

MISSION LIFE
IN THE
NORTH WEST

SEMMENS.



J. E. Beswick

MISSIONARY SOCIETY

OF THE

Methodist Church of Canada.

—♦—PRESENTED TO♦—

Maggie Grace

a Scholar in the Methodist Sunday School at

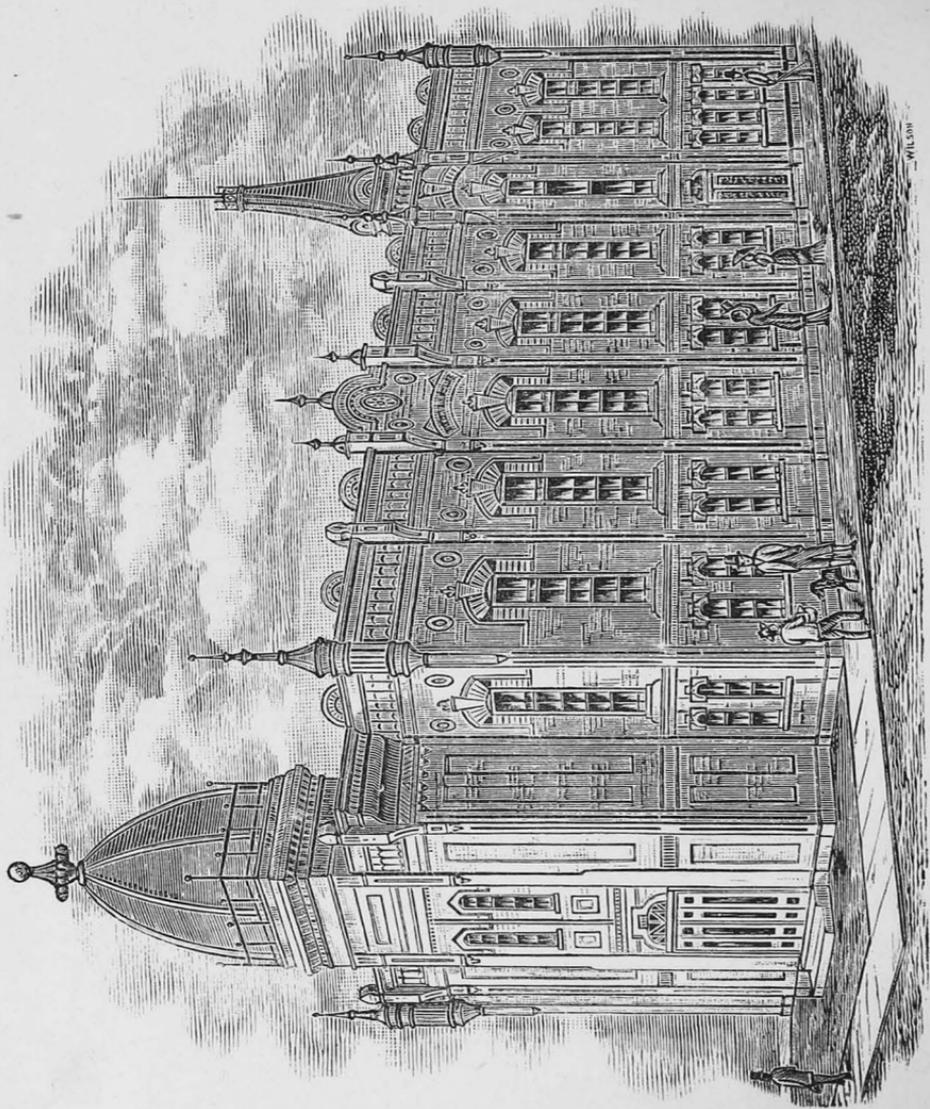
Christie's Appointment

in acknowledgment of diligence and fidelity in collecting
funds for the Missionary Society.

Methodist Mission Rooms,
Toronto, 188

A. SUTHERLAND,
General Secretary.

J. Moorey
Superintendent.



GRACE CHURCH, WINNIPEG—(By permission of G. Bishop & Co.)

THE FIELD

AND

THE WORK:

*Sketches of Missionary Life in the
Far North.*

By REV. JOHN SEMMENS.



TORONTO:
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P R E F A C E .

SOME of the following pencillings have already appeared in the columns of the *Guardian* or the *Missionary Outlook*, but are here put in a shape more adapted to preservation and recurrent use. Our only excuse for so doing, is the wish that our people, and especially our young people, should enjoy a better acquaintance with the practical side of Missionary Work.

Conscious of the lack of perfectness exhibited here, we send out these pages with the prayer that the divine blessing may follow their perusal.

J. S.

EMERSON, Dec. 1st, 1883.

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THE FIELD AND THE WORK.

CHAPTER I.

Arrival of Indians—The Appearance of Traders—The Arrival of Missionaries—Spread of Information—Immigration Begins—Right of Trade Sacrificed—Development of the New Country—Winnipeg in Early Days—Historic Allusions—Cathedral Bells—Dr. George Young—Mrs. Young of Happy Memory.

MANY, many centuries have elapsed since Asiatic refugees, hunted to the death by the Arab hordes of the eastern deserts, first crossed the sea at the "Straits of Behring," and began to ascend the wild waters of the Yukon and Mackenzie Rivers, in quest of the peace they had failed to enjoy in the land whence they had come. Encouraged by the abounding life in both forest and flood, they pressed inland, ever looking towards the east and south until all the country, from Great Bear Lake to Lake Superior, and from Labrador to the Island of Vancouver, was

claimed as the hunter's unfailing paradise, the Redman's undisputed domain.

Something over a century has passed since pale-faced traders, from the fairest island of the sea, began to seek their fortunes in the icy wilds around the Hudson's Bay. Lured by the vast gains of the fur-trade, they widened the circle of their operations, not without opposition from Redman, Frenchman and Spaniard, until their posts girdled the whole land from north to south, from east to west.

True to his character, the missionary followed closely in the merchant's path. From fort to fort went the heralds of the cross, with their tidings of salvation; familiar and precious to some, profound and mysterious to others. Everywhere they were welcomed and honored for their work's sake. The blessings of a kind Providence established the work of their hands, and the scene of their operations ere long reached from shore to shore, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth.

To these three classes the entire "Nor'-west Country" was for a long time sacred. "It was a time of silence, broken only by the report of the hunter's gun, the splash of the trader's oar, and the music of the missionary's hymn." Little knew frontier Canada that at her back lay a limitless region of prairie and forest-

land, rich in fur as Peru in gold. Little knew the capitalists of the eastern seaboard that in the vast wilderness, between them and the North-pole, iron, coal and gold supplies, exposed to the very sun's gaze, lay waiting the miner's pick and drill. Little knew England, that the "North-Land," which her King had signed away so thoughtlessly, was the richest and fairest of all the dependencies of the crown.

The diffusion of information relative to this land of limitless resources has been attributed to the ready pens and restless tongues of the representatives of religion. The interest created across the sea in the country's promise and development; the transfer of the Hudson's Bay Company's right of trade to the Dominion Government; the gradual introduction and constant spread of free trade; the resistless march of an overwhelming civilization northward and westward;—all these results and more have been charged upon the devoted heads of the clergymen of this country. It was the profound and cherished policy of the "Company of Adventurers," to keep the country shrouded in its native gloom. If an Indian was willing to give a hundred martens for a common flint-lock gun, whose business was it? If each post could return three-hundred fold on its yearly outfit, why should it be noised abroad? If the

directors suddenly found themselves bonanza kings, and the wintering partners discovered that they were autocrats, why should the outside world's jealousy be provoked by a knowledge of these things? Do you wonder that letters containing too much information were intercepted, and that the employèes were instructed to say but little about the trade, the climate, or the soil? Do you feel surprised that the recruiting agents at home should be instructed to obtain men who were "strong as oxen, ignorant as mules."

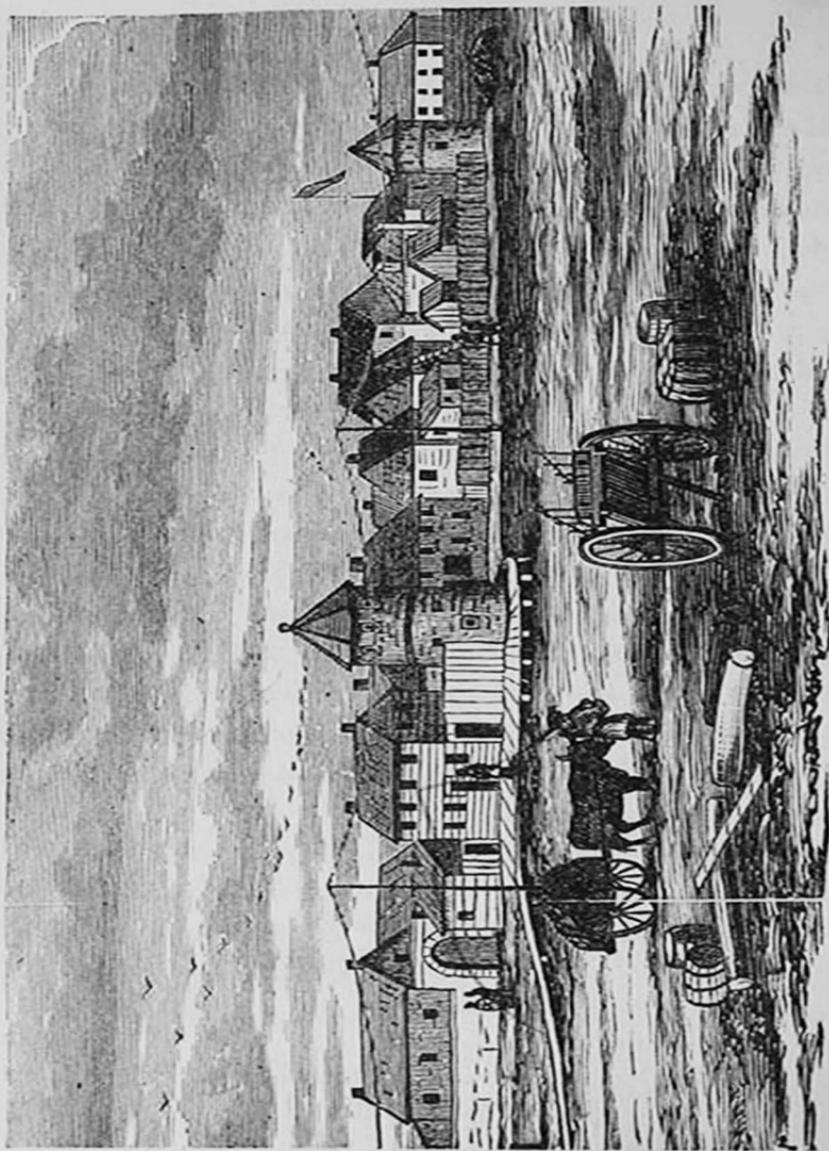
Well all that is over now. The missionaries wrote and spoke as they were moved by the capabilities of the country, and by the necessities of the times. The world sent its spies up to see the land and report. Capital poured in from a thousand sources. Rich and poor were fired with a desire to have some part in the world's latest bonanza find. Emigration began to pour its streams upon the new country. The Hudson's Bay Company accepted their defeat on the shrouding policy with a good grace. The traders' right was sacrificed for a few millions. A change passed over the face of the West. To-day, no more intelligent, law-abiding, honest-dealing, hospitable, or benevolent men trade with any people, anywhere, than the officers of the great Company trading in Hudson's Bay.

It was with mingled emotions of pleasure and pride

that we caught our first sight of the prairie province of Manitoba and its fair capital, the Queen City of the West. There was the formidable looking fortress known as Fort Garry. Within was the house which Riel had made his head-quarters during the brief existence of the "Provisional Government." At the angles of the quadrangle were the bastions where the loyal and true were imprisoned in the days when British power was defied. Facing the south was the gateway whence the frightened bandits fled at news of Wolseley's approach. East of the enclosure, on a slight hillock, Scott, the Orangeman, was shot down by ruffian hands in the prime of his manhood. Farther away in the same direction rolled the river where his body, chain-enswathed, was supposed to have been buried. There too was the Cathedral of St. Boniface, with its sweet-toned bells, made famous by Whittier, who, in describing the wearied voyageur taking heart as he nears his home, says :

"Drearly blows the north-wind,
From the land of ice and snow ;
The eyes that look are weary,
And heavy the hands that row.

"Is it the clang of wild geese ?
Is it the Indian's yell,
That lends to the voice of the north wind
The tones of a far-off bell ?



FORT GARRY IN 1869. (From "The Prairie Province," by kind permission of Ross-Belford.)

“The voyageur smiles as he listens,
 To the sounds that grow apace.
 Well knows he the vesper ringing,
 The bells of St. Boniface.

“Even so, in our mortal journey,
 The bitter north winds blow ;
 And thus upon life’s Red River
 Our hearts like oarsmen row.

* * * *

“Happy is he who heareth,
 The signal of his release,
 In the bells of the Holy City—
 The chimes of eternal peace.”

There again a little to the westward was Fort Osborne, with its stacks of arms, battalions of red coats, and fringing cannon Floating aloft on the gentle wind was the

“Flag that’s braved a thousand years
 The battle and the breeze.”

There, too, last, but not least, was Winnipeg, with its streets of sod, its hurriedly constructed houses, its three churches, its four hundred inhabitants. What a change has come in ten short years to the budding city of seventy-two !

The Rev. Dr. George Young was the very worthy representative of Methodism in the city of Winnipeg,

at the date of our arrival. A man of good judgment, and fervent piety, was he; an earnest and a successful worker in the cause of his Master. Many a story of hard manual labor and of self-denial could be told of this venerable man in the days when Winnipeg had neither house nor church, neither membership nor congregation. It was not an easy matter for one to come from the centres of Ontario when a pathless prairie linked St. Paul to Winnipeg. It was a constant sacrifice of comfort to live in so young a city when stores were few and goods were dear. The procuring of an acre lot on Main Street, as a gift from the Hudson's Bay Company, was as if he had enquired at the oracles of God. Church and parsonage were quite largely the result of his own labor. When he had a house of his own, no one gave a heartier welcome to strangers, or better advice to business men than he. He had an open hand, a wise head, a kind heart. His wife ably seconded his efforts. Her whole soul was in the work of saving souls. In Sabbath-school, in class-meeting, and in the prayer circle, she was a leading spirit. She was often at the sick bed, and the cry of distress was never raised in vain if relief was in her power. Hundreds of grateful hearts remember with pleasure the generous-hearted sympathy they received in trouble from Dr. and Mrs. Young. Missionaries of the North

add their testimony to the unselfishness of this devoted pair, for never a packet went out without words of cheer from Dr. Young. When the time came for shipping the supplies to the mission homes in the north, they were bought by the personal dealing of some member of the Red River Mission circle. By them, too, they were carefully packed and dispatched on their perilous journey Mrs. Young has gone to her reward, and her memory is blessed indeed. The venerable doctor, still hale and hearty, is doing God service in the capacity of Superintendent of Missions for Manitoba and the North-West. By virtue of his office he is the first President of the Manitoba Conference. Long may he be spared to serve the Church, preach the ever-blessed gospel, and cheer the toilers.





CHAPTER II.

Down the Red River—The River's Outlet—Drunken Indians—Prohibition—Lake Winnipeg—A Country Unreclaimed—A People Wretched to our Thought—Signs of Minerals—Fisher River.

THE trip northward from Manitoba's capital was full of interest to us, hitherto unaccustomed to western travel. The high banks, green with the verdancy of a rapidly developing vegetation, presented an ever-varying panorama of beauty. Large stretches of open plain, unreclaimed from its native wildness, contrasted beautifully with the well tilled grain fields of the early settlers. The long line of small log houses was broken here and there by the beautiful villa residences of the more wealthy and enterprising. School-houses and churches, neat in appearance, and commodious, augured both life and development in educational and religious circles.

On we went, past St. John's Cathedral, with its encircling colleges for boys and girls; past the now historic Kildonan, where Lord Selkirk's sturdy pioneers

fought out their right to the ground their children hold ; past the Rapid's Church, with its adjacent vicarage, relics of an age when strength and durability were more esteemed than speedy execution and exquisite finish ; past the Lower Fort Garry, with its ramparts and bastions of stone, built in the stormy days when the great rival fur-trading companies contended for the mastery ; past the town of Selkirk ; past the St. Peter's reservation ; past the tall grass, the reeds, the rushes, and the willows, which protect the numerous wild fowl that haunt the delta of the Red River.

Here we halt for the night. We have five boats, manned by forty pagan Indians from the Lake Sol region. Tall and stout they were, and wild, but harmless when sober. It happened that, by some means or other unknown to us, a supply of fire-water had been obtained during the day, and now the hour for indulgence had fully come. Men, women, and even the boys who visited our camp, were made drunk with the vile stuff which had been sold to them for whiskey. Soon the crowd was merry, and singing was introduced. Quarrelling followed—fighting ensued. Then came the necessity of interference. A league was formed between the guide, a young clerk, and ourselves ; and, as a result of our prompt and united action, six heavy-weights were bound hand and foot,

and placed in the boats. The balance were warned, but did not improve. A second raid was made with similar results. This time we took four captives. Our course was distasteful to the aborigines, as we gathered from scowl, gesture, and threat. It was not a time for repose. To have entered our tents would have been dangerous and unwise. So all night long we played at police patrol, assuming a courage which astonished ourselves. Drinking, dancing, singing, and threatening continued until morning light, but there was no more fighting.

A favouring breeze sprang up with opening day, and, hoisting our sails, we went to sea with drunken crews. The wind was light, and continued fair through the day. Before night the men had slept off their debauch, and were ready for supper and duty. Instead of carrying out their threats, a vote of thanks was given to the amateur constabulary force, and a short lecture on the sin of drunkenness was given in reply.

Thanks to the far-seeing policy of the Hudson's Bay Company, a prohibitory law prevails throughout the north. It was not always so. Trouble with the Indians, small returns of fur, loss of boats and cargoes, and general discontent, almost compelled the authorities to act as they did. It was a wise and a benevolent course to pursue. The welfare of the natives was an

essential to the success of commercial ventures. The liquor traffic was conducive to neither. With one voice the directors said, let the sale and use of rum be discontinued. From that day casks, puncheons, and hogsheads had no more a place in the cargoes of ships freighted for Hudson's Bay. Could not the Government of our fair Dominion take a lesson from the protective policy of this honourable corporation ?

As soon as the traveller from the south has passed out into Lake Winnipeg, he may fairly consider himself to be on missionary ground. Once beyond the sandbars and mud-deposits of the river's outlet, the country assumes a very different character. Here are no well-tilled farms, no quiet villages. The measured strokes of the woodman's axe, at times, greet the ear. The lumberman's shout occasionally startles the wild echoes. The merry measures of the ploughboy's song are listened for in vain. The kindly faces of a simple peasantry are greatly missed. Fences do not block up one's way. Roads do not make locomotion easier. No cattle gather on the hill sides. No young lambs gambol through the tender grass:—

“This is the forest primæval ; the murmuring pines and the hemlocks,
Bearded with moss and in garments green, indistinct in the twilight.”

You become impressed with the fact, that you have passed a boundary line. Instead of waving prairie-grass growing out of a deep and fertile soil, you find crooked birch and stunted spruce struggling for existence among granite rocks. Instead of a scene flat and changeless far as the eye can reach, you find high hills alternating with vast swamps, and huge headlands succeeded by deep bays. For comfortable houses, you find primitive wigwams. Modern costumes give place to filthy rags. Activity is supplanted by a prevailing indolence. Plenty and happiness fade into want and misery. The characteristics of a healthy-growing civilization give place to the concomitants of a stagnant, degrading paganism.

The general shape of Lake Winnipeg is not unlike that of an hour-glass. Broad at either extremity, it narrows as you approach the centre. The middle portion is a deep channel, barely two miles in width, bounded on one side by cliffs of limestone, on the other by granite hills. This geological peculiarity characterizes the lake throughout. Not a boulder of granite can be found on the western shore; and not a rock of limestone is discoverable on the eastern side. A miner's eye discovers here and there indications of iron, coal, and gold, and developments may

be expected which will change the complexion of this locality not many years hence.

Thirty miles south-west of the narrows of the lake, in the bottom of a deep bay, is a small stream known as Fisher River. Its remoteness from the line of travel, accounts no doubt for the oblivion in which its past history is shrouded. Recent events, however, have torn aside the veil of obscurity, revealing a country rich in all that a thrifty people could desire.

A more northerly mission-station was overcrowded. Either the people ate too much, or the lake yielded too little fish. Times of scarcity came. The council became alarmed, and a separation was determined upon. A deputation appointed for the purpose sought a suitable place where to plant a colony composed of the overflow population of the too densely settled location. After a good deal of wandering, by a seeming accident, they came upon this fair and fertile spot. They deemed themselves God-directed. Here was wood for building and burning, hay for thatching and feeding. Forest and flood teemed with life. Soil was rich and friable. Hastily, they returned to their own people, and so eloquently did they describe their find that a large number of young and old were fired with a strong desire to go up and possess this new heritage.

Lake Winnipeg was the wilderness in their way, and a stormy time of it they had on its confused surface. Some fell sick by the way. A few first saw the light. Several passed to their reward. Hunger pinched them. Head winds delayed them. Cold nights chilled them. All things seemed against them.

Patient toiling in rowing brought them at length to their desired haven. The imaginative who, from ideal Nebos, had seen the promised land afar, now saw before them the reality distinct and fair. The varying moods of the party found expression in silence or shouting, in weeping or laughter.

As soon as a convenient landing-place could be obtained, the grey-haired chief assembled his people for praise and prayer. "God had brought them thus far," he said, "in safety. He thought it right to take possession of this new place of abode in the name of the Lord." Hats were doffed. A hymn was read. A hundred voices startled the echoes of a heathen solitude with the well-known doxology,—

Mumechimeek waotaweek
 Mena Jesus wakoosiseek
 Mena kunatissit achak
 Mamowema mumechimeek.

Then the grave elders, like the pilgrim fathers of New England history, expressed their thanksgiving

in fervent language, and renewed their consecration vows to the Most High God.

There, to-day, those people dwell in the heart of a vast wilderness, on the banks of a peacefully flowing river, a hundred miles from civilization. They are well clad, and well behaved. They are peaceful, industrious, Christians. They have cosy houses, and neat garden plots. They find fish enough in the river, and venison enough in the woods. They make their own nets, construct their own canoes, build their own boats. They are brave seamen, willing laborers, unerring forest guides. Every man can read in his own tongue the "words of this life." Every rising sun is greeted with songs and supplications, Every nightfall is hallowed with hymns of praise.

Such are the Swampy Cree Indians of Fisher River, who readily and gratefully acknowledge that their superiority over their pagan neighbours must be credited to the enlightening, purifying influences of the religion of Jesus Christ.





CHAPTER III.

Lake Winnipeg a Field for Study—The Beauty of its Scenery—Beren's River—It's People—Still Northward—Norway House, Pride of the People—Papanikiss—Nelson River—The Rapids—The Scenery—The Streams Unite—Idols—Nelson River Mission.

TO the student of Nature, Lake Winnipeg and its surroundings offer many attractions. The geologist will find hosts of fossils on its shingly beaches, and rocks of many formations in its jagged cliffs. Botanists will be charmed with the specimens of flora which abound along its shores, and the medicinal plants with peculiar shaped leaves that infest its woods. Ornithologists will discover among its winged tribes many rare specimens worthy of study. Zoologists will be delighted to observe the numerous denizens of the forest, varying in size and disposition from the inoffensive rabbit to the vicious wolf, from the tiny ermine to the majestic moose.

Any one having an eye for the beautiful cannot but be pleased with the scenery afforded. There are nu-

merous islands of all shapes and sizes. One will be of sand, with a miniature lake inside, like the coral reefs of the Pacific. A second will be a collection of boulders, without a grain of soil, the waves rushing between them like currents of air through the open windows of a deserted dwelling. A third will be solid, shelving rock, with a shrub or two at the top, like a patch of hair on a bald head. A fourth will be covered with a rank growth of spruce, coming right down to the water's edge. There are innumerable shoals, with the white breakers dancing over them. There are picturesque straits, with deep but intricate channels. There are unprotected sea openings, and well sheltered harbours.

About half-way across the lake, on the eastern shore, nestling among tall groves of poplar, spruce, and tamarac, is the Beren's River Mission. Work was commenced here under the supervision of the Rev. E. R. Young, in the spring of seventy-two; and in no long time thereafter, a number of hard-hearted and long-neglected Saulteaux were found sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in their right mind. No sooner had they come under the influence of Christian teaching, than they began to build houses and till the soil. While the good seed of the kingdom was taking root in their hearts, their hands were busily engaged in

breaking up the fallow ground of their reserve. Thus Christianity combines the temporal and the spiritual in her care for the bodies and souls of men.

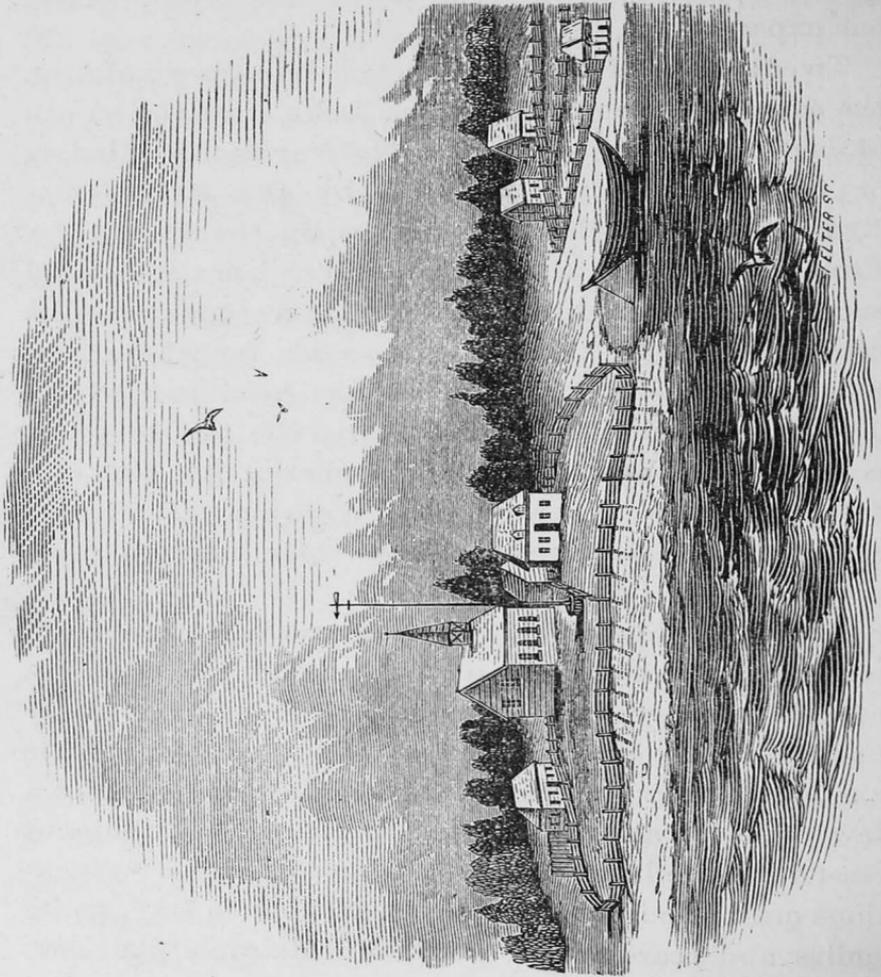
The people about this mission are conservative and prejudiced, stiff of neck, and hard of heart. Darkness covers the land, and gross darkness the minds of the people. The hereditary deadening influences of ages have not yet been eradicated or counteracted. A good deal of undermining has been done, but the fabric of idolatry remains intact. There is a light on the shore, but the vast interior is yet dark. Truth is mighty, and will prevail, but it is feared that Salteaux paganism will die hard. The average sense of right and wrong is so lamentably feeble, the general character is so positively vicious, that the most sanguine of missionaries would give up in despair, did he not know that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.

Leaving Beren's River, for the north, you meet with an open and a dangerous sea. The lake widens to the extent of nearly one hundred miles ; and its navigation is rendered intricate and dangerous by the hundreds of iron-bound reefs that girt the eastern shore. Angry waves are provoked by even light winds, owing, perhaps, to shallowness. Sudden changes, both in the direction and intensity of passing storms, impart a

dash of the romantic to a journey across the treacherous expanse.

Twenty miles from the outlet of Winnipeg Lake, on the eastern shore of Play-green Lake, near the mouth of Jack-fish River, stands the Norway House Mission, or Rossville. It was founded by the Rev. James Evans, of the English Conference, in the year 1840. From its inception, the work here has been eminently successful. Untold benefits have been reaped from its establishment by the grateful people for whose temporal and spiritual welfare it has been carried on. The quiet, teachable Crees live in rude but, to them, comfortable houses, infinitely superior to the old-fashioned, now superannuated wigwam. Their surroundings in every way evidence their material prosperity.

About forty per cent. of the population are church members. Of these, more than eighty per cent. are capable of engaging in public prayer. Almost every one can read the Bible by means of the Evans phonetic characters, in which their language is written. Not a few of them are quite equal to giving an intelligent reason for the hope that is in them. Large congregations crowd the house of God each Lord's Day, while smiles and tears reveal with unmistakable plainness their appreciation of the Gospel message.



NORWAY HOUSE MISSION, IN 1856.

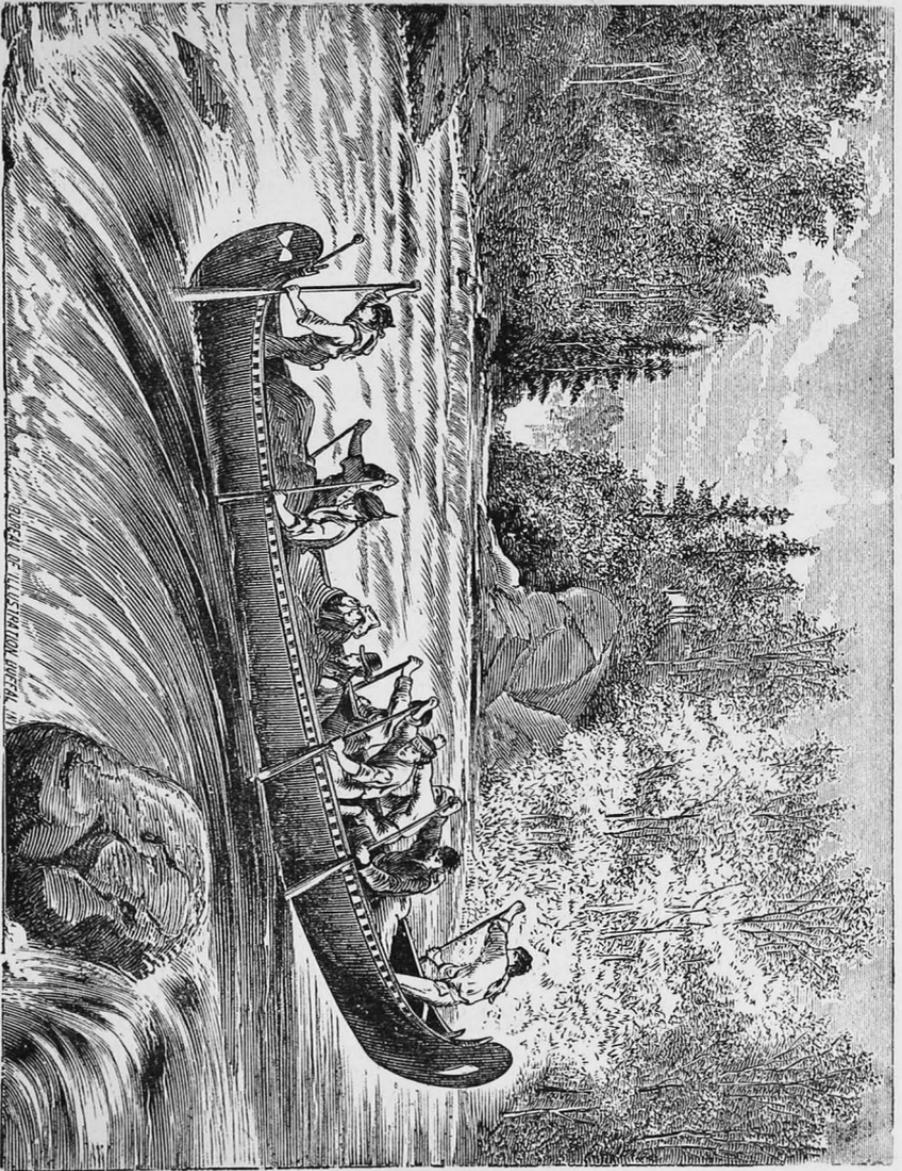
It is pleasing to observe the pride of the villagers in their mission institutions. The Mission House is to them what a feudal castle was to the English peasantry. Canterbury Cathedral is hardly more revered by the city folk, than is Rossville Chapel by the unsophisticated worshippers who gather there. The school is to them what Oxford and Cambridge are to their titled graduates. Even the graveyard is in their eyes a second "Greenwood" in neatness and elegance, a proper resting-place for the sainted dead. We smile at the simplicity of their unmerited and excessive admiration, yet cannot help admitting that their present, as compared with their past, is well worthy of their cherished pride. Who shall say? May not the civilization, now in its dawning, speedily attain to the brightness and the perfectness of the noon!

An amusing story is told of a certain notable called Papanikiss, who, in the early history of the mission, was admitted to the privileges of full membership. The church was celebrating the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The supply of wine was limited, and all were instructed to touch the lips merely. Papanikiss took his place, amongst others, at the altar, and the sacred cup, quite full, was passed to him. He was told to drink this in grateful memory, etc. With

a broad smile of satisfaction, he thanked the clergyman, drained the cup without lifting it from his lips, returned the empty vessel, and bowed his head in devout thanksgiving. Lacking one essential, the ceremony was adjourned to the sorrow of all concerned but Papanikiss, whose face shone with radiant satisfaction.

Leaving Rossville, still directing our course northward, we enter the broad and rapid stream of the Nelson River; the connecting link between Winnipeg Lake and the Hudson Bay. From the sources of the Red River, to this spot, no break occurs in the even flow. At least nothing serious enough to obstruct navigation. Here, however, the land begins to dip toward the pole, and we find ourselves in the rapids. Many of these are of a sluice like character, and may be run without the inconvenience of debarkation. Gracefully the canoe glides down the rushing water. Despairingly the sullen rocks grin out at you as you pass beyond their power to harm. Sportively the basin waters dance around you in imaginary triumph; wildly the foolish heart throbs in the moment of peril. You are delighted with the pleasant sensation, and, on reaching quiet waters, your first question is apt to relate to the nearness of the next rapid. The spell of the enchanter is upon you. The more numerous the rapids, the wilder the waters, the better you are pleased.

SHOOTING THE RAPIDS. (From "Ocean to Ocean," by kind permission of Rose-Belford.)



ROSE-BELFORD ILLUSTRATED

Long islands divide the Nelson into many branches. The traveller shoots through a cutting into a lakelet, only to find that four or five streams, coming from different directions, fall into a common basin, and is astonished to learn that these are but parts of the same stream. Herein lies the chief beauty of this part of the country. The islands have escaped the ravages of forest-fires while the main shores are completely desolated. Clad in verdure of living green, fantastic in shape, varied in appearance and magnitude, glistening in virgin sunlight, mirrored in glassy lakelets, nothing can exceed the spell which they throw over the lover of the beautiful.

Nearly a hundred miles down the river, the various branches unite in one. The current is deep and swift. The water is clear and pure. The banks are high and rocky. Granite hills look heavenward with uncovered heads. Mountain torrents fall laughingly into the mighty current, from the steep hill-sides. Spruce, balsam, birch, and poplar fringe the alluvial shores. Animal life abounds everywhere. Forests echo with bird-song. Rapids seethe and foam, rush and eddy. Falls dash and whirl, bound and roar. The brush of the painter and the pen of the writer fail. All is as far beyond description as nature is above art. One regrets that such intrinsic loveliness is so far from ap-

preciative observation. Instinctively one quotes the well known words:—

“Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear,
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen ;
And waste its fragrance on the desert air.”

Hugging the shore, for the purpose of sighting game, you often observe stumps of trees cut off about three feet from the ground and carved into some rude resemblance to the human head. You require no explanation. The heart of heathenism has been reached, and these are the people's gods. A handkerchief, torn and dirty, is perchance tied around the neck. A delapidated hat is pegged to the head. A black pipe is fastened into the mouth. Yes these are the strongholds of vice, ignorance and idolatry. This is the land of paganism and spiritual death. Here treachery and villainy pass unchallenged ; guilt and shame walk unmasked ; adultery and murder go unpunished. These are the dark places of the earth, which are full of the habitations of cruelty. Here Belial is worshipped and God is unknown.

In the midst of this moral confusion, like a lone rock in a confused sea, an oasis in an arid wilderness a dawning light in a region of darkness, a bursting life in a land of death, stands the Nelson River mission.



CHAPTER IV.

Moral Aspect of Nelson River—Some Characters—Laying the Foundations—Snow Shoes, Sleds, and Tripping—Interpreters and Translations—Hard Work Practice not Poetry—Canoeing under Difficulties—The Winter—Travel and its Consequences—The Result—Winter Travel Again—Wolf Hill—Daily Routine.

WE are told that up to the year 1875 this was a neglected part of the country. The channels of wickedness were filled to overflowing; might was right, and the stronger worked his will upon the weaker. Vice, enthroned, reigned with a fiendish greed of dominion; Virtue sat desolate in sack-cloth and ashes. The prevailing ignorance was well nigh absolute. They could not discern between the temporal and the spiritual. They could not see why the body should be denied for the soul's sake, why the present should be spent with reference to the future. They could not criticise divine truth. The doctrines of the Bible were as perplexing to them, as the problem of eternity to us.

Pamitao was very old when our work in Nelson River was begun. He was poorly clad, and much bowed. He was tall, lean, and furrowed. His voice faltered. His hands trembled. His knees smote each other. His eyes were dim. Judging from the wreck, he must have been a fine specimen of physical manhood in his prime. He was a noted conjurer, and was accustomed to delegate his powers to worthy recipients, under charge of secrecy or death. No one dared to offend him. Of those who unwittingly, or otherwise, incurred his displeasure, not a few, it is reported, found untimely graves. Pamitao was a hater of his kind, and he received a large return. Men despised him when he grew old and feeble. Timid women laughed him to scorn. His own children neglected him. He perished alone in the flames of his wigwam, a man-forsaken and a God-forsaken wretch.

Louis had a son who, in the heat of midsummer, sickened of brain fever, and drew near unto the gates of death. Delirium set in, and the superstitious mind of the father was terribly alarmed. No amount of persuasion availed to thwart his purpose of taking his boy's life. The hands and feet of the helpless invalid were tied securely. The fever-stricken patient was borne a stone's throw into the woods. The hard-hearted father placed a stone on the writhing bosom,

and, kneeling upon it, crushed out the life of an only child, despite his cries and tears. A year later, he murdered his wife with an axe, in a moment of anger. Subsequently he became an Ishmaelite indeed, in whom was no good. He wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way, carrying in his conscience-stricken soul the gnawing worm of deathless memory.

These are representatives of a large class, which belongs to the dead past rather than to the living present. Many still linger on the shores of time, but they have little or no influence on the community. Other and younger, and, let it be hoped, better men have taken the place of those whose whole lives were a shame and a disgrace. After all, the worst of them are immortal, blood-bought, Christ-redeemed. To such is the word of His salvation sent; poor, lost sheep, Manassehs and Ahabs, Magdalens and Legions.

“Shall we whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high,
Shall we to men benighted,
The lamp of life deny ?

“Salvation ! O salvation !
The joyful sound proclaim ;
Till earth's remotest nation
Has learned Messiah's name.”

Selecting, at random, the mission last named in this narrative, we might endeavour to show our readers what it costs to lay the foundations of the work of soul saving; believing that the same, and more, is true of many other places where work for God has been begun under great difficulties.

You take up your abode six hundred miles from medical aid, post office, and civilization. Your nearest white neighbour is three hundred miles away. Your home is a log hut, plastered with mud, and furnished with floor, chimney, door, and window. Your work is to follow the people from point to point within a radius of six hundred miles. You have no interpreter. For reasons, you are prevented from employing one. Your journeys are all performed on snow-shoes. Your couches are spread upon the cold ground, walled with sombre pines, roofed with twinkling stars. Your companions can only talk with you by means of signs and broken words. Your food is dry pemmican, smoked venison, heavy bannocks, or such as you can gather up by the way, from hunter, or fisherman, or trading store. You desire to speak to the people the words of life, but have not their language. You attempt to preach in English. They only catch your spirit. The words to them are meaningless. Dissatisfied, you attempt to read to them from a Cree transla-

tion of the Gospels. They are better satisfied; but you do not know how to apply emphasis, and the result is feeble. You return, feeling that you have spent your labour for that which satisfieth not.

Six months later, an interpreter will be with you, but you cannot, must not, be idle till then. Why not select a mission site, cut down an acre of forest, and prepare for the erection of a house. This course commends itself. You go into the forest, with an Indian for your companion and servitor. With your own hands, you hew and chop and saw until the timber, logs, and boards for a house are prepared. You draw these out to the river with the help of your dogs. A raft is made on the river. The break-up comes, and carries your raft to the place desired. Your dogs beach your logs and lumber. You live in a canvas tent, and give yourself to the work of building a house unto the Lord. Your net in the river feeds you. You are busy enough, but lonely. No mail reaches you for five long months. Meantime, your work of building is completed, and you are in possession of a mansion. There is no furniture; but the bare walls, bare floor, and naked roof are a great comfort. The interpreter at last turns up, and evangelistic work is commenced.

Winter draws near. Canoes must be dispatched to the nearest market for supplies. To keep down ex-

penses you determine to go yourself, as one of the steersmen. Three others are hired, and two canoes purchased. You have no provisions to take, so you do the next best thing, and arm yourself with net and gun. On the way one hundred portages are passed; some as much as three miles long. Your canoe runs on a sunken rock. Storms surprise you in exposed places. Ice forms on the marshes. You wade through them, cutting your feet and legs with the sharp new ice. In twenty days you return to your log-house in the wilderness with six hundred pounds of provision in pork and flour, butter and tea.

This, though it has cost so much in time and money, is but a poor provision for the wants of six people counting self, interpreter, his wife and children, so a fall fishing must be made. You know but little about the business, but do the best you can—working late and rising early. You tent outside under the shelter of the pines, drenched by every rain that falls, and chilled by every damp and cheerless night. As the result of a month's work, you stage two thousand fish. This, with the canoe loads, gives your mind rest, and you visit the hunters in the wilds. Dogs are purchased, and dogs must be fed. In four months' time you drive to market again. Lost on a shelterless lake, you pass the night in the drift on the ice surrounded by the

shivering dogs, foodless and fireless. Unused to snow-shoeing, you are the victim of "*mal de raquette*," an inflammation of the muscles of the leg just above the ankles. March winds, and the glow of the sun on the snow, inflame the eyes, giving you intense pain. Travelling at night to befriend the eyes you suffer from frost-bites. At last, more dead than alive, you lie down on your blanket-on-the-floor bed at home to allow nature a chance to recruit herself, no kindly voice to cheer you, or helping hand to nurse you in your time of need.

But then why despond? You have laid the foundations of Christian work. You have opened the way for another. You have spoken the word as opportunity has presented itself. You have seen souls come to the Friend of Sinners. Influences have been started which only eternity can value. Souls have been made hungry for the bread of life, and have been taught how to feed themselves out of the treasure house of God. What were even life itself compared to the salvation of a hundred souls.

"The thing that must be, must be for the best;
God helps us do our duty and not shrink,
And trust his mercy humbly for the rest.
With patience bear the lot to thee assigned,
Nor think it chance, nor murmur at the load,
For, know, what man calls 'fortune' is from God."

Although we have before, incidentally referred to the subject of winter travel, it may be worth our while to deal with it somewhat more fully, keeping in view the amusement and instruction of our younger readers.

The day before leaving home is a busy one. The purchasing, sorting and packing must be done before the hour of starting comes around. The wants of health and sickness must be provided for. Dangers and accidents must as far as possible be anticipated and guarded against.

Before all else, comes the amount of provisions likely to be consumed ere the nearest market is reached. So many men to be rationed, a given number of days, at so many pounds a day, a little extra for stormy days, or for starving Indians. Then the whole is bagged and put on the sled. Next to yourselves come thoughts of your faithful dogs and their wants. Two whitefish, multiplied by the number of dogs in the train, and the number of nights you propose to spend by the way, are piled on the sled. Tools and appliances of different kinds, must not be forgotten. Wood to warm your numbed limbs, and boil your cups of tea, cannot be procured without axes. Food cannot be prepared without kettles, and frying pan. Extra changes for hands and feet must be taken. To walk through deep snow, you must have moccasins and

snow-shoes. To sleep out of doors in sixty degrees of frost, you need warm blankets or robes of rabbit skin. Nothing must be forgotten, for you can obtain nothing by the way.

As soon as you are well away from home, your difficulties begin. You get beyond the beaten tracks. The snow is deep o'er all the land. Your guide goes ahead breaking a track, and giving you the direction. The dogs follow, struggling along as best they can with their load. The driver brings up the rear, dodging the overhanging branches, and steering the sled clear of the trees. Sometimes these occupations are conflicting. A man is successful in dodging, but the sled bunts a tree; or he manages the sled all right, but allows his head too much latitude so that it gets into trouble.

The chief impediment to your progress, is the rolling nature of the country through which you pass. Toiling up wearisome ascents is hard on both dogs and drivers. You must keep things moving if possible. Failing in this, a good deal of lifting and shouting are necessary to resume suspended motion. The dogs act like baulky horses, and your breath and your patience are alike exhausted. In a fit of desperation, you divide your load, carry up part to the top of the hill,

return for the dogs, ascend, reload and go on your way rejoicing.

Going down hill, though not so difficult, is far more dangerous. The driver must be brakesman. He holds back and steers by means of a rope attached to the head of the sled, but if he fails or falls, woe betide both dogs and load!

A good story is told of one noble missionary who, while journeying to a distant post, came to what is known far and wide as Wolf Hill. The ascent was effected nobly. The descent began. The driver charged his passenger to sit perfectly still. But the sight of racing dogs, and sound of jingling bells, and the music of forest echoes, were too much for the enthusiastic occupant of the cariole. He rose to his feet, cheered the dogs, whirled the whip in air, and halloed with all his might. The dogs bounded along. The driver let go. The sled struck a tree. The excited missionary was shot through the pines, down a precipice, head-first, into a bank of soft snow. The driver followed as fast as he could, and, halfway down the hill, discovered two moccasined limbs struggling in vain for freedom. Taking hold of them he quickly extracted the body of divinity to whom they belonged from his dive into the "beautiful," and it is

reported that the victim was ever after a cooler and a wiser man.

Your halting places are called "camps," and are all of similar construction. Situated in the heart of pine groves, lined and paved with evergreens, backed with blankets and robes, supplied with roaring fires, they afford not altogether uncomfortable resting places when the duties of the day are done.

Your guide rises early and makes the fire. Then all are roused. A hasty meal is dispatched. Dogs are harnessed. Forth you go, while yet the dawn is faint, into the darkness which surrounds your camp-fire's ruddy glow. A sharp run of six miles, and you are agreed to the proposal of taking a spell, if indeed the proposal does not come from you. Another six miles, and the breakfast will be appreciated. Twelve miles further on you relish a dinner, though it be one of pemmican and tea. Yet twelve miles more, and you seek the shelter of the pines, and beneath the stars you court the coming of

"Tired nature's sweet restorer,
Balmy sleep."

The difficulties of the way are manifold, but as long as health and provisions last you can endure much before you will say die, and when you get home after long wanderings, you appreciate its comforts and associations as you could not had you never wandered.



CHAPTER V.

A Journey Contemplated—The Time—The Method—The Distance—
The Party—The Outfit—Old Ideas Changed—Bill of Fare—The
New Bed—Dog Driving—The Train—Camping—New Method of
Ablution—A Storm—Making Bread—A House in the Wilderness
—Camp-fire Stories—A Bear Fight—A Canoe Wreck—A Tree
Falls.

AT the call of the Church, we were about to go northward, as a missionary to the wandering Indian bands who hunt for fur in the angle between the Nelson and the Churchill rivers, hard by the sea.

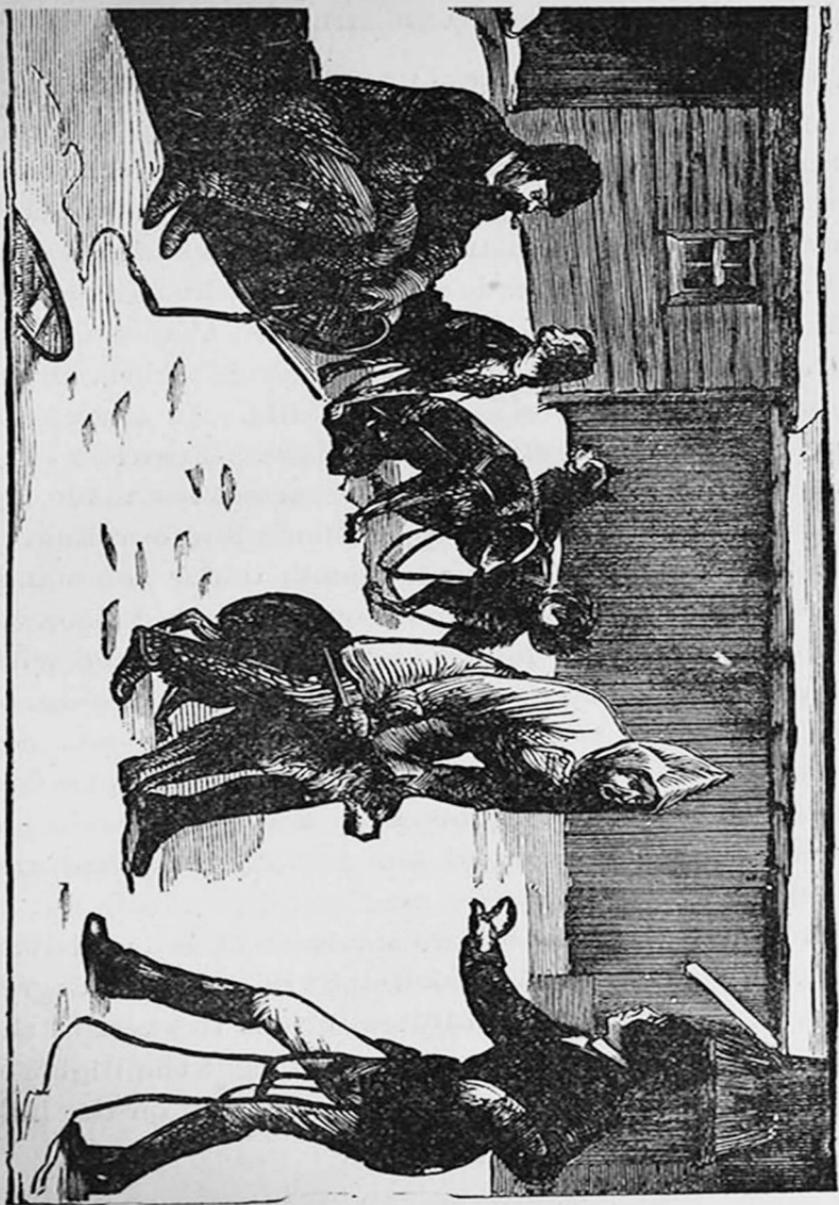
Although it was still wintry weather, the days were lengthening fast. The snow on the southern exposures would moisten in the noontide warmth. Voyageurs wore goggles to protect the eyes from the sun-glare on the snow. Snowbirds were changing color. Rabbits were turning grey. Eagles had returned from their southern haunts. Ptarmigan had gone back to their favorite rendezvous on the coast-line of the Bay of Hudson.

We were to go by dog-train a distance of six hundred miles. Kind friends came to wish us *bon voyage*, bearing practical evidences of their interest in our welfare. Hard as it was to say good bye, the time of our departure was at hand. Duty called, and we were away.

A team conveyed our baggage to lower Fort Garry, where dogs and sleds were in readiness, under the care of our Indian guide. Our loads were soon transferred, Our dogs were harnessed. An hour later, the cavalcade for the north passed through the heavy gates of the fort, and threaded its way through the leafless poplars towards the Delta of the Red River of the North.

Our party was composed of four dog-trains—sixteen dogs in all—of four natives, and two missionaries. Our sleds were the regulation flat sleds of the Hudson Bay Company's service, twelve inches wide, by twelve feet long, half an inch in thickness, turned up at the front so as slip over the snow with ease. Our effects wrapped in tanned buffalo hides sewed together, were strapped to our conveyances by means of shagganappi thongs. Our outfit, both as regards food and fixtures, was as complete as our experience would admit of.

Up to this time our notions of roughing it were wholly idealistic. Mark Twain's adventures in the



HARNESSING THE DOGS,—A GREEN HAND.

east did not prepare us for life in the west. We could not help anticipating an experience wholly new and strange. We had supposed that knives, forks and spoons were essential adjuncts to a square meal ; that viands could only be attractive when served in elegant dishes on snowy spreads ; that fish without sauce or salt would be insipid and undesirable ; that the only orthodox bed was one of feathers, raised from the floor ; that cleanliness was a necessity of life. In one night, our ideas were entirely revolutionized. Yeastless bannocks, unseasoned fish, and unsweetened tea made up the whole bill of fare at supper time ; and our fingers were the only feeding instruments under command. Our bed was a blanket, spread on the dirtiest floor we had ever seen. Our pillow a stove billet covered with a coat. Our sleep was fitful. Our dreams were of the absent and the distant. The morning came not too soon. Profuse thanks were showered upon our modest host for the protection and accommodation afforded, and we resumed our journey refreshed and hopeful.

Promoted the next day to the rank of a dog-driver, struggling under the added weight of our new degree of D.D., and being naturally ambitious to excel in the practice of our new vocation, we forgot the flight of time and the presence of care. The snow on the lake

was soft and deep, making the use of snow-shoes necessary. We had decided objections to this new-fangled feature, but were compelled to submit, though we did so with no very good grace. Sometimes we were on the top of the snow-shoes, and sometimes they were on the top of us. It was a rough and tumble time; a game of ups and downs, with the odds slightly in favor of the former. Then the driving! We had, as our leader, Nero, one of the laziest curs that ever ate a traveller's pemmican. The second was Fox, whose whole aim was to fool the driver. Number three was Bruiser, as pugnacious a hound as ever tore a foe. The sleigh dog was Hunter, about the truest animal that ever tugged at a load. Nero shirked all he dared. Fox played hypocrite with but rare intermissions. Bruiser fought every chance he got. Hunter worked like a hero from early till late. It kept us busy all day, giving directions, untangling harness, separating combatants, and looking after our own feet. Wearing out we repaired to our first camp in the woods with gladness and disgust.

The novelty of camp making and wood getting cheered us up some, and when supper was announced, we felt as well able to do it justice as anybody in the party. The night proved to be a stormy one. Drifts eddied and whirled about us as we sat by the open

fire munching our frozen pemmican, as if envious of our cold comfort. What a picture we must have presented could any one have looked upon us from a distance without sharing our ills. Sitting up, as was the wont of the men, was not pleasant, so feeding our dogs, and saying our prayers, we buried our heads in our blankets grey, and courted the coming of pleasant dreams.

Next morning the guide rose early. The storm had not abated, but the wind was fair and would help us along. With a voice of thunder, he shouted "*Huée ! huée !*!" Ever ready for duty, we threw back our blankets, never dreaming, in our innocence, of the avalanche of snow which the next instant descended on head and neck. What a cheer we received ! How the knowing ones did laugh at the fate of a "green-horn !" Never before had our ablutions been performed in so unceremonious a manner. We took refuge in silence and sought our revenge on the pemmican and tea.

We had not proceeded far, before the wind changed, rudely arresting our course, and compelling us to hide from the fury of the storm. It was impossible to move. No mortal could live in such a storm—a March blizzard. How thankful we were for the shelter of the pines that day.

Directions were given to the men, and they, forthwith, fell to making bread, for use further on. The process was closely observed by us. Nobody's hands were washed. Some snow was melted. Flour was poured on a dirty bag. Water was added. No shortening or baking-powder was used. Kneading followed, in which bag and hands played a conspicuous part. Flat sticks were prepared. The dough was impaled on these, and flattened out like a Chinese fan. The outer sides were kept from falling down by slim skivers put crosswise. The bread was exposed to the fire at the distance of a foot, until quite brown, then it was turned. When both sides were brown, the sticks were extracted and the "beaver tails," as they were called, cooked by this patent process, were put in the bag for some future occasion. Our mind comprehended, at once, the significance of a friend's advice, "Don't forget to patronize Perry Davis."

The weather moderating, towards evening, we were glad to get away from our day camp, and after a vigorous run of six miles we sighted a house. We must needs turn aside to see that great sight. It was ten feet square and eight logs high at the eaves. It had a pitched roof, with a hole at the top for a chimney. The fire was on the ground floor. The chinks had been filled with moss. This was the abode

of two families, eight persons in all. Tea was simmering on the hearth when we entered, and we received a cordial invitation to join the family at supper. Being pressed for time, we declined, but accepted the kettle of tea placed at our disposal. Personally we did not indulge, for reasons of our own. There was but one cup in the house. That had been handed to a young girl with directions to prepare it for use. Either her notions of what was necessary to that end, or ours, were badly astray. It did not seem proper for her to moisten the cup with her breath, rub it with her thumb, and wipe it with her dress; so, when she passed the full cup before us, with a smile of satisfaction, we, with a smile as bland and significant, passed it to our next neighbor, who, at that fireside, did duty for two.

Our travelling companion on his way to Red River a year ago, was unexpectedly delayed at this point, by a slight accident. To his great disappointment, Christmas day had to be spent in this hut. When he arose on the morning of the holiday, a pan of soft water, a piece of soap, and a towel awaited his use. His toilet completed, he returned the articles with thanks to the lady of the house. She, at once, placed flour in the empty pan, raisins in the flour, some water was added, and the resultant mass, tied in the towel he

had used, was thrown into a large kettle, hung over the chimney fire. At noon, the pudding, thus prepared, was served up as the holiday dessert. Our informant will never forget the dreams which were his in the night which followed.

A mile or two away from this hut in the wilderness, we camped for the night. After the wood-gathering, camp-building, dog-feeding, and supper, came the time for smoking and talking. The guide's story was of a bear-hunt, of which he was the hero, in the Peace River country some twenty years ago.

It was in the summer time. He was employed by the Hudson Bay Company, at Fort Dunnegan, on the river just named. An ox strayed from the Fort one night, and, failing to return on the following day as at other times, John was deputized to hunt him up. The seeker observed that, at no great distance from the stockade, a bear had strayed over the ox-track which he was now following, and then, turning around, had followed it closely. Backward, hastily turned the messenger, in quest of his single-barrelled, flint-lock gun, the best defensive weapon at his command. True it had often missed fire, but again oftentimes it had not; and, though it was worn in appearance, and had a slight twist in the barrel, yet he decided to give it another trial. Thus armed, he cautiously advanced

along the double track. Presently he reached a spot where tracks covered all the ground for half an acre or more. The grass, the vetches, the wild flowers, the briars were flattened down as if pressed by some mighty weight. Our hero, with an Indian's instinct, quickly read the story of mortal combat. Two rods farther on, the now lifeless body of the ox was found; the blood still flowing from nostril and wound. The hunter's heart throbbed furiously. He looked at his priming. He looked at the prostrate ox. He looked at the red grass, that was green an hour ago. He knew well that, not many yards away, lay a mighty grizzly, its natural ferocity stirred to madness by the taste of blood. Should he fly? or should he test the flint-lock? Come what would come, he would try to revenge the death of his master's ox. Taking up a piece of stick, he broke it quickly, and the sharp noise echoed through the leafy woods. Up jumped Bruin, not more than thirty yards distant! Taking a wild survey of the scene, with a horrid grin of rage, he rushed upon his foe. Coolly waited the Indian, with primed and pointed gun, until the nose of the monster almost touched the muzzle. Bl-bang! went the flint-lock, the shot entering the mouth, and penetrating the brain of the shaggy-coated brute. Death was instantaneous, but the impetus of the attack carried the

lifeless body of the bear twelve paces from the spot where the death-blow was received. The gun was broken into splinters, but John escaped with only a few scratches. All gunless, but victorious, he retraced his steps, the conscious hero of a remarkable adventure.

A few words of comment were passed by the camp circle. A few questions were asked and answered. The pipes were refilled. Another log was thrown on the fire. Then the missionary's story was told to the attentive smokers.

He was on the waters of a large lake, in a birch canoe, heading southward, with a light wind. It was in the early fall time, but toward evening of the day. Being anxious to reach his destination, he allowed the guide to venture too far out to sea, in the hope of reaching a distant point without coasting. This was his misfortune. The wind changed, and increased greatly in force. The waves rose mountains high. The canoe was cut off from the shore, and compelled to fly before the storm. Again and again they shipped water. Two men were bailing, and two were paddling. Rain set in, with thunder and lightning. The island which they sought could not now be discovered, though they knew it was near. If they could only hold out a few minutes longer! The guide, looking aft, saw a

huge wave rising, foam-crested and voiced with awful hiss. Boys, he cried, we are lost! On came the wave, lifting the canoe, and bearing it on its crest a hundred yards, then hurling it away like a stone from a sling. They were on the shallows. A moment more, the canoe grounded heavily, and went to pieces; and four badly-frightened refugees jumped wildly into the surf, and waded, swam, or were wave-lifted to the shore. Nobody was hurt. The craft was destroyed. Guns, and supplies and blankets underwent a terrible soaking. Fortunately, the island was inhabited. Another canoe was purchased, and the journey resumed on the following day.

Before the missionary's last words were uttered, the heads of some were nodding severely, so by common consent we composed ourselves to sleep.

Ere daybreak we were all awakened by the falling of a huge tree. During the night our fire had burned away the roots, and the crash followed. We had piled up a barricade behind us to break the draft, and this had saved our lives. The falling trunk struck this heavily, and was stayed in its descent when within two feet of our rabbit robes. Early as it was, we harnessed our dogs and departed; thankful, indeed, to God, whose preserving care had kept us from harm.



CHAPTER VI.

The "Heads" and "Points"—Beren's River—Rev. E. R. Young—
Our New Friends—Their Philosophy—More Wisdom—Blackie's
Fate—Montreal Point—The Packet—Old Voyageur—The Ice
Breaks—All get Safely to Shore—One Match—Norway House—
Kindly Greetings.

ONE by one the points or headlands, with peculiar and suggestive names, were past and left far behind. "Grindstone Point," "Bull's Head," "Dog's Head," "Flour Point," "Pigeon Point," "Mossy Point," "Big Stone Point," and hosts of others; each suggesting some peculiarity of appearance, formation, or history.

At Beren's River we regretfully part with the genial and energetic missionary, the Rev. E. R. Young—whose fame has gone over the whole north. No missionary was ever more liberal hearted than this good brother. Many hearts were won by the practical exhibitions of his unselfishness. Many were added to the Church as the result of his faithfulness. With

many a widow old and alone, with many a hunter dim-sighted and decrepid, did he divide his scanty store. When wife and children were but poorly off at home, medicines and nourishing things were sent to the sick and infirm in the villages hard by.

He was once detained, by headwinds and high seas, at the mouth of a river on this lake. Food was all spent, and the crew of eight men were hungry and discontented. The guide, with a bent pin for a hook, a piece of frog for a bait, tarred hemp strands for a line, succeeded in beaching a jackfish ; which feat was greeted with general rejoicing. In thirty minutes it was cooked, and the hungry ones sat down to an unexpected meal. Fully one-third of the whole was placed on the missionary's plate, the balance was given to the men. No sooner was this perceived by Mr. Young, than it was corrected. "No ! every man must have an equal share," he said ; so the fish was divided into eight shares, clergy and laity sharing equally. This is but an illustration of a stereotyped habit, which won him many friends, but left him impoverished. The *give* with him was always greater than the *take*. The loss was, as a rule, out of proportion to the gain. Large-heartedness, we venture to say, never characterized any of our representatives in a more marked degree than it did the Rev. E. R. Young.



REV. E. R. YOUNG IN WINTER DRESS.

Our party, made much smaller at Beren's River, was reinforced a few miles farther on, so that many hands make light work, and many voices make the fireside cheerful again. Allow us the pleasure of introducing to you our new friends.

"Antoine" is a tall, handsome Frenchman, with long-flowing, curly hair. He was born in the Red River country, of French parentage. He had some education while yet young. In early manhood he entered the service of the Hudson Bay Company, as a cook, and was thus employed in various places, from the warm shores of the Pacific to the ice-lined coasts of the Atlantic. Having a good address and pleasing manners, combined with an air of modesty, and an exhaustless fund of good humor, he won friends wherever he went. Being a good fiddler, he was in demand on all festive occasions, and he seldom failed to impress the fair element of these gatherings favorably. This his fortune, was his bane, for ere long he was considerably too much married, and fled to the seclusion of the north to avoid collision with his numerous relations-in-law. Here he married one who, like the woman of Samaria, had passed through various stages of matrimonial experience, and, from that time, Antoine lived a quiet hunter's life on the banks of the Leaf River. She was the better hunter, but he

excelled socially, and they agreed as well as persons of their character ever do.

“ Whiskiss ” was the other of our new companions, a Saulteaux pagan, and a noted conjurer. He had a villainous appearance. His reputation was an unenviable one. In himself, he combined the offices of priest and executioner ; his own will being the convicting jury. The knowledge that he had shed much innocent blood in the land did not make us take to this important individual. The sight of him was enough to make one’s blood curdle. Yet we were in a sense at his mercy. We were in the grounds of this giant imposter, and deemed it wiser to maintain peace than to declare war.

Both these individuals were unfortunate enough not to have taken any provisions from home, to supply their own wants by the way. In fact, to have done so would have greatly inconvenienced their families. They knew that we were gentlemen, and persons of our class seldom if ever travelled without enough and to spare of creature comforts. The little that they would take would amount to nothing, and it would be such a great favor to them to be permitted for a day or two to gather up the—pretty large—crumbs from under our table. Thus they satisfied themselves, and tried to satisfy us, that matters were all right, and that

their little intrusion was neither here nor there. It was decidedly to our interest, however, not to see the force of their logic.

This reminds us of the philosophy of a Cree Indian dwelling near Fort à la Corne. Thomas and William were brothers. Thomas went out to hunt for deer. A terrible storm swept the plain for two days after his departure. William was anxious, and, assuming a dejected look, he approached the master of the Fort. "What's the matter?" was the greeting of that functionary. "My brother is lost, sir," was the solemn reply. "Lost! When? How?" queried the anxious and sympathetic factor. "Went out to hunt three days ago; took no food; intended remaining only one night; must have perished," was the melting reply. "Go after him at once," said the man of business. "Take your friends and hunt him up." "No easy matter," replied William. "We have no provisions." "Here," said the generous trader, "take a bag of pemmican and begone, and report to me your success."

A few hours later William was still found in his tent, feasting and making merry with his friends. "What!" said the discoverer, "not yet gone after your lost brother! How is this?" "Well, you see," said the red man, "if Thomas is not lost, he will return

without our help. If he is lost, our search will avail nothing." They had the pemmican, and that was all they cared for.

Amongst the dogs of our train was Blackie, whose fate is, perhaps, worthy of record in this narrative. We were crossing a portage. The land was unequal and hilly. The drivers found it difficult to guide the sleds clear of the trees which lined the tortuous path. One man allowed his sled to run down a hill, of its own accord. Blackie was the sleigh-dog, and, failing to get out of the way soon enough for the heavy sled's advance, was jammed between it and a tree. The air was filled with the poor brute's howlings. He was released from his position, the harness was taken off, but he appeared to be unable to walk. What could be done? To take him with us was impossible; to kill him, would be inhuman. It was decided to pension him off with five fish, and leave him in a camp specially prepared for his comfort. As we went our way it was pitiful to hear the howls of the poor, forsaken dog, whose great grief was not that he was hurt, but that he was unable to follow his party.

Two days later, while we were eating dinner on the shore of the lake, what should happen but the arrival of Blackie. He had eaten the fish, the direct result of which was the restoration of the injured ribs to their

proper position. In this condition, he had followed our trail until he overtook his train.

Some days followed without special adventure, during which we passed "Little Black River," "Big Black River," and "Spider Islands." We camped at "Montreal Point," the last on the eastern side of the lake. This name is so peculiar, that we were anxious to know why it was so named, and were informed that when the canoe of the Governor came from Montreal, it always stopped here to allow him and his men a chance of fixing up, so as to be presentable on their arrival at the place of yearly council. In like manner, when they went away, they stayed awhile to put off holiday attire, and assume the habiliments suited to the rough way and rougher work they had to do, ere reaching Montreal.

The ice from this point to the outlet of the lake, is generally bad, owing to the strong current which sets in toward the river. At times, the ice is completely worn by the hurrying waters, and only the snow-crust covers the channel. Woe to the traveller who walks on this with careless tread.

The Hudson Bay Company's Christmas packet was working its way northward, through blinding drift, to this point, some ten years ago. The guide only knew that he was near the "Old Fort," how near he

could not tell. Old "Voyageur," the leading dog of the packet's train, became apprehensive, whined a little, and lay down, stoutly refusing obedience when commanded to resume his march. The whip was applied, with no effect. The baffled driver tried coaxing, with no result. Determined not to be beaten, he tied his sash to the dog's collar, and directed his companion to apply the whip while he pulled and led the way. In another instant the man farthest in advance was precipitated into the water. Loudly he called for assistance. "Voyageur," who had been so unmercifully thrashed, saw the misfortune he had feared, rose quickly, grabbed the drowning man by the collar, and kept him above the boiling flood until help was forthcoming. Then, with frisk and bark of delight, he whirled the sled on which the benumbed man was laid to shoreward. Nervously he whined, and anxiously he gazed into the camp, until satisfied that his driver was safe. Then, with a grunt of satisfaction, he lay down on the snow, to dream of the good he had done that day.

It was early morning when we crossed this dangerous spot. Our guide was careful. We hastened slowly, tapping the ice at intervals with axe or stick. In two hours, we had reached Play Green Point, only ten miles from Norway House, and quite beyond all

danger. We camped here to boil some tea, and to congratulate one another on our successful early run.

We were well aware that it was a cold morning, but were entirely innocent until now of its effects upon ourselves. We were all frozen, some badly. Guide's cheek was white as a lily. The runner bore an arctic nose. Another's wrist was badly frozen. All were chilled to the marrow. Dry branches were hastily procured, and birch bark was taken from some small trees standing near, and all was supposed to be in readiness for a fire. What was our consternation to learn that there was not one match to be found! The smokers of the party had used a whole box of matches since leaving Red River. We felt our pockets over and over again, with no success. The guide looked strangely solemn, with his white face, as he slowly said, "Boys, this is a bad job!" Ten miles away was the fort. What of that? We perish in an hour if unrelieved.

As a last resort, the provision chest was searched and there, beneath some crumbs, was the half of a match, the brimstone half too. Would it light? It was our only chance of safety. The guide took the responsibility of trying it. Others watched, with the intensity of hope bordering upon an unwelcome despair. It took fire. The branches were kindled. By the

freside with bursting hearts we thawed each others frostbites, drank our cups of tea, then knelt and thanked God for a deliverance which moved us mightily.

Three hours' run took us to Norway House, where we received a cordial greeting from the chief factor, Roderick Ross, Esq., and from the missionary, the Rev. J. H. Ruttan. It does not take long to get acquainted in this land. One coming fresh from the outside world has much to tell which is news to these dwellers in the wilderness. Till midnight and beyond, we talked of ministers, bishops, statesmen, nations, peace and war; when, with a plea of weariness, we sought retirement and rest.

How pleasant to have a room to one's self, a clean feather bed, and warm blankets. They only know how to appreciate the comforts of life, who, for a long time, are deprived of them. What a delight is congenial companionship after barbarian associations! How sweet is rest to the weary? It is like harbour life after a tempestuous voyage, like home happiness when one has returned after long absence.





CHAPTER VII.

Wedding Bells—Dress of Contracting Parties—The Ceremony—The Feast—Unpleasant News—The Goose Hunt—We Join the Throng of Pleasure-Seekers—Putting our House in Order—Story of an Owl—First Goose—Sabbath-Day—Missionary's Mishap and its Effect—Plenty—Return.

WE had rested for a day or two at Norway House, had exchanged our southern news for a review of life in high latitudes, and were now beginning to think seriously of moving on, when something turned up to delay us another day. A youthful messenger, from one of the village celebrities, came in, breathless from haste, bearing in his hand an envelope, which contained the following invitation :—

April 16th, At the Mission.

DEAR SIR,

Rev. J. H. R. and J. S.

You are invited to this wedding,

James McDonald }
Chloe Bear }

an hour after the first

table, that is if you will, and Sandy after and the servant made.

Yours truly Servant,

TIMOTHY BEAR.

The bell was *tolled* at half-past nine a.m. Mr. R. started a hymn to a funeral tune, prayed a good long prayer, exhorted them to be faithful to one another and to God, assured them that if they did so *this* would be the happiest day in their lives, then proceeded to tie the knot securely and solemnly. The bride was dressed in a pink print dress, plain but clean. She wore a tartan shawl over her shoulders. A black turban hat, tied round with a blue veil, completed her appearance. The groom had a new suit of blue black cloth, ornamented with large brass buttons, A pair of handsome moose-skin moccasins adorned his feet. A colored silk handkerchief was tied around the throat, and a large and richly-colored sash encircled the waist. Both parties were fairly good looking, and if kisses and congratulations, at such times, are worth anything, they were rich in friendships and in good wishes.

After the ceremony came the feast. Oh, for the pen of a Dickens to describe becomingly that wondrous spread! There was boiled venison, and boiled rabbit, and boiled moose-nose, and boiled beaver-tail, and boiled fish, and boiled tea. We had never seen anything like it before. It was inimitable, perfectly so. When we had partaken somewhat freely, and were about to excuse ourselves, a huge boiled pudding was

served up, and a plateful passed to us. Our courage failed us. Remembering an engagement, we quickly departed, leaving the guests alone in their glory. Next day there were several callers at the mission medical dispensary, who complained of symptoms of indigestion, and were advised to eat sparingly and exercise liberally.

Unpleasant news reached us about this time. The Hudson Bay authorities were inclined, for some reasons, to oppose our going any farther until the spring weather should open navigation. We were informed that the hospitalities of the Fort would be freely accorded, but that until permission was granted by the Company's representatives at Fort Garry, we were not at liberty to proceed. The reasons assigned were plausible enough: (1) The Church had acted without consulting the Governor of the Territory; (2) The winter was now far spent and the spring was at hand, making winter travelling difficult and dangerous; (3) Supplies were insufficient, and house accommodations were poor, at the post which we desired to reach. There was nothing for it but to submit, and the more good-naturedly this was done the better for all parties. So we decided to do what could not be avoided, remain until the ice had left the lakes and rivers.

Who would not go to the "Goose Hunt?" Once in each year all the people of the village go a few miles away, to a marsh or current where wild fowl are first to be found. The time for going is late in April. The reason, a scarcity of food at home. Not the least valuable feature of this hiatus is the scavaging done by the crows when the houses are desolate and the village is quiet. It must be admitted, however, that this is not usually a consideration with the children of the forest. They have dragged wood all winter to the mission home from afar; now they will pitch their tents where fuel is plentiful. The whitefish, caught in the fall and cached, have all been used; now they will go where the jackfish disport themselves in the sun, and the rabbits jump through the willow-copses. The hunter has no chance of following the fleet deer through the softening snow; so he waits by the point of marsh land until the ducks and geese come within reach of his gun. The children have been going to school all winter; now they enjoy the change of occupation and the freedom from restraint. As for the elders, it is to them a renewal of early memories, when game was not so scarce and scarey, and when food was plentiful as firewood, and nearly as easily obtained.

The spirit of adventure came over us, and to while away our weary waiting, we joined the throng of

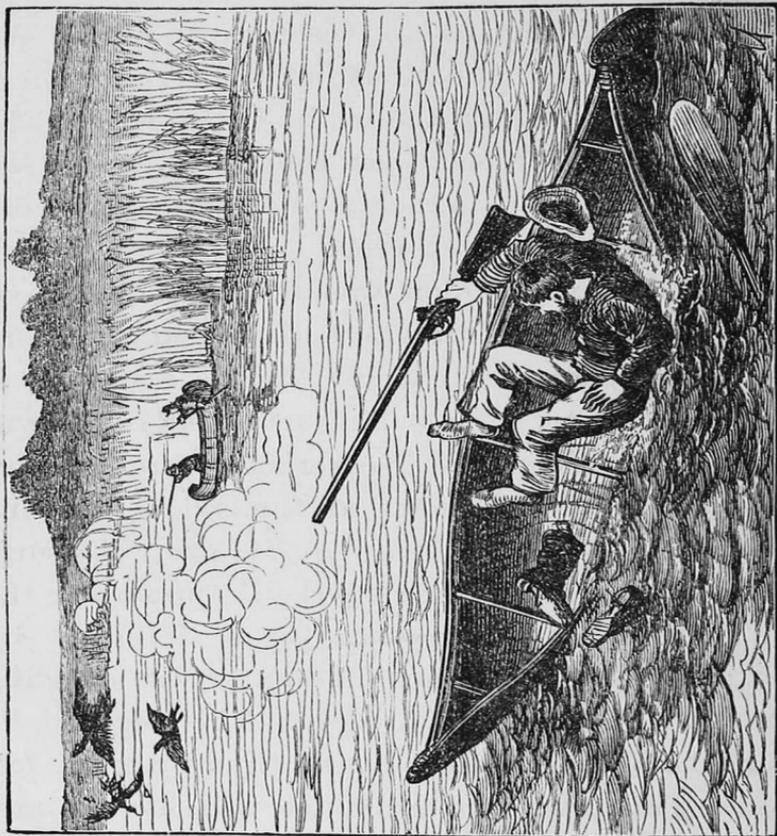
pleasure-seekers going twelve miles away to a place called the Sepastic. We outfit ourselves with a net, some ammunition, snare twine, and, for fear of starvation, a liberal supply of pemmican and flour. This very unhunter-like act was cheered sarcastically by the villagers; but we bore up under it bravely, expecting that at no distant day the tables might be turned.

The distance was not great, and we were soon at the end of our journey. We hacked and hewed away at the ice, put in our nets, set our snares for rabbits, erected our tents, and, taking good old Franklin's advice, we went to rest betimes. The morning brought us neither bird, fish, nor rabbit, and our reserve supply was in great demand. It was very evident that we should have the friendship of all, until the pemmican was gone at any rate. Day after day went by until a week was past; by this time our stock was exhausted, and no game was yet to be found.

On Saturday, in the forenoon, we said to our companion, "Peter, would you not like something fresh for dinner to-day? Can anything be done?" Peter, thought a moment, and then, with the air of a discoverer, he said "Let us try." Taking up the buffalo robe, he snipped of a piece which he proceeded to sew into some resemblance to an overgrown mouse, with

an abnormal tail. He then attached this to a cod-line, used in setting our nets under the ice, which was fully sixty fathoms long. Taking this and his gun he sallied forth, bidding us to accompany him. We journeyed together to the mouth of the river. There the line was strung along the ice its entire length, the mouse at the farther end. At the shore end of the line, a rude booth of branches and grass was constructed, and into this we crept. We were getting anxious, but our companion was not communicative. Fully an hour after our arrival, Peter called my attention to a black spot in the sky. Yes we could see it and it was evidently approaching us quickly. It was a bird of considerable size. Nearer and nearer it came, until it stood over the mouse at the end of our line as if preparing to swoop down upon its prey. Down it went, but Peter gave the line a jerk, disappointing the hungry owl. Presently another swoop followed by another jerk. By this means the hunter was drawing his target within range of his gun. This secured, he fired and the owl fell with a heavy thud upon the ice. Now, said Peter, triumphantly, we will have something fresh for dinner. We are free to confess that we enjoyed the dinner less than we did the hunt, but the members of our party thought it delicious, and we were pleased to see them happy.

The explanation of our success is well understood by hunters. These owls can see clearly objects that



DUCK SHOOTING,—MORE THAN HE BARGAINED FOR.

are miles (some say five miles though we scarcely credit that) distant. They hover over lakes most, searching the shore lines for mice or rabbits. On this

occasion he was caught by guile, and made to contribute something to the necessities of the hungry.

On Sabbath morning the first goose startled the solitudes of the Sepastic with its shrill cry. A score of eyes sighted it in an instant. Three geese, flying low, coming straight for our tent. The guns loaded and ready for use. The crowd suffering from hunger. What should be done? Personally, we refrained from word or gesture. We waited and watched with folded arms; the stolid Indians let them pass unmo-
lest. These people have been taught Sabbath ob-
servance and they suffer not themselves to break the fourth commandment.

Once upon a time a missionary, whose supplies were exhausted, was travelling on the Sabbath day. While crossing the lake in his canoe, accompanied by two men, he saw a flock of black ducks approaching, and determined, though it was the Holy Day to get his gun ready for a shot. While doing this, the trigger caught in the thwart, and the contents of the gun were buried in the boatman's heart. The Indians have never forgotten this circumstance, and not a few are afraid to handle a gun on the Sacred Day. A little of the same feeling would not hurt some of the sportsmen at home.

On Monday, the community was astir betimes.

Harry Budd, an old man of Franklin search fame, was the first to bag his goose, but by eventide many had fallen; and at night there was a noise of revelry throughout the camp. Fish came too, and we had such a plenty from gun and net, that we abandoned the snares, and lived in luxury and leisure.

Seven days of scarcity, followed by seven days of plenty, brought our sojourn to a close. We returned to the Fort, convinced by the warmth in the air, and the blackness of the ice, that the break-up was imminent. Footing up our financial showing, we found ourselves seventy dollars out as to cash but considerably ahead as to experience, with about four geese thrown in for luck.





CHAPTER VIII.

A Stormy Night—Conversation by the Fireside—The Early Start—
Jack River—Unsuccessful—The Return—A Wolverine's Trick
—Home again—A Surprise—How it all Happened—The Old
Story.

THE wild winds of as stormy a March as ever shook the leafless trunks of the forest trees whistled wildly through the crevices of the Rossville Mission-house one evening in the now long ago. Seated around the fire within were the representatives of civilization, three in number, whose work it was to tell the story of the Cross to those who lived within the circle of their influence. They were talking of the needs of the hour, and of the best way of providing food both for themselves and their dogs. The conversation was a serious one, because the larder was empty and the bottom of the flour bin showed white and bare.

“There is no use in expecting the people to help us,” said the senior member of the circle, “for they have

but little for themselves. There is no crust on the snow, and the deer are fleet. For some reason the rabbits are dying by scores, and but few are snared. The wild birds of spring are not likely to come until the weather moderates, or the sun grows stronger. The fish will not leave deep water until the ice is lifted from the shores. Altogether the prospect of relief is not encouraging."

"There is the Hudson's Bay Company's store," said another. "Of course, we shall not starve as long as the supplies at the Fort hold out."

"No," replied the first speaker. "The gentleman at the Fort is kind, and would not allow us to suffer. But he has no knowledge of our condition. Personally I would not have him know. He, in case of a local famine, must keep the tribe alive. The feeble folk, the widows, the children, will look to him when scarcity has deepened into want; and it does not seem right for us to beg where there are so many needier than we."

"Why may we not go to work," said a third, "and try to do something for ourselves? The ice is four feet thick on the lake, but we can hew a dozen holes through and put in nets, with meshes adapted to such fish as are likely to follow the currents at this season. The rabbits are few, but, despite the cold, we may

procure some. Snowbirds have been seen of late, and we will decoy them with a sheaf of barley impaled on a post. We will do anything rather than starve."

"Yes," said the elder; "but what if we take a trip into the country, visit some bands that are distant, take the dogs with us, and bring back anything we can get. We could arm ourselves with tea, tobacco and paint, and perhaps come back with enough and to spare."

All assented to this timely and feasible suggestion, and active preparations were begun forthwith. The pemmican bag, which contained but little, was to be left at home. The flour was not to be disturbed; but a few frozen fish were ordered to be placed on the sled, ready for an early departure on the morrow.

Before any streaks of gray were seen in the east, the two missionaries were ready to start out on their tour. A cup of hot tea was hastily swallowed, and a good-bye was cheerfully said to the lady, who was the best spirit of the three. There was a rush down the hill, and dogs and men were soon lost in the blinding snow and drift of a wild March morning.

Their course lay toward the mouth of the Jack River—a considerable stream, which gathers its waters hundreds of miles north-eastwards, and, after flowing through magnificent stretches of forest-land, loses

itself in the Nelson at Norway House. On they went, following the smooth surface of the wind-swept stream far up into the country to a point where many of the Mission people had been spending the last months of winter. Game is ever more plentiful where quietness reigns, and the Indians had gathered there in the hope of procuring food and skins. What luck will our heroes have? Cheerful, ambitious, regardless of toil and exposure, they surely deserve to succeed; but there are times when fortune is hard to woo, and when the best-directed effort falls short of attainment. So was it now.

Nothing could be more cordial than the reception given to the wayfarers. The best tent was placed at their disposal. The best in the camp was cooked for their dinner, and wood for their fire was gathered and piled at the door. At prayer time the tent was crowded with those who wished to join the missionaries' evening devotions. Barter, however, they could not, for they had nothing of value. Their own supplies were limited. They had not sufficient for the wants of their households, and nothing to give to others. Their children were half clad and hungry; but not a murmur of complaint was heard. Mothers, with tender babes in their arms, drank the liquor in which the fish was boiled to find nourishment for themselves

and their little ones; but still they were marked by the hollow cheek and the sunken eye. The men drew their belts a trifle tighter each successive day, and lived in hope of better times to come. The stages near the wigwams were empty. Famine, gaunt and cruel, was at the door.

Inquiry revealed the fact that the condition of things farther up the river was no better. It was a trying time. Eagles, owls, squirrels, anything would have been gladly hunted; but no target for the hunter's gun could be found. So with hearts heavily freighted with sympathy for the poor souls they had just visited, and with vivid apprehensions of still more straitened circumstances than they had yet known, and with some fears for others whom they cared for more than for themselves, the disconsolate searchers for food retraced their weary steps.

Because the roads were heavy and the way long they had on their outward journey made a *cache* of fish, for use at places where they expected to spend the nights of the return trip. To make matters very secure they had adopted the native's habit of suspending the fish in mid-air. The limbs of a small spruce tree had been all removed, so that no wild-cat or wolverine could climb it. Then the top was bent down, and the fish secured to it by a stout string. Thus

equipped the tree was freed, and the fish were swung up to a safe distance from the ground. As there was a curve in the tree near the top (caused by the weight of the amount *cached*), the fish did not rest against the tree, but hung free and swayed with the wind.

Our travellers expected to find things as they had left them, but instead of this they and their dogs went supperless to bed in their snow camp that night. A wolverine had climbed an adjacent tree, had jumped over to the *cache*, cut the string, and so secured the supper that two weary men and four tired dogs ought to have had.

There was no use in worrying over what could not now be helped, so the situation was accepted, and the best of a bad case was made. If the internal fires could not be replenished, they must provide a larger and more continuous forest fire; so the blazing logs were piled higher, diffusing, as they burned, both warmth and good cheer.

It was a glad relief when, through the noontide drift of the morrow the tired and hungry voyageurs and their equally tired and hungry dogs sighted the distant Mission-house. With what speed the last two miles were passed, and with what pleasure both to drivers and haulers the shelter of the porch was gained!

The missionary's wife met him at the door with a

smile altogether too cordial to suit his feelings; and the younger of the men guessed in a moment that something pleasant had occurred, but the nature of the surprise he dared not divine. Wraps were laid aside in silence, and while the new arrivals were warming themselves at the kitchen fire, the story of their adventures and misfortunes was briefly told. After this the good lady of the house led them to a prepared repast. Could they believe their eyes? Two roasted chicken, bread, butter, cake and biscuit! To make the surprise the greater, attention was called to a table in the corner of the room, upon which was piled an abundance of the good things of life. Where did they all come from? From the Fort, of course. Well, how did they know that there was want at the Mission? Because one of the stout lads of the band on the Jack River had been sent by the thoughtful Indians to acquaint the trader with the circumstances of the minister and his family. He had out-travelled the food-hunters, and on their arrival at home, lo! "enough and to spare."

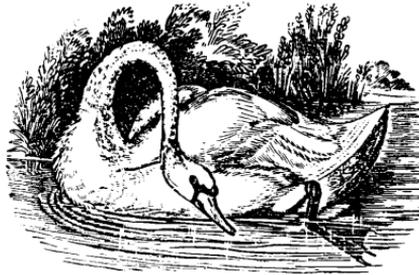
Accompanying the gift was a note which in effect was like this:—

"DEAR SIR,—Having heard this morning that your stock of provisions is much reduced, and being anxious to prevent any lack of life's good things in your home,

I send by bearer a small share of such as I have, which you will please accept with my compliments.

“Yours, etc. ———.”

The circumstance is recorded here for several reasons. It illustrates aptly enough the privations to which our Indian missionaries are exposed. It shows, too, the thoughtfulness of the natives, and their desire to serve when unable to give. It brings to light, also, an exhibition of kindness on the part of Hudson's Bay officials, which is none the less honourable to them because it is seldom recorded or made public.





CHAPTER IX.

Allowed to Pass—A Snowstorm—A Contrast—Prize Eaters—A Child Grave—Caught in the Ice—Reach Shore—A Portage—Narrow Escape—Friday the Conjuror—Two Sons of one Father—The Food of the Traveller.

THE Nelson had by this time cleared sufficiently to admit of our descending it with canoes. Word had been received from Fort Garry to the effect that we might pass alone, but that no interpreter should go with us. Fortunately, the Company was dispatching a courier to a distant part. We were kindly invited to share his canoe and camp. Delighted with our good fortune, we said our adieus in haste and departed, leaving our travelling outfit at the Fort.

On the 3rd of June a snowstorm dampened our ardour, and cooled our zeal. The birds flew in consternation to the evergreens. The frogs, suspecting that they had made a mistake, were mute with surprise. Buttoning up our coat collars, we worked hard at the paddles, our lower extremities almost freezing,

while the upper parts of our bodies were warm with exertion. The rapidly filling canoe was sinking somewhat under the weight of heavy snow, and one of our party was detailed to shovel the undesirable freight overboard. Still the storm raged. Our noble resolutions failed us, and, reluctantly, we camped when the sun was yet high.

What a contrast between last night and this, so far as our circumstances are concerned. From a two-storied Fort to a ten-elled tent. From carpeted floors to the cold damp ground. From soft beds of down to the hard bare rock. From the luxuries of home life to the rough fare of the camp. In our sleep, we dream of cosy rooms, and cushions, and pillows; but awake to find that fancy mocks us with disguises, and laughs at our discomfiture.

These Indians are surely the best feeders known to science or history. For our supper to-night, four men cleared the plates of four ducks, one rabbit, and a dozen biscuits of the hard-tack class. Multiply this by four meals and you have an idea of our daily consumption of provender.

The little bay where we have camped has been the scene of a distressing accident. These rushing waters once drowned the death cries of a struggling babe, once closed over all that was mortal of a tender child.

A Rachel's wailings once startled the echoes of this forest. A father's hands once scooped out of this sand a tiny grave. No eye beheld their sorrow, but the eye of the Unseen. No hand had brought relief but the hand of the Unknown. Here they buried the precious clay, without coffin or shroud. A little monument of wood and stones still marks the spot, sacred to the memory of the absent one. Underneath the grave roof may still be seen the bows and arrows with which he used to play. Close beside them is some pemmican, which an ever-mindful parent thinks may possibly relieve the hunger of the little inhabitant of the spirit-land. Ever and anon a canoe grates on the shore. Two silent figures move up to the mound. Hot tears bestrew the white sand. Oh, the depth of the heart's motion!—the strength of parental affection!

The day following was one of rare beauty, and, with courage renewed, we again set sail. The lake before us was not yet free from ice, but a channel opened as far as the eye could see, and we hoped through it to reach the farther shore. In this we were doomed to disappointment. We were more than half way across the lake when the ice began to close upon us. The steersman, quickly perceiving our danger, directed us to place two paddles between the canoe, on

each side, and the advancing ice. When the critical moment came he told us to lever the canoe, using the ice as our fulcrum. In this way we succeeded in landing on the ice without damage. We then made for the shore, sometimes carrying our craft, at other times dragging it, and at intervals paddling over open stretches of water.

Before us was a portage, one mile in length, over which all our effects must needs be carried by means of packstraps. The farther side gained, a difficulty presented itself. A huge ice-cake hung over the water, which ran about eight miles an hour. It occupied the only spot from which it was possible to launch the canoe. To carry the canoe out over it was hazardous. To attempt to remove it was dangerous, for the melting snows had weakened its hold on the shelving rock upon which it had formed. Seizing an axe, we ventured out to test its strength. One blow satisfied us, for the whole mass was plunged into the rushing river. There was a jump, and a splash, and a scramble; and hatless but safe, we waded out of difficulty, a wetter and a wiser man.

Once in the year, usually early in the Spring, a canoe is dispatched from each of the dependent posts on a district, for the purpose of carrying advance estimates of the year's returns to headquarters. The

Nelson House canoe, on its way to Norway House, we were pleased to meet. It was in charge of Friday, a noted conjuror, a thorough pagan. Friday professed to be able to dispel rain clouds, change the wind, or start an ice jam, with equal ease, and with the suddenness of magic. We had our doubts, but were curious to observe the man's methods. For a few plugs of tobacco, the men induced him to begin operations, with a view to the removal of a blockade now obstructing our course and his. Nothing loath, he proceeded. Some tall willows were bent double from where they grew, and tied together, making an arch. Others were converted into an arch at right angles with the first, and of equal height. Still others were bent in like manner, until there was a complete network of willows inclosing a small circular space. The willows within were cut off. Blankets were thrown over the tent-like affair, thus quickly and rudely constructed. Stones were then heated to redness, and placed within on the ground. A can of water was placed by the stones. After this Friday entered, drum in hand, and was shut in securely. He began with some words of prayer, meanwhile pouring the water slowly on the heated stones, until the inclosure was filled with steam. The occupant, nearly suffocated began to sing a monotonous refrain, half prayer, half

eulogy; the latter having reference to his honorable self. He desired something, because he was a good man and had a right to the consideration and favors of the gods. Endurance becoming impossible, the operator emerged in a state of profuse perspiration. The weather after this is supposed to clear, the wind changes or the ice moves on, or, if not, peradventure the god is talking, or sleeping, or pursuing. At any rate we are assured that the answer will not be long delayed; but if our impatience is such that we cannot wait, for a new supply of tobacco the operation may be repeated. Early next day the river cleared, and of course this was claimed as an answer to Friday's prayer.

Two sons of one father, the one a pagan and the other a Christian, abode near each other on the banks of the Nelson. When we were approaching the pagan's tent, the ice greatly endangered our canoe. William, perceiving us but dimly through his covert of evergreens, mistook us for bears, and levelled his gun for a shot. Just in time he discovered his mistake, and rose from his ambush. The guide's quick eye observed a human being standing on the hill with folded arms, and raised the cry of distress. William, the pagan, declined to help us, however, on the ground of personal danger, and passed to his tent without concern. Providence soon favored us, and we reached his

tent. It was an untidy spot. His wife had anything but a womanly appearance. The children were shy, and miserably clad. The very dogs were sulky, half-starved brutes. He would not offer us his hand, invite us to his tent, or ask us to warm ourselves at his fire. Such a greeting we never received before. You may be sure we did not tarry long under these circumstances. An hour later we paddled into the harbor at the door of his Christian brother Simon's tent.

This worthy was at the shore to receive us, and bid us welcome with a warm shake hands. He took us at once to his neat tent, set food before us and tea. He gave us gum for re-pitching our punctured craft, and bade his wife apply it while we ate our meal. When we were ready to depart, he produced a hymn-book and a Bible, and asked us to sing and pray with him. This request was gladly complied with, Simon and his wife joining heartily in the worship. Before allowing us to go, he made us promise to call again if ever we passed his tent. Such was the difference between kinsmen of divergent views. Who would not readily pronounce in favor of the tendencies of Christian teaching! "Self first," says Paganism. "To do good and to communicate forget not," says Christianity.

One has not always the chance of selecting his food in this land, and therefore he is not always suited

either as to quality or as to the method of preparation. The dinner of which we had just partaken freely, was made up of pounded deer's meat and grease, in the proportion of one-third of the latter to two-thirds of the former.

The method of preparation may be thus indicated: While the meat is still green, it is cut thin and spread over poles to dry: exposed to the sun from above, to the fire and smoke from beneath. When well dried, it is broken into small pieces and crushed on a smooth stone, with hammer or axe, until reduced to powder. This will keep in any weather. When served, a piece of white deer-grease is added to facilitate mastication, a bite of which is taken only at intervals as necessity demands. The only difference between this and pemmican is that in the latter meat and grease are boiled together and packed together in bags made of untanned buffalo hide. Simon gave the best he had. If it did not suit our tastes, it was not his fault. It was such as he ate himself. Candidly, we would have preferred home's humblest fare, but we accepted it thankfully, and were strengthened thereby.





CHAPTER IX.

A Subterranean River—The Power of Superstition—Island Falls—
Murdo Dies—A Fellow Missionary—His Failure—Split Lake—
The Loss of a York Boat's Crew—Oxford House.

PASSING down the river, our companions call our attention to an insignificant stream bearing the suggestive name of "Devil's Creek." Small as it seems, it is said to stretch far up into the country; but, near its confluence with the Nelson, it falls into a fissure of the solid rock, like the falls of the Zambesi, in Africa. After miles of subterranean flowing, it leaps out of obscurity again, only to lose itself in the mighty current which we follow. On the perpendicular rocks, forming the banks of this hidden current, are said to be found hieroglyphics of ancient origin, and of strange design. Prompted by curiosity, several have essayed to explore this chasm, but, if reports can be credited, not one of them has ever returned to tell the result of their search. All Indians avoid the fatal spot, believing it to be demon haunted. No bribe can

overcome their horror of the place or induce them to approach it. Rarely, if ever, do pagans pass without throwing something into the river, as a sacrifice to the god of evil.

Island Falls is well known to all who travel the Nelson, as being both difficult and dangerous. It takes its name from the fact that a small islet divides the stream, forcing the water to right and left over rocky ledges. The eastern fall is some ten feet high, and not quite perpendicular. Over this, York boats have passed without damage many times. The custom is to land on the island, discharge cargo, then back up and run over the falls with the empty boats.

Three boats were making their way along this river, in the summer of seventy seven, under command of Murdo, the bravest seaman of all his tribe. The landing was effected with safety. Cargoes were put on shore, and the flag-boat, as the custom was, backed up some distance to run the falls. This accomplished, the guide gave orders to portage the other boats, for the river was higher than usual, and the falls were wild. The officer of the Company in charge of the cargo taunted the guide with cowardice. Murdo was annoyed. To reverse his order, select a volunteer crew and back up into the current, was the work of but a few minutes. "If anything happens to me, take care of

my wife and children," was the helmsman's last salute. On came the boat, like an arrow shot out of a bow: Over it went, burying itself in the foam of the fall. Then leaping up like a maddened horse, and shaking itself free from the whirls, it reeled and staggered into quieter water.

But where was Murdo? The men were paralyzed with grief and fear. The boat was drifting on to danger, but never an oar was dipped. Just then a voice came as from the water. "Boys, take to your oars or you are lost. Never mind me; save yourselves and the boat." It was Murdo, struggling with the torrent, all forgetful of personal danger, but anxious for the safety of the crew. "Row hard, boys. It is a struggle for life. Your families need you. God will take care of me. There now, you are safe." Just as the boat's keel struck the shore, and was safely moored by her waiting cargo, the brave swimmer, with a wave of his hand, said farewell, sank overpowered by the current, and was seen no more.

Dream not helm and harness only
The signs of valor true ;
Peace hath higher tests of manhood
Than battle ever knew.

Slightly below Island Falls, we met the Rev. Mr S——, an educated half-breed of the Red River settle-

ment, now the representative of the Church Society on the Nelson River. At his own solicitation, he had been permitted to represent the Church in this vicinity. He came a year ago, equipped with 60 bags of flour, besides tea, tobacco, twine, ammunition, beads, and paint. Never missionary had a better outfit. Had he used well the high vantage ground which he occupied there is no telling how much good might have been accomplished. He had the language perfectly. He thoroughly understood the Indian character. The country was familiar to him. He had good support. All this was deliberately sacrificed by the course which he pursued. He feasted the people as long as his flour lasted. He gave tea and other things to his friends, without judgment. He allowed the young people of his home to exercise an evil influence upon the tribe, and, like Eli, he re-proved them not. They went from bad to worse. Famine came. The whole mission party was starving. The Hudson's Bay Company was appealed to. Relief was sent. Even this was squandered in riotous living. Learning the facts in the case, the officer in charge of the trading-district wrote to the Bishop of Rupert's Land, asking that Mr. S—— be withdrawn. This request was immediately granted. When we met him, he was on his way back to Red River. He, who had

gone out to Christianize his countrymen, had been more than defeated in every thing undertaken, through the profligacy and folly of wilful and disobedient children. He had spent all. He had begun to be in want. He was now going back to his bishop to say that he had sinned. The venture of the Church in the valley of the Nelson had failed for lack of the ordinary moral virtues in the hearts and lives of the workers. Our own Church has had experience in the same line too, and, let us hope, has learned wisdom thereby.

On our arrival at Split Lake, the Nelson ceases to conduct us toward our destination. We have come out of our way a great distance, in order to avoid the ice filled lakelets which, at this early date, would have impeded our progress had we attempted to reach Nelson House by a more direct course. We preferred to describe the two sides of a triangle rather than to risk the uncertainties of canoeing where currentless bodies of water retain their ice covering far into the spring. Here we are, then, on the the shores of Split Lake. Our companions tell us, while we are standing here gazing northward, more than half desirous of following the hurrying waters on to where they shake hands with the sea, that after this lake is passed, the river is very wild and the rapids dangerous. Long ago

the Company's boats were wont to pass this way *en route* to York Factory, the great distributing depot of trading supplies, and the post of export for all the products of the trade. It was early in the spring time, before the ice had quite gone, that those boats from some point in the Great Saskatchewan River were making their way northward along this watery avenue. Split Lake was reached in safety. On the farther shore the crews enjoyed their dinner of pemmican, and congratulated each other on the successful trip they had made so far, and shared each other's anticipations of a speedy arrival at the sea-board fort. With high hopes the boats were, after dinner, thrust out into the current, and allowed to drift along, while the men enjoyed an after-meal smoke. A slight favoring breeze came too, so that without rowing they made good headway. It was useless to put up the mast, for at no very great distance was a rapid which, owing to the nature of the shore, must be run; and at such times the weight must all be in the bottom of the boat to prevent rolling. On they floated,

" Drifting, drifting with the tide,"

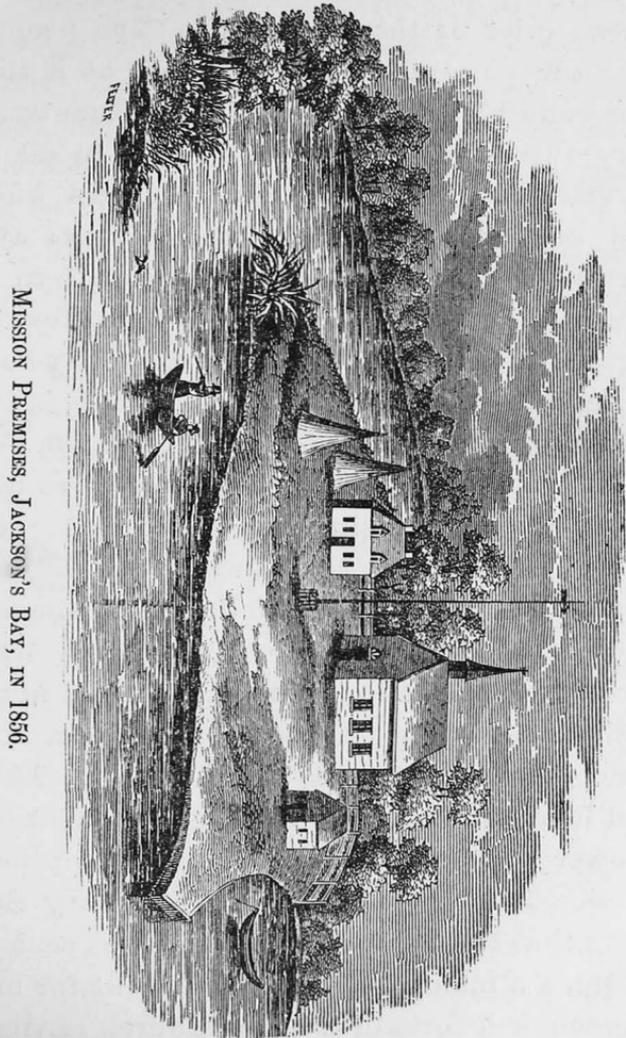
until the voice of the falling water greeted the ear. Pipes were put away. Every man took his place, oar in hand. The old guide ran out his long sweep, so as to have all the available steering-power under com-

mand. Then, standing on tip-toe, he gazed down the river with an uncertain, anxious gaze. The men noticing his nervousness, enjoyed a hearty laugh at his expense. The current was now quite strong; so powerful, that retreat was no longer possible. The guide by this time saw distinctly the realization of his worst fears. There was a bridge of ice below the fall and so close to it that collision was inevitable, and so low that not even a canoe could pass under it. With a wave of his hand, he signalled the boats in the rear to go ashore. The men at the sweeps interpreted the signal, and turned their boats in time, but the guide could do nothing. To try to turn the boat would be to go over the fall sideways, and to make death and destruction certain. They might escape with life by striking the ice with the prow heading down stream. The men, now aroused to a sense of danger which might not be avoided, were trembling and crying out for fear. The brink of the rapid was reached. Down the boat plunged, the shrieks of the poor Indians audible above the noise of many waters. Then followed the crash of the collision. The boat was smashed to atoms. The stern sank first, the force of the current breaking the already shattered hulk into matchwood. The men, disheartened by fear, were overpowered by the boiling flood, and were carried under the ice, to be

seen no more. Their comrades ran along the shore with ropes and spars, but their help came too late; not a form was seen, not a cry was heard. The guide, his crew, and his boat were beyond recovery and beyond eyesight: buried in the wild waves of this ever-memorable rapid.

This accident, it is said, led the officers of the Company to explore the Hayes River, with a view to the discovery of a less dangerous route to the west and south. They were successful, and the Nelson has never since been used by the York boats.

Less than a hundred miles east of Split Lake is an old mission known as Oxford House. It was originally situated on Jackson's Bay, a distance of twelve miles from the H. B. Co.'s Fort, but steps are being taken now to remove it to a new site, quite near to the centre of life and trade. The Rev. Robert Brooking, no doubt, foresaw the possibilities of evil that might fall on the establishment of a location nearer to the whites of the Fort. He chose rather to suffer isolation himself than to expose his people to even the danger of suffering wrong at the hands of superiors. It was not long, however, until the discovery was made that the journeys between places were long and tedious, as well as expensive. Besides, Indians, on their arrival at the Fort, if anxious to return to



MISSION PREMISES, JACKSON'S BAY, IN 1856.

their camps in the wilds, did not visit the mission, to the great grief of the incumbent. The people went over to the store and stayed a week at a time, and were beyond his pastoral oversight. Rum was in the country then. Passing brigades gave to all comers. Evils marked the cursed traffic. Little knew the worthy missionary that only twelve miles away, as the crow flies, his people were exposed to all the temptations he so much dreaded. The Rev. Charles Stringfellow held the fort at Jackson's Bay for seven years; and he fully realized his disadvantage in being so far away from the companionships of the Fort. A new and interesting branch of his work was begun at the post itself. Passing crews offered one more avenue of usefulness. Now, however, it was difficult to move. His pastorate was followed by the appointment of John Sinclair, a native agent, who was physically idoleut and morally lax. It did not take a long time under such a helmsman to run the ship aground. Spirituality was at a discount. The Word of God lost its charm, because its exponent had lost the power of right living. Twilight deepened into darkness. It was well for the Missionary Society's interests that the Rev. Orrin German was sent to take the place of a man who was no longer fit for membership, much less for work, in the Church of the living

God. The Rev. Enos Langford is now reaping the first fruits of Mr. G.'s faithful sowing ; and is seeking to break up the fallow-ground, that more seed of the Kingdom may have a chance to take root and grow, and increase a hundred-fold. Oxford House will always be a difficult post, partly because of its remoteness from travel, and partly in consequence of the absence of the Indians during long periods of both winter and summer. Those who labor there know how long and dreary is the winter, and how short and cheerless is the summer. Only the love of God can constrain any man to stay and work for the souls of these people. It is nearly all sowing. The harvest comes but slowly. The results are known to God. We but know that He hath said, " My word shall not return unto me void."





CHAPTER XI.

The Burntwood River—The Birds—The Beasts—Running the Rapids
the Wrong Way—Human Nests—The Portage—The Loads—The
Roads—The Weather—Nelson House—Hampered.

LEAVING the broad and beautiful Nelson at Split Lake, we begin to ascend the Burntwood River, a not inconsiderable stream, from the south-west. Suddenly the waters change color, so do our surroundings. Compared with the river we have left, this is decidedly inferior. It is both more shallow and more rapid. The banks are closer and higher. The timber is more scanty, and of a less valuable character. Arable patches of clayey loam, alternate with extended stretches of moss-covered rock. Beyond these, the inevitable swamp-land occupies more than a third of the whole country.

Fowl of every wing are found here. Ducks, geese, and loons make these their hatching-grounds. Swans, cranes, and eagles pass to the farther north. Gulls rise in clouds from the rocky islets along our way.

Pheasants and partridges start up in covies at the noise of our paddles. An innumerable army of smaller birds throng the air with their presence, and ravish the ear with their melody.

Game is very plentiful. Cunning foxes peer over the bank at you, and then disappear with great suddenness. Wild cats stare vacantly out at you from the willow copses. Hungry wolves howl dismally around your midnight pillow. Stumps of willows, rudely cut, suggest the presence of the beaver. Rough unsightly footprints in the moss-covered swamp, betray the existence of the ungainly bear. Deep tracks in the half-dried mud along the shore, tell of the panting hart coming hurriedly down to the water-brooks. Topless willows show where the gigantic moose has browsed his evening meal. Huge herds of the jumping deer are at times found here. In a word the whole land teems with life.

We will not weary our readers with a detailed account of our trip up the current of the Burntwood, but will speak generally of the various features of canoeing, as suggested and illustrated by our ascent.

Being on the up-grade, we found it necessary to keep out of the current as much as possible, and to avail ourselves of the help offered in many places by the "back-currents," so well-known to the native guides.

We found out quickly that we could not go up a rapid of any size. Did our readers ever run a rapid the wrong way? As we had the misfortune to have an experience of this kind, we will be confidential and tell how it occurred.

We were approaching a rapid which was long and swift, but not very steep at any stage. Then, too, it was full of boulders, and several inlets divided its waters into a number of channels. To go around it would involve a great outlay of strength. To paddle through it would be to run some risk. To venture was voted the better method, so at it we went. Chute number one was not difficult, and on reaching smooth water above it we felt quite proud of our prowess. The next rise was the most difficult in the whole rapid. Once over that we were sure of victory. The guide took a long look at it, but said little. When we were rested somewhat, our paddles were drawn up, the canoe swung herself into the current, and we were measuring our strength with the might of the maddened water. "Pull hard," cried the guide. But no one found time to reply. How quickly the strokes were multiplied! How vigorously the men did their part! But it was of no avail. Strength, wisely applied, could not overcome the resistance of that raging torrent. We were not gaining. As our vigorous

endeavor grew fainter, we lost ground slowly—then swiftly. The guide lost control of the canoe, and we were borne on—on, down—down, to the boulders and eddies of the basin, at the foot of the falls.

One's sensations at such a time are of so confused and indefinable a character as to defy analysis or description. The conviction that you are vanquished, is not consolatory. The loss of your canoe, is not reassuring. The loss of valuables not easily replaced, is exasperating. One's own immersion, where flood fights flood with noise and clamor, is exciting and dangerous. Once over, however, it is a leaf in your journal and an item in the memory as long as you live.

All along the line of the Burntwood River, one sees what appear to resemble huge nests in the trees. Explanations are given by our companions in travel. When a young Indian attains to the age of budding manhood, he desires a revelation from the gods as to what is to be required of him when he takes his place in society as a man amongst men. With this desire, he makes a nest in the topmost branches of the highest trees. There, for five or six days at a stretch, he remains without food or drink, thinking, wondering, hoping, dreaming. The character of his thoughts during the time of his elevation, will have some relation to his after-life. If he dreams of hunting, a

hunter he will try to be. If his thoughts are of conjuring, he will seek acquaintance with legerdemain. If he dreams of bloodshed, he will develop into a warrior bold. If he meditates most upon travel, it will be his ambition to become a voyageur. If he has no dreams, he is forever laughed at as one who was deemed unworthy of notice by the discerning gods.

The portage! The portage! Throughout the north the very name is an unpleasantness. "Robinson Portage," "Mossy Portage," and "The Long Portage" are names familiar to many as the synonymes of labor, accident, sickness, death, and want. Many a rower who has been brave enough throughout a whole trip, has lost heart and deserted his brigade when in sight of these carrying-places. Plenty of others, who were too brave to run away, have, throughout their whole lives, suffered the consequences of strain, or fall, or injury received in these places. Not a few have fallen prostrate beneath their loads, and have perished by the way. The graves of the victims, we are told, line all the route from the last great falls of the Saskatchewan, to the outlet of the River Mackenzie.

When we approach a fall or a rapid which cannot be safely run, the canoe is drawn up to the shore, and lifted from the water. The guide girds himself for the hard work of transporting his craft across the

country to the first quiet water. We help to place the burden on his shoulder, and away he goes through forest and across swamps, a veritable Samson bearing away the gates of our captivity. We follow with blankets, and guns, and kettles, and food, and freight. Each man is supposed to carry about one hundred and fifty pounds at least; but they who take the bulkiest articles will have less weight and more bother.

There are no roads. You cross fallen timber, wade the creeks, climb the hills, and, perhaps, roll down the farther side. The mosquitoes avail themselves of your inability to practice the art of self-defense. Your load gets heavy, but you dare not throw it down, for you could not raise it up again unaided. You look for the appearance of water, but are denied the encouragement. Your neck feels as if it were breaking, but you must endure the pressure. You avow your dislike for portaging in no measured terms. Then, catching sight of curling smoke, you quicken your steps, tighten your hold, straiten yourself up, and, with the air of a man who never complained, rush into the presence of your waiting companions.

We have a very distinct memory of a trip from Norway House to the Fort, on the Burntwood, in the summer of seventy-six. For eight days and nights it

rained without cessation. All day we paddled as well as we could. At night we wrapped our wet selves in our wet blankets, and lay in the pelting rain until the morning. In the portages we suffered greatly. The valleys were full of water, and we were compelled to ford or wade across. The swamps were so soft that they would not bear us up. The fallen trees were so slippery that we could not stand upon them. The standing trees were like waterpots: to touch them was to be drenched to the skin. Our moccasins gave out because of the wet, and our bare feet were wounded with splinters and rock. Sometimes we laughed at our own misfortunes, but at other times we could not laugh if we desired to. Glad indeed were we when, on the tenth day, the sun shone out again, giving us a chance to get thoroughly dry once more.

Nelson House, the object of our journey, was reached on the 15th day of June, 1874, and we were introduced to our brown mud mansion, kindly placed at our disposal for a small rent, until a house of our own could be erected. It was furnished with a table, a three-legged stool, and a mud chimney. A small window of four 8x10 panes gave us a southward view, and admitted light enough to enable us to read and write; while holes in wall and roof rendered special effort in the direction of ventilation quite unnecessary.

We were not long in making the discovery, that we were entirely useless in this locality. We had no interpreter. The people of the land had not the English language. We could only speak to them by looks and signs. So after a brief stay, during which we had a fair chance of understanding the needs of the country, and of ascertaining the nature of the work we would be required to do in this new region, we retraced our steps, intent upon securing the services of an interpreter : with what success our readers are already informed. Suffice it to say now, that some one had blundered, and the Company felt themselves justified in punishing the innocent to atone for the wrong-doing, which they regarded with extreme disfavor. Nearly a year passed before the tangle was unravelled ; but when at last our desire was realized, we went forth to seek the wandering sons of men that we might preach to them Jesus.

No one knows the loneliness and the disquietude of soul which was ours in these days of weary waiting for a chance to work. Having no inclination to speak of ourselves, we shall present our readers with the simple story of how the work came to be begun in this part of the land, and how, under fostering influences divine, it prospered in that to which it had been sent.



CHAPTER XII.

Reaching Backwards—Norway House Again—The Tribes—The Missionary—Numerous Calls—The Tin Canoe—Touches at Nelson House—A Change, yet not a Change—Rev. E. R. Young's Visit—His Appeals Successful—The Moral Sky Clears—Sad News—The Council—Farewell—Mutual Pledges—Reflections—After Many Days.

OUR story dates a long way back in the history of the "Wild North Land." Sir George Simpson was Governor of the Hudson's Bay Territory. Roderick Ross, Esq., was the Chief Factor in charge of the Norway House Fort. The Rev. James Evans was the Superintendent of the Rossville Mission, and the Rev. W. J. Mason was his assistant.

Norway House was then the Company's central distributing depot for the northwest, west, and south; next in importance only to York Factory. All the forts throughout the land looked toward this post for their supplies. So when the ice disappeared from the lakes and rivers, large brigades of square-sail-rigged boats might have been seen steering their tortuous

way along the watery avenues of the country, heading for the point where Lake Winnipeg ends and Nelson River begins. From the Lake Sol region, from the Red River country, from the Assinaboine Valley, from Swan River, Peace River and Deer Lake, from the mighty Saskatchewan, and the mightier Mackenzie, from the Burntwood River, and from Arthabasca Lake, came the hardy traders year by year with their returns of fur. Discharging their valuable cargoes of mink, and martin, and beaver, and otter, and black fox, and hosts of other valuable furs, they lingered for a day or two to rest, and then returned; their boats laden to the gunwale with prints, clothing, blankets, twine, ammunition, groceries, luxuries, and medicines.

These brigades were manned by the representatives of not a few tribes. The hard-hearted Saulteaux, the garrulous Crees of the plains, the faithful Stonies of the mountains, the skilful Chipwayans of the Churchill, the treacherous Bloods and the warlike Black-feet, were all represented in the rowers, steersmen, or guides of the traders' boats.

While they tarried at the fort, awaiting their cargoes, our missionary, through the courtesy of the officers in charge, had the opportunity of holding frequent interviews with them. In this way he,

through interpreters, obtained correct information relative to the condition of the religion in the regions of which they were natives. By means of them, he communicated a knowledge of himself and his mission to all the Indians dwelling north of the 49th parallel and south of the 60th, from the Nelson on the east to the Rockies on the west.

As the fame of this man and his message went far and near, "there arose no small stir about this way." Curiosity was thoroughly aroused. The officers in charge of forts, were fairly besieged with requests that they would induce the great praying-master to visit the principal posts, so that all might have an opportunity of hearing what he had to say about God, salvation, and the world to come. As anxious on their own account as on behalf of these petitioners, the Post Masters, Chief Factors, and Inspectors, who met the Governor at Norway House in their yearly council, took occasion to urge Mr. Evans to visit their homes and their people, readily promising all the assistance which it was in their power to render. Many of them were not yet legally married, for there were no clergymen in the vicinity of their forts. For a similar reason, their children were as yet unbaptized. The majority of them, though Christian born, had not received the Sacraments of the Church since they had

left the altars of Scotia, or the cathedrals of England. Their hearts were now hungry for the "Bread of Life," and their spiritual needs gave much force to their earnest solicitations. Moved by their appeals, the Rossville missionary bade farewell for a time to his new converts, commending them to the pastoral oversight of his assistant until he should return. Northward he journeyed, in his tin canoe, called by the Indians the "Island of Light," until he had compassed a circuit which is not even yet fully occupied by the missionaries of his church.

It was a part of his plans to call at Nelson House for a guide to Carlton, and other points on the Saskatchewan, previous to steering for Arthabasca and the Great Slave Lake. His time was precious, for the seasons were short and the way was long; but he could not, with all his hurry, pass the strange people whom he found at this post without a word. A day or two were set apart for religious services, and Jesus was for the first time preached to the pagans of what was then called Nelson River. The preacher went to return no more, but his words were not forgotten. His look of kindly interest left its impress on their hearts, and his name is fresh in the memories of the elders of the tribe until this day. Impressions had been made upon their hearts which stayed. They had heard just

enough to make them hungry for truth. At any rate they could never again worship idols with the same fervent satisfaction they had felt before. They were unsettled. Something told them that they were wrong, and they became more and more anxious to hear further about the white man's God.

Years went by—many weary years. They still worshipped the rocks, the hills, the trees, the stars, because they knew not how to worship the God of Heaven. They adhered to their traditional beliefs, because no one gave them anything better. They followed the customs of their fathers, because there was revealed to them no better way of doing God service. They hungered, but there was no food. They thirsted, but there was no drink. They prayed and sighed in silence of spirit, but there seemed to be no answering voice, nor any that regarded.

In those days of dissatisfaction and desire, with the prayers of Phillip upon their lips, "Show us the Father," it chanced that the Rev. E. R. Young came to them from his mission at Norway House. The warmth of the welcome accorded was ample evidence of the pleasure of the people at his arrival. Their interest in his words more than repaid him for the toils and dangers of his trip. His stay was short. Again they were left in a darkness made more intense by occasional gleams of light.

Mr. Young felt that the Nelson River claim was a strong one, and he ably advocated the appointment of a young ordained missionary to that far-away region. Called to Ontario for another purpose, he pressed his views upon many of the members of the Missionary Committee. At a vast number of missionary meetings addressed by him, he exhorted the people to support him and the Church in the endeavor to give the Gospel to this new field. His desire was granted, and the delighted people whose champion, or rather whose advocate he was, mingled their tears of joy with their words of thanksgiving.

The moral atmosphere of the country underwent a radical change the following year. Old and young acquired a knowledge of the "Evans' Syllabic Characters," which enabled them, wherever they were, to read the Scriptures, which are able to make them wise unto salvation. An unlimited number of Bibles and Testaments was supplied, through the kindness and liberality of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, and that without money or price. Hymns were distributed, and those who could read them spelled out the words to those who could not read, and so all became possessed of the truths which they contained. Idolatry was abandoned by the majority; while those who still persisted in the practice of

heathen worship, found themselves doing battle with an irresistible current. Many gave evidence of the possession of renewed natures, and several, animated by a zeal for God, went forth to tell to others what God had done for them. Reports from all parts of the field confirmed the missionary's faith in his work, and proved, beyond a doubt, that the Lord was prospering His word in the conviction and conversion of souls. The people became prophets. They saw visions of growth in knowledge and in civilization. They anticipated a great mental and spiritual development. They saw schools and churches throughout their hunting-grounds, their children properly educated, themselves secure in the fold of Christ, their old people ministered unto by the liberality of Christian people.

Just then came to them the sad news of the speedy departure of their missionary. Only two short years of plenty, to be followed by no one knew how many years of famine. With grieved hearts the elders of the tribe came to the mission-house, still white in the newness of its walls, to say good-bye to one whom they had learned to love for his work's sake, and to trust as a friend. Thanks, regrets, and entreaties were crowded into an address to the Missionary Society. Fears were freely expressed that the tide of

prosperity and advantage had taken a turn. "God only knows," said they, "whether Nelson House will ever again have a missionary whom they can call their own!" The shore was lined with spectators when the time to go had fully come. Farewells were unwillingly said. As the canoes sailed slowly out of the bay, the men fired a few guns, as is their custom at the death of their friends.

When the missionary and his party disappeared around the nearest headland, and the newly-baptized natives felt that they were really alone, they began to perceive how much had been lost. The mission-house had been to them a place of association, of scholarship, and of friendship. Here they had often found a warm supper, kindly greetings, and a fairly comfortable bed after days of lonely travel and of exposure to cold and storm. Here glance had greeted glance, and hand had clasped hand, after months of hunting in wilderness wilds. Here they had sung together, in uncertain measure but with melody of soul, their newly-learned songs of Zion. Here they had been taught to repeat the beautiful prayer of our blessed Lord until they could bear it away with them—a heart treasure—to be repeated by many a camp-fire, to be remembered through many a day of toil and privation, to be meditated upon in many a night-

hour spent by river-side or shore of lake. Here their souls had been accustomed to sit under the shadow of the Almighty with great delight. Here they had been fed with the food which was sweet to the taste, broken into crumbs out of consideration for their spiritual infancy. Here they had found some one to listen to their complaints, give them kindly counsel, and try to lead them along the path of intelligence, to the high lands of peace and purity, where the soul of man finds peace with God. Now the mission-house would be closed, the familiar face of the missionary would be missed, and they who had formed new alliances and had begun to find pleasure in new employments, would be left to grope their way heavenward alone in blindness and ignorance.

Agitated on account of what had been lost, anxious and perplexed as to the future, the old men met together about the hour of noon, and seating themselves on the grassy slope between the house and the river, they spake one to another concerning the religion of Jesus the Christ. They were all of opinion that this was what they had been wishing and hoping for through long years of superstition and idol worship. They expressed their common delight with the teachings of Scripture, so far as they had become acquainted therewith. Many of them announced their intention

of giving themselves to God, and expressing the hope that by faithful continuance in well-doing, they might gain a crown of life, missionary or no missionary. A few who could read a little declared their willingness to teach such as had not yet mastered the Evans' Characters. It was unanimously agreed that the Sabbath should be strictly observed, that morning and evening prayers should be regularly said, that the juniors should be encouraged to read aloud to their elders in the long evenings around the camp-fire ; and that under no circumstance should it be allowed for a baptized Christian to return to heathenish practices.

It was towards evening, when the swarthy braves rose and sought the quiet of their camps, and ere the morrow's sun was high, their birch canoes had borne them far on towards the haunts of the deer and the homes of the beaver. As they went they prayed with undisguised emotion that the Great Spirit would soon send them another teacher, and that in the meantime he would help them to do the divine will in so far as it had been to them revealed.

Oh, red man of the forest, simple-minded yet true-hearted too, little does the white man care for your poor soul! The shells that lie wave-beaten upon your shores, the bones that bleach upon your prairies, the soiled plumage that marks your camping-places in the

wilderness, the fur-covered beasts that creep into your rudely-constructed deadfalls, are as much to you as you are to them who array themselves in the products of your hunt, but scorn to call you brother. They see you fading in the increasing light of civilization as snow fades in the time of showers and sunlight and laughing rills, but they heed not the signs of your decrease. They listen to your cries for help as they do to the murmuring of the pines in the chill winds of the autumn, but they bring not of their abundance to purify your spirits and glorify your lives. They live in luxury and affluence, little heeding your want and wretchedness. They worship in crowded cathedrals, and praise the Lord with voice and instrument, but deem the leafy temple of the forest and the harmonies of nature good enough for you. You are but the poor lost sheep of the house of Israel. It is not meet to cast the children's bread to such as you. Yet outcasts, sinners more than all men, though you are, the Divine Shepherd thinketh upon you, seeketh even you, and will provide a place for you in the eternal home which He is fitting up for those who love Him.

Years have passed—years of struggles and triumphs hopes and fears, life and death. Even the native agent was finally removed, because the Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada was

unable longer to support a representative. The poor people felt keenly a loss upon which *they* could put no interpretation but that of wilful neglect or cruel indifference. Still the idea of unfaithfulness has no place in their thoughts. The long nights of winter are wiled away by discussions of the story of redeeming love. Prayer-meetings are held whenever two bands meet. On Sabbath days, they who fear the Lord speak often one to another, help one another, bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

In mutual helps and mutual song
They lived the weary days along ;
Looking for light, but finding none ;
Crying for help, yet left alone ;
Hungry for food, yet still unfed ;
Forsaken, but divinely led.





A CHRISTIAN CHIEF.



CHAPTER XIII.

Sandy Misquapam—His Journey—His Baptism—The Result—Angus Pimasthum—Starvation—A Council—Disgraced—Prayer—Shoots a Deer—Plenty—Sandy Harte—His Misfortune—His Narrow Escape—His Adoption—His Conversion—His Return—His Work—William Isbister—His Belongings—His Work.

SANDY MISQUAPAM was a man of fine physique, of pleasing appearance, and of fair address; but he was a pagan. The Word of Truth, so far as he was concerned, seemed to fall upon listless ears. His heart was as hard as his native hills. Others might weep over their sins, but the keenest observation failed to find in his face the most remote symptom of emotion. He listened with the air of a critic. He invariably stayed until the close of a meeting, as if anxious to see and hear all. He went away wearing the appearance of utter unconcern. Of all his fellows, he seemed least likely speedily to become a subject of saving grace.

The time came for his departure for winter quarters, two hundred miles north-west. With a cold shake

hands, he launched his canoe, answering a parting exhortation with a hearty laugh and a few vigorous strokes of the paddle. Never mind, missionary! the arrows of God are in Sandy's soul. Bread cast upon the waters may be found after many days.

The following winter was long and severe. By the middle of October, the lakes and rivers were coated with ice, and before Christmas the snow was four feet deep over all the land.

In the waning of the January moon, when the fur-bearing animals seldom went abroad, and the work and success of the hunter was not great, Sandy's heart troubled him. He was sleepless, meditative, sad. The medicine-man prescribed for him. Old wives shook their heads ominously, and suggested witchcraft. The members of the family became anxious, fearing fever or delirium. To his wife first, he announced his intention of going down to the mission, to offer himself as a candidate for baptism. She raised the alarm that brought together the elders of the tribe, who with due accord sought to dissuade him from his purpose. In vain they appealed to his superstition. It was to no purpose that they endeavored to work upon his worst fears. Borne up by a sense of duty, sustained by a high and worthy resolve, he procured food enough to last many days, and leaving his loved

ones to the care of a kind Providence, he turned his steps toward the south.

That night, the first from home, stretched upon the cold ground, beneath the silent stars, wrapped in a single blanket, alone amid the pines, he dreamed of baptism and death. Could it be possible that the predictions of his friends would prove true? Would the renunciation of idolatry bring upon him the anger of his idol gods? Had they power to kill his body? Querying thus with himself, he trudged wearily through the deep snow, wondering, hoping, fearing. At nightfall, he again sought the shelter of the pines, only to dream once more of death. The third night left him half distracted with concern and apprehension. What should he do? Risk it? Dare to do his duty? Defy the powers of evil? Throw himself upon the protecting care of the God whom he now desired to serve? His resolve was soon made. Die or live, he would renounce paganism and embrace Christianity. So, trembling in every nerve, he came and was baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, confessing his sins.

The men occupying the house in which Sandy rested that night, say that he slept poorly. For hours he walked the floor nervously; then, taking a brief nap, he would start up suddenly as if frightened. With break of day he arose from his couch on the floor,

pinched hands and face to see if he were really alive, took courage, ate heartily at breakfast, spoke cheerily to those whom he met, assumed a cheerful aspect, and went back a new man ; consecrating his snow camps as he went with simple, earnest prayer, and making the woods ring with his endeavors to render correctly the widely-known chorus :

“ Sweetest note in seraph song,
Sweetest name on mortal tongue,
Sweetest carol ever sung,
Jesus, blessed Jesus.”

Angus Pimastum was encamped on the banks of the Churchill River, not far from its escape from Indian Lake. The time was the winter of seventy-five. He was small of stature, but stout of limb, tender-hearted, and clear headed. He had been baptized and was called a Christian, though we did not regard him as having experienced a change of heart. He was anxious to learn, and willing to do his duty so far as he knew it. We scarcely thought him ready for sacrifice or for persecution.

For some reason the winter was a hard one. Game was not so plentiful as usual. Famine visited the encampment. Eyes were dim. Faces were shrunken. Children were crying. Even the elders felt the gnawings of hunger, as they seldom had before. Something

must be done. The inner bark of the poplar was not now fit for use. The lichen of the rocks was buried in the snow. The roots of the rushes were fast in the ice. The feet of the deer were fleet and the moose kept far away.

A council was called, at which five men were present. After speaking of the want existing, they proposed to conjure all night, and the next day to go out to hunt the moose. Angus objected. He had been baptized and would not conjure again. No sooner had he said this, than he was excluded from the circle by a majority vote. Poor Angus went back to his tent with a sad heart. His wife met him at the door and observed his dejection, but had hardly time to question him, before he told her the story of his disgrace.

“ Well,” said the good wife, “ have we not a God in heaven ? ”

“ Yes ; but we know not how to worship Him.”

“ Did not the missionary say that He always heard the prayers of His people ? ”

“ He did ; but we are so poor and powerless we cannot gain His ear.”

“ But He can read the heart as well as hear the voice.”

Well,” perhaps He can : let us pray.”

So they knelt by the fire, and lifted up their full

hearts to God on behalf of themselves and the starving children sleeping by their side. Who shall say that this inaudible prayer was not heard in heaven?

In the early morning Angus filled his shot pouch and powder flask, took up his unloaded gun, and went into the forest in search of game. The departure of the conjurors was almost simultaneous, each man taking a direction of his own.

About five miles from the encampment, while our hero was working his way carelessly through low scrubwood, he chanced upon the tracks of a deer. Encouraged by this, he loaded his gun and began the chase. By the softness of the impressions made in the snow he knew that the tracks were nearly fresh, and by the appearance of the footmarks he gathered that the gait of the animal had been slow. Cautiously he advanced until he came upon a small opening in the woods where moss lay deep upon the ground. Passing through the trees he saw, within easy shot, the object of his search. To fire was but the work of a moment. The deer fell in its tracks, and before the smoke of the powder was cleared, Angus was on his knees offering thanks to God. Cutting off some choice parts he loaded himself heavily and returned to the camp where he treated old and young to a hearty meal.

The pagans returned at nightfall with discouraged

hearts. They had seen no footprints in the snow. They had secured no game but some rabbits. They were free to partake of their friend's bounty. They were glad to admit that the Lord was *the* God, and that the camp was saved through His goodness.

This event confirmed the faith of the successful hunter, and made others think seriously of this new way, who before had determined never to submit themselves to God.

When Sandy Harte was a boy of fourteen he had the misfortune to become maimed for life, through the untimely bursting of a gun, which, with boyish indiscretion, he had overcharged. Because the wounds which resulted from this accident were improperly dressed, and the shattered bones were never set, and the nursing was as unskilful as the diet was unsuitable, poor Sandy's recovery was both slow and unsatisfactory.

To his pagan father's mind there came but one thought. He would end the life of his sick boy. As it was he was a bother, an expense, and a hindrance. He could be helpful to no one. He would never be able again to paddle the canoe, or roam the woods as before. He suffered constantly. There was no hope of immediate betterment. It seemed proper, therefore, to dispatch him to the happy hunting grounds,

where youth would be renewed, and life would be free from the ills familiar to men. So reasoned the proud chief of the Crees along the Burntwood—the father of the subject of our sketch.

About this time, the Rev. E. R. Young paid his first visit to this part of his vast mission. Becoming acquainted with the circumstances of the case, he sought to preserve the boy's life. He volunteered to take him back to his own home at Norway House, doctor him, educate him, and send him back again to his people after some years. All this was readily agreed to by the selfish father, who saw no advantage in the education offered, but only perceived a present escape from the necessity of caring for a helpless invalid.

Ten days of canoeing brought the pagan boy to a Christian Mission Station, where discipline, tuition, example, and all the influences of a Christian home-life were to be thrown around him.

Following hard upon the excitement of travel, and the change of abode, came the "long, long thoughts" of old-time pleasures of home and of friends. His guardian found that a degree of firmness was necessary to overcome the restless love of freedom which this wild bird with a broken wing possessed in no small degree. It was not long before the spirit of loneliness gave way to one of contentment, and this was accom-

panied by a vigorous prosecution of his studies. Not, however, until he had sought and found peace with God did he become specially distinguished as a student. From that time his one desire was to prepare himself for the work of instructing his poor ignorant friends along the banks of the Burntwood, Rat, and Churchill rivers.

When Nelson River's first Missionary went down from Norway House, his companion, assistant, and fellow-evangelist was Sandy Harte, son of the chief. Without delay, he began his work of faith and labor of love. Teaching with him became a passion. Early and late, and at all hours, he was at it. He became a name for industry and devotedness to missionary work. He taught his fellows Zion's sacred melodies. He made them acquainted with the Evans' characters. He helped them to frame their first petitions to the Great Spirit. To this day, without ostentation and without remuneration, he esteems it a privilege to speak to the people concerning the salvation of Jesus the Christ.

William Isbister was born at Norway House, about forty-five years ago. His father was a Scotchman born, his mother was a native of the North-West. He was educated in the Red River country, and spent his early manhood at Severn, a Hudson Bay Company's Post along the shore of James' Bay. His rank in the

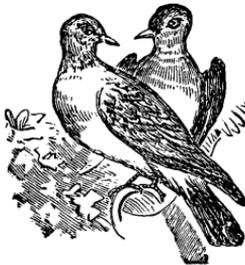
trading service is that of post master, or the first officer in charge of a subordinate station.

Religiously, he was an adherent of the Church of England; but was favorably disposed towards us, and was willing to work with us in all our Church enterprises, though he was not yet the conscious possessor of a changed heart. The Indians feared him greatly. Rightly or wrongly he had the name of being a hard man. He gave us a cordial welcome, and being a good singer and a first-class interpreter, he rendered us invaluable service. There was, however, a want of harmony between Sabbath duties and week-day practices, which checked the influence we so much desired to exert.

In something less than a year, a circumstance occurred which resulted in a change of heart. Then all was changed. How he would pray, and sing, and exhort too! The white men at the fort perceived the change, and felt the power which a correct life adds to earnest words. A wide-spread interest was soon awakened, and many of the far-off were brought to the footstool of divine mercy.

Since then, although the missionary has been absent, this man of God has preached twice a Sabbath to as many as are within reach. He prays with the sick, and helps the penitent to find the Saviour. He reads

the service over open graves, and whispers into the ears of the dying tidings of a holy hope to be obtained through the merits of the world's Redeemer. He has never asked for recognition or remuneration. He does his work freely as unto the Lord and not unto men. Surely when the day of reckoning shall come he will not lose his reward, nor fail to receive the recognition of the great Head of the Church universal!





CHAPTER XIV.

The Snowbirds and the Indians—The Settlers and their New Neighbors—The Red Man's Rights—Protection of the Law—Benefits of Civilization—Yearly Payments—Gifts—Missionaries—Common Schools—Orphanage—A Suggestion—Who will be First?—Government Helps—A Wish.

WHEN the warmth of the approaching spring starts the rills on the hillsides, and swells the streams in the valley, the tiny snowbirds, that have kept us company all the long winter, unable to endure the heightening of the temperature, go back to the more congenial shores of the Arctic Sea. When the clamor and strife of advancing civilization are heard in the near distance, the red man of the forest, who came in the long ago to dwell here, unaccustomed to the activities of trade centres, retires to the more pleasing solitudes of forest-land or shore of lake. Unlike the birds, however, the natives of the west in going leave their broad and fertile praries in the hands of strangers. Ambition, avarice, cunning, toil, and skill,

go to work without opposition. The settler and the speculator pass through the land without molestation. Life and property are safe, because the original owners of the soil are not malicious. Men grow rich and increase in goods, without thinking of how the poor souls exist whose land they have taken with but slight return, whose forbearance and peacefulness they have neither recognized nor rewarded.

Has the Indian no rights which we are bound to respect? Has this blanket-wrapped, bare-headed, war-painted savage no claim upon our pity or our power to help? Have his wrongs and his wants no power of appeal? Must he fade and perish before our eyes as fades the snow when the sun moves zenithward? Are we to roll in affluence while this poor beggar lies at our gates unpitied and uncared for? Is there not a sense of fair play in civilization's heart? Has not religion an unselfish desire to lift a fallen brother? Where, then, are the evidences of Christian charity—the proofs of the good will we bear to our brethren who wander and are weary?

We give them the protection of the law.

Yes! But do you not see that the law is one-sided in this case? You are protected from him. He is not protected from you. If he does you an injury you seek and obtain redress. He, when injured, has no

money and no knowledge of the methods of reaching you by the arms of the law. This is the reason why his own hands revenge injured innocence or outraged helplessness.

We give them the benefits of civilization.

Yes, we do! diluted and out-proportioned by the curses of a society notorious for its strong defects. Western rascality, borderland indulgence, and physical derangements have already carried off many victims. We give the white man's curse to be the red man's ruin. Unlimited permits are death to prohibition and to morality. We give them the poorest: we withhold more than is meet, and so win the disrespect of men naturally anxious to admire us. The representatives of our race best known to them, are, as a rule, lax in morals; and the result is contempt for our Christian integrity. Sow we not with our own hands one-half the crop of troubles which we harvest just now?

We pay them annuities! This must be acknowledged; but, by so doing, are we not systematizing beggary? A golden ornament ill becomes the hands of a child. What is five dollars a year but a mouthful to the starving! Three hundred and sixty-four days of desire, and one day of gladness! Is there any wonder that your money is wasted in trinkets, and

that you are hounded to death by the most constant demands the whole year through? As for other gifts, we have yet to hear of a tribe which really receives all that in good faith was freely promised. Be it admitted that they are not yet in a position to use many articles mentioned in the treaty. Then why promise absolutely what was only relatively intended? Long before pay-day comes, and often after, crowds of expectant people leave their avocations and gather at the place appointed. They are out on holiday. They are hungry. They are not too proud to beg. All white men are rich in their eyes, and they deem it right for the wealthy to give of their abundance to their poorer brethren. The Government gives money, food, clothing, why should not missionaries and traders do likewise? The wrong of all this is surely evident. The people are able to support themselves. The men are able-bodied. Why treat them in such a manner as to create the impression that we regard them as being physically unable to take care of themselves? Our West desires no able-bodied paupers.

We give them missionaries! To the credit of Christianity, be it said, that we have not forgotten utterly the Divine injunction, "To do good and to communicate, forget not." Our Church has done much for the

“least of these His brethren.” Yet there are things which might be mended even here. We send men out into the fields, and leave them severely alone. They are distant from us, and we know but little about them or their work ; more, however, about their work in its spiritual aspects, than about their personal privations and sufferings in the prosecution of their toil. We hope they are succeeding, doing good work for God ; but our interest is in no danger of running into enthusiasm. We give them enough to live on, but are indifferent as to whether they are in a position to prosecute diligently the work of evangelists or not. It would no doubt surprise us to be told that our men are hampered so that the spirit of rebellion is only suppressed by nobility of character and moral self-control. They do not relish months of idleness. They want to work for God all the time. They ask the Church to supply the machinery, and their presence in the field is proof enough that they will do the work.

We give them schools ! Yes, we do ; but the present system of teaching does not make an educated Indian. We give them the power to read the word of God ! So far good. Is there then but one side to the nature of an Indian, and that the moral ? Ought we not to teach them activity, make them acquainted with branches of industry, give them lessons in economy, and help them

to use the physical powers with which they are endowed in earning for themselves a livelihood that is not as precarious as hunting in the forest wilds? The missionaries are as dissatisfied with our present system, as are the Indian agents. Everybody desires a new basis of action: a more practical, a more beneficial method of imparting knowledge; a giving of the kind of instruction that will tell influentially upon the life, is what the case and the times seem to require.

We have given them an orphanage. True! but this does not cover the case of Indian children. The honor due to John McDougall shall not be lessened by pen of ours; but the whole race are orphans for that matter. Every child of those people needs all that philanthropy and religion combined can do to save him from ruin by lifting him up to a higher plane of existence. If this is not done, we need hardly expect that a future generation will be an improvement on the present one. What is done should be intended and adapted to the permanent elevation of the whole race, and "the King's business requires haste."

What, then, is suggested! With deference, we speak of the establishment of a Central Industrial School, say at Prince Albert, to be fed by branch schools conveniently located, say at Norway House and Edmonton. Let trades be taught the growing boys. Let

them see the development of vegetation year by year, in field or garden. Allow them to plant and reap for themselves until they are interested by their own success. Let the ground be tastefully adorned, that a love of the beautiful may be awakened in the youthful observers. Let them have freedom ; for a wild bird does not readily take to life in a cage. Let a religious atmosphere pervade the place, so as to inculcate fervor, and inspire devotion. Let religious instruction be regularly given, that the whole nature may be rounded by a complete system of education.

Surely men thus prepared to do battle with the world will overcome influences of which they now are the ready victims ; and who shall compute the return advantage to the nation, when years shall have revealed the results of liberal and wise dealing ?

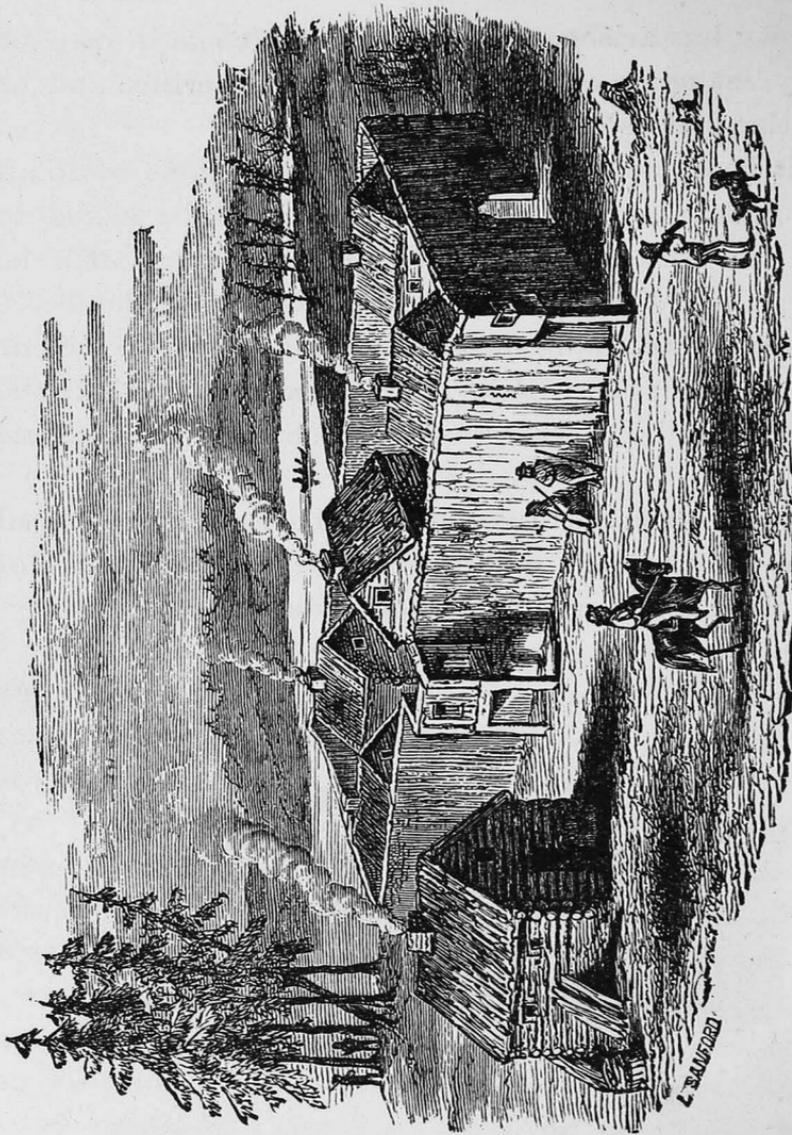
Will our Church be first to move in this matter, or allow others to move first, and then clamor for a division of the honors of subsequent action ? Brethren, let us be up and doing ! One thing is certain. No more quickly fades the light of evening, when the sun is gone, than fades the red man's chances of moral elevation under existing conditions. Crutches under the arms no more compensate for the absence of nervous force, than does our present outlay of effort support a race most in need of mental and moral invigoration. A great moral

necessity has arisen, and whatever it costs in men or money, let us meet it in the spirit of sacrifice and of Christian heroism.

If it be objected that the Church is unable to do all this unaided, then let the Government be asked to share the cost. No body of men, we judge, will be more willing than they to foster a scheme which bears on its face the stamp of feasibility and worth. None lament more than they the present waste of the treasury funds, in gew-gaws and shoddy, sweetmeats and finery.

Whether it comes from here or there, may the Lord hasten the physical, mental and moral, emancipation of a people who deserve well at our hands!





A FORT OF THE HUDSON BAY COMPANY.



CHAPTER XV.

The Hon. Hudson Bay Company—Criticism—Improvement—A Two-fold Charter—The Forts—Society Circles—Trading—Advances and Returns—Cancelling the Debts—Benevolence.

UP to the present, only the most meagre of references have been made to the great monopoly of the North-West. Our main purpose has been to afford glimpses of a certain section of our missionary domain. Missionary and mercantile interests are, however, so closely interblended, that we should consider our work incomplete unless some more than passing reference be made to those whose influence in the community is evident and undoubted. We are aware that those who write of the Company have sometimes assumed the abusive, and have denounced in no measured terms both the traders and their system. To our mind, this would appear to be as unwarranted as it is unchristian. That there are ills to be remedied is doubtless true. That imposture, overreaching, and petty tyranny do exist in some places may perhaps be proved. That

arrogant and foundationless assumption are urged and maintained against right and truth, may not be wholly false. These things exist the world over; and especially in dark and distant corners, beyond the reach of observation, criticism, and punishment. Though deplorable, it is not wonderful that unrestrained humanity inclines to evil as water to seek its own level. This is the way of the world. Far be it from us to delight in exaggerating existing evil for the purpose of awakening the odium of the outside world. Surely Christians and ministerial agents should seek by careful statement, by kind reproof, by faithful preaching, and correct living, to oppose the wrong and foster the good! Abuse and scurrility estrange and harden. Truth and kindness win and improve. We are not an apologist of the Hudson Bay Company, but a few years' experience has taught us that old things are passing away, like the darkness that pales before the rising sun. Reforms have been introduced into the administration, which, while they reflect credit upon the original promoters, are highly beneficial to the natives of the land. The risks of the trade are wondrous. The losses are often heavy. The returns are slow. The market is fluctuating. Expenses are enormous. Yet their prices are fair, and their custom of forgiving bad debts is scarcely less

worthy of them than is their practice in the direction of ministering benevolence to the aged and the poor.

Those who are acquainted with the original charter, by virtue of which the trade in North American fur was inaugurated, will remember that the "Company of adventurers trading into Hudson Bay," had a religious as well as a commercial commission. This part of their policy was carried out for many years; but when the missionaries came in, the religious aspect of the-fur trade faded into oblivion. It must be admitted, however, that a vast moral influence was exerted throughout the land by the officers of forts, which helped, not a little, to prepare the way of the heralds of the cross. Not a few of the gentlemen in charge to-day "fear God and work righteousness." Great numbers of the men are attentive hearers of the Word of Life. Some are "followers of those who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises." May the Lord of Life hasten the time when evangelistic effort, under Divine influence, shall have awakened and led to Christ every redeemed soul in this wild and silent land!

The magnitude of the Company's business and the richness of its exchequer must not be judged by the external appearance of the forts. A central plot of grass crossed with raised footwalks, a range of clumsy

log-houses with pavilion roofs forming the four sides of a square, palisaded walls through which open two-leaved gates of great strength, make up the general appearance. Outside of the stockade, to the left, is a dog-yard; to the right is a barn-yard; between is a house for the men. On a neighboring eminence is a powder-house. Lying idly on the beach are a few York boats. Leaning grave rails may be discerned in the distance, half hidden by the trees of rustling poplar. A few camps of birch or deer skins, pitched here and there, and a few log-houses built by the shore, complete the picture. The internal arrangement of the houses is neither grand nor gorgeous. The officers do not fit up for themselves abodes of luxury. They do not aim at keeping abreast with the architectural or decorative advancement of the age. They are money makers—fortune seekers—and to them profit is preferable to splendor, and solid gain out-values luxurious indulgence.

To the people of the forts are the missionaries and their wives indebted for all their social intercourse and their intelligent associations. Kindness, consideration, and respect are invariably manifested by the gentlemen of the various stations toward every member of the mission-staff, as well as to visitors from the outside world.

As these trading-posts are centres of semi-yearly convention for all the Indians of their respective vicinities, the missionaries find opportunities of instructing the assembled people in matters pertaining to salvation. Not unfrequently the word thus sown is harrowed in and applied by the company's officials. This may not always be done from unselfish love ; but in that Christ is preached we rejoice, " yea, and will rejoice."

The method of trading usually adopted is about as follows: In October the natives gather at the Fort and "take debt" as they put it, or, in other words, to receive advances on the hunt of the approaching winter. A good man will bring in say from three hundred to four hundred skins each spring. The advance made is about half of that. One Indian and his wife are admitted to the trading-shop at a time. The book-keeper charges him with two hundred skins. A skin equals about sixty cents, so that his debt reaches to nearly \$120.00. He is then presented with 200 quills, and he proceeds to make his purchases. First of all come blankets and heavy clothing for winter ; then twine for nets ; powder and shot, knives and utensils, luxuries and trinkets. Purchases completed, these are dismissed and others are admitted. One by one the purchasers strike tents and away, until the last

camp disappears and the fort is quiet and lonely. The fort-master now feels that anything of worth secured by these people in their work of hunting, after their own immediate wants are supplied, belongs to him. Hence free-traders are looked upon with suspicion, and are opposed until they are driven to the wall. Several times, perhaps, through the winter, the heads of families will come in for supplementary supplies, so that they are well in debt by the spring-time. Next come the returns. Moose and deer meat are perhaps plentiful, and many sleds are loaded and driven to the fort; that is so much of a credit. Then sturgeon oil and quills are added. Of greater value is the supply of leather mooseskin, and deerskin, ready tanned. Best of all is the prime dressed fur, ready for sale in the London market. Bearskins—white, brown, and black. Fox pelts—red, silver, and black. Beaver—black and brown; and almost every conceivable species of fur, from the shaggy coat of the almost extinct musk-ox to the smooth covering of the tiny ermine. When these returns are made he may yet be slightly in debt. If so he goes out to hunt for fresh venison; or he goes with the boats when they transport the returns to the seaboard; or he carries the mail-packet to the nearest port, usually a hundred miles away; or he goes back to the wilds again to gather up a few more of nature's

valuables. Thus is his account squared up, and he is allowed to draw again on the following year. If, however, the man is unfortunate, loses his own health, or is bereaved of dear ones, and returns with but a small credit there is no complaint. He is still trusted; and, if the debt becomes discouragingly great, it is usually blotted out and the delinquent is allowed the chance of beginning again. When the hunter gets old and feeble, he is still welcome to powder and shot and a few of the essentials of the hunt free of charge; and when sickness comes, medicines are administered without money or price, and food, tea, and tobacco are given at the Company's expense.

Many have spoken evil of the H. B. C. *regime*; but, take it for all in all, we never shall look upon its like again.





CHAPTER XVI.

The Canadian Sentiment—Enemies of the Red Race—A Brother's Claim—Mute Appeals—Idolators' Society—Poisoning—Examples—Effects of Bad Medicine—Treatment of the Weaker Sex—Illustrations—Bigamy—Intelligence—Beauty of Expression—As Laborers—Indian Instinct—Loyalty—Gems to be Freed from Defilement—A Case in Point.

IT is taken for granted that our readers are thoroughly Canadian in sentiment toward the aborigines of the land. Our national policy toward the original owners of the soil has long been one of peace. The friendly relations which for many years have existed between us and the natives is evidence sufficient that there is no better plan of dealing with the vexed question of Indian rights. The country is satisfied to maintain the peaceful and amicable arrangements already existing, even though the maintenance of the system incurs no small outlay. We do not desire to effect a union between the gospel of the first century and the revolvers of the nineteenth. We have no

sympathy with Western destructiveness, that would solve the problem of the red man's race by means of powder and shot. Force is not the only civilizer. Brutality is not the best factor in social reform. Kindness is generally better than severity. The voice of love is always sweeter than the deafening bass salvos of field cannon. To lift men up is more Christian than to trample them beneath the feet of careless rage. To save the endangered, to instruct the ignorant, to open the eyes of the blind, to preach the gospel to the poor—these things are elements of our success in the treatment of the children of our forests. Far hence be the unhappy day when our councillors shall consider it wise to strengthen their administration by resorting to war. Let us rather maintain our proud position, and prove to the world, by the exercise of humanity even toward barbarians, that a peace policy pays.

In spite of the national position assumed, there are many who do not look with favor upon these dwellers in tents, these wandering Arabs of the woodland and prairie. They regard missionary expenditure with extreme disfavor, a wilful waste of money, that has in it the force of reform if rightly expended. They consider the toil of our frontier evangelists as labor spent in vain, and so much of valuable lives wasted

for small if any return. The Indian, say they, is not worth the attention he receives. Better to leave him in his native gloom than to open his eyes to his moral deformity, for

“ Where ignorance is bliss,
’Tis folly to be wise.”

We judge that a good deal of this unfavorable criticism is the result of unacquaintance with actual missionary influence. Sometimes it is indulged in as excuse for limited liberality. With a few, perhaps, the wish is father to the thought. Others, judging from what is seen about our towns, write down the whole race as indexed by diseased and drunken vagabonds of the beggar persuasion, who haunt the willow-covered suburbs of our centres of activity and trade. Now, while we have no desire to paint the red man white, or to make him appear more admirable than circumstances would warrant, there are still grounds for the conviction that many excellent traits of character are found associated with the lives of the poor, despised, and neglected hunters who roam the solitudes of our land. Fennimore Cooper’s coloring may be deemed objectionable, but the facts of the case are adverse to the depreciation of this age. He may not be the *noble* red man, but he is a brother, having

a full fraternal claim upon Christian sympathies. If he does not realize his right to our help, that is no reason why we should ignore it. If he does not press the wants of his moral nature upon our attention, there is still every reason why we should urge our benevolence upon his acceptance. The mute appeals of abject poverty and of hopeless misery are far more potent with the discerning than the mumbled mutterings and praying solicitations of able-bodied mendicants. Physicians do not prescribe to suit the varying inclinations of fever-stricken and debilitated patients. They attack the disease, to the present discomfort of the sufferer, satisfied to wait for the favor of their subject until restored health proves the wisdom of the treatment. Let the woes of a sin-laden and idolatrous people move our Christian compassions until effort and sacrifice shall not be deemed too great an expense for the redemption of those who know not God. Let the claims of a common brotherhood awaken our liberality and our unselfish devotion to the general weal. Let the commands of a universal Fatherhood remove once and for ever any lingering doubts which we still may have concerning the advisability of going into all the world and preaching the gospel to every creature.

“ Through midnight's gloom from Macedon,
The cry of myriads as of one ;

The voiceful silence of despair
Is eloquent with awful prayer;
The soul's exceeding bitter cry,
Come over and help us, or we die !'
These brethren to their brethren call ;
And by the love that loved us all,
And by the whole world's life they cry,
Oh, ye that live, behold we die !''

They are idolators, it is true. They worship the sea as the king of waters, the tallest tree as the royalty of the forest, the largest beast as the chief ruler of animal tribes, the sun as the father of lights, the north-wind as prince of the power of the air. They try to venerate a deceased grandfather, that his spirit may interest the higher powers in behalf of needy descendants. They strive to appease the prince of evil from a fear of his malignant power. They trust the Great Spirit for every good, because they believe him to be a spontaneously benevolent being, who wills the good of all. They offer sacrifices, bring gifts, sing praises, present petitions—but there is no answering voice nor any that regardeth amongst all their fancied deities. Hope long deferred, maketh the heart sick. Faith often exercised and never rewarded leaves the heart hard and unbelieving. A religion which is all form and no spirit inspires contempt. One wonders that heathen tribes do not sink lower than they do. What have

they to control them, what to make them hopeful, what to excite spiritual aspirations? The better part of their natures is asleep; and it becomes us, actuated by love divine, to go out that we may awaken them out of sleep,—

“ And turn them to a pardoning God,
And quench the brands in Jesus' blood.”

Growing out of this idolotary are many evils, prominent among which are a few that we shall mention:—

The condition of society. People who have no faith in God have but little faith in one another, and are not apt to be exemplary in their mutual intercourse. Suspicion and subtilty take the place of mutual confidence and genial co-operation. Selfishness enthrones itself and enslaves many victims. Hatred, unchecked by salutary fear, finds frequent expression in open violence, or in “cunning craftiness, whereby men lie in wait to deceive.” Hence wars arise, and strife between brethren, ending, not unfrequently, in loss, discomfort, and death.

The habit of poisoning a rival or an enemy is unfortunately very prevalent in certain localities. A general knowledge of roots and herbs is possessed by all conjurers, and they supply the instruments of

destruction to every one who will pay for the favor and vow to keep a life-long secret. These poisons can be administered to the object of hatred by pipe or by a cup of tea. The effect is slow but sure. Life is not taken, but beauty is for ever defaced.

William was the husband of a wife who was a good worker, a splendid cook, but withal a lively, good-natured creature. Being of a jealous disposition, William deemed his partner in life less mindful of him than of others, and he proceeded to correct her much as he would his dog. She resented the treatment, and seizing the earliest opportunity of escape, fled for refuge to the Company's fort, one hundred miles away. William returning late, and finding his lodge forsaken, started in pursuit of the fugitive. Long and hard he paddled, but failed to overhaul her fleet canoe. At length greatly enraged he reached the post. It was midnight, and not a sound stirred the air. The wife, greatly fatigued with her journey, had fallen into a deep sleep on the floor of the trader's dining-room. Stealthily approached the jealous husband, poison in hand, and sprinkled the defacing powder on cheek and nose of the unsuspecting sleeper. His heart's desire being realized, he quickly retreated, crept into his canoe again, and by break of day was far beyond the pain and grief he had occasioned. An hour later the

victim awoke, conscious of an intense pain in the face. Help was called, and it was soon discovered that posion had acted upon the parts touched as if it had been muriatic acid. The flesh had been eaten to the bone. The parts affected were quickly washed, but all the skill in the country could not heal that disfigured face. The outward evidence of an enraged husband's brutality must be carried to the grave.

Baptiste Cook was the master's assistant at one of the inland forts. It was his duty to meet the fishermen every morning on their return from the nets, sort out the fish, ration the employees, feed the dogs, and, if the catch was good, give a portion to any loungers that were camped in the vicinity.

On a certain morning, an Indian medicine-man, unusually hungry, but too lazy to fish or hunt, came down to the beach for a share of the spoils. The yield that morning was very poor, and the hungry man was compelled to forgo his early repast. Looking at Baptiste he said, with shake of head and fist, "I will remember you for this," and so he did. Knowing well the meaning of such a threat, the sorter of fish kept out of old Joe's road for many a month, until the occurrence was well nigh forgotten. About mid-winter of the following year, Joe sent a request to the trader. He was sick, and needed some supplies. His

boys were all far away pursuing their avocation. Could a man be sent from the fort with the articles required? If so, the sled should be loaded with the best of furs. Baptiste was the messenger selected for the journey. His duty was faithfully performed. His sled was strapped for the return trip, richly laden. He offered his hand in token of departure. Joe appeared to be displeased, pressed him to stay for a meal, or at any rate to have a smoke. In an evil moment Baptiste yielded. He took the filled pipe which was offered him, smoked it out, and rose to go. Again Joe pressed him to remain, but finding that he was determined to return, he kissed him and bade him go in peace. An hour later the messenger felt a surprising faintness come over him. He was dizzy, and stiff in the joints, and weak. Throwing himself upon the sled, he was dragged for two days over lake and river until his own house was reached. By this time pimples appeared on the skin of hands and face, and the victim of revenge long-delayed, knew that he had been poisoned. For a month he lay between life and death. Then he rallied, but from that day to this he has suffered fearfully, without being able either to mitigate or cure the terrible ailment.

Curious indeed are the effects of this poisoning. When the warmth of spring swells the buds, the dis-

colored rash begins to appear. The blisters formed are filled with water. As vegetation develops the sufferer becomes worse. When the leaves begin to fade the symptoms are less severe, and in winter time the only evidence of poison is the discoloration of the skin, and the presence of a dark, coarse beard on the chin and face.

Another evil which one regrets to discover, is the *unkind treatment of the women*. Every man who has attained to any age is a bigamist. His wives are his slaves. They are hewers of wood and drawers of water. They are camp-builders and burden bearers. They do the cooking, the tailoring, and the dress-making. They visit the deadfalls and the snares. They bring home the meat and dry it for preservation. They prepare the skins for the market, and tan the hides for the moccasins. In a word, they are general slaves, subject to the behests of the most thoughtless and relentless of taskmasters.

On the morning of a warm March day we were standing in front of our mission-house door, ready to greet the chief of that country, but newly-arrived from the vast interior. While we were exchanging greetings, our attention was called to an approaching procession. It was composed of the wives and children, dogs and effects, of the chief. On they came,

trudging through nearly a foot of soft snow. Young and old were struggling, splashing through the wet on their way to the camping-place. Wife number one had her baby on her back in an Indian cradle. Ahead of her marched a poor, skinny dog, trying to drag a sled, on which was piled nearly a hundred pounds of dried venison. In the hands of the woman was a heavy stick, one end of which rested upon the laden sled. By means of this, she helped to move along the load which the dog alone could not move. Over her shoulders passed a rope, attached to a sled in the rear, well filled with household effects. This she drew unaided. Thus burdened, she essayed to climb the hill on the top of which it was desired to place the tent. The path was slippery, the footing bad, and she fell, baby and cradle tumbling over her head into the snow, while the second sled ran back to the foot of the plane, colliding vigorously with a dog train belonging to wife number two. Loud laughed the man at the woman's discomfiture, but never an offer of help was forthcoming. Loud laughed the older wife in response, but there was no manifestation of sympathy. Stung by adverse criticism she rose, placed the cradle deep in the snow that it might not fall, pushed the dog sled up the hill, then followed with her own, making way for her waiting sister, who, profiting by the acci-

dent, had better luck in her ascent. As if by magic, up went the tent, and very speedily dinner was announced: then only did this lord of creation condescend to join the family, that he might assist in the disposition of the good things provided by the toil of his slaves.

At Norway House dwelt Robert Atinow, who with his wife were worthy members of the village church. He was a local-preacher; and she, though uncommissioned, was a capital speaker. Life at the mission home had so far enlightened Betsy that she resented the unbecoming neglect with which her husband treated her, and information was laid before the worthy pastor which went to show that she chafed under intolerable grievances. A church trial was instituted. Robert was charged with drinking the tea, monopolizing the sugar, eating the best of the meat, devouring all the bread, leaving leaves and crumbs and bones to the share of his beloved. The right in the case was explained to the worthy local-preacher. The consequences of neglect were pointed out, but punishment was unnecessary. Robert readily promised amendment, and Betsy was confident that he would keep his word. A month later both parties declared their entire satisfaction at the change in their relations. He said it was far more pleasant to divide half and half

with his worthy housekeeper. She declared that it was easier doing the choring now that the head of the house was willing to make some sacrifices for her sake. Thus was a woman's rights secured through the influence of the Church, and from one case the reader may learn all.

As for bigamy, it is never allowed under any circumstances whatever ; yet the overthrow of this system of evil is one of the most difficult tasks which the missionary has to perform. How to provide for the abandoned ones, is the difficult question. It is really surprising how goodnaturedly the men accept this law of the Church, and in many cases the women are as ready to go as their husbands are to be relieved. The rule favors the claim of the senior wife, but many instances occur in which the right is waived voluntarily in favor of the younger women. Common sense would seem to suggest the propriety of asking the husband to care for the younger children, inasmuch as they are burdensome still to the mother, and would prevent her from earning a living. The first family would so far have grown up as to be able to support their mother, and give her a home with them. In this way provision is made for the wants of both sides. Yet no one rule can be made to work in all cases. To the honor of the H. B. Company be it said, that many

favours are shown toward these semi-widows, who are often allowed a chance to earn a dollar when others are refused.

Still another very marked evil is the *deceptiveness of Indian character*. As this question was discussed in another connection, it is not necessary to open it up again. We are not sure that this failing is peculiarly and distinctively Indian or foreign.

It must be admitted that these people are ignorant and uncivilized. It is gratifying to learn that they are easily improved in appearance, and that they are apt scholars. Taking into account the difference between home and foreign advantages, a school of red children will compare not unfavorably with the average country school in civilized countries. It has been said that they are smart, not able; but many pleasing exceptions occur. The Rev. Professor Bryce, Principal of Manitoba College, is authority for the statement that a pure Indian lad in his classes is at the head of the roll in almost every branch. The young people are quick in their perceptions and strong in their intuitions. They are extremely cautious. They have retentive memories. They delight in discovery. The one thing lacking is a perfect acquaintance with English methods of thought and expression; and added to that, inability to understand the uses of protracted study.

Intelligent men will master the Evans' Syllabic Characters in a couple of months, and read with ease and fluency in three or four. It is customary for one member of the household to repeat the sermon heard in church to those who from sickness or otherwise could not get out to the place of prayer. Their figures and similes are both beautiful and expressive, and their methods of embellishment possess a high order of excellence.

A Christian Indian, descending the Saskatchewan in company with a member of his tribe who had embraced the Catholic faith, was one day drawn into a discussion on the subject of religion. He did not fear to accuse his friend of practising idolatry. "You are an idolator," said the Protestant convert.

"On what grounds do you make your charge?" queried the other.

"Well, I observe you wear a necklace," continued the first speaker. "What is that for?"

"These are prayers that I count when I am not at leisure to pray at length," answered the Catholic.

"But what means the large central bead with the cross attachment.

"That is a paternoster."

"And the smaller beads on each side?"

"They are *Ave Marias*."

“Well, any man who is in the habit of making nine prayers to the Virgin Mary, and only one to God, is pretty much of an idolater in my judgment.”

“Oh, but you do not understand it. You know one paternoster is worth the whole lot of the *Ave Marias*.”

An Indian orator was one day instituting comparisons between the races.

“You see,” said he, “that bar of iron. It is exposed to the weather. It rusts. It is coated. The work goes on until it is weakened, ruined, and must be wrought over again before it is worth anything. Look at the granite hill. Our fathers looked upon that, and we look upon it. It has not changed in appearance. The weather cannot rust or ruin it. It stands the test of passing years. So to me it seems to be with the races of this land. The Indian rusts under the influences of civilization. Contact with the white race corrupts and ruins him, body and soul. Yet the white man lives, endures the temptations of his age, and changes not. He is wise. He is strong. He is good. Why the difference? Yes, I think I understand it. Religion gives to our white friends the power of resistance and endurance which we lack. Fortified with the grace and power of God, even we may endure the heat of the furnace-like strife, which comes to us with the on-rush of the tribes of the

south. If God be with us we shall walk unhurt in flame."

Granted that these poor children of nature are degraded, immoral, ignorant; they are not worthless. The Bishop of Rupert's Land, who had ample chance of observing during an extended episcopal tour, pronounces them the best boatmen that he ever employed—active, fearless, and strong. When Dr. Rae was looking for Franklin by the overland route, he got so near to the pole that compasses would no longer serve him. In despair of again finding the camp he turned to his men and said, "We are lost, I am afraid." "No," said the guide, an old man from Norway House, "follow me and I will take you back to the camp safely." In this case the instinct of an old man, which was better than scientific observation, did valuable service to discovery. When there was trouble in the valley of the Red River, the tribes of the north would have marched *en masse* to the scene of conflict had their services been required. They have clothed the world in robes of rare beauty, and of great value. Gems they are, bedimmed by a too close contact with the evil of earth but capable of shining out again with purest ray serene when washed and polished by the all-cleansing Power divine.

That this is possible, is evidenced by the following story of a good man's death :—

When James Evans, the immortal pioneer missionary of this country, began his work of faith at Norway House, William Memotas was a pagan, strong in his beliefs and prejudices. It was a long time before he repented of sin and turned to God ; but the change once effected, he became an excellent supporter of the cause he had so long opposed. His conversion was clear. His experience was definite and rich. His influence was great and good. He became a useful and intelligent local-preacher, and a faithful and zealous class-leader. He was the happy possessor of an amiable temperament. There was a general sweetness about him which made his presence a delight. His face shone with an immortal radiance. He was an everyday Christian. We never heard of his having committed an inconsistent act during the whole thirty years of his Christian life. His only desire was to get to Heaven, and to help others on their way. He went about doing good. He was the village doctor, and the friend of the sick and the poor.

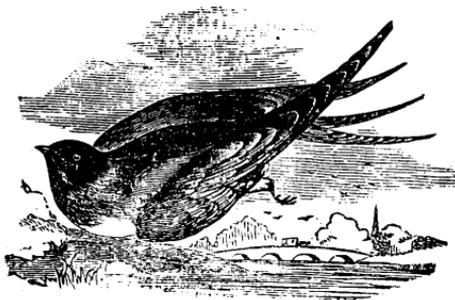
About nine days before his death, a severe cold settled upon his lungs, which had been diseased for a good while. Never did a weary traveller welcome his bed of rest more than did William the grave. Re-

signing his family to the care of his heavenly Father, he was fully absorbed by the prospect of soon entering into life. His pain was great, but his joy was full. To him the valley was not dark. He partook of the Lord's Supper with a few friends, and—

“Like a sacrament divine,
Seemed to him the bread and wine.”

“My precious Saviour,” he exclaimed, “I shall soon see him.” Dear man! a log hut, a bed of rabbit skins, failing breath, but a soul triumphing over death through the blood of Christ. Silently, sweetly, he passed through the pearly gates, and was forever freed from earthly toils and pains.

“Oh, may I triumph so,
When all my warfare's past;
And, dying, find *my* latest foe,
Under *my* feet at last.”





CHAPTER XVII.

A Golden Chain—Robinson Treaties—The Policy of the Government—Manitoba Treaty—How the News Spread—Excitement—Calculations—Expectancy—It comes—The *Colville*—Birch Canoes *versus* Steamers—The Pow-wow—Clear-headedness—Purchases and Fun—Terms of the Treaty—Signatures—Let there be Peace.

THE relation of the Dominion of Canada to the Indians of the North-West is a subject of vital importance, and it may not be out of place for us briefly to refer to but one link in the chain which unites, let us hope for ever, the red race with the white.

Ever since September, 1850, when the Honourable W. B. Robinson, in the name of the late Province of Canada, treated with the 3,400 Chippewas of Lakes Huron and Superior, and agreed to give them £4,000 sterling and £1,000 annuity for each year thereafter, there has been a strong desire voiced from all parts of this country that duly authorized agents be sent to conclude alliances with the several tribes.

This the authorities at the helm of affairs have endeavoured to do, allowing themselves to be guided by circumstances which were the most pressing, and keeping before them the interests of settlers, lumbermen, traders, miners and navigators.

It was in the fall of 1870 that Wemyss M Simpson and Robert Pether, acting in conjunction with the Hon. A. G. Archibald, then Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, effected an alliance with the Indians of Manitoba at Lower Fort Garry, twenty miles north of Winnipeg. This had the effect of allaying the uneasiness consequent upon the large influx of immigrants from the older-settled districts west of the great lakes, and it secured to the Government the lands fit for settlement and the timber limits likely to be of use to millers and manufacturers.

In this Manitoba Treaty were included a number of Swampy Crees, who at one time had lived much further to the north, but who, for some reason, had become separated from their own people, and had taken up their abode near the mouth of the Red River. These Swampies were the boatmen of the Hudson's Bay Company, and were frequently called to transport freight from Lower Fort Garry to York Factory, passing Norway House on their way. Naturally enough, they carried out the news of presents and money and

promises, which meant more money year by year, to their countrymen residing at places which they would touch *en route*. This had the effect of awakening a wide-spread interest which stirred the hopes of the dwellers on the coast line of Winnipeg Lake. All sorts of requirements were cut and dried for presentation to the Commissioners when they should arrive. The wildest fancies were indulged. Councils met and adjourned in confusion. Every one had the very best plan of procedure to recommend. One would have schools, teachers, gratuities to sick and poor. Another would have pork, flour, and whiskey. Another would have the Government appoint an agent to live with the tribe, teach them the white man's ways, and pay them as they had need out of the annuity fund. A new but ever-increasing value was placed upon the lands traversed by the tribe, inasmuch as they were to be a passport into the favor of the Great Chiefs, who were sure to come with proposals of purchase. Some even went so far as to calculate what they would do with the "five dollars a head" which they expected to receive. There was "Chon" and "Cheemes" and "Pouly" and "Marriah" and mama and papa, six; that was six times five, thirty dollars!! To men who had never seen money in their lives, that seemed a great fortune. Time dragged heavily on their

hands. Months were as years, and years were like ages.

It was about midsummer of 1875 that word reached Norway House to the effect that the Treaty Commissioners would come out in the early fall. Then there was a commotion. Boatmen would not hire for long trips. Distant hunters were recalled. Men divided their time between lounging, eating, smoking, and discussing the probabilities. Becoming restless at the Mission, the majority of the people went down to the shores of the great lake, and there waited with oft-strained eyes for many days.

Roderick Ross, Esq., a chief factor in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company, surveyed the channel from the old or abandoned fort at the outlet of Lake Winnipeg, to the present headquarters of his district twenty miles further north, across what is known as Great Play Green Lake, and everything was in readiness for the long-expected arrival.

"It comes already!" "It comes already!" Many times over were the words echoed, each time with increasing certainty. The forenoon was far advanced, and it was difficult to look southward along the smooth waters; but eager eyes had sighted smoke where no island was known to be. "*Is-cut-as Che-mun!*" (steam boat) shouted the children. "Sure enough,"

said Mr. Ross, "there she is." The tents were forsaken. Even the dogs all came down to the shore to catch a glimpse of something interesting.

Meantime, while excitement ran at fever heat, the old *Colville*, well known as the Company's steamer plying between Lower Fort Garry, came into fuller view, and by eleven o'clock of the 23rd of September she had reached the old fort. Roderick Ross, Esq., went on board and piloted the first steamer that ever descended the Nelson River, a distance of twenty miles through almost countless shoals and islets, to his fort. The speed was necessarily small; so much so that when the boat was moored at the Norway House landing, many canoe loads of Indians, who had seen her in the distance from the lake side, were already present to greet the arrival of the distinguished strangers with a noisy but irregular salute of fire-arms.

There was very little sleep for the excited villagers that night. On the one side of the river were the pagan Swampies from Cross Lake; on the other the Christians of Rossville. On the one side heathen practices were observed, on the other were religious services. The camp-fires burned brightly the whole night through. The teapots were not allowed to cool. Pipes were smoked out, replenished, and burned out again. The hum of conversation was increasing, and the Council sat till the gray of the morning appeared.

The pow-wow was held in a large warehouse, placed at the disposal of the party by the chief factor. The chiefs of the bands were elected in a most business-like manner, and the councillors were nominated after a little consultation.

The Hon. Alexander Morris accepted the appointments, and, in a speech of considerable length, because spoken through an interpreter, declared the object of his mission. The question of reserves was the only one which required any discussion. The pagans wanted to remain at Cross Lake. Some of the Christians wanted to go south to Grassy Narrows; but because the Icelanders were there they were given Fisher River instead, and the decision was accepted. The treaty was then signed, the medals and uniforms were distributed, and the payment began, lasting until mid-day of the 25th.

The commissioners recognized the quick perceptions and the enlightened judgment of the Norway House Indians, as excelling anything they had yet observed. At the North-West Angle three days were taken up with useless talk. Before the Qu'Appelle Treaty could be ratified six days of discussion passed; but at this post two or three hours did all the work. The fact is, the people had been so schooled in patriotism, and in consideration for the rights of others, and had

reaped such mental advantages from the Mission and the Fort. that they meant what they said, and accepted other people's words at their face value. Hence, where bitter misunderstandings might have been, delaying proceedings and annoying the agents, there was nothing but cordial agreement, followed by a hearty vote of thanks to the Queen and her officers for their kindness to the Indian people.

Following the payments and the departure of the white chiefs, came the expenditures of a people unused to handling money, and unacquainted with its value. Squaws, with soiled and tattered garments, struggled along under the latest fashion in hats. Indians, with new broadcloth coats, roped in their anatomy with tinsel strings, ornamented with gaudy tassels. Boys went strutting around in coats big enough for their fathers; and girls, whose hair had never known a comb, were tricked out in ribbons of every hue. All appeared to enjoy themselves immensely; and though white men shook with uncontrollable laughter at the ridiculous antics of natives who had for the first time been indulging in the luxury of spending money, yet they were delighted to see them happy, and cordially wished them many returns of "Treaty Day."

So passed into the hands of the Government of Canada 100,000 square miles of country, much of

which is wood land of considerable value. It must be added that similar meetings were held at Beren's River and at Grand Rapids, where a similar routine was



AN OLD TIME TREATY—W. M. PENN AND THE INDIANS.

observed; and these three places are but the centres of the immense area covered by Treaty Number Five.

This treaty, which would be too dry for the average boy or girl, surrenders all lands within a certain circle to Her Majesty the Queen and her successors for ever.

Her Majesty agrees to lay aside one hundred and sixty acres for each family of five ; and in proportion for larger or smaller families, to be included within certain reserves duly located and bounded ; reserving in every case the free navigation of all lakes and rivers, and free access to the shores thereof.

Her Majesty also agrees to give a present of five dollars to each man, woman, and child belonging to the bands acknowledging the treaty.

Her Majesty further agrees to maintain schools for instruction in such reserves as her Government shall deem worthy of them ; judgment to be based upon the expressed desire of the Indians.

Her Majesty further agrees that until otherwise determined by her Government of the Dominion of Canada, no intoxicating liquor shall be allowed to be introduced or sold ; and all laws existing or to be enacted for the purpose of saving her Indian subjects from the curse of drunkenness, shall be strictly enforced in all the reserves.

It is further agreed between Her Majesty and the Indians of this treaty, that \$500 shall be spent yearly

in the purchase of ammunition and twine, to be distributed by the Indian Agent; and that a place or places of meeting shall be indicated yearly to all Indian bands within the treaty, where the Indian Agent will pay to each Indian person the sum of five dollars per head.

Two hoes are to be given to each family cultivating land, and also one spade.

One plough is promised to every five families, five harrows to every twenty families, one scythe to every family, and also one axe.

Each band is to receive one cross-cut saw, one hand saw, one pit saw, the necessary files, one grindstone, and one augur.

Each chief receives a chest of ordinary carpenter's tools.

Enough of wheat, barley, potatoes, and oats to sow the land actually broken, is promised to all reserves.

Every band is to receive one yoke of oxen, one bull, and four cows—all for their encouragement in the practice of agriculture.

The Indians on their part solemnly engage to abide by the treaty, to keep the laws of the land, to refrain from interference with or molestation of any of Her Majesty's subjects, to behave themselves generally,

and to be loyal to the Great Mother beyond the seas.

The treaty, after being duly read and explained, was signed by:—

ALEXANDER MORRIS, [L.S.]

JAMES MCKAY. [L.S.]

DANIEL RUNDLE, *Chief*.

JAMES COCHRANE,
HARVY KOOSTATAK,
CHARLES PASIKWINAPE, } *Councillors*.

TAPESTANUM, *Chief*.

GEORGE GARVISCH,
PROUD MCKAY, } *Councillors*.

JACOB BERENS, *Chief*.

ANTOINE GONIN,
NAH-KE-QUAM-NAY-ASH,
PEE-WAH-NOO-WEE-NIN, } *Councillors*.

PETER BEARDY, *Chief*.

JOSEPH ATKINSON,
ROBERT SANDERSON, } *Councillors*.

In presence of—

JOHN H. RUTTAN,
O. GERMAN,
E. R. YOUNG,
RODERICK ROSS,
D. C. MCTAVISH,
A. G. JACQUES, M.D.,
THOMAS HOWARD,
ELIZABETH YOUNG,
CHRISTINA MORRIS,
L. C. MCTAVISH,
E. C. MORRIS, and others,

Witnesses.

Promises are easier made than kept, but we have confidence enough in the officers of the Crown to believe these new wards of the Government will be treated with all consideration and kindness. Let Canada's record be sustained. Let there be no unseemly wrangling between Church and State. Both the religious and the civil elements are necessary to the growth of the truest liberty. Thus shall we see our fellow-citizens, the Indians, pass the bounds of their minority to display the beauty of a manliness which but awaited the removal of enveloping superstitions to assert itself. Thus, too, will come a peace between the present owners of the soil and the original inhabitants of the land, which, may God grant, shall never be disturbed.



CHAPTER XVIII.

The Latest from Nelson River—Sandy Harte's Letter—No Teacher
—A Faithful Unpaid Agent—Progress—Edward Papanekiss
Writes—A Mislaidd Letter—A Hero whom the World knows not.

OUR readers will remember the case of Sandy Harte, son of the Nelson River Chief, and what came of it, and they will be pleased doubtless to hear of him after years of work. He writes :

“ NELSON RIVER, March 15th, 1883.

“ REV. J. S——, *Minister*.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,—I truly rejoice to see by your letter that you have remembered me, and now I will answer you a little, although I am sorry that I cannot do more than my ability will allow. I asked our master here to write, but he did not oblige me.

“ You have asked me to make known to you what the religious aspect of our neighborhood is like. In reply I can assure you that appearances indicate devotedness to the truth, but God only knows whether

in heart they serve Him. Religion, according to my judgment, makes more progress than it did in your day

“ There is one thing that every man of us regrets, that is we have no teacher with us in these days. It is already three winters since he went away, that is Edward Pa-pan-e-kiss. But I am thankful to God that we have service regularly still. Our brother, yours and mine, William Isbister, every Sabbath morning takes the people into service in his house, then again in the afternoon, and once more in the evening. In the middle of the week also we assemble for prayer at his house. I am very glad to be able to tell you this, for you saw his ways before he was converted. Not at all so does he live now. Like another man, so I see him. Very much he lives to do that which is good, the work which Jesus told us to do. Through the winter the children were in school also, and William was their teacher. That is the way I see that man, and no other way.

“ Another thing I wish to say to you, remember me when you pray, that God would bless me. You understand to tell Him about me in your prayers. I am convinced of that when I see your letter. So also never do I forget you since I saw you.

“ I am trying still to serve God, and as much as in me lies, to spread His name.

“I have two children now—a boy and a girl—and should you come this way I would have you baptize my little man.

“Very much I desire to see you here on earth once more, but if this is not our Father’s good pleasure, I hope to see you in heaven in the life eternal.

“Farewell, my brother, and all that you are (your family).

“He whom you were wish.

SANDY HARTE.”

This letter is similar in construction to the original, hence peculiar methods of expression; but the translation is faithful, though free.

Another native epistle is from our interpreter, who served us in the early days of our foreign work. He was converted, I think, in '73, early in the year; went to Nelson River in '74, as interpreter and assistant; and at the recall of the first missionary to that country he assumed charge of work under the supervision of the Superintendent of Norway House. His services were dispensed with in 1880, since which time our Society has had no recognized agent there:

“JANUARY 2nd, 1883.

“DEAR BROTHER,—You will know by this I received your letter, and we were very glad to hear from you, and to learn that you were well.

“ You were wishing to know how I am employed. I work for the Company, but am not forgetting my religion. I am sorry they took my duties away from me. Very much I want to work for Christ. I keep a class-meeting in my house, and attend the Sabbath afternoon service up the river at the school-house. When Mr. German is away, I am called upon to conduct services at the village.

“ Perhaps you would like to hear of the people of this place. They are striving to walk in the ways of our holy and blessed religion. Many of the young people are turning from their evil ways to God.

“ Joseph, my boy, is quite large now. How I wish I could send him to the right kind of a school! He is the only boy I have, and I do want to give him a right education.

“ Have heard no word from Nelson River lately. The people there are different from when you were there. Most of them can read in Cree characters. Even old Friday, though late baptized, can read. They are trying to serve God and walk in the ways of righteousness.

“ We all had enough fish last fall. No danger of starving this winter. We all had a good crop of potatoes too, and the deer are plentiful.

“ There have been four deaths since I wrote before.

“ We had a pleasant feast this year. I have nothing more to say. May the Lord bless you and prosper your work, that there may be fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life.

“ Yours faithfully, my brother,

EDWARD PA-PAN-E-KISS.”

This letter was so good that few changes have been made, and that principally to avoid grammatical inaccuracies. This man received his education at Ross-ville, and was one of the youngest day-scholars of the days of James Evans. He has a fair gift of speech, is quick in his perceptions, and is devout withal.

With these letters came another from William Isbistr, which has been mislaid, much to our regret. He speaks encouragingly of the work there, expresses his pleasure at being permitted to do some service to the souls of those who hunger for the truth, and concludes with fraternal greetings, and a wish to meet us in heaven.

So the works moves. If the Missionary Society is unable to send them help, God raises up one who is willing to stand in the breach, and do God and souls service without asking a dollar from any one. A hero is he, though the world knows him not.



CHAPTER XIX.

Freighting on Lake Winnipeg—York Boats—Brigades—Portages—
Means of Transport—Awaiting Shipment—Difficulties—The
Visit to the Governor—John Sifton, Esq.—Embark in Skiffs—
Force *versus* Pluck—Storms and Escapes—Home at Last.

GENERALLY our Missionaries are fortunate enough to have their yearly supplies brought to their doors by the Hudson Bay Company's York boats, passing from Fort Garry to the Posts on the Saskatchewan, or to York Factory, at the mouth of the Nelson. The charges are very high, judged from an Ontario standpoint. The freight, especially that portion which is likely to suffer from dampness, is not always delivered in good condition. Provoking delays will occur when one's needs are the most pressing. Notwithstanding all this, it is the best and only practicable way of obtaining the yearly outfits. The Company has learned by experience the unwisdom of sending a single boat across unfrequented lakes; and, having due regard to the safety of both property

and life, its boats are sent out in brigades. The propriety of this course is the more evident when the broken lines of navigation are reached. A heavy fall necessitates a portage. The boats must be emptied, lifted out of the water, and dragged across the land to the quiet stream above the boiling flood. Three boats' crews can haul one boat with ease, but fewer men would be compelled to abandon the journey where the falls are wild and the banks are precipitous. No missionary has ever yet, in the history of the North Land, had capital enough to equip and maintain a brigade of boats, even if he had freighting enough to keep them employed.

Circumstances will sometimes render it very inconvenient to wait for the arrival and departure of conveyances that are controlled by a corporation which never hurries; and then the needy missionary must measure the distance by personal effort, and obtain what is essential to comfort at the expense of his muscle. If it be in the winter, dog-trains are the only available means of transport, but in summer he can use the indispensable birch-bark canoe. With this craft he can follow the trend of the coast so closely that at any moment, when danger threatens, canoe and all can be lifted on shore, and refuge found among the hills, or beneath the pines. Anything

larger than this would be generally considered useless, unless it was equal in size to a York boat, and was so constructed as to outride the heavy swells which even moderate breezes provoke on shallow lakes like this.

It happened that in the fall of '76 the Bercns River Missionary was a prisoner in the Red River country, with his winter's stock of provisions on his hands, but with no means of procuring their removal to the far-away mission. The last days of August were still lingering, and, usually at that season of the year, brigades happened along; but this year's work had been done up with unwonted celerity, and the season was considered at a close. The crews had been disbanded, and freights were not likely to move again until the following spring.

In the dilemma private parties were canvassed, but no one could be found willing to risk the fall wrath of Lake Winnipeg for anything that could be paid. Every day lost in vain endeavor was a day nearer to the high winds of mid-September. Delay was perilous, perhaps fatal, to the purpose of reaching the field of labor which lay two hundred and fifty miles across the water.

With some hesitation the Governor of the Hudson Bay Company was approached, and the most favorable terms of sending a special boat out were solicited.

The result was not encouraging. One hundred dollars, and all the risks besides, could hardly be compassed by the limited financial ability of one whose salary was less than \$800 a year. Worse than that, the interview had been made the occasion of venting official indignation at some members of the fraternity of missionaries, whose indiscretions had closed for the time the floodgates of the Company's benevolence. With a poorly disguised indignation at the personally undeserved rebuff, the honorable gentleman was assured that favors had neither been anticipated nor solicited, and the august presence of Governor Graham was quitted without any special ceremony.

About this time John Sifton, Esq., of Selkirk, always a friend of passing missionaries, hearing of a stranger's difficulties, with great kindness offered a large boat which was at his disposal. But there was no sail, and the boat required a crew of four who would demand high wages, and might not be able to return before the close of navigation, in which case pay and provisions would draw heavily on limited funds, so that this kind offer was respectfully declined. Two small skiffs were purchased for a trifle from the half-breeds. Ten hundredweight was crowded into each. One was put in charge of an Indian anxious to winter at Berens

River, the other was taken in hand by the Missionary himself, and the journey homeward was resolved into the storms of the lake *versus* two pairs of oars.

The trip down the river and across to Willow Island was not unpleasent, but no sooner was the tent pitched than a thunderstorm burst upon the lake, lashing it into foam and affording the voyagers some idea of what had been undertaken.

As the following morning opened fair and clear, an attempt was made to cross a deep bay without coasting, which would have involved a good deal of labor and a long delay. That a mistake had been made was evident before the middle of the bay had been reached. A smart breeze started up from the shore, and in less time than it takes to record it, a considerable wave was running. Turning the boat's head towards the wind, some vigorous spurts were indulged in to no purpose. A high rate of speed only drenched us with spray and made the boats the heavier. To fly before the wind was ruinous, for sixty miles of water lay between the boats and the shore in that direction. So the oars were vigorously plied with very doubtful results. Life and property were saved in this instance by a peculiar circumstance. In the bay were some shallows where reeds and rushes grew, rearing their tall forms above the waves. Happening to reach one

of these the almost exhausted rowers grasped the swaying rushes, effected an anchorage, and obtained a much-needed rest. With energies recruited by this respite from severe exertion, another start was made, and in due time a landing was thankfully effected on the windward shore.

Following hard on this adventure was another, equally perilous, but of different character. A light fair wind encouraged the wayfarers to hoist blanket-sails, and a very respectable rate of progress was thus secured. Towards noon the wind increased and the growing waves became troublesome and threatening. Then it was discovered that the shore could not be approached with any hope of safety until a certain point, still distant, was past. The coast was iron-bound and begirt with shoals, over which the waves danced with frantic mirth. On flew the skiffs before the wind, their speed the only influence which kept the waves at bay. Little Grindstone Point was not far away, and the hearts of the helmsmen beat hard with fear. They knew well that the back-swells at the Point would be more dangerous than the long seas of the open lake. If the wind would have allowed, they would gladly have given the dreaded spot a wide berth, but their blanket-sails could not be manipulated to good advantage, so the risks must be run.

A few moments later the confused seas, in which lay the greatest danger, had been reached. Helms and sails had by this time been securely lashed, and the occupants of the boats sat with pails in hand, baling out the water which boarded the frail crafts from all sides. It was like a hand-to-hand fight with destruction. The Missionary's boat was the first to reach the quiet waters and touch the shore, but the other was not far away. Shooting through the dangerous surf, it struck an unseen rock, and sank almost within its length of shore. Its steersman escaped to the beach without difficulty, but the cargo was all in the water. Tea, coffee, matches, twine, and many other things of perishable nature were overwhelmed in the waters of a harbour after passing the dangers of open sea.

This state of things occasioned some delay, but repairs were quickly effected, and some articles were dried in the sun, and before twenty-four hours the trip was resumed.

For some days there was no adventure of moment. The lake was calm enough to admit of advancement, and though the sky wore a somewhat sullen aspect, the weather was not unfavourable. Long stretches were crossed by dint of hard rowing, with no more special result, than the weariness of the operators. This, however, was not much thought of, for they were

rapidly nearing the end of a long journey and the completion of an arduous task.

After a long spell of successful tugging at the oars, nightfall of the seventh day found them camped in a cosy harbour on the eastern coast. The wind came over the land, and the water in the bay was as quiet as a pond. Across the lake "Dog's-Head Post" could be distinctly seen in the deepening twilight, and, as night advanced, its ruddy light glimmered merrily over the rippling water that rolled between. The moon shone from a cloudless sky, and appearances seemed to indicate a fine to-morrow; so the hearts of the boatmen were full of cheer as, sitting beside the glowing camp fire, they recounted the perils of the way.

Supper over, the tent was pitched on the sandy beech beneath the sheltering pines, and before the conventional hour for retirement had come, weariness had hidden itself beneath the wing of sleep. Then the clouds came. The wind shifted from east to west. Moon and stars disappeared. Waves sounded on the sands the news of a coming storm. The boats, lifted by the rising water, were so swayed that the increasing surf struck their frail sides with giant force, pushing them hard aground, and filling them with flying spray.

By this time the camp was alarmed, and frantic exertions were being made to prevent a threatened destruction. The darkness was intense, for the encroaching water had put out the camp-fire. The howling winds and the hissing waves were all that could be heard. But the men knew their duty, and were doing it bravely. A good deal of effort was required to launch the skiffs, by this time heavy with water and sand; but the waves were pressed into the service, and the boats were pushed away from the shore before any very serious damage was done. The Missionary and his assistant were drenched to the skin. Some of the freight had been water-soaked, but nothing of a more serious nature had occurred. Now that they were afloat once more, the object was to reach the nearest inlet where shelter could be enjoyed. The nature of the night made this a difficult task. A mile of high-running waves must be crossed. A sharp look out for rocks must be kept up. If the oars ceased for a moment the boats were drifted toward an inhospitable shore. At best the waves would be intrusive. Providentially, after an hour's fight with the storm, the harbor was gained and life was safe once more. Quickly the cargoes were put on shore, the boats were hauled up on the sand, a fire was kindled, and the work of drying the dripping

garments was just begun, when down came the rain in torrents. There was no use in seeking comfort any further, so the almost discouraged ones wrapped their drenched forms in their blankets and lay down, wet as they were, to resume a sleep which had been so rudely disturbed. Oh, the thoughts of home which filled the minds of the voyageurs that long and stormy night! It required some effort to say, "But none of these things move me!"

We do not propose to weary our readers with any further details of this eventful trip. For fourteen days the strife continued; afterward came harbor, home, and Christian work. Enough has been recorded to show that the romance of mission work is often counterbalanced by the eminently prosaic; by toils, losses and dangers unknown to the world, borne uncomplainingly for Christ's sake.

