

American Missionary Association

The Mission House
at Elbowoods, N. D.

By REV. C. L. HALL, D.D.



287 Fourth Avenue - New York



Chapel and Missionary's Home, Elbowoods, N. D.

The building is the missionary's home, and the home of little girls and their teacher and matron. The center of the building is the Chapel.



Independence Church, Built by Indians.

This building was done partly by volunteer labor by the members, and with money furnished almost entirely by the Indians and their friends on the Reservation. The bell in the tower was transferred to the church from the old Mission at old Ft. Berthold, where it was first hung in 1880. It was the gift of the Broadway Tabernacle Church, N. Y., in memory of Deacon R. L. Hall, father of C. L. Hall, and is so inscribed.

THE MISSION HOUSE AT ELBOWOODS, N. D.

REV. C. L. HALL, D.D.

Missionary work begins with evangelism. It does not end there. The people must hear the good news of salvation. So we have spent much time to "make the message plain." It has taken



Returned Pupils and Children.

years of labor to put the gist of the gospel into several Indian languages that had no literature, that our people might get the word of God. One had to work to get a clue to a word through a crude interpreter; or by making signs or motions where, as often, no interpreter was at hand, and then guessing between several possible meanings. In this way one would in time get a knowledge of the commonplace things in a language. Then there must follow the task of finding equivalents for Christian terms in the speech of a people without Christian ideas, and who knew not the God and Father of our Lord.

Difficult as all this work was, it is only a beginning, only elementary. The message must be applied to all phases of life. A constant educational process must be kept up to incorporate Christian ideals into the daily thinking of the

people, and Christian purposes into their controlling motives. This is to be done by the reiterated daily teaching of the schools, and the living example of the missionary and of those he can educate to lead the people. A bare message unrelated to life is like seed scattered on the road or on a rock. After sowing one must harrow and



School Girls, Teacher and Matron.

cultivate and fight insect pests all the season to get a crop. So a constant process of education, moral, industrial, hygienic, must go on or there will be no regenerated fruitful characters.

The old Indian linked his hunting and corn-planting and simple arts to his religion. He lived by the help of his gods. We are trying not to destroy this faith, but to transfer it to the living God, and to make it "work by love," instead of by selfishness. Our little girls in the home are learning to keep house and sew and cook, because it is the work of a child of God to do these things well. We are trying to teach our neighbors by word and example to farm and build and make homes in a way that will be becoming to a redeemed man. They must understand that the gospel means diligence in business, honesty, carefulness, co-operation, skill, cleanness of heart and body, health and enlightenment, and

prosperity, and any other virtue of endowment that makes life worth living now and always. We think our example in raising seventy bushels of oats, or two hundred bushels of potatoes to the acre, garden vegetables, improved cattle and hogs, well-kept horses, small fruits, and sheltering trees, and pretty shrubs, in what is classed as a semi-arid land, is a part of the gospel of Christ who came to make all "deserts blossom as the rose."

When our former Mission school boys are found taking hold of agricultural work according to present-day methods and earning a sup-



Sisters of Blossom in Party Dresses.

port for their growing families, building their meeting place, and making some contributions to church work abroad, we feel that the foundation of a Christian community is being laid.

The clouds return sometimes. There comes a recrudescence of heathenism. The blight of ritualism shrivels the budding life. Yet faith sees still the leaven at work. An old man's daughter went away to our Santee School and returned a believer in the Christian way. She taught her father what she had learned and prayed for him.

He yielded to her faith and threw away his fetishes after a hard struggle with all the past and present environment that bound him. Then at once his instinct was to make a better home for his family. He must get away from the heathen village with its squalor and impurity, and idolatry. It is true that environment does not regenerate the soul, but the renewed soul transforms the environment. Then better conditions are evidence of the new life. On the contrary when some fall away back to heathenism, they fall into slovenly attire, ill-kept homes, and neglected fields.

The struggle for clean bodies and healthful conditions demands much attention from a mis-



Mission Oat Field, 70 Bushels to the Acre.

sionary. Christ healed diseases. We must bring help to the bodies of our people.

In the Indian country tuberculosis and trachoma especially must be fought. Nearly one-half of our people at the present time have trachoma in various stages. For more than six months we have given daily treatment to six cases in our little home school. There is good prospect of curing this eye disease in the case of young children, but it is a fight of years to win the victory over this malady in a tribe. In the case of consumption we have again and again watched the life sapped out of promising youth that we

hoped to depend upon in the church and community. The bodies of the people must be redeemed or there can be no abiding Christian community. It is bad enough to have weak members in the churches, but dead ones are yet more inoperative. It is not that Christian principle does not triumph over disease. Brother Porcupine was a notable instance of such a victory. For years he had one foot in the grave. Once his



Blossom Chase.

Romanist neighbors tried to win him over to their way when, as they thought, he was on his death bed. They made the offer of a burial in their fine graveyard, round which they had put a new fancy iron fence. He recovered enough to get about and for several years he laughed at the picture of a happy corpse inside an iron fence. He could not read, but delighted to carry about

a testament that he might get some friend to interpret a little of it to him. Coming to church in all weathers and giving his testimony with difficulty in a husky voice to the very end, he was an example to the flock, a hero though in a body almost repulsive from the ravages of disease. We have seen such triumphs all along these well-nigh forty years, but to build up a church we need able-bodied men and women filled with God's spirit. So it is part of our effort to improve physical conditions for our members and especially for our growing children.

It is necessary to have hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and also bodies washed with pure water! We want a church on earth as well as one in heaven. Struggling and imperfect it may be, yet triumphing over adverse conditions, both physical and spiritual. For godliness has the "promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

DISTRICT OFFICES:

Eastern District:

615 CONGREGATIONAL HOUSE, BOSTON, MASS.

Western District:

19 SOUTH LA SALLE STREET, CHICAGO, ILL.

Pacific District:

21 BRENHAM PLACE, SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.