

"Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me."

CHAPTER XXI.

MEDICAL WORK.

IN the preceding chapter, by recounting many cases of sickness and accident, we showed the urgent need of Medical Missionary work on this Coast.

In the winter of 1887-1888, three students were just completing their medical courses at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario. These devoted, young men, W. J. Hall, O. L. Kilborn and A. E. Bolton, were ready to undertake Missionary work.

Hall went to New York to work in the slums and later went to Korea, where after a few years of service he died.

Bolton, who had been strongly influenced by the visit of the early leaders of the Student Volunteer Movement, during the sessions of 1886-1887, went to pursue further studies in New York. While there he wrote to Dr. Sutherland, the General Secretary of the Missionary Society, asking whether there was an opening for Medical Mission work under the Methodist Church of Canada, as he preferred to work under his own denomination. The reply was to the effect that the Church had no funds for such a purpose. This constant reply of want of funds was not only heart-breaking to Missionaries, who had to listen to many pathetic appeals, but had doubtless the effect of retarding the progress of the great general work. Does the responsibility rest upon the Church in this matter? Dr. Bolton soon after returned from New York and commenced practice at Portland, Ontario.

Dr. Kilborn was still disengaged when I arrived in Ontario. I met him at Kingston, and after discovering his desire to enter upon a Missionary career, suggested to him that he was needed in British Columbia. He thought British Columbia was not his proper field of work; but mentioned Dr. Hall and Dr. Bolton as perhaps available, with the result that we opened negotiations with Dr. Bolton by letter and he at once applied to the Missionary Society for appointment as a Medical Missionary.

Medical work had not been previously undertaken by our Board of Missions; and there was considerable delay and manifest reluctance in accepting his offer. In the meantime, the Missionaries in the field promised substantial contributions from their own salaries toward his support; some contributions were also offered by the Indians; and the British Columbia Conference, at its meeting in 1889, formally asked for the appointment of a Medical Missionary. Dr. Bolton then proceeded to British Columbia at his own expense; and thus began the work of the first Medical Missionary connected with the Methodist Church, Canada. No pecuniary assistance was received from the Missionary Society during the first year.

On his arrival at Port Simpson on November 17th, 1889, Dr. Bolton went earnestly to work. The results achieved were from the first sufficient evidence of providential leading in the matter, as well as of Dr. Bolton's zeal and ability. As to the conditions met with and the nature of the work, no better account can be given than that contained in his letter to *The Christian Guardian*, written after a year's experience in the field. This letter is here given in full:

"Dear Sir,—Having now spent a year in Medical Missionary work in the Port Simpson District, I venture to address a few words to the friends of Missions among the

readers of the *Guardian*. First, my wife and I wish to thank those kind-hearted friends, whose sympathy and prayers upheld us and who extended a helping hand to us in this work. It has been a busy year with us. Sometimes I have had more work on hand than I could well attend to, especially during the ravages of la grippe, in March last.

"The winter and spring were spent here in Port Simpson, where there is the largest Indian population on the Coast. Being the chief trading post, it brings me many visiting patients. During June and July, I made my headquarters at Port Essington, on the Skeena, and found a great deal to do among the Indians of the many tribes who gather there during the salmon season. Part of August I put in on the Naas, where the fishing continued later. During September, there were not many of our people home, but I had a great many patients from a distance. They come to me from two hundred miles inland; the same distance from the south; from Alaska in the north; and from Queen Charlotte Islands in the West.

"Of course there is a great deal of sickness among this people. Ignorance and uncleanness are ever accompanied by disease, while the travelling and exposure of their semi-nomadic life add to the liability; but a larger part of their suffering is caused by hereditary diseases arising from their impure lives and the wantonness of members of our own race and color.

"To instruct in hygiene, to check the progress and alleviate the suffering of seated disease, to soothe the dying agonies, and at the same time to point to Jesus, the Saviour, as the healer of the soul, have been my work, together with preaching occasionally and helping with class-meetings, Sabbath School, Day School and Boys' Home. Under Providence, I hope I have done some good. I have treated over fifty-four hundred patients. A great deal of suffering has been relieved, and perhaps some lives saved; but lack of proper means cripples us in the work. So many surgical cases need antiseptic operations and dressings, with warmth and good air; and other cases need care and food such as they cannot have in their

homes. In cases of visiting patients, I have had as many as a dozen here at one time, all lodged in tents on the beach; or, a little better, roofed in by the guest house of the Hudson's Bay Company.

"Let me instance two cases from among my list of visiting patients. One, an Indian from Masset, Queen Charlotte Islands, came to me in July, suffering from syphilitic throat, and each leg a mass of ulcers. I treated him some weeks at Port Essington; and he paid his last dollar for a passage to Port Simpson to meet me on my return from the Naas. By daily dressings, I sent him home in September quite recovered; and I heard a few days ago that he remained well.

"A woman from the same place came over last January, having a running sore, which proved to be deeply-seated necrosis of the tibia. Notwithstanding the cold weather, I operated in an Indian house and removed the dead bone; and she made a good recovery.

"While we are thankful for some good results amid such unfavorable circumstances, yet there are so many such cases as the above that one cannot but feel deeply the need for a Hospital at this place; and we are going to have one. An interest is awakened among the few white people in the vicinity; and a petition has been sent in to the Local Government asking for aid and we have been assured of a grant to help pay running expenses. The Dominion Government should aid through the Indian Department and I have no doubt will do so if the matter is properly presented to them; but we can all have a hand in this great work.

"Are there among the readers of the *Guardian* men to whom God has entrusted wealth, who will come to our aid with handsome donations to provide a building? Many more could give a little, and thus help to care for the remnant of the predecessors of our race on this continent, who have gained so little and we so much by our usurpation.

"In regard to evangelistic work among the sick, I look upon this as one of the most important departments of our Mission work here. I would rather have the privilege of

a few words of exhortation and prayer with a single, dying Indian, whose hold on this world is loosening, than to preach to a Church crowded by his white friends who are full of pride and the enjoyment of life. During the epidemic last spring, when I was almost worn out in body by overwork and personal sickness so that I could scarcely walk from one smoky, ill-smelling house to another to see whole families ill together, and when the work was rendered discouraging by the many, who were weakened by previous disease, succumbing in spite of all my efforts, nothing so cheered and encouraged me as the pleasure of talking and praying with the sick, and seeing in some cases the true repentance and faith which turned their death beds into an entrance of glory. These privileges of doing good would be greatly augmented by hospital accommodation, where the sick would be constantly under such influences; and as some might be expected to come to us from heathen villages, where they could be instructed in the Gospel, and perhaps find healing for soul as well as body.

"Yours in the work,

"A. E. BOLTON.

"Port Simpson, Nov. 17, 1890."

There was at this time only one other doctor within five hundred miles.

The much needed hospital was finally erected at Port Simpson in 1892. It was felt that a grant for this purpose could not be expected from the Missionary Society, but the Woman's Missionary Society was asked for a nurse, and sent Miss Spence, who rendered fine service in that capacity, and remained for thirteen years in the work. They afterwards sent other nurses. The building was erected with the aid of five hundred dollars from the Provincial Government and local subscriptions from both Indians and whites.

The effect of this work on the physical condition of the people was very marked. Many incidents of an encourag-

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ing nature, some pathetic and some humorous, took place in connection with it. The simplicity of the Indian mind with regard to religion and civilization was often strikingly illustrated. One Indian declared that "the doctor was wonderful man; he could heal just like the Master."

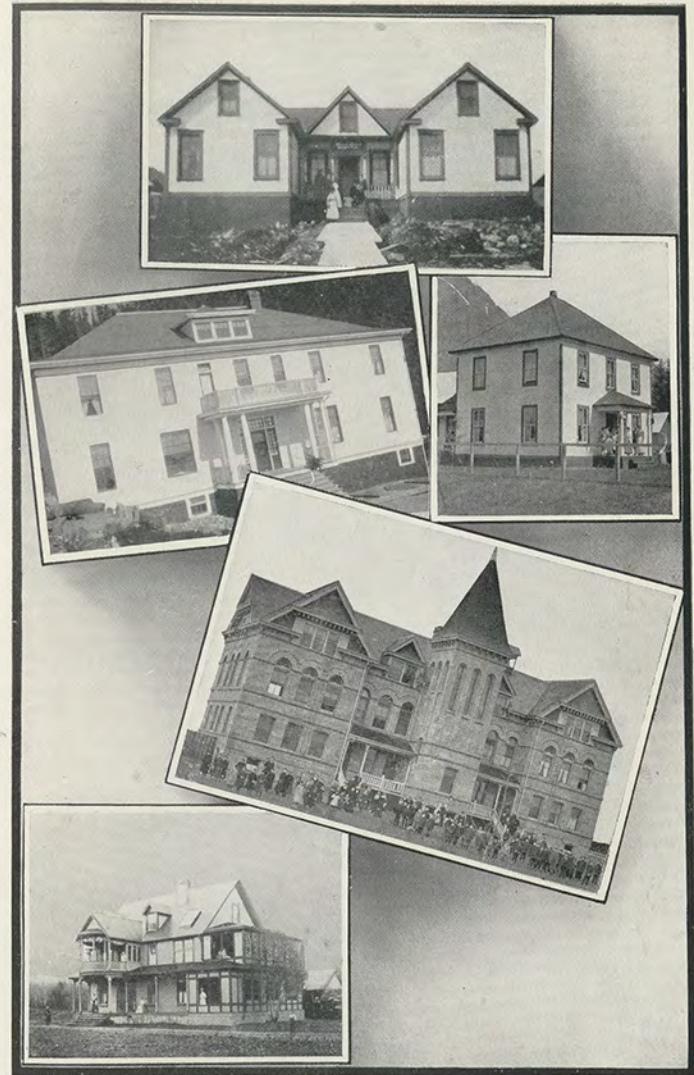
In 1895, a branch Hospital was opened at Port Essington and kept open for the benefit of the Indians and other fishermen during the summer months only. It proved a great boon to the people gathered there during the fishing season.

A second branch was opened in 1897 at Rivers Inlet, two hundred and sixty miles south of Simpson. Here, where many of the people had not been under the influence of Missions at all, the conditions were awful; putrid sores and cases of chronic disease were to be seen on every side, and the people accepted these things as inevitable, not knowing that they could be helped.

During this season, Dr. Bolton, by securing a pass on the Coast steamers, tried to work the three Hospitals simultaneously until the arrival of Dr. Jackson, who took charge of the Rivers Inlet Hospital, but had to relinquish the work on account of ill health.

These Hospitals were built largely by the labors of the Medical Missionary, assisted by the Indians. The whole work is a monument to the industry, devotion and endurance of Dr. Bolton, our first Medical Missionary.

In November, 1898, Dr. R. W. Large arrived to take charge of the Mission at Bella Bella, where he established a new Hospital; and the Hospital at Rivers Inlet was turned over to him. It has since been used as a summer Hospital in connection with the principal one at Bella Bella. These Hospitals also serve the villages of Bella Coola, North and South Bentick Arm, China Hat, Kimsquit, Smith's Sound, Cousin's Inlet, and Swanson Bay;



The Hospital, Bella Bella.
Girls' Home, Kitamaat. The Mission House, Bella Coola.
Coqualeetza Indian Institute, Chilliwack.
The Hospital, Hazelton, on the Skeena River.

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and are a blessing to hundreds—Whites, Indians, Chinese and Japanese—who come to Rivers Inlet from all along the Coast during the fishing season.

Another Hospital was much needed at Hazelton, at the Forks of the Skeena. When attending General Conference in Toronto in 1898, I met Dr. Horace C. Wrinch, who then intended going to China where the numbers are so great. I argued with him that he could find on the Skeena River all that one man could do. He is a man especially qualified for this work, being strong and having a practical knowledge of carpentry and farm work. He finally yielded to the call from British Columbia, and began his work in Hazelton in 1900, where he has succeeded and is succeeding beyond all expectations.

The following description of Dr. Wrinch's work is drawn from his various reports:

“Leaving Toronto on July 17th, 1900, I reached Vancouver on the 22nd of the same month, and, after reporting to the Chairman of the Indian District, went on to Victoria. At Victoria I made myself known to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs in British Columbia, and secured from him a small grant of drugs for use among indigent Indians.”

After visiting the Medical Missions, under Dr. Large at Bella Bella, and Dr. Bolton at Port Simpson and Port Essington, Dr. Wrinch proceeded to the Upper Skeena. His report published in 1906 contains the history of his work to that date:

“To understand rightly the situation as we found it on our arrival at Hazelton, early in September, 1900, it is important to remember that the foundation for Hospital work there had been strongly laid. The ten years already spent by Dr. A. E. Bolton, at Port Simpson, with his branch hospitals at Port Essington and Rivers Inlet, had

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told in breaking down prejudice against, and in creating a sympathy with, the Medical Missionary and his Hospital throughout an extent of country not by any means limited to the points actually reached by the visits of our pioneer medical man.

"A very few weeks were sufficient, however, to show that no Medical work could be satisfactory, either to patient or Doctor, without provision for proper care and treatment during acute illness. Patients would be brought by friends from very considerable distances, in one case a hundred and twenty-five miles, and would be virtually laid at the Doctor's door. The giving of suitable care to many of these would often mean much more than the mere medicine or surgical treatment required; and so the question of 'How to secure a hospital' became at once the great problem.

"Every reasonable consideration, both as to securing funds and accessibility, seemed to point to the vicinity of Hazelton as the only right place for the Hospital. In looking for aid, we approached the Provincial Government in the interests of the white people; and the Mission Board and the Indian Department at Ottawa, in the interest of the Indians. We were told to see what we could raise locally, then come to them and they would do what they could. In this way, the sum of five thousand dollars was finally raised from these joint sources, and the work went on with gratifying success."

Throughout his whole period of service, Dr. Bolton was never recognized by the Church as a fully paid Missionary. From the second year after reaching Port Simpson, he received an annual grant of six hundred dollars from the Missionary Society. This he voluntarily dropped, after some years, retaining only a nominal allowance of one hundred dollars a year until 1901. In 1902 he resigned

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from the Hospital management, to the great regret of all those who had been associated with him in that work. On leaving Port Simpson, he was presented with addresses testifying to the high esteem in which he was held by both Indians and whites. Apart from his Medical and Missionary duties, in which he showed unremitting zeal, he never hesitated to undertake any other necessary work, no matter what its nature. His services, as a Justice of the Peace, accomplished a great deal of good in combating the various evils by which the Indians are beset, especially the illegal liquor traffic, and won high praise from the Attorney-General of the Province and from other competent judges.

The following letter on Port Simpson District Hospital work was written by the General Superintendent, Dr. A. Carman, during his visit to the District in 1896:

"The Medical Missionary of the right stamp is a factor of immense importance in Christian evangelization, especially among the heathen; and certainly, as the world views it, there is no more sublime consecration to the service of God and humanity than is made by the learned and skilful physician when he gives his life and his powers to save the bodies and the souls of pagan people. There is little prospect of earthly reward and glory. When prosecuting his work in a right spirit, he is most emphatically following in the footsteps of the Great Preacher and Physician, enlarging the knowledge of mankind and bringing health and salvation to soul and body. The Christian doctor of medicine anywhere has a glorious office and dignity; but, when he yields up his professional attainments and ability wholly and directly to Christ, he has the means of usefulness, honor and eternal reward, available to but few beside him. What is too good for Jesus, the Saviour of men? What is the use of singing 'Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small,' without such self-surrender? What is too

great a sacrifice? Thanks be to God, we have some noble men with these qualifications of self-renunciation and Christ apprehension already in the field. Why should not the Church have more?

"Among these consecrated and faithful men, noticeably, is our brother, Dr. A. E. Bolton, at work in this capacity on this District among the Indians. After seven years' practice, he enjoys the unqualified confidence of the people, in whose language he now converses freely, and whom he abundantly instructs and exhorts in the Gospel. He has succeeded in erecting a good Hospital here in Port Simpson, and a branch building at Essington. In these he has a nurse and apprentice provided by the Women's Missionary Society. He also visits the afflicted in their homes, and, while without fees, must supply the Indians.

"Besides him, there is only one other doctor on the Coast, that one residing at Metlakahtla, about midway between Simpson and Essington, say twenty-five miles from each place. For another, a journey of five hundred and fifty miles must be made to Nanaimo or Vancouver. Surely there is not overlapping here. There is abundant room among the Indian tribes, and among all the races of unchristianized men, for such toilers as Dr. Bolton and his heroic fellow-laborers in Japan and China. Why should Christian physicians stand all the day, all life's day, idle? There are diseased and stricken men everywhere to be healed. Is it not a noble ambition to go forth to heal them, and preach to them the Gospel? It is not without its significance that Paul, the apostle, had Luke, the beloved physician, as his companion in travel, when he went forth on that Christ authorized and unsurpassed evangelistic system, two by two, through the cities of Asia Minor.

"Breaking down the old Indian medicine man with his rattle and fierce garb and soul-trap, with his charms and savage yells, the least we can do is to give the poor natives our best substitute, especially when that substitute is one of the most effective agencies in spreading the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. The preacher, doctor and teacher must go together or else the preacher must cover

the whole ground. Even that is keeping Christian Missions within narrow limits. Oh, for more brave, consecrated, efficient workers! Oh, for tenfold ability and liberality in the Church and among the people to enable the Missionary Society to employ every laborer and occupy every field! There can be no question that if the Church had filled up the measure of her obligation there had been multitudes more converted to God.

"There is another aspect of this question which deserves faithful consideration. Christianity is designed to save the bodies as well as the souls of men; it has the promise of the life that now is as well as that of the life to come. Let us see how we are measuring up to our duty in this regard among the aboriginal inhabitants of the country God has given us. The horrors of Armenia shock the world. Turkish atrocities outrage the moral sense of mankind. What about ourselves? What about the Christian Britons' treatment of the Hydás, a noble race that less than a generation ago numbered eight thousand, and now numbers less than eight hundred with hardly a healthy woman of their own race among them? Here is a splendid tribe literally decimated. What is the Turk doing? Blessed are the poor pagans of the interior, out of reach of the Capital. The white men wrong and purchase the Indian woman till there is hardly a healthy progenitor left. Talk about the extermination of a race. Here it has gone on in our own land and under our own eyes, and who has felt the burden and the shame? The white man's traffic; the white man's drink; the white man's diseases; the white man's indifference to the Indian's immorality, darkness, disease and sin, have wrought it all and suffered it all to come to pass. Under Christian Missions there seems some hope. What a field for Christian physicians to instruct the people and pluck men and women, yea, nations of men and women, as brands from the terrible burning! How dare the Church of God face this state of things in our own land, and be indifferent or illiberal to the cause of Missions? Gross darkness covers the people; the remedy can come only by the Light of Life. The Lord hasten the day. "A. CARMAN.

"Port Essington, May 12th, 1896."