

PETER JONES.

KAH-KE-WA-QUO-KA-BY.

By Rev. John McLean, Missionary to the Blood Indians at Fort McLeod.

Peter Jones was born at the heights of Burlington Bay, in western Canada, on January 1st, 1802. His father was of Welsh extraction, and was born in the State of New York. Augustus Jones, having received first-class recommendations as a land surveyor, was appointed by General Simcoe, Governor of Upper Canada, King's Deputy Provincial Surveyor. His duties brought him into contact with the Ojibway Indians, and having learned their language he conceived a love for the people, and from among them chose an Indian maiden to be his wife. This Indian girl was named Tuhbenahneequap and was a daughter of Wahbanosay, a chief of the Missisagania band of the Ojibway nation. Peter Jones was the second son of a family comprising five boys and five girls. His father's occupation compelled him to be absent from his home a greater portion of his time, and thus the education of the children devolved chiefly upon the mother. Naturally she severed the customs and religious tenets of her people and her children were taught the errors and superstitious of the native religion of the Ojibway Indians. Strange and sad were his boyhood years among these people. He blackened his face, fasted and prayed to the Indians' gods that he might obtain their favour. A grand feast was made on the occasion of his receiving an Indian name, and being dedicated to an Indian deity that he might enjoy the protection and favour of this god. His grandfather officiated at the feast calling him *Kah-ke-wa-quo-ka-by*, which means "Sacred waving feathers." His mother belonging to the Eagle clan, he received a war club and a bunch of eagle's feathers, thus denoting that he was dedicated to the god of thunder, which was the Indians' sacred bird, the eagle. These were to be kept as a memorial of his dedication, the club symbolizing the power, and the feathers the flight of his special god. Through the custom of supplying the places of deceased friends, he was, at the age of nine years, adopted into the family of an Indian whose son had died. Many and bitter were his experiences through the idle and drunken habits of his people. They had acquired strong desires for intoxicating liquors introduced amongst them by white men, and in their seasons of debauchery the weak and helpless had to endure many hardships. Often times hungry and neglected it is no wonder that many died through sheer starvation or vicious living. His mother's affection for him was manifested by a long and perilous journey during a period of sickness when he was unable to walk, assisted by another Indian woman, she carried him for thirty miles. At fourteen years of age his father sent him to school, which he attended nine months making considerable progress during that time. The family removed to Grand River and settled amongst the Mohawks, where he was enabled to attend religious services. The Mohawks, however, seemed not to improve by having the Gospel preached to them, as they led immoral lives. He was induced by his father

to present himself for baptism, feeling that it was a duty he owed to the Great Spirit and being convinced that the Christian religion was true. Although conforming outwardly to the commands of Christianity, his heart and life were not changed. He still delighted in associating with his heathen companions and engaging in their sinful pleasure. Desirous of improving his education, he sought and obtained work at brickmaking during the summer, and attended school during winter. While thus seeking strength for his intellect, a pious minded young man named Seth Crawford, came from the United States, deeply impressed that it was his duty to preach the Gospel to the Indians. He settled amongst the Mohawks for the purpose of doing good and learning the Indian language. Peter was deeply impressed with the piety of this linguistic student and derived much benefit from him. An exhortation from E. Stoney, a Methodist preacher, caused him to think of religion. He was constrained to visit a Camp Meeting held in the township of Ancaster, whither he went with his sister Mary. The novelty of the scene attracted his attention, and he was deeply moved by the pious utterances and fervent prayers of the worshippers. The Rev. Wm. Case was the moving spirit in this religious enterprise, and the enthusiasm of the people was manifested by the large attendance, there being nearly two thousand persons present. As he listened to the earnest appeals of the ministers, tears flowed freely down his cheeks, but he bowed his head that they might drop unseen, being afraid lest any should witness the weeping of an Indian brave. The burden of his soul became so great that he sought a solitary spot where unobserved he might give vent to his grief and find a refuge at the mercy seat. Longing for liberty he bowed with others at the altar of prayer, while Christian men and women poured out their supplications on his behalf. Wearied in body and mind he retired to his tent and slept. Soon, however, the Revs. E. Stoney and George Ferguson came to him with the joyful news of his sister's conversion. He returned with them to the meeting, and as these faithful men knelt by his side and his sister Mary spoke to him of her new found treasure: the light dawned upon his soul and he was enabled to say "Abba Father." Then he says "everything now appeared in a new light, and all the works of God seemed to unite with me in uttering praises of the Lord. The people, the trees of the woods, the gentle winds, the warbling notes of the birds, and the approaching sun, all declares the power and goodness of the Great Spirit

..... May I never forget the great things He has done for me on the glorious morning of the 5th of June, 1823!" Before the Camp Meeting closed, a fellowship meeting was held when the Rev. Wm. Case requested all those who had been converted to stand up. When he saw Peter Jones among the number, he exclaimed, "Glory to God, there stands a son of Augustus Jones, of the Grand River, amongst the converts; now is the door opened for the work of conversion amongst his nation!" His parents rejoiced in the conversion of their children.

The Spirit of the Lord, descended upon the Mohawk Indians at Grand River; and often

times in the prayer meetings might be heard supplications and songs of thanksgiving in English, Chippewa, and Mohawk. Happy days were these for the children of the forest. The frowns and ungracious words of the the ungodly pale face could not deprive them of the favour of God. The room in which their religious meetings were held became too small for the dusky worshippers, and Chief Davis, a worthy man, with the magnanimity of soul, gave up his own house for use as a school and place of worship and retired for the autumn and winter to a log cabin in the woods. The converts were formed into a class under the leadership of Seth Crawford. A day and Sunday school were organized in which Jones and Crawford nobly assisted. Together they superintended the erection of the first Methodist Indian Church in Canada. It was built with the aid of the Christian Indians, and there our two devoted companions laboured amongst the children and adult population, seeking to train their intellects and teach them the way of life and peace.

A summer spent at brickmaking in order to obtain funds to start life as a farmer, and Peter undid his secular affairs, for he felt it incumbent upon him to preach the gospel to his brethren of the red race.

In the spring of 1825, he began his lifework, in which he was in "labours more abundant." Filled with an intense love for the souls of his brethren, he sought every opportunity of doing them good. He aimed at their conversion and civilization. He chose land for them, went to the fields and taught them how to plough and plant, and when the work of the day was over, gathered them together for spiritual instruction and prayer. As a school teacher he was successful. The children made rapid progress, and many were the commendations he received from the white people, who were astonished at the piety of the Indians, their love for the gospel and their deep interest in the education of their children. Anxious for the salvation of the souls of the red race, he went on a missionary tour with the Rev. Mr. Torry to the Munceys and Chippewas on the river Thames. Five days he spent in the woods entreating them to forsake their vices and accept Christianity. The messengers of the Gospel were cordially received, but the people said that they loved to follow the religion of their fathers, and that they was as moral as the white Christians who had introduced whiskey among them. They promised, however, to think of what they had heard in the sermons preached to them and to give an answer when the preachers returned a few months hence. A school teacher was left among the Munceys, and there was some hope of success, as tears had flowed freely down some swarthy cheeks at the preaching of the truth.

The Six Nation Indians were assembled for their treaty payments, and Peter Jones was there with his children, who plainly showed the benefits of education to the Indians, much to the delight of the visitors. It was customary for the Government to dispense intoxicating liquors to the Indians during the treaty payments but this youthful Indian Missionary, yearning for the well-being of his fellow men, went among the leading Christian Indians to induce them