

From Mrs. D. L. Spencer (Sadie Hart).

CONVERSION OF AN INDIAN CHIEF—HARDSHIPS OF
MISSIONARY LIFE.

PORT ESSINGTON, *May 15th, 1895.*

Yours of November I received only when I reached the coast, two weeks ago. Usually there is one mail sent over from Naas across what is called the "Grease Trail," but this winter no mail was sent, so we had to do without. We were seven months without communication with the outside world. Just what that means, one must pass through a like experience to understand.

Our home is in a village of between three and four hundred inhabitants, only about one-third Christians, so that a great many heathen practices are still carried on, but fewer this year than any previous one. The head Chief this winter has become a Christian. Several of his household have followed him. The heathen acknowledge their power broken; and though they still persist in their old ways, many have staked out building lots for their new houses, saying it will not be long now before all will be Christians. In heathen life, many families live in one large house, but when they give up the old way, they build small houses for each family.

The climate is very different from the coast. I did enjoy the bright, dry weather, day after day and week after week. We had very cold weather during the winter, but did not feel it when as low as 27° below zero as at 10° below on the coast.

I was sorry to learn nothing is definitely settled about a Home for that part of the country. I think a Home there would be better managed by letting the children return to their parents for vacation. Indeed, while it would make more trouble in one way at Simpson, still I think, on the whole, the children in the Simpson Home would be more contented if a short vacation were allowed. I have had some opportunity this year in studying the real heathen character of these people.

To reach Simpson in time for the District Meeting, we had to leave Kishpiax before the ice was all out of the