

## Letter from the Bishop of Moosonee.

BISHOP'S COURT,  
Moose via., Temiscamingue,  
Ottawa, R. Canada.

*My Dear Christian Friends,*—Last year at this time I was travelling through my native land, declaring what God had done by means of His Missionary servants, in bringing Eskimo and Chipwyan, Cree, Ojibbeway and European into His Church, and the sympathy evoked among my hearers, and the help so kindly given, encouraged me once more to plunge into the wilderness, and still work on amid the snows and isolation of Moosonee, where for nearly two and thirty years my home has been already situated.

I left England in midsummer day, and sailed for New York, when, as well as in several of the towns of Canada, I had an opportunity of advocating the claims of my Mission; but on August 1st, I left Mattawa, the last outpost of civilization, and travelled by canoe the remainder of my way, which occupied eighteen days, the travelling being mostly very severe from the intense heat which existed most of the time. On August 18th, however, I landed quite well, and ready for immediate work at Moose, where I received a most hearty and enthusiastic welcome. A person can have no idea of the manner in which one is impressed in reaching Moose from the interior; a new world bursts on the view, a new centre of civilization, with all its civilizing agencies, a respectable and well built settlement, with its House of God, the greatest of all of them, rising in its centre. And here, a few hours after my arrival, I was able to meet my people who filled the edifice. There knelt with me one of my eldest pupils, the Rev. Thos. Vincent, who had had charge of Moose for some months, the dear brother, who, among greater hardships than I have ever endured, has for many years laboured among the Indians and Eskimo in the inhospitable East Main Coast; there too were two young brothers, just from England about to buckle on their armour, and join in the honourable fray; there two the faithful Catechist, who, during my absence, had so satisfactorily fulfilled his duty, it was a blessed gathering.

Two circumstances will, perhaps, enable you to realize, better than anything else, how things are going on among us. On August 27th, after due examination, I confirmed forty-five young Indian men and women, and subsequently three others, the whole of whom had been carefully prepared by Mr. Vincent; except two, whose knowledge did not satisfy me, these were all the persons of the Indian congregation of a suitable age for Confirmation. Our Indian congregation there is composed of the entire Indian population, except such as are attached to the English congregation. The conduct of the candidates at the time of the service was marked with deep solemnity, and I could not but feel assured that the prayer at the imposition of hands was, in many cases, fully realized. The other circumstance occurred on Nov. 26th, when I confirmed all the English-speaking young people—half caste and Indian—between the ages of fifteen and twenty; there was not a single exception; and during the preparation for the rite, which extended over many weeks, scarcely one was ever absent from the class; they came, too, from many quarters—from Moose, Albany, New Post, Mataw-akumma, and East Main. All spoke English fluently; all could read their English Bibles, all were well acquainted with the Church Catechism, all appeared deeply impressed with the gravity of the step they were about to take, that it was something far deeper than making a mere formal promise they were required to take. The number was seventeen. Another would have been present, but he had already "come to the company of just men made perfect." He was a young Indian, Benjamin Sutherland by name, who received his education at our Mission School. When old enough he entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, and was sent into the interior, whence he returned to Moose last summer in feeble health, and when I first saw him he was confined to his

bed. There I confirmed him, there, too, I administered to him the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and within a few days he passed away in peace, firmly believing that for him, individually, Christ had poured out His blood on Calvary.

Besides those confirmed, I held one at Albany on the last Sunday of the year, where I confirmed twenty-three candidates. Albany is a station one hundred miles north of Moose, situated on a river of the same name, about four miles from its mouth. I travelled to it by ice over the frozen Hudson's Bay, the journey occupying three days, while in returning I was no less than six days, so hard was it to get forward from the boisterous weather and the deep snow. I neither saw a house or met a human being either in going or returning. All is going on very well at Albany under the care of the Rev. Thos. Vincent.

In the East Main district Mr. Peck is labouring as indefatigably as ever, receiving seals to his ministry from a people whom he loves with a love which nothing can cool, and whom he seeks out among their igloos in their winter haunts that he may impart to them some spiritual blessing. He has now with him Mr. Lofthouse, whom he is assisting in the study of the Eskimo language, as well as in Mission work generally. He returns to England for a short season next summer, when, I trust, you may have an opportunity of hearing from his own mouth of the way in which God has blessed his labours.

Mr. Lofthouse comes to Moose in June, and after receiving Ordination, proceeds to Churchill by way of Manitoba, there to open a Mission among the Eskimos and Chipwyans, who inhabit the surrounding dreary, but extensive region; he will have an arduous post but I trust he will find that, as his day, so is his strength.

The Rev. John Landers, Ojibbeway clergyman, has been with me the past winter at Moose, receiving lessons in English, in which he preaches very fairly, and assisting me in my Ojibbeway translations, he has himself translated into his mother tongue "The Peep of Day," while the Rev. Thomas Vincent is engaged in translating into Cree "The Pilgrim's Progress;" both books, I have no doubt, I shall find very useful in the Diocese.

(To be Continued).

## IS UNBELIEF INCREASING?

## II.

In a former article we have touched on this question, and have referred to the breach at present existing between modern culture and Christianity. In order to answer the query propounded by us, we must, however, survey the present condition of Christianity and contrast it with the past. We must, also, as far as possible, within the limits we can at present allot to this subject, contemplate the aspect of unbelief in the age in which we live and compare it with the state of scepticism in former years. To this latter point we shall at present refer. There is no great need to go very far back in order to fulfill our purpose, nor will it be necessary to give more than a few striking examples, as proofs of what we shall advance. Still, black as the picture is, we believe no student of history can be at a loss in recalling many periods, when error was more general and stronger than it is to-day, but to this we shall not allude further at present.

We do not deny scepticism is widespread. On the contrary, we affirm it, and acknowledge it is far more open and aggressive now than formerly. But granting all this, and lamenting its disastrous influence on public morals, ours is by no means the worst of ages. True, it is affirmed that churches, especially among the educated and working classes in towns, are thinly attended. In some European cities the average of church goers is as low as two per cent. of the population. England makes a better exhibit, so also, we are glad to say, does Canada. But in the present day infidel publications have a tremendous power, and are read greedily by hundreds of thousands. Strauss and

Renan are studied carefully and implicitly believed in by the majority of artisans and working men in the cities of Italy, Germany and France. Popular articles, full of atheism, find their way into almost every well known magazine and are widely circulated. In these the praises of science are sung and all thought of God is carefully excluded, while much is made of empty phrases such as "the religion of humanity," and "the worship of genius." Infidelity and immorality among the masses are still further increased by the enormous stream of infidel publications which are constantly issuing from the press. To give one example in proof of our assertion, it is said twelve million copies of atheistic and other infidel publications issued from the London press in one year, and to this enormous total must be added twenty-nine million copies of immoral publications, all of which, or nearly all, were distributed among the working classes. This total is larger than all the issues of the combined Bible and religious tract societies of the same city.

In France and Italy, it is said, the great majority of educated persons have not only silently broken with their church, but openly avow their unbelief. There all infidel publications have their most splendid triumphs. Only priests and women in those countries, it is affirmed, are religious. Renan's writings are very widely circulated, and on all sides men hear the same tale at public gatherings:—"The old faith is obsolete; belief in miracles is absurd; only hypocrites and the ignorant profess to adhere to Christianity."

Belgium is honey-combed with societies whose members bind themselves not to permit the visit of a priest in case of death, who refuse to take part in any except civil marriages, who determine not to allow their children to be baptized or instructed in the Christian faith. In many of the colleges and popular schools throughout Europe teachers consider themselves too enlightened to share the simple faith of the common people. Prussia has, among mere school boys of thirteen years of age, societies whose rules affirm that unbelief in God is a bar to any one's election as member. Religious instruction is, it may be expected at a low ebb in such countries.

Many cling to secularism as their chief stay. This is the doctrine that the present life and its belongings is everything, and that men should only care for such things. Assaults on the Bible and articles against the faith, are received with eagerness everywhere. Witness the hearty reception given to the *Essays and Reviews*, and to Colenso's lucubrations against the Pentateuch. In Germany critics of this sort abound, all have followers. Rationalism, *i. e.*, the denial of all opinions and doctrines that cannot be explained by mere human reason, also numbers there and in other countries many professed adherents. By scores of literary men Christianity is regarded as a hindrance to true culture. Eckardt would prefer the modern drama to true religion as a teacher of society. He says: "The theatre is my temple where I would see inaugurated a new form to worship. The theatre should be regarded as a house of God, as it was among the ancient Greeks. Religion and the drama I would fain see identified."

Such, then, it would appear is the present religious condition of many countries, especially in the Old World. Or if the description we have given does not exactly apply at this moment, it was at least a true account within the last thirty years.

Our picture, we are aware is incomplete, but we must pause here. We cannot go further into details. We have gathered the facts from the most reliable and trustworthy sources. The details any thoughtful person can supply. If the scene we have presented is bleak and dark, with nothing to relieve it, then we must reply to our question in the affirmative. But we believe a flood of golden light can be thrown upon this picture in depicting the grand advances the Church has made, and to this much pleasanter and agreeable task we shall apply ourselves in a future number.—*Com.*