

**MANITOULIN; OR, FIVE YEARS
OF CHURCH WORK AMONG
OJIBWAY INDIANS AND
LUMBERMEN, RESIDENT UPON
THAT ISLAND OR IN ITS VICINITY**

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Manitoulin; Or, Five Years of Church Work Among Ojibway Indians and Lumbermen,
Resident upon That Island or in Its Vicinity by H. N. Burden

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H. N. BURDEN

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A JAM OF LOGS (See page 64.)

Burden, H. N.

MANITOULIN ;

OR,

*Five Years of Church Work among Ojibway Indians
and Lumbermen, resident upon that Island or in
its Vicinity.*

BY

H. N. B.

AN ASSISTANT COLLEGE CHAPLAIN AT CAMBRIDGE,

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1895.

THIS LITTLE BOOK IS DEDICATED

TO A NAME

TOO REVERED AND TOO DEAR FOR ME TO ATTEMPT

TO SAY OF IT WHAT I WOULD,

EDWARD,

LORD BISHOP OF ALGOMA.

IN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF MANY BLESSINGS, AND OF HIS

GREAT SYMPATHY, BOTH, WHILE I WAS ONE OF HIS

CLERGY, AND SINCE MY REMOVAL FROM THAT DIOCESE,

TO PATHS OF DUTY IN THIS GREAT UNIVERSITY.

THE AUTHOR.

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P R E F A C E .

"FANCY suggesting that any lake in North America contains an island over one hundred miles long where the ice bridge is in winter the only means of access to the mainland twenty miles off! The atlas shows no such dimensions for any of the few islands lying in Lake Huron."

Such was the reply of an old gentleman, who brought an antiquated atlas with him to prove me mistaken, when I mentioned these facts to stir up his sympathies, and get him to contribute clothing and magazines towards the box I was about to pack, and send to the Bishop of Algoma, for the benefit of dwellers on the great Manitoulin.

"Indeed, but I am speaking the truth," I said, "and if you look at a recent official atlas, you will find the area of Manitoulin Island such as I describe. You will also find innumerable islands scattered throughout the two hundred miles between Saulte Ste Marie in the West, and Parry Sound in the East." In the Georgian Bay alone, Commander Wakefield noted 27,000.

In Spring and Autumn the islanders are cut off from the mainland for weeks at a time, by reason of shifting ice. In summer they travel by boat or canoe, and the steamers of the Great Northern Company call twice a week at points on the islands, and stations on the opposite mainland across the inside channel.

As an example of a winter journey between mainland and island, I quote the experience of a missionary, then in charge of Algoma Mills.

"Mr. G. re-crossed the frozen channel more than twenty miles

"in width, in the teeth of a blinding snowstorm, with the thermometer so low that several lives were lost on the same day, not far from the route he took; while he himself was so crippled by the intense cold, that though he had bread in his wallet, his hands refused their office, unable to raise it to his mouth, and he was compelled to drop it on the snow, and go on his way, famishing with hunger, in hope of reaching his destination at Blind River. This, however, he missed by two or three miles, striking a point to the east, where the only shelter to be found was a deserted fishing shanty. Here he passed the night, without fire, light, or blankets, resuming his journey in the morning, astonishing his friends by his unexpected appearance in their midst. Weary and exhausted as he must have been, he resisted all their entreaties to lie down and get a few hours sleep, contenting himself with a quiet rest till evening, when he held service and once more delivered his Master's message."

I once wrote to the late clergyman of Gore Bay enquiring in his district would be a good locality for emigration. I insert his reply, thinking it may be of general interest and give a peep at the life of the neighbourhood.

"You can form an idea of the want of religious influences in new settlements, when one clergyman (as in this mission) has to work single-handed over some 700 square miles of territory, while, 'beyond the hills' there are people who may be said never to see the face of a clergyman from one year to another. Of course, as these regions become peopled, efforts will be made to supply them with the ministrations of religion. Still, for all the drawbacks inseparable from new settlements, the wonder is that thousands in the overcrowded districts of the old country do not come out here.

"The ordinary settler's house is built of logs, either hewn flat on two sides, or left in the round, and their houses or huts are eighteen by twenty-four feet. The work of this mission is hard, sometimes dangerous, but always encouraging.

"I might mention for instance, how I have been caught on the open ice in "blizzards" (heavy snow-storms) and have had to travel for miles without being able to see ten feet in any direction, and having to trust to the sagacity of my horse to bring me safely through. I could mention being forced to lie on the beach all night without food or shelter, not being able to face the waves in my open boat. I could mention how I travelled on New Year's Eve for twenty-four miles over roads, sometimes covered with ice and water, from two to three feet in depth, for a quarter of a mile at a stretch.

"When I came to open up this mission about four years ago, I found that the people were fast becoming atheists, and all manner of scepticism was to be met with, which was the result of the absence of Church teaching. But things are changed now. The strange notions which the people had adopted have mostly been given up for better things; they have learned to speculate in religion less, and to read their Bibles more; and wherever the Church's standard has been planted there has sprung up religious life and activity, in place of the old spiritual deadness and indifference. Already three churches have been built in this mission, and more will be undertaken before very long.

"Your letter came to hand a few days before Christmas together with the books, cards and mottoes. Their arrival was most opportune, as we were getting up a Sunday School Christmas festival, and were hard pressed for materials. Through the medium of the Christmas tree, the beautiful cards and mottoes have been distributed all through the mission and the recipients appeared greatly delighted. The prettily bound books and most of the testaments were distributed at the same time, the latter going to the more deserving children; and we were enabled through this help to present every Sunday School child with a useful and attractive gift."