

the first occasion, yet who have a very small amount of Christianity, consisting at the most of assisting at a short prayer on Sundays, and per chance of saying mechanically two or three Hail Marys in the morning and as many at night before retiring, but who have not the smallest care for learning their catechism or listening to what the priest might have to say for their instruction. What makes it the more discouraging, they are in most cases victims of drunkenness, immorality and all other vices. And yet, the same Indians, under favorable circumstances, show themselves very docile and prove that they could be made good Christians if only they knew their religion and were protected from temptations to which, as a rule, they know not how to resist. We find the proof of this in the prisons or penitentiaries, where the very ones who appeared the most ferocious and dangerous while enjoying their freedom, become very docile and good natured, and would remain so as long as they are away from temptation. As soon as they are out of prison they return to their former reckless habits, while others become more regular.

It must not be overlooked that there are still in the country thousands of Indians still unchristianized, and who have not the good fortune of receiving the missionaries' visits. The greater part of them are engaged in occupations and continual displacings which renders nearly impossible their presence at the priest's visits. In the early times after the arrival of the first missionaries in the country, the natives, having no other property than their hunting or fishing outfits, did not find much difficulty in answering the missionary's call at their regular visits,

because they could repair to the appointed place with all their earthly possessions, which did not amount to a very heavy luggage; it did not cost them more to live in one place than in another. But since they have taken much interest in cultivating the ground and in stock-raising it has become more difficult for them, and even in many cases impossible, to answer the missionary's call as in former times.

We must also take into account the circumstances under which the missionary toils. The same priest having to attend to a district of several hundred miles of circuit, containing from 2,000 to 4,000 Indians, distributed in bands of from 50 to 150 or 200, he cannot make very frequent visits to each place—three or four times a year at the most. Were he to try and see them more often he could not, because most of the time the Indians would not be at home, but scattered over their fishing or hunting grounds, or engaged in other work which would keep them away from their camps.

Since the missionary can see the Indians only three or four times a year, he must endeavor to give them during the time of his visit as much religious instruction as possible, and this, of course, makes the time of the visit rather laborious for the missionary. In those camps where the Indians are fervent Christians, or where the chief has some influence over his people, the work of the missionary is rendered more agreeable by the encouragements he receives, the Indians having made a sacrifice of their interests in order to come and profit by his visit. There are also other camps where it is necessary to resort to hard pulling, as some Indians have no scruples for being absent from religious exercises.