

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

NOTES FROM EDMONTON, N.W.T.

MR. EDITOR,—The interest in the affairs of the North-west, which is evident on every hand, encourages me to write to you again about Mission work in this "latest outpost of Presbyterianism." It is work which grows in interest and influence; and although heavily handicapped by difficulties peculiar to any undertaking of the kind in a frontier town, yet I am happy to think that the harvest is beginning to be reaped already. One case in which the grace of God was markedly apparent occurred lately. It was that of

A YOUNG MAN FROM ONTARIO,

who had been successively a school-teacher, a college alumnus, a superintendent of schools in Illinois, and by political means master of a fortune of \$14,000. This vanished almost as rapidly as it had been acquired, and he came to the west as a driver in a train of Red River carts. Soon after my arrival a public school was organized, and this young man was engaged as teacher, but he was spared only a few months to enjoy the comparative comfort which this more congenial occupation brought him. Before and during his illness I saw much of him; in some of our talks we had keen discussions of the bearings of science on religion—he had been an honour-man in science in his student days. But even before his sickness came, I began to find in him a deep reverence for the Word of God and the spirituality of its teaching. Gradually that reverence deepened into a steady love for the central character and central truths of that Word, and when the end came it found a strong brave heart, with many regrets, it is true, about the past, but full of peace in regard to the future. After his death we communicated with his friends in the east, and I have just received a letter from his mother, which lets me see how deeply the faithful worker here may gladden hearts that wait with yearning patience in far distant homes.

The ups and downs of this case have their counterparts in the lives of many among us. With the exception of those connected with the Hudson Bay Company, and a few settlers who have their families with them, the majority of the white population is made up of young men away from family ties and social restraints, and not a few of whom have come here for the very purpose of being away from these restrictions.

THE TIDE OF IMMIGRATION

which is filling up the eastern part of the Territories so rapidly has not reached us yet. We have only the advance guard—adventurous and generous, but often reckless and careless young men. It would make many a worthy father of a family ponder seriously over the way he is bringing up his boys if he could stand at my elbow for a while, and hear the way these young men talk. "No, I don't care to go to church—I had too much of it when I was a boy. Church morning and evening, and Sunday-school in the afternoon, with catechism and questions on the sermon in extra hours, and a watch kept on us all the time. It was like a dull, monotonous machine." No doubt, in most of such cases it was the boy who was mainly in the wrong; but was the wrong all on one side, when the result has been to drive the boy away from his home to some place where he would be as far as possible from that which made the Sabbath such a weariness to him? With advancing years the young man begins to look back with respectful and admiring love on the conduct of his father, and on the motives which prompted it; but his distaste for religious services wears off much more slowly, and the missionary begins his work with such a case at a very decided disadvantage.

OUR FIRST COMMUNION

was observed some time ago. Although our numbers are small, and our ecclesiastical organization not complete, it was an impressive and most helpful service. Nine members sat down at the Lord's table; two of them—young married women—for the first time. There are three other members, who were hindered by sickness or by distance from being present, and there are three or four other members in the neighbourhood who have lapsed.

Financial matters are going on smoothly. The treasurer tells me that since the formation of the congregation there has not been

A COPPER COIN RECEIVED

among the contributions. The building of the church is, unfortunately, at a standstill. The basement for the heating apparatus has been dug, the foundation timbers placed in position, and the doors and window frames made ready, but the contractors have come to a deadlock for want of nails, which are not to be had in the place. The extensive building operations now going on have exhausted the supply. We expect, however, to hear in a few days that "gamut of discord" that announces the approach of a train of Red River carts, and with the supplies which they bring operations will be at once resumed. I should not omit to say that the size of the church is fifty feet by thirty—not eighty by fifty, as stated in the annual report published some weeks ago in THE PRESBYTERIAN.

The work prospers in the outlying stations. A Sabbath school has been organized at the Belmont school-house, under the superintendence of a very suitable young man, the son of a minister of the Church of Scotland. At Fort Saskatchewan the services are still held in the barracks. This place is likely to grow considerably during the summer, both by incoming settlers and reinforcements to the Mounted Police.

With the pastoral oversight of so large a district, with the preparation of two sermons a week, and the extra work connected with the erection of the church, it will not be a matter of wonder that I have found but little time for the study of Cree, or for extending my acquaintance with my dusky neighbours. Ever since I came I have, of course, been dabbling in the language, but the foreign department of my missionary work cannot be said to include more than visiting some sick Indians in their *tepees*, ministering to their creature comforts, conversing with them through an interpreter if I had one, or, if alone, repeating with them the Lord's Prayer, or some such simple form which I had committed to memory for the purpose.

I have a scheme, however, in which I am deeply interested, and which I anxiously hope will be successful. It is to do something in the way of

EDUCATING THE INDIAN CHILDREN.

As it is, they grow up dirty and almost naked, able—either boys or girls—to ride a horse with perfect grace, or to kill game with but the rudest of weapons, but altogether unacquainted with any means of elevating themselves in the scale of morality or a wider intelligence. After many discussions with those best qualified to give information, this was resolved upon as the best plan under the circumstances: to furnish the children gratuitously with clothes, books, etc., and to secure their attendance at the public school by means of a small daily supply of food from the Indian Department. My plan was looked upon good-naturedly enough by the officials, but they all predicted that it would be a failure. Some were of opinion that the inducement offered was not sufficient! The scheme was tried for two months before the holidays by way of experiment, and was a decided success, but the real test has to come now that the novelty has worn off, and we have lost the old teacher who took a kindly Christian interest in the little Crees; but I am still quite sanguine, and I hope that when parents and children come to see how much the school benefits them, we will be able to withdraw gradually the help we give, and teach them not only letters, but independence and self-support. If the scheme can even be kept alive during the summer, it will be an assured success in the winter, when the Indians are much less given to roaming about, and when they are in a position to appreciate keenly the chance of spending the day in a comfortable room.

EDMONTON AND ITS PROSPECTS.

I must not close without saying a word about the growth of the place and its prospects—a letter from the North-west would be incomplete without that. We have already received this summer a considerable number of settlers, but the majority of the immigrants are still on the way. Every mail brings letters to persons here from friends in the east, saying that they are starting, or have started. Several who came last year are expecting their wives and families. Their arrival will be a great boon not only to the social, but also, I believe, to the religious life of the place. The running of steamers on the Saskatchewan has, as usual, been irregular and uncertain, and most of the immigrants are coming by the overland route. They are fortunate just now in having the finest of weather,

and roads better than they have been for two or three years. The crops are excellent. Hay was luxuriant, and cereals—which are being harvested now—promise an abundant return. Other interests, too, are prospering. Our immense coal field, which extends 200 miles from east to west, and at least 900 from south to north, is being turned to account not only for our own use, but for regions beyond—the experiment is being made of sending it down the river in flat-boats. Considerable quantities of lumber are being shipped by steamer and flat-boat to Battleford and Prince Albert. Another of Edmonton's industries is seen in the long-booted gold miners, who come down the river now and then to dispose of their little bags of dust. An attempt is being made this summer to mine by steam-power.

The prairie just now looks at its best. The busy season is at its height, and although the dog roses and tiger lilies are gone, there are hosts of substitutes to take their places. The rich grassy sea stretches away into the limitless distance, dotted here and there with an island of poplar or willow that rises dark and high against the horizon. This sea is as mobile and as beautiful as water; sometimes its waves dance along and chase one another from island to island; sometimes it is as smooth as if asleep under the slumbrous, shimmering sunshine. An afternoon's ride away from any human habitation, letting one's horse wander at will over those grassy billows, is a holiday compared with which the thing that people ordinarily call a seaside resort is a tame conventionality.

ANDREW B. BAIRD.

Edmonton, N.W.T., Aug. 16, 1882.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

MR. EDITOR,—Our Church is alive to the work to be accomplished in this fair Dominion. We can anticipate a great future, if the several necessary elements are properly attended to, and the vigorous efforts of those immediately interested are responded to by the members and adherents.

Our schools and colleges are prosperous; North-west work and our Foreign and Home Missions are progressing—facts which gladden the hearts of all Presbyterians, not in the spirit of mere sectarian pride, but of rejoicing that the kingdom of God is being advanced in this small portion of the earth through the instrumentality of our Church.

Scotchmen are admired the world over for their indomitable energy and marked success; the religion of their youth is generally adhered to and promoted whenever and wherever an opportunity offers. We find them in our own Dominion the backbone of Presbyterianism. But why is this eulogistic strain indulged in? I would answer, for the purpose of contrasting our own religious and denominational characteristics with those of Caledonia, which has been so prolific in mighty men. Why cannot we emulate them, and send our Canadians marked and branded with Gospel training, that they may shine in whatever sphere they may be placed?

Let us ever remember that the mothers of Scotland moulded and formed these national characteristics, and the mothers of Canada must do the same. The conversion of thousands of children has resulted from the sweet, godly words of the loving mother or saintly grandmother, whose words of reverential praise and prayer seemed inspired and made lasting impressions. This is the position which the young ladies of the present will have at some future time to fill. Young men have their sphere, but as much depends on our Christian young women. And now we come to the state of affairs which led to these remarks. Where and when do the young women of our Church receive this training that will fit them for these responsibilities? Many of them receive it in their homes, from devoted and godly parents; but others, who are placed in such circumstances that they can take advantage of higher education and training, do not even patronize those institutions of learning which have been established in connection with our Church—where we know they would be trained and prepared for life's battle, to take their place and do their duty in evangelizing this great sinful world after the faith of their parents—but wander off, or are sent by indulgent parents to other schools, where the world and Church is as one, and the serious questions of life are forgotten in the turmoil of the so-called fashionable ladies' schools. Have we not excellent schools, under the best of teachers? And why do parents think so lightly of sending their