

MISSION FIELD.

Letter from India.

CANADIAN MISSION COLLEGE, INDORE, JUNE 18TH, 1895.

DEAR SIR,—Please find space in your columns for the acknowledgments of the following sums on behalf of the Indore College which were forwarded to me by last mail by the Rev. Dr. Reid:—

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| Mrs. M. E. Sinclair..... | \$50.00 |
| Prescott, C. E. S..... | 7.00 |
| Toronto, Knox Church Bible Class..... | 25.00 |
| Parkdale..... | 15.00 |
| Montreal, Colvin Church, Scholarship at Indore.. | 20.00 |
| Montreal, Crescent St..... | 15.00 |

Total, \$132.00

Yours faithfully,
J. WILKIE.

The Missionary Review of the World.

The July number begins with a racy article by Rev. Edgerton R. Young, on "Life Among the Red Men of America." In 1868 he was appointed to labor amongst the Crees northwest of Hudson Bay, which at that time took him two months and nineteen days to travel—at first by steamboat and rail, then by horse over the prairies, and during the last fourteen days, in a skiff rowed by Indians, and a living ox lying across the boat as a fellow passenger a part off the way. One of the first things he did was to take all locks of windows and doors and throw them away, thus showing the Indians that he was going to trust them—and his confidence was respected. The Bible was translated by Mr. Evans, not in the alphabet, but in syllabic characters, making it possible for Indians to learn to read the Word of God in two or three weeks. In some missions through this discovery, 90 per cent of the people are reading the Word of God in their own tongue. The value some of these poor Indians place on the Word is illustrated by an incident which we cannot quote in full, that of an Indian who walked on snow shoes 280 miles to recover a Bible that, by mistake had been left behind.

The missionaries had to live on fish half the year, and the other half on reindeer, muskrat, gulls, owls, and anything that could be got. "I have been" he says "in your penitentiaries, I have seen the food provided for you worst criminals. My wife and I would have been glad to have had anything approaching what you give to your murderers and house-breakers." The mission field was 550 miles long and 300 miles wide, and it was travelled in the summer in a birch canoe and in the winter with dogs.

By and by a successor was found for his mission amongst the Crees and he went to the Saulteaux. The work was greatly blessed, hundreds were gathered in so that the missionary would sometimes say to himself "Can it be true?" I had to go to the woods and sit down all alone and take out my Testament and read through the Acts of the Apostles. Then I would say "Yes, it can be true, the Holy Spirit can do his work here as in these Apostolic days."

An amusing as well as instructive account is given of a visit received from a *Chiefness*, who had heard of the white man and his wife and their wonderful Book—and the reception given the missionaries when in fulfilment of their promise they visited their guest—twelve or fourteen days journey away.

The Indians are very cruel in their treatment of their wives, thinking that it is a sign of weakness to be kind to a wife's sister or mother, but when the Gospel begins to tell all that is changed, and the same qualities that exist elsewhere under the Holy Spirit's teaching.

Dr. Pierson contributes a second chapter on the curious customs of the Indians of America. One of the strangest is the *rattlesnake dance*. The professional snake men prepare themselves for the occasion by a fast, drinking only a bitter tea infused with secret herbs which are said to be an antidote to the venom of the serpent. They then go out in search of snakes, and all that are captured are kept in a sacred room, until the night before the dance when they are ceremonially cleansed at an altar made of colored sands. In the dance each priest takes a snake between his teeth, and dances around the circle. In some dances as many as one hundred snakes are used and three fifths of them with fangs unextracted.

Another tribe, the Navajo Indians, will not touch a snake, but

hold the bear in sacred reverence. A Navajo would not kill a hunter whose bear's den is lest the bear should visit him and his family with vengeance. The only exception is when a bear has killed a Navajo,—then the avenger halts before the bear's cave and makes a solemn apology for the revenge he is constrained to take, singing the praises of the king of beasts,—then the bear is killed and they go home to fast and purify themselves.

Witchcraft is a common faith amongst Indians, and the witch is considered an universal enemy, all disasters are ascribed to them. When such dread is in the air suspicion is easily aroused and sometimes so many have been accused of this evil influence that whole tribes have been obliterated.

Wizardcraft is also common and the skill of the magician is such as to compel the spectators to believe in their supernatural power. They do marvellous things, such as swallowing an eighteen inch sword, dancing bare-footed amid hot coals, holding torches against their naked bodies, or taking baths of flame. The chief achievement is the "growing of sacred corn." At sunrise the corn is planted, soon the earth cracks and the blade appears, by noon the corn tassels out and by sunset the corn appears. The jugglers weird song does not cease during the whole process, if it did the growth would stop.

These magicians have many superstitions in connection with the colors in weaving, hunting, cooking rabbits, etc., which are trivial but requiring a long apprenticeship.

MISSIONS IN ALASKA.

Before Alaska was purchased by the United States, the Russian Greek Church did mission work. They have a cathedral in Sitka, forty-one churches and 12,140 members. The Lutherans also had a mission in Sitka until the Russian support was withdrawn and then the mission was abandoned. Little has ever been done to civilize the Alaskans, and from 1867 to 1877 soldiers, sailors and smugglers introduced vice to such a degree that each settlement became a pandemonium. They practised the greatest cruelty, witchcraft with its horrors was universal and retaliation became a science. In 1875 a white man named Lawson, settled in Sitka. He practised and taught the natives how to distil rum, and soon there was in every house a still, and it was a continuous orgie of drunkenness and murder. In 1877 the American Presbyterian Church sent Dr. Jackson on a tour of inspection. At Portland, Oregon, he met Mrs. McFarland, the widow of a missionary who had been in New Mexico. They went to Fort Wrangle where Mrs. McFarland remained. Being the centre of mining interests, the natives and whites met in unrestrained vice. A convention was called, Mrs. McFarland in the chair. Certain rules drawn up, and three policemen appointed. This was the first attempt at Government. It was then necessary to start a refuge for girls who were being sold to whites by their parents for a few blankets.

In 1878 a school was started in Sitka, which was a "hell upon earth." They now have a church and boarding schools and industrial schools all of which are successful. Surrounding points applied for the Gospel and new stations were opened. The missions have been gradually extended as well as in the surrounding islands. The natives north of the Aleutian Islands are Eskimo, dwelling in houses partly underground, with one small entrance, so small as to be entered on hands and knees. They have no tables or chairs, eat on the floor without knives and forks. Their food is whale meat and skin, walrus, deer, birds, etc., eaten raw. Whale and seal oil are the principal drinks. They are slaves to tobacco, both sexes chew it until no taste remains and then they dry and smoke it. For drink they are ready to sell body and soul.

The *Golden Rule* says that at the Y.P.S.C.E. Convention, Boston. "To begin with there will be more missionaries from foreign fields at this Convention than have ever before honored one of our international gatherings. All of the three Monday morning sessions will be devoted entirely to the one central thought 'The world for Christ.' At this time in addition to the long array of missionaries, a number of men who have been greatly blessed in their labors at home on behalf of missions will set forth the needs and claims of the field."

The Synod of India has sent up to the General Assembly by a vote of 43 to 10, a memorial in favor of liberty in some circumstances to baptize a man with two wives. It is not a question of a man taking a second, but having two wives, that he should not turn her away.

According to Rev. Henry Jessup "It doesn't cost very much to carry on Foreign Missions. A single chapel (Episcopalian) in New York spends more money annually than the whole Syrian Mission, with its 40 missionaries, 44 preachers, 183 helpers, 26 churches and 152 schools.