

CHRISTIAN WORK AMONG THE CREE INDIANS.

BY THE RIGHT REV. JOHN HORDEN, D.D., BISHOP OF MOOSONEE.



BISHOP'S COURT, SCHOOL-HOUSE, AND TENT.



ROUND the great Hudson's Bay lies a region of vast extent very little known to the civilised world, cut off as it is from contact with the outer world, and holding communication with it but seldom. My experience there dates from the year 1851, when, early in the month of

June, and just married, I sailed in the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company's ship *Prince Albert* from Gravesend. After touching at Stromness to complete our cargo, we made our way across the Western Ocean, meeting with no interruption until we came to the Hudson's Straits. Here we became enveloped in a thick fog, which caused the captain much anxiety, for we were among ice. Suddenly the atmosphere cleared, and a grand and brilliant sight met our view. The land on either side was high, bold, and picturesque; the water, as smooth as a mill-pond, was of a deep blue, whilst its surface was covered with blocks of ice of every conceivable size and shape, and of most brilliant colours. The captain, having got rid of a load of anxiety, was perhaps the happiest person among us. But it was not long before a change took place; the ice became thicker, and the fog once more gathered around us. An ice-deck, which is some ten feet above the ordinary deck of the vessel, was erected, and this was always occupied by one or two of the ship's officers, generally

including the captain. Many a heavy blow we received, notwithstanding all the care exercised, causing the good ship to shake from stem to stern; but she was prepared for the encounter, being built expressly for such work as that in which she was engaged. Ice now surrounds us on all sides, no water is visible, and we lie quietly for many hours. The ice, acted on by the tides, again opens, and we once more slowly pursue our way. Here we meet a mighty iceberg which overtops the topmast of our ship, and we greet its appearance with pleasure, for from it we are able to draw a supply of fresh water.

The Straits are now left behind; we are in clear water, and may be at our destination in a week, says the captain. But presently something looms on the



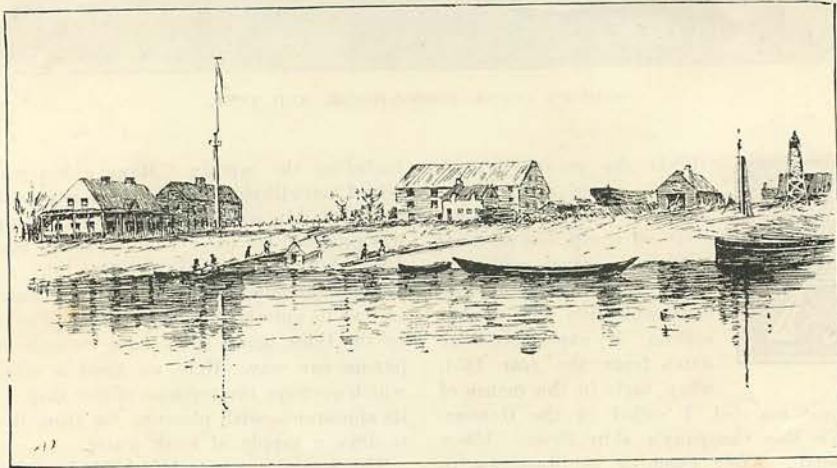
THE CATHEDRAL, MOOSONEE.

horizon—a cold grey streak; the temperature falls, ice is once more ahead. We sail east and west, trying to round it, but it cannot be done. We force our way into the pack, and make a little progress, and again all is still. Day succeeds day, and we are still imprisoned. We get chilled to the bone; hands and feet are covered with chilblains—despondency seems to take possession of all on board. At length, when three weeks have passed, there is movement among the ice, and lanes of water appear here and there. Every sail is set, for a strong wind is blowing; a venture must be made. In six or eight hours we are once more bounding southward in a sea wild and rough, but without a particle of ice on its bosom. Within three days we are anchored in the Moose Roads, and can see a little land in the far distance. It did not look inviting, but it was the land I had chosen, and here I determined to remain as long as I could be of any service to the inhabitants thereof.

A boat soon came for us, and after being taken a few miles up the Moose River we were landed at Moose Fort, where we received unbounded hospitality. I was in a new world. I found a few gentlemen and labouring men who could speak my own language, but the mass of the people spoke in a tongue unknown to me.

as coopers, blacksmiths, carpenters, boat-builders, and labourers; and during the summer season, when every Indian trading at the post is likewise employed (and that at fairly remunerative wages), the place is as busy as if it were situated in the midst of the civilised world. The Indians live in birch-bark or canvas-covered tents, which can be rendered very comfortable in winter when the snow is dug out, the poles erected and covered, and the bottom strewn with a plentiful supply of pine-brush. A few now reside in houses permanently at Moose, but the bulk of the Indians still have the tent as their only winter dwelling, and necessarily so; for being continually engaged in hunting, they move from place to place according to circumstances. The animals hunted for their fur are the black bear, the lynx, the beaver, the otter, the marten, the fox, the mink, and the fisher. The Indian hunters, if at all successful, make a very good livelihood; and as the price of furs has of late greatly increased, some of them may be said to be almost in affluent circumstances.

At Moose I found myself called upon to labour to two different peoples. I had come primarily for the benefit of the Indians; but the Europeans and half-castes who spoke the English language must not be



MOOSE FACTORY.

It was the Cree language, with which I must become acquainted before I could expect to carry out my desire of bringing them into the Christian fold.

Moose Fort, or Moose Factory, is the depôt of the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company for South Moosonee, whence are distributed all the supplies and trading goods needed in the various districts. Here, too, are brought all the furs and oil collected throughout this vast extent of country. This makes it a place of great importance, and more people are congregated here than are to be found at any other station in the country. The staff consists of a chief factor, a doctor, an accountant, and two or three clerks. The servants used to be mostly Orkney men and Highlanders, but *now* principally half-castes are employed

neglected. For those I at once opened school and conducted the usual English services, but the Indians received my principal attention. I assembled them, and through an interpreter told them the object of my mission. They were overjoyed, and promised to attend on my ministrations. But I was not long in discovering that an interpreter is a poor substitute in conveying the truth of revelation. He but imperfectly understands your meaning, and to the Indian often conveys but a parody on what you had intended. I therefore determined that as soon as possible I would be my own interpreter by mastering the language. The language, which is polysyllabic in its character, is difficult of acquisition from the great length of its words and the peculiarities of its verb.



AGED CREE MAN.

It is, however, very regular in its formation, and its study not only gave me deep pleasure, but likewise filled me with wonder that a people without literature should possess a language as philosophical as if it had been the united work of a band of sages. I made progress rapidly, and in six months was able to converse freely with the Indians, and to deliver my addresses, which I carefully committed to writing, correcting my manuscript with the aid of an interpreter.

The instruction of the Indians in reading and writing was my next employment; in this I was greatly aided by the use of a system invented by the late Mr. Evans, a Wesleyan Minister, who had been many years in the North-West Territories. By this system the difficulty of spelling was entirely obviated, each character standing—not for a separate letter, as in English—but for a whole syllable; thus the Indian word for God is KICHEMUNETO, which is represented by five characters—one for each syllable. And the system is so easy that a person of ordinary intelligence would learn its principles in an hour, and be able to read, although not fluently, in the course of a single day. Reading soon became pretty general, and the providing of books, all written by hand, became a heavy tax upon me. As soon as I found myself capable of doing the work satisfactorily, I prepared a translation of a portion of our English Prayer-Book, and sent it home to my friends of the Church Missionary Society, requesting that a thousand copies might be printed and sent out to me by the next ship.

The word "ship" recalls many reminiscences, some of a painful character. Our ship is looked for with deep interest, and should it not arrive at its accustomed time, our minds become filled with anxious forebodings. But in the year when the books were looked for the ship arrived somewhat early.

Large cases were consigned to me which I had hoped would be filled with books; but what was my amazement, on opening the first, to find reams of unsullied paper, a fount of type in the syllabic character, a printer's roller, a drum of ink; while in the second case were what appeared to me the parts of a printing-press, and many other things, of the use of which I had

not the slightest conception. It then dawned upon me that my friends had sent me out everything necessary to set up a first-class printing and bookbinding establishment, but had entirely forgotten to send out the printer and the bookbinder. What was to be done? It would never do to allow these things to remain idle, so I set to at once to see what I could do with them. I selected a smart little boy from my school, and we at once began our work. We were first carpenters, and made the frames to support our fount of type; and then we looked at the parts of the printing-press, and the sight seemed to fill us with dismay. But we were not to be easily beaten, and after many trials the completed press stood before us an accomplished fact. I now took my composing-stick in hand, and stood before my frame dropping in type after type. It was at first slow work, but became more rapid as I proceeded, and I felt extremely proud when I saw my first page tied up and put aside. But I had to set up sixteen pages before I could be assured of success, such being the number required for a single sheet, and this occupied me many days.

All this time the Indians were watching me, and they noticed that I was extremely silent, and that my look was anxious. Thoughts soon arose in their minds, and those they soon expressed in words: "The minister has troubled himself so much about his books he has gone quite mad." I made no reply, but kept steadily on at my novel employment. At length all was ready, and I had the satisfaction of seeing the result of my work in a proof in which the characters were as clear and bright as in any book I had ever seen. With my sleeves turned up, I took the printed sheet in both hands and rushed out of doors, among a body of Indians assembled outside, crying out, "PACHE KUNAWAPATUMOK OMA, PACHE KUNAWAPATUMOK OMA!" ("Come and look at this, come and look at this!") They came, they looked, they stared; I was no longer a madman, but the greatest conjurer they had ever seen. And now sheet succeeded sheet, until the work was completed. I next had to undertake bookbinding.



AGED CREE WOMAN.

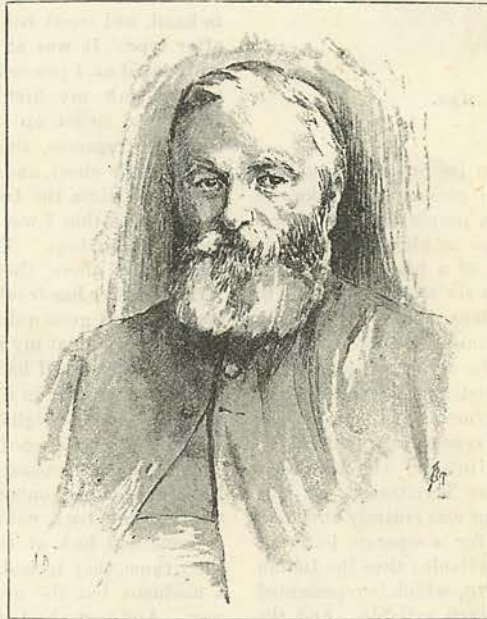
In this I was equally successful, and by the end of May, when my Indians returned from their hunting-grounds, I was able to present each of them with a well-bound Book of Common Prayer, after which our services gradually assumed the form of the usual church service. A Hymn Book followed, and that again was followed by a Bible History in the form of a Catechism; after which the four Gospels, which made a volume of considerable size, passed through the missionary press.

Books in the Ojibbeway language then occupied my attention, and afterwards a service book in the Eskimo; for by this time both Ojibbeway and Eskimo had sent their first-fruits into the Christian Church. But my readers may inquire, What effect had all this on the spiritual condition of the people? Did a changed life follow? Did heathenism become replaced by the Christian faith? Yes, and that very decidedly. Now our own holy religion is that likewise of Cree, Ojibbeway, Chipewyan, and Eskimo, who rejoice in the Fatherhood of God, as made known to us by His Son, Christ Jesus. Of the Crees, there is scarcely one unbaptised; a large number are communicants, marriages are duly celebrated, and the marriage tie is as highly respected as in any part of the world; while when the missionary attached to any post is absent on a journey, the church services are conducted with regularity by the Indians themselves. The Mission has become reproductive; some of the sons of the soil are now numbered among the clergy, and among my own pupils (all natives of Moosonee) I can number two archdeacons, two clergymen in full orders, besides teachers and catechists. In my work I have been nobly assisted by the clergymen sent out to me by the Church Missionary Society. The Crees were the first to receive the light; then came the Ojibbeways, who for a long time resisted the truth, many being quite content to follow the superstitions of their forefathers. But when one of their number had been ordained, then a change took place; the handle of the axe had been cut from the native tree, and soon the trees of ignorance and superstition were levelled to the ground, and trees of the Lord's own planting took their place.

In the instruction of the Ojibbeways I found of very

great use a translation of "Peep of Day," made by the Rev. John Sanders, one of the missionaries above referred to. The book is highly prized, and has conferred a lasting benefit on the whole of the Ojibbeway tribes in Moosonee. Mr. Sanders' district, in which there are no Indians but Ojibbeways, is of large extent, and through this he travels twice every year—in the winter on snow-shoes, in the summer by birch-bark canoe. Besides the Ojibbeways in Mr. Sanders' district, we have three large tribes in the Albany district, which is under the charge of Archdeacon Vincent, who has to make very considerable journeys to come into

contact with them, travelling up the Albany River to Martin's Falls, and thence to Osnaburgh. His success, too, has been very great; all the Indians of Osnaburgh are baptised, many are communicants, and all contribute towards the support of the Mission; for I make it a point of bringing our converts to feel that great responsibilities attach to the privileges of Christianity. The archdeacon's journeys are attended with great danger, and two years since he nearly lost his life in descending the Albany River. It will not be long, I think, before civilisation will overtake Osnaburgh, the most western station in Moosonee; and then the shores of the large and beautiful lake on which it stands will become covered with the homes



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(From a sketch made by A. Dickson Patterson, R.C.A.)

of a busy multitude, where now silence and solitude reign supreme.

The Crees occupy the whole country around Hudson's Bay, but their dialects vary very considerably, and when the different tribes come into contact they have at first much difficulty in understanding each other. At Moose the pronoun "I" is represented by NELA; at Rupert's House, a hundred miles east, by NEYA; at Albany, a hundred miles north, by NENA; while at Churchill, in North Moosonee, it is NETHA.

Many of the Indians attain to a great age, and I have buried several who must have lived at least a century. Those whose portraits form two of our illustrations are very fair types of aged Cree Indians; the man represented was the best shot in the country, and bore the euphonious name of Richard Butterfly.

It is a source of great joy to us to see our cathedral in its present condition. We have lately added to it a chancel, gaining thereby nearly a hundred seats, and

even now there is no unoccupied space when our Indians are all here in the summer. The building is all I could desire. It cannot, of course, vie with the cathedrals of England; it was never intended to do so; yet comparatively it is as good as any of them, and as well adapted for every part of Christian worship. We have not to do with thousands; a few hundreds are all who can ever enter within its walls, and there all find everything done decently and in order; a bright, happy service, and such as is calculated to draw the hearts of the worshippers towards the God of their salvation. I have to thank several English friends for the assistance they gave me in supplying the necessary furniture, as well as some beautifully written texts in the English and the Indian languages for the embellishment of the walls.

Perhaps at some future time I may be able to give some account of our work among the Eskimo, and

take my readers to North Moosonee, where we have stations as deeply interesting as those of which I have here written; we shall see men as keenly alive to the Master's interests as their brethren who live in a comparatively milder clime, and enduring great hardships as uncomplainingly as any in the whole missionary field. This is my joy and crown of rejoicing—that I am so thoroughly well supported by those who labour with me in the Lord. Were it otherwise I could never have remained so long amid the dreary solitudes of Moosonee; but when I have felt that every labourer in the vast vineyard was, trusting in God, doing his very best in the work committed to his charge, I have gone on from year to year, joyfully and thankfully assured that the Lord had made good His promise of companionship to me, and had given me the grace and strength necessary to support me in every day's trials and anxieties.

JOHN MOOSONEE.

A SERMON ON SALT.

BY THE REV. MICHAEL EASTWOOD, NEW BROMPTON, CHATHAM.

"Let your speech be seasoned with salt."—COL. iv. 6.



THESE words are homely as the kitchen and mystical as heaven.

Those two elements, indeed, make up our religion—heavenliness and homeliness; so that, at the risk of an improper introduction to my sermon, I am tempted to pause and address you, my sister, who may be borne down with the cares of the household. Don't feel vexed and ashamed if you are too weary to remember the sermon: remember the homely text. Let it remind you of Him who is not too great to use the words of the kitchen itself, and who, even in His resurrection glory, bent over the fire, preparing a fish-breakfast for His tired hungry "boys," as He called the Apostles. Think of that, and let it season your dull daily life with its own sweet influence.

But while one is struck with the homely voice of the text, who can fail to detect something else? The words are simple as St. John's; they are also mystical as St. John's; and they contain the word *Logos*—now familiar to most sermon-hearers. It means the WORD; it means Christ. In the text, however, it is applied to ourselves; to our *self* rather than to our talk. And the Apostle Paul means: "To be like Christ, to have your life as a holy discourse, it must have been touched through and through with saving grace."

We did not make a mistake, then, in allowing our text to lead us straight to Christ. Christ is salvation, and "salvation" is, both literally and figuratively, the state of having been salted. The Christian life, then, is one that has been seasoned and interpenetrated with something independent of itself—the saving power of Christ.

1. This being so, our life, our "speech" is COMPLEX.

Like salt itself, which is not a simple substance (salt is a metal and a gas: sodium and chlorine blended together; a solid foundation and a subtle element upon and within it), it is a mysterious union. It is the work of God. As *the Logos*, the Word, equals humanity and divinity, distinct yet blended, so our "speech," our life, must have Christ within it, really, truly, mystically.

Let it be clearly understood, then, the text does not primarily mean our talk, but ourselves. Our self is to be united to Christ. Then our speech, our talk, will be reformed, as a matter of course; and of us it may truly be said, "The style is the man."

2. But do not forget the idea with which we started: that our discourse is to be HOMELY. Again like salt, for common every-day use and by common every-day people. This glorious mysticism is not monopolised by the great or the learned; into its secrets the lowliest persons may be initiated, and such are in the majority. Some of the most charming speech in this country is to be heard amongst our working people, as we call them—bright, picture-que, vigorous, solid, and subtle: The novelist himself feels that his book is a failure without such an instance, and I have heard both great preacher and learned professor acknowledging with tears their indebtedness to our working men—men who can talk like John Bunyan. May God multiply them! May He give us grace to imitate them!

Oh! for more Saxon speech—pure, mighty, and homely as our forefathers' in the German forests ages ago! How often we forget that one of the first canons of art is that the grander the thought the simpler the speech!