

## RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

## WESLEYAN MISSIONS.

## HUDSON'S-BAY TERRITORY.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM THE REV. GEORGE BARNLEY, DATED MOOSE FACTORY, ROBERT'S LAND, NORTH AMERICA, AUGUST 24TH, 1810:

I LEFT Montreal and Lachine on Monday, April 27th, in company with Mr. Cameron, the Officer who accompanied us from England; and proceeded up the Ottawa by steam-vessels, as far as commerce is carried on to an extent sufficient for employing that means of transport. We were providentially met by a canoe, which had been despatched for the purpose of conveying us forward, a few minutes after landing from the last steam-vessel. On the following morning we rose early, and, taking our luggage on board the canoe, with five voyagers, we pursued our course. This mode of conveyance being quite novel to me, I was much interested in observing the various particulars connected with it. The men employed in this navigation are principally Canadians, and members of the Romish communion. They are capable of enduring an incredible amount of fatigue, and never appear to lose their native buoyancy of spirit. When the time of encamping at night-fall arrives, every thing is carried on shore, at some convenient spot; the sound of the axes echoes through the forest, and the glare of an immense fire soon illumines the surrounding scenery. The evening meal is prepared; and after an hour or so occupied in relating some strange or ludicrous tales, and joining in many hearty laughs, each of these, almost strangers to reflection or care, wraps himself up in his blanket, and, with no covering but the inverted canoe, lies down to sleep, regardless of the damp ground beneath, or threatening clouds above. I felt a little inconvenience at first, from sleeping with only an oil-cloth and blanket between me and the ground, sometimes on damp and marshy land, and sometimes on a bare rock; but, through the mercy of my heavenly Father, I escaped without taking cold, of which I had been apprehensive.

The scenery on the banks of the river, and, indeed, the stream itself, constantly presented a most imposing aspect. We appeared to keep pace with the advance of spring, so that the appearance of vegetation was every where about the same. When we approached Lake Timiscamingue, large masses of snow and ice were seen on the banks, yet undissolved; the weather, too, became cold, wet, and misty, so that nature bore rather a wintry aspect.

On Friday, May 8th, after entering the lake, Mr. Cameron suddenly rose up, and looking forward for a moment, exclaimed, "There is plenty of ice a-head!"—a statement which was soon confirmed, by finding our further progress quite impossible, as the whole breadth of the lake was occupied with the congealed mass. An encampment was immediately sought; but it was necessary to return a distance of about four miles, before a spot could be found large enough for our purpose.

A hot sun and strong wind on Monday morning soon put the unwieldy mass of ice in motion, and about eleven o'clock we thought it possible to make our way through it; but, in so doing, we exposed ourselves to some danger, as the men had to use poles for the purpose of breaking a passage, while the sharp edges and points of the ice were pressing hard against the sides of our very frail bark. About one, P.M., it became again necessary to stop; and, taking up our position on a large isolated rock, we waited until our course was free from insurmountable obstacles, which was not until sunset, when we again embarked, and arrived at the Company's establishment about half-past seven, P.M. I was received at Temiscamingue Post with every mark of respect.

The river being still full of ice above, I was detained at Temiscamingue until Tuesday, May 16th. I preached twice on the Sunday which I spent there, to the residents who understood English, and addressed (through the medium of an interpreter) the few Indians who were at the place. All the aborigines connected with this Post regard themselves as Christians. The emissaries of Rome have erected the frame-work of a chapel, and, I believe, intend completing it during the present summer. One of the first objects which strikes

the eye on approaching the establishment is a large cross, elevated on the summit of a hill, before which the poor deluded Indians prostrate themselves most devoutly; and they also wear and count their beads, at stated intervals, with scrupulous exactness; but of a change of heart they have no knowledge, either in theory or experience. The evil tree, consequently, fails to present any of the fruits of righteousness; and while remembering that our Lord's reproof to the Jews had been applied to the Romish Church, I felt its propriety: "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves." I endeavoured to direct the minds of the Indians to the great doctrines of redemption by Christ, justification by faith, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, not controversially, but so as to show their absolute necessity, and that nothing less than an experience of the two latter would secure their admission to the Great Spirit's presence.

On the day above mentioned, I took leave of Mr. Cameron, and, in company with Mr. and Mrs. Frazer, set off for Abitibi. In the course of this voyage I crossed the high land which separates Canada from the Company's territory, and completed our journey in about five days. The Romanists have here prepared logs in the wood for a chapel, and have endeavoured to prevail on Mr. Frazer, the Company's agent, to draw them out; but their efforts have been in vain. Many of the Indians have been baptized by the priest, and wear beads, and bow before the Romish cross. After staying at this place during Monday and Tuesday, I proceeded on Wednesday, the 27th, along the Abitibi Lake and River, to the place of my future residence, liberally supplied with provisions by the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Frazer, in a canoe manned by five Indians and a Canadian.

I arrived at my present residence on Wednesday, June 3d, about eleven, A.M., and was received by Mr. Bailey, the Chief Factor in charge, with great kindness, and accommodated in an apartment of the Fort, which, though rather confined in summer, will, I think, be large enough during the rigours of the severe winter which is approaching.

The Indians are said to learn very quickly, but not to retain long what they learn; on this I shall have an opportunity to form my own judgment, as I have devoted one hour and a half in the forenoon to the instruction of those who wish to learn; the number of pupils is at present seventeen, and has not at any time exceeded twenty.

Our Sunday services have been conducted in the mess room, and will be continued there until the erection of a chapel, logs for which are in course of preparation; and an edifice capable of containing about one hundred persons, will, I expect, be completed early in the next summer. The Liturgy is read at both our services, and two sermons preached. I endeavour to give prominence to the great leading truths of the Gospel, and to make myself understood by all; but I fear there is not yet any very deep impression made, at least no intimation is given of anxiety to be saved. Still I remember the time I have spent here is very short; and looking to the encouragement afforded, the hope is entertained, that "in due time I shall reap, if I faint not;" they "who go forth weeping, bearing the precious seed," are cheered by the word, doubtless in connexion with the favourable result of their toil; and although I mourn over the small degree of my compassion for the souls of men, yet I do rejoice in hope. The people are very quiet and well behaved in their general demeanour, and I am glad not to have seen any thing, since my arrival, in the conduct of any, which would be regarded generally as censurable. Great prudence and caution I find to be indispensably necessary in my words and conduct; and I wonder at finding myself, as I have often done at finding others, so graciously kept while exposed to so much danger from my youth and inexperience. I acknowledge gratefully that all the praise belongs to Him who has said, "I will teach thee in the way that thou shalt go, I will guide thee with mine eye."

An opportunity was afforded me for visiting Albany, distant about one hundred miles from Moose, in a north-west direction; and as I was anxious to preach Christ where he had not yet been named, I embraced it, although led to expect that most

of the Indians would be absent, seeking provision on their hunting-grounds. I was agreeably surprised to find several of them at home, and I had the pleasure of preaching on several occasions during my stay, to about thirty or forty persons. Here, as at other places, I met with a cordial welcome, and found in Mr. Banston, the gentleman in charge, what I had little expected to find at all in the wilderness, a man deeply conscious of his own heart's depravity, grateful for the gift of Christ, and happy in his Saviour's love. This circumstance made my visit a season of especial refreshing to my soul. While I preached, especially on the last occasion of addressing them, a deep and powerful influence rested on the meeting. After having remained upwards of a fortnight, I embarked for Moose; and on separating from the above-named gentleman, he was affected even to tears, while expressing the happiness he had derived from that Christian communion to which he had been long a stranger.

There is none of that ferocity about the aborigines here which generally connects itself with the idea of a North American Indian in the mind of an Englishman. They are exceedingly quiet and inoffensive, except when under the influence of liquor, which very seldom can be obtained by them in sufficient quantity to cause intoxication. I am told that at such times only an Indian speaks his mind, and that, although he sometimes quarrels with others, and they come to blows, they are generally inflicted with the open hand, and no manifestation of ill feeling takes place subsequently. The Indian, it appears, lives but to satisfy the wants of the body, to eat, and drink, and sleep; and yet, by his activity occasionally, he shows that if the right spring can but be touched, there is a capacity for exertion—joyful, indeed, should I be if it were called forth in the pursuit of spiritual and eternal blessings.

The Company appears to regard, as far as perhaps further than could be expected, the welfare of the Indians, who are completely dependent on them. The introduction of fire-arms has caused the natives to lose that skill with the bow and arrow which characterises the Indian of the plains,—so that, without constant supplies of ammunition, they would be unable to procure sufficient food to sustain life. In former times, when traders opposed to each other were competing for their furs, the Indians were more independent; but as they were passionately fond of rum, of course they wished to procure it in exchange, and if one party of traders had refused to supply them with it, all the trade would at once have been thrown into the hands of the other; and the Indians would not have been benefited, but greatly injured. It is gratifying to know, that in no case throughout the territory is liquor sold to them; it is more so, to find that the system of giving it is being gradually discontinued, and that dry goods are furnished instead of the fire-water.

I have been compelled to confine myself almost entirely to the delivery of addresses or sermons to them, in which I have endeavoured to explain the doctrines, nature, and duties of Christianity; but on these leading topics I think more could be done by conversation and catechising—while on cleanliness, industry, and numerous other subjects, scarcely any thing can be done but in this way. As I see that much time would subsequently be saved, and a much greater probability of usefulness secured, by at once devoting my whole attention, or nearly so, to the acquisition of the Indian language, I have entertained the idea of encountering the rigours of the winter in an Indian lodge, accompanying some one of the most cleanly families, whose residence may be within two or three days' journey of the factory. I have no person here whose time could be devoted to my instruction, and the period during which access to them in the summer season can be obtained, is so short, that every advantage ought to be taken of it. The plan is approved by most of the gentlemen to whom I have spoken on the subject, as one by which the knowledge I seek would be most effectually, and, perhaps, the only one by which it could be at all secured. They have appeared to think, that the hardships which must necessarily be endured will be too severe; but I do not believe that will deter me from carrying my plan into execution, if the way is made plain. I should gladly consult with some of my honoured fathers or brethren on the subject; but as that opportunity is not afforded me, I must be content to make