

MONTHLY NOTES

THE CHOIR CAMP.

As has before been stated it was found impossible to find a suitable camping ground on this side of the Lake within easy reach of the city; all such places being already occupied by other camps and cottages. On account of this we ventured across the Lake and made our home for three weeks in a beautiful oak grove on the farm of Mr. Bernard, about three miles west of the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, where we found ourselves amongst peaches and apples, there being several large orchards on the property, from which, through the kindness of the proprietor, we were allowed to help ourselves.

We left the Cathedral on Monday, July 24th, and made our way down to the dock at 2 p.m.; on our arrival there we experienced some trouble with the 1st officer of the steamer Chippewa who refused to allow our tents' boat, etc. to be put on board, saying that they did not carry freight; however, we found the captain and after explaining to him the predicament we should be in if landed without our tents and boat, he allowed them to be carried but said we would have to put them on ourselves as they had all the hands putting on coal and could not spare the time. As soon as this was settled the boys set to work like a lot of stevedores carrying on bundles, pots, tents, boxes and the boat, etc., getting all on just in time for the start from the dock.

On our arrival at Niagara we were met by Mr. Bernard who had a team of horses waiting to carry the boys and baggage out to the farm, while a few of us rowed out in the boat which we took with us.

The boat party was the first to reach the camp grounds, but shortly afterwards the wagon with its large load of both live and dead weight was to be seen coming through the trees, and about an hour later the camp with its four sleeping and one provision tent was to be seen in all its glory; the next thing to be done was to make a kitchen and prepare our tea, as by this time we were all pretty hungry. This was soon done, the kitchen consisting of a pole reaching from a rail fence to a tree about ten feet distant, from this we soon had the pots suspended and the water boiling, and in a few moments we were on the ground enjoying our bread and cheese as though we had not had a meal for several days. By the time we had satisfied the inner man we began making preparations for turning in, but any one who has been to a boy's camp will know that the first night is not conducive to sound sleeping, this one was no exception to the rule and I think it would be safe to say that the majority were awake all night, as those who would otherwise have slept were subject to the pranks of those who were otherwise inclined. This is the general rule the following nights—find all in deep slumbers. By the end of the next day everything was settled and running in good order, the boys having been divided into three

squads for doing the work of the camp, which consisted chiefly in preparing meals and washing dishes, pots, etc. In order that all should have an equal share of the work, it was arranged so that each squad would take charge of a different meal each day, and each worked under its captain who was generally one of the elder boys chosen by themselves, the captain taking his orders from the cook who was also general supervisor of everything in general about the camp. There was no lack of amusements, the bathing being all that could be wished for there being a fine sandy beach, the same kind of a bottom and as we could wade out a tremendous distance without being over our depth there was no danger, but above all what is most pleasing to the bather is the freedom from apparel and as we were far from any neighbors the bathing suit was reserved only to be used in case of visitors being in camp. Besides bathing we spent many hours in fishing and playing cricket, boating, playing in the barn and roving about the orchards, sometimes helping to pick peaches and other fruit for market, and riding down on the fruit wagon to the boats and helping to load and unload, all of which work was new to most of us. We explored the ruins of the two old forts Mississauga and Fort George and a great many other interesting places connected with the history of the country. We were entertained by Mrs. M. Servos who invited all over to her house one evening which is one of the oldest in the district, it being the homestead of the farm on the opposite side of the road to the one we were on. One room is set apart as a museum containing relics of the war of 1812, the American Revolution of 1776, and the Pioneer U. E. Loyalists of Ontario, she being a descendant of that noble stock. On both the Sundays we went to St. Mark's Church in the town and were given seats in the south transept close to the choir and were invited to assist in the singing, which of course we did as far as possible. The Rev. Mr. Garrett, rector of the Church extended the invitation and asked us to bring our vestments next year and to give them our regular service; which we hope to do. One of the most enjoyable and interesting days was that spent in visiting the Falls and Queenston Heights, Mr. Bernard kindly driving the whole party in a large wagon to these places; we went by the road which passes through the village of St. David's where the boys evinced much interest on account of it being the resting place where Mrs. Secord stopped to get her breakfast while on her perilous journey on foot from Stoney Creek to Beaver Dams. As Mr. Bernard pointed out the ruins of the old mill which was occupied by her relatives, the people living about the roadside were made aware of our whereabouts by hearing the strains of the "Maple Leaf," and "Queenston Heights," sung by the whole party as the wagon rolled along. To any one who is not familiar with this part of the country it will be interesting to note that the road runs through an almost continuous succession of orchards and vineyards, in some of these the ground was yellow under the harvest apple trees with fallen fruit and some of our party