

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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HIME merrily, ye silver bells!
A bright new year
Doth now appear;
And hopeful once more we ignore fear
Of a year like the past;
Though a memory last
Of sadly muffled silver bells.

Ring cheerily, ye silver bells!
Old year depart!
Nor leave a dart
Ranking in a careless, thoughtless heart;
May a profitless past
Be redeemed at last
In the years to come, oh silvery bells!

WINTER IN THE NORTHLAND.

BY REV. EGERTON RYERSON YOUNG

(late Missionary at Norway House, Keewatin.)

HO for a sleigh ride! Old winter is coming again, and already the snow is falling like a great mantle of purity, making everything it touches look so bright and beautiful.

How exhilarating are our wintersports, and how glorious the fun! Where is the boy who does not welcome the first snowstorm, as it comes pouring down its millions of glittering snow flakes! hurting no one, but beautifying everything it touches, covering up the mud and dust and dirt of the land, deadening the harsh sounds of the noisy streets, and acting as a wonderful incentive to innocent amusement and mirth. It makes eyes flash out with unusual brightness, and pale cheeks flush up with the rosy hues of health, and hearts beat more joyously than they have done for long months before.

The handsleds or toboggans are brought out from their dusty retreats, and are quickly put into service along the beaten track, or down the sloping hill.

Glorious Canada! land of bracing winters, and health-giving breezes, we would not exchange thee for those sunny, tropical lands, where the snow never falls, and the cold bracing air never blows. Beautiful may be your flowers, and gorgeous the plumage of your birds; sweet may be the perfume of

your breezes, and glorious your tropical forests, but the death-dealing pestilence, in a thousand forms, there lurks, and insidious fevers, such as we never know, are ever doing their horrid work. Your inhabitants are a sickly, puny, saffron-skinned lot of people, without ambition, or courage, or enter-

So to our fair Dominion we will still give our preference, our love, our loyalty. For her prosperity we will still work and pray. In her sports we can find all the relaxation and enjoyment our physical natures require, and, among them all, none gives us more health and pleasure than those which can be enjoyed when the Frost King reigns and the snow covers the ground.

Look at our second picture. There is sleigh-riding that is exciting enough to almost take your breath away. What would you not give to be wrapped up as cosily in the fur robes in the cariole or dog sled as that traveller is.

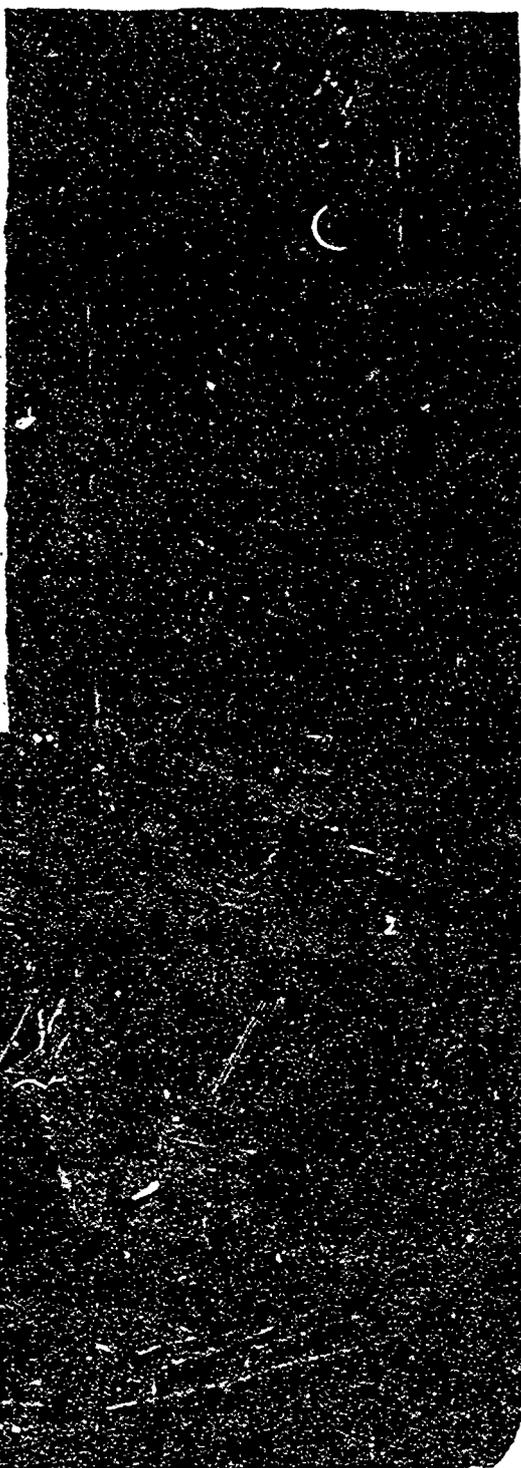
The picture represents a white man—let us for the time being call him a missionary—with his Indian attendant and dog trains leaving Norway House for a long trip on Lake Winnipeg. Let us join them and see what an exciting time we will have.

But ere we start let us examine our outfit—our dogs, our Indians, our sleds and their loads. Did ever you see such fiery-spirited dogs? they are called the Esquimo or Huskie dog.



CAMPING OUT IN THE NORTH-WEST.—(Specimen of 250 cuts in "Methodist Magazine" for 1884.)

I used them altogether on my long winter journeys until I imported my St. Bernards and Newfoundlands. These Esquimo dogs are queer fellows. Their endurance is wonderful, their tricks innumerable, their appetites insatiable, their thievish propensities unconquerable. It seems to be their nature to steal, and they never get the mastery of



it. I have gone to an Indian's wigwam, and have bought from him a litter of puppies; these I have taken to my mission home, and, giving them abundance of food, have brought them up in the way they should go, but they would not stay there. Some of them are easily trained to the work, and quickly submit to the harness, but

others die rather than yield. We will learn much about them as we journey on.

Our sleds are like toboggans. They are about ten feet long and eighteen inches wide.

Of our Indian runners it is indeed pleasant to speak. Faithful indeed were their services rendered, and bright indeed are the memories of their untiring devotion and constancy. When their feet and ours were bleeding, and nearly every footprint of our trail was marked with blood, their cheerfulness never failed them, and their heart quailed not. When supplies ran short, and home and plenty were many days distant, can we ever forget how, ere the missionary was made aware of the emptiness of his provision bags, they so quietly put themselves on quarter rations that there might yet be sufficient for full meals for him? And then when the long day's journey of perhaps sixty or eighty miles was ended, and we gathered at our camp fire, with no roof above us but the stars, no friendly shelter within scores of miles of us, how kindly, and with what reverence and respect, did they enter into the worship of the great God who had shielded us from so many dangers, and brought us to this hour. Sometimes they tried patience, for they were human, and so were we; but much more frequently they won our admiration by their marvellous endurance, and unerring skill, and wisdom, in trying hours, when blizzards raged, and blinding snowstorms obliterated all traces of the trail, and the white man became so confused and affected by the cold that he hardly was able to distinguish his right hand from his left.

Picturesque was their costume, as in new leather suits, gaily adorned with bead or porcupine quill work, by the skilful hand of bright-eyed wife or mother, they were on hand to commence the long journey. And when the "Farewells," to loved ones were said, and the word "Marche" was given, how rapid was their pace, and how marvellous was their ability