

narrating a sad outbreak of supposed cannibalism and sickness that occurred at White Fish Lake the previous week, he writes that on going there, this man of whom I have spoken as under conviction, came to him and said that he was sorry that he had been angry at my words; that they were wise words, and that God had sent this sudden sickness as a punishment. He urged Mr. White to hold prayers in his house. On entering the latter found the house full and held a deeply interesting service. It resulted in the baptism of this man Nahachick, his wife and three other adults. In searching out these recesses of the great Lone Land one learns how much of idolatry, devil worship and superstition still lingers amongst them. The Indians are reluctant to speak about these things, and it is very difficult, especially for the missionary, to obtain information. One frequently sees near their houses or graves straight poles painted in rings after the bark has been carefully removed, with a piece of calico generally attached to them. These are regarded as in some way propitiatory and a defence against malignant spirits. Only last winter the poles and pegs of a huge medicine tent were still visible at Wapuskaw. One sometimes sees in these tents or houses a long pad of dressed moose or deer skin. These contain the hairs of deceased relatives. They are mingled with the hairs or feathers of the owner's powargan or "familiar" which may be an animal or bird; whatever has presented itself to him in his dreams during the fast of his novitiate. These are carried by the owners wherever they go, whether travelling or hunting. They are often highly ornamented with many colored wools and Indian fancy work and are taken periodically to the medicine tent to receive fresh magical power.

One night while sitting with my travelling companions in a deserted house, I found what I thought was a piece of the touch-wood (a growth on poplar trees subject to dry rot) used by them with flint and steel. Noticing a fragrant odor about it when burning, I was told that it was not this touch-wood, but something used in the rites of the medicine tent, very much, I expect, in the same way as incense. I could not, however, learn from them from what tree it was taken. Well may we long for the time when the true light may shine into their darkened hearts that these black shadows of idolatry and superstition may flee away. There is an increasing demand for the books of prayers, hymns and instructions we printed on the Mission press here. We used large plain syllable characters without accents, breathings or punctuation which only serve to mystify the Indian mind. The ease with which they read them and their desire to obtain them is sufficient proof of the success of our venture

and encourages us to issue the Gospels in the same characters. St. Mark's Gospel has been already set up and is on the way out to Winnipeg to be bound, as we do not possess a binding outfit. My assistant, Mr. Gordon Weston, is now engaged on St. John's Gospel.

May much prayer be offered for a blessing on this circulation of God's Word and for our brave and isolated missionaries that all grace and wisdom may be given them to deal with the many difficulties and to stand firm in the face of the many disappointments that beset the work among these poor fickle people.

I remain, yours most sincerely,

RICHARD ATHABASCA.

THE WILD NATIVES OF MASHONALAND.

IN Mashonaland there are, besides large numbers of natives who are brought into contact with the whites, tribes of wild natives. The Bishop of Mashonaland has written to tell us of an interview he has had with a powerful chief of an ancient race.

"I had an interesting but sad visit to the perfectly savage chief M'tasa, where we have begun a small work. He had been drinking, and was in a morose and sullen mood. He said the teacher was his friend, but why did the white man take his country and his cattle, and his women? I told him that I had nothing to do with the Government, and I had to pay taxes, and obey the Queen's laws as well as himself, and that the laws were for his protection as well as mine.

"I then rebuked him for allowing white men to bring whiskey among his people, and warned him that the great Spirit would take the kingdom away from him unless he protected his people from evil, and governed righteously. He said we might teach his people, and the missionary was his friend. M'tasa is the paramount chief in this district, and represents the old dynasty of the Monomotopo, dating from 1,000 B.C. at least, but how degenerated by their native worship! their Baal and Astarte, their Chiun and star-gods, their Moloch, and five demons, their divinations and their sorceries, their animal and material worship, and their degradation of all national, social, and the individual life by the triple tyranny of slavery, polygamy, and witchcraft."—*S.P.G. Mission Field.*

"It would be well for every Bishop when he ordains a young man to call his attention to the fact that while he is licensed to a particular curacy, yet he is ordained to an office which carries him throughout the world—*Dean Vaughan.*