

THE CANADIAN CHURCH MAGAZINE

• • AND MISSION NEWS • •

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

VOL. V.

TORONTO, NOVEMBER, 1891.

No. 65.

HISTORICAL SKETCHES.

No. 64.—THE NEW BISHOP OF MACKENZIE RIVER.

BY REV. W. A. BURMAN.

THE subject of this sketch, William Day Reeve, was born in 1844, at the small village of Harmston, in Lincolnshire, England; a place which has given two other missionaries to the Church Missionary Society: Roger Clark, who died in India, and his brother Robert, now the veteran worker in the Punjab. At the village school, which ranked high in the neighbourhood, the future missionary received a thorough grounding in the subjects usually taught. He then had two years' practical experience of farm work, followed by a business training. He was for a time superintendent of St. Martin's Sunday School in Lincoln; and, during this time, was led to offer himself to the C. M. S. for missionary work through an address given by the late Col. Martin.

Having been accepted he was entered as a student at the C. M. S. College, Islington. Here he took an active interest in all the work of the college, and was a leader in the outdoor sports of the students. While still in the Junior Theological year, he was chosen on the recommendation of the Rev. (now Archdeacon) W. W. Kirkby, to go to Fort Simpson, Mackenzie River. The young missionary had only about a month in which to procure a year's supplies, get married and obtain the necessary outfit for himself and his bride. In April, 1869, the wedding took place, and four days later the couple set sail for New York. Winnipeg was

reached in due course, by way of St. Cloud, in Minnesota, at which point the railway ended. From there it was a distance of 600 miles to Winnipeg, a twenty days' journey over the wild prairie. On June 6th, Mr. Reeve was ordained deacon at St. John's Cathedral, Winnipeg, by the present Metropolitan of Rupert's Land, and shortly after started for Fort Simpson in one of the Hudson's Bay Company's "York" boats, which were taking supplies for the far north. The route was by way of Lake Winnipeg, up the lower part of the Saskatchewan River, then

northward to Athabaska, a long toilsome journey of three months, exposed to all sorts of weather, and the attacks of myriads of mosquitoes and sandflies. This was a new and trying experience for both the missionary and his bride.

On reaching Fort Simpson, then, as now, the chief trading post of the Hudson's Bay Company in the Mackenzie River District, he received a warm reception from the people, who were glad to welcome another worker to assist the only two other missionaries in that vast region, viz: the Rev. W. C. Bompas, who, in 1874, became Bishop of Athabasca, and Rev. R. Mc-

Donald, now Archdeacon. The former had no certain dwelling place, but wandered from fort to fort—from tribe to tribe, by boat, canoe and dogsled; the latter lived at Fort Youcon, 1,500 miles north-west of Fort Simpson.

The young couple found everything very strange, and many things very trying. A new life had to be begun, a new language learnt, and many things hitherto thought necessary had to be foregone.

Letters came only twice a year, in August and March; supplies of tea, flour, clothing and



WILLIAM DAY REEVE.
Bishop of Mackenzie River.