

## A Modern Book of Acts\*

In his preface to this latest and greatest missionary publication from the office of our Forward Movement, Dr. Crosby naively declares that, "Not writing books, but working for the spread of the Gospel among benighted peoples and striving to extend the influence of the kingdom of Christ in the hearts of my fellow men have been my occupation." The reviewer is thereupon led to enquire whether this fact does not partly account for the unusual and almost unique character and value of the volume under discussion. Certainly no mere skill in bookmaking nor any purely literary aim could have produced a story of such amazing freshness, so vivid in presentation, so picturesque in detail, so filled with the breath of a high and holy purpose, so rich in living incident, so inspiring in example and so final in its exultant testimony to the Gospel of Christ as the power of God unto salvation. And yet all these terms are easily and naturally called to mind by this unaffected and unpolished account of the author's apostolic labors "for the

intrepid Crosby, already inured to pioneer hardships by twelve years' work among the Ankomenums (of whom also he has written with insight and sympathy) was, if anything, more than matched in courage and devotion by the Ladies' College teacher from Hamilton, who went as his wife to the far outpost in 1874. There, with an equal measure of graciousness and good sense, the missionary, like a wise leader and faithful shepherd, urges upon his flock the absolute impropriety of dedicating to the Lord an unpaid-for church! And in recording their self-sacrificing gifts with what sly humor he observes, "For they were very fond of jewellery, like some other heathen people." This sense of humor shines out frequently throughout the book, as where we read of the preacher who sought free passage in the mission yacht, and then was forced to work his passage by cutting cord-wood for the engine!

No one can doubt the rare faculty of the Indian for the enjoyment of religion, at least, after reading how



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spread of the Gospel among benighted peoples" on the Pacific coast.

What we have to review is not exactly a book, but something more and better than a book in the ordinary sense. It does not aim to be a biography, a history, nor a scientific account of the Coast Indians and their evangelization. It presents rather the sources of history and biography yet to be written. It is an historical exhibit, not a catalogue, a series of pictures—and moving pictures at that—rather than a mere chronicle of events, a treasure house of data on the wonderful works of God in nature, humanity and grace, with little attempt at scientific classification. The net result is one of the most delightfully readable and powerfully moving accounts of missionary devotion and Gospel triumphs which have come from any mission field in recent years.

We read how the Port Simpson Mission was born in a Victoria bar-room with the conversion of Diex, a chieftainess of the Tsimsheans, in 1872. How the

Dr. Crosby's "boys," toward the close of a long tour, sought and secured permission to paddle all night that they might reach home in time to participate in a revival which had "broken out" during their absence.

Before classifying such incidents—and they are common—as a species of religious dissipation, one does well to recall how the Christian Indians, by their firm stand, stopped Sunday work at certain mines and canneries, and actually forced a revision or new adaptation of the law to meet the unexpected difficulties created by this unfaltering adherence of Indians to principles which their white brethren were everywhere ready to abandon for the sake of gain. Equally remarkable and inspiring is the story of municipal development in a Christian village. An ordinary civilized person—that is to say, a life-long taxpayer—finds nearly as much human interest in the movement to augment civic revenues by levying a dog-tax (and that in an Indian village!), as in our author's claim that the first newspaper on the Pacific coast was his *Simpson Herald*, published largely in the interests of mission work.

Either a small boy or a scientist might read with

\* "Up and Down the North Pacific Coast by Canoe and Mission Ship." Rev. Thomas Crosby, D.D. The Young Peoples' Forward Movement Department. Cloth, 50c.; paper, 35c.

interest of baskets made to hold water, of "a steam-boat without boiler or engines," which nevertheless made several knots per hour, or of gulls "so numerous as to resemble a heavy fall of snow."

Few tales of adventure can furnish more "thrills" than one finds in such accounts as those of Quakshan and the Grizzly, of canoe trips on an open ocean in wintry storms, of night camps in wet and cold weather, of running rapids on the Skeena, or taking the *Glad Tidings* through seas where regular steamers feared to venture out.

Stories of devotion and triumph there are, too, fit to rank with the best in Christian annals since the days of the Catacombs, and of those who went "everywhere preaching the Word." A woman paddles alone one hundred and twenty miles in a small canoe to bring her pagan sister to the services, and to Jesus! Blind Jack has come ten suns "to see God's house." There he give his all (seventy-five cents) to aid in its completion and goes home to tell his pagan tribe "the wondrous story." Jim heard of Jesus while living a drunken life at New Westminster. Later, his thirst for the old, old story brings him a journey of six hun-

ability to reach needy and despairing tribes, unanswered appeals and unsuccessful efforts to secure from the Church and Mission Board that measure of support requisite to meet the demands of a situation always tragic in its opportunity and peril. When the veteran worker breaks down and cries after his rebuff at district meeting, any normal reader just longs to start something—preferably a collection plate. But even this feature is brightened by the account of many remarkable deliverances from dire extremity in answer to prayer.

A touch of pathos, all too familiar to those acquainted with missionary devotion, is found in his account of the leave-taking after nearly twenty-five years—"As we came away many of them promised to take good care of the four little graves we left in the Indian graveyard on the island." Aye, that they will! and so must the Methodist Church take good care of those needy people left to us by Dr. Crosby, and by his Master, who surely included these children of the forest in His solemn charge concerning "the least of these, my brethren." I wonder are we ready for the logic of His "Inasmuch"!



HOW THE INDIANS WELCOMED THEIR MISSIONARY

dred miles and sends him back with a few nails—and the Gospel! to begin the evangelization of a tribe and the building of a church. In one tribe the Christians are pelted with red-hot stones, and several are poisoned, but under the leadership of a young chief, who counts all but loss for Christ, they refuse to deny the faith. An Alaskan chief brings the appeal of his people for a resident missionary, although he dies of consumption before reaching home with the welcome promise. Drunken and dog-eating Indians become flaming evangelists like Mackay, the Apostle of Alaska, and others of lesser note but perhaps equal devotion, who in bands or as individual itinerants, at their own charges, carry the Gospel message far beyond the range of its regular agencies.

The horrors of heathenism are painted in their true colors, but black and lurid as they are, what can be said of the white scoundrels who, when they tired of their pagan paramours, in a search for fresh concubines, manifested a preference for and sought to purchase Indian girls who had learned cleanliness and useful accomplishments in the Mission School and Rescue Home?

Apart from these recitals the only sad pages in the book are those which tell of inadequate resources, in-

## The Newfoundland Disaster

The following resolution was unanimously adopted at the recent meeting of the Executive Committee:

The Executive Committee of the General Board of Missions of the Methodist Church of Canada and Newfoundland have learned of the terrible disaster which has recently come to the hardy sealers of the ancient colony.

We herewith place on record our deep sorrow at the fearful loss of life, the awful suffering experienced by those who have been rescued and the inevitable consequences to many families bereaved of their bread-winners.

We also express our Christian sympathy with the afflicted families and with our Newfoundland friends generally in this sad visitation and assure them of our prayerful regard and intense interest in all matters pertaining to their material and spiritual welfare.

We direct that a lettergram, including this resolution, be sent forthwith to Dr. Fenwick with instructions to use as he thinks wise.