

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

HOW OUR ANCESTORS WROTE.

(Continued.)

You saw how the savage would indicate a bat, by drawing its image. Well, suppose picture-writing of that kind were used a long while by a nation, until it was found convenient to use the picture of a bat in words where there was simply a sound like *b a t*, even when it has no reference to the odd little flittermouse that comes out at dusk. Now, suppose some other nation (without as good a system of writing) should find it convenient to take that picture-sound *b a t*, but should use it somewhat differently. Suppose this nation has so far advanced on the way to an alphabet that instead of pictures, or signs, that mean certain things, or the sounds of the names of those things, they have signs that mean single short sounds which we call syllables. A syllable is composed always of a consonant and a vowel, or a vowel and a consonant side by side, or a vowel between two or more consonants. Consonants are so called because they *sound with* a vowel; the vowel is the long, and the consonants the short sound, and it sounds with the vowel. *Bat* is formed of the consonants B and T, which *sound with* the vowel A. Then, in the language of this nation I am speaking of, the little sketch of a bat would be used to stand for the syllable *ba*. Suppose by a simiar development a small sketch of an ant should be employed to express the syllable *at*, the sound of *n* in *ant* being slurred over, after a fashion you will find in many different tongues. Then to write on this system the word *bat*, this nation would need two signs, one originally the drawing of the bat, the other that of an ant; placed side by side, they would spell *ba-at* and would be pronounced *bat*. Note now, that wherever in the words of that language those two sounds *ba* and *at* occurred, these two signs could be used. This may seem a clumsy fashion; you may wonder why it is easier to use two signs in place of one; but it is really a great step onward from pure picture-writing. Let this be enough for the present. I only wish to hint to you how pictures gradually grew into letters of the alphabet during the course of ages. Later you will learn how it all took place, so far as we can make it out from the old forms of writing. The word *syllabary* expresses that stage of writing where *ba* and *at* spell *bat* and a true alphabet had not yet been born.

It was the Phœnicians then—remember this name, for it will constantly occur hereafter—a people of Syria and Palestine, and cousins of the Hebrews, who used a true alphabet of only twenty-two letters. By the hands of successive nations and, as a rule, westward from Asia Minor, we have borrowed from them our own excellent alphabet. But did the Phœnicians invent their own alphabet? Did they see the clumsiness of the syllabary stage and make the last great leap? That is a question many wise men have labored hard to answer. Men have given the better part of their lives to discover whence that alphabet came. And some are now content to believe that a French professor, named de Rouge, was right, who argued by a train of reasoning too long to be given here, that the

stand the language, customs and intellects of the Indians better than any other can in several years. With an energetic and wise superintendent, greater success would be attained and with less expense.

Education and religion were not divorced. This was one of the chief causes of Eliot's success. Spiritual instruction will produce ideas, regenerate the moral nature, produce a true social life and lead to God.

The one enduring relic of this extinct New England tribe is the Indian Bible. The influence of Eliot's work created a desire to aid the Indians and to this fact may be traced subsequent efforts to educate and civilize them. A brick building was erected at the American Cambridge, called the Indian College, and about the time of Eliot's death, a college was founded in Virginia for educating the youth of the colony and also the Indians. Since that time colleges and Industrial schools have exerted a leavening influence, and the grand results abundantly testify to the importance and usefulness of these commendable means.

Society no longer dread the savage red men. The ranks of literature are being adorned by the earnest advocates of the Indian's rights. Political parties are interested in the Indian question and the churches are laboring earnestly for the temporal, mental, moral and spiritual welfare of these people.

Bowed down with age and bodily infirmities, no longer able to go out amongst his Indians, the devoted Eliot induced several families to send their negro servants once a week, that he might impart religious instruction to them.

In his last days, he was found teaching an Indian child the alphabet by his bedside. A friend asked him "why not rest from your labors now?" The aged Apostle answered, "Because, I have prayed to God to render me useful in my sphere; and now that I can no longer preach he leaves me strength enough to teach this poor child his alphabet."

He died on the 20th of May, 1690, aged eighty-six years. His wife died three years before him. She was a pious and devoted woman, who, by her excellence, aided much in the work in which both their lives were spent. There were five sons and a daughter in the family. Three of the sons became ministers of the Gospel. The daughter and one son survived their father. The Apostle to the Indians was esteemed highly by the men of his day. Richard Baxter, who was peculiarly attached to him and deeply interested in his work, wrote "There was no man on earth whom I honored above him." Enthusiastic in life, his dying declaration reveals the same burning zeal for the welfare of his converts. Ceasing at once to work and live, he "being dead, yet speaketh unto us."

"Let no dark cloud rest on the work of the Indians. Let it live when I am dead. Welcome joy." Such was his dying injunction to those behind. The years have rolled on, they are extinct, a very few of the thousands of copies of the Indian Bible are in existence, yet to us there remains the example, as an incentive to labour and the precious memory of the heroic missionary is our legacy and joy.

[THE END.]

old Greeks were truthful in their traditions when they wrote that the Phœnicians took the shapes for their twenty-two letters from the writing of the Egyptians, several thousand years before the birth of Christ. The theory is that Phœnician traders in Egypt borrowed the shapes of the letters of the alphabet from the Egyptians, and handed these shapes improved down to us, along with their names, which we retain very clearly in *alpha-beta*, or Alphabet.

THE END.

MISSIONS IN THE FAR WEST.

We ought to have at least five more white missionaries in the Indian Territory. We ought to do far more evangelization of the uncivilized Indians, for whom we are doing comparatively little. In the Indian Territory an excellent religious interest has prevailed, resulting in numerous additions to the churches. The christian Indians continue with increasing zeal the support of a native missionary to the uncivilized tribes in the Territory. Their Territorial convention and the publication of "The Indian Missionary," of which Rev. D. Rodgers, our general missionary, is editor, are having a happy effect in unifying and combining for Christian effort the Baptists of the several Nations in the Territory.

It is gratifying to be able to announce that a missionary to Alaska has been appointed. His destination is the Port of St. Paul on Kadiak Island. This island is the elbow of the peninsula, has an area of 28,980 square miles, (nearly half that of New England), and belongs to the geographical portion of Alaska known as the Kadiak division, containing 70,884 square miles, being about one-sixth larger than New England. The people, numbering about 5,000 are of Eskimo stock, dwelling in villages which (according to the last Government report) "will compare favorably, in neatness and domestic comfort, with most of the fishing villages of Northern Europe. The climatic conditions of the island are more favorable than in other sections of Alaska, the cultivation of potatoes and turnips and the rearing of cattle being among the general industries of the people." The people, therefore, are at least semi-civilized, and under such religious care as they formerly received from the Russian Church, have chiefly, if not wholly, abandoned their pagan and savage customs.

They sadly need the influence of education and of the Gospel, and upon American Baptists certainly rest some obligation to supply this need.—*Baptist Home Mission.*

An Indian named Comego, under the influence of liquor, or, as he says, of Blue Ribbon beer, lay down beside the railway track, between Hastings and Birdsall, with his right arm thrown across the rail beside him, and a passing train severed it a little above the elbow.

The report that the Whitefish Lake band of Indians were to be allowed to vote at the forthcoming Federal elections in the North-west is discovered to have been founded on a proposition to extend to them the provisions of the Indian Advancement Act.