

Work for God at Home and Abroad.

CONFIRMATIONS HERE AND IN CANADA.

ONFIRMATIONS are becoming much more frequent in England than they used to be. We constantly hear a notice given out in church that the Bishop is coming, and the clergy are ready and willing to prepare candidates, old and young, girls and boys, for confirmation.

This is fairly simple work in our country, where church spires dot the landscape in every direction, and the clergy are many, and eager to lead souls into the right way.

In distant lands it is often far different. There the gift of the Holy Ghost, delivered through the laying on of hands, has to be struggled for, and won through actual bodily exertion, and often peril.

Take Canada, for instance, as a case in point. Confirmations ordinarily take place in winter there; the short summer is necessarily such a busy season—gathering in the fruits of the earth—that the clergy could not find opportunity for the teaching and examination of candidates. The people are all in the fields and gardens, as is right and natural.

Still, a Canadian winter does not seem a promising season for young people or old to travel in; lately we have received an account of the difficulties that beset some candidates for confirmation in Mattawa, Canada, which illustrates this.

An English lady living twenty miles distant from Mattawa was anxious to present her son and daughter for confirmation at that place.

The first thing to be done was to cross a frozen lake, which feat was performed on snow shoes. The whole distance to the railway station on the Mattawa line was accomplished on foot in good time for the train.

Too good, alas! for, in company with an anxious throng of candidates gathered from other parts of the district, the travellers waited exactly twelve hours for a snowed-up train. The thermometer showed forty degrees below zero. Imagine the discomforts of a wayside station or shed at this crisis. Most thankful were the party when they actually saw the train steaming slowly into the station.

Still Mattawa was reached too late for the confirmation; it had already taken place; the bishop, however, not having left, kindly held another service for the belated candidates.

The missionary who had the duty of preparing these confirmation candidates had no light task either; instead of their coming to his classes as is the habit in England, he had to visit them in their outlying homesteads. He says that for three months before the bishop's arrival he seldom spent more than two nights a week in bed, the rest he passed travelling or snatching a hasty nap for an hour or two wrapped in his fur cloak on a hard bench, while waiting to continue his journey.

Another missionary friend in Canada tells us of a brisk old lady of ninety-two setting out to walk some miles to get confirmed. Happily at the end of the second mile she got a lift. And well she did, for the weather was rainy and muddy, so much so as to recall the advice given in the 'Homilies': 'It is a good deed of mercy to amend the dangerous and noisome ways, whereby thy poor neighbours, sitting on his silly weak beast, foundereth not in the deep thereof.' Happily this old lady did not founder, but was lauded safely at the church.

We cannot help being struck with the zeal and fervour of these Canadian candidates, and contrasting it with our own lukewarmness at home, when a wet evening or some slight hindrance will keep us from attending a class.

We do not like our religion to cost us anything. Is this right? Ought we not rather to think that we should not offer to our God that which costs us nothing? Surely those struggles through cold and fatigue in Canada to obtain His Grace find favour with Him. Let us struggle too to miss no opportunities of spiritual help.

NEWFOUNDLAND.

HARD times come to the dwellers in all countries. They come to us in England. But we are a well-populated country, and the poor man in distress is buoyed up with the hope that here or there, in his village, or in the neighbouring town, he will meet with a helping hand, and so get pulled through his troubles.

But the poor man in Newfoundland looks in