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Miss H. H. H.

THE
GIRLS IN THE WOOD

BY
MISS H. NEWNAM

MM 52.7

N266

THE
BABES IN THE WOOD

BY
MISS S. NEWNHAM

Montreal:
PRINTED BY JOHN LOVELL & SON

1895

THE PREFACE.

The following interesting pages refer incidentally to the Missionary work of the Diocese of Moosonee, which encircles the waters of the Hudson's Bay in North America.

They give an account of a journey made during the month of August, 1895, by Mrs. Newnham, wife of the Bishop of Moosonee; his sister, Miss Newnham; and his three daughters: Georgie aged two years and a half, and Hazel and May, twins, aged 10 months. They started from Shelter Island, where they had spent the summer at the eastern extremity of Long Island, New York, on August 14th. They went by rail to New York 100 miles, by rail from New York to Montreal 400 miles, by rail from Montreal to Missanabie 700 miles, where they left the C. P. Railroad and embarked in a bark canoe for their distant home at Moose Fort, James' Bay, Hudson Bay, a distance of between 400 and 500 miles, so that they travelled about 1600 miles, and completed the journey on September 3rd, 1895. The narrative gives an account of the last section of the journey from Missanabie to Moose Fort-

W. H.

OCTOBER 16, 1895.



"BABES IN THE WOOD."

From the "C. C. Magazine".



THE BABES IN THE WOOD.

Come and look at the babes before they go off to the woods ; three such fair-haired morsels under a wide-spreading, old apple-tree ! One twin, Hazel, sitting up in the perambulator, her blue eyes twinkling with fun, and taking notice of any movement round her ; laughing and bobbing her pretty head in greeting to her friends. And this is little May lying in the pillowed hammock, the sunlight stealing through the green leaves and flickering about her dimpled hands and chubby legs as she kicks and crows to herself in infinite content. Her eyes are a deeper blue, and have a look of earnestness that brings to her mother's thoughts the words, "her eyes are homes of silent prayer." But this is no time for moralizing, for around us stirs a bustling presence (first nestling in the Bishop's home), now in the full importance of her two and a half years, feeling herself far removed in age from the helpless atoms whom she styles "the dittle news," and to whom she delivers lectures on the duties of life. She is very busy setting the world to rights, tumbling about on the soft grass, and inventing a thousand interruptions to the fast-travelling pen, interruptions which a mother's love seems to accept with untiring patience. A satisfying picture, is it not ? one we should like to leave undisturbed, wishing the little people long enjoyment of the hot Southern sunshine relieved by fresh breezes from the broad Atlantic waves that you can see rolling in their crests over there, just beyond the fields quivering with the heat of the mid-day. But not so would say the missionary's wife, whose husband has already started 10 weeks ago for a difficult and dangerous journey to visit the Indians and their noble teachers, the Archdeacon and Mrs. Lofthouse, in the lonely North ; not so says the restless sprite Georgie, but takes her mother's hand, saying wistfully, "Come, let us go and find Daddy !"

And very soon they go, leaving behind the many little comforts considered so necessary to the daily life of adults, let alone the kings and queens of Babydom ! Leaving too what is far harder, the many loving hearts and devoted nurses in the old home, leaving them with empty arms and aching uncertainty for months together as to the welfare of the nurslings who have gone northwards, lost in the silence of the vast woods of the diocese of Moosonee ; but leaving them we can

yet thankfully say to the "strong consolation" whispered to them by the Eternal Father who comforts "as a mother."

"Peace, perfect peace! With loved ones far away!
In Jesu's keeping we are safe, *and they—*"

But shall we follow these tiny travellers, you and I? We shall see much that is new and strange, and fitting with them this way, we shall not add to their luggage, which must be kept as small and light as may be if they wish to get quickly over the trials that lie between them and their distant home. We will not dwell on the repeated farewells from various friends, each bringing its own pain, nor on the long railway journeys with which their experiences begin, but we will take a peep at them after a long night in the train and see the finishing touches put to their toilet as they draw up at Chapleau, the one and only town in the whole diocese. In a moment they are greeted by the Rev. A. Braham, rector of the Parish, which consists mostly of the workers who congregate at a large railway junction. He comes with genial words and kindly action, and boards the train carrying a pail of new milk which is most acceptable to all three infants. He tells of many friends waiting on the platform, so we form a little procession and march down for inspection and the introduction of the younger members of our party. It is very pleasant to see the high regard in which Mrs. Newnham is held by the ladies whom she has met on her former journeys past, and the Indians lately settled at Chapleau who had received kindness from her at Moose Fort. But the few minutes' stop for the train are soon gone, and we must take our places again for the last stage of our last journey by steam-power for a long time to come. Two of the Indian women have taken return tickets, we find, to Missanabie, meaning altogether a good five hours travelling, that they may secure the hours between the trains for a talk with Mrs. Newnham; this is pretty strong proof of their affection, is it not? The special bond with Hannah, the elder woman, is that her daughter was a member of Mrs. Newnham's Bible Class at Moose Fort, and was by her gentle influence led into Christ's fold and a higher standard of life; the girl has died since their removal to Chapleau, but the mother's heart can never forget her gratitude to the one through whom the blessing came.

After traversing miles and miles of uninhabited bush for nearly three hours, watching the endless stream of trees go by, some in leaf, many merely bare grey stems, reduced by bush fires to skeletons, stretching their ghastly, twisted limbs skywards, we sight at last the Missanabie Lake, and in a few minutes have dismounted at a little wayside

station ; our most unfashionable-looking luggage is dumped beside the track, and we are taken possession of by Mr. Ross, the Hudson's Bay officer in charge of this Post. Away puffs the iron monster, and until she goes out of sight Georgie can hardly be persuaded to follow our guide, but stands making low, sweeping salutations accompanied by repeated cries of "Good-bye, toot-toot, good-bye."

And now we have time to look about us. What a scene of desolation to call home ! It is the height of land from which the rivers run to the frozen seas of the North, and it is scarcely safe from night frosts at any season ; trees are few and stunted, the ground is covered with plants that are content with the poorest soil, everlasting and native weeds, interspersed with some very hungry looking wild raspberries. We look for relief to the dwellings. There stands the railway office with log house attached. Across the track stands Mr. Ross' mansion, also of wood, for we have got beyond the region of stone and brick now. To English eyes it is very small and very primitive, but it is beautiful by the frank hospitality extended to us. The best of everything the house contains is placed at our disposal, and the babes are soon freshened up, fed and comfortably sleeping in the upper room.

But although buildings are scarce here, there seems to be plenty of life to-day ; a group of Indians are waiting to be introduced, the crew of our canoe, who had begged to be allowed to come up early, that they might be ready to welcome Mrs. Newnham on her arrival. She shakes hands with them all round, and recognizes one as "Long Tom," who acted as guide when she and her husband went down to Moose the first time. Tom is an important man to-day, for his bride-elect is sitting with another woman on the rough wooden bench outside Mr. Ross' house, and he has secur'd the services of Rev. J. Sanders, native pastor from Biscotasing, three hours run from Missanabie by train, to tie the knot before we start. She does not suit our idea of a bride, perhaps, but her brown stuff dress is quite new, fashioned for her by kind Mrs. Spence, of Brunswick House, and her daughters, and instead of a bridal veil, her head and shoulders are covered with a warm red shawl more fitted to the climate. Her brown face is so stolid it might be cut out in wood ; her eyes and hair, as is usual with these Indians, are black ; there she sits with her friend, never seeming to move or speak, her natural apathy increased by shyness in the presence of white strangers. We are anxious to see the ceremony, and when the appointed hour comes, quite unconscious of doing any harm, we wend our way along the narrow trodden path to the little knoll where a tiny log cabin does

duty as a church whenever Mr. Sanders is able to visit this part of his flock. The interior is as unpretending as the outside, the fittings consisting of a small table, a stove, planks for benches round the walls, and a stump or two of wood for seats in the centre, which the congregation place as they like. After some delay the bridegroom sauntered in with his friends, and sat themselves down, some on the doorstep, and announced to the waiting clergyman that the wedding was not likely to come off,—the bride had changed her mind! After a consultation Mr. Sanders departed on an embassy to the young woman, where she squatted with her sister on the shore of the lake; but it was of no use, she would neither go through with her part nor give an adequate reason. Some days afterwards it leaked out that she was scared by the sight of so many white people; had she only not been too shy to say so at the time, we should willingly have removed our disturbing presence, and Tom's little cabin might have gained its mistress in peace. As it is, they are not likely to have a visit from a clergyman again until next spring; however, after the first slight vexation at her coyness had passed off, Long Tom told his friends that if she were willing to fulfill her promise when next an ordained minister came through that district, he would then marry her.

Tom's story is rather an interesting one. His mother died when he was quite a little boy, and he was adopted by Rev. J. Sanders, who brought him up with his own children, so that he learned to read and write, besides the most important lesson of all, to be an honest, trustworthy, Christian man. He built himself a nice little cabin across the river from New Brunswick House, and there he made his home with a devoted young wife; from there he went as guide to Moose in the summer of 1892, when Rev. J. A. Newnham took his bride to her new home. But clouds came over this happy nest, and Tom's wife died, leaving him alone with their baby boy; the poor fellow was heart-broken, his health failed, and he was thought to be dying of consumption, a disease which makes great havoc amongst the Indians owing to their poor feeding and exposure to all the sudden changes of the weather of which we in England can understand so little. Good Mrs. Spence took charge of baby Joseph, who grew into a sturdy little trotter under her motherly care, living with her own nice boys. In time Tom greatly recovered his health, and although the germs of the disease are probably still there, he was able to resume his canoeing, and through the summer the open air life will do him good; for the coming winter Mr. Spence has engaged him as a servant, so one hopes he may not be thrown back again. It

was so touching to see his pleasure in his little boy during the three hours we spent at the Post. He carried him in his arms down to the landing stage and up to the very moment of re-embarking. This summer brought fresh sorrow to poor Tom, his father whilst away in the bush with another Indian, accidentally knocked the trigger of his loaded gun, which discharged itself into his own body; he stumbled back to his tent, only able to tell his wife that he was dying, and life soon fled, without the possibility of any skilled effort being made to save him. Tom took this loss much to heart, and is receiving his step-mother into his own home, so he will not be quite alone this winter, he will be able also to keep little Joseph with him as long as there is a woman to look after the child.

Through this summer Tom has been employed going to and from the line, fetching the Company's stores, but he contrived as often as possible to be back at the Post for Sundays, when he would get the loan of the tiny church, and hold service for his Ogibeway friends,—the only service they had.

But we have wandered far from the Babes, have we not? It was planned that we should be up at five o'clock the next morning, that we might if possible reach Brunswick Post in time to have one more night under a roof; but the day broke dark and rainy, and we were not astir until six o'clock. As it seemed inclined to clear, we made everything ready on our part, dressed ourselves and the children in strong warm "knock-about" dresses, and had everything strapped up by the time we were summoned to the early breakfast. But it is always most tedious work getting Indians to start from a Post, though they are prompt enough when once on the march. However, by nearly nine o'clock the chattering and running to and fro came to an end, the twins were set up one in each end of a capacious clothes-basket and comfortably tucked in with warm shawls, their bright little faces peeping out of a pink and a blue helmet respectively, head gear after the pattern of those made for the Deep Sea Mission, in soft wool, covering the ears and neck from cold and, we hoped, from flies, but later experience showed that, give them time, and those wicked black flies could burrow through the stitches and bite the tiny heads, leaving great red patches on the fair silky hair.

Naturally we did not hit on the best way of packing ourselves at the first start, but after a day or two the men learned how to arrange things for our comfort. We were provided with a large war-canoe some twenty feet long, and ornamented with green and white paint at each

end, for the rest it was just ordinary birch-bark outside on a thin framework of wooden strips. In broadest part at the centre one bale of bedding corded in a great tarpaulin was laid down for our seat, a similar bale being stood up to make a back to it. On either side of us we wedged in various bags and wraps that might be needed during the day. Close in front, allowing only a few inches for the accommodation of our feet, stood one of the boxes, on top of which was placed the basketful of babies within easy reach for all the needful ministrations; and it was really marvellous how good those mites were and how very little trouble they gave during the whole voyage! They would sit there by the hour together, dancing and cooing to themselves, or making conversation with the Indians after a manner well understood all the world over.

Right down the middle of the canoe stood the boxes and baggage of all sorts that we were taking, as little as might be on account of the many "Portages." * Each man sat on a little canvas sack which held his blanket and any change of clothing he might carry; their rations of flour, salt pork, etc., were in bags also. The canoe has no fittings whatever; being simply a shell with two inch wide thwarts at intervals, your baggage makes your furniture. In the bow sat the guide, Mungoos by name, which means a "little loon," a bird well known in these parts. He was a capital fellow, with a bright, keen face full of good nature, always on the alert, most careful of our comfort, cautious to avoid any risks for the babies, and keeping his men well in hand. Behind him sat William and Long Tom; the latter having been a guide himself, sometimes relieved Mungoos at the bow, and proved himself even a better shot when ducks and geese were unwary enough to cross our path. Behind our "state-room," save the mark! were the two young fellows, and in the stern Willie Redbreast stood, steering with his paddle and watching the ripples and shadows ahead which marked the dangers of the way. Close to us was placed George Spence, whom his parents had willingly entrusted to the Bishop to make himself useful in any way that should be needed in the Mission, and to get his education there. He acted as our interpreter on the way, for none of the men would venture to speak English to us, although some of them evidently understood us when we made ordinary remarks to them, to which they replied only with the most inhuman grunt. George might also be called our valet, cook, and "buttons," minus those insignia of office, since he was

*A pathway on land where rapids intervene, along which the baggage is carried to the next body of navigable water.—See page 16.

responsible for the supply of all our needs, and thoroughly well he performed all his duties, even to washing the babies' bottles and such like tasks. He chose Willie Redbreast as his colleague, and Georgie soon became a devoted admirer of these two from seeing them constantly busy round our fires; and indeed she refused to let any of the other men touch her, and would protest, "Willic will carry me" when there was a difficult place to be passed.

The manner of using the paddle is entirely different from one's ideas in the Old Country. The men all face the bow and plunge their short paddles into the water with a scoop towards themselves, knocking the canoe edge at each stroke; this gives a jerking motion, and followed by the gurgle of the water makes a sound something like punk-whulp, punk-whulp, which becomes monotonous after a time. It is the wooden punk, punk, which to the quick Indian ear always gives notice of an approaching canoe whilst it is still in the far distance.

Now you will be able to picture us as we paddled along hour after hour, first up the length of the Missanabie Lake, later down the whole course of the Moose river, between endless low banks clothed with pines, poplars and birches, almost the only change being that the trees became more stunted as we went farther North. So we had to depend on our own resources for any variety in our lives. To attain this variety the children were our best helps, Georgie especially, being at the age when five minutes in one position, except in sleep, is well-nigh unbearable. A canoe does not afford much space for moving round, but we presented convenient mountains to be roamed over, horses to be ridden, and a whole Noah's ark to be trotted out. All the old nursery rhymes and finger tricks had to be revived and used in turn, much to the edification of our crew as well as of the Babes in the Wood.

Our first day's experience was anything but funny; a drizzling rain fell at intervals, the air was very chilly, and we had not yet worked out a good way of protecting ourselves from the weather. We were very fortunate in being able to put up a square of sacking across the boat, between two poles, which, though not a handsome sail, yet helped us on in fine style, and we accomplished the crossing from Fairy Point at once, whereas canoes are often delayed there for days, waiting until the wind abates enough to make it safe to attempt it. We only had a pleasant little tossing such as so many of us *enjoy* in sailing-boats off the south coast of England! We found it would be impossible to make the "Post" * that evening, so halted about six o'clock just as a fine rain

* Hudson Bay Station.

came on again ; we landed on an oozy bank, and the tent was pitched only a few yards from the water. Although everything was dripping wet around us, the men had two roaring fires in a few minutes, and we got the children under shelter and safely in bed as soon as might be. The men not yet having their tents, just wrapped themselves in their blankets, and lay down round the second fire, after stirring it into a blaze, by the light of which Long Tom read their evening prayers, which they never under any circumstances omitted. By starting early next morning we reached the Hudson's Bay Post about midday, and were received by Mr. and Mrs. Spence with the greatest kindness. It was from this Post that our Indians were hired, consequently here that they now received their rations for the possible fourteen or sixteen days that we might be out. Mrs. Spence also very kindly supplemented our stores with home made bread and fresh butter, which lasted us all the way. The Indian women clustered round the door and inspected the white children with the most lively interest, as being very rare curiosities in these regions. We in our turn looked curiously at their black-eyed, blinking little objects bound into their wooden frames, and so carried about on the back or arm of mother or sister in charge.

After about three hours rest and getting things into final order, with laying in stores for possible emergencies, which takes a good deal of thought, we started again with waving handkerchiefs and many farewells to the last friendly faces, the last dwellings we should see until we reached Moose.

Now we settled down to regular camp life, only that our hours of travel were necessarily shortened for the sake of the children. We would paddle away through the whole afternoon, only stopping occasionally for the regulation "smoke time," when the men lay back resting their muscles and enjoying their pipes for some ten minutes or so, whilst the canoe drifted slowly down the river. To our astonishment and gratification, before the first of these spells the men asked, through Georgie, if any of us objected to smoking. Was not that unexpected refinement? Yet it was but a sample of the consideration they showed for us all through. They were a fine set of men!

About 6 o'clock Mungoos would begin looking for a suitable camping ground ; if there were any special point of rapid or rock to be passed, it might be nearly 7 p.m. before we were moored to the bank. The men would spring ashore and rapidly carry or toss everything out, drag the canoe itself on to dry land and turn it upside down for the night. The boxes and heavier luggage they stacked near it, covering

it up from the rain. Mungoos chose a suitable spot just inside the belt of wood, and cutting down a tree if needful, to make room, set up our tent poles; Willie disappeared in the bush, and we heard the ringing of his axe and the crash of a falling tree, and he very quickly had a blazing fire some three or four feet long, according to the lengths into which he cut his tree, burning between our two tents. The lads meanwhile fetched a quantity of small freshly cut pine branches, which were most scientifically laid overlapping each other over the area to be occupied by the tents, making a springy, fragrant floor and smoothing over the inequalities of the ground. Over this our two calico tents were stretched and tied out to stakes. Willie uncorded the bedding in each, and spread the tarpaulin which had protected it all day, as a carpet, and then our work began. We laid out blankets, quilts, waterproofs, anything we could muster to make a dry and *comparatively* soft bed under us (you don't sleep well on unpadded tree-poles!), leaving out sufficient to put over us to keep out the intense cold of the small hours. To those accustomed to Canadian pleasure camping, there is nothing new in all this, but an English person has much to learn by experience and inconvenience, as to the best way of making such a bed, how to stow away in different corners things needed at different times, the need of wrapping up one's garments from the damp of the night, and above all and most difficult of all, how to move round and do all this in such a small space in wet weather without touching the sides of the tent, for wherever it is touched the rain promptly drips in. Our tents fortunately proved quite water-tight after the first good wetting had swelled the threads, and we were altogether very well protected.

By the time the babies were snugly packed into their beds and had cooed themselves to sleep, as they lay watching the leaping flames, we were very thankful to sit in the tent door and take the meal that the two men had laid ready for us. Often at the same time we stretched our feet towards the blaze to warm them after sitting for hours with wet shoes and skirts, for we had a good deal of bad weather, only three days of the whole trip passing without any rain at all. This caused additional anxiety with the children, as they all took cold, and one threatened croup; but the cough mercifully yielded to remedies after three nights. The men used to carry off wet clothes and wraps, and dry them round their own camp fire, the great fellows bringing them back as neatly folded as any woman could have done it. It was the funniest sight to see them turning some tiny garment about wonderingly; and often whilst their own meals were being prepared, the dis-

engaged men would stand round us or crouch in the bushes near, to watch our operations with the deepest interest. On fine nights we stretched our bedding cords from tree to tree and hung out the result of our day's laundry, done French fashion in the river, and we laughed to think that ours was probably the first canoe trip that could boast of a clothes line, though pegs were conspicuous by their absence.

The quiet evening hour with the babies asleep was a beautiful time; the two white tents like great hen-coops face to face with the glow of the fire between, the light flickering fitfully, now showing up the neighboring tree-trunks, now leaving them in deepest gloom. At a short distance the crackle and glare of the men's fire showing up their two tents, and the soft sound of their voices, for they never speak loudly, or the low singing of their evening hymn prevent the solitude becoming oppressive. All around us the deep hush of the woods broken only by the night wind whispering through the branches far overhead, the trees growing so close together that they draw one another up with but few lower branches. Not many yards away flows the river silvered by the rays of the rising moon, and as we steal out from the shadows of the wood we see the stars shining brightly in the clear atmosphere. Sometimes we camp at a Portage and have the roar of the waterfall for our lullaby, or it may be only the swirl and dash of the waters in the shallows. But anyway, we need no rocking, and must hurry back to our tents, for silence has already settled down upon the other camp, and there is the early start before us. The children slept splendidly after three days in the open air, but their elders were sometimes kept wakeful by the cold in the "wee sma' hours." We dared not keep the fire alight because of the danger of burning the tents; as it was, the flying sparks made several holes before we could extinguish them.

Too soon for our inclination, about 4.45 o'clock we were awakened by the sound of chopping of wood at our tent door, followed by the crackle of fire and a most welcome warmth creeping over us; so we roused ourselves up and made a hasty toilet, and by the time we threw back the tent flaps, Willie had a steaming cup of coffee ready, to which we added condensed milk, and which we found most necessary in view of all that must be gone through before breakfast. The babies had to be dressed and fed, our belongings packed away or sorted into heaps for use during the day or not until night, and before we were ready the men would be wandering around, having carried down their own belongings and all agog to take down our "roof-tree." If we were not watchful they would swoop upon some much needed and highly-prized gar-

ment, and stuff it away in the company of boots and rubbers in an old hunting-bag, whence we could only ruefully rescue it the following night. So we had all the excitement of a race to get things in order before their "many hands made light work" of our possessions. But with all this movement and bustle we never lost a thing,—even a hair-pin dropped in the bedding would be returned to us with ceremony; and with the fourteen or more Portages, nothing was left behind—but the precious bag of potatoes for Georgie's dinners!

We were generally into the canoe and underway before 6 o'clock, and glad we were to wrap ourselves in every available piece of fur and wool as we paddled through the thick river mists, the sun not yet showing over the tree-tops. At these times the twins were beautifully cosy, well down in the basket with shawls piled around them. However, the sun very quickly gained power on the days when he elected to shine on us at all! and it was often pleasantly warm by 8 o'clock when we drew to land for breakfast. This time, as at the dinner camp, only the larder was taken out, ours consisting of a cleverly packed hamper containing the fortnight's supplies, except the reserve of loaves; we had besides a compact canteen with kettle and cups, etc. Our cooking was of the simplest and quickest description; but in spite of our efforts to hurry matters, it always took a good hour for the landing, breakfast, making the babes' food for the day, and the morning service which some of us made a point of attending. It was an inspiring sight,—those bronzed men with their well-knit, muscular figures kneeling on the rocks, bareheaded, under the vast blue temple roof. Never in any highly educated congregation did I see more, I might almost say such, reverent behaviour. Mungoos made the best picture as he stood hat in hand listening to the Scripture portion; he was unable to read, so Long Tom acted as chaplain, standing in the centre of the group. Those who owned books produced them from the little print bags in which they were kept, and Tom would give out a hymn, leading the singing in a good musical voice; the tunes being generally familiar to us, we joined in, singing the English words. So too as we knelt together we could follow when they joined in repeating the Lord's Prayer; and the Creed was easily recognized by the proper names, with only slightly altered terminations from the English. So here in the wilderness we had some realization of the Communion of Saints, and it seemed to link us afresh with fellow-worshippers at home.

But time is passing all too quickly, and we must cramp ourselves into the canoe once more, this time, unless interrupted by a Portage, pad-

ding until about 1 o'clock, when we halt for dinner. If the babies were happy we did not take them ashore, but they had the canoe all to themselves either sleeping or sitting up, laughing and babbling in perfect content even when none of us were within their sight. The use of tinned food saved time, as it prevented the delay of cooking, but once during the journey we had some hot duck, a bird having been given us by a passing hunter, who also presented the men with some strips of dried goose-meat, receiving in exchange a panful of flour and some salt-pork and grease. The meeting took place on a group of rock in mid river, the Indian reaching it from below just as we had been landed on it from above, and were sitting on our boxes waiting whilst our crew ran the half lightened canoe down the rapid and brought it to the lower edge to take us off again. The sight of any human being is exciting on this lonely journey, and we watched the landing of this family party: the man, a pale Indian, with a peculiarly gentle, child-like expression in his dark eyes, his squaw browner and more stolid, holding her black-eyed bantling, and away behind them came the inevitable dog, swimming slowly up against stream. This is the way the most of them live through the summer months, the little household just paddling up and down the rivers, living on the birds and fish that they contrive to get, with a small reserve of flour and pork brought away from the Hudson's Bay Post for times of scarcity. There is no chance of doing more than keep up a bare existence until the returning winter brings the fur-bearing animals to be trapped, whose skins have to pay for clothes and food for the whole year. As these animals are getting annually more rare, times become harder for the Indians, and the warm clothing and supplies sent out by our Missionary Associations are more and more valued.

Mrs. Newnham was unable to speak the language of these people, but she went over and shook hands with them both, giving them her good wishes through an interpreter, for, lonely and unknown as they were, they belonged to her husband's flock, which brought them a step nearer than being merely fellow-mortals. Her opportunity for talking with them was shortened by Georgie choosing this time for falling into a pool and soaking her clothes, so that the bare rock became a dressing-room, and dry stockings and other garments had to be hunted up and put on, the wet things being wrung out and dried on the edge of the canoe as we continued our voyage. This we found a capital way of drying our washing, the sun and wind making the things so sweet and white, and the wag amongst the crew even tied a tiny gown on the end of a pole and hoisted it for a flag!

The rapids we ran were numberless, and I soon found it was unnecessary to hold my breath and look out for squalls; indeed, after a few experiences, one learned to go right on, attending to the babies or playing pranks for Georgie's edification, without looking for chances of an upset. The only requirement was that we should sit as low as we could, put down umbrellas and keep still. Of course they varied immensely in risk and in the way they must be taken. They were generally preceded by a short "go-as-you please," and as we neared the rough water the men would stand up and take their long poles instead of paddles, the elder men made a keen survey of the rapid and consulted as to the apparently best course to try. There is a charming uncertainty about this navigation, as the heavy ice every spring pushes the boulders into new positions and carries down fresh rocks, so there is no regulation channel to follow. The instant we entered the waves, all was excitement and stir. The poles rattled and clashed against the rocks, the men chattered and shouted, shoving the frail bark this way and that to avoid a bump; we would be almost upon a submerged rock before it was seen, the guide's pole would hurriedly push off from it with his shout of "me-me-me-me" as fast as he could say it, and he would turn and watch anxiously until the stern had been safely kept off it, then back to his task with a laugh that showed his good teeth to perfection! Sometimes we went over a rock in the grand sweep of water that poured continuously down it, and that was a pleasant sensation. Not so the feeling a rock suddenly hunch up the canoe bottom under your feet, or scrunch along beneath you. It sometimes seemed exactly as if we were really grounded; but somehow we always went on again, and the consequent leakage was never bad, and it all came in the day's work. If the difficulties became too great, the poles would be rammed down amongst the rocks and the craft kept perfectly steady, whilst a consultation was held as to the next move, and that in the midst of roaring, swirling waves that we should consider utterly impassable, the guide's whole body quivering with the strain and beat of the water against his pole. Their absolute control of the canoe gave me great confidence, and they promised that they would run no risks with the children on board, for in case of an accident they could not have lived one minute amongst those rocks. An additional touch of excitement was given by the snapping of a pole in the midst of a rush, or by a bow pole getting caught fast in the rocks, and rap-rap-rapping the canoe-side as we dashed past, the rear men grabbing at and recovering it if possible; but too often we looked back and saw it standing up out of the water shaking derisively at us. Be-

fore a bad rapid the men would land and cut down and trim a few slim saplings for a reserve in case of such losses.

Once only did the Indians find a rapid they had undertaken too risky to be continued, so they pulled up short with the most beautiful skill, and laboriously poled us back up the small falls we had descended with many a bump and scrape. Through this episode there was no laughing, only intensely alert and serious looks, and one did not feel it exactly a joke. Through God's mercy we were soon landed safely, and scrambled through our worst Portage, a very slightly trodden one, with fallen trees to be scrambled over and through, until we reached quiet water and were once more taken on board.

The Portages varied in length from a short cliff to be scrambled over to a long ramble through the woods, or scramble through thick bush, perhaps dripping with rain, diversified by a paddle through bits of swamp where tall rubber boots were in their glory. These scrambles afforded at any rate a relief from the cramped position in the canoe. If you wish to get some real idea of what that was, we should recommend you to try sitting in a good sized wheel-barrow, with a barrow load of babies in front of you and a small child roaming to and fro over your cornfield. Let some one wheel you about in jerks, and lest you should feel too much of a Sybarite, proceed to protect you from rain by covering you over right to the edge of the barrow with a heavy tarpaulin, for which your devoted head forms the chief prop. This last woe was invented after one or two trials of the power of concentrated umbrella drippings to soak through one's clothes; and another day's experience taught us that the best way of all was to open two umbrellas in line and have the tarpaulin supported in the middle by their points and sloping away to the water on each side, for a heavy storm had formed lakes above us which drained right through the covering into the babies' basket amongst other places. What wonder that coughs, colds and loss of voice roused our anxieties and convinced us that canoeing with children was not all "cakes" etc.!

But in spite of the discomforts of wet and heat, it was rather funny when the three infants rebelled and all three howled at once in this very limited space;—a menagerie at feeding time would be nothing to it! As a further improvement, we ran a rapid at that very time, and found that it seemed very much more dangerous when one could see nothing, and it sounded as if the men were just racing about on a deck; but this awful time was soon over and we were released from duress vile.

A tedious class of incidents occurred when feeling the way down the

shallows, which on one occasion took us forty minutes to do over one short reach of river. A sharp out-look was kept for the deepest channels, and we made the oddest zigzag course, now going off at right angles, now doubling back, creeping close to the shore, then out again, and describing three parts of a circle; often the men would roll up their trousers and wade in the ice cold water, easing the canoe over the rocks and even shunting smaller ones out of our way, with many a shudder and laugh. Never once through the whole trip did we see a trace of ill temper, however trying things might be. If the scraping and grinding against our craft became too bad, we had to pole backwards and seek another course altogether, or when the river spread itself to a great width we were forced to land and portage. The best craft for these places would be the famous American boat built to "go across country on a dewy morning."

The chief oddity of the Portages was the amount of luggage that one man would carry, and that over rough tracks across fallen trees and other obstructions. First, a long double leather would be looped round a fair sized box, which was hoisted on to the porter's back, the broad part of the strap resting across his forehead, on to this box another trunk and a sack or two would be piled as high as they could be balanced, and he would carry small bags in his hand.

The usual order was to take over all the luggage first, and stack it at the lower end of the Portage, and go back for the canoe, which presented an unearthly appearance, arriving out of the bush bottom up, seemingly moving along on three pairs of legs of its own, for the porters' heads were inside it. We thus had double time in which to do our own scramble, and it was sweet to see Georgie on a fine day dancing through the woods, her hat hanging on her back, her fair hair blown in wildest confusion.

A most important bit of luggage was a roll of thick birch bark which came into requisition at night when the stranded canoe was thoroughly overhauled, strained seams gummed over, and patches of fresh bark gummed on where we had torn off strips in the adventures of the day.

I must not omit to mention the two Sundays spent out, which were kept by not starting until about 9 o'clock; after we had had breakfast and the Ojibeway morning Service with several hymns, by going easily all day and camping earlier in the evening to allow time for their second Service. Finding that the crew liked our music, we sang many dear old hymns through the day, keeping time with the paddles. I was struck by the absence of excitement about ducks and geese sighted on

Sunday, and was told that the Indians never use their guns on that day unless driven by hunger. Their religion seems more real and practical than it is too often, alas! with us. Part of the Mission work is to supply them with Almanacs in Cree, with the Sundays marked, before they go off for the winter.

On Monday and Tuesday, Sept. 2nd and 3rd, Mungoos asked if we would forego the breakfast halt, taking our meal before the 6 a.m. start, to save time, to which of course we agreed; but he was very reticent as to the time he expected to reach Moose Fort. However, by 11 o'clock Mrs. Newnham's suspicions were aroused by a familiar look of the shore. Moreover the men were running us round the back of Moose Island without the usual landing to don "shore-going" clothes. We could only make a frantic dive for clean bibs and white hats, and freshen up the children, when we were seen from the land. Away scampered the little brown heels to carry word of our approach, and out swarmed the Indians all along the high bank, including Sam, the Mission factotum. They do not seem ready with words at such times, but looked very pleased as Mrs. Newnham shook hands and spoke to them by name. We had hardly scrambled up the mud bank, for it was low tide, to the open stretch of grass where the tents are pitched, before we met the Rev. I. J. Taylor, Missionary in charge during the Bishop's absence, running for all he was worth, followed by Jane, the domestic factotum, a splendid specimen of what can be done by careful training, for she had the whole house as clean and tidy as if her mistress's eye had been on it all the time. After the first welcome Mr. Taylor possessed himself of one handle of the babies' basket, and they were carried in triumph into their new home, a funny little wooden dwelling sometimes known as Bishop's Court! But I don't think my story need end here.

The whole island is bush, except just the inhabited strip along the south-eastern shore. It is surrounded by islands all covered with willows or pines, and separated from the civilized world by hundreds of miles of woods and swamp, so more than ever are they now the Babes in the Wood, and I fancy that in spite of all that has been written about Moose by Bishop Horden, Mrs. Batty and other able pens, you will still like to hear how things strike a new comer!

Moose is a puzzling place; you doubtless think of us as always wrapped in furs and shivering with cold, yet the first thing we did on landing was to get out cooler dresses, for it was oppressively hot, and mosquitoes and black flies laid wait for us at every turn. The Bishop's

house stands facing the common, with a small vegetable garden beside it and yet tinier flower garden in front, all most carefully guarded by close white fences from the mischievous dogs, with a touch of wolf in them, that swarm round the tents. These fences have of course been renewed since the heavy ice brought down by the flood crushed them and destroyed the gardens. The flowers were a welcome sight, though of course very backward,—nasturtiums, pinks, pansies, etc. ; the sweet peas are not yet in bloom, so have no chance of flowering now before the frost cuts them down ; the kitchen garden too was rather a dismay to the house-keeping mind, for the onions and cabbages were a complete failure, besides other things which would have been most valuable in the long winter. However, we are thankful that the potatoes are turning out well (the Loft-houses cannot even grow those at Churchill), and there are some nice peas and spinach, most of these things being grown from the seed sent gratis every year to many Mission stations by Mr. Sutton of Reading,—a most kindly and acceptable gift.

At the back stands the little Mission house, now occupied by Mr. Taylor, the kitchen of which is used as a carpenter's shop by Sam, and the large entry room has to receive the over-flow children from the school in winter ; we have visions of Kindergarten system and such airy schemes, but it is best not to say much of plans that may come to naught. The School itself is within ear-shot, so small that it would be condemned at home as a class-room for more than about twenty children, yet through the *summer* they have to pack into it between 80 and 90 Indians, seating them on the floor or anywhere they can make room.

Further along the shore stands the wooden church, for of course *all* the buildings here are of wood, and beyond that again you see the factory, dwellings, shop, store-houses shut in by high palisading, relic of the olden days when the Indians were wont to make raids upon the Forts and all the servants' houses and farm-buildings. This, my friends, is the cathedral city of Moose Fort ; I beg you will speak of it with due respect ! The city is connected from end to end by a track more or less trodden, for road-making is not one of the Moose industries, and we shall not be likely to adopt the fashionable wheel here !

The common outside the Mission windows is dotted all over with the wigwams of the Indian families and the smaller calico tents of the young men, and very picturesque is the scene, the smoky poles bristling out at the top, and covered below with odd pieces of canvas in all the vary-

ing shades of brown and grey, with here and there a sheet of birch-bark. Round and about them play the grotesque figures of the children, the girls, like the women, always wearing a shawl over the head and shoulders, even to church, only on Sundays the bright new plaid shawls give a smarter look to them. The boys affect longish coats and great black felt hats, the brims turned down round the faces; the men wear most a sort of dark blanket coat with a hood. As the autumn brings the small birds round, the boys are to be seen all day long creeping about with cross-bows, running behind the banks, bent almost double like monkeys, or going actually on all fours in the hope of taking the birds unawares, which is doubtless a good training for the hunting by which they will have to make their living.

We get many a peep from our windows of the daily life of the Indians, for owing to the smallness of the wigwams and the large families to be accommodated, a great many of their operations must perforce be carried on outside. Blankets and clothing are hung out for airing, snow-shoes are lying on a pole near, moss for packing a papoose into its cradle is being prepared and dried on a line, a cassette containing the family belongings here and there stands outside for want of space within. A cassette you must know is the only correct luggage to be used in Hudson's Bay territory, a small, very solid, painted wooden box, warranted to stand all weathers and any amount of tumbles on Portages and elsewhere. To own such a box anywhere in Canada would stamp you at once as from Hudson's Bay.

At night the wigwams look like a great encampment of lanterns, glowing with the fires that are burning within, the smoke curling out through the poles in the centre. Could you get a view of the interior you would then find the whole family sleeping with their feet towards the fire, their heads near the canvas. It is already becoming too cold for this open ground, and the canoes are being hauled up, gummed and patched in preparation for the winter's migration, and this part of the Moose population will be scattered far and wide through the woods, setting and visiting their traps to get furs for next September's cargo for England, and living in what shelter from the bitter cold the trees afford. The few old and sick ones who remain will gather together, crowding into a few log cabins for warmth.

But they do not "like the Arab, silently steal away"; *the* ship has just been here, and the ox-cart has brought up many bales and boxes to the Bishop's house, and the people cannot think of leaving without saying good-bye to Mrs. Newham; should not you and I feel just the same?

Of course there are many amongst them who have the most genuine love for and trust in those who have come so far to bring them the comfort they so sorely need, the news of the Great Father's love for them, many whom Mrs. Newnham met again with pleasure as personal friends, but some who have been called home during her absence were not there.

Anyway, the Mission premises are the centre of interest just now, and the Missionary Bishop's wife gets no leisure ; the friends of the sick ones are at the door by 7.30 a.m., and she must skim the milk and give all she can spare for their needs, and from that time until night again, you can never go out without meeting men, women or children sheltering behind the wood-pile, standing at the door, squatting on the steps, and as often as not sitting on their heels in the kitchen ; nor is that all—you may be sitting upstairs and look round to find a group at your door who have wandered up in search of " Bissip's " wife. The universally worn moccasin makes no sound, and their hunting habits have trained them to such stealthy movements that you do not hear them come, and they never speak until you do, but stand waiting patiently.

So pressing personal claims are put aside and the work of unpacking is begun ; with joyful hearts we fill up the store-room shelves with sorted piles of lovely warm, strong garments made by loving, clever fingers at home. When there is enough to begin upon, Mrs. Newnham sends for the poor widows, and gives each a long, warm petticoat and big chemise,—they do like their things ample ! Then she lets them squat round the door, and Jane brings them out a cup of tea and a thick slice of dry bread each, the bread being a great luxury, as they cannot make it themselves.

Next, she arranges that one morning all the school boys shall come, each bearing a written ticket from Mr. Taylor stating their general conduct. Round they throng, grabbing off their caps at sight of her, and eagerly receiving the warm shirts, bright knitted mufflers, cuffs, etc., which she gives out according to merit. Then off they rush, helter skelter, round the corner of the house, already wrapping the scarfs round their necks, but pull up short at the sight of the white children enjoying the sunshine in front ; but after surveying the enemy, they sew up courage to go past at a run, and go tumbling away to the tents to exhibit their treasure.

The next day the same performance is gone through with the school girls, but with a more demure behavior and promptings to each other as to the English form of " thank you." Frocks and petticoats are the favorite gifts this day, and stores of beautiful ones had been sent out,

of simple pattern and good strong material suitable to the rough life in which they will be worn. Gores are not appreciated in this part of the world, the fashion being good bunchy pleats round the waist for solid warmth!

Besides these regular distributions, Mrs. Newnham was being called on morning, noon, and night, to go to the outer store-room and look out shirts for the men, skirts and cross-overs for the women, and so forth, so that she was never free from interruption. It was often a lengthy business, for tales of illness and trouble had to be listened to, in broken English or through an interpreter, and advice given, including generally a strong recommendation to go off hunting for the winter and not stay about the Fort for what could be picked up, and falling into idle ways. In several cases the record was not good, and a gift was refused, a serious talking to being given in its place; for there are black sheep in Mocse as in every flock, and one very necessary and painful duty of the Bishop and his help-meet is to keep up a wholesome discipline in order to restrain the evil.

We were so delighted that, by the kindness of Dr. Bell, a Government surveyor, who passed through, we were able to send a parcel to Mrs. Spence for the poor people round Brunswick Post, who scarcely ever get a bale, being so far from this and not on the mail route; this parcel contained flannel shirts for the elder men of our crew and mufflers for the lads, and richly they deserved them.

So a fortnight passed, and Mrs. Newnham had only once left the premises except to attend the church services, and she was getting pretty well worn out. As the shelves grew lighter, fresh bales had been opened, many gifts being put aside for Christmas trees and festivals, and at last all the Mission things had been unpacked, and between whiles we had refreshed ourselves with dives into the private boxes from home. Little Georgie silently noted the novel incidents, storing them up for future use; for instance, when told to give some message, she remarked "I don't speak English."

The next pressing duty was the "Packet."* Every moment through the day that could be snatched from household or family calls was devoted to quill-driving, and the evening, until quite late. All the associations and friends at home who had worked so well for the Mission, and many of whom has shown such kindly thought for the personal comfort of the Bishop and his family, must be written to separately before the Packet would be made up about the 20th, for after that there would be no

* The Mail.

chance of writing again until February 7th. Picture us, with hearts overflowing with gratitude and with so much to say, and so little time to say it! and back in our minds the continual thought, "when can we get at our own folks' letters?" In spite of the magnificent packing and invoicing of the Missionary Leaves Association, it was impossible always to avoid confusing the different donors, and you will not marvel if, in writing, things have been acknowledged to the wrong people; but you may be quite sure that as each label was read in the store-room, the *mental* thanks went quite straight! As the pressure increased, other calls had to be set aside; everything is to be done "after the Packet," and it may be as well that our minds should then be filled by urgent work, or we should be "verra flat" waiting for these same Indians to take our letters up by the longest route and bring back our longed for home mail, letters that were written to us in England in August! It is this pressure of writing that must be my excuse for the present effort, poor enough from a literary point of view I know, scribbled in the midst of numberless interruptions, but received, I trust, as a hand-clasp from the "Great Silent Land," by you who are strengthening our hands by your earnest prayers to the "All Father," for the Indians and those who are working for their good, and by the activity of your needles. Let me only beg you, "Be not weary in well-doing," and let your work be indeed for the Master's sake and not for any individual missionary; so that whether He sends or removes special workers, still His kingdom may continually be advanced; and one day you will share in his joy when "he that abideth with the stuff" at his Lord's command will be equally rewarded with him that was sent out to battle.

It is with great regret that I close without being able to give you any recent news of the Bishop himself. He left his family, as you probably know, the last day of May, and was by God's good hand upon him able to report his safe arrival, in spite of a dangerous passage at York Fort, July 5, having held services and baptisms at Norway House, Oxford House, as well as by the way once or twice when he came upon wandering Indians. From this he was to go by sea to Churchill to cheer and help Archdeacon Lofthouse, confirming and strengthening the Indians and Esquimaux under his care, and leaving with him Mr. Buckland, who had journeyed up with the Bishop on purpose to be with the Archdeacon as a lay worker this winter, and if possible facilitate his getting a well deserved and imperatively needed holiday next year.

None can realize the anxiety weighing on the wife's heart through these months of suspense, whilst the Bishop is making his way southwards again to York, from thence to Severn, always a trying, often a dangerous and very prolonged voyage, and so on to Albany, which in favorable weather is only 3 or 4 days journey from Moose. Archdeacon Vincent started out with his men about a fortnight ago, hoping to meet the Bishop somewhere on the river and bring him on. Surely we may say "He who has kept will keep," and confidently look for his speedy and safe return to his flock at Moose, his waiting wife and his Babes in the Wood.

*Written by the Babies' Aunt, Sophia Newnham,
For the benefit of the Diocese of Moosonee.*

Sept. 22.—Joyful post-script, and, being a woman's, most important! An Indian rushed in last night to say "Bissip's come!" It did not take long to reach the river-bank, stumbling in the dark through grass and mud, and there, sure enough, his little canoe came to land. He is in splendid health, and tells of God's over-ruling goodness at every step, and help out of every difficulty. So the thanksgivings in Church this morning were indeed heartfelt. So many things have turned out far better than our hopes, may it be that "the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God." You will of course hear from the Bishop's own pen of the "good hand of his God" upon him.

Contributions for work among the Indians in the Diocese of Moosonee, or for the Bishop's new house, will be thankfully received by the Bishop's Commissary.

REV. CANON HENDERSON,

896 Dorchester Street,

Montreal.