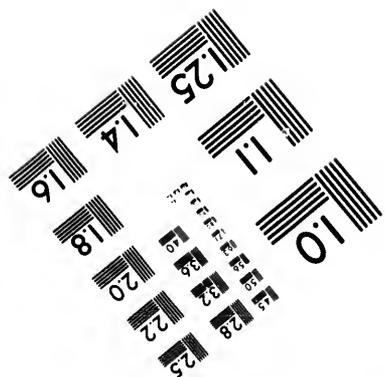
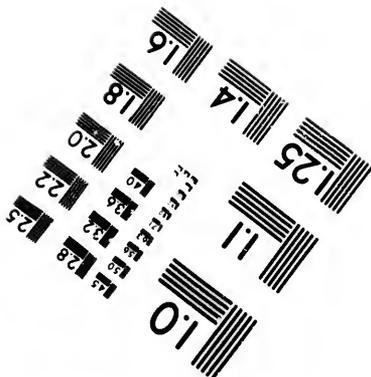
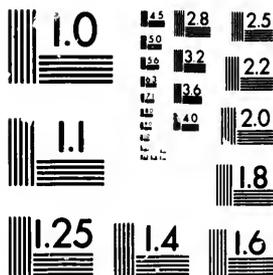


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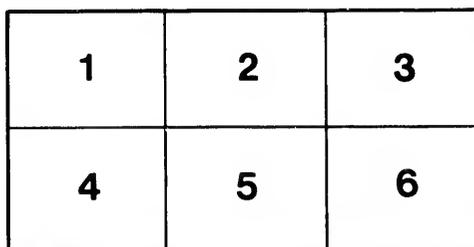
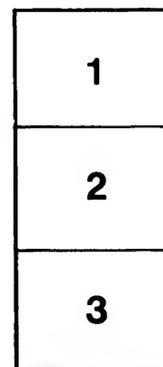
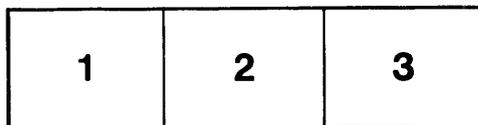
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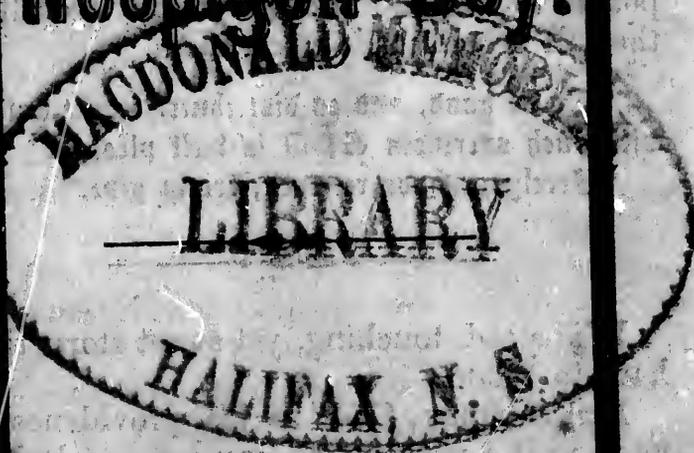
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THE DEATH OF

# DEATH

OF THE

## Neepigon Boy.



HALIFAX, N. S.

Printed at THE CHURCH GUARDIAN OFFICE,  
1880.

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## THE DEATH OF *The Neepigon Boy.*

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THE following touching story speaks for itself. It was first published in THE CHURCH GUARDIAN, and at once attracted much attention and excited much sympathy.

May its publication at this time prove instrumental in moving the hearts of God's people to respond promptly and liberally to the call herein made upon them.

"To do good, and to distribute, forget not; for with such sacrifices GOD is well pleased."

"Freely ye have received, freely give."

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It is a sad, touching, yet sweet story that I have to relate.

Last Summer, God, in his providence, led us to visit a most interesting tribe of Indians, on the shores of Lake Neepigon, about 100 miles North of Lake Superior. These Indians were all pagans, but had been for thirty years waiting for a Missionary of the English Church to visit them. Thirty years before their late chief, Muhnedooshans, had, in company with

other chiefs, paid a visit to Sault St. Marie, to arrange with the great white chief (Sir John Robinson) about the sale of their lands. The great white chief at that time promised to send them an English teacher. And so these poor people had waited on year after year. Muhnedooshans had died a pagan, but his dying exhortation was, that they should still wait on, and that whenever the promised English teacher arrived, they were to receive him, and listen to him, and ask him to establish a Missionary among them.

Led in a remarkable way by God's special providence, we arrived at Chief's Bay, on Lake Neepigon, on the 12th. of August, 1878. The people were for the most part scattered for summer fishing, but we found a few wigwams on the shore, two or three men, and some women and children. Among the men was one named Oshkahpukeda, a son of the old chief, Muhnedooshans.

We read the Bible to, and talked with these simple inquiring people. They received us as their deceased chief had told them to do. They believed that the Great Spirit had sent us to them, and trustingly and confidently they looked to us as though we had been with them many months, instead of only a few hours. When we were preparing to return to our camp for the night, preparatory to an early start the next morning, Oshkah-

pukeda rose and said, "I wish you to take my son with you, to be educated at your school. I love him indeed very much, my spirit clings to him. I shall be very sad when he is gone, but I want him to be taught, and I will try and control my feelings until he returns to me next summer.

And so the next morning, when we started on our homeward journey, Oshkahpukeda's son had become one of our party.

His name was Wingwinenna, and such a bright, intelligent-looking lad, apparently between 13 and 14 years of age. He at once adapted himself cheerfully to his new circumstances, and assisted our boys in their work, and in a few days he knew the alphabet thoroughly, and was spelling and pronouncing short words, though he did not know A from B when we first found him.

Such a dear, good boy he proved, and every one who knew him at the Shingwauk Home loved him,—so gentle in his ways, so quiet and polite in manner, so pleased at any little attention, and so quaint in his efforts to talk English.

The Bishop took a great fancy to him,—became his godfather, and baptized him in his own name, Frederick, on the 27th of October. Although the time was so short since he had had the opportunity of receiving their teaching, he had nevertheless a very fair knowledge of

the Scriptures at the time of his baptism ; and what was more, the Holy Spirit had, we believe, taught him in his heart the meaning of the great Sacrifice made for sin on Calvary, and he had learned to love his Saviour.

But, poor boy, he was soon laid on the bed of sickness. His mother had died of consumption, and that terrible hereditary disease was secretly poisoning his veins, and sapping his life. At Christmas time he was very sick with bronchitis and inflammation of the lungs. From these attacks he never thoroughly recovered. There was a hollowness of the cheek, and an unnatural brightness about the eye, and yet, otherwise, he had become well enough again in himself, and was again occupying his place in school, and pursuing his studies along with the other boys.

Just after his recovery from this illness, he wrote a short note in English to the Bishop, composed and written (with a little assistance in the spelling) by himself in pencil. It was a short little epistle, but in quaint pretty language—"Me not learn much book—all the time sick me," and so forth.

Shortly after this, he was much delighted at receiving a letter from his father. His father, of course, could neither read nor write, but some good friend had written the letter for him by dictation. The poor father spoke of the longing he felt to see his loved

son once more, and how anxiously he was looking forward to the Spring, when he hoped to see him again. The Bishop also kindly wrote to him in reply to his little letter, exhorting him to "try and live as God tells us to do in the Book which he has given to us; and concludes with the earnest hope, that when he died, he might go to that happy place where the Saviour Jesus Christ is preparing to receive all who truly love him." "Good-bye, my dear boy," added the Bishop. "May God bless you, and make you good." This letter Frederick fondly treasured to the day of his death, and often expressed his desire to see the Bishop again.

On Sunday, March 30th, Frederick was at Church in the Sault with the other boys. There was an administration of the Holy Communion after the Service, and the boys who had been confirmed, remained to partake. Frederick remained with them, and innocently came up with the rest to kneel at the rails. I was very sorry to turn him back, but whispered to him a hurried explanation in Indian that only those who were confirmed were about to take the Sacrament, and he quietly withdrew to his seat. Afterwards, I explained it to him, and a day or two subsequently, wrote to the Bishop, asking him to arrange, if possible, to hold Confirmation before the boys dispersed for the holidays, so that Frederick,

among others, might be confirmed. Had I known that he was so soon to die, and that in his last illness he would not be sufficiently conscious to partake intelligently of the sacred feast, I would not have turned the dear boy back. Too often do we, perhaps unwittingly, act the part of the disciples who hindered the little children in their approach to Jesus.

On Sunday evening, April 27th, Frederick came in for a little talk with me after service. He seemed very earnest and spoke very nicely of his trust in the Saviour. I said to him (in Indian) "I want you to get quite well, Frederick, before you go home; perhaps your father will be angry with me if he sees you sick." He looked up in my face to see if I meant what I said, and, seeing me smile, replied: "No; I am sure he will not be angry. He entrusted me to you. My grandfather said, before he died, that we were to wait for an English teacher to come, and that when he came we must listen to him and do what he told us. That is why my father gave me up to you."

The following Sunday, May 4th, the poor boy was suffering greatly; he had been two or three days in bed with what appeared to be rheumatic headache, with impaired vision and peevishness. In the evening he wanted to get up and come down to the service in the school-room, and I allowed him to do so, but

he could not remain through the service. He became giddy and faint and had to return to his bed. The dear boy seemed to have some presentiment that he might not live, and expressed himself on the subject in his quaint, broken English to one of our little children who had taken him up some canned peach and a bun: "All the time my head just like broke. All the time sick me. By and by me, I guess, I'm dead."

A few days after this severe symptoms set in, and the doctor was sent for. On the 10th of May he became delirious and had to be held in bed, and watched constantly both night and day. We never have any difficulty in procuring night-watchers among our Indian boys. Quite a forest of hands generally goes up when the question is put after evening prayers, "Who will stay up and watch to-night?" Two boys stay at a time, and the change is made every three or four hours.

For three days and nights poor Frederick lay in a perfectly unconscious state, taking neither medicine or nourishment. The doctor pronounced it to be organic disease of the brain, the result of a consumptive tendency in his system, and gave but faint hopes of his recovery. Day and night we watched him, and were glad when, on the fourth day, he showed signs of returning consciousness. His brain

never seemed to become quite clear, but he had intervals of intelligence, during which he would often answer questions in a rational manner and attempt to repeat verses of Scripture. The verse, "Suffer little children to come unto me," he said through. He attempted, also, "God so loved the world," but only got as far as "believeth in Him." Two nights before he died he tried to say the Lord's prayer, but his breathing was short and it seemed to be an effort for him. At the words, "as it is in heaven," he stopped, and, after a pause, said, "Can't say "my Father," too much ruu away me."

After a little I asked him, "Who was it that died on the cross for us, Frederick?" He rambled a little for a moment or two, and then, as though the meaning of my question had flashed upon him, spoke out in clear accents, "Jesus Christ!" Very little longer was he to live. We had prayed very earnestly and constantly for his recovery, but it was not God's will. On Saturday evening, after prayers, I perceived that he was sinking, and I told the boys who were watching him that I did not think he could live through the night. He was breathing heavily and quickly, and groaning as though in pain. He would take no notice when spoken to, and could not swallow. An hour or two sped by; it was 10 o'clock, and he was now breathing with great difficulty, gasping frequently for breath,

and his pulse scarcely perceptible. I called to his bedside those boys who had made the Lake Superior trip with me last summer, and we stood watching him. Then, as his end drew near, we knelt and offered up the beautiful commendatory prayer for sick people on the point of departure, and we joined in repeating the Lord's Prayer. As we rose from our knees the dear boy gave one more faint gasp for breath and expired.

How wonderful are the ways of God! How little can we understand His dealings! But the very essence of faith is the trusting in God when we do not understand His dispensations. Yet a little while and all will be made clear. We yield up this dear boy to his Heavenly Father, humbly, willingly, thankfully, persuaded that his soul was washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, and that he is now with Jesus; persuaded, also, that this ordering of God's all-wise providence will tend, in some way we see not yet, to the glory of His name and the furtherance of His cause.

I have written to the father and sent money for him to come on the steamboat. We think that he will be at Red Rock, having come out from the interior to dispose of his furs at the Hudson Bay Company's Post, and to meet his son returning, as he will no doubt expect, for his holidays. In ten days, it is just possible, that the father may be here, and

we are keeping Frederick's body in ice until he arrives.

I should not have omitted to mention that Frederick's godfather, Chief Bulkwajjenere, of Garden River, hearing of his godson's illness, came purposely to visit him, and stayed with us all night. It was very kind of him. Indians are always very kind and helpful to one another in sickness. E. F. WILSON.

The following is a letter from the poor pagan father written to Mr. Wilson when he heard of his son's death.

RED ROCK, May 31st, 1879.

DEAR BROTHER,—I am told that my poor boy is dead. So, our talk is dead too. I cannot send any more of my children to the Home. But I hope you will do what you said you would do, and build us a "teaching wigwam" here, so that the Indian children may learn. After what has happened, I don't think any of the Neepigon Indians will let their children go to the Home. All my brother's children want to learn, if you will put up a small "teaching wigwam" here, and we will help to pay for the land. I do not think I can ever visit my poor boy's grave. I wish you could have sent me his body on the fire boat. I feel very sorry for what has happened. My heart is sore. I do not know what to do. Did not my boy say anything before he died? Surely he said something

about his father; if so, let me know when you write. I do not blame anybody about the death of my boy, but I am happy for the care you have taken of him. I want you to send me an Alphabet, and a small book with words of two or three letters.

I have nothing more to say at present, I am very sick at heart. I hope to see you soon, or to hear from you. Please write all my son's last words, as I would like very much to know them.

I am your friend who loves you,

OSHAHPUKEDA.

P. S.—Tell all the boys, I send them my love. And the boy that he liked best, I shall think of him as my son.

Mr. Wilson expressed publicly through the columns of THE CHURCH GUARDIAN his desire to comply with the chief's request, and erect a small school-house at Lake Neepigon, and provide a teacher, and asked for contributions towards paying for the publication of the account of the boy's death, believing that its general circulation would assist in providing the means for that object. An immediate response was made to this appeal by a gentleman of Halifax, N. S., who offered to provide the money for having it published; while a number of young people of Windsor, N. S., contributed a sufficient sum to pay for mailing it; and it has been Mr. Wilson's absence in England that has alone delayed its publication.

Contributions may be sent direct to the Rev. E. F. Wilson, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario; or to the following local Secretaries: John Beard, Esq., Woodstock, Ont: John Cartwright, Esq., 75 Beverly St. Toronto, Ont: Rev. F. W. Kirkpatrick, Kingston Ont: Mrs. Simpson, 117 Metcalf St., Montreal, Que: Rev. Geo. Hamilton, Quebec: Rev. E. Dowling, Carleton, St. John, N. B: Rev. T. H. Bartlett, Drummondville, Ont: Rev. C. M. Sills, Halifax, N. S.

