

# Northern Messenger

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## An Open-Air Service in Finland.

Our picture, the original painting of which is by a Finnish artist, shows us a little company of Finnish peasants, gathered on a cloudless-summer day at the usual meeting-place, to hear the Word of God and join in offering praise to him.

The scene recalls those which once took place on the shores of the Galilean sea—in a very humble way, it is true, but the same spirit is here. The masts of the vessels are seen through the trees, the sails reefed in honor of the day.

Such a picture as this is better than all

roof, the door, or the window. In winter these cabins are lighted by long splinters of pine-wood. And yet, in the midst of this apparent want of all comforts, the people are moral in their habits, clean in their persons, and of an independent and self-respecting character.

There is scarcely a man or woman in Finland of the Lutheran faith who cannot read the bible. The ministers have zealously promoted education, even to the length of refusing the sacrament to any person who cannot read and write.

The Finlanders possess not only their hardly-won privilege of universal toleration, but that open mind and humble heart which

of age that had passed through them all, and were still out of Christ. So I began preaching. But previously, I must tell you, I had entered into the rest of faith, as they called it then. Nights and nights I had spent in prayer; I had trodden the grass of consecration pretty hard by knee practice, and had seen that I could not consecrate myself, but must open the door to Christ, for him to come in and consecrate me to himself. The burden of all my sermons at that time was that the church was responsible for the world, and that if the world was not won for Jesus it was because the church was out of condition. Nothing can stand against a united church, clean in life



AN OPEN AIR SERVICE IN FINLAND.

the one-sided accounts which prejudice gives for or against a people. Everything we learn of the Finlander proves in harmony with this representation of his worship. If he has little of that bold and daring ambition which glorifies one man at the expense of a thousand others, he possesses those more solid virtues to which time always gives the crown.

Hardy, patient, and brave, he is singularly loyal to his rulers. This is perhaps owing to the facts that he has kept the faith and remained poor. In place of wealth comes too often grim famine, but the evils to which this gives rise are much less harmful to the character than those caused by selfishness and luxury.

The general condition of Finland is that of poverty. Nearly nine-tenths of the population are peasants, a vast number of whose families dwell in one room each, warmed by a great stove, the smoke from which escapes in primitive fashion through the

welcomes light in whatever direction it comes. To these qualities it is no doubt partly due that the moral condition of the people is so superior, but another consideration has also much to do with the matter, namely, that 'serfdom has never existed in Finland.'—Cottager and Artisan.

### A Revival Incident.

'You must get the church right before you can have a revival,' so said an old minister as he stood beside me on the balcony overlooking Eagle Lake, Indiana. 'I found that out in 1873-74, when a revival began in my church that lasted four years.' 'Tell me,' said I, 'how it came about.'

'Well,' said he, 'it was like this. As a young man I was settled over a church which had been faithfully ministered to for half a century, and had been swept by for a dozen revivals in that time; but there were plenty of members over fifty-five years

and practice, and one in its fixed resolve to win the outlying world to Jesus.

Out of this preaching of mine came a secret prayer-meeting, held in my vestry for eighteen months. I picked the people who composed it, both men and women. We used to pray definitely for the unconverted by name, keeping lists of names definitely before God. A band of young men also used to meet in my vestry, and we would kneel around the room with clasped hands, praying in turn for the conversion of other young men, and when we had gone around once we would begin again. This went on, as I told you, for eighteen months.

Towards the end of that period I set myself with renewed earnestness to preach to professors. For three months I had no word for the unconverted, and some of them began to fear that they were past saving; but during that time I was constantly urging the church to consider its awful responsibili-