

work by their contributions.

Seven persons were admitted to the full communion of the Church at the first Confirmation held in Smithville by the Bishop of Toronto in 1874. Twenty-four received the same sacred rite from the first Bishop of Niagara in 1884, and thirteen in 1887 from Bishop Hamilton, the present bishop, who has paid several visits to the place, strengthening the hands of the missionary and his people by his kind interest and wise counsel. His Lordship also held the first confirmation service at Beamsville on Sunday, the 21st of October last, when fifteen persons were confirmed.

In the Smithville congregation there are now 48 regular communicants. The present missionary is full of zeal and energy, laboring with all his strength. The sacred nature of the work engaged in, is present in his intercourse with all whom he meets, and this, coupled with a kindly and genial manner has contributed largely to the success of his work.

There are as yet but few Church families in the neighborhood, but it is the Church's work to draw the worldly and the thoughtless into the fold of Christ. This, we hope, may be successfully done in this interesting Mission.

There is great joy in tracing in this movement the realization of the hopes and prayers of many years, and in the faithful trust that the Divine blessing may rest upon it.

THE FIRST CHRISTIAN MISSION IN ONTARIO.*

By MRS. G. A. MACKENZIE.



ABOUT two years ago on our way home from Parry Sound we reached Penetanguishene on a Saturday. The streets were crowded with people in holiday dress, and it was with difficulty that we secured accommodation in the largest hotel. On inquiring the cause of the excitement in the usually quiet little town, we learned that on the morrow the corner stone of a church in memory of the Martyrs would be laid. What Martyrs we asked? And the reply was "The Jesuit fathers who 250 years ago peopled the woods and plains of this part of Canada, with memories of a heroism as disinterested and devoted as any that history has to record."

May not our own missionary zeal be quickened by a brief review of the work of these brave pioneers in one branch of the Church? However much we may differ from them on some points of doctrine, our aim is the same, to bring "life and immortality to light through the Gospel" of Our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Two and a half centuries ago the now prosperous county of Simcoe was a virgin forest inhabited only by the Huron, the most intelligent and least savage of all the Indian tribes. The peninsula, formed by Nottawassaga and Matchedash Bays of Lake Huron, the River Severn and Lake Simcoe,

contained thirty-two villages and hamlets with a total population of at least twenty thousand, engaged in tilling the ground, raising small crops of maize, beans, pumpkins, sun-flowers and tobacco. They were keen traders descending in canoes annually as far as the French posts on the St. Lawrence near the present site of Montreal, and sometimes as far as Quebec, to barter their furs and tobacco for kettles, hatchets, knives, cloth, beads and other commodities. In the year 1615 Joseph le Caron, a friar of the Recollets, a branch of the Franciscan Order, landed with several others at Quebec. To Le Caron was assigned the Mission to the Hurons. Therefore hastening to Montreal where the Indians were assembled for their yearly trade, he induced them to take him and twelve armed Frenchmen back to their home by the great Fresh Water Sea. Their course was up the Ottawa to Lake Nipissing (the line now followed by the Canadian Pacific Railway), thence by the French River to Lake Huron, then moving southward to Matchedash Bay, they landed a little west of the present harbor of Penetanguishene. In a letter to a friend Le Caron writes: "It would be hard to tell you how tired I was with paddling all day, with all my strength, among the Indians, wading the rivers a hundred times and more, through the mud and over the sharp rocks that cut my feet; carrying the canoe and luggage through the woods to avoid the rapids and frightful cataracts; and half starved all the while, for we had nothing to eat but a little "sagamite," a sort of porridge of water and pounded maize, of which they gave us a very small allowance every morning and night." Near the Indian village (a little inland) the Hurons built Le Caron a bark lodge; here the friar erected an altar, and here day and night came a multitude of curious savages to listen to his teaching; and here he remained for a year praying, teaching, making catechisms and struggling with the difficulties of the Huron language. Joseph le Caron was not only the first white man that gazed upon the expanse of Lake Huron, but he was also the founder of Christian Missions in western Canada, and this poor bark lodge in the wilderness was the prototype of the many churches erected to the glory of God throughout the length and breadth of our fair province.

In 1625 finding the Mission fields too vast for their powers, the Re'collet friars applied for the assistance of the Jesuits; and accordingly three of this brotherhood (Charles Lalemant, Enemond Masse and Jean Bre'beuf) embarked for New France. Bre'beuf was the leading spirit in the work—"a tall, strong man, with features that seemed carved by nature for a soldier, but which the mental habits of years had stamped with the visible impress of the priesthood." History tells us also that Jean Bre'beuf was of a noble family of Normandy of the race from which sprang the English Earls of Arundel. Full of enthusiasm he set forth for the arduous mission of the Hurons. But

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