

gleam of fire. The house was a study in shadows: the floor sticky with mud brought in with the snow; the *debris* of a dozen meals on the table; a lamp, without chimney or bottom, stuck into an old tomato can, gave its flickering light, and revealed the poor woman with nothing to shield her from the storm but a few paper flour sacks tacked back of the bed. Two or three chairs, the children in the other bed, the baby in a little soap box on rockers, were all the wretched hovel contained. Medicine was left her, and the minister's watch for her to time it. He exchanged his watch for a clock the next day. By great persuasion the proper authorities were made to put her in the poor-house and she was lost to sight; but there was a bright ending in her case. Less than two years from the time she was left a widow, a rich old uncle found in her his long-lost niece, and the woman became heiress to thousands of dollars.

Sometimes dreadful scenes are witnessed at funerals, where strong drink has suddenly finished the career of father or mother. At the funeral of a little child smothered by a drunken father, the mother was too sick to be up at the funeral, the father too drunk to realize what was taking place, and twice the service was stopped by drunken men. At another funeral a dog-fight began under the coffin. The missionary kicked the dogs out and resumed as well as he could. At another wretched home the woman was found dying, the husband drunk, no food, mercury ten degrees below zero and the little children nearly perishing with cold. The drunken man pulled the bed from under his dying wife, while he went to sleep. His awakening was terrible and the house was crowded with morbid hearers.

As the nearest minister is miles away, the missionary has to travel many miles in all weathers to the dying and the dead. Visiting the sick and sitting up with those with dangerous diseases, soon cause the most of men not only to respect, but to love the missionary; and no man has the moulding of a community so much in his hands as the courageous and faithful servant of Christ. The first missionary on the field leaves his stamp indelibly fixed on the new village. Towns left without the Gospel for years are the hardest of all places in which to get a footing. Some towns have been without service of any kind for years, and some of the young men and young women have never seen a minister.

All kinds of people crowd to the front—those who are stranded, those who are trying to hide from justice, men speculating. Gambling dens are open day and night, Sundays of course included, the men running there relieved as regularly as guards in the army.

In purely agricultural districts a different type is met with. Many are so poor that men have to go to the lumber woods part of the year. The women thus left often become despondent and a very large

per cent. in the insane asylum come from this class. One family lived so far from town that when the husband died they were obliged to make his coffin, and utilize two flour barrels for the purpose.

So, amid all sorts and conditions of men, and under a variety of circumstances, the minute-man lives, works and dies, too often forgotten and unsung, but remembered in the Book; and when God shall make up his jewels some of the brightest gems will be found among the pioneers who carried the ark into the wilderness in advance of the roads, breaking through the forest guided by the surveyor's blaze on the trees.

In one little town a grand minute-man laid down his life. He was so anxious to get the church paid for that he would not buy an overcoat. Through the hard winter he often fought a temperature forty degrees below zero; but at last a severe cold ended his life. His good wife sold her wedding-gown to buy an overcoat, but all too late; and the bride of a twelve-month went out a widow with an orphan in her arms.

"MISSION WORK AMONG THE SIOUX."

*Address to the Winnipeg Presbyterial, W.F.M.S
by Miss Laidlaw, Missionary to the Indians.
at Portage la Prairie.*

I count it an honor to-night to be called upon to speak of that work in which I am directly engaged. It must be gratifying to sympathizers in this work to know that it is progressing, slowly to be sure and fraught with much that is disappointing, nevertheless moving onwards, and lifting one here and there from a life of degradation and dependence to one of nobler purpose.

Difficult as our work must appear it is a necessity if we would obey the command to "preach the Gospel to every creature." How often, oh how often, are we asked the question is it any use spending time and money: would it not be better to leave them as they are to roam the woods free, for they are a dying race.

If the latter be true, then let us move all the more quickly in giving to them that Gospel which means so much to us; which has made us as a nation what we are; which has made us individually what we are, so that they may share in that happiness which we hope will be ours one day.

Then as to the former, I would single out one or two and tell what the school has done for them. I know of no sight which touches the hearts of more people than that of unkempt children; and no doubt the attention of the ladies of Portage was turned to the need of just such a work by the sight of so many needy little ones.

The first child to come to school was certainly among this number—ragged, cold, and hungry no doubt, and true to her name "Topsy," looking as if she "grewed." One