

but still there are many which have never yet been recited to the public. Rich and prolific is the field for him who accords it the attention which its fascination justifies.

The following marvellous case of suffering and endurance was related to me by a brother of the young men who figure in the narrative:—

Thirteen years ago the country bordering on Lake Nipissing had but recently been surveyed and opened up to settlement. It was a stock of hardy pioneers which first entered these northern solitudes to seek what proved in many instances to be a very precarious livelihood for the first few years of occupation. They found themselves surrounded by Indians and halfbreeds—descendants, no doubt, of the *coureurs de bois* of earlier days, who had settled along the course of this once trans-continental highway. In many instances these neighbours proved to be kindly disposed toward the white settlers. There were, however, exceptions—selfish individuals who looked with displeasure upon the encroachments of civilization. Such was an Indian named Keso, who occupied a shanty five miles below Lake Nipissing on the French River. This Indian gained his livelihood by hunting, fishing and trapping, and occasionally assisting those who desired his services in navigating the treacherous waters of the river. He was taciturn and of a vicious disposition, as the sequel will show. Quick-tempered, greedy and overbearing, he was shunned even by his own people.

Two young men, named respectively Alfred and Wesley Wright, had at this time pushed their way into this new country and opened up a small general store at a point twelve miles south of Lake Nipissing, in what was then the nucleus of the present town of Commanda. All their stores and supplies had to be transported by canoe up the French River and across Lake Nipissing, thence by waggon trail twelve miles into the interior.

A building was erected wherein to transact business, and the window-sash and other supplies for this purpose had also to be brought in from the outside world. In the carrying of this material up the river, it was found necessary to leave a portion of the load behind, until such time as another voyage could be made. Accordingly the window-sash was unloaded and stowed away in Keso's cabin, with his consent, to await another voyage. Here it remained for several weeks.

It was a beautiful morning in the latter part of June when the two brothers arrived at Keso's cabin to claim their goods. The waters sparkled on their course in the early morning sunshine; the birds were making merry music, and nature was clothed in her most beautiful garb. Nothing spoke of pending catastrophe, and the brothers experienced an intoxication of spirits from imbibing the ethereal nectar of nature's brewing. Their canoe was a large one, capable of carrying a heavy cargo, and required their united efforts to portage it around the rapids.

Upon arrival at the shanty it was found to be deserted; at least no sign of its occupants could be seen, and the Wrights took their sash and loaded the canoe.

Pushing on up stream about four miles the last portage was reached, where the river debouches from Lake Nipissing by a long rapid. A landing was made upon a huge flat rock at the lower end of the portage. The work of unloading had but just commenced when an Indian, paddling a small canoe, was seen approaching; he came swiftly up the river, and was very soon recognized as Keso. Malignant anger shone in his dark eyes. Jumping out upon the rock, with gun in hand, he demanded:—

"Why you take dose sash? You pay me tirty dollar rent for keeping him!"

Alfred Wright, the elder brother, calmly replied that thirty dollars was an exorbitant price to pay for storage, but that they were willing to do what was right in the matter.

Quick as a flash, and without any more words, the Indian raised his gun and pointed it directly at Alfred's head. Wesley Wright, divining that murder was intended, jumped quickly forward and knocked the gun downward, but not in time to save his brother, for in the same instant a loud report rang out and Alfred fell groaning upon the rock. The charge had taken effect in his right leg about four inches below the hip joint, shattering the bone into fragments. Wesley immediately grappled with the infuriated Keso and endeavoured to discharge the second barrel of his gun so that no further damage might be done, at the same time shouting to his wounded brother to shoot the sascal with his revolver. This the wily Indian prevented by holding Wesley between himself and the wounded man. Being a muscular person he was able to accomplish this with something of ease. In keeping Wesley in this position, however, he was not able to protect the gun, and the heroic young man succeeded in getting the second barrel discharged. The struggle had reached its end. Keso tore himself away and vanished like a shadow among the undergrowth, leaving behind his gun, powder-flask and canoe.

Wesley now turned his attention to his wounded brother and found him to be suffering intense pain. They were thirty-five miles from the nearest settlement of white people, and in order to convey the wounded man to that point a long portage must be made, and a trip of thirty miles across Lake Nipissing endured, and only one pair of shoulders to bear all this. Truly it was a terrible situation for the young men to be placed in. The large canoe could not be moved by one man, therefore Wesley decided to take the Indian's smaller boat and convey his brother to where he would receive the attention required to save the life which had so narrowly escaped instant destruction. The canoe was carried across. The wounded

man was carefully laid in it and Wesley took his place at the oars, when the horrifying discovery was made that the vessel was too small to hold both men. Here was what appeared to be an insurmountable difficulty. The day which had broken so full of promise was now dark with clouds of adversity. The sky of the young men's bright prospects was overcast with a cloud of sorrow from which they could discover no silver lining. Wesley's great fear was that his brother might die of exposure ere he could be taken to those who would care for him. What could he do under the circumstances? was the enigma that presented itself, and this is the manner in which it was finally solved:—

Thinking that possibly the Indian might still be lurking in the neighbourhood the brothers decided as a last resort to appeal to him for assistance if he could be found. Wesley shouted for their foe to come out of the woods and assist them, promising at the same time that he would not be harmed and that his property would be returned to him. To the great astonishment of the distressed men Keso walked boldly forth from among the trees, and with no apparent distrust offered his services in assisting to carry over the large canoe and the goods. This work was accomplished with little delay and the young men were shortly on their journey toward assistance.

Speaking of the matter in after years Wesley has declared that he was never so sorely tempted to cast honour to the winds as he was when Keso, the would-be murderer, walked before him carrying goods across that portage. Strange to say the Indian appeared to place implicit trust in the promise which had been given, and exhibited no fear that the young men's word of honour would be betrayed.

It was a long and weary row ere the settlement on the south shore of Nipissing was reached, but it came to an end at last and the wounded man was safely placed in the care of friends.

The next important step was to secure a physician, and this could only be accomplished by sending a messenger 32 miles to the nearest point where medical aid could be procured. Upon the doctor's arrival and examination of the wound it was deemed advisable to procure a second physician for consultation and assistance. This entailed a further trip of sixty miles. For four long painful days Alfred Wright lay upon his bed without the lacerated limb receiving necessary attention. Fortunately the weather was pleasantly cool, otherwise mortification must surely have set in. But the shattered bone was finally set, and although the young man lay for months unable to move himself, still a wonderfully strong constitution and vigorous young manhood carried him through, and without the loss of a limb. The Indian's family were assiduous in their attentions upon the invalid, bringing him delicacies of the chase, such as fish, pheasants, and venison, and expressed much concern at his condition. Keso himself was arrested for the crime and died in Kingston penitentiary a few years ago while serving a life sentence for the attempted murder.

The Wright brothers disposed of their property at Commanda, and are at present carrying on a lucrative wholesale business in New York city.

W. H. THURSTON.

HENRY BURTON.*

AS a novel, judged by the ordinary demands on the part of readers of light literature, this venture cannot be pronounced a success. The primary thought with the majority of readers in perusing such books is the story, and they expect to become intensely interested in the hero or heroine introduced to their notice ere reading an eighth part of its pages. But in reading this novel one must expect to draw on his patience until at least half the book is perused before anything like a desire to finish is realized, so far as the history of the characters is concerned.

Again the conversations introduced compose such veritable moral and literary essays as to forbid the thought that they ever were permitted to be delivered in social intercourse or pleasure gatherings, and so make it impossible for the average reader to be cheated into even a momentary fancy that what he reads ever might, could or would take place.

But whilst the author has not succeeded in entertaining his readers, he certainly has succeeded in presenting his religious or moral belief in a much more readable form than if following the usual course of the simple essayist. And as this, on his own showing, is his real aim, his success in this modified direction is fair and will probably induce imitators even as he himself seems to be an imitator of the author of "Robert Elsmere."

The main object of the author evidently is to introduce the outlines of what is known as Christian Science to the reading public in object form and under circumstances less startling and less abstruse than in the writings of the high priestess of that faith. The two thoughts here made prominent are founded on the truism of the superiority of our spiritual to our material nature, and it is thence inferred that, if we really subordinate our grosser part to the higher, God as love will be recognized and realized and we become partakers of His nature, that is, become as one with Him, and so enjoy the real Heaven of which God is the King; and further this adjustment or at-one-ment of the spirit with the great

Universal Spirit will at once begin to act on the lower nature so as to eliminate pain and unsoundness of every kind, tending rapidly to complete health of body and mind.

Now if the author had contented himself with stating these general principles and not hazarded their testing in actual life, the weaknesses of his personal views or rather, we should say, of the creed he advocates, would not become so apparent. But alas for his plans, he has attempted to apply them to real practical life, and their ethereal, unsubstantial character can easily be discovered.

For example he takes us through a revival in a country town, and after portraying the work of a severe but energetic evangelist, carried on through several days of intense religious excitement, he makes his hero come on the scene and in a few nights not only undo all the work of previous weeks, but succeed in making this present highest type of spiritual religion acceptable amongst all classes, including austere saints, and open infidel sinners, a feat no apostle or evangelist of Christ ever succeeded in performing and which the Christ himself neither attempted nor encouraged His followers to look for as possible.

The hero then starts a magazine as the exponent of these views, which also at once meets with great public favour. The inference from all of which is that he has accomplished the task which neither Christ nor any of his hitherto followers could accomplish, that is, he has at last succeeded in taking the offence of the cross out of the world, and so completely renovated Christianity that had the first preachers of it but made this discovery they would have christianized the Roman world without encountering any opposition whatever, let alone having to endure bitter persecution. We certainly consider the spiritualistic speculations and idealistic teachings of the author more suited to the Utopian realms of More than the hard matter-of-fact world which crucified Christ, and which only permits itself to be conquered after ages of fiercest struggle.

The parts of the volume which treat of the healing of diseases are exactly similar in their teaching to the well-known doctrines of Christian Science and need not be enlarged on. But whilst thus discounting its teachings we are glad to be able to recommend the book to our readers for attentive perusal. Scattered throughout there are many real gems of thought and sage criticisms of current literature, for although the principal aim of the author is evident, nevertheless he frequently turns aside to the discussion of other topics, whilst his descriptive powers, although by no means first-class, are sufficiently good to rob the passing hour of its ennui and cause some pleasing pictures to be retained by the memory for future use.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE DEARTH OF WIT.

To the Editor of THE WEEK:

SIR,—One of the most remarkable features of the speeches delivered by Canadian orators of the present day is the great lack of wit which they manifest. If a speech be read through and closely scrutinized, this sterility of imagination and lively play of fancy is most conspicuous. On the one hand, twaddlesome and wishy-washy stories constitute the humour, and vituperative abuse the wit. On the other hand, ponderous facts are heaped upon one another like Pelion on Ossa, while the unhappy hearer sits and groans under the turgid weight. The speeches are regarded as great efforts, because of their incomprehensibility; as solid, because they are heavy; as profound, because they are obscure.

Perhaps the absence of wit is due to the undoubted fact that we are apt to regard the witty man as a dangerous fellow, who may be poking fun at us whilst we are peacefully and unconsciously pursuing the "even tenor" of our way. The effervescence of wit is considered as froth, and epigrammatic diction as gloss, denoting the veneered nature of the ideas. The brilliant, witty speaker is spoken of as being "Very good in his way;" "Funny, but not solid;" "Good for nothing, but making little jokes."

The Boeotian stupidity of the prosy, narrow, and dull utilitarians weighs upon those who have a keen sense of wit, and compels them to acquiesce in the verdict against humour, or else submit to be placed among the feather-heads, the unstable and the Bohemians. The people at heart have a deep sense of humour, as can be perceived by the shouts of laughter and applause with which a touch of real humour, or flash of keen wit is greeted. The success which *Grip* has gained shows that people are ready to welcome the man who can make them laugh a genuine, hearty, wholesome laugh—that honest, healthy wit is regarded with approbation by all classes—cultured and uncultured.

The American style of wit, which consists of vulgar exaggeration, is about the most degraded that can be imagined. The greater the falsehood, the more it is expected to amuse; it rises from an elevation of vulgarity to another, until at last there are no more heights of coarseness left to climb, no more worlds of barbarity to conquer. We are fortunate in having escaped adopting this inferior style of wit, even though we are deeply mired in the bog of prose.

Is there no happy mean that we can strike? Must we be wrecked on the one rock while endeavouring to avoid the other? There must be some middle course between dullness and vulgarity, and we should adopt that course. There can be no question that a school of wit is arising among us, which aims to follow the standard of true humour, and which is doing so successfully, but, as yet, our

* A novel. By Henry Wood, author of "Natural Law in the Business World."