

Communications.

MISSION AT BRUCE MINES.

To the Editor of the Record.

DEAR SIR,—According to your request I send you a brief sketch of my labours in that distant part of the Home Mission field, namely, the Bruce Mines.

It was in the early part of the month of May last that I started in the steamer *Ploughboy* for this place in accordance with the appointment of the Presbytery of Grey. Our voyage being all that could be desired, we reached our destination in safety and in good time. The wharf, as we approached, it, was crowded with the miners, who had left their work to bid us welcome, and this they did most heartily, for they made the air resound with the three good cheers which they gave us. No wonder, we may say, that such a sensation is created by the steamer's first visit for the season, when we consider the isolated nature of the place, and particularly the fact that during the whole winter the people are in a measure cut off from all communication with the busy world lying hundreds of miles beyond them.

It was on Saturday that I arrived, and on Sabbath, the following day, I preached to a congregation numbering about 300. It was an encouraging thing to see such a goodly gathering as this in such a place. It was particularly so to me, for I was not prepared to find so large an audience after the discouraging accounts I had received of the Bruce Mines before I left Toronto. From 250 to 300 was the average attendance throughout the summer, and these consisted of hearers of all denominations of the place, namely:—Presbyterian, Episcopalian, and Methodist? In connection with the Church, there is a Union Sabbath School, which is well attended; the usual number being about 100, while there are upwards of 200 on the roll.

At present there are about 40 Presbyterian families resident in the place. These I visited, and was very kindly received by them all. There are also a few Presbyterians settled as farmers on the Island of St. Joseph, which is miles opposite the Bruce Mines. To these I preached once a fortnight, when weather permitted. I also took a trip during the summer to the village of Sault Ste. Marie, which is distant from the Bruce about 10 miles. While there I ascertained that several Presbyterian families lived 4 miles inland from the river, consequently I directed my steps into the country to pay them a visit. It was very pleasant to meet with the warm greeting with which they received me. They were 7 in number, I found, and settled on good farms; a circumstance which somewhat surprised me considering that the most part of the surrounding country is nothing but a barren rocky wilderness. I remained a few days with my Presbyterian friends, and often preaching to them on the last evening of my visit. I bade them good bye; commending them to the Great Shepherd who is nigh unto the sheep of his fold wherever they may be scattered throughout the earth. To return to the Bruce Mines. I may make a few general remarks in addition to what I have said respecting the moral and religious state of the people of that locality, as well as the prospects of the place as forming part of the mission field.

In regard to the former I must say, that my present opinion, after a sojourn of some months at the mines, does not accord with the impressions which I was at first led to entertain. The reason is obvious. It requires one to spend some time in any community, and to mingle amongst the people, in order to ascertain rightly their condition in a moral and religious point of view. This I have done during the summer, amongst the miners and their families, I have daily come in contact with them, and have, therefore, had opportunity of judging accurately of the true state of things. In stating what I think of the religious character of the place, I must acknowledge that I never met with such