

ance; and the number of communicants was as great as I could expect, considering the position of the congregation, it having been vacant two years, and consequently much disorganized. From the people I have experienced invariable kindness, and they have done everything they could for my comfort. Aided by a grant from the Clergy Reserve Commissioners, they are now building a manse, into which I hope to remove in a few months. We are also on terms with a gentleman for the purchase of a piece of ground for a glebe in connexion with the church.

One of the great difficulties, which a minister in Canada has to encounter, arises from the scattered nature of the congregation. It is difficult, I have said, for the people to come to church, and it is still more difficult for the minister to carry out an effective system of visitation. In Scotland it is generally possible to visit a considerable number of families in the course of one day's travelling; but here they are so far apart that it is frequently a good day's work to visit a single family.

From the experience I have had—and I have travelled through a good many districts—I am led to conclude that religion is not in a flourishing condition in Canada. Every new-comer must be struck with the contrast it presents to Scotland. There is a very much larger proportion of the population without any religious profession whatever, who are never seen in church, and are connected with no denomination of Christians; and amongst those who have a profession there is much greater neglect and inattention to ordinances. (Of course I speak only generally, for there are many most exemplary and faithful in the discharge of all their religious duties.) But, to an extent much to be lamented, indifference prevails. One cause of this is to be found in their long want of ordinances. A family, suppose, come out here as emigrants. They settle in all probability, for the sake of the moderate price at which the land is there to be obtained, in a thinly peopled district, where there is no church or at least not the Church with which they were connected at Home. For years they cannot, however willing they may be, attend public worship: and, when at length the district has become better settled, and a sufficient number of families of the same persuasion are found to build a church and call a minister, time has weakened their religious impressions and worn out their church-going habits.

THE CHURCH IN THE LOWER PROVINCES.

[From the *H. and F. Missionary Record* for January.]

The letter which follows evinces the sense which the people entertain of the value of the services of the missionaries and ministers who have been sent out, and is a great encouragement to the Colonial Committee in endeavouring to supply the want of ministers and missionaries which still exists in Nova Scotia and in other provinces of British North America.

Letter—Rev. Messrs. Pollock and Mackay to the Secretary, dated New Glasgow, 26th Oct., 1853.

We have been instructed by the Presbytery of Pictou to bring to the notice of your Committee a scheme which has engaged the attention of the Presbytery during this summer. It will be remembered that, at the first meeting held in this country after the arrival of the last staff of missionaries, a resolution was passed to the effect that a scheme should be formed for the purpose of sending young men Home to be educated for the ministry, and supporting them as far as should be found necessary. The presbytery, at their first meeting subsequent to the recording of this resolution, took the matter into consideration, and determined to take the responsibility of sending Home four. Accordingly four applied, were examined, and received by the presbytery. Their names are Messrs. Cameron, Grant, Mac-

millan and Macgregor. These have been studying under the care of members of presbytery during the summer, and are sufficiently prepared for college. They have left this country under the direction of the Church here, intending to study at Glasgow University, and are probably by this time arrived in that city. The presbytery propose to support these young men by contributions from the churches. Contributions have been raised for this purpose for the present year, and the people have responded to our call beyond the expectations of the presbytery. The funds are now in our possession. The request, that the presbytery would prefer to your Committee, is, that you should be kind enough to take charge of these funds to the extent of receiving and distributing the money in such proportions as the presbytery shall specify. The long exhibited and well known kindness of your Committee to the Church here encourages the presbytery to prefer this request. And it is believed that it is more agreeable to the people in this country to know that the Committee are giving out the money to these young men who are their hope, and who, if they are spared, shall be the means, in the disposal of the Almighty, of placing our Church on a better footing than she has ever been. The money is all collected, and may be transmitted at once, as soon as the Presbytery receives your answer to their communication, which they fondly hope, will be favourable.

We may mention that, for the missionary services rendered to the churches in Pictou, almost all the money has been paid to the Presbytery. There is but a very small part of it not yet handed in; and, as soon as the Presbytery meets in the beginning of January, the Committee at Home shall be refunded to a very large extent for the disbursements made to the ministers who have been or still are employed as missionaries. The Presbytery begs an answer by return of post.

Letter—Rev. G. W. Spratt to the Secretary, dated Halifax, 24th November, 1853.

As a year has nearly elapsed since my appointment by the Colonial Committee to this field of missionary labour, it is now my duty to acquaint you with my proceedings. After reaching Halifax in company with my fellow-labourers, Messrs. McLean and Pollok, I put myself under the guidance of the Rev. Mr. Scott and the Rev. J. Martin, the two ministers of our Church in this city, and I was directed to preach alternately in their churches, one of us supplying the destitute localities in the neighbourhood as often as circumstances would permit. Our two congregations in this town are of old standing.

St. Matthew's, presided over by Mr. Scott, is very large and influential. On account of heavy debt and other drawbacks St. Andrew's has for years past been less prosperous; but I am happy to state that these hindrances are now partially removed.

Within a compass of 50 miles round the city we have a number of mission stations, which have been visited as often as possible. They depend on us for the supply of ordinances, as there are no other clergymen of our Church within 100 miles. When spring opened, I exchanged for two months with the Rev. Francis Nicol, of St. Andrew's Church, Newfoundland, who, although 600 miles distant, is a member of this presbytery. The Newfoundland congregation were for years exposed to a succession of adversities; but under the ministrations of their present pastor they are in a thoroughly prosperous condition. I shall never forget their kindness to myself, nor their warm attachment to, and hearty support of, the Church of their fatherland in the midst of a population of different faiths.

As soon as I returned to Halifax, the Rev. Mr. Martin, who, though advanced in life, is still unwearied in his efforts for the good of the Church, set out for Cape Breton, a large island which lies 150 miles to the eastward of Halifax, and which is inhabited chiefly by Highlanders speaking the Gaelic language. Since the Secession these

people have only had one or two short and partial visits from ministers of our Church. During the interval they have been regularly supplied by the Free Church; and yet at the late census no fewer than 5000 declared their adherence to the Church of their fathers.

Mr. Martin spent a number of weeks among them; and he reports that we have there large numbers of people, who, uncountenanced and unsupported, have persevered in their attachment to our Church. If they are not to be utterly neglected, surely the time has come when an efficient Gaelic minister should be sent out to labour among them.

Soon after Mr. Martin's return, I left for Wallace, which was also visited by the Rev. Mr. Scott earlier in summer. The circumstances of this congregation have been frequently brought before your notice. They have built lately two handsome new churches, and are now preparing to build a manse. Almost a new generation has grown up since they had a regular minister of our Church. They have been disappointed time after time, and the danger is, that, unless supplied before long, some of them may fall away, as so many in other places have reluctantly been compelled to do. One of the greatest vexations I meet with in the Colony is to hear people tell how much they were once attached to the Church of Scotland; but at last, despairing of getting service, they were obliged for the sake of their families to connect themselves with some other communion. Thus in every colony multitudes have gone from us, and gone for ever. People at Home do not sufficiently reflect that new empires are rising throughout the Colonial World, which are yet, as it were, in a plastic state. Impressions made now will tell in all coming time. The next quarter of a century will in all probability do much to stamp their future religious character. As an outward system of church polity, Presbyterianism is much better adapted to them than any other. Indeed, had it not been for the schisms in our Church—the bitter fruits of which are reaped by Scotchmen even in the ends of the earth—even now the best colonies of the British crown would have been thoroughly inoculated with Scottish Christianity. Still we have very much for which to thank God; and here, as elsewhere, there are abundant proofs that His blessing is with us. During the past year a vast improvement has taken place in the state of the Church in this province. The Presbyteries of Pictou and Halifax are now both revived, a number of the more pressing vacancies have been supplied, and several young men have gone Home to prepare themselves for the ministry. But in the meantime there is urgent need of a few Gaelic preachers, and of one English-speaking preacher for Wallace. I look towards my Glasgow college friends in the hope that some will “come over and help us.” Though they should remain but two years, or even not more than one, they would do a good work for the Church, and gladden many hearts by their coming. I have thus, Sir, given you an outline of my missionary movements during the past year, and of the visits to destitute localities, which the Rev. Mr. Scott and Mr. Martin have been enabled to accomplish by my supplying their pulpits; and I trust the great day will show that something has thereby been done to advance Christ's cause in the World.

[From the *H. and F. Missionary Record* for Feb.]

Letter—Rev. John Mackay to the Secretary, dated Rogershill, 2nd January, 1854.

I acquainted the Convener some time ago that the scene of my labours was for the most part confined to the Rogershill congregation since an accession has been made to the labourers within the county of Pictou; and I now proceed to give you a sketch more particularly of what has been doing within the sphere of my labours. This congregation is extended over a wide district of from 25 to 30 square miles, and has 4 places of worship. I subjoin an account of the number of Sabbath-days I officiated in these 4 stations respectively, and likewise the respective sums raised to pay for the services received of me, in order