

them, but is bearing fruit, which will undoubtedly blossom in eternity. The Indian has a most profound regard for God. Even the heathen Indian (of whom, happily, there are but four families in this entire district) will listen respectfully, and even reverently, to anything you may tell him about God or the Saviour. The Indian has a deeply-rooted and unshakable faith in the Great Spirit. It may seem strange to you (if you do not already know) to be told that in the heathen religious traditions of these poor Indians there are stories identical with the Bible records. Where they got them is difficult to understand. They have a tradition which is identical with the Bible history of Noah. They call their Noah Neen-ah-boos. They say he was the father of their race, and that he came from a country very, very far away. Long, long ago, they say the whole world was deluged, and that Neen-ah-boos and his family were the only people who survived. He had been warned of the deluge by the Great Spirit, and commanded to prepare an immense raft which was to carry him and his family in safety over the turbulent waters. He was also commanded by the Great Spirit to take with him on the raft animals of every kind. Neen-ah-boos faithfully followed the commands of the Great Spirit, and when the deluge came was saved from the common destruction. After being carried about hither and thither, by wind and wave, for a considerable time, he sent a muskrat out to find the depth of water in the place where he then was, as he fancied the deluge was diminishing. The rat returned with a mouthful of mud, which Neen-ah-boos scattered on the face of the waters, and this was repeated again and again, until at last the waters subsided and the land again appeared. He was a very industrious little rat, and Neen-ah-boos evidently kept him hustling.

These Indians (in their Indian lore) say that they were the people who originally replenished the world after the deluge, and it is peculiar that in their language they have no word for people other than the name they call themselves by. They have different names for the different races of mankind, but in saying, "I saw a large concourse of people," you would have to say, "I saw a large concourse of Indians," even though the gathering referred to may only have been composed entirely of white men.

They also have a tradition identical with the history of Jonah, and several others which, however, I hesitate to reproduce, as I do not, as yet, know them well enough. Mixed up with their traditional lore is the good old friend of our childhood, Santa Claus, whom they call Nee-buh-kut-i-e-gay, literally, "the one who levels all equally," or the one (person) who does not draw distinction between persons.

I have been told several droll stories of this remarkable old character. He is certainly a merry old rascal (the Indian Santa Claus), but I have only just got word of him, and when I know him better I will attempt to give you a little of his history and exploits. I am gradually becoming acquainted with those stories, and though only absurd superstitions they are interesting and often humorous. I learn them from my wife, who is a pure Indian, and as she progresses with English I am able to gain a deeper and a more practical knowledge of the people among whom, the Lord helping me, I propose to live and try to raise.

These Indians are Sotos, a branch of Ojibbeway or Chippeway. They are at present in the transitional stage between semi-barbarism and civilization, but, thank God, the tendency is upward. They are improving every year, and in due time will be properly fitted to take their place in the ranks of the battle of life, and will not, when the proper time comes, hold a place inferior to white people.

The first missionary who came to this district (an Englishman, C.M.S.) established himself some fifty-six years ago at Fairford. And it is highly deserving of remark that, in the vicinity of the mission, what was then a wild wilderness is now dotted over with clean, well-kept houses and gardens. The people, who were at that time simply terror-spreading, untamed children of the forest, are now, without even a single exception, an intelligent, self-respecting, and prosperous Christian community.

The "old, old story of Jesus and his love," practically backed up by Christian charity and forbearance, softened their hearts, soothed their savagery, and led them step by step into a more exalted plane of life.

The missionary (the Rev., afterward Ven. Archdeacon Cowley) first made himself acquainted with their own heathen theology, and preached his first sermon to them about the flood. The Indians have a tradition that the Great Spirit had given Neen-ah-boos (Noah) a book which was His own Word. Neen-ah-boos bequeathed it at his death to someone who afterwards lost it. They became deeply impressed with the fact that the pale-faced stranger should have been able to tell them out of the book the very history which they were traditionally cognizant of themselves. It was not difficult to demonstrate to them that this was the correct history, rather than their way of putting it, as a covered ark would be absolutely necessary for the preservation of both animal and human life. On the raft, the creatures, as well as their pilot and his family, would soon have perished from exposure.

The reverend gentleman led them on gradually to a deeper knowledge of the Word, and his self-sacrificing labors were eventually