

## OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

### NOTES FROM MANITOBA.

MR. EDITOR—Though under a cloud of depression at present, Winnipeg is destined to be an important centre. Its situation is favourable for growth, and the capital already expended by private parties, and by companies, will guarantee its future progress. When men were insane in land speculation twenty months ago, and were trying to be rich by rapid strides, there was naturally a rush of capital to Winnipeg. Men embarked in business, and large stocks were purchased, every one was full of hope, prices were inflated and trade was an unsafe, because unnatural, basis. When, therefore, the boom ceased, and common sense gained sway, it was found that many were left to the lurch, with land that would not bring over fifty per cent. of its cost, and with stocks of goods far beyond the demands of the country, some have unloaded themselves of lots and other property at immense sacrifice. Some have been ruined, while others again, are struggling along, hoping to weather the storm and reach a season of calm again. With heavy stocks, and the stream of population passing westward, and rising towns competing for the trade, it is easily seen how Winnipeg is labouring under a burden which needs all her energy and wisdom to carry. Even at this season, every incoming train brings its share of immigrants who, however, do not stop in the city, but push westward to the homestead lands. The crowds of passengers that throng the platform, even in June and July, are greater than one sees either at Toronto or Montreal. The city itself is of interest to one who visits it for the first time. It has a strange mixture of civilized and frontier life about it. On Main street, there are canvas tents and rough-boarded shanties, in which goods of every description are sold, and close to these, are handsome buildings that would do credit to any city in the Dominion. On the streets are seen the pushing, energetic business men, and also the original sons of the prairie, with their long, straight black hair hanging over their shoulders, and squaws who are clothed in shawls of flaming colours, and have their feet encased in beaded moccasins. The Main street is broad, and has some fine buildings, especially the Hudson Bay Company's property, and Cauchon's large block, near the Assiniboine. The new Presbyterian Churches to be erected, and other edifices, will add much to the appearance of the city. The last General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, held in London, appointed a Principal, and so sanctioned the establishment of a Theological College to Winnipeg. We believe it has been decided by the Baptist Church, also to have a Theological College in the city. These and other institutions will wield a strong, and beneficial influence on the future history of the city and country. Though far north, the inhabitants of Winnipeg have a due share of heat. For two days, June 27th and 28th, the mercury marked from 95° to 100° in the shade. Between that city and Brandon, the rails on the C.P.R. expanded and spread out, so that the express was delayed some hours. During those days of intense heat when the sweat was trickling down the faces of the Winnipegians, good drinking water was a scarce commodity. The food at the hotels was well salted, and this was done, according to the opinion of some of the knowing ones, not to preserve the meat, but to intensify the thirst of the guests at the hotels; and as the water was kept at the bar, it was necessary to pay frequent visits, and thus of course opportunity was afforded those who wished to obtain a stronger thirst annihilator than water. To my opinion the bottom has not yet been reached in the scale of depression. As the wave of immigration flows further and further westward towards the Pacific, and the money expended in the construction of the railway is far beyond the reach of Winnipeg, there will be harder times, but it will only be temporary. The fertile soil of that vast country will pour its rich products into the lap of the city, and eastward to the seaboard, and those who may be croaking ill omened oracles about the future will find in a few years that they have been false prophets. The future of the city will be one of bright prosperity.

Portage La Prairie is a thriving town of 5,000 inhabitants, about fifty six miles west of Winnipeg. Its streets are well laid out at right angles to each other, they are broad, and lined with young maple trees which grow rapidly, and in a few years will afford a

pleasant shade. The soil northward, to the south of lake Manitoba, is very fertile, and is occupied by farmers from Ontario. Some of these farmers came from the township of Scarborough and cultivated the land as thoroughly as they did in the east. We found them well satisfied with the climate of Manitoba, as well as the soil, and asked some of them who left good farms in Ontario, if they liked Manitoba equally well with Ontario, they replied "yes." When asked their reason, they answered the soil is richer, it is easier worked, and we have better crops, save more money, and have good school and churches near us. To show what has been done on the land in that part of the Province one farmer purchased a half section near Portage, paying for it \$9,000. In three years from the time he turned the first sod on the farm he paid the whole sum and owned the land. Many of the enterprising farmers, and business men there, are Presbyterians who have made comfortable homes for themselves, and what they have done, others can do, if they have the pluck and determination to succeed. Though there had been a scarcity of rain, wheat and other grains were looking well, and as the heavy rains in Ontario have done havoc to the spring wheat the outlook for the farmers of the North West is bright. Root crops were also in a flourishing condition. We found strawberries ripe at High Bluff on the 5th of July and on the farm of Mr. McLean, one of the oldest settlers near Portage, we saw red current bushes laden with fruit. Whatever may be the prospect for the growth of apples in the North-West, it is unquestionably true, that the small fruits grow in great luxuriance. There is much in the soil and in the climate to make happy homes for millions in that immense area of fertile soil. We had the pleasure of speaking on Sabbath, July, 1st, to the congregation at High Bluff, over which our old fellow student, Mr. McKellar is pastor. The church is a neat and commodious log building, the attendance was good, and the service was enjoyed by all. We spoke at the request of the pastor on some facts of interest in connection with the present state of Jerusalem. We noticed here, and through all the North-West, that a large part of the congregations is composed of young men. These are the strength of the country, and of the Church. The pastor of High Bluff is doing excellent work, not only for our Presbyterian Church, but for the cause of Christ's kingdom generally. In the evening we preached to a large congregation in Portage. Under the fostering care and activity of the pastor, Mr. Bell, this congregation has made rapid strides, and has kept abreast of the rapid development of the country and the town. The congregation worship in a handsome frame building capable of seating five or six hundred people. The music in this church would do credit to many of our city choirs in Ontario. A splendid brick manse has been erected lately for the pastor, and altogether the cause of Presbyterianism is healthy and strong in this part of Manitoba.

Brockville.

GEO. BURNFIELD.

### WOMAN'S HOME MISSION SOCIETIES.

MR. EDITOR,—The Woman's Home Missionary Society of the Presbytery of St. John felt so encouraged at their last meeting that they desired me to make known, through your columns, to the ladies of Toronto and the west their method and its success, in order, if possible, to induce the formation of similar Presbyterian societies in Ontario.

The mission field of the Presbytery is unusually extensive, for it embraces about two-thirds of the whole Province of New Brunswick. Its stations, as indeed nearly all the charges of the Presbytery, mainly extend along the river St. John from north to south, and the line of sea-coast from east to west—about 200 miles in each direction. It had long been felt that this vast field could never be overtaken by the ordinary system of summer supply. Instead of advancing, our Church was losing ground. Churches built with Presbyterian money had in some cases been sold to other denominations, and our most earnest adherents in not a few localities had given their energies to other communions which, if less to their mind, yet supplied Gospel ordinances to their families.

At first the society simply aimed at supplementing as many stations as possible so that the services of an ordained missionary might be obtained for some that could not yet claim aid from the supplemental fund, but, as resources developed, ideas broadened, and, making a bold resolution, the ladies requested the Presbytery to appoint an ordained missionary who

should visit all the mission fields, dispense ordinances, and superintend generally the work of Church extension, pledging themselves to pay \$600 of his salary. The offer was at once gratefully accepted, and the Rev. Jas. Macgregor Mackay, of Woodstock, was called to the work. He accepted, was released from his charge, and at once entered upon his itinerancy. He has proved himself to be fitted in no ordinary degree for the work. Blessed with a vigorous frame, and an iron constitution, his indomitable Highland fervour carries him through labours that would wear out an ordinary man. Enthusiastically loyal to his own church he succeeds in inspiring with new courage our feeble congregations, who now begin to appreciate the episcopal oversight of the Presbytery as represented by its missionary. Mr. Mackay is continually exploring new fields, and advising on the spot with leading members in regard to the old. At nearly every meeting of Presbytery he furnishes a graphic account of the whole field traversed in the interval, thus enabling the Church to distribute its efforts to the greatest advantage. You will at once perceive on what a solid, permanent basis this places our mission work.

You will ask, doubtless, where the money comes from. I will tell you how the St. John ladies raise their funds. A committee with a vice-president is appointed for every church in St. John, and it is the duty of these to see that parties willing to contribute are visited, and the amounts paid into the treasurer at the monthly meeting of the society. In St. John's Church the collection is made by the collectors of the Congregational Missionary Society, who have a separate column in their books for this contribution. In addition to this the Presbytery has enjoined all its congregations to take up a collection in aid of the work; and a collection forms an item of business at every meeting of the society.

By these means a general interest has been excited in the work; a large number of ladies have been interested in church extension whose energies were hitherto confined to the limits of their own congregations; the ladies of the several churches have been brought together, and a feeling of denominational unity has been brought about, with an increase of mutual esteem, which has produced moral results of a most healthy character. The meetings of the society are looked forward to with much interest, and the reading of Mr. Mackay's monthly report is always a source of the liveliest satisfaction. His graphic descriptions of the work, I will venture to say, give the ladies of St. John a clearer idea of what Home Mission work really is than is possessed by most of our Presbyteries.

Will not the ladies of Toronto, and other central cities and towns of Ontario attempt a similar work? Our Foreign work is important and possesses a romantic interest, but surely our kindred in the faith claim our first regard, and no Foreign Mission reports could exceed in interest those read monthly before our society in St. John.

T. F. FOTHERINGHAM.

St. John, N.B., July 5th, 1883.

### REUNION OF PROFESSIONAL MEN FROM ZORRA.

In the year 1834 the Rev. Donald McKenzie was ordained by the Synod of Ross as a missionary to minister to the spiritual wants of a large number of Sutherlandshire people who had emigrated to Canada and settled in Zorra, county of Oxford, about the year 1832.

On arriving in Zorra he found the people destitute of a pastor, but not without their Bibles, prayer-meetings, family altars and Christian principles instilled into them, amid their native hills and glens.

Having arrived in Zorra on Saturday evening, he found upon enquiry that the people were in the habit of assembling for prayer and the reading of the Scriptures in what was then the new "log church," but known for many years afterwards as "the old log Church." With thankful hearts those assembled as usual for prayer on the first Lord's day after the missionary's arrival heard the joyful sound of the Gospel from the lips of the far famed Apostle of the North—Dr. McDonald of Ferintosh, having presided at Mr. McKenzie's ordination and designation to the field, having given Mr. McKenzie testimonials and letters of introduction, the missionary was looked upon in Zorra by some at least as the minister sent them by Dr. McDonald. The second Sabbath day arrived,