

time in which free schools have been in operation, I have observed in the region where I reside, a large increase in the number of pupils attending them. The increase in some instances greatly exceeds the whole number usually attending the same schools under the old law; and in no case known to the writer is this increase less than one half of the former average attendance. Thus in five schools where the number of pupils had been 18, 20, 24, 25 and 30 respectively, the attendance has been increased correspondingly to 40, 42, 46, 64, 60; thus doubling the number of pupils receiving instruction in these five schools. It is believed that equally favorable results have appeared in other districts, and that further observation will justify the conclusion forced upon me—that free schools will certainly make full schools. If Education be good for the few, it certainly must be good for the many. Let the many then have it; make the schools free and keep them so; and instead of impoverishing, they will enrich the country, and become one of the best guarantees of its liberties and safety.

It may indeed be alleged that the increased attendance is an inconvenience; nay, some fastidious and not excessively patriotic or benevolent ones may regard it as a positive annoyance, indeed a nuisance. But the intelligent political economist, the patriot, the philanthropist, and the Christian must look upon it with deep interest and pleasure, and with large hope for the future of society and his country. The new school law is adapted to be an especial blessing to the poor man's family. By it his child is put in as fair a way to obtain mental training, knowledge, distinction and happiness as it is possible for Legislation on this subject to place him. The priceless and precious boon of education is put within his reach and he is entitled to enrich himself with knowledge, and be a man if he will. Nor is the law that provides free schools, unjust to the rich man. Were such the case it would prove a fatal objection to free schools. It is admitted that property is increased in value, and is rendered more secure by being located among an educated, enlightened, and orderly people. Some may doubt this. But no one who has reflected on the social structure, and observed the operation of the principles which obtain in the social economy, but must be convinced that education through the benefits it confers on society greatly enhances the value of property. He who would deny or doubt this, is a novice in legislation and social science. Now for this increase of value every owner of property should be willing to pay; it is only right, and it is not unjust to require it.

But what is thus right, necessary, and desirable as a social and economic arrangement, is urged upon us with greatly increased force by patriotism and Christian benevolence. Liberty will degenerate into licentiousness, unless accompanied and guarded by mental enlightenment and moral training.

Education under the proper moral influences may result in the highest good of which man is capable. The ability to read the Bible is no small blessing. This education confers. Why should not every child in Nova Scotia be placed by the wisdom and benevolence of his country in a position by which he can have access to the rich and inexhaustible treasures of knowledge, human and divine, which invite the attention and promise to reward ten thousand fold the most careful and laborious efforts of him that loveth wisdom? In no way could the people themselves, or their representatives so wisely, economically and profitably employ a portion of the means which God, in his bounty, has supplied to the country, as in making suitable provision to confer the great boon of a good common school education upon the youth of this highly favored province. Such a blessing is worth unpeakably more than the sacrifice required to obtain it. The Legislature in passing the new school law made a noble beginning in a much needed and glorious work. The measure may to some extent be unpopular; but this consideration neither detracts from its intrinsic value, nor affords proof that it is wanting in merit. The writer believes that the gentlemen who supported and carried the school law were sagacious enough to perceive that the law would not add, for the present, at least, to their popularity; but they had patriotic and moral courage enough to pass the measure, because they believed it was greatly needed, and would prove, if adopted and worked out, a great and lasting blessing to the country.

The members of the Legislature cannot now do a better service to the province, and the coming generations that are to people it than as far as in their power, to perfect the school law, and provide that all schools in order to participate in the Provincial Grant must be free to

all who in their respective sections desire to enter them. This provision should be universal and irrevocable. Irrevocable it will be, if the present Legislature does its duty. For it is not probable that any future House of Assembly would venture to repeal, or very materially modify a measure so wise, patriotic and beneficent; and which will, at no distant day, be generally acknowledged as such.

The easiest, most direct and best way to render the schools free, is to enact that they be sustained by Assessment. Make this mode absolute, and free schools will ever be the inheritance of Nova Scotia's children. The law as it now stands is almost tantamount to assessment; so that the change proposed is not great, and while it could be worked out better, more simply and efficiently as a law, it would, on the whole, be more acceptable to the greater number than the present mixed plan.

The unpopularity that has, in some quarters attached to the school law is passing away; many are beginning to see its value and tendency; and unless I greatly misjudge the people they will be ready, when the needed modifications are made, to co-operate cheerfully, in carrying out a measure which themselves are to control for the children's good, both their own and their neighbours, and which is so clearly connected with the highest interests of man individually, and socially for time and eternity. Let the children be cared for, and they will make the country, will be its strength, will enrich and defend it.

If the members of the Legislature prove themselves equal to the occasion, and it is confidently believed that they will, by making, or confirming the arrangements proposed, they will have earned the respect and gratitude, not only of the present, but also of future generations. On them the eyes of the people are intently fixed, believing that from their Legislative conduct, on this subject, education will be greatly promoted in the country for all coming time; or the impetus already given to it, under the new law, will be checked, and this great work be much retarded to the great injury of the country—an injury extending to all her interests.

Feeling their responsibility, not to the people only, but most of all to God, may the members of the Legislature, take, on this great subject, the course that will so extensively benefit the country, be worthy of themselves, a blessing to posterity, and an acceptable service, to the Author of every good and perfect gift.

Jan. 23rd, 1865. For the Christian Messenger.

**THE MIACMAE MISSION.**

Mr. Editor, The Committee of the Micmac Mission have directed me to draw up a pretty full account of the Annual Meeting, held on last Thursday evening, 20th ult., in Chalmers' Church, and to ask you to publish it in your paper.

The meeting was opened by singing, reading the scriptures, and prayer by Rev. Mr. Maxwell, minister of Chalmers' Church. Dr. Avery, the President in the chair. The story of Gideon's faith and exploits, in Judges 7, was read as an appropriate introduction to the changes about to be introduced in the constitution and operations of the society. The Chairman gave a brief outline of what had been already accomplished. Portions of the scriptures had been translated into the Micmac tongue, numbers of the Indians had learned to read, and many more had heard in their own tongue, wherein they were born, the wonderful works of God. He mentioned it as a very encouraging indication, that others beside the Missionary were beginning to labor as colporteurs among the Indians. Several pious young women had learned to read Micmac, and were engaged in teaching the Indians to read in different parts of the country, and are reading the scriptures to them. No written report had been prepared this year, but the Missionary would give a summary of what had been done. I was then called on and will endeavor to compress into as brief a compass as possible the substance of my address.

I can never attend an annual meeting without reverting in my own mind to the commencement of our labors. It is only by contrasting the present with the past, that the real progress of the work can be seen. How weak was my own faith then—how weak the faith of others. Had our efforts proved abortive, and had they been abandoned years ago—and been pretty much forgotten at the present day, few would have been surprised. People would have said, we knew the thing would fail. It was absurd to suppose that the language could be learned, and the scriptures translated, it was absurd to suppose that the Indians would be induced to abandon Popery. They would never be allowed to learn to read the Bible—they would kill and scalp the missionary. It was one of the wildest imaginable scenes ever concocted, we saw it all and said so from the first. But we live still, and though faint are pursuing.

Among other objections to the Micmac Mission it was said to be argued that they were rapidly dying out and that by the time we were ready to commence operations in earnest, the

last Micmac would have died. But let us hold our sixteenth Annual Meeting this evening. The society lives still, the Micmac race still exists, and in much larger numbers now than when we began our work. And there are "oceans" of children at the present day coming up to supply the places of those cut off by death. Several facts were given in proof of this statement. The last census shows a large increase during ten years. I visited an encampment during the summer at Delap's Cove in Granville. There were six families, and they comprised forty-five individuals. In two wigwams there were ten each, in two others six each, in one eight, and another five. I was at Dartmouth during the summer, up at the Narrows, (called in Micmac *Kebek* or *Quebec*—"Narrows.") I neither counted the wigwams nor the children. I wish I had, but I was told there were about twenty of the former, and the latter were very abundant. And what pleases me is that the children no longer appear shy and suspicious, but crowd around in all confidence, no one interfering to hear what I have to read and to say, and they allow me lay my hands on their heads and talk to them about their souls, and bless them in the name of the Lord.

And so I argue that if we did right to undertake this mission sixteen years ago, it cannot be right to abandon it now. Even had it proved to all human appearance, a complete failure, that would be no valid argument for abandoning it. It would be an argument for self-examination, for earnest enquiry into the cause of failure, for deep humiliation and self-abasement before God—possibly for re-consecration—for a change in our mode of operations, but while the gospel is true and Jesus lives, and souls are precious, and the great commission stands unrepented, there can be no valid argument for abandoning the Micmac Mission or any other good work.

When we commenced our work, there was no translation of the scriptures to which the Indians of these Provinces could have access. Not ten of them could be found who understood English sufficiently well to make any thing of the plainest chapter in the New Testament when read to them in English. In fact as a general thing they knew nothing of the Book. The Catholic Prayer Book they had—written, not printed,—in characters, not letters, and it was the labour of years to learn to read it—they did not know that the Protestants believed any portion of the Christian religion. The "Praying" and the "Prayerless" were the two words which in their language designated the Catholic and the Protestant, very suggestive expressions, but expressions which indicated how profound was the darkness into which they were plunged. The idea that there was besides the Prayer book, a book believed by the Priests to have been written by Prophets and Apostles, which had been concealed from them, appeared to the reflecting among them an absurdity too monstrous to be for a moment entertained. Their ignorance of the existence of the Book, has had much to do in the way of preparing their minds for the reception of it at our hands in their own tongue. It has transpired that there is a Catholic Bible as well as a Protestant, and great interest is shown by them in comparing what the Douay Bible says in English, with what "Rand's books" say in Indian. The number is now rapidly increasing who can compare the two, and the result does not increase their reverence for the priests.

When I commenced the study of Micmac, it did not enter my head that I could learn to speak it. To reduce it imperfectly to writing and to read it was the height of my ambition, and even this was a very doubtful matter, an experiment that would probably fail. In the winter of 1846-7, in Mr. Bain's woods, over the North River, opposite Charlotte-town, I effected the first translation of a passage of scripture into Micmac. It was the 16th verse of the 3rd chapter of John's Gospel. I cannot say how many hours I wrought at it, but I do remember the thrilling emotions that came over me, after I had finished my work, and had read the translation. One of my assistants was an old woman named Madeline, who had a withered hand. She complimented me upon the correctness of my work, both in Indian and in broken English. I walked home with the piece of paper in my pocket. My hopes had already been realized. I had actually been doing the work of a colporteur—I had read the scriptures to the Indians in their own tongue. And might not this be accepted as an omen for good, an earnest of what was to come. And there sprung up a hope in my bosom stronger than it had ever yet been that the day, though distant, might come, when I might have a whole chapter in Micmac, and be able to read it, my nerves thrilled, and my heart exulted at the thought. That was in 1847, a good while ago, but I remember it still and bless God for all he has since permitted me to see!

Reference must be made this evening to "ways and means," and plans for obtaining supplies, I am to move a resolution proposing to release from obligation all annual subscribers, and all who are fearful and faint-hearted, and all who wish to depart and withdraw from the work, on the principle of Gideon's "general order," in the chapter just read, which sent in their names, "twenty-two thousand," and there remained one thousand. We have no words of reproach to use; we are thankful for all the past; but we cannot afford to receive any unwilling contributions. The "three hundred men that lay putting their hands to their mouths," who can carry a lamp and sound a trumpet, and who can neither be frightened nor discouraged, nor tired out, nor killed, will suffice for our purpose. Though the host of the Midianites and Amalekites, thirty-five thousand strong are in the valley below, we have no fears for the result. We will hold aloft the light, we

will sound our trumpets, we will utter the battle cry: "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon," and heaven shall accomplish the rest. If the work be not the Lord's we have no interest in it, and care nothing about it; if it be He will accomplish it. And the more contemptible to human eyes the instrumentality employed the greater will be the honor to Him to whom all praise is due.

We propose abolishing the "begging system," the fixed salary, to look far less to man and far more to God. So having mentioned my first scripture translation, I am reminded of the first contribution secured in aid of the Mission. It was spontaneous, unsolicited, large, consisting of two "nuggets" of gold, before California, Australia and Nova Scotia, as gold-bearing regions were discovered, and while yet the word "nugget" was a most unusual word. It was given me by a sailor, a man-of-war's-man, an epithet that in my youthful days was suggestive of all that was evil in morals and terrific in aspect. He was quite a stranger to me personally at the time, an Episcopalian, but a Christian, a philanthropist, large-hearted and liberal, and ready to every good word and work. Commander—now Captain—Orlebar, R. N., late of Her Majesty's Surveying Service, Charlotte-town, was the man. He had heard something of our designs, had made enquiries, approved of the attempt, learned that we had no funds for the object, and so brought me two sovereigns, promising me more when needed. And he has contributed largely in aid ever since.

But I must refer to the labors of the past year. And at the outset I beg to say with gratitude to God my Heavenly Father that it has been to me a very pleasant, I may say a happy year. It would be a kind of denying of Christ, not to acknowledge, that I have enjoyed a great part of the year a sweet sense of His approbation and presence. The first week of the year, I spent in Fredericton, N. B., and united with five different denominations in the Week of Prayer. Such a precious week I have seldom if ever passed in my life. Besides the morning and evening public prayer meetings, and other seasons still more precious, we held a special prayer meeting in Rev. Mr. Sterling's Church, at 8 o'clock, P. M., to pray for the Indians and the Micmac Mission. Several times we had with us an Indian, and their condition, their need of help both from heaven and earth, were impressively represented. I visited the Indians at St. Mary's almost daily. Before I left Fredericton, where I labored several weeks, we held an open air prayer meeting in the midst of the Indian village.

During the summer I met Indians at my own house, in what I call our "zayat." The building we erected for the purpose last year, such as we have always needed, where, quite apart from the family, they can come and see me, and where they can remain for the night when necessary, and I have had not a very few opportunities there of reading to them the Bible, and conversing on the things of the kingdom. I visited them at Cornwallis, Wilmot, Granville, Brookfield, Liverpool, Shelburne, Chester, Truro, Horton, Shediac, Charlotte-town and Halifax. I have in all these places been kindly received. Even at Charlotte-town, or rather Rosebank opposite the city, where in the earlier days of the mission, I experienced more opposition than at any other place, there was a most decided change for the better. "Old Jim" no longer cursed and rowed at me, nor shook a club over my head as he has done now, nor did "old Snake's" daughter again utter her unearthly yells, nor brandish her club, nor hurl her tomahawk, in terror, as she had done in former days. I could go and come without fear, where formerly I was sometimes afraid for my life; and I had repeated opportunities of discussing the doctrines of the New Testament, even where they were afraid of the reading; and in every visit, I had also some opportunity generally to read the scriptures.

Nothing is more clear to my own mind than that there has been a complete revolution in the minds of the Indians throughout the length and breadth of the land, respecting education, and respecting the way in which they have been treated by those who have held them in religious bondage, and respecting our Mission. And I cannot doubt that the seed which by divine grace has been scattered upon a pretty large scale, is beginning to germinate and will before long spring up to the praise of the glory of that grace, and produce an abundant harvest. The dread of the priest is gone. Despite his threats or his promises, they will not "thrash Rand out of the camp," they will receive his books and will not burn them; they will learn to read them; a circumstance now so common that it has ceased to excite surprise. And surely the "great mountain" is already sinking into "a plain," not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit with the Lord.

I mentioned at our Annual Meeting last year the case of two Indians, far advanced in civilization who had learned to read, and who had for years been friendly, who had been induced the preceding summer to return me the books. It was just after a solemn visitation of the Bishop on their great festival occasion, St. Ann's day. And I related how the circumstance connected with remarks overheard in Micmac, had been blurted to the quickening of my own soul in the divine life. Well, during the past summer I have had several pleasant interviews with those same men. I have met one of them at my own house, who with a nephew of his passed the night in our "zayat," and declared that they "slept like kings," and one afternoon on the shore of the Bay of Fundy, under the trees at the door of his tent, with a large family grouped around me, I read and preached, and sang and prayed, spending a most pleasant hour or two. From her conversation and from what I know of her character, I could not but have a follow