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*Among the
Wild Indians
of Amazonia*

AMONG THE WILD INDIANS
OF AMAZONIA

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AMONG THE WILD INDIANS OF AMAZONIA

BY
LEONARD HARRIS

UNEVANGELIZED FIELDS MISSION.

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another language, but his spirit needs to be identical
with Napoleon's spirit.

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Among the Wild Indians of Amazonia.

I.

A Costly Entrance.

It is the 15th August, 1925, and with my two travelling companions I have slept on a huge sand-bank, and passed a fairly good night. At our feet the River Ipixuna flows, while our canoe seems to be lazily resting. The dawn is breaking, and a heaving mist has fallen—so common in tropical forest land.

We are bound for Oga Garkia—a spot on this river where we intend to make our base among the Kawahib Indians. Two days' journey lie behind us, and who knows how much farther we may have yet to ascend? “ ‘There shall be no Alps,’ said Napoleon, ‘and his road across the Simplon was constructed through a district formerly inaccessible.’ ” The pioneer of the Cross of Christ has another language, but his spirit needs to be identical with Napoleon's spirit.

Our canoe is well loaded. It is not that we are burdened with our personal belongings, for our luggage is chiefly food. Every traveller in the

unknown interior of Amazonia must carry his own commissariat. Starvation is a close companion. It is merely necessary to recall the name of the first missionary to plant the flag of Christ in South America—Alan Gardner. How was the flag planted? He simply *starved to death* in the wilds of Tierra del Fuego.

I make my way to the canoe and arrange the baggage, then make a fire in an old kerosene tin to boil water for coffee, and we are off again.

We had only been going for two hours when together we said one word—"Indians." We ran the nose of the canoe ashore and were soon amidst an eager, gesticulating crowd, whose language we did not understand. The Indians clambered aboard and searched everything. An axe-head went first, then our one and only washing-bowl, which I had been most careful to hide. But this was merely the beginning—having unpacked, spoons disappeared like magic, not only so, but there was a very careful "sleight of hand" worked with our plates, knives, forks, choppers, etc., which seemed nothing short of magic. Our pockets were searched over and over again, and one always found oneself with something less each time. We were commanded to open our boxes—it reminded one of passing through the Custom House where one is a suspected person.

The constant jabbering in their strange language, and the constant threats to kill us if we disobeyed, coupled with the sight of our disappearing kit, produced a weariness indescribable. We sat on our boxes and looked at each other, all the while growing mentally tired of it all. What made it all so painful was the fact that the Indians carried off everything they got like a victor who had won a prize. Yet some one must blaze the trail, commands are commands, and the last He gave to us was "**To every creature.**"

II.

The Indian as he is.

THE salutation of the Kawahib Indian is a good introduction of what he is nationally. The Kawahib is essentially a warrior, and war seems not so much a regrettable necessity as one of the joys of his existence. On approaching a friend for the first time he begins a peculiar muttering noise of unintelligible words. This is accompanied by a stamping of the right foot, while the chest is inclined slightly forward. On nearing the visiting friend, arrows are drawn, while the bow is con-

stantly lifted well above the head in a shooting attitude. The most trying part, however, is the actual shooting of arrows round the visiting party, who is safest if he remains in his first position, taking good care not to move his feet. By this time the mumbling has increased to wild yells, and if the case demands it, some arrows may be shot above the head of the visitor. This ends as suddenly as it began by the Indian shaking your hand and giving the tribal greeting or the Portuguese "Good morning."

The Kawahib used to live at war with everybody who was not of his tribe. In time of war the body is smeared with charcoal, thus giving the Indian a ghastly appearance. They constantly made war on a neighbouring tribe known as Pirahuns, and constantly they appeared on the River Madeira, attacking houses and killing the unhappy inhabitants. Transport is no difficulty to the Indian, who has canoes sunk in all parts of his territory.

The chief object of war on another tribe was to bring back the heads of their enemies. After such victories the head was reduced to a skull, and the victor performed a dance with the head slung across his shoulder, to the accompaniment of a weird chanting. Cannibalism was one time rampant, and the Indians even now boast of having eaten human flesh.

Attacks made on the River Madeira were no less diabolical. Women were murdered and children carried off, while the house was usually set on fire as the raiders retreated. The war cry is fierce and alarming in the extreme. To one who has not become familiar with their tactics, the cry produces a terrifying fear, which undoubtedly made an easy victory for the Indians, the Brazilians being overcome with terror.

But in his own region the Indian is industrious. They plant maize that is of such a soft nature it can be eaten raw. Macacheira, sweet potato, urucu, banana, and mamão are all planted in their turn. Cotton is grown, from which the Indian women make hammocks. The daily menu is augmented sometimes by fish, and wild fruit or honey. Game, of course, is hunted, and the usual method of cooking is roasting over the fire, or cooking in the ashes. A good bread is made from the Indian corn, which is merely crushed and mixed with water, and finally baked in the ashes. Such bread is usually flavoured with a gritty substance which is picked up in the cooking process, and which must resemble the eating of coke.

Of all things most strange to the servant of the Lord is the fact that the Kawahib has no religion. It is certain that they have no knowledge of the national semi-god of the Tupi tribes who is known

as Maira. Roughly hewn crosses and primitive figures supposed to represent saints have been found in their dwellings, and these have led to the supposition that they were christianized by Jesuits two centuries ago. Witchcraft has abounded, but it is fast dying out, though we have had deaths attributed by the Indians to the witch-doctors.

But what concerns us most is the all-important fact that their sin is wearing them out ; and contrary to all received tradition of their high moral standards, it needs to be said, that the case is far otherwise. Sin and misery abound on every hand, and it is our strong conviction that had there been no advent among them of white men, only a handful would have been found to-day. What is true of the Kawahib is true of all tribes in Amazonia, that while we tarry and delay their evangelization, hundreds are dying annually ; and even whole tribes are passing away, worn out by their own sin, misery, and fevers. As one of the foremost authorities has said of them, "While the years are slipping away that hasten our Lord's return, so the opportunity to preach to living Indian hearts is slipping through our fingers."

"Therefore, lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left."

III.

Oga Garkia.

It would be difficult to convey any true idea of how we found Oga Garkia. Filth abounded everywhere. Trees had been felled but never cleared ; and there was an abounding army of locusts and the red ant—the worst ground insect, I suppose, to be found in Amazonia. We had only been there a short time when I discovered my books, if left about, were disappearing by fractions to keep the locusts alive.

A missionary's life is a strange mixture of occupations, and to enlighten those who picture their missionary always preaching to a hungry crowd of natives, it might not be out of place if I tabulate a few of the daily occupations of a missionary. Preacher, composer, teacher, baker, cook, gardener, barber, dentist, doctor, builder, tailor, tinker ; but the arts in which he must excel are fishing and hunting, or the Indians will want to know where their missionary was educated. I think Oga Garkia in the early days taught us that the necessary qualifications for a pioneer are love to God, love to all men without distinction, and a love of real hard work.

While we worked, the Indians thought it an

excellent opportunity to relieve us of any of our kit that might be lying about. "The spoiling of your goods" appeared to be on the daily programme of the Indians. Yes, we understand what Paul meant when he penned those words, for nothing was secure when once the Indians had seen it. I was glad to drink my coffee out of a Nestle's milk tin, and we always buried our spoons after a meal, despite the fact it was an easy matter to forget where you had buried them by the time the next meal came round, but it was our only security.

The test almost proved too much for my undisciplined heart, for I found myself with no love for the Indian, and I began constantly losing my temper with his daily unreasonableness. But it was then I began to know how little love I had, and how little I had learned what love like the Master's would give. God in His infinite mercy taught me there are higher values in this world than anything we may possess.

"Many crowd the Saviour's Kingdom,
Few receive His cross;
Many seek His consolation,
Few will suffer loss,
For the dear sake of the Master
Counting all but dross."

IV.

A Lesson in Grammar.

"The Kawahib, in the majority, are incorrigible thieves who employ all their intelligence, and all their courage, to get possession, publicly or secretly, of the property of others."—(Curt Nimeuadaju).

I am alone with the Indians, with the exception of our Brazilian servant. My two fellow-missionaries have descended to civilization to buy fresh supplies. I am holding the fort until they return. Ah, you may not know what it is to battle with a foreign language. A wrongly sounded "u" may make you say what you never dreamed of. Even a Ragland was not immune from such difficulties. "One day he sent his boy to get his towel. (It is necessary to explain that the words in Tamil for 'frog' and 'towel' are almost identical). The boy looked puzzled, but finally appeared with a frog. Ragland, amazed, repeated his order, and the boy vanished to appear after a still longer interval with a bigger frog. Then Ragland—it was hot and he was tired—got properly cross. 'I told you *frog*,' he explained, and a third was added to his collection." But why recall it now? Because it is so true to life out here.

An Indian had been stealing our sugar. Now, sugar of all things is most precious to an English-

man, and so after having watched the Indian help himself and give his wife a portion, I exclaimed "Tupahun." I had merely meant to say "It was bad," but, alas, instead of using the word "tirahun" I have used the word for "gun." The Indian now thinks I have threatened to shoot him, and I am roughly handled for some five minutes, while I am given a free exhibition of how I shall be divided up and my house burnt to the ground. I took his hand and tried to calm the enraged Indian, whose wrath had been stirred by a grammatical mistake. We were soon the best of friends again, and I, for one, learnt once and for all the difference between those two words.

"From Hebrew wit, the maxim sprung,
Though feet should slip, ne'er let the tongue."

Wiser words were never written.

v.

Breaking the Ice.

WARINAO, an Indian you can never forget once you have met him, and lived a few days with him. He always says what he doesn't believe, and believes what he never says. He has arrived at Oga Garkia,

and begins gesticulating and telling me lots about God that I do not understand. He demonstrates. He falls on his knees and pretends to pray, and says that we must teach him, and in return he will stop with us and work for us in the plantation. We had been praying that God would send us *His* men that we might train them. It is as equally true on the foreign field as in the homeland—God's men are not made by their B.A. God is still the chooser of whom He will use, and who is of value to Him. "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts xiii, 2).

Warinao is essentially a leader of men. This does not mean, as some seem to suppose, that his heart is like a piece of rock, and unaffected by the emotions common to all. He lost his wife by death, and still had two very young children to care for and feed. Now his child has cut her foot and Warinao is crying. But what is it that he is saying? "My child will die, and already I have lost my wife. If my child dies, then I shall want to die too." The Indian is a fatalist, and it is not to be wondered at when it is remembered that swampy forests are no aid to health, and that with a bad fever it simply means to lie down and die, for no aid is at hand. I assured the Indian that his

child would not die, and having attended to her, I knelt down and prayed, and before I had finished praying the child went gently to sleep.

Was there much in that? Not a great deal, but it bound the heart of Warinao to us in an unbreakable friendship. It was Warinao who always explained to fresh Indians who mistrusted us that we were worthy of their trust. It was Warinao who got the Indians working and clearing the forest; and it was he who guided a companion and myself, in the summer of 1926, through unknown barren regions. It was he who planted maize and potatoes, and in sheer heart gratitude, presented the maize and potatoes to us—really the only riches an Indian has to give. Yes, and it was he who asked the question on Christmas Day, "What of the Kawahib, who have not heard about God—will they not go to heaven?" How strange it is that the regions beyond should dawn on an Indian's heart when so many of God's own people have never cared?

VI.

An Untouched Field.

SOMEWHERE I have chanced to glean the words of a fictitious worldly man, who, reviewing mankind,

said: "I rather regard mankind as wolves, with the exception of a few harmless simpletons who have not been gifted with teeth. Wolves, hunting in packs for convenience sake. Every one pushing forward for his own interest, every one struggling to get first; striving, panting, straining, and with the quarry wealth full in view. If one goes down—what matters? There is one less mouth to feed; the rest of the wolves rush past their old comrade or over him; he'd have done the same to them."

How differently God looks on humanity. "For He has looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth, to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to loose those that are appointed unto death" (Ps. cii, 19, 20). I can see it all again now—the first Kawahib death we witnessed at Oga Garkia.

A party of Indians had returned from Manaos, whither they had made a journey in an ordinary open canoe. This is no mean journey, and the exposure they had been called upon to endure had told upon them. Illness had so terribly reduced them that we could almost see their bones. Two of the party were in a dangerous condition, and though suffering such acute pain they were forced to live in the forest, as no sick Indian is allowed to live with his comrades, however ill he may be. Unattended, and constantly drenched with rain,

death is the inevitable result. With the moving off of the main party, these two came to live in the Indian moloca. I took a look into their basket, and found they had been living on farinha and nuts. Do we in England, surrounded with all we need, think enough of those who die from the lack of the sheer necessities of life?

It was on a Saturday, and I was on my way to have some prayer, when an Indian called me into the moloca. We found a woman dying—already she was unconscious. Manoel was stricken with grief, while their little son, too young to fully realise he was losing his mother, seeing the agitation of his father, began to cry. Manoel, between taking last looks at his wife, tried to comfort his boy; but what comfort could he give? Death was to him a robber of her he had loved, and of the after-life he knew nothing. Then it began to dawn upon us what a sting death is to him who knows nothing of a world where God shall wipe all tears from our eyes.

While she was dying, however, she was measured, and the Indians commenced to dig her grave—actually in the very centre of the moloca. Really most Indian molocas thus become graveyards of the dead, over which the living move and live unconcerned. We gave a hand to dig the grave, and when considered deep enough the

woman was interred, being buried in her hammock as she died. Before finally filling in the grave all her earthly possessions were thrown in, and though only dying at 3.40 p.m., she was buried and the earth filled in by 5 p.m. As we listened to the sobs of poor Manoel we could not help being stirred by our God. While we were witnessing the death of Manoel's wife at Oga Garkia, a stroke of lightning killed another Indian woman upstream, while a third had died in the same region. But what of the Indian women who are yet living? Must they slide into a Christless grave as well? Missionary magazines are so packed with news of other fields, it is oft-times difficult to digest it all, but the magazine of "The Worldwide Evangelization Crusade" contained this paragraph concerning Amazonia's women: "Thank God there is a place for them in the mercy of God, and the day is near when their ingratitude and vileness shall be changed, but, best of all, they shall be saved from a Christless grave."

"Left to die, their faces bear their story,
Wronged by cruel hate, they live beneath a lie,
As if for them the cross could have no glory;
We have let them die."

The Written Word and the Living Word.

PIONEERING! The very word suggests glamour, adventure, and romance; yet, as one has said, there is little in the life itself. To those who have done pioneering, the chasm between platform and floor is understood. As Amy Wilson Carmichael has said, "Set on the common sand of life, the missionary glow is not always as luminous as one might expect." Hear the words of one of God's pioneers—Coillard of the Zambesi: "The evangelization of the heathen world in the place where it is carried on, is not a tissue of strange customs and adventures as thrilling as a romance. It is a desperate struggle with the prince of darkness, and with everything his rage can stir up in the shape of obstacles, vexations, oppositions, and hatred, whether by circumstances or by the hand of man. IT IS A SERIOUS TASK."

In this case it was the hatred of man that put our lives in jeopardy. An Indian had heard about the deaths of the Kawahib women, and in his own mind he was convinced that we had bewitched them because we spoke to God on our knees. The news reached us by an Indian who had chanced to visit us, that Knini was descending the river the

following night to murder us. We were absolutely cast upon God. Already this same Indian had almost strangled one of our missionaries, and we therefore knew how bitter he could be. It is one thing to sing in England "In death's dark vale I fear no ill," but does it hold good when to-morrow you may be called upon to lay down your life? Some seem to paint missionaries with hearts that never fear, but it needs to be constantly remembered that they are human. However, we had a strong refuge—even our God.

The Saturday dawned, and as night fell I was, I confess, a bit disturbed. Suddenly the dogs began to bark most furiously towards the river, while the Indians who were with us began to warn us to flee into the forest, as we should never live if we stayed there. We could only commend ourselves to God, and so turning to an ever-ready Refuge—the Written Word—we read together Ps. lxxxiii, and came to that verse "So persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm" (v. 15). The heavens answered, and we were soon in the midst of a literal storm, the fury of which was amazing.

What God did I do not know, but the Indian did not ascend the bank, and finally I managed to turn into my hammock, though sleep was not easy. I was thinking of creeping Indians and arrows shot

secretly. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil"; and who can say we did not walk that way that night?

But the morning dawned—the sun wore its usual smile, and the eternal forests seemed to praise God that He had triumphed gloriously. "For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands" (Is. lv, 12). Some will not know what it means when nature seems to worship the Creator, but there seemed a unity between our worship for such a Father.

VIII.

Travelling with the Gospel.

"In His day, men gave themselves, not a guinea, when an appeal was made. Love had not found out it could buy itself off for a guinea when they owe Him their whole life"—(Dr. Joseph Parker).

It was in the summer of 1926 that two of us undertook a journey with Indian guides, and the route

mapped out was to ascend the River Ipixuna to its headwaters, and then to cross by land to the River Maicy, where we were to wait on God for further guidance for the rest of the journey. The object was to preach wherever we might find Indians. Unknown forests, rivers not known sufficiently to be marked on any map, have all to be travelled if the pioneer of the cross of Christ is to reach all sections of an Indian tribe.

The preparation before leaving was simple enough—each man had two suits, one hammock, and a mosquito net—nothing more. I carefully hid a razor in my pocket, and so certain were we that we should be robbed that I wore both my pairs of trousers at the same time. There were two canoes—one for ourselves and the other for the two Indian guides, and enough food for a few weeks.

We united in prayer—commending each other to the love of God—and soon we were off. The river journey was pleasant enough. We had fresh fish every day which the Indians caught *en route*, and the only thing that did really worry us was our canoe, which leaked like a sieve would do, if suddenly asked to float.

Travelling in Brazil is slightly different from an afternoon on the rivers of England, as a quotation from our journal will show. "We had only been

going this morning for two hours when two trees stopped us that had fallen across the river. We lifted the first canoe over, but dared not do the same with ours as it would have promptly sunk. There was nothing else to do but to chop the trees through. To do this one had to balance on the tree trunk, and at the same time chop. With such a current underneath, neither my brother nor myself dared face the task in case we lost our balance. In the midst of the argument the Indian fell in, and came up some distance down stream, still holding the chopper. Having passed this, we glided under trees that compelled one to lie flat in the canoe. Once or twice we stuck on the bottom, necessitating our getting out and walking, pushing the canoe. Then came the climax, when I at the front of the canoe heard a terrific splash behind me, and discovered my companion had been knocked overboard. He never blamed anyone, and rowed on until his clothes dried on him in the sun."

We had an excellent opportunity of seeing the Red Man's land with our own eyes, and truly it seemed that death and ruin ruled everywhere. Deserted molocas (houses); overgrown plantations that were no longer needed; decaying tapirys (shelters) still standing; but death had stalked the land, and whole families had ceased to exist. Hundreds of human beings had passed for

ever beyond, with no knowledge of the Name that is above every name. When those early explorers discovered Brazil the estimated number of the Parentintin Indians was one million, but to-day they number a little more than one thousand.

Is there no appeal in that?

The overland journey was severe, for two reasons. For one thing, we could carry no food with us except farinha; and secondly, in the dry season water is difficult to find. Tangled in creepers; crossing streams on dead tree trunks; passing over dried marshes in a burning sun, all added to the difficulties of the overland trek. At times we found ourselves drinking from pools in which the Indians, at the same time, were taking a bath; but the reward came on reaching the other side. Here we held our first service among the Indians since leaving our base, and had the supreme joy of telling of the cross of Christ for the first time to more than twenty-six. We worshipped God for being so privileged to utter the name of Jesus right in the very heart of the Parentintin region.

Yet let it ever be remembered there are regions beyond—hundreds of miles from civilization—that yet wait the coming of the messenger of peace. "I was determined to succeed or perish in the attempt to open this part of Africa," said Living-

stone ; and God is asking for the same consecration for Amazonia.

The journey terminated here, because our Indian guides would not ascend the Maicy for fear of the wild section. We then dismissed our guides, who returned home the way we had come, while we felt led of God to descend the Maicy as far as its mouth, thus eventually coming out on the River Madeira. Then we had another glimpse of the dreaded enemy of the Parentintins who dwell on the lower Maicy. How little did we dream as we drifted by them in the moonlight, crouched over their fires, that they would again take human life. Only a year later, without warning, two Brazilians were cruelly done to death on this very river, and by this tribe.

"For the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty," but we know the remedy—"Thy name is as ointment poured forth."

IX.

A Sunday at Oga Garkia.

SUNDAY SERVICES ! What recollections flood my mind. At first the Indians would not hear of us

preaching to them at all. God to them was thunder, hence their dread of even the name of God. Let it not be imagined that they in any way worshipped thunder, but the confusion was caused by their word for God, which was the same as thunder, except for the final "a." Thus, with our bad pronunciation, they concluded we were teaching that thunder was to be worshipped. But after a year's patient study of their language, we felt we might begin to preach and conduct Sunday services.

At these services we long and labour to be reverent, but how can we? In the midst of a most solemn address, I have been asked for the gum-bottle by an Indian who had audaciously passed right in front of the preacher.

Sunday is a strange day to us. This is how we proceed when it is time for an Indian service.

An Indian rouses all the others—telling them that it is God's Day, and it is time for service. They look at him as though they do not understand what he means, and he then proceeds to tell them that if they do not come to church they will all get fever and die. There is a rush to church. It is useless to remonstrate with the messenger, as next week he forgets all you told him of what not to say.

We begin the service by singing. The Indians

make a tune of their own, while boys shout the few words they know. Prayer! The women must mumble, talk they must, and they do. The men bow their heads, while some even kneel. Then a picture is shown, on which a brother speaks, explaining that the picture represents a scene in Palestine. He further has to explain how the houses are brick ones, etc., and at this point there is a question from a man in the front row. The question is merely to ask if your house in England is brick like that the picture represents, and at this a hundred voices seem to spring from nowhere. Really, it is all the other Indians explaining to the one asking the question. You order silence and continue, only to find that Warinao is snoring, but you continue and hope for the best. After a short talk you draw the service to a close, *urging immediate decision*.

The first man you go to after the service is Warinao. "Warinao, you were sleeping during the service, later you will not know about God." "I did not intend to do so," he replies; "but I listened much, and soon I forgot myself and did not know any more till I awoke."

But the real seed pluckers are the women, who declare that the preacher is a liar, and there is no such place as hell. They usually sit on the floor, not because there is not room for them on the

seats, but because there the preacher cannot see them, and they can carry on a low conversation among themselves. But no Jezebel was too far gone for the hand of God to save, and no flower that has lost its whiteness is too soiled for God's hand. Though they may be in some cases worse than poison to a dying man, their day is coming when they shall be washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Thus a service; but you labour on because the power is in the seed, not in the hand that sows it.

x.

The Conversion of "Skinny."

AN enquirer in India could even once ask, "What wood was the cross made of?" It reminds one of the finer aspects of the Atonement over which so many battles have been fought. Enough for the heathen that Jesus has died, was buried, and rose again, and will yet appear a second time; and that in His outpoured blood, bad, wicked men are cleansed and made good men, and fit for glory. Blessed simplicity this! Listen to the public prayer of the first

boy to respond to the gospel—"I want to receive Jesus. My heart is full of sin. I want God to wash my heart in the blood of Jesus. I want God to-day."

The pray-er was a dear lad of twelve or more, who came to us fever-stricken, and extremely thin. We called him "Otinin," which, in Kawahib, means "Skinny," but his real name was Bowahibi. Some belittle child conversion, but who can deny that the heart of a little child can carry a sense of sin? How beautifully this was taught us by a little incident that happened just after Bowahibi's conversion. The fishers had returned, and we had been living on dried salt fish for weeks. The temptation was too great, and Bowahibi hid three small fish for himself and his companions. By a chance word we found this out, and the fish were returned.

I tried to talk to Bowahibi, but he would not listen, and there seemed a new touch about the Indian proving that, wherever there is sin, there is sure to be suffering. During the same evening he tried to make it right, and I told him he must first tell God he had stolen. "But I have not stolen," he replied; "when you asked me to return them I did, and you have eaten them, and therefore how did I steal them?" I laboured the point, and showed where his guilt was.

It was finally decided that we would tell God about it all the following day. True to his promise, he came to me in the prayer-hut, where I was having my quiet time, and there together we knelt down, and he prayed first. This was his prayer: "I have stolen fish. You, God, forgive me and wash my heart from sin. Amen." "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," yea, and it is true even of Red men.

Let those say what they will about youthful hearts, but none can gainsay some of the greatest saints have come to know the Lord in childhood. What would we have said if we had heard those boy martyrs of Uganda who, just before the murdering of Bishop Hannington, sang while they were being roasted to death, "Killa sika tunsifu":

"Daily, daily sing to Jesus;
Sing, my soul, His praises due,
ALL He does deserves our favour,
And our deep devotion too;
For in deep humiliation,
He for us did live below;
Died on Calvary's cross of torture,
Rose to save our souls from woe."

More About the Language.

It has been said that the Christian public, in our homelands, measure a work of God by the numbers of its conversions. If this is a true test, then we are not worth another penny from God's people. Intelligent pray-ers will have, we are persuaded, other standards by which to judge a work for God. Conversations are not always a real test of what the heart contains, and neither can a work be judged by what is seen. It is still within the living memory of some of how an American paper summed up the work of Dr. Laws, when he was obliged to withdraw through persecution. The report was something as follows:—"Outlay, so many thousands of pounds. Gains, two European graves. Converts, nil." Yet, who can say what those early days meant to the God-honoured work that is now being done in that very same region?

The supreme difficulty among the Parentintin Indians has been the language. It was unwritten, and there was none who could speak Portuguese, even as there are none to-day who can act as interpreters, hence a difficulty confronted us that I venture to say was never considered to be such a Jericho as it was found to be. A vocabulary of about 150 words had been published, but these

were mostly names of animals, birds, and fish, that proved of little value to us.

What did we do, you ask. Well, everybody carried a note-book with him and all new words were noted down. A simple arrangement, so it seems; but it proved more than Solomon could have done to determine the exact use of some words. My patience at the slow way we were compiling our vocabulary at last gave out, and when my two brethren descended for civilization again, I determined to give all my time to compiling words. But the Chinese puzzle came over the word "daquahabi." I got this word from the Indians for the following objects:—Trousers, blanket, steel, and wire. On comparing my list I hardly knew exactly how to classify this strange but very important word. What connection a blanket had with steel and wire I could hardly perceive, and this was the question I went to bed on. On the return of my brother I explained all the circumstances to him, and asked him what explanation he could give for the word. "Oh," replied he, "fancy you not knowing that—we discovered that weeks ago. It means 'I do not know.'" I thanked him, and slept better after that.

But we had spent two years on the language when God worked a miracle. A lad, who proved

to have exceptional abilities in language work, got saved, and came to us to be taught Portuguese, which we promised to do if he would teach us, as best he could, his language—Tupi. It was through him that the light dawned, and the first rough grammar notes were completed. With his aid, the things that before seemed like mountains, now vanished, and humanly we owe everything to him.

The Brazilians say "Little by little," and though the work of language construction is laborious, we are sure of one thing, that the evangelization of the Indians of this tribe is nearer to-day than it was when we began; and though there is much yet to be done, we have seen the drops, and the showers will fall when others come and find a language in which they can preach the unsearchable riches of the Lord Jesus Christ.

XII.

Teaching the Indians to Pray.

SOME people pray because it is their habit, while others begin, not knowing what they really desire

to ask from God. There is no better motto for prayer than Spurgeon gave for preaching: "Stand up, speak up, and shut up." God desires to know what we have to say, not by how we say it, but by the asking. I had been giving a saved Indian a lecture on prayer, and was emphatic that God delighted in prayers that were truthful, and from the heart. He came to me one day and said he had prayed for all the Indians he knew, while he was washing his clothes, that they might know what he knew. That seemed good. We used to meet together for nightly prayers, and the acme of truthfulness was reached when the Indian prayed "Our Father, we thank Thee for the food thou has given us, but yesterday Leonardo shared the bananas, but he didn't to-day."

But the test came when war was talked of among the Indians. Every day this Indian told us he would not go if they went. The others told him he was afraid to go, and so constant were they in their tauntings that the Indian began to know what tribulation was. We can never forget the night he poured out his heart to God, like a son telling his father all his pent-up misery. The part of his prayer that seemed wrung from his heart was, "They say I am afraid to go and help them to kill, but I am not. I do not wish to do evil." What a triumph of the gospel it seemed, when

only a few months ago they were only too glad to kill.

However, he did not stay with us long, for he was anxious to get back to the man who had so befriended him on the River Madeira, and he asked me if he should go. I told him how God delights to guide those who trust Him, and His guidance was far above all I could give him. So we knelt together, and asked God that He would bring a canoe the following day if He wanted the Indian to leave us. The following day fresh Indians arrived with the asked-for canoe, and so he left us, promising to come back again in the near future.

Such brands are only plucked from the burning by power that comes down from heaven; and what a call it becomes to us! One of their own could be, in God's hand, the means of winning scores of their brothers, if once they really knew that grace to which we owe everything.

XIII.

The Unfinished Task in Amazonia.

TOWARDS the close of the last century, when God so stirred His own people to consider worldwide

evangelization, the battle cry became "The evangelization of the world in this generation." University men were shaken from their book worlds to get out into a world of reality, and the Christless millions became a burden to prayerful men. Let the prayerful soul consider what this move has done for the Indians of South America.

It has been estimated that there are roughly four hundred tribes in Amazonia. Among those four hundred tribes there are nine missions working. All told there are thirty-seven missionaries, inclusive of wives, and the total number of tribes reached is nine. "The number of converts is so small that they can be counted on the fingers. Only the most meagre efforts at teaching the Indians to read and write are being made. The numerical decline which goes on among these tribes makes it hard to say that their situation will improve in the future. Unless it begins to improve immediately, it will hardly be possible for it to improve at all. Indeed, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, taken as a whole, the Indians of Amazonia are facing sure and gradual extinction which nothing seems able to arrest."—(K. G. Grubb).

The speed of the numerical decline can be gauged by a tribe living near to the Parentintins. When the Parentintin work began in 1925 they numbered

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150, and in 1927 all told they numbered 75. Only a rapid move *now* can make Indian evangelization possible, for soon it will cease to trouble us altogether.

The present need is therefore twofold. When Hudson Taylor began that inland offensive in China, when China was mostly an unopened country to the foreigner, he said that the need was to advance upon their knees. Never was the need so great for intercessory prayer for the safety of God's servants in the jungles of South America as to-day. But prayer alone will do little for the Indian himself—we must *go*. To those who will hear His voice there can be nothing promised but risk, sufferings, the loss of all things, and, maybe, death itself. Loneliness, persecution, and weariness, will be the constant companions of the pioneers of the cross of Christ, but there is one thing it will be impossible to lose—if faithful unto death—that crown that shall be the reward of those who have turned many to righteousness. Is it a small thing to follow the steps of him who wrote those painful yet glorious words, "By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers and yet true, as unknown and yet well known; as dying and behold we live, as chastened

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and not killed. . . . If I must needs glory I will glory of the things that concern mine infirmities."

Yes, Thou forgivest, but with all forgiving,
Can'st not renew mine innocence again,
Make Thou, O Christ, a dying of my living,
Purge from the sin but never from the pain.

So shall all speech of now and of to-morrow,
All He has shown me and shall show me yet,
Spring from an infinite and tender sorrow,
Burst from a burning passion of regret.

—F. W. H. MYERS.

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