

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

A TRIP TO THE NORTH-WEST.

MR. EDITOR,—I am in mid-ocean, returning homeward by the steamer *City of Owen Sound* from a trip to the North-West. We are on Lake Superior, out of sight of land; and as the day is wet and cold, it just occurred to me to occupy the afternoon in writing a narrative of my journey.

I STARTED FROM COLLINGWOOD

on this vessel on Monday, 10th July. Our course lay north of Manitoulin Island, thence to the Sault Ste. Marie, and thence across Lake Superior to Prince Arthur's Landing. I would pause to describe the magnificent scenery of the lakes, but many of your readers have seen it for themselves, and as it was my privilege to be amongst the first to cross the C. P. R. from

PRINCE ARTHUR'S LANDING TO WINNIPEG,

it may prove of interest to give some of my experience. You are not to imagine that we travelled in a splendid Pullman or by an express. It took three days to go from the Landing to Rat Portage, a distance of upwards of 300 miles. The first day we travelled 187 miles, to a place called Tache, in ten hours. We had for a Pullman an old freight car, and a flat car did duty as a first-class. The road took us to Fort William, then along the River Kaministiquia, and after that through a dense and monstrous forest. The first night we put up

IN THE MEN'S SHANTY,

which would have been comfortable enough but for the heavy rain that came through the leaky roof and soaked our bed. An Irishman consoled me by telling me that if one sheet were wet and the other dry, I would be sure to take cold; but as both were wet I would be all right. I certainly felt no harm from the ordeal, but rose next morning as fresh as a daisy. The food supplied to the men in these shanties is excellent. We started on our flat car at 5 a.m., and after proceeding about 50 miles we came to the residence of Mr. Ginty, one of the contractors of section A, who kindly entertained us. The road between this and Eagle River was exceedingly rough. Recent rains, too, had undermined it. When we came to a bridge, the locomotive looked as if climbing a tree. At Eagle River I had my first experience of

TRAVELLING ON A HAND CAR,

and also of pumping it. This being the end of the section, we had no locomotive or train to take us on. We travelled per hand car a distance of ten miles in less than an hour. This brought us to Vermillion Bay, a portion of Eagle Lake, and here we were fairly stuck. Though a romantic spot, it was hardly the perfection of human bliss to be made the object of attack by whole battalions of

MOSQUITOES AND BLACK FLIES,

evidently under the leadership of some Napoleon or Wellington, to have only a track to walk on at best, and to be housed by reason of torrents of rain. Anxious to know something about the men, I sent word round that we would hold a

PRAYER-MEETING

in one of the shanties. Not many came, but those who did gave respectful attention. (I can hardly imagine a more important or difficult mission than that to the railroad shanties. The men are shut up together, isolated from the world, have no church to go to, and there are the inevitable swearing and drinking in full blast. I afterwards met Mr. Johnstone, a student of Queen's, who acts as missionary on the line, and who gets along well with the men and has large meetings in the shanties.

The next day word came down the line that we were to travel by hand car to

EAGLE LAKE,

where we would find a construction train. We were quickly up and off. Having four men to do the pumping, we were scarcely an hour in going another ten miles. The headquarters are at Eagle Lake. Here we were kindly entertained by Mr. Kennedy, superintendent of the section. The view from his temporary house on the lake was a very fine one. We started next morning about five o'clock on a construction train, upon which men clustered like bees as they were being taken to the scene of their labours. It turned out a day of clear sunshine, so that the lake scenery

through which we had to pass was seen to great advantage. The lakes along Section B are countless. They are varied as to size, water-level, the trees with which they are surrounded, the islands that dimple their waters. They are of different shape—some round, others long, others like semi-moons. The journey took us alternately through rocky mountains and over deep ravines, and lakes far below. The construction of the road was accomplished by blasting the rocks with nitro-glycerine, and then by raising trestle-work along the intervening spaces. The extent of the latter is simply marvellous, and it is only being filled in; it has the appearance of lace-work stretching across the ravines. Having been delayed at several steam shovels, where I watched with interest the process of loading the ballasting cars, we did not arrive at

RAT PORTAGE

until about three o'clock in the afternoon. This little town stands on the northern shore of the Lake of the Woods. I stayed here for about a week, bathing, boating, and cruising among the islands. It is said there are 10,000 islands in this lake, and beyond these to the south there is an open sheet of water so large that you cannot see the shore. I am sure that the Lake of the Woods will become a favourite summer resort for the people of Winnipeg, as it is only 133 miles distant, and can be reached in a few hours. Rev. Dr. Collins has charge of the Presbyterian congregation, but being absent in Ontario, his place was supplied by Mr. Johnstone, the student already referred to. I preached to good congregations, the one Methodist and the other Presbyterian.

The road from Rat Portage to Winnipeg is in regular running order, during the first portion of which beautiful lakes at intervals are found, and during the latter we come upon rich agricultural lands, where we may see large herds of cattle or extensive wheat fields. I visited

SELKIRK,

about 20 miles from Winnipeg, and found it to be a garden of great promise. The view of Red River is very fine. There are already some five brick-making fields, which are doing a large trade. Other industries are spoken of. The Selkirk "Herald" was just being started by two Torontonians, Messrs. Campbell and Gemmell—the one late city editor of the "Globe," and the other of the "Mail" staff of reporters. I had a delightful drive to the manse of Rev. Mr. Matheson, Presbyterian minister. His church and manse are built of stone, the latter commanding a splendid view of the Red River. The former is very neat and comfortable in the interior. I never saw finer potatoes than those in the minister's garden. Mr. M. told me that from a patch of ground 23 by 31 yards he had taken in a former year 80 bushels of potatoes. At Selkirk I had a nice little gathering to hear me speak of "Getting On in the World," of which they seemed to furnish an excellent illustration.

THE CITY OF WINNIPEG

is well worthy of being seen. Although at first somewhat resembling an overgrown village, yet closer inspection brings out the essential features of the great and growing city. There is a population of upwards of 20,000. The streets, though very wide, are thronged from morn till eve. The many hotels are crowded. Life is intense. But let us speak of it as a centre of Presbyterianism. We have now two large congregations, viz., Knox, to which Rev. D. M. Gordon, B.D., will be inducted this evening, and St. Andrew's, of which Rev. Mr. Pitblado is pastor. The first thing that strikes one is the preponderance of men in attendance upon the service, and the eagerness of the evening congregation as compared with the morning one. I am sure there were 1,500 persons present in the evening in Knox Church. I learned that St. Andrew's was also crowded. Knox Church Sabbath school is not so large as one would expect, but this is accounted for by the fact that many men have not yet removed their families from below. The Bible class was a solid one. I had the pleasure of hearing Superintendent Robertson teach it. It was a lesson of much interest and profit. I was also greatly delighted with the prayer-meeting in St. Andrew's. It was a model meeting. Though the night was hot, there were not less than 150 present. Rev. Mr. Pitblado presided. There were five brief prayers, as many hymns, a portion of Scripture read, and an address—all within the hour. It will be gratifying to the many friends of Mr. Pitblado to learn

that his congregation is growing rapidly, and that as a minister he is warmly loved and admired. Both congregations are worshipping in large halls which are their own property.

It was most gratifying to me to visit the

NEW PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE BUILDING.

It is beautifully situated—at present outside of the city, but destined at no distant date to be surrounded by buildings. The authorities have provided against overcrowding by laying apart nearly five acres for recreation and adornment. In the interior the building is commodious and well adapted to the purpose for which it is erected, though, according to the original plan, the present structure will be only a wing when the whole is completed. The history of our college in Winnipeg is a gratifying one. Having had to contend with many obstacles, she has persistently maintained her ground, until she has become a recognized centre of missionary work as well as a great educating power. In both of these aspects Professors Hart and Bryce have rendered invaluable service to the Church. They are to be congratulated that, while yet in their prime, the work of the past years promises to be but the foundation for the more extended task that now lies before them as they enter upon the new period which is marked by the completion of a portion of the college buildings. I am sure we all wish our western college a prosperous future, in the hope that many able ministers may go forth from her halls, and that the generous support which she requires will be gladly given by the churches at large. As regards the teaching staff, the valuable services of the late Rev. Dr. Black, of Kildonan, and of Superintendent Robertson should not be forgotten.

A short visit to Portage la Prairie, Brandon, and Emerson enabled me to learn for myself

WHAT OUR CHURCH HAS BEEN DOING,

and the task that lies before her. One can easily see the wisdom of appointing a man like the late honoured pastor of Knox Church, Winnipeg, as superintendent of her missions in the North-West. Wherever I went it was the one story, the wonderful progress of the Presbyterian Church. It should, however, be remembered by us all that it is not enough to have an able general and a noble band of faithful ministers, but that proper ammunition must be forthcoming to enable them to build and hold their forts, and maintain the work of the Church in the midst of the evils incident to a new country. When on the spot we can see the need there is for the building fund which our superintendent is so zealously raising. Our congregations outside of Winnipeg are, as a rule, far from being wealthy, and yet every one is apt to think there is a plethora of money in a land where immense fortunes are being made. But the very opposite is true. New settlers are not possessed of more money than is required to give them a start. They cannot be expected to build churches and manses, and support pastors right away. A little timely help will secure many a valuable site for future operations, and common sense should teach us to nurse the infant churches well, assured that, when they attain manly proportions, they will in the time of their abundance be able to give liberally towards the further extension of Presbyterianism in the North-West.

We cannot but express our thankfulness that the Great Head of the Church has sent such a workman as the Rev. Mr. Gordon to the western metropolis, and the pleasure we feel from the conspicuous circumstances connected with his appointment, in the certain prospect of a pastorate that will prove a blessing not only to Knox congregation, but to the Presbyterian Church and to the cause of Christ at large.

DAVID MITCHELL, *Belleville.*

Steamship City of Owen Sound, 8th August, 1882.

THE domes of the great churches in St. Petersburg, Moscow, and some other Russian towns, are said to be plated with gold nearly a quarter of an inch thick. The church of the Saviour, in Moscow, represents a value of \$15,000,000, and the Isaac cathedral, in St. Petersburg, of \$45,000,000.

SOMETIMES a fog will settle over a vessel's deck and leave the topmast clear. Then a sailor goes up aloft and gets a lookout which the helmsman on the deck cannot get. So prayer sends the soul aloft; lifts it above the clouds in which our selfishness and egotism befog us, and gives us a chance to see which way to steer.—*Spurgeon.*