

number of victims. What assaults are made on man's faith and morals in these hours of dissipation! What obliviousness of temperance and decency! How many Christians at the end of the sacred day are less pure and more guilty!"

The Swiss Bishops are not alone in this good work. The *Courrier de Tarn et Garonne*, in France, quotes from an "Instruction pastorale" by the Bishop of Montauban, in which he uses language equally strong: "Let this public scandal cease from our midst: this national disgrace of the profanation of the Lord's Day. Form among yourselves a league which shall be courageously carried out—a league for the restoration of the Sabbath in our dear country, the day of rest and repose. In the name of religion, and in the name of France, we implore you to do so. Fathers and mothers, you who are the heads of families, keep holy the Sabbath Day, and see if God does not give you His blessing. He will bless you in your home and in your children. Manufacturers and heads of large establishments, sanctify and help others to keep holy the Sabbath Day. You owe it to God as a duty, to Him who giveth you all things richly to enjoy," etc.

It is an important sign of the times that the Sabbath, from a Christian point of view, is thus defended and urged upon the attention of people notorious for their neglect, not only of the religious observance, but of the common decencies due to the sacred day of rest.

As I write, an item of news comes from another country equally, if not more heedless of the respect due to the Sabbath, than those referred to—I mean Germany. It is to this effect: "At Berlin, 1,000 carpenters and joiners have petitioned the Government to protect them from Sunday labour; while at Dresden, the directors of some large glass works have dismissed all their men, about 1,000, on account of their refusal to work on Sundays." When the question of Sabbath rest is being discussed by the labouring classes, who were supposed to be indifferent to the subject, there is some hope for improvement in Continental countries. They are the class who are most affected by the question, and who should be ever ready joyfully to sing:

This is the day of rest;  
Our failing strength renew;  
On weary brain and troubled breast  
Shed Thou Thy freshening dew.

Toronto, February, 1887.

T. H.

#### PRESBYTERIAN MISSIONS AT FILE HILLS.

The group of Indian reserves, situated in the File Hills District, and about eighteen miles north-east from Fort Qu'Appelle, have a population of about 400. Although lying so near an old settlement, no provision had been made for educating the children, perhaps because it was considered to be utterly useless to make an attempt, as there was no prospect of success. But, in the fall of 1884, an effort was made, and a school opened to rescue the poor heathen from ignorance and superstition. The school proved a miserable failure, owing partly to the teacher's unpopularity, caused, no doubt, by the rebellious nature of the times. After lingering eight months, the school was closed; and the reserve lapsed into a state worse than the former. It was in this state that I found things when I arrived to take charge on September 15, 1886. During the rebellion of 1885 the schoolhouse had been broken into, and a quantity of provisions (the property of the teacher) stolen; and the building remained in a dilapidated state until my arrival.

After waiting about three weeks, the schoolhouse was made fit for use, and I attempted to open school, but found the natives altogether opposed to the reopening. After hard fighting, in which I received very valuable help from Mr. Williams (Indian agent) and staff, who have been very kind to me since I arrived here, I managed to get one pupil, and from this small beginning I have struggled on, until, with God's help, I have a school of about twenty-six, and an average attendance of between seven and eight. The pupils are beginning to take an interest in their work, but I do not expect to see very great results for a considerable time, as, from a native experience of seventeen years, chiefly in Australia and New Zealand, and from the reports of the various missionary societies in the North-West Territories, I am confident that results from missionary work are things of slow growth.

The natives on these reserves are considered to be amongst the worst in the North-West, and, although I am very glad to be able to speak well of them, I am obliged to admit that there is a great deal of truth in the statement; but this makes me the more anxious to try to do them good. They seem to glory in what is immoral, and this necessarily forms the chief topic for conversation. They are also, as a rule, very lazy; but this, I think, is owing to the system of giving rations without properly recognizing the value of labour in the way of merit, but I am glad to notice that in numerous instances labour meets with its reward on these reserves. Evidences of the lack of cleanliness are everywhere visible. Their marriage regulations are also very lax, and the wife is purchased by means of horses, the price ranging from eight to as low as one horse, marrying for love being out of the question. Notwithstanding all these bad habits, combined with the grossest ignorance, I can see that all the good has not been crushed out, and I have hopes that these poor degraded heathen will yet become the servants of the Most High, and return thanks and praise to God, for sending missionaries amongst them to teach them the love of God and the way to heaven.

The spirit of opposition to the opening of schools on the reserves is rapidly decreasing, and the natives are beginning to be anxious to have other schools opened. They seem, also, to be more inclined to work, and I try to impress upon them the reasonableness and necessity for labour. In the matter of cleanliness, I think it would greatly help me if I had a small stock of timber and nails, in order to help them to make their homes more attractive, by assisting them to make tables, etc. They do not appreciate any they get from the agency half as much as what they get from me, because they think the Government goods are not presents, but theirs by right. I have received substantial help from a good Indian named Jack, who has been one of the greatest warriors of the File Hills Tribe, and was speaker for the late chief, Little Black Bear (a good old chief, a man of great influence among the Indians, and always loyal to the Government), and this Jack is of the same type. Jack still retains considerable influence over the Indians, and is a true friend to the white man, and I believe is trying to live a good life, although he cannot get rid altogether of his Indian habits. He often prays to God, although it may be in a very imperfect manner—and I believe God will hear him. I think he deserves a reward for his loyalty to our mission, and I intended giving him a nice warm cap of a very bright colour. He said he would like one made of fur, but if I give one to him all the others will want them; and I am sure he would value it ten times more, and it would have a mighty power for good, if some good brother or sister would make the present, as it is very desirable to encourage all the Indians to be good, and show practically that we appreciate their efforts to improve themselves.

I wish it were in my power to board the children, especially during the winter, and then I should have more influence over them, and see more fruits for my labour, as the attendance would be more regular, and the counteracting influences of the home less. Another serious drawback is the want of suitable regulations, in which the teacher's discretion should be allowed to be used, as the present North-West school ordinances for white schools are utterly unsuitable for North-West Indian schools; as are also the regulations of the Ontario Indian schools, because the Indians of these vast plains have ideas and customs peculiar to themselves, and it will be a considerable time before these can be eradicated; thus agent and teacher have to control the schools on a good understanding between themselves, but should they differ in their opinion, then comes the falling back on the laws in force, viz., unsuitable regulations. I hope this will never be my lot, as I am sure the difficulties met with in dealing with the Indians are quite enough for both agent and missionary teacher.

The prospects for the future are most encouraging, although the difficulties and discouragements in the past have been great and numerous. I hope, however, that the Mission Board will urge upon the Government the necessity for making regulations for the Indian schools of the North-West, and also providing a residence for the teacher. There is a strip of land the whole length of the reserve, and only sixteen chains wide, between the reserve and the land open for settlement, and the said strip of land is so narrow,

and in such close proximity to the reserve, that it is utterly unsalable, and I think it would be a graceful as well as a judicious act on the part of the Government, to set this apart as a mission reserve for the Presbyterian Church, similar to the reserves belonging to other Churches, on which we could place mission buildings, and utilize it for supporting a boarding school, viz., by ranching and cultivating. I am in urgent need of clothing for old and young, and mitts and warm stockings are always a welcome addition. Illustrated papers and pictures of all kinds are a great attraction, as well as enabling the Indian to comprehend the meaning of anything much more readily. The small quantity of clothing I have already received has been a great help, and enabled me to keep faith with my Indians; but the supply is utterly inadequate, and the cry is for more. It makes my heart bleed to see these poor, ignorant and superstitious people, in need of clothing. I know they have not many redeeming qualities, but our ancestors, before the elevating influence of religion was, in God's mercy, brought to them, were not much better, and the Gospel will do the same for them, although in a lesser degree. Let us resolve that we will all do what we can, and that at the great day Christ shall be able to say of us: "I was hungry, and ye gave Me meat; thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; naked, and ye clothed me, sick, and in prison and ye visited Me."

In concluding, my grateful and hearty thanks are due, first to God, for having been pleased to grant me success and preserved me from all dangers; to the dear sisters of the Toronto, Nova Scotia and Winnipeg branches of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society for clothing, and the kindly interest they have taken in my work; to the Foreign Mission Board and kind friends at File Hills and other places who have helped me. I remain yours gratefully.

R. N. TOMS, Missionary.

Assiniboia, N.-W. T., January 18, 1887.

#### THE AUGMENTATION FUND.

MR. EDITOR,—I am very sorry to see by your last PRESBYTERIAN that the Augmentation Fund is not prospering as it ought to do, and under the heading of "Montreal Notes" there is a poor showing of the liberality of a number of the Western Presbyteries, such as Guelph, Saugeen, Bruce, etc. What is said as to a probable failure of help to our poor congregations in the Province of Quebec and Eastern Ontario is a melancholy fact, but little known or thought of by these Western Presbyteries. Now the plain truth is that, out of the towns in Quebec, our country congregations, in many places, have a hard struggle for their existence, surrounded as they are by French-Canadian Roman Catholics, and the prospects getting darker every year. We know now too that these same French-Canadians are making rapid progress in Ontario, and unless we keep a bright look out, they will swamp our English-speaking Protestants in a few years along the boundary line. I lived in old times in Quebec, and know how feeble are the Protestant Churches in that Province, and since then, the increase of the French-Canadian population has been very great, and their Church is very wealthy and very powerful, and the only Church in Canada which can legally exact tithes from its people, and which it does exact most rigorously. Such a distinction ought not to be; but all denominations of Christians should be on the same footing, and I trust such will soon be the case. CANADIAN PRESBYTERIAN.

22nd February, 1887.

#### A CORDIAL SERVICE.

God wants not a constrained, but a cordial service. He spurns a cribbed, confined, grudging and stinted obedience. He claims the whole heart. He expects the loyalty of the whole life, even to its minutest details. "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord." Ah! this hale, and hearty, and wholesome, and whole-souled acting in everything for God! Do you groan out, "What a weariness is it?" Do you bargain and dicker with God as to exactly what and how much? Are you trying to find out how little service will be accepted as your share? If so, you have not learned the first principles of filial obedience; you are still a servant and not a son of God. You need regeneration.—*Christian Standard*.