

CHAPTER XVII.

CAPACITY OF THE INDIANS FOR RECEIVING INSTRUCTION.

Indians' Desire and Capacity to Receive Instruction—Illustrations—Indian Eloquence, Wit, and Shrewdness.

As "facts are stubborn things," the best method of establishing our position is, to relate facts. Those who read the statement of them will be able to decide, whether the Indian has not the same capacity to learn as the white man. All that is wanting is, the proper means of instruction.

William Wilson, an Indian youth of superior abilities, was sent to Cobourg College, and whilst there, stood at the head of the first-class. He made rapid progress in the classics, and wrote poetry with great ease. On leaving College, he went to New York, where he was seized with small-pox, which terminated fatally.

The following respecting him is taken from the *Christian Guardian*, dated May 23rd, 1838 :—

" INDIAN IMPROVEMENT.

" On our first page will be found an original poem, on 'England and British America.' The author, William Wilson, is an Indian youth, whose educational opportunities have been exceedingly limited, but whose praiseworthy assiduity is as creditable to him and to his too much despised countrymen, as it is gratifying to his friends and instructors. The poem is far from being faultless, but we hazard nothing in saying that it exhibits an incipient genius which deserves cultivation, and which, under due religious influence, may yet be of essential service to a

people who are nobly desirous to emerge from the barbarism and wretchedness in which they have long been enveloped."

ENGLAND AND BRITISH AMERICA.

BABEL ! whose primal empire erst did rise
 In peerless pomp 'neath fair and fervid skies,
 Where now thy lofty tower, whose summit proud
 Attempted heav'n, and pierc'd the ambient cloud ?
 Assyria where ? against whose vices bold
 The prophet's ire in dread denouncement told,—
 Along whose streets betimes his warnings swept,
 And o'er her doom in plaintive accents wept,—
 Till, loudly echoing, flash'd the bolts of heav'n,
 Launch'd by Jehovah's arm in thunder giv'n,
 And dire revenge from giant slumber burst,
 Hurling her smitten fabrics to the dust !
 Where Carthage now ? against whose rival coast
 Triumphant Rome led forth her conquering host,
 Ere warring Scipio bends her prostrate walls,
 And Romans shout exulting as she falls !
 Where do the myriad spires of Egypt gleam
 Along the banks of Nile's extended stream,—
 Rearing aloft her monumental pyre,
 Whose cloudy top would fain to heaven aspire ?
 And where her halls by learned Magi grac'd,
 Whose gifted minds the path of science trac'd ?
 Where too her sceptred kings that proudly shone
 In pomp barbaric on th' empurpled throne,
 Commanding nations far, by stern decree,
 In adoration low to bend the knee ?
 And Greece ! oh where that mighty empire now
 That bade the Perse with trembling homage bow ?
 Bright clime of that immortal bard, whose name
 With deathless hues shall live in brightest fame,
 Who tun'd his hallow'd harp, all wild and free,
 To rapturous strains of heav'nly harmony,—
 Of him whose thunder did the forum shake,
 And made the throne of haughty Philip quake,
 While rude Oppression from his seat was hurl'd
 And Freedom's banner o'er his corse unfurl'd !

Where now her classic field, her sylvan grove,
 Made vocal with the muses' lays of love ?
 Arcadia where, where sacred Science dwelt,
 At whose fair shrine exalted sages knelt ?
 Alas ! the lamp that brightly shone of yore
 On her its light effulgent sheds no more ;
 No more with her doth Genius rear his throne,
 And fondly view a realm from zone to zone :
 For lo ! her sons by Moslem tyrants fall,
 And slavish chains their captive minds enthrall.
 Where is the mighty Alexander now,
 Who fought the world to deck ambition's brow,
 Who dar'd in arms to match all-conquering Jove,
 And boldly spurn the laws of Heaven above ?
 Rolling his chariot fierce to realms afar,
 And with rebellious arms wag'd dastard war ;
 While nations wild with consternation stare,
 And groans of slaughter'd millions fill the air ;
 Until he made, by more than mortal skill,
 A fated world obsequious to his will.
 Th' Eternal City where, imperial Rome,
 Whose standard proudly wav'd o'er realms unknown,
 And through the earth her battling legions bore,
 To glut their madden'd ranks with human gore ?
 Where now those rock-built tow'rs that darkly frown'd
 In mystic awe o'er Tiber's stream profound,
 And rear'd their impious heads in height sublime,
 Scowling defiance 'gainst the blasts of time ?

To this bless'd land I turn from Empires' fall,
 O'er which stern fate has stretch'd oblivion's pall,—
 Have fled like ocean's spray before his nod,
 That dar'd the brunt of his relentless rod.
 Here would the muse kneel at Apollo's shrine,
 In votive strains t' invoke the tuneful Nine,
 Perchance t' imbibe alike th' enlivening fire
 Of him who did the early bards inspire.
 But Britain first behold, that " sea-girt isle,"
 With pow'r and wealth as boundless as the Nile,
 With genius, learning, art, and science bless'd,
 And reason's nobler ray at her behest ;
 Her sons, the first in glory's hallow'd field,
 The last in battle's darker hour to yield,

Behold, in firm recluse from tyrants' shock,
 Around the standard of their country flock,—
 A formidable front to despots show,
 While to the field they dare the angry foe :
 Contentment, peace, and good their steps attend,
 Their sacred hearths from ruthless vice defend ;
 To them each genial year its charms renews,
 The fruitful earth their thousand wants pursues ;
 For them wing'd commerce wafts from distant climes
 The treasures of their land and richest mines ;
 Harmonious laws their kindred hearts unite,
 And wisdom's ways their nobler thoughts delight.
 Behold her red-cross flag unfurling far,
 Victorious Wellington directs her car ;
 Triumphant too at Waterloo he rode,
 Beneath its wheels the vain tricolor trode,—
 Inglorious bade the proud usurper bow,
 And own his conqu'ring arm in suppliance low.
 Behold, 'midst yonder deep and princely hall,
 Where godlike Justice sits in awful pall,
 Where Freedom's matchless champions mutual join
 To shield the laws, and for their rights combine,
 Immortal Pitt with conscious boldness rise ;
 Destructive lightning flashes from his eyes ;
 Now threat'ning vengeance sits upon his brow,
 His glowing cheeks bespeak his fervour now ;
 Through all his frame th' inspiring god is seen,
 And all his pow'rs with mingled terror gleam.
 Hark ! through the long-drawn aisle his voice resounds,
 And dreadly now re-echo back the sounds ;
 Like when th' Olympian sire in thunder pours
 His vengeful wrath, and arrowy tempests showers :
 On schemes corrupt he wreaks his fell desire,
 And fiercely vents his all-devouring ire,
 While round the pompous heads of tyrant kings
 Aloud his dread denunciation rings,—
 In thunder loud his vengeance flings retort,
 While heaven and earth revere the dread report.
 Before his voice now brazen discord shrinks,
 Now lordly guilt in meek submission sinks ;
 Insatiate ease now startles from his couch,
 In frantic terror factious minions crouch :

The sable sons of Afric gladly hear
 His welcome voice, and lend a list'ning ear ;
 He bids the captive slave from bondage flee—
 He fondly sets the iron-bound pris'ner free.
 Amid the crowd of patriots, heroes, view,
 That grace proud Albion's clime with bright halo,
 The train of star-eyed Science' devotees,
 Who to her altar bow with suppliant knees.
 On learning's pinions proud they take their way,
 And through the maze of latent myst'ries stray ;
 Far as imagination's piercing ken
 With philosophic eye their flight they wend ;
 Stay with firm hand the planets in their course,
 Direct the pathless comet, trace its source.
 Chief to her bards is due the meed of praise,
 Though feebly giv'n in low discordant lays :
 High on Parnassus' cliffs they glorious stand,
 They strike the lyre with more than mortal hand ;
 Melodious sounds retreat on heav'nly wings,
 As sweet the muse in pensive sorrow sings,
 And o'er romantic vales and distant plains
 In fitful echoes die the mystic strains.
 But first enroll'd on list of genius' throng,
 Who scal'd the proudest heights of lofty song,
 With dazzling rays, as shines the morning star,
 Her Milton stands on fame's dread mount afar,
 And gently beckons the aspiring muse,
 As o'er his soul his sacred beams diffuse.

The clime of Canada in fondness gleams,
 And western wilds awake more pleasing themes :
 From where the eagle gluts his hungry beak
 On Labrador's far coast of barren peak,
 To where the Rocky Mountains sternly rise,
 O'erlook the land, and half invade the skies,
 Its fair and undulating soil extends,
 And to the eye its bright enchantment lends.
 Here Nature's God in matchless splendour rears
 His living fane, and in wild pomp appears.
 Here placid lakes like molten silver beam,
 The full-orb'd sun reflects the glassy stream,—

Alluvial mountains lift their verdant heads,
 And on the prairies prone their influence spreads.
 Here fertile vales their rich luxuriance show,
 Where nature's works in loveliest beauty glow ;
 From whose retreats, or sounds the woodman's hymn,
 Far from the bustling throng of madd'ning din,
 Or 'mid their haunts aërial spirits stray,
 While to the breeze they chaunt their roundelay.
 Here cataracts vast the echoing forests wake,
 And all the ground with quick vibrations shake ;
 Where dread Niagara in thunder roars,
 As o'er the rocky steep his deluge pours,—
 Along whose banks the lonely Indian wound,
 And in the scene his kindred spirit found.
 Here boundless plains in fragrant verdure stretch,
 Bright landscapes there invite the artist's sketch ;
 Here forests dark their stately branches wave,
 And rivers there in solemn silence lave.
 But though this land with ev'ry good is crown'd,
 And choicest gifts on ev'ry hand surround,—
 Though Nature here has wrought her grandest plan,
 Yet does the mind deplore the fate of man.
 Those lordly tribes that lin'd these mighty lakes
 Have fled, and disappear'd like wintry flakes.
 Lo ! on the mountain-tops their fires are out,
 In blithesome vales all silent is their shout ;
 A solemn voice is heard from ev'ry shore,
 That now the Indian nations are no more,—
 A remnant scarce remain to tell their wrongs,
 But soon will fade to live in poets' songs.

Hail to thee, Canada ! the brightest gem
 That decks Victoria's brilliant diadem ;
 Thine is the happy seat, the blissful clime
 Where art and nature form one vast sublime ;
 Where temp'rate skies effuse their golden rays,
 The fertile land the labourer's toil repays ;
 Plenty and peace at ev'ry footstep smile,
 And sunny scenes to gentler thoughts beguile.
 A voice is heard upon thy mighty floods,
 A voice resounds throughout thy trackless woods,—
 Heard in the plaintive rill and cataract's roar,
 Heard in the whispering breeze on ev'ry shore :

'Tis Freedom's voice ; 'tis on thy rivers roll'd,
 That in their course the sacred theme have told,
 And bid the dwellers on the mountains swell
 The choral strain, and wake the joyful knell, —
 Till all mankind shall hear the gladd'ning sound,
 Rouse from the trammel yoke of sleep profound,
 And o'er the earth Britannia's banner wave,
 Each foeman crush'd—unshackled ev'ry slave.

THE BIRCH BARK ALPHABET.

About the year 1827 I made a missionary tour to Lake Simcoe, Mahjedushk, Sahgeeng, St. Clair, and Muncey Town. At Sahgeeng the Indians received the Gospel very gladly. On departing, we left one of our party, (Keche-jeemon,) to labour among them. He continued to tell them all he knew about the Christian religion. One day some of the young people inquired if he could not teach them to read in the white man's book. Keche-jeemon told them he could not read himself; all he knew was a, b, c. They then said, "Teach us a, b, c." The next difficulty was, he had no book containing the alphabet. At length, he thought of making the letters on *birch bark*; so he went into the woods, got the bark, and then with charcoal formed the letters a, b, c. When the missionary went to establish the mission in that region, he found all the young people knew the a, b, c.

An Indian lad, named Joseph Quenchenau, belonging to the Credit tribe, showed great love for his books, and was very punctual and attentive at school. But best of all, he loved his Saviour, and regularly, night and morning, offered up his private prayer to God. In the twelfth year of his age he was taken ill, when he committed himself into the hands of his Maker, saying he was not afraid to die, for he knew God would take him to heaven. After he

was dead, his friends placed all his books, consisting of his Bible, Indian hymn-book, and spelling-book, on the top of his coffin, because he had loved them so much. I was very sorry to lose such a promising boy from our little society ; but God saw best to take him, and therefore we must bow to His sovereign will.

THE MORMON BOOK AND AN INDIAN.

Soon after the conversion of the Indians on the Bay of Quinty, as a converted Indian was passing through the white settlement, he heard preaching in a school-house, and, being anxious to learn more about the words of the Great Spirit, he turned in, and took his seat near the door. He listened ; but, instead of hearing about the good old Bible, the preacher was extolling another book he called the Mormon Bible, which he said was much better and plainer than the old one. He then entered into an explanation as to its origin, telling how Joe Smith had dug it up out of the ground, and was inspired to translate it. When the preacher had finished his discourse, he gave permission for any of the congregation to say what they thought of the things they had heard. All sat still, and, as no white man was found to speak for the good old Bible, the Indian at length rose up and said, " May Indian speak ? " The Mormon preacher replied, " Yes, Indian may speak. " The Indian then said, " A great many winters ago, the Great Spirit gave his good book Bible to the white man, over the great waters. He took it, and read it, and it make his heart all over very glad. By-and-bye, white man come over to this country, and brought the good book with him. He gave it to poor Indian. He hear it, and understand it, and it make his heart very glad too. But when the Great Spirit gave his good book to white man, the evil spirit

Muhje-munedoo try to make one too, and he try to make it like the one the Good Spirit made, but he could not; and then he got so ashamed of it, he go into the woods, dig a hole in the ground, and then he hide his book. After lying there many winters, Joe Smith go and dig it up. This is the book this preacher has been talking about. I hold fast on the good old Bible, which has made my heart so happy. I have nothing to do with the devil's book."

CAPTAIN JOHN AND HIS BIBLE.

Captain John, or Wageezhegome, was one of the most intelligent chiefs of the Credit tribe. In his early days he went for a short time to school, and learnt to read a little in English; but afterwards, mingling in Indian life, he soon forgot all he had learnt at school. Some time before his conversion Mrs. Small, of Toronto, made him a present of a Bible, which he kept for her sake. Soon after the work of God commenced on the Grand River, Captain John went up there, where he was made a partaker of the grace of God. He no sooner found the Lord than he began to learn to read the Bible the lady had given him, and by perseverance was soon able to understand its contents, so as to become a teacher of righteousness to his people. He made one or two visits to the Credit at his own expense, for the express purpose of inviting his people up to the Grand River, to hear for themselves the wonderful things of God; and I am happy to state that his labours were not in vain. After adorning the Gospel of our Saviour a few years, he died, praising God, and exhorting his people to cleave to Him with all their hearts.

In John Sunday we have a remarkable instance of the capability of an Indian to receive instruction. John was

about thirty years old when he was converted from the depths of Paganism to the knowledge of the true God. In a letter lately received from him he writes :—"It took me only half an hour to learn the alphabet, and it was not many months after I began to read a little. The first word that I spelled was b, a, g, bag, and by-and-bye I knew the word G, o, d, and I thought I learned a great thing then, and at last I began to read, but when I began to write it was very difficult to me. When I try to make a straight mark I make a mink,* and after a while I began to write."

The late Bishop Hedding mentions the following fact as coming under his own observation when on a visit to the River Credit Mission, C.W., in 1827 :—"I saw among these nations an Indian, named John Crane, who could read quite well, especially in the New Testament. He said, and others confirmed it, that he did not know his letters. I found, on inquiry, that he had been so anxious to learn to read that he carried a New Testament with him constantly, and asked every boy or girl he met with what was the name of any particular word he would point out. Thus he learned the word by its shape, just as a child learns the name of a chair, a spoon, or a hat, before it learns its letters."

Extract of a Letter to PETER JONES, from an Indian Youth desiring more instruction.

"I am wishing to come to your school, Muncey Town, if possible. I have been to school here, Wesleyan Seminary, Albion, but my time will be out next spring. My people are very poor, and have not the means to assist me. I belong to the Chippewa tribe. Half of us are in

* Mink was the *toodaim*, or tribe, to which he belonged, the representation of which he made as a signature.

Canada, and the remainder, to whom I belong, are in Michigan. I wish to know if you could assist me to come to school, as it would enable me to instruct our ignorant brethren. I wish to have a little more instruction in the English language. I know you can assist me anywhere to go in your schools. I would endeavour to make it a lasting benefit to our poor people, by teaching them the way of life. Please send an answer.

“Yours truly,

“JOSEPH RUCKY,

“*Alias* O-SHE-NAH-WA-GE-SHIEK.”

“*January 8th, 1852.*

“To Rev. PETER JONES.”

*Extract of a Letter from the Rev. MATTHEW RICHEY, M.A.,
dated March 20th, 1845.*

“Our missionary meeting at Hamilton took place on Wednesday evening, the 29th. John Sunday was particularly happy in his address at this meeting, and, towards the close, thrilled and astonished all present by the ingenuity and power of his appeals. I wish I were able to present you with a correct report of his entire speech. Connecting with the perusal of it your vivid recollection of his mental idiosyncrasy,—never so fully developed as when he becomes animated on a missionary platform,—I am sure you would be delighted above measure. His closing words I can give you with substantial—I think I may say, with verbal—accuracy; and they are too good to be suppressed. ‘There is a gentleman,’ said Shawandais,—‘There is a gentleman, I suppose, now in this house; he is a very *fine* gentleman, but he is very *modest*. He does not like to show himself. I do not know how long it is now since I saw him, he comes out so little. I very much afraid he sleeps a great

deal of his time, when he ought to be going about doing good. His name is *Mr. Gold*. Mr. Gold, are you here to-night? or are you sleeping in your iron chest? Come out, Mr. Gold! Come out, and help us to do this great work, to preach the gospel to every creature! Ah, Mr. Gold, you ought to be ashamed of yourself, to sleep so much in your iron chest! Look at your white brother, *Mr. Silver*. He does a great deal of good in the world while you are sleeping. Come out, Mr. Gold! Look, too, at your *little brown brother, Master Copper*. *He everywhere!* Your little brother running about all the time, doing all *he* can. Why don't you come? *Come out, Mr. Gold!* Well, if you *won't* come out, and give us *yourself*, send us your shirt, that is, a *Bank Note*.'"

At a meeting of the Canada Conference Missionary Society, at which Bishop Hedding was present, one of the speakers narrated the following incidents, with a view to show the eagerness with which the natives receive instruction:—

“An Indian chief, residing in the neighbourhood of Lake Simcoe, came to solicit missionary aid. After unfolding their needy state, he observed that they did not wish the labours of the missionary for nothing. They would hunt deer, beaver, &c., and each one would lay aside some skins, and appropriate the avails of them to the support of the mission. As a demonstration of this generous disposition, and of their ardent desire to have their children instructed, the women stripped themselves of their nose and ear jewels, brooches, and breastplates, which had been given them by Government, and sent them to the missionary to purchase books for the school; and these were exhibited on the occasion, as an evidence of their devotion to this sacred cause.”

We give only another proof of their general mental capacity, in their talent for music in particular. A book of Indian melodies, by Thomas Commuck, a Narragansett Indian, was published in New York, in 1845. The tunes in this little book are named after noted Indian chiefs, Indian names of places, &c., &c. The author remarks: "This has been done as a tribute of respect to the memory of some tribes who are now nearly, if not quite, extinct; also as a mark of courtesy to some with whom he is acquainted." The book contains 120 new tunes.

The Rev. G. Cole, who is regarded as naturally and scientifically a good judge, thus speaks of it:—"In the first strain of the first tune there is something worthy of Handel, and in the whole there is something equal to anything we ever saw in the productions of Haydn. In the next, there is something strikingly original. The third, as sweet as the gentle flowings of Kedron. The fourth, rather tame, but suited to a solemn train of thought. The fifth is bold, rich, and joyous. The sixth is in the style of Leach's 'Watchman, S.M.,' but greatly superior. The hearer, when he hears a good tune, thinks that he could make as good an one himself. We have tried this principle with regard to the tunes before us several times, and in every case our auditor has shown, by unequivocal signs, that he felt as if he could do the like himself, if he only had the ability."

SPECIMENS OF INDIAN ELOQUENCE, WIT, AND SHREWDNESS.

At the negotiation for peace, in 1774, after the Battle of the Kanhawa, the great "Mingo chief," Logan, refused to appear at the council. He was in favour of peace, but his proud spirit scorned to ask for it; and he remained in his cabin, brooding in melancholy silence over his own wrongs.

Of so much importance was his name considered by Lord Dunmore, that a special messenger was despatched to ascertain whether he would accede to the articles of peace. This conference took place in a solitary wood, and, at its close, he charged him with the celebrated speech to Lord Dunmore, which has become familiar wherever the English language is spoken.*

“I appeal to any white man to say if he ever entered Logan’s cabin hungry, and he gave him not meat; if ever he came cold and naked, and he clothed him not. During the course of the last long and bloody war Logan remained idle in his cabin, an advocate for peace. Such was my love for the whites, that my countrymen pointed, as they passed, and said, ‘Logan is the friend of the white man.’ I had even thought to have lived with you, but for the injuries of one man. Colonel Cresass, the last spring, in cold blood and unprovoked, murdered all the relations of Logan, not even sparing my women and children. There runs not a drop of my blood in the veins of any living creature. This called on me for vengeance. I have sought it; I have killed many; I have fully glutted my vengeance. For my country, I rejoice at the beams of peace; but do not harbour the thought that mine is the joy of fear. Logan never felt fear. He will not turn on his heel to save his life. Who is there to mourn for Logan? Not one!”

WIT AND SHREWDNESS.

It is related that two chiefs came from the far West to the city of Washington, on business with the government. While they were there, a gentleman invited them to dinner. They went,—and being seated for the first time at a white man’s table, they began to eat such things as were set before

* Life of Brant.

them, and to help themselves to such as were within their reach. One of them seeing some yellow-looking stuff (mustard,) took a spoonful, swallowing the whole. Tears soon ran down his cheeks. His brother chief, seeing him weep, said, "Oh! my brother, why do you weep?" The other replied, "I am thinking about my son who was killed in such a battle!" Presently the other chief took a spoonful of the same stuff, which caused his eyes to weep as did his brother's; who in return asked him, "Why do you cry?" Upon which he replied, "Oh! I weep to think you were not killed when your son was."

Once the Rev. W. Case took John Sunday with him to visit the United States, for the purpose of raising funds for the Canadian Missions. John one day received an invitation to dine with a minister. At table this good man was talking to John about religion, feeling truly thankful to see a converted Indian. Among other eatables before him was a dish of finely-scraped horseradish: John, not knowing what it was, and supposing it might be something very sweet, took a spoonful of it into his mouth; presently tears came into his eyes; the minister observing them, and supposing John was weeping for joy at what was the topic of discourse, began to shout, "Glory! glory! glory!" John, as soon as he could, raised his hand, and pointing to the dish of horse-radish, said, "O, it is that,—it is that!"

From this anecdote we may see that tears are not always to be depended upon; and also the difference between a pagan and a Christian Indian's veracity.

A hunting Indian one day called at a farm-house for some food. The good woman of the house began asking him all sorts of questions. At length she pointed to a

shaking aspen tree, and asked the Indian, "What do you call that?" He replied, "Me call it woman's tongue." "Why do you call it woman's tongue?" was the next question. The Indian then said, "You see those leaves always shaking, never stand still; so me call it woman's tongue."

An Indian and a white man agreed to hunt in partnership. At the end of three days they were to divide equally what they had killed. The white man killed a *buzzard*, and the Indian a *turkey*. The white man then said, "It would be a pity to cut the birds in two, therefore you may take the buzzard and I will take the turkey; or else I will take the turkey and you may take the buzzard." The Indian replied, "You say white man take turkey twice, you no say Indian take turkey once."

In J. Long's travels the following story is related:—"An old American savage, being at an inn at New York, met with a gentleman who gave him some liquor, and, being rather lively, boasted he could read and write English. The gentleman willing to indulge him in displaying his knowledge, begged leave to propose a question, to which the old man consented. He was then asked who was the first circumcised?—the Indian immediately replied, 'Father Abraham'—and directly asked the gentleman who was the first Quaker? He said it was very uncertain,—that people differed in their sentiments exceedingly. The Indian perceiving the gentleman unable to solve the question, put his fingers into his mouth, to express his surprise, and looking steadfastly, told him that Mordecai was the first Quaker, for he would not pull off his hat to Haman."

CHAPTER XX.

PRESENT STATE AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF THE NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS.

THE concluding chapter of this volume was to have embraced the following subjects:—"The present state and future prospects of the North American Indians."

As the author ceased from his labours before the commencement of this chapter, it is deemed sufficient to insert his suggestions on the subject, expressing as they do his unaltered opinions up to the day of his death. The queries, as will be seen, are numerous, and embrace a wide field. The answers of the author, having all the authority of a life of labour and observation, cannot fail to interest.

Answers to the Queries proposed by the Commissioners appointed to enquire into Indian Affairs in this province.

Query No. 1.—How long have you had an acquaintance with any body of Indians?

Answer No. 1.—Being an Indian on my mother's side, I am well acquainted with the habits, customs, and manners of the Chippeway nation of Indians to whom I belong. The tribe or clan with whom I have been brought up is called *Messissauga*, which signifies the eagle tribe, their *ensign* or *toodaim* being that of the eagle. I also lived for several years among the Mohawk Indians on the Grand River, by whom I was adopted. Since my entering upon the work of a missionary, I have travelled very extensively among all the Indian tribes in this country, and am therefore well acquainted with their former

and present state; but, as I belong to the River Credit Indians, I intend to confine my remarks principally to them.

Query No. 2.—What has been their improvement during that time in their moral and religious character, and in habits of industry?

Answer No. 2.—Previous to the year 1823, at which time I was converted to Christianity, the Chippeway and indeed all the tribes were in a most degraded state; they were pagans, idolaters, superstitious, drunken, filthy, and indolent; they wandered about from place, living in wigwams, and subsisted by hunting and fishing. Since their conversion, paganism, idolatry, and superstition, have been removed, and the true God acknowledged and worshipped. The Christians are sober, and comparatively clean and industrious; they have formed themselves into settlements, where they have places of worship and schools, and cultivate the earth.

Query No. 3.—Do you find them improved in their mode of agriculture to any extent, since you first became acquainted with them?

Answer No. 3.—Many of them have made considerable progress in farming, but not to the extent they would have done if they had been settled on their own farm lots. The Credit Indians live in a village, and some of them have necessarily to go a mile or two to their farms, which has been a great hindrance to their improvement. Before their conversion very few of them raised even Indian corn, but now many of them grow wheat, oats, peas, Indian corn, potatoes, and other vegetables, several cut hay and have small orchards. I find the Indians at Muncey Town far behind their brethren at the Credit in agricultural industry.

Query No. 4.—What progress have they made in Christianity?

Answer No. 4.—Considerable; many of them can repeat the Lord's prayer, the ten commandments, and the Apostle's creed. They also understand the leading articles of our holy religion. I have translated the Book of Genesis, the gospels of Matthew and John, with other portions of Scripture, which they have now in their possession. They have made some proficiency in singing, are tolerably well acquainted with the rules of sacred harmony, and have a hymn-book translated into their own language, which is in constant use.

Query No. 5.—Since their conversion to Christianity are their moral habits improved? What effect has it had upon their social habits?

Answer No. 5.—Christianity has done much to improve their moral, social, and domestic habits. Previous to their conversion the women were considered as mere slaves; the drudgery and hard work was done by them; now the men treat their wives as equals, bearing the heavy burdens themselves, while the women attend to the children and household concerns.

Query No. 6.—Do they appear sensible of any improvement in their condition, and desirous of advancing?

Answer No. 6.—Very much so, and feel grateful to those who instruct them. They are still desirous of advancing in knowledge, seeing their white neighbours enjoy many comforts and privileges which they do not possess.

Query No. 7.—Are any of the Indians still heathens? What efforts have been made to convert them? And what obstacles have prevented their conversion?

Answer No. 7.—There are no heathens at the Credit, Alnwick, Rice Lake, Mud Lake, Snake Island, Balsom

Lake, narrows of Lake Simcoe, Cold Water, St. Clair, and Moravian Town; but there are a number at Muncey Town, some at Sahgeeng, Big Bay, and the Grand River. I believe all the Indians at Walpool Island are pagans.* There are a few among the Oneidas settled on the Thames at Muncey, and a number of Pattawatimees wandering about in these western parts who are in a most deplorable state of poverty and degradation. Efforts have been made to introduce Christianity to most of the pagans by missionaries of various denominations, but principally by native teachers. The obstacles to their conversion arise from their strong partiality to the ways of their forefathers, and their prejudices to the white man's religion. I am happy to state that the Wesleyan Missionaries, aided by native teachers, have never yet failed to introduce Christianity among a body of Indians.

Query No. 8.—What, in your opinion, is the best mode of promoting their religious improvement?

Answer No. 8.—To combine manual labour with religious instruction; to educate some of the Indian youths with a view to their becoming missionaries and school teachers, as it is a well known fact that the good already effected has been principally through the labours of native missionaries.

Query No. 9.—Do the children in the Indian schools shew any aptitude in acquiring knowledge?

Answer No. 9.—Considering they are taught in a strange language, they show as much aptitude as white children.

Query No. 10.—What, in your opinion, is the best mode of promoting the moral, intellectual, and social improvement of the Indians?

Answer No. 10.—The establishment of well-regulated schools of industry, and the congregating of the several

* This island is now under Christian instruction.

scattered tribes into three or four settlements, which would be a great saving of expense to the Government and to missionary societies, at the same time it would afford greater facilities for their instruction in everything calculated to advance their general improvement.

Query No. 11.—Can you offer any suggestions on the expediency and best means of establishing schools of industry for the Indian youth, and the best system of instruction to be adopted in them?

Answer No. 11.—I would respectfully refer the commissioners to my letter on this subject, addressed to them, dated November 21st, 1842.* In addition to what is there stated, I am happy to add that most of the Indian youths who have been educated at the academies have become respectable, and are now usefully employed in instructing their countrymen.

Query No. 12.—Do the Indians show any aptness for mechanical arts? And if so, to what arts?

Answer No. 12.—I know several Indians who have become pretty good mechanics with little or no instruction. At the Credit Mission there are two or three carpenters and a shoemaker. At Muncey we have one blacksmith, and some carpenters and tailors. By a little more instruction they would soon become good workmen in any mechanical art. The only drawback which I have observed is a want of steady application to their respective trades.

Query No. 13.—Is the health of the Indians generally good, or otherwise, as contrasted with the white population in their neighbourhood?

Answer No. 13.—From observation I am led to conclude that in general they are not as healthy as the white population. I apprehend this arises from their former mode of

* See Appendix O.

living, when they were frequently exposed to excessive fatigue and fasting, to carrying heavy burdens, drunkenness, and injuries inflicted on each other when in this state. These things have laid the foundation of many pulmonary complaints from which the present generation are suffering.

Query No. 14.—Do you find the Indians on the increase or decrease in numbers, irrespectively of migration? If the latter, what, in your opinion, is the cause?

Answer No. 14.—Previously to their conversion to Christianity they were rapidly decreasing. Before the white man came to this country the old Indians say that their forefathers lived long and reared large families, and that their diseases were few in number. In my opinion the principal causes of their decrease have been the introduction of contagious diseases, which hurried thousands off the stage of action; their excessive fondness for the *fire-waters*, and want of proper care and food for the children and mothers. I am happy however to state that this mortality has been greatly checked since they have abandoned their former mode of life.

I have kept a register of the number of births and deaths of the Credit Indians for several years past. After their conversion they remained stationary for some years; but, latterly, there has been a small increase from actual births. I have also observed, in other tribes, that the longer they have enjoyed the blessings of civilisation, the more healthy they have become, and the larger families they have reared.

Query No. 15.—Is there in your opinion any means of checking the excessive mortality among the Indians, if such prevails?

Answer No. 15.—In my opinion the best means is to promote industry and regular habits amongst them, and to have

a good medical man stationed at or near each Indian settlement. I have known many of them suffer much, and die for the want of medical aid. It is also my opinion that intermarriages with other tribes of people would tend greatly to improve their health. Many of the small tribes are degenerating on account of their having continued for ages to marry into the same body of Indians. Hence the necessity of concentrating the scattered tribes.

Query No. 16.—Do the Indian men or women frequently intermarry with the whites?

Answer No. 16.—When this country was first visited by the whites it was a common practice for white men to take Indian wives, but at present it seldom occurs. As far as my knowledge extends, there are only three or four white men married to Indian women, and about the same number of Indian men married to white women.

Query No. 17.—Is there any marked difference in the habits and general conduct between the half-breeds and the native Indians? If so, state it.

Answer No. 17.—I think there is. The half-breeds are in general more inclined to social and domestic habits. I have always found them more ready to embrace Christianity and civilization than the pure Indian, who, in his untutored state, looks upon manual labour as far too degrading to engage his attention.

Query No. 18.—In cases where intermarriages with the whites have taken place, do you find the condition of the children of the marriage improved?

Answer No. 18.—I think they are, especially as regards their health and constitution.

Query No. 19.—Do the Indian women frequently live with white men, without being married?

Answer No. 19.—I know of no instances in all the tribes with which I am acquainted.

Query No. 20.—Does the birth of illegitimate children among the unmarried women occur frequently? And in what light is the circumstance viewed by the Indians?

Answer No. 20.—Such occurrences are not so frequent as when the Indians were in their drunken state; and when they do occur it is regarded as a great sin, and the mother loses her reputation as a virtuous woman.

Query No. 21.—Do any of the Indians enjoy all, or any, of the civil and political rights possessed by other subjects of Her Majesty?

Answer No. 21.—Not any to my knowledge; except the protection of law which I believe every alien enjoys who may visit or reside in any part of her Majesty's dominions. I am fully persuaded that, in order to improve the condition of the Indians, all the civil and political rights of British subjects ought to be extended to them so soon as they are capable of understanding and exercising such rights.

Query No. 22.—Are there any instances of Indians possessing such rights, besides those of the children of educated white men married to Indian women?

Answer No. 22.—I know of none.

Query No. 23.—In your opinion have the Indians the knowledge and ability to exercise any of those rights?

Answer No. 23.—In my opinion, some of the Credit Indians, and a few at other settlements, are so far advanced in knowledge as to be able to exercise some of those rights, such as voting for Members of Parliament, township officers, &c., and to sit as jurors.

Query No. 24.—Can you offer any suggestions for the improvement of the condition of the Indians?—For the

application of their presents, the expenditure of their annuities, and the proceeds of the sales of their lands?

Answer No. 24.—I would most respectfully suggest—

1st.—The importance of establishing schools of industry as soon as possible, that there may be no further delay in bringing forward the present rising generation.

2nd.—In order to promote industry among the Indians, agricultural societies ought to be formed at each settlement, and rewards offered to such as might excel in any branch of farming. This would excite a spirit of emulation, and be productive of good results.

3rd.—In forming an Indian settlement, I consider that each family ought to be located on his own farm lot, containing 50 or 100 acres of land, with the boundaries of each lot marked out and established.

4th.—I am of opinion that it would have a beneficial tendency were titles given to the Indians by the Government, securing their reserved lands to them and their posterity for ever. In offering these suggestions I do not mean to say that it would be prudent to confer titles individually on the Indians, but on the whole tribe. At present they hold no written documents from Government, and they frequently express fears that they will, at some future period, lose their lands. This fear acts as a check upon their industry and enterprise. In suggesting the impropriety of giving individual titles, I consider at the same time it would be well to hold out the promise to the sober and industrious, that when they shall have attained to a good knowledge of the value of property, and have established a good character, they shall have titles given them.

5th.—The power of the chiefs is very different from what it was in former times, when their advice was listened to, and their commands implicitly obeyed. Immoral acts were

then punished, and the offenders submitted without a murmur. But I am sorry to say, at present, many of the young people ridicule the attempts of the chiefs to suppress vice. I would humbly suggest that the Legislature, in its wisdom, take this subject into consideration, and pass an Act incorporating the chiefs to act as councillors, and the Superintendents of the Indian department as wardens. Bye-laws could be passed for the regulation and improvement of the several communities of Indians, such as the enactment of a moral code of laws, performance of statute labour, the regulation of fences, &c., &c.

6th.—I think it very desirable that something should be done for the Pottawatimees who wander about in these parts. They are in a state of great poverty and degradation, and an annoyance to the white inhabitants wherever they go. They have no lands in this province, having recently come over from the United States. I would, therefore, suggest the propriety of locating them, and thus bring them under the influence of civilization and Christianity.

7th.—Feeling a deep interest for the welfare of the Muncey Indians residing at Muncey Town, I beg to call the attention of the Commissioners to their state. They are an interesting people, strongly attached to the British Government; and during the last American war rendered essential service in the defence of this province. If the Government could do something in the way of assisting them in their farming, it would afford great satisfaction, and be the means of facilitating their civilization. They receive no annuity from Government, and consequently have no means at their command to help forward their improvements.

8th.—With regard to their presents, I would respectfully

suggest the propriety of issuing them at their respective settlements. This would prevent some of the tribes being obliged to leave home, very often to the great damage of their crops, in order to travel to a distant post to receive the Queen's bounty.

9th.—It is my opinion that the annuities payable to the Indians for lands ceded to the Crown ought to be applied in promoting agriculture and education among them.

10th.—The proceeds of the sales of their lands ought to be invested in good securities, and the interest paid annually, and applied to such purposes as may improve their condition.

11th.—I would suggest the propriety of rendering annually detailed accounts of the receipts and expenditures of the annuities, and the proceeds of the sales of their lands, and that the same be laid before the Indians in council for their satisfaction and information.

All which is respectfully submitted.

(Signed)

PETER JONES,

Missionary and Indian Chief.

*Muncey Mission House,
Feb. 6th, 1843.*