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THE
MISSIONARY REVIEW OF THE WORLD.

VOL. XVIII. No. 7.—*Old Series.*—JULY.—VOL. VIII. No. 7.—*New Series.*

LIFE AMONG THE RED MEN OF AMERICA.

BY REV. EDGERTON R. YOUNG, TORONTO, CANADA.

In 1868, when pastor of a church in Hamilton, Canada, I was asked to go with my young wife as a missionary to the red Indians, northwest of Hudson Bay, north of Manitoba. It was a strange call; we had not been thinking of the Indian work, or the foreign field, and were very happy in our home work. But we made it a subject of prayer. We laid the letter before the Lord, and though all our friends, with one or two exceptions, opposed us, yet as God seemed to call us, we went, and we have never regretted it to this day.

It took us two months and nineteen days of hard travelling to reach our field. You can go around the world in that time now. It was a lonely far-off place, more inaccessible even than the heart of Africa is now. We travelled as far as we could by steamboats and railroads, then we journeyed for thirty days with horses over the prairies and plains of the north, and then for the last fourteen days we went in a little skiff manufactured by the Indians and manned by them. The place assigned us in the skiff was a bit of a slab seat near the stern of the boat. Behind us stood a big Indian with an oar reaching out behind, with which he steered, and before us were our stalwart Indian oarsmen. When we had gone about forty miles from Fort Garry toward the north, we saw the Indians turning toward the shore, and we wondered what they were going to do. We soon found out. They took on another passenger, which to our amazement proved to be a great, big, lively, struggling ox. His head hung over one side of the boat and his tail over the other, and for fourteen days in the month of July my wife and I had to sit in that skiff close to that live ox. But we were full of life and anticipation, and enthusiastic in our work, and these little things didn't trouble us much.

We reached our destination at last. We were first stationed among the Cree Indians, four hundred miles from the merest vestige of civilization. We had a good chance of testing the Indians. You know the very conflicting opinions about the red men. After studying them for many

years, my opinion is that they are just about like the rest of poor humanity. They need the Gospel, and the blessed Gospel is just the thing for them. We had a little log-house, in which to live. A gentleman wouldn't keep a decent horse in it, but it was the best the country afforded; the Indians were living in wigwams, and we were glad to have that log-house. We thought the best thing was to come thoroughly in touch with our people, so we gathered them together, and stood before them with our Bibles, and said, "Now, look at us. We have not come here to buy your silver foxes, your beavers, your otters, your minks, or your martens; we have not come to make a fortune in the fur trade, but we have come with *this book* to do you good, and to help you to a better life, that you may be happier here and happier beyond. We know you are sinners, and that you have your faults, and need the Gospel, but we are going to trust you as well as help you." We knew the majority of white people think that the Indians are thievish, dishonorable, and unreliable. We do not believe that. So we decided to trust them. We took the fastenings off all the windows, and the bolt off of the door, and the keys out of every drawer and chest, and threw them away, and from that day to this we have never fastened a window or locked a door in an Indian country; we have never had anything worth sixpence stolen from us by the Indians. That is our experience among the Indians, when putting them on their honor and treating them fairly.

We mastered the language as quickly as possible, because I believe in all missionaries being able to look into the eyes of the people and tell them the truth in their own language. We worked and toiled among them, and we had at first the effects of the work of some blessed men who had been before us, and before we had been there five years, in addition to what had been done, we had gathered a congregation of from eight to ten hundred Christian Indians, who used to pack our church every Sabbath, although some of them had to come from their hunting-grounds fifty or sixty miles distant, on Saturday, to be present, and on Monday they would walk back to their distant hunting-grounds. We had the Bible translated into their language by Mr. Evans, one of our missionaries, not printed in the letters of the alphabet, but in syllabic characters. These characters are so easily acquired that in a few weeks an Indian can learn to read the Word of God. It is a marvellous invention, and as a result of it in some of the missions 90 per cent of the people are reading the Word of God in their own tongue. Often have I been made ashamed of the littleness of my love by the devotion of these Indians and by their love for the Bible. Let me give you an incident. One of our Indians with his son came away down from the distant hunting-grounds to fish on the shores of our great lakes. We catch our winter's supply there in October and November. My good wife and I have lived chiefly on fish twenty-one times a week, for six months, fish and salt with a cup of tea, at times no bread or vegetables at all. We live six months on fish, and

the other six months on reindeer and muskrats, gulls and owls, anything we can get, sometimes glad to have two meals a day. I have been in your penitentiaries—not unwillingly—and I have seen the food provided for the worst criminals. My wife and I would have been glad to have had anything approaching what you give to your murderers and house-breakers. I have been for three days without a mouthful. To go on with my story. This man and his son came down to fish, and they made splendid fisheries, put up the whitefish on a staging where the foxes and wolves could not reach them, and one night the father said, "My son, we leave to-morrow morning early; put the book of heaven in your pack; we go back one hundred and forty miles to our distant hunting-ground to join the mother and the others in the wigwam home." So the young man put his Bible in his pack that they might take it home. Later on, along came an uncle and said to the young man, "Nephew, lend me the book of heaven that I may read a little; I have loaned mine." So the pack was opened and the Bible was taken out, and the man read for a time and then threw the Bible back among the blankets and went out. The next morning the father and son started very early on their homeward journey. They strapped on their snowshoes and walked seventy miles, dug a hole in the snow at night, where they cooked some rabbits, and had prayers and lay down and slept. The next morning bright and early after prayers they pushed on and made seventy miles more and reached home. That night the father said to his son, "Give me the book of heaven that the mother and the rest may read the Word and have prayers." As the son opened the pack, he said, "Uncle asked for the book two nights ago and it was not put back." The father was disappointed, but said little. The next morning he rose early, put a few cooked rabbits in his pack and away he started. He walked that day seventy miles and reached the camp where he and his son had stopped two nights before. The next day he had made the other seventy miles and reached the lake and found his Bible in his brother's wigwam. The next morning he started again, and walking in the two days one hundred and forty miles, was back home once more. That Indian walked on snowshoes two hundred and eighty miles through the wild forest of the Northwest to regain his copy of the Word of God! Would we do that much to regain our Bibles? O the power of the Gospel! It can go down very low and reach men deeply sunken in sin and can save them grandly, and make them devout students and great lovers of the Blessed Book.

The worst class we had were the conjurers and medicine men. Some of these men hated us, and often used to put our lives in jeopardy because they knew that if we succeeded it was the end of their reign. But the Gospel reached even some of them.

These northern Indians are hunters. They roam over a vast country in search of game, and the missionary must follow them. My mission-field was about five hundred and fifty miles long and three hundred wide,

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and over it I travelled in summer in a birch canoe, and in the winter with dogs. I am sometimes called a "D.D.," and I say if it means anything it is "Dog-driver." I travelled many miles each winter with the dogs, and thus reached bands who had never seen a missionary. I wish you might look in with me upon a company of Indians who have never seen that Book before, who have never heard that Blessed Name. It is a blessed work, this preaching Christ to a people for the first time.

After five years among the Cree Indians we went among the Sauteaux. It is so hard to get volunteers for this Indian missionary work! We had made our log-house among the Crees quite comfortable and cheerful, but the Sauteaux were calling for a missionary. I used to visit them once in summer with my birch canoe, and once in winter with the dogs, but there was such a long interval between these visits that when I went back to them I sometimes found that some who had become Christians were growing cold, for lack of instruction, and so they pleaded for a missionary to live among them. They could not get one, as none would volunteer for such a work. At length I got a dear young minister so far interested that he said, "I know a very nice girl, and if you and your good wife will give us your home among the Crees and go among the wild Sauteaux, we will take your place among the Crees." We jumped at his offer, and thanked God for it. We took in a birch canoe and a little skiff only what we absolutely needed. We left the furniture, dishes, table-linen, and a number of dogs, canoes, and other things, and all the home we had for a year was a poplar log-hut twelve feet one way and fourteen the other, with a roof that was covered with mud and grass. God blessed us there, and hundreds came to Christ. So quickly, so believingly, and so thoroughly did they come that I must say in my ignorance I was sometimes staggered. When I heard men get up and say, "I know whom I have believed, I know this Jesus is my Saviour, and I will trust in Him; I have a sweet joy in my heart," I would say in my stupidity, "Can it be true?" I had to go out in the woods and sit down all alone, and take out my Testament and read through the Acts of the Apostles. Then I could say: Yes, it can be true. The Holy Spirit can do its work here as in those apostolic days. If a heart is honestly seeking God there is a wonderful guide and helper in the Holy Ghost. Now, after knowing some of those men over twenty years, their consistent lives have been a testimony of the genuineness of those conversions, even if they had only heard a very few sermons. I believe that if we could send out the right kind of men and women all over the world, it would not take long to convert the world.

After we had been in this new mission for some time, and the work was going on blessedly, the tribes of Indians around heard about the white man and his wife who had come among the Sauteaux, and they came often to see us. One day there marched into our little home a great big Indian woman, quite different in style from the ordinary Indian

woman. These women are the most modest, timid, and retiring people you ever saw. But here was one who came in with her head up and looking at us as though she was sizing us up. Her actions were different from the other women. This we learned after was because of her position. She was a chieftainess. Her father was a great chief, and her husband had been a great chief, and when he died she ruled her people. She was a clever woman. She lived far in the interior, and she had heard of the paleface and his wife, who, with their wonderful Book, had come to live down there among the Saulteaux. She did not believe what she heard, and had actually come many days' journey to find out whether what she had heard from the hunters about the Book and the Great Spirit was true. I found that of all the inquirers that I ever had, she was the most insatiable in her curiosity and in her desire to learn. She would talk morning, noon, and night. Nor could we seem to satisfy her curiosity. She stayed with us about two weeks. Before she went away, I said to her, "Now, you are going back home, and I want to say some things to you. Christians keep one day in seven, which is God's day. We do not attend to worldly matters on that day, but we worship God. I want you to be a Christian in everything, so you must keep this Sabbath day. I am going to give you this big sheet of paper to help you." I gave her a big sheet of foolscap and a long pencil, and said: "When you get home begin and make six small marks | | | | |. Those are your days in which to hunt and fish. Attend to your matters with the tribe, your duties as chieftainess on these six days, and then for the seventh day make a big mark, ———, and leave the gun and the rifle quiet in the wigwam, no hunting or fishing on that day. Work hard on Saturday to get enough food for the Sunday. On that day think about the Great Spirit, and pray to your loving Father, who sees you wherever you are." When she pleaded with me to come and preach to her tribe, I said, "When the eagle moon is filling out, listen for the ringing of the missionary's sledge-bells; then I will go and see you."

My programme of work was so great that six months passed away before I could visit her people. When the eagle moon came I harnessed my dogs and took my guide and dog-drivers, and away we went. It took us twelve or fourteen days to get there. We often had to travel altogether by night on account of the dazzling rays of the sun on the snow, which cause snow-blindness, a very painful disease. We journeyed on amid many dangers and adventures, but at last we reached our destination. The last six miles we had to cross a frozen lake. As we dashed out of the forest, there, on the other shore, was her village. Sharp eyes were on the lookout for us. We were not more than half-way across before they detected our coming, and had dinner prepared when we arrived. Ookemasquasis, the chieftainess, had some frozen heads of reindeer on the staging ready for us. These are one of the greatest delicacies which the Indians can offer as food. She put some of these heads

of reindeer on the fire to singe the hair off, and then and there she went at them with her big axe and chopped them in chunks and put them in a big Indian kettle on the fire. So when our dog trains dashed into her village our dinner was boiling. Soap out there is three dollars and a half a bar, and they don't put much on their faces, and as they don't know much about shaking hands, every man, woman, and child tried to see who would be the first to kiss us!

I cut short this ordeal and hurried into the wigwam. You never saw a woman so happy as was the chieftainess. She exclaimed, among many other things, "Oh, to think the man with the Book has come to my people!" A level place was prepared for the dinner. In the centre was piled up these chunks of reindeer heads and in a circle around was placed a number of tin cups full of black tea, of which I had given her a package. She put me on her left and her principal chief was on her right. Some more of her prominent people and my drivers and guides were also there. There was not a plate or a fork or a knife visible. As soon as we sat down, the men took out their hunting-knives and at once reached forward for a chunk of meat. "Wait," said I, "we are going to be Christians; Christians thank the Great Spirit for His gifts; Christians ask a blessing over their food. Shut your eyes and I will ask a blessing; we will thank the Great Spirit for what we are going to eat and drink." They shut their eyes and I asked a blessing, and, being the first, I made it like a little prayer, and said Amen, and opened my eyes. But every eye was shut. I said, "Open your eyes." So they opened their eyes. "When I say amen at the end, although that is not all it means, it means that we have come to the end. Now, eat your dinner." Every fellow leaned forward and grabbed a chunk of meat and took it up in his dirty hands, and cut it with his big hunting-knife with which they fought bears and skinned their game. Some, more hungry than others, would take a piece in their mouth and saw off a little piece at a time. I looked over the pile and saw a piece that had a projecting bone on it. I took hold of that bone as a handle, and, taking out my hunting-knife, began my dinner. How happy my friend the chieftainess was! She reached forward with her great, dirty hands, and, grabbing a great juicy, splendid piece of meat she went at it with great vigor. Then she slapped it down on the ground, and, after drinking a cup of tea, she grabbed it off of the ground again and vigorously ate from it, all the time talking, with her mouth full or empty. Again she threw the piece of meat down, and reaching down in the bosom of her dress she drew out a greasy, dirty paper, saying, "Oh, missionary, I want you to see how I have tried to keep the record of the praying day." It was a dirty, greasy paper now, and I hardly recognized it as the clean one I had given her. With much interest I looked it over, and found that during all those six months she had kept the record faithfully. Here it was the right day for all those six months. Of course I was very much delighted. She said, "Some days a boy

would come in and say, 'There is a fine reindeer out in the valley, I am sure you can shoot it.' But I said, 'No, no, it is the praying day, and I cannot shoot on the praying day.' But I think of the Great Spirit, my Father, and try to pray and talk to Him and have Him talk to me." She was so happy, as I said kind and encouraging words to her. Soon she folded the paper up and jammed it down in the bosom of her dress, and then she grabbed up her chunk of meat and chewed some pieces of it, while I was nibbling daintily at my bit. Then she looked at mine and looked at hers, and said, "Your piece of meat is not a very fine one; mine is a splendid piece;" and before I knew what she was going to do she swapped pieces. I did not practice any hypocrisy. I knew the motive that had prompted her giving me her piece was that it was better than mine, and so I took her piece and from it I finished my dinner, and I thanked her for doing it, because in exchanging pieces she had done what is considered one of the greatest acts of kindness an Indian can do—that is, if he sees he has something better than yours, to exchange with you. We had a service in the afternoon that lasted until supper-time, and another in the evening that lasted until midnight, and twenty-two of us lay down in that wigwam, all with our feet to the fire and our heads to the side of the wigwam. God has now given us that people for Christ. Every one of them professes to love Him, and there is not a conjurer or a medicine man among them.

I had occasional visits from Roman Catholic priests. I never quarrel with them, but I keep my eyes open, and the fish that I have landed I try to get into my basket and have stay there. The priests used to come and visit the Indians, and I was courteous and friendly, but when they had gone away I would say to my people, "What did these long-coated gentlemen say?" "Oh, they said a lot of beautiful things to us about the mother of our Lord, and how nice it would be to get her to intercede with her Son for us." Here was my argument to them: I would say, "Suppose that the governor-general of our country should come out here and be in my house as a guest, and he should send out word, 'Now, Indians, if you have any petition or favor to ask, come and see me, and I will gladly listen to your prayer and do all I can for you.' Suppose that John Company (the name the Indians give the Hudson Bay Company) should say, 'Now if you Indians want to have any talk with the governor, tell us, and we will go and speak for you.' What would you say when the governor himself had invited you to come right to his presence? You would say to John Company, 'Mind your own business, we are going to the governor.' Now listen, in this book Jesus Christ says, 'Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out; whosoever will may come; and I if I be lifted up will draw all men unto Me.' I would not say a word against the mother of our Lord, she was a glorious and blessed woman, but when the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, says, 'Come unto Me,' what is the use of having the mother as your mouthpiece when you can

go yourself straight to the Son?" So when these priests came around again and thought they were going to scoop in a great lot of my converts, they found the Indians were offish, and they wanted to know what was the matter, and the Indians said, "Well, it is just this, if you long-coated gentlemen wish to go and say your prayers through the intercession of the old lady go and do it, we are going straight to the Son every time." The result was that I never lost an Indian convert in any of our missions.

These priests are very zealous and worthy of imitation, as to courage and enterprise and push, and their determination to succeed. In one Indian village was a French priest, an earnest worker in his way and very zealous for the ceremonies of the church, especially as regards Friday. The Indians were told never to eat meat on Friday; they were to eat fish only. That was all right for six months of the year, when they had any quantity of fish, but the other six months, when the ice was often ten feet thick, it was rather difficult to get the required food. One Friday this priest went into one of the wigwams, and found one of his best Indians, as he had supposed, eating a great piece of venison. The priest, with all the excitability of the Frenchman, flew around and said, "Didn't I tell you never to eat meat on Friday?" The Indian carved off another piece and said, "Him no meat, him fish." The priest said, "Can't I believe my eyes? You are eating venison." "Him no venison, him fish." The priest was very much annoyed and said, "Are you crazy or am I crazy? I say that is venison." "Him no venison, him fish." "How do you know it is?" said the priest. The Indian replied, "You came to me awhile ago and said, 'I want you to be one of my people.' I said, 'What do you want to do?' 'Why, to baptize you.' I said, 'What is that you tell me? What will you pay me?' We talked about it and you decided to give me a new shirt if you would baptize me. I said, 'Go ahead;' so you took the water and went through your prayers and baptized me, and you said, 'I change you, you not Ookoosketoo any more, you Peter.' So I am Peter ever since. Friday come, and I have no fish, and I feel pretty hungry, and I don't want to go all day without anything to eat, so thinks I, I will fix him, and I get some water and take up that nice piece of venison and I say, 'you venison are you, I fix you;' and I put water on him and baptize him, and make him fish, and I eat him." So he went on, and had a good time.

One of the saddest things in reference to our North American Indians of this far north was the cruel way in which they treated women. The men in their pagan state were naturally tyrants. They had such false ideas. They thought if a man was kind to his mother, or his wife, or his sister, or his daughter, there was something weak about him, that he was not a big Indian, a strong, great warrior, so they crushed out all kindly feeling. They were fond of the little boys, but the poor little girls had a hard time of it. A man could cuff his wife's ears because the little baby a few hours old was a girl, and not a boy; and all through life that feel-

ing of contempt for womanhood was manifested. I have seen a big Indian with a rifle on his shoulder come marching into the encampment. He would look around until over yonder he would see his wife, perhaps chopping wood, and he would say, "Get up, you dog of a wife, and go along the trail and you will see where I have shot a deer. Bring it in quick, I want my dinner." Then he would send a club at her with such fury, that if she had not dodged it her brains would have been dashed out. Away she would go and stagger home with that great deer on her back. Then she would take her scalping-knife and go to work and skin that deer, and cut out a lot of venison and boil it and put it before her husband. He would invite half a dozen of his men friends, and they would sit down and get out their knives and go to work. The wife would go and sit with the girls, and after these fellows had gorged themselves with venison, they would take bony bits, and after they had eaten the best off the bones, would laugh to see the dogs and women struggle for the bones which they threw to them. That is paganism as we saw it first. Oh, how often I had to shut my lips tight and hold my tongue and say, "Lord, give me grace to be quiet now, and to speak the right word when the time comes!"

It was worse than that, for it was a sin, my sister, my mother, for a woman to grow old out there. I once went to a village where lives a great chief named Mookoowoosoo. Tobacco among the Indians is like salt among the Arabs, and I have often brought them to parley with me because I have given them a little tobacco and tea. I gave this old fellow a plug of tobacco, and said, "Go with me for a walk." Just outside of his village was a pile of blackened ashes, and I said, "What is that?" "Ah," he said, "that is where I burned my mother to ashes." "Of what disease did your mother die?" He said, "She died of a rope." "What do you mean?" "Why," he said, "she got so she could not snare rabbits and catch fish, and I was not going to be bothered with the old thing, and one day I put a rope around her neck and then burned her to death, so her ghost wouldn't come to haunt me." He boasted that he killed his own mother! But look at the contrast. My wife and I went among that people, and we worked for several years. We preached the blessed Gospel of the Son of God, and I went out a year ago last summer to visit all these tribes, and travelled several thousand miles, holding evangelistic services from tribe to tribe. Look into one of those Indian churches. It is made of logs, a great big roomy Indian church, with one wide aisle down the middle. Let us stand in the desk on Sunday morning as the congregation gather. Look at that man and his two brothers who took their mother out in the woods and killed her because she was getting old and feeble. Look at that old woman who murdered the two little babies of the missionary who followed us. And then look at this other woman. There is brightness on her face, but if you look deeper there is a memory of some terrible crime which she cannot wipe out. That woman

has a history. When I first went out there with my dogs in the woods, visiting them, her husband was an old conjurer, a very wicked man. He would not let her come to the house of God, and in the summer time when I went in my canoe he kept her away. I thank God for a voice with which I could send ringing out into the distance the story of God's love, and so while I had a company of a few hundred Indians there on the ground, I knew that in that clump of balsams on the bank of the river, pretending to be making a moccasin or dressing a deer-skin were the wives or daughters or sisters of some of the intensely wicked people who would not allow them in the company to which I was preaching, and so I would preach for those yonder. One day this old fellow caught his wife out in the outskirts listening, and I learned afterward that he took her and beat her cruelly, and then made withes with which he tied her to a tree. The hunters had gone away. They used to come to my meetings, but, the instant I left, away they scattered to their hunting-grounds, and only a few families were left in the village. These were all so afraid of this terrible old conjurer that they dared not untie his wife. Yonder in the wigwam was her little baby girl a few months old, in the hammock. By and by it woke up and began to cry. It wanted mother's care and mother's nursing. But she was tied there to the tree, and the child cried louder and louder, until by and by its shrieks so affected the mother that she struggled free at last, and she rushed for her child, not to nurse it, but to run down to the river, and take it by the heels and dash its brains out against a rock and throw the quivering body into the rushing river. As the child was swept away some Indian women heard her wailing out, "Oh, that my mother had done that to me when I was a poor little baby-girl like you, to save me from the life I am living!" Her husband died after awhile, and so there was no impediment in the way, and she came to Christ; but in her heart is the memory of that murder. Oh, if she only knew that there was a river of oblivion into which she could plunge and wipe out the memory of the past, she would go to the ends of the earth to bathe in such a place!

But look, the chapel doors are thrown open. Ah! there is a sight that brings a lump to my throat and tears to my eyes. Two great Indians, men twenty-eight or thirty years of age, with their hands have made a chair and over their two hands and shoulders there is a blanket thrown, and seated on that chair, with her arms around their stalwart necks, the poor old invalid mother is being carried to the house of God by her own sons. Another brother goes ahead down the aisle. We have no backs to our plain seats, so he folds up a blanket very nicely and puts it down as a soft cushion, and the other sons come along and mother is seated upon it, and one of the big fellows sits down beside her and puts his strong arm around her and she lays her head against his manly breast. Ah! there comes a dimness in my eyes and a lump in my throat as I see that, and I thank God for the transformation. The mother burned to

death is paganism ; the mother carried by her own sons to the house of God is Christianity.

Those are some of the things God has permitted us to see in our work among the red men, and it is a joy to tell you ; we are glad to tell you that even among the red men God has saved some hundreds of precious souls. Devoted men and women there are toiling on. God is blessing them in the work. Indian converts are being raised up, and now some of our most successful workers are Indians.—*Northfield Echoes.*