

Pastor and People.

Rev. Mr. McKellar's Missionary Work on the Saskatchewan.

(CONTINUED.)

During the winter of 1874 the people felt much discouraged without a Pastor of their own. But the visit of the Rev. Mr. Robertson of Norwich, Ontario, who had been sent out to supply Knox Church, Winnipeg, greatly encouraged them. Mr. Robertson spent four weeks amongst them, visited every family, and by his indomitable energy and spirit, aroused the people to action. They were made to feel that unitedly they could do much, so they resolved to raise a sum of \$800 towards the support of a minister, and accordingly they signed a call to the Rev. William Ferguson of Glenora, Ontario. And it is to be hoped that Mr. Ferguson is not amongst them already that he will soon be. All the people not only of this mission field; but also those of High Bluff, Portage Creek, Portage La Prairie, and Rat Creek, are rejoiced that Mr. Robertson has accepted the call given him by Knox Church, Winnipeg, as they feel satisfied that as long as such men as Mr. Robertson is with them then their own as well as the interests of the other newer settlements of this Territory will not be lost sight of. Mr. Robertson has the entire confidence of this community. They feel that the right man is in the right place. With regard to the contributions towards the funds of our society, I have to state that the parts of the field which had an opportunity given them to contribute before I left, have done what they could, considering the adverse circumstances in which they were placed, owing to the late grasshopper plague. They were willing to do all that they could, and some I am satisfied did more than they well could. I placed the position occupied by Mr. Currie and myself as the missionaries of your society clearly before the people at all the stations. They felt very thankful to the society for supplying them with the means of grace in the hour of their greatest need; and fully appreciated the object and efforts of our society in sending the gospel to such places as are least able to support the means of grace among themselves. They were only sorry that their present circumstances prevented them from doing more for our society's funds. Brethren, you need not fear that these new settlements will be long a burden upon others. Let them have a year or two of prosperity and you will find a people who will generously come forward not only to support gospel ordinances amongst themselves, but also to send them to others.

Contributions: Palatine \$57; Golden Stream \$9. As I had to leave before the subscription list could be circulated at the other stations, I cannot give the amounts collected, but I shall set it down at six dollars (\$6) each, which will make \$12. Total amount contributed by entire field \$78. The whole number of families that could be expected to contribute will not exceed 41, so that the contributions average nearly \$2 per family. Why I mention these particulars is, to show that the people have done their duty to the society in this respect, and that there is every encouragement for our society to send out missionaries to this great North-West Mission Field in the future. In closing this part of the report I wish to press upon your attention, brethren, that there are other new settlements springing up outside of this group of stations which require immediate attention. At Squaw Creek, five miles south of Golden Stream, stations, several claims have already been taken up by parties who intend settling on them next summer. There is one family there now, Mr. McLaughlin from near Ottawa, who is a member of the Church of Scotland. Also about eighteen miles from this, on the old Saskatchewan Road, there is a large family who came to this last summer from Wardsville, Ont.—Mr. McKinnon. There are several grown-up sons who have taken up claims for themselves. There is also another family coming in there this winter.—Mr. Sangster. And they are expecting several families from the same part of Ontario next summer, so in all likelihood there will be a thorough settlement in this locality. About fifty miles west of this another settlement has been started this last summer. There are four families there now. It is on the banks of the "Little Saskatchewan River," (to be carefully distinguished from that which drains the Great Saskatchewan Valley, as it is 300 miles from it.) They say the land is good. These three stations could be supplied if the missionary had a horse. Now a horse could be purchased at the beginning of the term and disposed of at the end of it without much loss to the society. This would be a good field to take up next summer. And I am satisfied there are men amongst you, anyone of whom would at once respond to the call to come out if you will only give them the opportunity. There is a strong and urgent call from the scores of families scattered over this "great lone land" to you now assembled within that sacred Hall. Come over and help us. There is a large district in the direction of Pembina Mountain without a single missionary of ours all last summer. There is another extensive field in the direction in which Mr. Currie has been labouring this summer, the necessities of which Mr. Currie no doubt will fully set before you; and not to mention the great field that is opening up for us in the "Great Saskatchewan Valley."

I fear that this report will be considered too long already; but I feel that I cannot conclude it without giving you as briefly as possible an account of the position I now occupy and how I have been led to undertake the long journey west to this place. Owing to the lamented death of the late Rev. Mr. Nesbit, who has been over eight years missionary to the Cree Indians of the Saskatchewan, the Prince Albert Mission has been left vacant without a missionary. The question of supplying this place was taken up and earnestly discussed at the meeting of Presbytery in October. They found immediate steps were not taken in sending a missionary at once

that the place would be left unoccupied all winter, which might result in greatly weakening our position here as a church, and that even others might possibly come in, and plant themselves in the very position, which our church through her missionary has been building up at such expense. Accordingly a calling call was sent by the Presbytery, to your humble missionary, asking me to go out to Prince Albert for the winter. This call came upon me altogether unexpectedly, and I felt what I was asked to do, to be not an easy matter. To undertake a journey of nearly 500 miles in the very face of winter, through a region almost entirely uninhabited, with the slow mode of travelling over such a road, and to have to camp out during the long, and probably cold, stormy nights, I felt to be no child's play—a journey if entered upon a month or six weeks earlier, would have been a pleasant trip. I also felt the work required of any man, occupying such a position, to be one of great responsibility. Yet on a full and I trust prayerful consideration of the whole question, I came to the conclusion that to refuse to go, would involve a graver responsibility than to consent, so trusting in a Higher Power, I agreed to go, but not without first getting the Presbytery to supply my place in the Palestine Field, at their own expense. At a special meeting of the Presbytery at High Bluff on 27th October, I was licensed and ordained, and appointed as missionary to Prince Albert. Now, although I would wish very much to give you an account of, to me, the most interesting, and even on the whole, enjoyable trip I ever made, yet I must positively refrain from doing so here, as the report is already much larger than I anticipated when I began to write it. But just permit me to say in a single word, that I now, felt so proud of being a Canadian before, as I did while passing through this magnificent territory. But I hope to be able to give a fuller account not only of the portions that I have already seen of it, but also of portions farther west. I cannot omit mentioning here, the name of a gentleman to whose kind assistance, I owe so much for my safe and speedy arrival to this place. Alex. McDonald, Esq., Factor of Hudson Bay Company at Fort Ellice, with whom arrangements were made to supply me with horses and a guide, as well as provisions for the journey—which arrangement Mr. McDonald carried out to my entire satisfaction. Now before concluding this report, I wish very briefly to state, the position which this place (Prince Albert) occupies in its relation to future missionary work both among the white settlers, as well as among the Indians. And, in lead, no one can have an adequate idea of the importance of this position to our church, as a centre from which missionary operations may be carried on in other portions of this immense valley unless he comes out, and, for himself, views from this stand point, the great openings which are presenting themselves on every hand. This place as you all know, was selected by the late Rev. James Nesbit, and established as an Indian mission station, in July 1866, at a distance of 500 miles from any settlement. The "Crees," numbered several thousands then. Their territory extended west to the Rocky Mountains. Prince Albert has an excellent centre. A mission farm was selected in a central place on the east side of the North Branch of the Saskatchewan river, as a model for the Indians to copy. The quality of the soil is excellent, and there is abundance of good pine timber on the opposite side of the river. Mr. Nesbit worked hard not only to teach the Indians the way of life and truth, but also laboured with his own hands, to show them how to work, and encourage them to settle down on farms of their own, along the river on each side of the mission farm. He succeeded in getting, as I am creditably informed, as many as twelve Indian families to select farms and made improvements on them, under his own direction, but as the white settlers continued coming in, the Indians were induced to dispose of their claims, although Mr. Nesbit did all he could to prevent it. The great difficulty that stood in the way, being that there was no means, by which the district could be made an Indian reserve, which would render any stipulation entered into with the Indians illegal, and not until this is done by the Government can a mission station established upon the plan adopted by the late Mr. Nesbit, be successful; otherwise, if the position selected is well adapted for a settlement, the whites will be sure to get possession of it. There are only two of the Indian families now occupying their original claims in the settlement, and the mission farm is a valuable one, and may yet be so applied as to render valuable service to the Church, in carrying on her mission work among the numerous families of the Cree Indians, to be found inhabiting this wide district about P. A. Mission. The farm is 24 chains in width, and like the rest of the claims along the river, it extends two miles back from the river. Of this about 22 by 24 chains is under cultivation, land out into four fields. The yield of wheat averages about 10 bushels to the acre, sometimes 15, Barley, 7 bushels has been known to yield 200 bushels, but not always the case; Potatoes, 20 bushels plant 1, yield 200 bushels, on a rare occasion 2 bushels yield 60. Mr. Nesbit had the farm summer fallowed this last summer, so that it might be ready for spring sowing. The fences will be required to be repaired soon, which will take up a part of the proceeds of the farm as well as will the expenses incurred in summer following it. The mission house is a comfortable dwelling, well arranged, capable of accommodating two families comfortably. There is a good house also for the interpreter, 35 ft. x 18. A store and dairy in one building, 50 x 20; a large barn, 50 x 25; stables, capable of holding 20 animals; 2 acres enclosed by a saskatoon fence, intended for a garden, yard, &c. Within this enclosure, the dwelling-houses and stores are built. The mission church is built of square pine logs; dimensions, 30 ft. x 25, capable of seating about 200 of congregation. It has a bell. The mission school is held in the church. The general attendance ranges from 60 to 100 scholars in the summer season. The teacher's salary for the last year was \$375, this year \$450. The school is under the superintendence of the Prince Albert Missionary. Three trustees are elected annually by the

people. The teacher's salary and other necessary expense, paid as follows:—\$200 from the mission fund, the balance by the people themselves. The school has been in operation now for seven years; for the first three years of this period they were nearly all Indian children, who attended; and for the last three or four years, as the number of white settlers increased, the attendance of Indian children a school has been gradually decreasing. This result to a certain extent I am informed is owing to the instruction which Mr. Nesbit received not to take any more Indian children under the care of the missions, as it was considered too expensive to keep them. Now, there are only five Indian children attending the school, while, formerly there were from fifteen to twenty. There is a grave yard about half a mile distant from the mission church.

The settlement itself is rapidly increasing. There are now altogether about fifty-five families comprising this community, including the two Indian families already referred to. Besides this, there are twelve Indian families, who make as a general rule, this settlement their abiding place. So that there are as many as sixty-seven families here altogether, making a population of nearly 400 souls. The settlement extends from end to end, a distance of about thirty miles along the east bank of the river. The river water is pure and healthy—the climate is also healthy—the days are generally fine and bright. I have never seen milder weather in Ontario at this season of the year, than we have had here for the last two weeks. The snow is nearly two feet deep at present, yet the horses are out feeding on the grass, and are found in excellent condition when brought home in the spring. And what gives the farmers settling down here a decided advantage over those settled in the Province of Manitoba is, that no grasshoppers have been seen here yet. Once a regular communication has been opened up between this and Red River, no more important position I doubt not, can be found in the territory.

What advantage does this station present as a centre for Indian mission work? Now I believe that many of our people at home, all labored under a wrong impression respecting this wide district, as an Indian Mission Field. I have certainly, been so myself, if the information I have received upon this question is to be relied upon, and I have much reason to believe that it is from what I have learned from personal observation about the Indians, even during the short time I have been here, and I hope to gain more definite knowledge respecting it. I shall simply state here, a few reasons why our church should continue and prosecute more than ever, this great and blessed work of christianizing and civilizing the thousands who perish out here in the midst of heathen darkness.

1st. The large number of families that are to be found from year to year within reasonable distance of this mission station, at the following points:—

(a) Fort Carlton, about fifty miles west from here. A reliable resident of this place, who is thoroughly acquainted with this entire district, states that he has seen as many as fifty Indian families at the above point in the summer of '73, and he has no doubt that as many have been there last summer also. In winter there are only about five or six tents, principally of old people and invalids, the rest being away hunting.

(b) White Fish Lake, North-West from (P. Albert), eighty miles distant. There were thirty families here last summer and winter; ten of these have taken up claims at this lake last summer, with the intention of settling down. The land is good—there is abundance of fish—also good for hunting; so that there is every probability of a large reserve being laid out for the Indians there, which would render this a desirable point for mission work. But I fear we have lost ground here already, as a Church of England Catechist has been lately out as the forerunner of a regular missionary, to select a site for a school. Why have we not taken possession of it before this?

(c) Sturgeon Lake, North-West from this (Prince Albert) eighteen miles. Twenty-two families here during summer and winter, more or less. The land good. There are four families at this lake that took up claims under the direction of Mr. Nesbit, and made some improvements on them. They are still there. Is our church prepared to give up the work that has been begun at this point, to others?

(d) Candle Lake, north from here, (Prince Albert) thirty miles distance. There are fifteen families here. Good fishing. The land about this lake is mostly woodland, the soil is good.

(e) South-East from Prince Albert a distance of eighty miles on the south branch of the Saskatchewan. There are ten families here. The land is excellent, and some of the families plant small patches of potatoes every summer. They subsist chiefly by hunting.

(f) Prince Albert mission itself. As already stated, twelve families are living about here. Of course the men are often away hunting, which remark will apply to all the other places as well. Total number of families at all these points—139. Say that each will average four individuals, which is certainly a low average; thus we have within the range of these points alone, an Indian population of at least 556 souls, and be it remembered that this is likely to become a permanent population that will likely settle down on reserves which will be set apart for them and their children. And as the buffalo is killed off to the west, it is not at all unlikely that some of those who are now hunters, will return to settle down in this more favored valley. And what is the argument from what is stated above, it is this, that an able and earnest young man should without delay be sought out, who shall consecrate himself wholly to this great and glorious work. Let him make Prince Albert his general home. There is abundance of room in the fine mission house, to accommodate both the missionary that may be settled over the congregation here, and the Indian missionary, together with their families if they have them. Thus, while the missionary would be out among his

people, his family would be enjoying the advantages of a good school, etc. But a single man, no doubt, would be better able to undertake this work at least, for the first two or three years.

The position of an Indian missionary in future, will be very much different from what it has been in the past; he will be coming frequently in contact with the regular settlers at various points of his Mission Field, and it will be becoming more and more so every year.

2nd reason, why our church should continue on this work: That all those families who usually congregate at these various points have heard the gospel teachings, either directly or indirectly through the labours of our missionaries. The late Mr. Nesbit, who conversed with them in their tents when he visited them, or in his own house when they visited him. He gave to many of them food when they and their children were nearly starving; and medicine when they were sick. Mr. Nesbit's name is respected, and his conduct toward them in times of troubles and want, is gratefully remembered in many an Indian camp, which continues to exert a wholesome influence for good over them and their children. Do we not see the fruits of such a life manifesting themselves already? Not many weeks ago a little orphan girl brought from the plains by our late mission, died happy, praying the prayer that he taught her, remembering the last words that he spoke to her and her little orphan brother as he bade them good bye, "never to lay their head on their pillow without saying their prayers." A week ago to-day a Christian mother was buried, who died in her wigwam about twenty miles from here, with none but her husband and four children near; she prayed for them, besought them to give themselves to the Saviour. She heard of Mrs. Nesbit's death, and said that she did not think that she was going to join her beloved friend so soon; that she did not expect to have so high a place there as her departed friend; but she was sure that she would be so near that she could see her; and her last words were words of blessing and thanks to the good man who had done so much for her and her children, and expressed the hope that he would come and see her dear children after she was gone. Little did she think that he would be there before her, to welcome her home. Are these not precious jewels, my brethren, taken from the common mass of heathenry, prepared for the Master's presence? Are these not worth labouring for? Can our Church afford to give up this work unto others, and thus forego the privilege and honour of having a share in so blessed a work? And this very day we had the most conclusive evidence of the great confidence with which all the Indians of this large district regard the character of the leaders of this Mission for integrity. Two of their chiefs, accompanied by eleven of their representative young men, who came with them, as they termed it, to "make their hands strong," called upon Mr. McKay (interpreter) and myself to-day at the Mission House, to consult us and get our advice on what they considered (and certainly it is that) to be a matter of the greatest importance. They said they could not trust the Hudson Bay Company gentlemen, as they had interests of their own to serve, nor the French priest, as they feared he would be inclined to favour the Company; nor could they trust the Government agent. But they had known Mr. McKay long, and had every confidence in his honesty and ability as an interpreter, so that they have unanimously elected him to be their interpreter at the treaty next summer, if there should be one. One of the chiefs, who had never been at the Mission before, said in the beginning of his speech, that he heard what the Roman Catholic Church taught, but never had an opportunity of hearing what our Church taught, and would like to hear, so that he could tell the difference. The nature of their errand was to find out how they should act in preparing to meet the Governor next summer, if he should come to make a treaty with them. They wished me to write a letter to the Governor, which would fully explain their views and desires upon the subject, which I readily assented to do, and told them that I should be most happy to do anything I could to assist them in the matter. They stated their views fully, and Mr. McKay interpreted them. This letter I am requested to send at the earliest opportunity. Then I explained to them, through Mr. McKay, as briefly and as simply as I could, the leading truths which we teach. I particularly sought to impress upon them that Christ Jesus, God's Son, became our surety; and that through His blood alone we can obtain pardon and peace. I then told them that I felt sure that they would get justice done to them by the great man at the head of our Government; that he was a good man, who would do all he could for the benefit of themselves and families; and that I remembered yet how kindly he used to speak to me and encourage me when a boy going to school. I also told them of the cat and good Mother across the great ocean; how she wished that all her red children should be happy and provided for. After partaking heartily of a good dinner prepared for them by Mr. McKay, and after a few short speeches more they went away, apparently perfectly satisfied with the result of their mission. Let us remember these were representative men, authorized to speak for the whole band within the bounds of a large section of this territory. Now, this has been a precious opportunity to exert a good influence over them, and, through them, do good to those they represent. And there is one thought more which should have great weight in determining our Church to act at once in supplying this large district with a missionary; that the Indians themselves begin to see clearly the necessity of making a living in some other way than by hunting and roaming from place to place as they do now. One of the chiefs present to-day expressed this by making use of a most beautiful and impressive figure. He said it a cake of bread was placed on one end of the table, and a buffalo on the other, and if he were asked to take his choice, that he would choose the cake, because the buffalo will soon be all killed off, but the cake will continue to grow out of the ground from year to year. This clearly shows that they are beginning, to realize their present posi-

tion, and see the necessity of settling down and improving their farms, and live like white people. Now is the time to seek out good positions for reserves; and you may rest assured the Church of England has her attention fixed upon this very mission field, which has been ours for the last eight years, and you may also lay it down as an established fact that, whatever Church gets possession of these important points, which shall, in all probability, become in less than a year or two Indian Reserves, will be greatly strengthened in her position for carrying forward missionary work among the new settlements which, without doubt, will be rapidly springing up on every hand; and as a result which will naturally follow from her having taken up our Indian mission ground, she will be sure, and that very soon, to establish a mission station in the heart of this very settlement. I doubt not you may be looking for such intelligence before very long. And why? Just because we have given up to her our Indian mission ground, which virtually has been passing out of our hands for the last year or two, when, if I mistake not, as a Church we shall have cause to regret.

I fear, brethren, you will regard this report as too long and tedious, both to read and to listen to it read; but you must exercise great patience toward one who has been connected with your Society so long, and who feels himself to have been greatly privileged and honoured in having been permitted to take a humble share in carrying forward the great and blessed work for which the Society has been established. I owe much to the Society. It binds me more closely to my fellow students, and strengthens the affectionate tie that binds me to our College and the noble and generous hearted men who are at the head of it. And may God abundantly bless and prosper you, my beloved brethren, in all your labours of love. An I may our Church be strong, not only outwardly but also in heart and purpose. May she greatly honour Him who is her Head and Master; and may she always hear and obey the voice of Him who bids her: "Enlarge the place of thy tent; and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations. Spare not; lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes." And may it be truly said of every man employed within her borders, and especially of all her messengers, "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." And now, in bidding you an affectionate farewell, my beloved brethren in the Lord, let us unite with one heart and voice with the Psalmist in the closing words of the 72nd Psalm: "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things; and blessed be His glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and amen." As ever, yours faithfully, H. MCKELLAR.

Newman Hall on "Now."

A short word; a shorter thing. Soon uttered; sooner gone.

Now! A grain of sand on a boundless plain. A tiny ripple on a measureless ocean! Over that ocean we are sailing; but the only part of it we possess is that on which our vessel at this moment floats. From the stern we look backward and watch the ship's wake in the waters; but how short a distance it reaches, and how soon every trace disappears! We see also some landmarks farther off, and then the horizon closes the view; but beyond that ocean still rolls far, far away. Memory contemplates the few years of our individual life; history shows us a dim outline of mountains; science tells us that still farther back, out of sight, stretches that vast sea; reason assures us that, like space it hath no boundary; but all that we possess of it is represented by this small word—Now! The past, for action, is ours no longer. The future may never become present, it is not ours until it does. The only part of time we can use is this very moment—Now!

O, listen to the voice of warning now! "Awake thou that sleepest! Awake now! Seek the Lord while he may be found! Seek him now! Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved!" Believe now! Confess to Him your sins, ask pardon through his blood, rely on his atonement, implore the help of his Spirit devote yourself entirely to his service! Do it now! Strive to enter in at the strait gate now! Offer the prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner" now! Too much time has been wasted already. Lose no more. This may be your only opportunity! Seize it now!

Now! for time is short, and death is near, and judgment threatens! Now! for in eternity it will be too late, and your very next step may land you there! The only reason of which you can be sure is now! The only season in which you can work is now! The purpose may not last till tomorrow; fulfil it now! Fresh difficulties will flood the channel to-morrow—wade it now! The chain of evil habits will bind you more tightly to-morrow; snap it now! Religion is a work for every day; begin it now! Sin exposes to present miseries; escape them now! Holiness confers present joys; seize them now! Your Creator commands; obey Him now! A God of Love entreats; be reconciled now! The Father from His throne invites; return now! The Saviour from His Cross beseeches; trust Him now! The Holy Spirit is striving in your heart; yield now! Behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation!

Piety and politics are not essentially antagonistic; that is, if the piety be genuine and the politicians be honest; and we know of no place where honest men are more needed than in the political affairs of the country. If the disinterested and honest citizens would assert their rights and perform their duties to society in these relations, they could fill all offices with good and competent men, greatly to the benefit of the people. But when professed politicians are heard warning off good men from their "dirty pool" with the familiar cry against "religion and politics," then look out for villainy. Honest men, Christian men, should remember their obligations to the community, and carry their principles with them into all their political dealings.