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HISTORICAL SKETCHES

No. 128—VEN. ARCHDEACON R. MACDONALD, D.D.

THE subject of this sketch was born at Point Douglas, now part of the city of Winnipeg, in 1829. His early education was received at the parish school of St. John's. After leaving school he was, for a time, engaged in farming. When nineteen years of age he went to the Wesleyan mission at Rossville, near Norway House, at the north end of Lake Winnipeg. Here, for a time, he labored as schoolmaster, under the Rev. W. Mason, D.D., who was afterwards ordained by Bishop Anderson. In 1849 the Bishop advised Mr. Macdonald to enter St. John's College with a view to preparing for the ministry, and he therefore came in with the Bishop on his return from the Pas mission in 1850.

After two years at St. John's College he was ordained deacon in December, 1852, and priest in June of the next year. The ordinations took place in St. Andrew's Church. The same year he accompanied the Bishop as chaplain on a confirmation tour to the Pas and Stanley missions, and in October was appointed to the C.M.S. mission at Islington, which had been commenced two years previously by Mr. Philip Kennedy as catechist. Here he remained until 1862, when he was appointed to establish a mission at Fort Aux Liard, on the Liard River, a tributary of the Mackenzie.

When, however, he arrived at Fort Simpson, where the Rev. W. W. Kirkby was stationed, and had learned from him of the great encour-

agement he had received in two visits to the Indians of Peel River and Fort Yukon, it was decided that he should proceed to the latter point, where many Indians were waiting to receive the Gospel. Here his headquarters were established, and he made annual visits to Peel River and La Pierre's House.

In 1870, Fort Yukon having proved to be in Alaska, the Hudson Bay Co. removed their post to Porcupine River. Mr. Macdonald also re-

moved, but next year a change was again made, this time to Peel River, in latitude 67 26, and longitude about 135 west, and thirty five miles from its confluence with the Mackenzie.

Here he has since labored. The tribes in the immense region under his charge are as follows: Near Fort Yukon, the Yukons, Kwitshya-Kwitichin, or Lowlanders; Vuntet-Kwitichin or Rat Indians; Tranjik Kwitichin, Black River Indians, Natsi-Kwitichin, open country Indians; Hunh-Kwitichin, river dwellers, and others; in Peel River country, the Teth-Kwitichin.

The common termination "Kwitichin" means "dwellers." La Pierre's House district, Takudh

meaning, perhaps, "haughty." They all, however, call themselves Tinjihzyoo, that is "kind people," and speak dialects of the Takudh language, that of Peel River being the purest and fullest.

They live by hunting the moose and the reindeer and by fur hunting; some also fish.

While at Fort Yukon all the nearer tribes were visited in winter, and the more distant in summer. The farthest point westward reached was St. Michael's, Norton Sound. There are



THE VEN. ARCHDEACON MACDONALD, D.D.