

Beren's River, I saw very little affording any encouragement to the agriculturist. In fact there are two things which would discourage any farmer, and which must be met all through this northern region,—want of soil and want of season; of the soil in *depth* and of the season in *length*. A general thing the soil barely covers the rocks to a depth sufficient to grow shrubs or small trees, whose roots often strike down into the clefts of the rocks. In the lake there are two large islands, on which timber large enough for saw logs, or for small frames, can be obtained. On one of these, a steam saw mill has been recently erected, and from the other Mr. E. R. Young obtained the timber used in the buildings he has erected on his mission premises, drawing it with dogs across the ice, a distance of ten or twelve miles. From Norway House to Oxford House the country seemed to have no higher destiny than to be what it now is, the roaming, feeding, and hiding ground of game and fur-bearing animals, and the home of those who hunt, trap, fish, or "trip" for a living. The soil is thin and poor, and the timber fit only for fuel, or to supply poles for the Indian's cabin, or for his use in making the traps or dead-falls wherewith he kills his game. Small lakes, rivers, marshy grounds, tamarac swamps and rocky hills,—those make up the variety between those two points. Unless valuable minerals should be discovered, I should think that fifty years hence a thousand acres of this land might be worth a thousand cents. On the east shore of lake Winnipeg there are large quantities of iron sand, which the magnet takes up readily; what this may betoken I know not. The tracks of game and fur-bearing animals, however, all through the northern region, abound; while in the lakes and rivers, the finest fish in the world are to be found. Fish is the

main dependence of the people as food for themselves and dogs. During the trapping season the Indians are obliged to scatter in every direction. We saw the wood traps all along the shores of the lakes and rivers as we passed, and the number of skins of beaver, otter, mink, fox, lynx, bear, etc., which these hunters bring into the Hudson's Bay Company stores, at the different trading posts, all tell of their success.

#### THE MISSIONS

I visited belong to the Methodist Church; no other denomination has ever occupied this ground.

The *Rossville Mission* is very pleasantly situated on the shore of a beautiful little lake, within two miles of Norway House Post, and is the oldest and by far the strongest of our Indian missions in the North-west. It was established in 1840 by the Rev. Mr. Rundle, Wesleyan Missionary from London. In looking over the register of baptisms and marriages, which has been carefully kept from the first, I found the first baptism recorded on the 28th of May, 1840, by Mr. Rundle, and the last on the 3rd of January, 1875 by myself; between these dates one thousand five hundred and sixty baptisms were registered.

At the lovefeast there were present about three hundred people, while nearly two hundred came to the Lord's table, among whom one was over one hundred years of age, and one came one hundred miles to attend the services. New Year's day was "a high day" with the Indians at Rossville. Over five hundred feasted on "fat things," all of which were "gratis" to the feasters. From morn till even the eating went briskly on amid indications of good appetites, and great enjoyment, and but little weariness. I reached the mission on my return trip from Oxford, about ten a.m., just in time for the feast. In the