

MISSION WORK ON HASTINGS ROAD, &c.

Madoc, 9th Feb'y, 1871.

MR. EDITOR,—My annual trip on the Hastings Road, to look up the Presbyterian interest, and see what can be done for the support of the Gospel by the people, was undertaken last month. Having no one to supply my pulpit during my absence, I had to condense the greatest possible work between two contiguous Sabbaths. My prescribed work was to preach in six different places, drive 200 miles, &c. As it was, the sun only favoured me with five hours of his face, had four days' storm, for four days pressed over unbroken roads, could only preach four times, and drive 150 miles with three changes of horses, and did not enjoy two nights' rest, partly from want of time, and partly from other discomfort.

My idea of a minister of the Gospel is, that he should lose his individuality in Christ; that, having given him a work to do, he should not flinch from the doing of it, whatever it costs him—non-promotion in the Church, sacrifice of ease and plenty, and all the disadvantages connected with self-abnegation. It would have contributed greatly to my worldly interests had I made this, my first charge, a stepping-stone to a better. Had I done it, as I might have often, the North Riding of Hastings would have been lost to our Church. Were I to do it now, the field I have been trying to extend would shrivel up to a single weakly, isolated congregation. My diocese extends 100 miles north and south; my winter journeys exceed 1500 miles; and at present there is only one ordained missionary, located 45 miles north, to help me with the work.

The Hastings Road is in a sad state of desertion, and the clearances are largely running again to bush. From the town line of Tudor and Lake to the town line of Limerick and Wollaston I counted 57 deserted shanties melting to dust on the free grant lots; and from the southern boundary of the latter to the centre of Dungannon and Faraday, 28 more. The country is very hilly, rocky, swampy, and the most of the land is not ploughable because it is so broken with rocks on edge. Yet it is not the nature of the country so much that is restoring it to the wilderness and the wild beast, as the unfitness of the settlers for bush life, the absence of churches, and the presence of grogeries. The order of necessities, in a backwoodsman's mind and practice, is, first the house, second the barn, third the school-house, and when he can afford the luxury, he will erect a church. Were he to make the church the prime necessity, God would prosper him in very unfavourable circumstances. Even two years ago, I counted 26 grogeries between this and the Peterson Road, 70 miles north. These demoralized the people, drove them elsewhere, paralysed those that remained, and, in their turn, many of them are also now becoming ruins. Few belonging to our Church have left for parts unknown, and few belonging to any other Church remain. We might yet people the road with a hardy, virtuous, and godly race of Presbyterians. They are in every way the best settlers. Would that our Church realised the economy of preserving its people, and the extravagance of letting them alone to be degraded, and then reclaiming them. I believe in following up our people with the Gospel, and never letting go our hold of them. Had we done this years ago we would have saved many broken backs, hearts and fortunes.

Our missionary is stationed at L'Amable, Dungannon, 45 miles north. He preaches there and at McKillican's, 15 miles south, one Sabbath; in Carlow, about 30 miles north-east, the second Sabbath; and at Doyle's