerly part of the Province of Quebec. Its general course is directly south, though from the nature of the country through which it flows, its way is of a very zig-zag description, and it empties into the north side of the Ottawa, a short distance below the capital. The country along its banks is wild and mountainous, and has been, and still is, the scene of extensive lumbering operations. For this region the Missionary deputation, consisting of Revs. Messrs. Gordon, Carswell, and Farries set out on Monday morning, September 10th. A bright sun and a cloudless sky gave promise of fine weather. The team was all that could be desired, and the conveyance comfortable. A delightful drive of three hours, through a beautiful and picturesque country, brought us to Wakefield. This village is situated on the north side of a bold bend and wide swell in the river, about twenty-two miles north of the city of Ottawa. Here we enjoyed the hospitality of the Rev. Hugh Maguire and his good lady. And after rest and refreshment, and joined by Mr. Maguire, who was also one of the deputation, we resumed the journey. It was deemed wise to proceed directly to our most northerly station, the Desert, before holding any meetings, and with a drive of over seventy miles before us, we prepared ourselves to enjoy the scenery. On leaving Wakefield, the country becomes more wild and rugged. Through deep gorges and clefts in the rocks the river at times pushes its way, at other times, it creeps along through the green valleys which lie between the banks and the bases of the granite hills. In these valleys the homes of the husbandman nestle, surrounded by an area of cultivated land whose extent is determined by the proximity of the river, on the one hand, and of the high, glaring, granite hills on the other. At times the wheels of our conveyance sink deeply into the sand which is formed by the detritus of the rock, and the wash of the river; at times we jolt over great boulders, or rattle over the sheer rock up the sloping sides, and over the rugged summits of the granite hills. But even if your space would admit of it, no general description could convey any adequate idea of this wondrous valley. Everywhere hills—hills ribbed and dotted and crowned with rocks of the old Laurentian stratum—hills bleak by nature, but rendered still more bleak by the desolating fires that have swept over them—hills that are marked by the bare trees whose life was smitten and destroyed by the flames, but which still stand, the bleached skeletons of former majesty and greatness—hills whose nakedness is partially concealed by the green underwood that struggles for life on their rocky sides, and hills furrowed, and rent and cloven by deep fissures, and gloomy gorges and yawning chasms. As we proceed, the same material is everywhere, and everywhere it assumes new shapes and forms. After a dusty ride of several hours, and a considerable time after the shades of the evening had gathered, we reached Aylwin, which is about thirty miles north of Wakefield. Here we were most hospitably received and entertained by Mr. Hartley, the efficient and genial manager of a large farm and depot belonging to the strong lumbering firm of Hamilton Bros. Here, also, we met Mr. Hiram Robinson, the general business agent and manager of the above firm, and who is also an efficient elder of Knox Church, Ottawa, whose frequent visits to this region in years past, and now, exercise a most beneficial influence upon our cause, and the interests of christianity in the whole valley.

Early in the morning we bid our kind host and hostess good-bye, and by twelve o'clock, noon, we reached Six Portages, where we enjoyed the generous hospitality of Mr. McCallum, the energetic manager of a large farm and depot belonging to Edwards & Co. Still there are seventeen or eighteen miles to make before we reach the Desert, at which place, after a dusty drive under a broiling sun, we arrived about five p.m. Here we were most hospitably entertained by Mrs. Campbell, whose husband has had for many years the management of the farm and depot of Hamilton Bros., which are situated here, but who was absent at the time of our visit. The Desert is nearly 100 miles due north of the city of Ottawa, and derives its name from the river which there empties into the Gatineau. Here we found a village of considerable size, a trading post of the Hudson Bay Company, and some large lumbering depots. There is much of interest connected with this place which space will not allow me to note. One scene, however, I must refer to. Behind the Roman Catholic Church, which is a magnificent building, costing somewhere about \$27,000, there is a somewhat conical granite mound of considerable height, upon the summit of which stands a cross whose upright beam is about forty feet high, and whose cross beam is about twenty-five feet from point to point. We hasten to obtain a view from this lofty point of observation. We stand upon the summit of the rock; above us towers the lofty cross. The scene which bursts upon our vision is grandly sublime. Far as the eye can reach we look out upon a region, billowing with mountain peaks, that gleam with the golden splendours of the setting sun.

But the hour of meeting is at hand, and we wend our way to the church. This, we find, is a neat and comfortable building. It is the property of our Church. The families that belong to us here are few in number, though by far the most numerous and influential of any Protestant denomination. Some are detained by necessary business, but in proportion to the number of Presbyterians in the community, the meeting is large. The Rev. T. Brouillette, the ordained missionary at the Desert, presides, and two features mark the assembly:—1st, the intelligent and earnest attention of all, and 2nd, the presence of several Indians, who seem to be deeply interested in the services. Some of these are refugees from Oka, others are enquirers after the truth among those who occupy the Reserve in the locality. We were informed by Mr. Brouillette that those from the Reserve are amongst the most intelligent and influential of the tribe located there, and that they had visited him on many occasions, to make enquiries and receive instruction. There seems to be good reason to believe that a good work is in progress among these dusky sons of the forest, and that many of them are turning their eyes towards that better sun, the Sun of Righteousness.

But now we must notice the position of our cause in this Valley,—and, 1st. It is a satisfaction to know that in numbers and influence, our cause has the ascendancy over every other Protestant denomination that is represented in the Valley. 2nd. The members and adherents of our Church here are earnest, active, and loyal to our cause. They are willing and ready to do their utmost to maintain and extend the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom in connection with our Church. Many of them are from Scotland and the north of Ireland, and have been reared within the fold of the Presbyterian Church, and are extremely desirous of having the Word preached, and the ordinances administered among them according to the faith and practice of our Church. But they labour under great disadvantages. They are beset with difficulties which, to a very large degree, are unknown to the members and adherents of our Church in the mission fields of Western Ontario, or even in the North-West. 1st. The country is not generally favourable to agriculture. Whilst there are portions that are very fertile and productive, these are in some degree like oases in the desert. They are surrounded by regions whose hills and rocks bid defiance to the efforts of the husbandman; as a consequence the settlements are at a considerable distance from one another, and cannot, therefore, unite efficiently for the maintenance of public worship. 2nd. The great mass of the people are Irish or French Roman Catholics, with an occasional Protestant family, and there are stretches of many miles along the Valley which are wholly peopled by Roman Catholics. In consequence of these two things our stations are in the first place a long way apart. For example from Wakefield to Aylwin, our first Mission

Station to the north, is about thirty miles. The intervening country, so far as settled, is occupied almost entirely by Roman Catholics. Within an area of several miles of Aylwin we have thirty-six families. The Six Portages, the next station to the north, is about twenty-three miles from Aylwin. Here we have a few families, some five or six, who are aided in some measure by other Protestant families in maintaining occasional services. The Desert, the next station, is some seventeen or eighteen miles still farther north. The distance between the stations renders it extremely difficult for them to aid one another; and, in the second place, from the fact that nearly all the arable land is already occupied by Roman Catholics, there is not the same prospect of growth which stations in the West generally enjoy. Conversions from Romanism to Protestantism though not unknown in the Valley, are extremely rare, and whilst the earnest, active and progressive spirit of Protestantism may fairly be regarded as more than a match for Romanism in the struggle for the possession of the soil, yet the prospects of rapid accessions to Protestantism, in the Valley of the Gatineau, are not very encouraging. Preaching Stations in the west, from causes that are very apparent, quickly pass through the intermediate state of supplemented congregations to self-sustaining churches. Preaching Stations in Quebec and the Upper Ottawa, from the causes above mentioned, remain preaching stations or Mission Fields, with little or no marks of progress year after year. And what is true of them is true also of the supplemented congregations in the same regions. They do not increase in numbers and grow in wealth as the same class do in the west, not because our people here are less active, less loyal, less liberal, but simply because the character of the country and of the mass of the people, put an insuperable barrier in the way of their progress.

What then is to be done? Abandon them? Surely the Church will not entertain for a moment such a thought. Around the weakest child in the home the tenderest affections of the family cluster; and shall the Church abandon some of her children simply because they are weak and do not grow as rapidly as some of her other children do? To adopt such a course would not only be a wrong to our people in these less favoured districts, but would also extinguish the only lights which shine to show men the way to the cross and to the crown in the midst of the superstition and idolatry which prevail in these regions. But still the question returns, what is to be done? Is the Church always to bear the burden of supplying, in no small degree, the means to maintain the Gospel in these non-progressive regions? and to do so even when more hopeful fields are loudly calling for her aid? The members of the deputation discussed this difficult question, and were unanimously of opinion that the first and second of the general recommendations which the Home Mission Committee laid before the last General Assembly indicate the best practicable method of working all such fields, and there are many of them, as that of the Gatineau Valley:—

I. "That Presbyteries should aim at grouping Mission Stations in such a way as may afford full employment for an active minister, with a considerable proportion of the salary from the field in which he labors."

II. "That the salaries of suitable Missionaries, accepting an engagement for more than one year, should be on a liberal scale and not subject to the regulations affecting supplemented congregations."

There can be no doubt but the policy indicated in these recommendations is the only one by which our Church can retain its hold upon fields situated as this is. And hence the deputation are of opinion that the whole region north of the congregation of Wakefield should be united in one Mission Field, with Aylwin, the Six Portages and the Desert, as the chief and central points of operation, and that an ordained Missionary should be placed over it to give as much of his services to these and surrounding points as possible, and that for the services of a zealous and faithful man a liberal salary should be given. A large proportion of the salary of a faithful man could be derived from this field, and by such a method the field could be held and our cause extended. The policy hitherto adopted in these fields of uniting in some measure the supply of our people with work among the French has not been at all satisfactory, and the frequent changes of the Missionaries and often irregular supply have become a wearisomeness and a source of dissatisfaction to the people.

From the meetings, which were all largely attended by intelligent and earnest audiences, we turned away with a deep feeling

of sadness that we were leaving that whole region without any one to break the Bread of Life to the people, for Mr. Brouillette left a few days after our visit, and with the hope and prayer that the Lord would speedily bring forth a man who would with zeal and love and faithfulness labour among them.

THE LATE REV. ROBERT SCOTT, PASTOR OF JANE STREET U. P. CHURCH, NEW YORK.

BY REV. DAVID MITCHELL, TORONTO.

Tidings of the sudden death, on 19th July last, of the Rev. Robert Scott, created a painful feeling of surprise and loss in the hearts of a large circle of his friends in Canada. It was only three short years since that our Church parted regretfully with Mr. Scott, on account of his having seen it to be his duty to accept the unanimous call of Jane Street U. P. Church in the City of New York. Mr. Scott was well and favorably known throughout Canada. His name is fragrant in more than one corner of the vineyard. He was ordained by the Presbytery of Ottawa in 1860, taking charge in the first instance of Pakenham. He was thence translated to Oakville, Ont., and afterwards to the parish of Camlachie. In all these places he labored incessantly and with marked ability and success. In the last mentioned, his ministry was peculiarly blessed of God to the comfort of his own soul and the building up of the cause of his Master. Two new churches built under his directing and controlling care stand as monuments of his work in Camlachie. He spent some fourteen years in all in this country, and in the year 1874 to the surprise of many he went forth to the great city to undertake a most difficult and unpromising labor. The church to which Mr. Scott was called is situated far down town, and those who know New York will appreciate what that means. In fact as things go in that wealthy city, there is room for only two kinds of churches, those that are rich and prosperous and those that are too poor to be other than missionary appendages to the aristocratic congregations. The middle class driven out of the city by exorbitant rents and miserable accommodations, there is really no such thing as a prosperous workingmen's congregation. But Mr. Scott set himself to the task of building up a church in a district that had been depleted of the very people who would naturally come to it. If the Jane Street Church had belonged to the General Assembly, and not to the U. P. body, and if Mr. Scott had had the advantage of the liberal feeling in music and otherwise which pertains to the American Church, and to which he was not in conscience opposed, we doubt not he would have had a wonderful success. We reason this from the success he had in a church that is not popular with young people, and that was suffering by reason of its location. The membership of Jane Street grew very considerably during Mr. Scott's ministry. From the first to the last he was very much beloved by all amongst whom he labored. He was extremely modest and unassuming, but he was most winning in manner; full of sympathy for the afflicted and suffering; most faithful both in and out of the pulpit; also, gentle, kindly and possessed of genial humor. He was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost, and so succeeded in a locality in which men of great ability have failed. The record of such a life can only be known in eternity. The memory of Mr. Scott in New York will be long a blessed one.

The subject of this sketch was a native of Strathaven, in Lanarkshire, Scotland, born in the year 1830. With an uncle of martyr fame, and with the memories of suffering for the truth that cluster around that district, it is no wonder that Mr. Scott early gave his heart to Christ and commenced diligently to prepare for the gospel ministry. The Scottish student is often a noble example of a sacrificing spirit. While attending the University classes, he has too frequently to struggle for a living. Many a minister who now adorns the pulpit, has had to live on oatmeal, and with hardly a morsel of night over his books and papers. It is doubtless a glorious thing to have to say of young men that they esteem no sacrifice too great to accomplish their noble purpose; but alas, the number of graves which we have watched as they received their occupants from the rank and file of student life! Mr. Scott was no exception to the rule, but though studying under such difficulties, he stood high in his classes, was distinguished in metaphysics, and took a good position generally in the course at Glasgow University. He was licensed by the U. P. Presbytery of Glasgow in 1856, and thus we have to mourn his loss while

yet in the midst of his years, when his eye was undimmed, and when his talents were at their best.

Mr. Scott leaves a wife, two sons and a daughter to mourn his loss. He was a singularly affectionate husband and father as well as pastor and friend; and while he will be missed from his Presbytery by brethren who highly esteemed him for his work's sake; from the pastoral society in which he was loved and respected; from his congregation to whom he ministered continually in the things of Christ,—his loss will be still more felt by his family and bosom friends. And we close by expressing our sympathy and prayers, and those of a large circle of friends in this country, for her from whose side he has been called, and for their dear children who have been taught by their bereavement to look up to the Father of the fatherless for help and comfort.

Of our dear brother we may say in those beautiful and tender lines,

"Calm on the bosom of thy God,
Fair spirit rest thee now;
Even while with us thy footsteps trod,
His soul was on thy brow.
Dust to its narrow house beneath,
Soul to its home on high!
They that have seen thy look in death
No more may fear to die."

AN INTERESTING FIELD.

Last summer a peculiar field came under the notice of the Students' Missionary Society. A letter was addressed to the Presbyterian College requesting a student to labor during the summer in Mississippi, P. Q. Enquiries were made which resulted in finding out that there were Universalists, Adventists, Free-Will Baptists, etc., but no Presbyterians. However, it was decided upon to grant their request. Mr. Russell was chosen by the society to labor in word and doctrine in Mississippi during the summer. When he reached there he was very warmly received, for the people thought that they invited one who could unite all denominations in love and fellowship without interfering with their peculiarities. In the course of a few weeks they discovered that Presbyterians do not try to please men but to set forth in all its richness and fullness and distinctiveness the Glorious Gospel of Jesus. Adventism and Universalism took offense at the old-fashioned way of preaching the gospel, and considerable opposition was manifested. But our missionary did his work faithfully by preaching on Sabbath, conducting prayer meetings during the week, and visiting from house to house. The divine power was manifest.

On Sabbath, 28th ult., Rev. P. Lindsay, of Sherbrooke, dispensed the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to thirty-one in that place,—about twenty of whom professed to belong to the Presbyterian Church of Massachusetts.

On the preceding day Mr. L. baptized two adults. A great deal of interest is apparent, and we may have confidence in the results when we know that there has been no unusual excitement. It has all been done by the regular pastoral method. I mention this because so many young men think that the only way to succeed in the mission field is by "Revivalistic" effort and, the tendency is to ignore the regular method and over-estimate the irregular.

The contributions have been liberal and bear practical testimony to the work of Grace. The people have shown their appreciation of Mr. Russell's services by presenting him with several handsome presents.

Mississippi is situated in a favorable locality in the eastern townships. Nature has done much for the benefit of the people, but their Spiritual wants have been sadly neglected. The country is highly picturesque, and the air is laden with rich stores of health. Every Canadian traveller should visit this part of the Dominion, and the artist and poet would receive fresh inspiration from such lovely views of nature. Let us hope and pray that the day is not far distant when thousands of people in the Eastern Townships shall rally round the time honoured, divinely appointed Banner of Presbyterianism! A. C. M.

At a meeting of the Presbytery of Montreal held on the 2nd October, the Rev. Mr. Springer called attention to the fact that deputations were appointed to visit the congregations within the bounds of the territory set apart for the maintenance of the Presbyterian College, Montreal, with the view of raising funds sufficient to clear off the debt on the ordinary fund of the college. The Presbytery heartily commended this matter to the attention of the congregations within its bounds, and hope that the deputations will receive all possible encouragement and aid.