

slowly in the wake of the setting sun, as far as Garden River. There they parted from their red brethren with many expressions of good-will; and the steamer, now

relieved of her burden, bore home the remainder of the party, much pleased with the events of the day.

Muskoka and the Free Grant Lands.

BY REV. W. COMPTON.

DURING my recent visit to Toronto and the surrounding country, I was asked so many and such a variety of questions respecting this part of Canada, called the Free Grant Lands, all the questions betraying the greatest ignorance of the country, its advantages and disadvantages, that I determined to write a series of papers upon the subject and request permission to have them published in the DOMINION CHURCHMAN, as one of the best means I know of giving information generally. As a preliminary it will be as well for me to give my qualifications before I say a word about Muskoka, etc.

I presume everybody knows that the country is separated into townships and that these are about ten miles square each. As a travelling clergyman I have been over and through *eleven* of these townships and therefore can speak so far as regards *eleven hundred square miles of the country*. The townships I mean are Stevenson, Brunel, Chaffey, Perry, Stisted Watt, Humphrey, Christie, McMurrich, Cardwell and Macaulay, Six of of these I know thoroughly, and with the others I am pretty well acquainted by visits and meeting the settlers at various places on my rounds.

In all my journeys there is only one place where I have to seek the accommodation of an hotel. Wherever I find myself, there I stay as one of the family in the settler's home, and am happy to say, the pastor is welcome with them all. I know all the gradations of sleeping accommodation from a nice feather bed, separate room, &c., to that of making one of *ten* in the general room, finding the softest board to sleep on, with my feet under the stove and my overcoat for a pillow. So I think I may lay claim to some acquaintance with the *habitudes* of the settlers.

Then, again, I have lived some days in a house (more than one, too), where the table literally groaned with the good things of this life, beef steaks, mutton chops, pork, potatoes, stewed and preserved tomatoes, several varieties of preserved fruits, superior bread, green corn, Johnny cakes, and I know not what beside; everything, except the tea, sugar, pepper and such condiments, the production of the farm itself.

On the other hand, I have lived some days (and often) where the tea (?) was made of dried birch-tree leaves, and where the edibles consisted of potatoes and dry bread only. Once upon a time I walked six miles to hold service in a settler's house; after service the good wife must make me a cup of tea. This she proceeded to do by roasting a crust very hard, pounding it very fine, and pouring boiling water upon it. Our eatables were dry bread. But that was three years ago; things would be found very different there now. I grant I have given extreme cases, but I do so to show that I have graduated in the bush eating department, and may, therefore, take it upon myself to say, I ought to know something of the capabilities for production of the Free Grant Lands.

In addition to this, I and my family, consisting of wife, three sons (aged 18, 15 and 8, respectively) and three daughters, came on to these lands in October, 1873, as ordinary emigrants, under the auspices of the late Mr. Dixon, Emigration Agent England—that we came from a sweet residence on the outskirts of Manchester (Cheetham Hill, the Yorkville of that town) into the primeval forest, *nine miles* (then) from any Government road, and not a stick was cut where now our house stands. My boys—one of whom was a chorister on the Foundation at Manchester Cathedral, and all were school boys—never spent an hour on a farm in their lives in England. They have now *thirty* acres cleared land by their own exertions and eight head of stock. Their two cows are giving *sixteen pounds* of excellent butter every week at present. We have only the ordinary log house, log barn and log stable.

These then are my qualifications, and I think any ordinary mind will yield to me at least this much, that I ought to know something about Muskoka and life on the Free Grant Lands.

I may also say, that during the five years of my residence in Canada, I have only been *twice* out of the bush. Both times I have been amused, and much annoyed too, by hearing the extraordinary tales and deliberate untruths told about the country of my adoption.

I found there were generally three kinds