

Our Indian Department.

Edited by Rev. W. A. Burman, B.D., Principal of the Rupert's Land Indian Industrial School, St. Paul's, Manitoba. Missionaries having items of interest regarding the Indian will kindly forward them to Mr. Burman.



In the February number of the *Missionary Review* there appeared a striking article on the work of some Moravian missionaries in Alaska, entitled "The Moravian Mission on the Kuskowim." It is a record of noble self-devotion and heroism, that cannot fail to touch the hearts of all who read it. Few of our readers are perhaps aware that a similar work, calling for quite as much self-devotion, and carried on in the same Christ-like spirit, is being done by our Church in the Yukon Valley. If our readers will turn to a map of Alaska, near the point at which the 55th° parallel of longitude crosses the Yukon, they will find Nuklukayit. Here, aided by his devoted wife, the Rev. T. H. Canham has for two years been doing grand service as the advance guard of the Church. Below we give some extracts from most interesting letters from Mr. and Mrs. Canham, which speak for themselves. We will only remark that they show most clearly that, even in our own northern missions, the age of heroism is not past. To do such work and to dare such perils and privations as Mr. and Mrs. Canham are doing and enduring, requires not less faith and zeal than that which fired the hearts of the early Christian martyrs. If the Church Missionary Society had but this one mission in Canada, it might well plead for our support. It is, however, but one example of the work it is doing for our northern tribes.

Writing in July, 1889, Mr. Canham says: "Before the seed can be sown some knowledge of the language must be acquired. We are now but breaking up the ground, as it were, and, while doing so, long and pray for the time to come when

the Gospel shall be proclaimed in all its fulness, freshness and power. The Jesuits were on the scene before us, but, thank God, they were not permitted to gain an influence over these people.

- - - We leave our brethren (the missionaries of the American Board) to fight for the lower part of the river, while we guard most jealously this upper part, and hope and pray that the C. M. S. will be able to send out one, if not two, missionaries before the Jesuits' purpose is carried out."

Mrs. Canham writes: "It is now nearly a year since we had letters or received any news from the outside world. We are daily expecting the steamer which is to convey us so much food (for body and mind), as our supplies for the year come at the same time as the mail. So you can in some degree imagine the state of our feelings at present. I almost dread to hear the whistle as the steamer rounds the nearest point. It means so much in every way to us. It will be a year next month since we came here, and as yet we have not succeeded in getting into a house of our own; but there is one in course of erection, as well as a schoolroom. Building is carried on so slowly in this country, and the expense is so heavy that we have to be very prudent and cautious in all our undertakings. Mr. Canham decided upon establishing the mission at an Indian village about seven miles from here, and made all the preparation he could for building, but until spring very little could be done. In the mean time the Alaska Commercial Company gave us permission to occupy one of their houses, at the cost of \$75; it was very poor accommodation—two wretched rooms, in which we had to hold prayers, daily school, cook, eat, sleep, and try to keep warm with the aid of one stove, which failed in heating the two apartments; our bedroom was like an ice-house; fortunately for us the winter was not so severe as usual, although we had some very cold spells, and, thanks to our good and gracious God, we both kept well.

"There was a good deal of sickness amongst the Indians during the winter, and the demand for medicine was great; we brought a fair supply with us, but our store is almost exhausted now. The only deaths we have to report are those of two infants, and a great 'Medicine Man.' The latter recovered from his first illness, but took cold and died soon after. The people were in great fear of this man, believing him to have certain magic powers, and even still visit his grave and go through some heathenish rite, the exact meaning of which I cannot find out;—it is difficult to get the truth at any time from an Indian, and they know we do not approve of their doings in this matter. They are very ignorant and superstitious, and need a great deal of teaching; but as the language promises to be difficult, and Mr. Canham has no interpreter, it will be some time before they know more than the rudiments of Christianity. We must not despise the day of small things; Paul may plant, Apollos water, but God only can give