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### OUR WORK AMONG THE INDIANS.

**A** MORE misrepresented being never lived on the face of the earth than the red man of the Forest." So reads an American exchange. And the same paper goes on to give the reason of this misrepresentation of the Indian, namely, that all that is known about him at present is told by white men, and that this misunderstanding and misrepresentation is likely to continue until the Indians as a people are sufficiently civilized and educated to stand up for their own rights and speak for themselves. That the difficulties in the way of educating and civilizing the Indians as a people are many and great certainly cannot be denied. Speaking only of our own experience in this Diocese of Algoma. Their wandering habits, their want of stability, their comparative indifference about the education of their children, their want of faith in the singleness of purpose of those who are honestly trying to benefit them, all these things militate against the efforts which have been put forth on their behalf, the ardour of the Missionary becomes damped, and those who would have given of their substance to aid the cause are apt to withhold their hands because success has not followed the efforts that have been made in the ratio that had been expected. Probably no men engaged in the Holy office of the Ministry, are called to endure greater trials of faith and patience than are those whose lot is cast among the Indians. Probably every Bishop in Canada and the North West will allow that the most trying branch of his work is that which has to do with Indians. So long as it is a mere matter of paying an episcopal visit in a fatherly way and distributing gifts to the children and people all goes well, but when it comes to a question of organization, and inquiries are made as to what the people themselves are doing towards supporting their ministers, and how the necessaries for the church and school are supplied, and what are their domestic habits and their character for honesty and sobriety, then the sore spots come to the surface, and the Bishop is apt to feel that the problem of how to deal with the Indians is a deeper and a more difficult one than he had at first thought. But to look for a moment at another side of the question. Here throughout this country are scattered these bands of Indians, living for

the most part on their own reserved lands, their habits, ideas, occupations, language, all very different to those of their white neighbours; they are forced to be our neighbours we are forced to be theirs; surely we would not leave them to be heathen; how can we call ourselves christians if we would do that; if they are to be christianized, a church must be built for them and a missionary must learn their language and go and live with them; and then there are their little children, clever little things, quite capable of receiving instruction and learning to read and write the same as white children, and so the next thing is to build a school house and to appoint a school teacher; thus these Indian missions have gradually crept into existence; and who will dare to say that wrong has been done or that money has been improperly employed in making these efforts to reclaim these poor people from ignorance and heathenism? But time has gone on, years have rolled by, and now because these poor Indians have not made the same progress as might have been expected of a colony of white settlers with the same advantages offered to them, the cry is raised that Indian Missions are a failure, that money spent on improving and civilizing the Indians is wasted; yes, some even go so far as to say that the Indian nature is of so low and debased a type that it is incapable of improvement. It is poor encouragement to a missionary who has spent the best years of his life labouring on behalf of these poor forest children, bearing with them in their inconsistencies, forgiving them their personal annoyances, aiding them when it might be said they did not deserve it, treating them kindly and tenderly as a father might treat his children, to be told that his efforts have been all wasted and to be sneeringly asked what fruit can he show as to the result of all his labours. We believe that the Indians are a misrepresented people. That is, while allowing that there are traits in their character that are exceedingly trying, that there is often a laxity of principle about them, a want of fixity of purpose and perseverance, we nevertheless maintain that TIME SUFFICIENT has not been allowed for the vast change that is required to be made in their thoughts and principles, and habits before they can become assimilated to the ways of white people. We think it ought to be taken into account that the Indians as a people for generations past have lived in an utterly wild untutored state and that the seeds of