

The Last of the Old Guard

(Concluded from page 7.)

was at its height among the Kutchin-Kutchin Indians, they broke several of their guns, and also many of their beads, which were used by them as a standard of wealth. There were some, however, who remained firm to what the missionary had taught them. One of these, Jutsugvetye, called "the doctor," because he was once a great medicine man, and had a powerful influence among his people. When bowed down with sickness he was urged by some to return to his con-juring in order to drive away the disease. This he refused to do, saying that he wished to follow the teaching of the minister to the last. Another old man told Mr. McDonald in the midst of his sufferings "that he held on to God's word just as a fish on a bait attached to a hook."

The longer Mr. McDonald was in the country the more did he see the need to be ever upon the move visiting isolated bands of Indians hundreds of miles away. From Easter, 1867, to Easter, 1868, he travelled two thousand miles on snow-shoes, and four thousand miles by canoe and boat. Only a volume could do justice to his many experiences on these trips. In this brief sketch only a few incidents can be mentioned.

One of his journeys was down the Yukon River toward its mouth. He was accompanied by "Red Leggings," of the Black River Indians, and Shan-yate, chief of the Kutchin-Kutchin. For several days they moved down the river. "The scenery," so Mr. McDonald wrote, "was interesting and beautiful—hills from 200 to 600 feet in height, running along both sides of the river. These, sloping gradually back, are covered with spruce, poplar, and birch from the summit to the water's edge. Rocks, dipping at the river's brink, and rising perpendicular, or jutting out from the sides of the hills, combine to render the whole most picturesque and charming."

The first difficulty they encountered was the loss of their canoe. One morning when they awoke it was nowhere to be found. In the night a strong breeze had sprung up, stirred the smouldering fire, which crept along until it reached the frail craft, and "consumed it entirely before anyone was aware of it." Fortunately they were able to obtain another, which was "but a makeshift," and in this they continued on their way.

At length they reached the mouth of the Tanana River, where it flows into the Yukon, and here they found two hundred Indians, who had gathered at this place for fur-trading purposes. These for a time proved quite hostile. "They have been warned by some medicine men among them," wrote Mr. McDonald, "not to shake hands with me, for that if they did so their death would be occasioned by it." But notwithstanding the hostility the missionary sang a hymn, and gave a short address to which all listened attentively. He succeeded in talking to the medicine men, and his companions spoke to the rest of the Indians, and told them what changes had taken place at Fort Yukon since Mr. McDonald's arrival among them.

During the stay here a great feast was held by the Indians, followed by dancing and conjuring. Learning what was going on, Mr. McDonald went boldly into their midst and asked them to desist. Instead of getting angry they at once obeyed. When he was ready to depart they showed the friendliest feelings, pressing around to bid him farewell, even after he had embarked in the canoe.

It was the same wherever he went. Hostile at first and ready to slay him, the natives afterwards became friendly and listened to his message. An incident recorded by Archdeacon Stuck, of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States, shows the influence of Mr. McDonald's work. The Archdeacon was travelling one winter a few years ago in Alaska, and came upon an isolated band of Indians far into the interior. He was surprised to find that they could read, had books in their own language, and

conducted regular religious services. They were praying for Queen Victoria, and when the Archdeacon struck out the words, and substituted the President of the United States, it made no difference to the natives. They had been told years before to pray for the Queen, and they determined to obey McDonald, who had given them the books, and had done so much for their welfare.

On one of these journeys Mr. McDonald discovered gold on one of the creeks, which he scraped up with a spoon. The find was reported in the London Times, and attracted little attention. But when the great Klondyke strike took place The Times referred to Mr. McDonald's find years before, and claimed that he was the real discoverer of gold in the Yukon.

Thus for forty years Mr. McDonald carried on his work in the far north-land, moving in later years to the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains, at Fort McPherson, on Peel River, where, in 1876, he was appointed Archdeacon of the Mackenzie River Diocese. At last, owing to failing health, he was forced to retire to Winnipeg, where he spent the remaining years of his life. Here he was on familiar ground, for at Fort Douglas he had been born on November 7th, 1829. Here he had attended St. John's College, and from this same institution years later he received the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity.

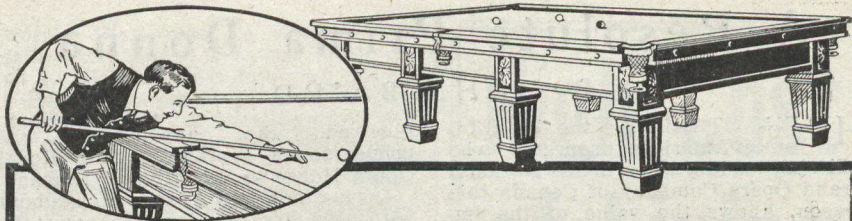
But during Archdeacon McDonald's forced retirement he was not idle. His beloved Indians of the north were ever in his mind, and for them he worked long and faithfully in preparing a Lexicon of the Tukudh language, which work, it is understood, was completed before his death.

So lived and toiled this earnest pioneer of the Regions Beyond. The influence of his life is far-reaching. It has been an inspiration to many who have become discouraged, and it has been the means of changing the lives of thousands of Indians from cruel barbarism to nobler and higher things. "Perhaps the greatest work achieved by this missionary," said the Vancouver Daily Province a few years ago, "and undoubtedly the most tangible feature of his labour is his translation of the whole of the Bible and Prayer Book into the language of the northern Mackenzie and Yukon River basins. When it is considered that this language is one of the hardest to master (in fact, some people can never master it) the magnitude of his work will be appreciated."

All Honour to Benson

ONE, William Shakespeare, who used to live at a place called Stratford-on-Avon, chiefly famous as the town in which Marie Corelli now lives, is coming into his own in America. In addition to Sothorn and Marlowe, Robert Mantell and Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, Margaret Anglin and Mr. F. R. Benson are with us, presenting interpretations of Shakespeare's plays. And even John Drew tried it, though finding that "Much Ado About Nothing" earned little better in the way of criticism than "much ado about nothing," he abandoned it.

The most notable presentation of Shakespearean drama is that of Mr. F. R. Benson and his Stratford players, who were in Toronto this week. Benson is a man who has only just become appreciated. He is the most faithful interpreter Shakespeare has had. Everybody on the English stage who is anybody so far as Shakespeare presentations are concerned, have played with him. Many of these were trained by him. Sir Herbert Tree, Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, Mr. Granville Barker, Mr. Oscar Asche, Mr. Arthur Bourchier, Mrs. F. R. Benson, Ellen O'Malley and many others have had Benson as master and fellow-player. If he had specialized in one or two roles as Mr. Sothorn has done, or Sir Herbert Tree or Mr. Bourchier, he would have become more famous. But he did first what a very few have done since—he popularized Shakespeare. All honour to him.



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