

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

ENLARGED SERIES.—VOL. IV.

TORONTO, NOVEMBER 1, 1884.

No. 22.

OUR MISSIONS.

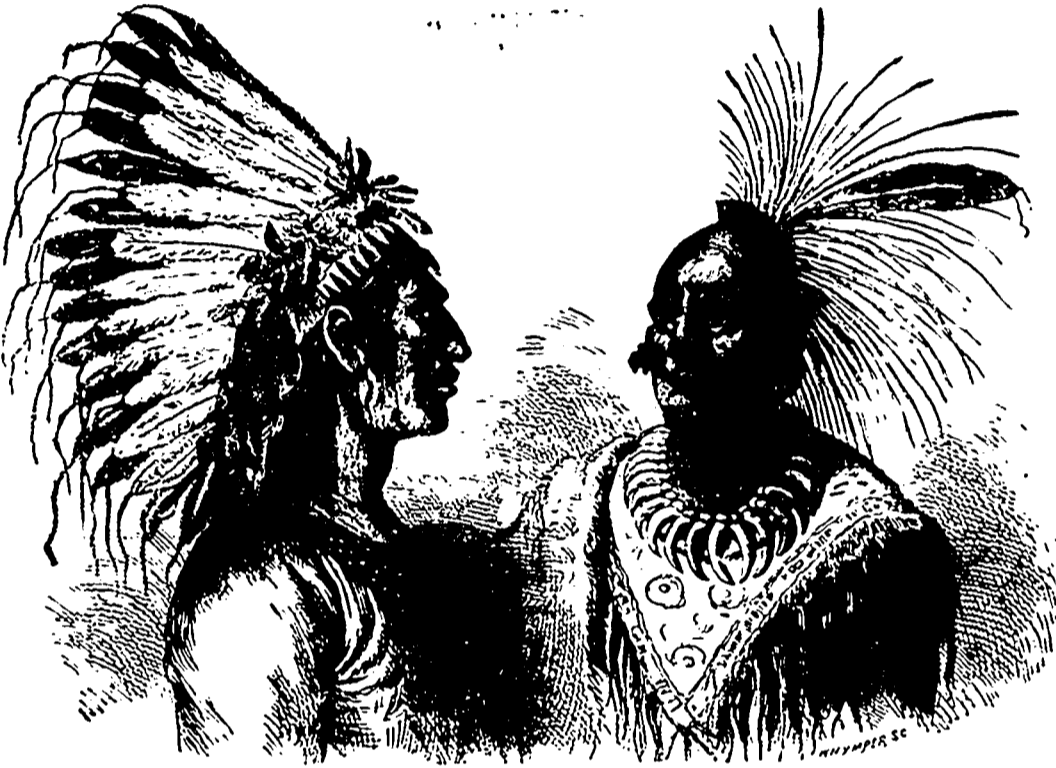
BY THE EDITOR.

I.

EVERY great religious movement has been accompanied by intense missionary zeal. The day of Pentecost was the prelude to the diffusion of the Gospel by apostolic labours from the banks of the Indus to the banks of the Rhone, from the highlands of Abyssinia to the rugged mountains of Caucasus. The mediæval Church, in the time of its greatest purity and spiritual power, sent its monkish missionaries into the depths of Thuringian forests, and to far Iona's lonely isle and storm-swept Lindisfarne. The Lutheran Reformation awoke the missionary zeal of the long-torpid Church. The Catholic revival which followed was characterized by the apostolic labours of Loyola and Xavier, and the missionary enthusiasm of the Jesuits—in the Old World, in India, in China, and Japan; and in the New, from the waters of the La Plata to the waters of the Nipissing, from the coasts of Newfoundland to the Rocky Mountains.

This missionary spirit is especially characteristic of the movement called Methodism. As if conscious of its destined universality, its founder with prophetic soul exclaimed, "The world is my parish." His burning eloquence kindled at the altar of eternal truth, the apostolic Whitfield, like the angel of the Apocalypse, preached the everlasting gospel to millions in the Old World and the New.

On many a field of sacred toil have the agents of the Methodist Church vindicated its title to the distinction of being pre-eminently a missionary Church—amid the cinnamon groves of Ceylon, in the crowded bazaars or tangled jungles of India, among the teeming populations of China, beneath the feathery foliage of the tropic palm in the sunny islands of the Southern seas, amid the dense darkness of African



INDIAN CHIEFS.



INDIAN CAMP.

barbarism, and beside the mighty rivers which roll in solitary grandeur through the vast wilderness of our own North-West. With a prouder boast than the Roman poet they may exultingly exclaim, "What place now, what region in the earth is not full of our labour?"*

† In every land beneath the sun this grand old Mother of Churches has her daughters fair and flourishing, who rise up and call her blessed. The Sabbath chant of her hymns, like the morning drum-beat of Great Britain's garrisons, engirdles the world. And we, in the virgin lands of this New World, have endeavoured to be faithful to the traditions and spirit which have characterized Methodism everywhere. From the beginning we have been a missionary Church. And now, with our new organization, our ampler resources, and our broader fields of labour, we must maintain our missionary character, and go forth to grander conquests than we have ever attempted before.

At this juncture in our history, a survey of our mission field, and examination of the varied character of our mission operations, may not be uninteresting nor un-instructive.

OUR DOMESTIC MISSIONS.

This department of missionary effort must always continue to largely occupy our care. These missions have especial claims on our sympathy and support. They are in our immediate vicinity. Their spiritual necessities are forced upon our notice. There will always be young and poor and feeble circuits—in the backwoods settlements, on the distant prairie, on the storm-swept shores of Newfoundland—which require fostering and assistance in the early years of their history. The adventurous spirit and the sturdy independence of character which lead the hardy pioneer to hew out for himself a home in the wil-

* "Quis jam locus, . . .
Quæ regio in terris nostri non
plena laboris!"
—Virg. *Æn.* vv. 463, 464.