

# PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.



REV. THOMAS CROSBY.

### Banner of Missions.

BY GEORGE W. DOANE.

Fling out the banner! Let it float  
Skyward and seaward, high and wide;  
The sun, that lights its shining folds,  
The cross on which the Saviour died.

Fling out the banner! Angels bend  
In anxious silence o'er the sign,  
And vainly seek to comprehend  
The wonder of the Lord divine.

Fling out the banner! Heathen lands  
Shall see from far the glorious sight;  
And nations, crowding to be born,  
Baptize their spirits in its light.

Fling out the banner! Sin-sick souls,  
That sink and perish in the strife,  
Shall touch in faith its radiant hem,  
And spring immortal into life.

Fling out the banner! Let it float  
Skyward and seaward, high and wide;  
Our glory, only in the cross,  
Our only hope, the Crucified.

Fling out the banner! Wide and high,  
Seaward and skyward let it shine;  
Nor skill, nor might, nor merit ours;  
We conquer only in that sign.

### PIONEER WORK IN THE NORTH-WEST.

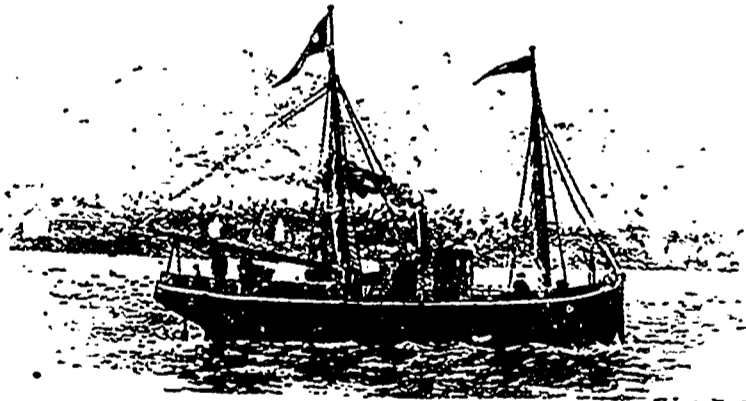
THE APOSTOLIC LABOURS OF REV. THOMAS CROSBY AMONG THE INDIANS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA AND ALASKA—TWO THOUSAND MILES A YEAR IN A CANOE—THE BUILDING OF A STEAMBOAT.

Nearly forty years of toil and travel and self-denying effort for the evangelization of the Indians of the great Northwest, have made the names of Thomas Crosby and wife household words throughout Canada. Few people, even among those who know them best, have any idea of the extent of their labours. The change visible in some locality is witnessed, groups of Indians quit their vicious lives, the women and girls become virtuous and decent, a little church is built and the whole settlement is revolutionized. Then the man and his wife, whose labours have been blessed of God to this glorious result, cease to be residents of the district. They disappear, but they are gratefully remembered, and their frequent visits afterward are festivals to be anticipated, enjoyed and recollected with delight. Where do they go? The people whom they have served so well do not always know, but if inquiry is made, they learn that the work that has been done among them is being done with the same laborious effort and the same joyful results in some other settlement. No less than thirteen hundred persons have in this way been brought into church membership and have joyfully professed their faith in

Christ. More than six thousand have heard the Gospel and been brought under Christian influences in church and Sunday-school. This, in a thinly settled country, where means of communication are few and precarious, is a stupendous work for one man to have accomplished, involving almost inconceivable labour and hardship.

The instrument God has used for the achievements of this enormous undertaking seemed to human eyes a very unsuitable one. With little education, no college training and no preparatory study, he took up the work, moved by faith and love; and by simple brotherly affection and quiet, unobtrusive helpfulness, he won the good-will of the people in one section after another and led them to Christ. The word of call and inspiration was as simple as it was effectual. In the year 1860 there appeared in a Canadian journal a letter signed "Edward White," in which the writer dwelt on the urgent need of the country. "Thousands of young men," he said, "are coming to British Columbia seeking gold, but where are the young men whom we need to consecrate their youth and strength to the preaching of the Gospel to the miners and the Indians?"

It was a deplorable picture that he drew of the condition of these people. They were leading lives of practical heathenism, the miners careless, dissolute and depraved, and the Indians sacrificing the sacred ties of fatherhood and brotherhood in pandering to the vices of the white settlers, and squandering the proceeds in self-indulgence. It was an awful circle of mutual corruption, vice, and degradation. Who was there with faith in God and conviction in his soul of the purifying and elevating power of the Gospel, who would go and preach it and live it among them? It was like asking for volunteers for a forlorn hope, or for missionaries for some benighted island of the South Seas, with the added difficulty that some of those to whom it was proposed to send the Gospel were backsliders from Christian lands.



MISSION STEAM-YACHT "GLAD TIDINGS."

We do not know how many read that appeal from Edward White, but we know that one young man read it and could not forget it. Thomas Crosby was then twenty years old. Four years before, he had come from an English village to Woodstock with his father, mother and brothers, and had settled here. The family was poor, and the father's venture in farming, which at first promised a brilliant success, ended disastrously. The boy must earn his own living, and he took the first opportunity. He went to work in a tannery and was making his way. In his seventeenth year he became a member of the Methodist church in Woodstock, and after a short time was appointed a local preacher. To him Edward White's letter appeared to be a personal call. He dwelt upon it, re-read it, took it to his room and read it on his knees, and finally made an offer of himself in solemn consecration to God for the work. That was all he could do, he left the opening of the way to God. Two days later he had an intimation that his offer was accepted. His elder brother, an unconverted man, spontaneously removed the only difficulty in the way by offering him all the money he needed. "Take it as a loan, Tom," he said, "if

you can repay it, do; if not, I shall never ask you for it." He took the money, and going to his room, he knelt down and thanked God for it, and said that henceforth his whole life was given up to him.

The matter was settled there and then. All attempts to dissuade him from an enterprise that seemed to the worldly mind profitless and foolhardy, failed. His employer was the first to assail him. "What are these people to you?" he asked. "They are savages; they will kill you and eat you. Don't be quixotic; stay with us; you have done well and may do better. Keep on with your work, and from to-day we will double your wages." Tom had but one answer for the kindly tanner. He had promised God and he must go. At home the trial was harder. The father could not see the call in the light that Tom saw it, his mother wept over her boy and declared that she could not spare him. There was a midnight scene that is still fresh in his memory, when father and mother both listened to his story of the call and the consecration, and lamented over him as one given over to death. "I cannot be happy if I don't go," Tom said. Then his mother answered with a voice broken by sobs, "Well, then, my boy, go, and God bless you." Hundreds of times in after years, on storm-tossed seas and lonely desert places, in the solemn night hours, Mr. Crosby declares, the echo of those words fell on his ears encouraging him and stimulating him. The ejaculatory prayer was heard and abundantly answered. God has blessed him.

Setting out alone on his perilous enterprise, with no promise of support from any church or society, he made his way to Victoria, British Columbia, where he arrived April 11, 1862. He was anxious to enter on his work unhampered by an obligation, so he stayed there working with his hands until he had earned enough money to repay his brother's loan. The time was not lost; he gained much knowledge of the field, and he gained strength in lonely communion with God. It was the period of solitude which gen-



MRS. THOMAS CROSBY.

eral unfitness; but Punshon overcame them, declaring that Crosby had given the best of all proofs of his fitness in his success.

Mr. Crosby remained in that field two years longer, and then returned to Victoria to report his success to the church there, in the hope of getting some thoroughly organized work for reaching the Indians commenced. Two of the brethren there, McKay and McMillan, were deeply interested in his story and made the experiment of mission services in Victoria itself. They hired a bar-room on the corner of Government and Fitzgerald Streets, and Crosby gladly preached in it. There were plenty of Indians there who had come down from the north, with their squaws and daughters, to engage in their loathsome traffic. A great work began in that bar-room, and many of the people converted during those services, more than twenty years ago, are still living, and are leading earnest, faithful, Christian lives.

During the next few months, Mr. Crosby went through Ontario, arousing the churches to the need of the work, and awakening them by his story of what had already been accomplished, and by his testimony as to the readiness of the Indian to listen to the Gospel, to the duty of supporting missionaries among them. During that tour he incidentally awakened in one of his hearers another kind of interest, which finally became a very close and personal one. He was married to the daughter of the Rev. John Douke, and henceforth had a valuable helper in his work.

On the conclusion of his tour, Mr. Crosby kept his promise to the Indians whom he had served at Victoria. A Hudson's Bay ship, sailing to Alaska, carried the missionary and his wife to Fort Simpson, about seventy miles from Mr. Duncan's station at Metlakatla. The converts of the Victoria work had prepared the way for his coming, and Mr. Crosby was received with open arms. After a short time, a church was organized and a building commenced. Mr. Crosby with his own hands cut the timber, and the Indians laboured hard at the building. The skilled labour was paid for chiefly by the Indians themselves, who, although they had no money, brought furs, finger-rings, ear-rings, and surplus blankets, and gave them freely for the building fund. The completion of the church was the beginning of a wonderful work of grace, which spread to distant places. The people who came to Fort Simpson and heard the Gospel went home, and soon messages came from them to Mr. Crosby, begging him to visit them. He went to Queen Charlotte Sound, where there was a similar gathering of souls, thence to Bella Bella, to Bella Coola and to many other places. In each settlement he remained preaching and teaching until a church was organized and he could safely proceed to a new field.

The extremities of this chair of mis-