

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

NORTH-WEST.—II.

Reaching the house of the Rev. D. McGregor, the missionary in charge of the Big Plain District, Saturday evening, I determined to accompany him to his stations on Sabbath. The services were at Fairview, or Barnes', and Lee's. On our way to Fairview we intimated that a service would be held in the evening, at the house of a Mr. Morrison. There was a good attendance at Fairview, the house being comfortably filled. The singing was hearty, and the people were devout and attentive. They are building a church here, and it was expected to be ready for opening in a week or two. In the afternoon we drove to Lee's, crossing the Canada Pacific Railroad about four or five miles south of Fairview. The attendance at Lee's was not large, being only about twenty. The land in this neighbourhood is all taken up, however, and the station must grow. We drove back to Morrison's, and although the notice was so short, we had the largest attendance of the day. At all these stations I had managing committees appointed, and left subscription lists to be circulated. On the following day I visited the other two stations of this field—McKinnon's and Black's. These are farther north. In this whole field there are about eighty or ninety families and young men that have claims. The soil is warm and sharp, and heavier than the Paris and Brantford plains. It produces a fine sample of wheat. No farmer has yet a large area under cultivation, but a good beginning is made, and in another year this crop will be large. A re arrangement of stations is required, and churches are very much needed. In another year the field should be self-sustaining. At Fairview, Mr. Smith, formerly of Oshawa, and Mr. A. C. McColl, brother of the late Rev. J. McColl, of Central Church, Hamilton, have just opened a store. These two young men offered to give \$50 per annum for the support of ordinances, and I have no doubt but that others will manifest a similar spirit of liberality. Take it all in all, we have no more promising field in the west than the Big Plain. While visiting this district I was the guest of Mr. McGregor, and from himself and Mrs. McGregor I experienced the greatest kindness.

Hearing that there was a considerable number of Presbyterians along the Souris, I resolved to go and explore that district. Leaving Mr. McGregor's, I drove southward, stopping for dinner at Mr. George Hope's. Mr. Hope came from Ayr, Ontario, has secured a most desirable location, and has a fine farm. I then drove twelve miles southward to Suttill's, through a good country, but there is not much settlement. At Suttill's the Sand Hills begin, and I was told that the distance to the Assiniboine was twenty-four miles. There is but one trail winding among the hills, and so there is no danger of losing one's way. I crossed Pine Creek about nine miles from Suttill's, and noticed several good tracts of land among the hills. If the spear grass could be destroyed, these hills would feed thousands of sheep for market. There is not much wood except along the Assiniboine. The Souris Crossing was reached between nine and ten o'clock, and the mosquitoes were most tormenting. After repeated calls on my part at the ferry, someone responded from the other side of the Assiniboine, "What have you got?" I replied, "A horse and buggy." "We can take yourself over, but not the horse," was answered. I declined to go and leave Tom to the tender mercies of the mosquitoes after a drive of fifty miles. They explained that the ferry was leaky and unsafe. At last I persuaded them to try the craft, and after much ado both man and horse were safe on the other side. The hostelry was being refitted by being replastered with clay. There were no beds, and hence I took in my own bedding and slept on the floor. Quite a number of men were about the place, and I proposed that we should worship before retiring. This was readily acquiesced in. From Mr. Bangs, the land guide, and Mr. Mills, land agent, I got much valuable information about roads and settlements. In the morning I drove up to Milford, which is about three miles from the Assiniboine. Major Rodgers, the owner of the town plot, gave me much information about this and neighbouring settlements. I called on the Registrar of the district; a Mr. McDonald, of Halifax, formerly of St. Matthew's congregation; on Mr. Lundy, of Peterboro'; Turnbull,

and others. Held a service at the house of Mr. Motherwell and baptized two children. Hearing that there were several families farther south towards the Tiger Hills and Lang's Valley, eighteen miles beyond Milford, I drove in that direction in the afternoon, calling as I went at houses along the way. The country is very fine, the soil being a rich black loam, mixed with sand. There are but few settlers yet, but they expect a large number next spring. The Tiger Hills rise gradually from the plain, running south-east and north-west. As I was about entering the hills I saw a small house near the trail, and drove up to inquire whether I was going in the right direction. An old man was sitting at the door reading a copy of the Winnipeg "Free Press." After interrogating him for a time, he asked the privilege of asking me a few questions, which I granted. He proceeded: "Are you a minister?" "Yes," I replied. "Do you not belong to the Presbyterian Church," he asked. "I do." "Well, I thought so." "Why?" I inquired. "Well," he answered, "I thought you did not belong to my own Church (the Episcopal), because they are not enterprising enough to look after their people in this way. I was sure you were not a Methodist, for you don't look like one; but there is something staid and steady about a Presbyterian minister that made me conclude, as I saw you come round the corner of the house, who you were." Bidding the old gentleman good-bye, I resumed my journey, and had a fine drive of seven or eight miles through the hills. The soil on the elevated parts here is light, but on the level it is heavy and clothed with an abundant growth of grass. The trail winds among the hills, following the driest and most level parts. Now you ascend an elevation that commands a wide view of similar elevations, of ravines and clumps of trees—then you descend, skirting along a lake fringed with poplar and scrubby oak and alive with ducks. Here you bowl along a smooth plain, and there you pass through a heavy meadow of native grass. This country must yet be all occupied with stock farmers. There is ample pasture on the uplands. In the valleys hay can be cured for stock; and in the ravines, in the woods, or sheltered in the valleys, cattle would know little or nothing of the wind and drift of the plains. At sunset, descending by a ravine, I came in full sight of Lang's Valley. It was worth driving fifty miles to see. The valley is about a mile wide and at least 200 feet deep. It is a huge trench, stretching east and west, and no doubt it formed at one time the bed of the Souris River. This river, after running south-east for a considerable distance, takes a sharp turn to the north-east, and after flowing thirty or thirty-five miles enters the Assiniboine. At the turn Lang's Valley begins, and in its bosom are found Lake Louise, Lake Lorne, Pelican Lake, Swan Lake, and Rock Lake, out of which flows the Pembina River. The valley of the Souris above the bend has every appearance of being older than the valley below. It is wider, and the ravines on either side are longer and broader. What changed the course of the river I have not been able to learn. I reached the house of Mr. Lang about dusk. It is pleasantly situated on rising ground, with a fine creek flowing past on the north and east sides. His sons—active young men—soon pitched my tent, provided me with clean, crisp hay, and took care of my horse, while I enjoyed the hospitality of their father. Mr. Lang, I found, formerly resided in Ottawa. Through the pressure of hard times, like many others in that city, he lost almost all, and with his family came out to Manitoba to begin life again. Nowhere have I met a more cheerful or contented family, or one the members of which appear to be more agreeable with each other. Accustomed formerly to attend regularly on the ordinances of religion, they feel it no ordinary privation to be without Sabbath services. From Mr. Lang I learned that there are in all seven Presbyterian families and seventeen young men with claims in the settlement. Much land yet remains to be possessed, and next season it is expected the settlers will be at least twice their present number. Next morning I held service with this family, some travellers who camped close by, and neighbours who were summoned. The simple, solemn service proved too much for some of the audience, for they could not conceal their emotion. I was entreated to send a minister, and they all promised support according to their means. Finding that I could not cross the Souris without some danger, I returned to the ferry at Milford. On my way back I saw some men working in a field some distance from the trail, and drove to where they were and found

them binding wheat, and a heavy crop it was. After some conversation with them, I asked, "Do you attend church?" "No," one of them answered; "at least not much." "Why?" "For two reasons: first, because there is none; and secondly, because even when there is, a fellow does not care to go." "But why not care to go?" "Well, when a fellow was at home, and his mother or sister did his washing and ironing, he liked to go to church; but when he does his washing and ironing himself, he has no desire to go to meeting to show his linen. Besides, Sunday is washing day, ironing day, baking day, cooking day, mending day, and a day for doing up chores generally." "But don't you know that these things should not be done on that day?" "Well, perhaps it is not right, but when a fellow is busy all the week, and tired too, it seems as if Sunday was the only day left to do them in." The other three scarcely liked this young man's candour, and he said to them: "You need not look so. You do the same things, although you don't own to it." They all felt as if their present life tended to barbarism, and were most anxious to get a minister. Altogether, I found that with those in Lang's Valley, there were nearly fifty families and young men with claims on the south of the Souris belonging to our Church. This number will be largely increased next year. What energetic young minister will come and look after those sheep scattered in the wilderness? They plead loudly for a shepherd. Will they plead in vain?

JAMES ROBERTSON.

LETTER FROM THE REV. G. L. MCKAY, D.D.

We have come from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and are staying a few days on the golden shores of California, in San Francisco, the extreme western city of the great Republic. There are two peninsulas here—one north, the other south. The city is built on the northern point of the latter. San Francisco Bay separates them from the mainland. The narrow strait between them, and connecting the bay with the ocean, is called the "Golden Gate," which is a mile in width and thirty feet in depth. A portion of the city is built on hills, giving the whole a broken appearance. In 1835 the first dwelling-house was built, and now there are 300,000 inhabitants from all lands. Here are New Englanders, Spanish, German, French, Italians, Norwegians, Swiss, British, Canadians, Japanese, and 21,000 of the so much hated Chinese. Christian work was commenced among the latter in 1852 by Dr. Speer, and is conducted now by Dr. Loomis, formerly of Ningpo, China. There is a school every evening in the week, where English is taught, then Christian instruction given, ending with prayer and praise. The attendance is from ninety to 120, and the average Chinese congregation on Sabbath is about eighty-five, and from twenty to thirty Chinese women. It is evident that two great causes tell against the mission: 1st, the contemptible treatment of the mob towards the Chinese; and 2nd, the wickedness of this city, even at the very doors of the Mission church. I regard this city as one of the most wicked and debasing I have seen travelling around the world. On this Pacific coast the results of Christian effort, in spite of the hoodlums and devil's agencies, are: attendance at evening schools, 825; average in Sabbath schools, 1,100; baptized in California, 500. These are glorious fruits in face of the enemy; but ere long thousands will rush into the Kingdom of God in this land. Things are finding their level. Kearneyites are being pushed into the background, and righteousness is being planted on these shores. Hear the American Consul for the Chinese here (Colonel F. A. Bre): "I challenge your labour leagues, your eight-hour leagues, every other league, to meet the question fairly and squarely upon its merits. I claim that the advantages of the Chinese to California surmount everything else;" and he adds, "It can be shown that prostitution here is confined to the French, the Germans, the Irish and Americans, to a greater extent than to the Chinese." I never met more enthusiastic defenders of the rights of the hated Chinese than here in San Francisco—many of them residents for a dozen years, and having regular dealings with the "Celestials." "Watchman, what of the night?—the morning cometh." Yes, liberty, sweet to every man; justice, fair to every man; and Christianity, necessary for every man, will be established on this coast, where devilish tyranny and abominable mob rule reigned so long. Let Canada keep clear and show that the morning has already come, and that trust in God,