

array of booths, tents and canvas hotels, bearing most pretentious names. The general impression was that, if the place had advanced beyond the stage of a "paper" town, it was at best but a "cloth" one. A more careful examination improved, if it did not remove, this unfavorable estimate. Here, civilization as marked by railways had reached its limit, and the trail had henceforth to be followed. A weary tramp of twenty-five miles was a sufficient conviction of the immense benefits conferred on mankind by railway facilities, and even the huge syndicate monopoly was transformed in imagination into a most beneficent institution. The destination of this trial trip on foot was marked by a few scattered houses and tents, built or pitched on a most picturesque site on the high and rugged banks of the noble river Souris. This was the town. As may be imagined, the arrival of a "preacher" gave rise to much conjecture and aroused not a little curiosity among the inhabitants, of whom only four belonged to the fair sex. The general conclusion was that such a personage was sadly needed, and it was not necessary to go far to find confirmation of this. Some saw with regret that a death-blow was about to be dealt to their Sunday-craft. Arrangements were soon made for the holding of service on the succeeding Sabbath. In the kitchen of a plain log house, serving the quadruple purpose of a post-office, general store, boarding-house and stopping-place, the first regular service was held. It is unnecessary to say that a crowded house greeted the speaker. The audience was of a very mixed character, both in point of religion and nationality. Among those present, were to be found men drawn from England, Scotland, Ireland, and every part of Ontario. The proceedings were listened to and watched with a critical attention.

To one engaged in mission-work in Manitoba, almost the very first impression received, is, that the standard of morals which obtains in the older provinces has here degenerated not a little. This is especially the case in new settlements such as the one to which reference has just been made. Pushing young men with whom the country is filled, freed from the restraints of home and of friends, have come here with the avowed object of amassing wealth easily and speedily, and to this end everything is made subservient. In view of this fact it is not strange that the observance of the Lord's Day is wantonly disregarded. Stores and post-offices are kept open every day, and Sabbath is considered a favorable and most opportune time to drive home a load. Whether this state of affairs is compatible with what are called "works of necessity and mercy" alone, there is grave reason to doubt. At any rate that expression is interpreted in the broadest and most liberal manner, being used as a convenient pretext to justify almost any breach of the Divine Command, however flagrant. Notwithstanding these and many other drawbacks against which he has to contend, the laborer in the missionary field will find in them only a stimulus to

diligence and hard work. Indeed it may be said that the whole spirit of his surroundings will form a powerful, or rather an additional incentive "to spend and be spent" in his Master's service. He is thrown, for example, into contact with men and women who, by their removal into this new world, have turned their energies into a new and wider channel of action, who are manifesting a hardy virtue and fortitude in the effort to carve out for themselves a home. He will find everywhere a sense of mental freedom, marked by a disregard of the past and an eager anticipation of the future. The old sober and staid ways of thinking are laid aside and the mind is filled with new hopes and aspirations. Everything indicates progress and continual movement onwards. To stand still is to fall behind in the race. This spirit of wholesome rivalry and advance, of strong resolution to succeed, will exert its contagious influence, and unless the missionary also is possessed with it he will most certainly be out of harmony with his surroundings. In proportion as he can take advantage of it, and utilize it in a religious way, so far may he look for success. To one who has personally visited and had abundant opportunities of observing the way in which Manitoban settlers "live and have their being," it is not a little amusing to recall the strange experiences passed through. To toil through sloughs knee-deep; to seek repose on the hard floor of a shanty after a wearisome day's journey; or, what is worse, to be disturbed in the hours of slumber, not by the stings of conscience but by a far more palpable enemy to bodily comfort; to enjoy hospitality while seated on a molasses keg listening to the profuse apologies of the hostess, or more usually the host, that things are not yet arranged but promising improvement "next time"; to find oneself on the level prairie without a single living object being visible for miles; to be obliged to cling with desperate energy to the rear end of a Red River cart while the driver, under the mistaken idea that he is giving you a ride, goads on his slow-paced ox; to see the never ceasing string of teams wending their way to the Far West, drawing heavy loads of utensils and materials of every description—all this is incidental to mission work in newly-settled districts. To a zealous and earnest worker there is no reason for discouragement in all this, but rather the reverse. His opportunities of doing good are many and ample. The people, irrespective of creeds, welcome the preaching of the Gospel and feel a pardonable pride in, and attachment to, that church which has shown its interest in them by sending some one to look after their religious welfare. This, of itself, cannot fail to insure a hearty reception to the missionary wherever he may go.

A. S.

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