

The Methodist Orphanage, St. John's, Newfoundland.

In response to a request for information regarding the inception and management of the Methodist Orphanage, St. John's, Newfoundland, the Secretary writes :

"The need of an orphanage had often been spoken of, and in 1887 the idea took practical shape, largely through the exertions of the late Rev. George Boyd. A committee was formed, a small house hired, and a collection taken up here in this city for the purpose of defraying the initial expenses—furnishing, etc. The numbers rapidly grew, and the house was soon found to be too small for our requirements; the idea of building was entertained, but found to be impracticable owing to lack of funds for the purpose, the result being that a larger and more suitable house was hired and equipped, and this latter is at present in our tenancy.

"You will see by our reports that our charge, so far, consists entirely of girls, ranging in age from seven to sixteen years, and who number now twenty-three. Most of them come from our small fishing villages, where the people are, as a rule very poor, and from which we receive very little pecuniary assistance, nearly all the money being collected here in St. John's, the institution thus becoming an additional burden upon an already over-taxed community.

"Some years since an effort was made to secure a grant from the funds of the General Conference, but was unsuccessful, the refusal being based upon technical grounds. Here your Society stepped in; and, beginning with a grant of \$200, made an annual appropriation to our funds, increasing it from time to time—the sum thus appropriated for the current year being \$500, one-half of which has just been received, and which grant has, needless to say, been of very great assistance to us in our work.

"A few years ago, under the will of the late Hon. C. R. Ayre, who had always taken a great interest in the Orphanage, and to whose efforts the inception of the undertaking was largely due, we received a legacy of about \$12,000, which was to be devoted to the erection of an Orphanage building, and which was to be paid in instalments as the work progressed.

"Steps were at once taken to avail ourselves of this sum, and plans for a building were procured, and, with a view to the reception of boys as well as girls, a small tract of land was purchased about two miles from the city, where it was designed to give some training in farming, etc.

"Some opposition to this scheme developed, it being thought by many that such an institution would impose too great a burden upon the connexion for maintenance, and the result was that the larger idea was abandoned, and it was decided to erect the building upon a piece of ground situated within the town limits, and which had been donated for the purpose by our Government.

"Before finally placing the contract, however, and having in view the fact that Conference was then sitting, the committee brought the matter before that body for further consideration, considerable difference of opinion being still evident as to the desirability of erecting a building of even the comparatively small pretensions contemplated. The result was that the idea of a building was again deferred, and at the present time it is designed to erect a building to cost about \$8,000, the balance of the sum available being funded to meet probable future requirements.

"The children hitherto received have nearly all been of

tender age, and few have been sent out. Our aim is to find suitable homes for them, and with a complete, though plain outfit, they are given a fair start in life. In some cases, the results have not given unqualified satisfaction; in others, there is reason to feel that our work is well rewarded. In this particular I suppose we share the experience of similar institutions elsewhere.

"From the above, written hastily owing to a pressure of other work, you will gather that the institution is scarcely yet out of the experimental stage, and we shall not consider ourselves fairly started until we are in our new building. Our great care for the present is to take such action in this connection as shall prove in the future to have been well directed."

Alaska.*

THE following extracts, from a letter written by a missionary at Point Hope, Alaska, will give some idea of the difficulties attending evangelistic and educational work within the Arctic circle :

"It should be remembered when the work among these Esquimaux is considered, that unless the Government plan of introducing reindeer among them is carried out, they can never be taught else but hunters. Unlike the Indians of our western lands, they can never become farmers, for what can be grown where the average annual temperature is far below the freezing point, and the land not free from snow, or the rivers and ponds from ice, more than sixty out of the 365 days of the year? Again, there is no raw material here to be converted into manufactured goods for sale abroad. Each family builds its own house and kills its own meat, the skins of the animals being made by mothers and daughters into the clothing of the household, constructs its own boats, and, in short, if not indolent or intemperate, is sufficient unto itself. They do not require the clothing of white men, nor could they survive the rigors of the climate if they adopted it. The white man who would live here must adopt their kind of clothing. There are not thirty days in any year when the clothing of civilization can be worn with safety north of the Arctic Circle. These natives do not need our cottons, calicoes, muslins, linen, buttons, thread, shoes, stockings, or sewing machines, or many other things of which those mentioned are typical. They do need fire-arms and ammunition, soap and towels, perhaps flour and sugar and some hardware, such as axes, knives and pots, and but little else used in civilization.

"If, by the blessing of God, we can bring them to a knowledge of His love, and induce them to abandon their filthy and immoral habits, we shall have done for them all that, in the nature of things, can be done. I know these views will not accord with those of many who study this problem from a distance, but I also know they are true.

THE SUNDAY SERVICES.

"The services begun last year were resumed the past season as soon as the natives returned from their summer hunting, and continued without intermission until the whaling season this year, the congregations numbering from fifteen to fifty, according to the weather. Shortly after we began the services last year, a large number of the natives expressed a desire to learn to pray and to observe the Lord's day; but it very soon became evident that they only desired to pray for greater success in hunting. As to observing the Lord's day, that portion of the Divine pre-

* See MISSIONARY CAMPAIGNER, August, 1896.