

THE NOR-WESTER.

(A Twenty-Four Column Paper) Devoted to the interests of Alberta and the North-West generally.

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R. C. MISSION.

An Hour or Two With Father La Combe

It is nearly eight years since we were a fellow traveller with Pere La Combe on the old stage route between Winnipeg and Moorhead.

When he came into the office the other day that was the first time we had seen him since 1876.

Many little episodes occurred on that trip.

Dr. Schultz was aboard, so was Fredholm of Emerson, and Mr. Cameron more familiarly known to newspaper men as "Jack."

Father La Combe has with him a handsome buffalo robe splendidly lined, and a Grand Forks man had taken a fancy to it and he tried nearly all day to trade for it, but the Father was inexorable.

There was nothing he wanted. An end was put to the importunity of the Yankee by the good father informing him that the robe was a present and he could not part with it.

Father La Combe is looking hale and hearty. The snows of several winters have deepened a little but he is still active and full of energy.

Accepting his kind invitation we visited him at the little mission on Saturday, and enjoyed a couple of pleasant hours doing the mission which is beautifully situated on the Elbow about a mile and a quarter from the depot.

The little building which is the building proper, is a small and unpretentious structure and as we entered it we saw that anything that was in the shape of luxury was studiously denied.

Father La Combe himself, shortly afterwards entered and introduced us to several missionary priests who had lately arrived from different parts of the district to attend a council.

Then a Blackfoot dropped in and then an embryo Indian maiden, and the Father remarked that he had had the little one a short time ago.

Conversant with the Blackfoot language Pere La Combe handles that difficult tongue with the ease of the clever linguist that he is.

Then we sat down to dinner, the father remarking that they did not care for the fattest but lived on the plainest food.

The life of the Roman Catholic Missionary is certainly not one which a lover of the world could envy.

His food though healthy is coarse, he has a buffalo robe or a blanket on the floor, he denies himself much that he might have and refuses comfort on purpose to practise self denial.

The missionary of the Athabasca country has even harder fare. Flour he seldom sees hurried to him are unknown.

His principal food is fish and he has to deal with vast silences and long and severe winters, to say nothing of the thousand other vicissitudes of a missionary's life.

A walk around the missionary grounds reveals one of the scenery in good the Elbow looks like a fine stream with its waters swollen by the June rains and the melting snows of the mountains.

Father La Combe has a large tent pitched near the mission building, in this he sleeps and conducts his correspondence which is voluminous. In other respects he fares no better than the humblest pioneer member of the staff.

The undomestic manner under the hill, "Where each in his narrow cell forever laid" is an object of interest.

A few graves have rude railings around them to indicate the places, but the most are without anything but a small unheeled stone or a rude cross.

Several are buried, the number of Williams and his victim, Adams. The newly made grave is pointed out to us as that of Buckskin Shorty who a little more than a week ago was full of lusty life.

Mounted Police and railway parties, he side by side under the sod with an interesting history attached to each.

A considerable number are the graves of sudden deaths either victims of foul play or those of untoward accidents.

Not far away on the banks of the Elbow a large number of logs are lying. These are to be used in the construction of the new missionary house, church and school.

The building is to be log and frame 50x20 two stories high. The upper story is to be used as a dwelling for the missionaries and the ground floor as a school house and temporary chapel, and the location is about half a mile from town most pleasant and convenient.

We are indebted to Father La Combe for many courtesies, and we trust that the citizens of Calgary irrespective of creed will not forget to render Father La Combe liberal assistance.

He is one of the best friends the town has got at home or abroad. He is continually rendering good service and this circumstance in addition to his well known popularity amongst all classes should ensure him substantial aid in the completion of his building.

Boytown Hall.

A representative of the Nor-Westerner dropped into Boytown Hall yesterday and inspected the staging and its multifarious appointments.

Capt. Boynton and Mr. Donnan of Calgary who is stage manager kindly showed our representative the mechanical philosophy of the stage machinery.

Mr. Milward is doing the fresco and scenic work and he is being ably assisted by Mr. Munroe late of Ottawa and Winnipeg.

The hall looks splendid since the plastering dried and the acoustic properties are all that could be desired.

There is nothing "shaggy" in the stage work as you will see from a visit to the stage.</