

Missionary.

From Norway House to Oxford House.

[The Editor of this paper having met at Norway House, Miss Armstrong, a Toronto, Sherbourne Street Leaguer, on her way to Oxford House to engage in missionary work as a teacher, requested her to write some account of her long trip from Norway House to Oxford House. She has sent the following interesting letter:]

All privileges of travelling by steam having ended at Rossville Mission, about four miles past Norway House, I took passage for Oxford House in a York boat, which was used for freighting purposes between Norway and Oxford House. The boat being heavily laden with flour, etc., there was little accommodation for passengers, but, owing to the kindness of friends, I was enabled to rest comfortably.

The boat was manned by nine men—a steersman and eight rowers, all of whom were Indians. An English Church clergyman having taken passage in the same boat as I, tended towards making things pleasanter than they otherwise might have been. Mr. Faries treated me with much respect and kindness, and his Indian workers became my attendants for the journey. After leaving mission friends who came to see us off at the beach, we had a pleasant trip, the afternoon being lovely and the lake calm. At about 7.30 p.m. we went ashore and camped, after which tea was gotten ready, the missionary and I, each going to our own tent for the evening meal, but we were sociable enough to talk across to each other. The Indians sat in groups some distance from us talking, laughing and apparently enjoying their bannocks, pork and strong tea.

I remarked that it was a wild place for a camp, but the missionary considered it tame compared with some of his camping experiences. While the place was wild there was a grandeur about the scene which I had not hitherto witnessed. Our tents were pitched a short distance from the shore, fires blazed and crackled, trees waved high above us, and over all the moon shone down in magnificent splendor. Truly, the hand of God was manifest. After tea there was a hush, and the guide informed the missionary that they were ready for prayers. A hymn was sung, after which they were committed to the care of our Heavenly Father. On Thursday morning I rose early, had breakfast, and was ready to start, prayers being ended and camp broken up. The day was fine and pleasant. The country along the river presented a wild but beautiful appearance—evergreens, poplars, tamaracks and the white willow lined the banks, and wild reeds and rushes waved and swung along the edges of the river. While before we had the Indians called breakfast—on the five meter of the day—we ran the Sea Falls, twenty and three-quarter miles beyond Norway House. Sea Falls is the place where Mr. Boulounger, a H. B. Co.'s chief factor, and Stanley Simpson, clerk, lost their lives some years ago, the latter sacrificing his life in trying to save his master.

In the afternoon we passed "Hairy Lake," twenty-eight miles from Norway House, but I think Reedy Lake would be a more appropriate name for it. The surface of the lake being covered with reeds through which the boats have to pass.

In the evening we camped some distance in the "Echamanish River," a very acceptable camping-ground, the place being on a good level, and plenty of dry timber to feed the camp fires. The mosquitoes were troublesome, nevertheless Mr. Faries and I enjoyed a camp-fire talk for a time. Again evening prayers were conducted, two of the Oxford Indians leading in prayer.

On Friday morning the clouds seemed threatening and the atmosphere cold and damp, but after breakfast the sun shone out in splendor and clouds dispersed, verifying the statement "A cloudy morning brings forth a pleasant day." At breakfast time we witnessed a wrestling match between two Indians who seemed to rival each other in strength. The one who had given the challenge was beaten and appeared to show, at times, an unfriendly spirit, which I had not noticed among the Indians on our journey prior to that time. I was impressed with the manifest good cheer existing between those Indians. During the day we passed four dams or barriers, looking for a way to raise the water in the interior and thus gain sufficient depth to allow the boats to float through the narrow river.

At one of those dams the cargo had to be taken out of boats and carried over. As we proceeded up the river it became so narrow in some places that the oars had to be taken in and the boats pushed by poles. We camped at the "Height of Land Portage," a small stream where the cargo had to be carried and boats hauled. A voyager's average load is two hundred pounds, but some even carry three hundred pounds. We retired earlier than usual, presumably not too early for the men who had worked so hard. On Saturday morning the dew lay thickly on the grass. One of the Indians had set a net during the night and in the morning it contained a number of white fish. Due to the kindness of the missionary at different times on the way I had the pleasure of partaking of the fish which he had so nicely prepared by his cook. Although the weather continued to be fine strong head winds prevailed which made difficult work for the oarsmen. From the "Height of Land Portage" we passed through the "Waterken River," and at 11 a.m. arrived at Robinson's Portage, the longest portage on the route.

At the north end of this portage we camped, not to resume our journey until Monday morning. The road is wide and well made. In former days the H. B. Co. had oxen and wagons on it. Now both luggage and wagons may be taken across by men. When evening came the boats were across but not all the luggage.

About 10 o'clock Sunday morning the missionary preached in Cree and much interest was manifested by the Indians as he (the missionary) spoke of "Jesus, the mighty to save." A Hudson's Bay officer who travelled on Sunday passed about noon and brought a letter for the missionary, also one for myself. He left us a half dozen oranges, which were quite acceptable. My letter was the first I had received since I had left home, a month that day. During the day many Methodist tunes were sung by the Indians, and about 6 o'clock the missionary again addressed them when the subject of "God in Nature" was dealt with. While those Indians might not measure up to our standard of Christian discipleship, yet I consider that many were trying to follow the "meek and lowly Jesus."

After sunset worship was again conducted, and so the "day of rest" closed. Monday morning came with strong head winds, but the current being in our favor we made good progress. We passed through a narrow strait where the rapids are called "Hell's Gates." The parker took me to the upper gate, but I did not enter, but sat on a rock and

watched the men as they let the boat down the boiling rapids. Evidently it was unsafe to run the rapids so the men let the boat down by a rope, while four men with poles kept the boat from being dashed to pieces on the stones. A few miles further down the river we came to the "Hell's gate" again. I had on my coat "Hell's gate," but did not enter; here there was abundance of water rushing at a tremendous rate. We watched the Indians running the boats down the falls. Much excitement prevailed, but the men and boats arrived safely over the rapids. In the evening we camped at "High Pine Lake," which is about ninety miles from Norway House. Here again we were visited by mosquitoes, a "smudge" was made near our tents and the smog was quite effective in dispersing the uninvited guests. The following morning was cool and damp, with a thick fog hanging over the Lake, but after the sun had risen the fog cleared away and the day was fine. The men could not make out any account of the strength of head winds. We passed through rapids in the river between Windy and Oxford Rivers. The last one, being shallow, the cargo was carried over and the boats run down the rapids. In one boat was landed on an island and our crew were on main-shore—there was a narrow strip of water between us. It was amusing to see the Indians throwing choice pieces of bannock and pork across to each other. I believe the Indians have a custom of exchanging choice bits at meal times, a practice denoting close relationship, but I failed to receive a bit. In the afternoon a canoe was seen in the distance. The Indians said that it was the "Kecheyanachewakama's," "The prying chief," meaning Mr. John McDougall. When the canoe arrived it contained Mr. and Mrs. McDougall and son, also four Indians. Greetings were exchanged and mails looked into, after which the canoe passed on.

In the evening we camped at the "Doorway," about fifteen miles from Oxford House. That evening the Oxford chief led in prayer and the missionary considered it encouraging to hear the way he brought the missionary cause before God, making special mention of the work before Miss Armstrong. While I was not present and do not understand the Cree language, I was pleased to know that I had been remembered. Soon after starting out on Wednesday morning the boat was run on a rock, but the men succeeded in getting it safely off. At about 11 o'clock a.m. we landed at the company's wharf, Oxford House, where we were met by the Rev. Mr. McNeil and his wife, also Mr. Campbell, H. B. Co.'s chief factor. After kindly greetings started for the parsonage, which is comfortable and well situated, with a fine lake-front view. I have taken possession of a nice large room upstairs, which is much better than I had anticipated.

My reception by Mr. and Mrs. McNeil has indeed been a kindly one, and already I feel very much at home, hoping that I shall be able to reciprocate some of the kindness shown, also hoping that I have not weary you too much.

Yours in the "Look Up and Lift Up work."
E. J. ARMSTRONG.

Oxford House.

It is great encouragement in missionary work to know that every nation is by right of gift and inheritance our Lord's. He sold his all to purchase it, because his treasure was buried here. It is ours to make it his in fact. It is always easy to work on the line of the divine purpose. God's will is practicable and possible for man to realize. Apprehend the purpose of God, and without hesitation claim its realization.—F. B. Meyer.