

## JOHN ELLIOT.

## THE FIRST PROTESTANT MISSIONARY TO THE INDIANS.

**J**OHN Elliot was an English boy, and was born nearly three hundred years ago, in 1601. He was a college boy too, and had his education in the great old university of Cambridge. When he was twenty-seven years of age, he came out to America, and the next year was settled over the congregation of Roxbury, Mass.

But while teaching the white people, his heart was sore for the poor neglected red people, twenty different tribes of whom were scattered through among the white settlements.

There were no missionary societies in those days. He lived nearly two hundred years before Carey ever hammered a shoe or read a book. But Elliot did not think that because nobody else was awake, there was therefore no use in his waking up. John Elliot had an idea, and sometimes an "idea" is worth more than a whole army of missionary societies.

Would you like to know what John Elliot's "idea" was? It was found years afterwards written down at the end of his Indian grammar, but more plainly still written out in large letters over the whole of his life. Here it is: "*Prayer and Pains, through faith in Jesus Christ, will do anything.*" He acted out his idea, and he found it true. He prayed to his living God, and took never-ending pains to reach and bless his poor red brothers. Prayer and pains conquered for him the wild, unwritten language: they touched the red men's hearts, faced the angry priests and pawaws, tramped the long, lone forests, and gathered the scattered heathen. Prayer and pains established a christian Indian settlement at Natick, and planted churches all through the wilderness. Prayer and pains translated the whole Bible into the language of the red men, and taught and trained the native christians till there were twenty-four red-skinned missionaries pushing on the work among their fellows. Is it any wonder that John Elliot wrote down his idea in that

one short sentence? wrote it down that others might get it and try it too. "*Prayer and pains, through faith in Jesus Christ, will do anything.*"

Now I would like to give two or three pictures that will let us see the man at his work, and almost hear him as he talks there two hundred years ago.

The first of these is the preaching of his first sermon to the Indians. But he was no longer a young man when that sermon was preached. By the time prayer and pains had conquered the heathen language and got him ready for that work, he was 42 years of age, a man with a sweet, wise wife, a happy home, and four rollicking boys and one dear little girl.

So now you may imagine John Elliot stepping out from that sympathetic home circle, to go and preach the first sermon to his Indians. It was late in October, and the savages were gathered in considerable numbers at a place they called Nonantum. Mr. Elliot prayed a very short prayer, then he told them over God's ten commandments, and helped them to understand what they meant.

The story of Jesus Christ came next: what sort of a Saviour God had sent to help those who had broken all the commandments, and to die for them that they might not have to die for their sins.

Then he told them of the judgment day and what would become of those who would not have Jesus Christ for their Saviour, and he pleaded with them to receive the offered Saviour at once, and begin a life of prayer to Him and earnest following after Him.

After the sermon he told them they might ask him any question they liked.

One asked if Jesus Christ would understand if they prayed to Him in their own language. It is easy to know the tone of Elliot's answer to a question like that.

Two weeks later he preached to them again and, hard-hearted though the Indians usually are, several of them broke down into weeping as he talked to them.