

A VISIT TO THE SIOUX MISSION.

BY THE VEN. ARCHDEACON PHAIR.

It was late on the night of October 2nd, when the train reached the Griswold station. When I stepped on the platform and found it covered with snow, I began to think of the six miles of snowy, muddy road between me and the Mission. In a few minutes Mr. Hartland and I were seated behind a brisk little pony that evidently meant to go home.

Arriving at the Mission I received first a hearty greeting from Mr. Hartland's mother, and soon after a warm cup of coffee, which was very acceptable.

Saturday, the 3rd, was a busy day. The church was to be decorated for the special service to-morrow, the Indians desired to talk a little, or rather a great deal, all of which meant time.

The little church, owing to the tasteful care bestowed on it by Miss Dunn, looked really pretty, and was the special admiration and delight of the Indians, who from time to time walked in to see what new addition Miss Dunn would make to its beauty.

Sunday, 4th—Circulars had been issued, and arrangements made to have one grand service in the afternoon, to which both white people and Indians were to come. Our arrangements, however, were not to be carried out, as the Indians gathered in the church in good time in the morning. How blessed it is to be ready to leave our own plans and ideas, and fall in with the higher ones of our Master!

About half past ten it became quite clear there was a special effort being made, without the aid of bell or flag, to be punctual. Far in the distance, and from all quarters, the dark objects could be seen hurrying towards the church, some on foot, some in waggons, and many of the men on ponies.

In a short time the church was more than full, numbers having to remain outside. Where the white people would have found room had the original programme been carried out I do not know, as it was there seemed to be but little room for the one white lady who was present.

The men sat on one side of the church and the women on the other, all most orderly and quiet. When I looked on the faces before me, and especially when I heard their sweet voices join so heartily in the service and singing, I could not help feeling what a glorious power there is in the Gospel; what a change in these men from the dark antecedents of their lives.

Mr. Hartland, who has now been about twelve months among them, read the service in Sioux with ease and fluency. One of the lessons was read by a Sioux, and the sermon interpreted by another. After the sermon came what might be well called a great event of the

day, viz: the collection, which was to be given to the Rupert's Land Indian Mission Fund. Two Indians, with bags in hand, moved in quite an official manner through the crowded seats, holding their bags close enough to each one inside and outside the church.

There was a good deal of fuss, but there was some "wool" also, for when the contents of the bags were emptied, and counted, it was found the collection amounted to a little over thirty dollars. Nor was this all, as several notes came and promises that a remittance would come shortly, which would make the offering of these people amount to fifty dollars, which was to be handed to the Treasurer of the Rupert's Land Indian Mission Fund.

I may add, here, that these Indians gave me, on leaving, a written promise that they will be responsible for an annual subscription to the above fund of fifty dollars.

The afternoon service was attended both by white people and Indians, and the congregation and collection were both smaller.

Monday—the chief and a few other Indians called and had an interview regarding school and other matters. I reminded them how much God had done for them through our Church and people; and wanted them to enable me, on my return, to explain to their friends, who sent them a teacher, why their children did not come to school. A number of reasons and opinions were given—the school stood a long way from some of them, and some of the children had very little clothing. The bigger children were often needed to help their parents, while the smaller ones who could be spared, could not come to school alone. Again, some of the parents alleged they had tried to induce their children to go to school but had not succeeded. The chief was of opinion that the parents themselves needed urging, and he said he would take his pony and ride around among them on the morrow and do it himself.

On Tuesday I drove over the Reserve with Mr. Hartland, calling at tents and houses.

The Indians seem to be very prosperous. Some of them have farmed a good deal. Several had over one thousand bushels of wheat, some fifteen hundred bushels. I was pleased to hear most of them promise to send their children more regularly to school.

As far as the general work of the mission is concerned, I have found no mission more hopeful than this one, and very few so neat and tidy.

The attendance on Sundays is good, and the feeling between Mr. Hartland and his people is what it should be.

On my way home I stopped over at Portage la Prairie, with a view to visiting the Indians in this neighbourhood.

I called on the Rev. Mr. McMorine, who takes a deep interest in Indian Missions, and especially in those Indians near the Portage,