

TO THE EDITOR OF PETAUBUN

REV. SIR Should you think worthy of the enclosed composition, which I have written in the form of an address to the Indian nation, with regard to our relations with the white man at the present time, you may insert it within the columns of your valuable paper, the PETAUBUN, the pride of the Chippeway nation.

J. SUNDAY, Junr.

Alnwick, May 28th, 1862

FELLOW COUNTRYMEN, Perhaps you are all aware that when we were many, and the white man was few in number, we were strong and scattered throughout the whole of this vast continent of America, and they were weak as a little child. But instead of driving them back into the great Atlantic Ocean, as we might have done at that time, we cherished them in their infancy, as well as tendered to them our most sacred emblems of peace, which we have never yet been known to violate; and if we did violate the ties of peace, the pale face has always been the aggressor. We gave them land as much as they wanted, and also sold it to them for the merest trifle, which the children of the present age buy for their amusement only. We have permitted them to clear up our hunting grounds, to build their dwellings and other useful buildings; and when every thing began to smile around them, under the influence of industry, education, and religion, we did not go to them and say, "We want your well cultivated farms for our own use. You have enough land across the great waters,—you must go back to your own country,—we do not want you here,—the white man was never made to live with us". Nor did we say to them when they had become strongly attached to their dwelling places, and also to where they had buried their fathers, "You are mere tenants at will,—we own all the land, which we can recover at any time, and if you do not leave this tract of land, we will recover it by force. You must submit to our laws of the forest as we choose to make them for you". Far from it!—we have never uttered these words.

We have allowed them to make their own laws and govern themselves as they chose, when we could have dispossessed, or subjugated them at pleasure. We let them remain where they wished, till they gradually became stronger and stronger, and at last we have changed places with them, and now occupy the position they occupied during their infant state. They wanted more land and we sold it to them at their own price. Still they had not enough, and we moved farther and farther back into the forest, away from the Eastern Ocean, till at last we have no land by which we can call ourselves, the original proprietors of the tract of land, handed down to us from our fore-fathers. Not these small patches of land which we still retain, are coveted by the Pale Face, and we are ever hearing rumors that we are to be removed from our present locations. Where shall we go? We cannot expect them to treat us as we have treated them in their infancy, when we are now in that painful situation. Shall we go to the South, East, North, and West? Not the Pale Face has already taken possession of this vast continent. There is not a land where the rays of the sun do not shine upon the Pale Face.

Where are our mighty nations of old? Where are our fearless and brave warriors of old? Gone! gone forever! never again to be seen upon the face of the earth, with their fierce war-whoop. They have left us helpless, and placed us completely at the mercy of the White man. Surely the White man is not so hard hearted as Pharaoh of old, as not to see our helpless condition. Surely he ought to protect us from any outrage while we are yet in the land of the living;—while we are yet representing the once powerful nation, whom he looked upon as his superior in number as well as in strength, while he was in the inferior state;—the same humble position which we now occupy.—(a sad change!).

The wasting pestilence, famine, and war, have not alone produced this sad change. there has been a more fierce enemy than these; a moral cancer, which has eaten the heart's core of many a brave warrior; a plague which the touch of the White man communicated; a poison which betrayed us to lingering ruin of both body and soul, and is our secret destroyer in time of peace or war. Why then do we encourage this fatal poison, so relished by many of our people at the present time, which has destroyed many thousands of our nation so brave, and so true. The young men of our time seem to be offended, whenever the authorities are trying to interfere with their evil practices. They know not that

it is for their own advantage, and also for the benefit of our nation. Should we cease to use this dreadful poison we might still exist a few years longer than has been predicted by the White man. A new Government has lately been formed, who will be our future rulers. May it not be the worse for us.

I never saw a winter north of 54 degrees north latitude, where the greatest degree of cold is 50. degrees below zero. Our greatest cold in this region would be 20, or 25 below zero, and the sun at noon in the shortest days would be over 20 degrees above the horizon, but at Rossville it would only appear some 11 1/2 degrees above the horizon at noon in the shortest days. We would close our window shutters about 4 o'clock, P. M., and at 8 A. M. it would be light, so that we could extinguish our candles, thus making 16 hours of night, in the shortest days. Our house was constructed for warmth with double doors—an outside, and an inside one. We had double windows, and window shutters in addition.

I used to observe our church on these cold days. it being ceiled with boards on the inside there were many nails used, but however great might be the heat inside the church, the head of every nail would glisten like a diamond, being covered with frost. In using iron tools at these times, I used the same precautions as I would had they been heated, and the effect on the bare hand is not very dissimilar. In several respects I was disappointed in the effect excessive cold produced on the human frame. Instead of forever shivering with cold, I never shivered less. The cold does not produce this sensation, but rather a biting, prickly sensation, like fine needles perforating the skin. Every part of the body has to be well protected. boots and shoes for winter were out of the question. moccasins made of moose skin, and the feet well wrapped in many folds of some warm material.

Generally the snow was not deep, and we were north of the deepest snow line, but he that has heard the snow crackle under his feet, or aigh on a cold winter's night may imagine how it would sound to have it increased ten-fold. For four months together there was not heat sufficient to dampen the snow in the most sheltered nooks, having a southern aspect. From two to three feet would be the average depth of snow in that latitude, while to the south of us it would be four or more feet and sometimes not over one foot, or eighteen inches to the north of us. But if we had no great depth of snow, we had enough of ice, and frost. It was a good day's work for two men to dig a grave, as the whole depth of four, or five feet must be cut through the clay soil, as hard as frost could make it: so that there was an additional inducement with us to keep the living alive, at least until spring; for it was no light task to decently inter a fellow mortal at that season. One morning in the month of March I directed the servant man to cut a new watering place; and this we were compelled to do several times during the winter. The hole being two feet in diameter when first cut, would gradually become less and less, until closed entirely; although the surface was kept open, it would close up below. My man had been at work half a day, and reported no water yet. I went to his aid, and after a time we reached the bottom of the ice, when a torrent burst upward. On measuring I found the ice four feet eight inches thick. Although the ice was so thick, and the frost had reached such a depth, I was surprised to find how soon the summer's sun would dissolve them. Not far to the north of us, however, the ground was always frozen: how deep I could never learn, but on one occasion, when an important building was to be erected at York factory, and a solid foundation was required for the walls to rest upon, the excavation was made in the latter part of the warm season, and when the solid ice was reached, although in a bog, they congratulated themselves that the building would be secure with such a foundation to rest upon.

Our cattle, of which we had four or five, had to be securely housed all the winter. They would hardly endure the cold long enough to go to the watering place once a day. The moisture from their breath would condense on the inside of the stable, until the whole inside was lined with a coating of ice: still we seldom were required to feed them over six months.

It is in this region that the Aurora Borealis is seen in all its splendor; and frequently it passes over to the southward. No wonder this phenomenon is a prolific source of legend, and superstition. Although the local-

ity of this phenomenon may generally be high above the surface of the earth, still at times it is near the surface, and I have frequently heard the rustling noise of the corrugations, as they passed onward in their march southward.

During the mid winter season the sky was generally clear, so far as clouds were concerned, but with a hazy appearance in the atmosphere. In the early part of winter there would be more snow, but as the weather became intensely cold, the snow would mostly cease until near spring, when we would again be visited with occasional snow storms. The cause of this phenomenon I judged to be the freezing up of all the waters in the entire north—for all the lakes are shallow—and all the vapor that was wafted from the southward, condensed and fell long before it reached so high a latitude, and thus the snows were piled up along a line of latitude not far from 50 degrees north, which I have called the deepest snow line.

Notwithstanding the cold of the climate, and the barren nature of the country, animal life is abundant, and the present resources of the country are far greater than in the warm climate and fertile soil of the south. The lakes abound with fish of the best quality, and the rabbit, or American hare swarms all over the wooded region. The reindeer, moose, and beaver are common, although much less numerous than formerly.

The beavers are again in the increase since the introduction of silk hats. At Rossville the carcass of the beaver would sell for four shillings sterling, while the fur once so valuable brought but two shillings. In some of my journeys up and down the rivers, I found the beaver enjoying their comparative jubilee.

For our winter's supply of provisions we would put up from five to ten thousand white fish. Two men and a boy would do this in one month's time, commencing about the 8th of Oct., which was about as soon as the weather was cold enough to preserve them by freezing.

A scaffolding is built at the fishery, above the reach of the dogs, and the fish are hung up by having a small stick run through the tail part. Ten fish are put on one stick, so that on inquiring of the fisherman, how many fish he had taken on any day, he would say thirty, or forty sticks, as the case might be. These fish would keep perfectly sweet and good for five months, in the open air, and by covering them in our fish houses with snow, I have eaten them as good as when first caught, six months afterwards. Rabbits also are a staple article of food in the north. One Indian woman would start in the morning to visit her snares, and in the evening would arrive at the mission house, sometimes with 45, or 50, the result of one day's hunt.

The invariable price, from age to age, of all these things is fixed, and the price for ten rabbits is two shillings sterling, or one skin. Six ducks, or three geese were the same price as ten rabbits. With our stores of fish, rabbits, a little pork, fresh beef, and pemican, with potatoes, turnips, carrots, &c., we would close all up for hibernating.

I found the frost and cold a great conservative institution, and often thought that the people and their customs partook largely of this ruling power in their country.

We were not long in falling in with the current of things natural in such a region, for one fall we killed a beef creature, and of course preserved all the meat fresh by freezing. One day we had a soup, with vegetables for seasoning, and were discussing our prospects for many a palatable dish of soup for the winter, and fearing our vegetables would deteriorate, a large quantity of soup was made up, and put away in moulds (each mould containing a sufficient quantity for one dinner) to freeze, after which it was stored in boxes; then all that was required any day to have a delicious soup for dinner, was to heat one of these cakes thoroughly, and it was as fresh, and savory as when first made. Milk was also preserved by freezing, and kept for months.