

THE CANADIAN CHURCH MAGAZINE

AND MISSION NEWS

Published by the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada.

Vol. VI.

TORONTO, FEBRUARY, 1892.

No. 68.

HISTORICAL SKETCHES.

No. 67.—REV. W. A. BURMAN.

THE Rev. W. A. Burman is a native of South Lincolnshire, England. At an early age he felt a deep interest in missionary work and resolved to give himself to it, his first offer for which was to the Church Missionary Society in 1876, and the field chosen was Central Africa. But his laudable designs were frustrated by an adverse report by the Society's medical officers as to his physical strength. As a second application met with no better results, Mr. Burman abandoned the idea of work in Africa, and came out to the Red River settlement in 1877 to assist the Rev. Richard Young, now Bishop of Athabasca. After a short time he proceeded to qualify himself for holy orders by taking a full course of study at St. John's College, Winnipeg, and was ordained deacon in 1879 by the Bishop of Rupert's Land. The first task assigned him was that of opening up work among the Sioux Indians on Oak River, now in Western Manitoba. After his marriage in March, 1880, he proceeded to his new field of duty, arriving there in the month of May. The first winter spent among the Sioux was a most trying one. The Indians being almost destitute of food and shelter, suffered untold misery, and in many cases death was welcomed as a relief. But in the following spring Mr. Burman taught them how to utilize the land for the supply of

their wants, and enough food was raised by them to keep off hunger when, again, the snows of winter forced them into their wigwams.

In 1881 Mr. Burman was ordained to the priesthood, and at the same time passed his examination at St. John's College, University of Manitoba, for the degree of B.D. The degree was not conferred till 1884, as Mr. Burman was not able to be present at Commemoration till then. After 1881, the country in which he had settled, till then peopled almost only by Indians, began to fill up, as emigrants took up grants of land. In a couple of years a new county was organized, and called Dennis, and Mr. Burman was appointed Inspector of Protestant Schools in it, the number of schools being three. He held this position till 1886, when the schools under his charge numbered twenty-two. This large increase of settlement opened up an entirely new style of duty from that originally contemplated, for his own flesh and blood called upon him for help, as well as the unfortunate Indians. Accordingly, much of his time was spent in organizing parishes, some of which have now their own clergy. In 1886 he was ap-



REV. W. A. BURMAN, B.D.

Principal Industrial School, St. Paul's, Manitoba.

pointed Rural Dean of Brandon, the territory under his charge embracing the counties of Brandon and Dennis; and the same year he went to England to recruit his health, and spent the winter in deputation work for the C.M.S. and in passing the Sioux Prayer Book through the press. On his return he took charge of the parish of Griswold, six miles from the Sioux mission, where he built a church, but the most