

## THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

\$2.00 PER ANNUM, 3 ADVANCE.

C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Proprietor.

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To render THE PRESBYTERIAN more convenient to its numerous readers, a Folding Machine will shortly be purchased, so that the paper may be sent out not only folded, but also pasted and trimmed, thus placing it on a par with American Journals published at a much higher price.

The co-operation of friends is earnestly invited to aid in extending our circulation. Much has been done in the past in this direction, but much yet remains to be accomplished in the future. Young and old alike can help in this work, and now is the time in which to make a hearty effort.

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C. BLACKETT ROBINSON,

5 JORDAN ST., TORONTO.

Publisher.



Edited by Rev. Wm. Inglis.

TORONTO, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1881.

## MISSIONS IN THE NORTH-WEST.

WE are pleased to be able to give in this week's issue the first of a series of papers by the Rev. James Robertson, on the state and prospects of Presbyterian missionary operations in the Great North-West. These papers will answer for themselves, so that we need say nothing about them. The writer's official position and personal character guarantee abundantly that every statement made can be absolutely relied upon, so that a fuller and more satisfactory view of the whole field than has yet been presented may be confidently anticipated. It is only by degrees that the general public is coming to have any adequate conception of that great country, whether as an inviting field for the industrious settler or for the devoted Christian missionary. But a few years ago it was represented by those who professed to know to be a mere dreary, inhospitable waste, incapable of being turned to any better account than a breeding-place and refuge for fur-bearing animals, and a home for the wandering savage, and the not much more elevated white hunter and half-breed. Why such representations were made is now pretty well understood, and the only wonder is how they came to be so long and so generally received. Even at a later date, when the dishonesty of the first repre-

sentations could not but be conceded, it was a matter of great difficulty to secure anything like general credence to the most moderate statements about the character and extent of what had come to be known as "the fertile belt," while any amount of harsh criticisms and depreciatory wit was expended upon the climate and everything connected with those supposedly hyperborean and inhospitable regions of almost perpetual winter. Men who were thought to be wise, moderate, and well informed, said the very mention of the country sent a cold shiver through their frames; while those who were struggling to make known the truth about the territory were entreated with good-natured banter to remember that Canada had already a sufficient amount of frozen, unproductive regions under its control, so that it was quite *de trop* to seek to add to her icy and unprofitable burdens. How entirely all this has passed away need not be said. Not a few of the wit-crackers are not yet old, but they don't care about being reminded of that misdirected fun of former days. The statements which were scoffed at as monstrous lies are now found to have been studiously moderate, and the so-called romancers of these almost prehistoric times are found to have told only the truth, but not nearly it all. It takes an effort to realize the fact that it is only a few years since Louis Riel was master at Winnipeg, and that what is now a pleasant three-days' travel suggested permanent banishment and naturally led up to all the mysteries of will-making. The changes in the character and extent of our Presbyterian mission work are equally marvellous. Ten years ago what was it? Ten years hence what will it be? Never had a Church such an inviting and ever-extending field; never one more precious opportunity for doing right noble work in the Master's cause. What shall the harvest be? Humanly speaking, the next few years will permanently and unmistakably determine. It has now passed into an axiom, that holding forth the Word of life is as indispensable to the progress and prosperity of any Church as holding that Word fast; nay, that the latter will not long continue if the former is lost sight of or practically ignored. There is no temptation to the Presbyterian Church in Canada "to draw the curtains and retire to sleep." The work is urgent, and everywhere—at hand and afar off. Is it going to be overtaken with any adequate measure of energy and success? The indications are that it is, and if so, great will be the full tide of blessing upon all who show that they have heard and have responded to the call to come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

## PRINTED MATTER FOR OUR MISSION STATIONS.

THERE is one way of helping the Lord's work in the newer quarters of our country, which we fear is not sufficiently thought of, and not by any means so utilized as it easily might be. Too many forget that what is so plentiful with them as to have become stale and little prized is very scarce and very precious in other regions of the land. Sabbath school papers, magazines, and juvenile libraries are in very many congregations supplied in lavish abundance. It is to be feared in some cases there is even a good deal of positive waste. Have many considered that with a very small amount of care and effort these papers might be made to do double and very blessed work? There are scores of congregations which could each fully supply one or more mission backwoods schools with reading matter from their own superfluous abundance—abundance which is absolutely going to waste. In many of these each child is supplied with one or more papers every Sabbath. In this way frequently three or four copies of the same publication come to one house. Why should this be? The surplus after each home has got a copy would make many little hearts in the backwoods glad and grateful as well. Why should not this be done? Why also should not many of these publications be gathered up after they have been read, and instead of being treated as useless waste paper, repeated regularly to some place where none can be taken—at least where none are? The trouble would be very small, and so would be the expense, while the blessing all round might be very great.

The same thing with Sabbath school libraries. Every one knows that it would be a positive kindness to take away a large number of volumes from many

libraries, because they have been read and re-read till they are absolutely stale. These volumes would be all new and wonderfully acceptable in many recently settled and spiritually destitute districts of Canada. Why not gather them up, get them all put into good order, box them up and send them off, *carriage paid*, to rejoice the heart of some hard-working missionary and the little folks that he is seeking to win for Christ? We are asked by the Rev. Mr. Wellwood, of Minnedosa, in the North-West, to acknowledge with his heartiest thanks the receipt of a large box of just such books, kindly sent by Crescent Street Church, Montreal. We only wish we were asked to make an indefinite number of such acknowledgments. Mr. Wellwood says: "They are sent for free distribution, and will prove a great boon in the long winter evenings which are now upon us. The people need good books, as the freight has been so high that very few have been brought into the country." What is to hinder this being done to almost any extent? The post-office could easily carry Sabbath school papers to almost any extent and at very moderate rates, while the freight by express of a box of books might be a mere bagatelle to those who sent, but a very formidable burden to those who received. Let none say that they have no idea how or where to send such things. All they have to do is to send a postal card to the Rev. James Robertson, Winnipeg, to the Rev. A. Findlay, Brackville, or to any of the students at any of our colleges, and they will soon get directions for the practical and profitable disposal of all they have to spare. It would be a fair interchange of blessing, and would help on to something more and perhaps something better. Why not do the same with THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN and other religious newspapers that are not sold? Every missionary we have could find abundant and profitable use for all that could thus be sent. Reading matter, let us repeat, is in many parts of our country very scarce, and these papers might often preach the Gospel in regions where the voice of the preacher is heard but seldom, if at all. Those who are not willing to undergo the trouble and incur the expense implied in doing this, surely make manifest that their faith is feeble and their zeal but small. Let them gather up even the fragments that remain, so that nothing be lost.

## THE MEN NEEDED FOR MISSION WORK.

A MISSIONARY in the North-West says in a recent letter: "The crying need for this country is that of men—young men without families, who can make their home the field—remaining wherever night overtakes them, sleeping on the floor with a bag for a pillow and their robes for a bed—men who have a love of the Master, and who do not care wet or cold, or even hunger, many a time when on a weary journey—men who are not looking for salary, nor for great praise or flattery. Let it never be forgotten that the people have but little money, and can spare but few comforts either in words or things." Such men, we have no doubt, will be forthcoming in ever-increasing numbers—aye, and will meet with adequate encouragement eventually, both in salary and souls.

## SABBATH DESECRATION.

THE rumour went abroad about the end of last week, and was repeated in some of the newspapers, that the Grand Trunk had followed the pernicious and ostentatiously catchpenny proceeding of the Credit Valley Railway in the matter of Sabbath trains. We are glad to say that such rumours are at any rate premature. The Grand Trunk authorities, it is said, have not yet moved in the matter, and have no immediate intention of making any change in their arrangements. This is so far well. They already do a large amount of very unnecessary Sabbath work, and there was little need for their adding to the amount. With the Credit Valley lies as yet the bad pre-eminence and peculiarity of introducing a new form of intrusion upon the needed rest of the Lord's day. There is a deep feeling among religious people on all hands that something should be done to arrest this increasing Sabbath desecration, but what that something shall be is the difficulty. If, however, the Christians of the land would, first of all, keep the Sabbath faithfully and becomingly themselves, and that to a far greater extent than is generally done, and were then to combine upon some plan to influence others, they would exert a power that could hardly fail of producing good results.