

The Two Loaves, or the Contrast.

In June, 1843, Messrs. Riggs and Hopkins, with their families, ascended the Minnesota, in an open barge, as far as Traverse-des-Sioux. There they commenced a mission station among the Dakota Indians. This trip on the river occupied, as was usual, about a week; and the traveling party enjoyed and endured both shade and sunshine. Sometimes the bright sun, reflected from the water, was very oppressive by day, and the encampment on land, where they were stung and serenaded by mosquitoes, was no less trying by night.

On the last day of the passage, the ladies, tired of the bread ordinarily supplied in such trips, determined to try a loaf of "home bread." The yeast cakes furnished by a Galena friend, were produced, the kettle of water, warmed on shore, was carried on board the boat, the bread made, and placed in a sunny spot "to rise." In the afternoon, a strong head wind caused us to land and take an early supper. Then the loaf of bread was duly watched, and as nicely baked in a 'dutch-oven' as the circumstances would admit, and put away, uncut and untasted, in the provision-basket, for breakfast.

The wind lulled at sunset, and we re-embarked, while the sky and the water were tinged with its purple beams. Late in the evening we reached Traverse-des-Sioux. The tent was hastily pitched, the beds, &c. arranged, and all gladly sought repose. In the morning, breakfast was early prepared. As some of the party slept on board the barge, at some distance from the tent, they were sent for, before the loaf was cut which had caused so much labour and diversion, the day previous. Imagine the surprise felt when, knife in hand, the provision-basket was opened, and behold, no bread was there! A Dakota had silently taken it while we slept. Other bread had to be prepared before the breakfast was eaten; and all of the hungry group who could,

assisted in baking it in frying pans, by a camp fire.

Nearly eleven years after this well-remembered breakfast, one of the families then encamped on that beautiful prairie at Traverse-des-Sioux, that of Mr. Riggs, was rendered homeless, by the burning of the mission houses at Lac-qui-parle. Very little of clothing, and less of provisions, was saved. It was early in March, and desolate and destitute, we took refuge in the church, a little after noon, without a dinner or the means of preparing one. An Indian woman kindly promised to supply us. She stewed some beans. They were brought to the church. The benches were drawn near the stove, and the family group seated. A blessing was asked, and the beans served,—two eating from one plate or saucer, a few of each having being sent in by a neighbour. The meal was nearly finished on beans alone, without bread or butter. The door opened, a Dakota widow entered, bringing a large loaf of light bread—all the bread she had. The astonishment and joy were greater than were the surprise and regret when the loaf was missing at Traverse, in 1843. This was not her only offering. The unexpected liberality and warm sympathy of the native church members caused tears of joy. The contrast between the heathen and Christian was so marked, during and after the fire, we could not but say, "Lo, what hath God wrought." Although the external change may be small, truly a great change has been effected by the gospel.

Let those who deride missions and missionaries, because the Dakotas as a tribe have not exchanged skin tents and bark huts for frame houses, and the Indian garb for white men's dress, be silent.

Let faithless Christians, who have, in despair, ceased to pray and labor for the salvation of these degraded Indians, because the glorious promises are not fulfilled, hasten to their closets