

BY DOG SLEIGH IN YUKON.

LETTER FROM REV. J. PRINGLE.

Glenora, B.C., Feb. 24, 1890.

Dear Dr. Warden :—

I have just returned from a short missionary trip, of which perhaps you will let me tell you, not that there was anything startling or uncommon about it, more than any ordinary trip, but it lets you see my work in winter, and may be of interest to you and to the people of our churches.

This journey had its principal motive in the desire to verify reports which came to Glenora of the prevalence of scurvy along the trail. Three men were down with it in the village and we know of another at Glacier Creek, six miles down the Stickine. I therefore decided to go out as far Tahl-tan and further, if necessary, to learn the truth about the physical condition of the pilgrims of the Yukon.

My journey really had its beginning on Saturday evening, Feb. 11, with an extra large feed given to my dogs and a look over my harness and sleigh, to see that they were fit for the journey. For it is no joke to have your sleigh, or harness, give way on a wilderness trail with the mercury anywhere from zero to sixty below.

I had mild weather however, while I was travelling, and was comfortably in my cabin, when, a day or two after my return, the mercury hurriedly sought shelter in the bulb.

Sunday morning, the 19th, I had service as usual in Glenora. I am my own sexton, and that means I was up betimes to put the kirk in order and to build and light the fire.

My congregation here is getting rapidly smaller, for one-half of those who met me the Sunday after the mail came in are now on the trail to Atlin.

After service I took my dinner, and then harnessed my dogs, Tahl-tan, leader; Telegraph, next; and Teslin in the shafts.

Your folks in the East would be amused to see a full sledged minister, with a fair sprinkling of grey hairs on his head, sitting on a roll of blankets and shouting—"get there"—to a train of dogs. But it is the only way in which we can make time in this country. Horses are practically useless: for feed is scarce and very expensive, and besides, outside the two villages and a wood road or two the trail is a dog sleigh trail in which it is next to impossible for a horse to travel.

I am off then, 2 p.m., for Telegraph. Two or three hundred yards on the street, then over the

bank into the river. Hear the bells tinkling in the clear frosty air. I often sing, "The Gospel bells are ringing" as I drive along, with the bells of my dog train chiming an accompaniment. It is a favorite hymn out here. There is a lift in it for men who are down, and it reminds them of their Father's love and care.

Two hours, and my dogs have covered the distance, twelve miles, between Glenora and Telegraph, and I spend the two hours before tea in seeing the people least likely to come to the meeting.

When I stand again where I stood for the first time on that Sunday which seems so far away, April 17, 1898, there are about forty people before me, fifteen of them Siwash, (Indians).

I preached the same Gospel as has been a saviour of life to the world in all ages. How they listened! What a joy to preach the Gospel to men who are really hungry and thirsty. Some of them listen because it is the only thing here that is like home; but most of them because for one reason or another, they need strength and courage and help and there is none to offer these to them but Christ. Almost every white man that was in that congregation is now on the trail, from fifteen to forty miles out, but they will not forget, or if they do for a time, will remember, when the soul shall sometime make its voice heard above the clamor of passion and the world.

On Monday, taking Dr. D. R. McLennan, a Queen's man, with me, I start for the north. Before we are well out of the village we stop at a cabin where are some old Stickine Trail acquaintances.

There is a stranger amongst them who is not well. "What is the matter," asks the doctor. The sick man tells him about his side and his knees and his teeth. The doctor says—"scurvy," tells him what to do and we are off again.

We meet and pass scores of men in the next ten miles, some with horses, some with dogs. Still more are pulling their outfits themselves. There has been much drift and the horses have punched the trail full of holes, and it is heart breaking work for men tugging at those sleighs with their 250 to 400 lbs. of load.

Poor fellows, we hope there is a claim for them somewhere, Atlin, Salmon, or Nescutlin. Somewhere surely in this great land there must be a reward for toil like this. Or is the toil its own reward? Or the experience?

At a little 6 x 8 tent we get the use of a stove for an hour, and melting some snow make a cup of tea, it and hard tack constituting dinner.

But the road is now good through the burnt