

THE COLONIAL CHURCHMAN.

"BUILT UPON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CHIEF CORNER STONE."

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MISSIONARY RECOLLECTIONS—NO. IV.

A FUNERAL IN THE WOODS.

In the early part of May 183-, I was called to bury the child of one of my remote parishioners, whose dwelling was in the bosom of the forest, at a distance of full twenty miles from mine. The circumstances made a strong and pleasing impression upon my mind, and I therefore would record them here.

My course lay through what a short time ago was but a trackless wilderness, but is now dotted by new and improving farms, with here and there some humble cabins. For miles, however, the eye is uncheered by those signs of civilization, and rests upon the unbroken wood, or the broad surface of some beautiful lakes, whose waves to-day were sparkling in the rays of an unclouded sun. The road was such as the provincial missionary has almost weekly to travel at the risk of his neck—sometimes impeded by rocks and stumps, and the roots of trees—and sometimes a mere path, scarcely discernible to an unpractised eye; and on this occasion there was the unsettled state of the ground, owing to the frost coming out, to contend with, making it often dangerous to sit the horse. The whole might fitly bring to the mind the *road of life*—for a little while smooth and pleasant, but soon beset by various difficulties and dangers, temporal and spiritual. Happy they who in the midst of these can realize the protecting and guiding hand of Him who is himself the "WAY, the truth and the life."

The house of mourning, to which I came at last, was embosomed in the trees which "God's right hand had planted," and was prettily placed on the margin of a beautiful lake—alone in the wilderness, with no other dwelling of man in view. The owner had come to the spot with axe in hand but a short time before, and the considerable clearing that appeared around was good proof that he had not used that instrument in vain. The house was such as is usually reared in haste by the poor settler—formed of logs, and the interstices filled with moss. But contentment seemed to abide within its humble walls; and, what is better still, we trust that on this day the Spirit of the High and Holy One did not disdain to be present also. The single room of this dwelling was my Church—rough boards placed on blocks of wood served for pews—a table and chair were the substitute for a pulpit.

The neighbours, (so called) that is, those who lived within six or seven miles, were gathered to the number of about 20 or 30 to assist on the sad occasion. It was the first death that had occurred there, and the first time that the voice of a minister had been heard celebrating the ordinances of the church. We had first our blessed prayers, and our comforting scriptures, as appointed for the burial of the dead,—nor was the psalm of praise wanting, such as untu-

tored voices might humbly raise, acceptable perhaps on high, a when accompanied by the loud swell of the magnificent organ, or "gentle psaltery's silver sounds."

I failed not to seize the occasion when hearts were softened by affliction's rod, to preach the Gospel of Him who came to "comfort those that mourn," and who has especially said of such as the little one that lay before us, "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not." The warning note was addressed to the old and the young—the afflicted parents were reminded not to sorrow as those without hope for their child, translated from the cares and sorrows of earth to the joys of the blessed in heaven. Nor did the word seem to go forth void, if we might judge from the fixed attention of the congregation, and the tears that not seldom coursed down the rough and sunburnt cheeks of many before me. The missionary, though averse to what commonly pass for "funeral sermons," is careful not to let slip such occasions as these, without endeavouring to bring home to the hearts of those who generally assemble, (and perhaps seldom are able to enter a church,) the great truths of the Gospel, and thus become the "voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord."

Our services within doors being ended—the last nail driven into the rude coffin—the last look taken, and the last kiss given to their beloved child as he lay apparently locked in the arms of sleep, with the wild flowers and green herbs around his head,—we all went forth, young and old, male and female, to the narrow house which had been prepared for his last earthly abode. Church-yard, or church, there was none, nor tolling bell, nor long train of mourners, "bearing the mockery of woe." But near to the house the green sod, amid the stumps, had been broken up, and a soft bed made ready for the little one. There for the first time did the earth open to fulfil the sentence of the Creator—and there for the first time was the sublime and comforting Burial service of the Church performed.—Seldom have I used it with a happier influence on my own heart, and, as it seemed, on the hearts of all around me. The cheering declaration especially of the Saviour—"I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth on me though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die," came home with accompanying faith and power to the soul, and it is hoped, sent the mourner comforted away.

After a little time spent in more private and direct communication with the family, and with others that came from far, I turned my head homewards, having other duties before me on the morrow, and reached it safely about ten o'clock, somewhat weary, but very thankful for the mercies and impressions of the day. And I felt when I lay down to rest, that though I have in my time followed the great, the learned, the pious, the beautiful, to the grave—and have myself,

performed the last solemn services over numbers of all descriptions, and under every various shade of circumstance—and though I have been where all that wealth could do has been put in requisition to add solemnity to the obsequies of the dead,—I yet could remember few of such scenes more affecting and impressive than this little FUNERAL IN THE WOODS.

A MISSIONARY.

OLD FATHER MORRIS.*

By Miss H. B. Stowe.

Sometimes "he would give the narration an exceeding practical turn, as one example will illustrate. He had noticed a falling off in his little circle which met for social prayer, and took occasion the first time he re-collected a tolerable audience, to tell concerning the "conference meeting which the disciples attended" after the resurrection.

"But Thomas was not with them," said the old man in a sorrowful voice—why! "what could keep Thomas away?" "Perhaps," said he, glancing at some of his backward auditors—"Thomas has got cold hearted, and was, afraid they would ask him to make the first prayer; or "perhaps, said he, looking at some of the farmers, "Thomas was afraid the roads were bad—or perhaps" he added, after a pause, "Thomas had got proud and thought he could not come in his old clothes."—Thus he went on, significantly summing up with great simplicity and emotion, and added, "But only think what Thomas lost, for in the middle of the meeting, the Lord Jesus came and stood among them! How sorry Thomas must have been!" This representation seemed to fill the vacant seats for some time to come.

At another time, Father Morris gave the details of the anointing of David to be King.—He told them how Samuel went to Bethlehem to Jesse's house, and went in with a "How d'ye do Jesse?" and how when Jesse asked him to take a chair, he could not stay a minute—that the Lord had sent him to anoint one of his sons for a King; and how when Jesse called in the tallest and handsomest, Samuel said he would not do; and how all the rest passed the same test; and at last, how Samuel says, "Why have not you any more sons, Jesse? and Jesse says 'Why yes, there is little David, down in the lot,' and how, as soon as Samuel saw David, he slashed the oil right on to him, and, how Jesse said, 'he never was so beat in all his life.'"

Father Morris sometimes used his illustrative talent to a very good purpose, in the way of rebuke. He had on his farm a fine orchard of peaches, from which some of the ten and twelve year old gentlemen helped themselves more liberally than even the old man's kindness thought expedient.

Accordingly, he took occasion to introduce into his sermon one Sunday in his little parish an account of a journey he took, and how he saw a fine orchard of peaches, that made his mouth water to look at them.—"So," says he, I came up to the fence, and look'd all around—for I would not have touched one of them for all the world. At last I spied a man, and says I, Mister, wont you give me some of your peaches? So the man came and gave me nigh a-

* Concluded from our last number.