

Mission Field.

MISSION NOTES.

(By H. Sutton in London News)

A letter from that veteran in the Lord's work, the Bishop of Moosonee reminds me that whilst we at home are enjoying our great anniversary meetings, those who are our "substitutes in our God's vineyard," to quote Dr. Horden's words, are labouring in lonely lands where they seldom hear a word from home. When worldly men, and some, alas! who profess to be Christians in deed and truth, talk contemptuously of certain colonial Bishops as "returned empties," it is well to be able to tell of one who has spent nearly two-thirds of his life in missionary work.

This is the case with John Horden, D. D., Bishop of Moosonee. He went out just over forty-one years ago. He was then twenty-four years of age. He had small time allowed him to consider the question as to whether he would go or not. His mind was made up in a few hours. Then, as he has so often told on missionary platforms, he had to find a wife, get married, and be in readiness to depart in about a fortnight, or a whole year would have been lost. Happily he knew one who was like-minded with himself who had given her heart to the Lord and His work—one who did not need a long time to make grand preparations for a wedding—but was willing at once to go out to the Great Lone Land.

Mr. Horden, who was not then ordained, went out with his wife to Moose Factory in 1851. During his voyage across the Atlantic he gained some knowledge of the syllabic system of spelling. In this system each sign represents a syllable. People learn to read it very quickly—though it looks very complicated. So soon as he landed, Mr. Horden tried to master the spoken language. At first he thought his progress very slow, but he acted on the principle of Eliot, the apostle to the Indians: "Prayer and pains, through faith in Jesus Christ, will do anything"; and when the then Bishop of Rupert's Land (Dr. Anderson, who was for some years Vicar of Clifton) went to Moose Factory, he wrote: "I think it very creditable of him (Mr. Horden) to have acquired such fluency in so short a time. It has been, I think, by going at once into tents, taking down often a long conversation from their lips, and sitting often for hours employed in this way. At Albany, when I was speaking with the Indians, they interrupted me by saying that Mr. Horden spoke their own language very well; and last evening, in examining an old chief for confirmation, his spontaneous testimony, without any question on the subject, was to the same effect."

One of Mr. Horden's troubles was that Romanist priests had followed Protestant missionaries, rebaptised

the people, and taught them much that was false. It reminds one of what has gone on in Uganda, to read in a letter written July 18, 1852, by Mr. Horden, these words:—"At Albany, I assure you that I found enough to do; my opponents were very persevering men, and worked in a manner worthy of a better cause. We could not but be friendly, for we lodged in the same house, and messed at the same table. But truly I may say that the Lord was with me, and that might and power are of little avail when the Lord is their opponent. Many were obedient to the Word of the Gospel, and I think that the numbers of Protestants and Romanists are already well-nigh equal—namely, about eighty adults of each. There is, however, this material difference; theirs came in like a swarm of bees, remained four or five days, and then departed, leaving the priests with a very small number; whereas I could always muster a tolerable congregation."

Moose Factory is on the Moose River, which flows from the southwest corner of Hudson Bay. Albany is—for that vast land—only a short distance further north on the west coast of the bay.

Years have not changed the good missionary who has done such grand work for good under conditions of the most trying character. He was ordained in 1852 by Bishop Anderson, and just twenty years later was consecrated Bishop of Moosonee. He has thus been twenty years a Bishop. As another Bishop in that land of loneliness and hardship has written:

"Neath skies with stars that never set,
But round the pole still circle yet:
Where streamers of magnetic light
Enliven winter's lengthening night;
Where niggard suns must stint their ray,
To spend on climate far away;
There Christian brethren bend their knees
In shelter of the forest trees.
Hearts that with heavenly fervour glow
Are found amid the Arctic snow;
And in the dreadful day of doom
When all the dead to judgment come,
When worldly sentence all reversed,
The first are last and last are first;
What if these tribes of sorrow race,
Hindmost now of human race,
Their want and poverty lay by
For robes of immortality?"

Ay, it will be because men like Dr. Bompas, Bishop of Mackenzie River; Dr. Horden Bishop of Moosonee, and others have been willing to live long lives of lonely and, as some would think, monotonous labour, that at the great day from these lands of the frozen north some—many in comparison with the total number of inhabitants—will praise God that "to them was the word of salvation sent."

One of the most touching incidents in the Bishop's letter is his account of the death and burial of Archdeacon Vincent's wife. The Archdeacon was once one of the Bishop's own pupils. He had been married thirty years, and found in his wife a great help in the work at Albany. The Bishop now wants to strengthen the Mission in many parts, and to begin a first-class Mission in the Matawapumme district, close to the Canadian Pacific Railway.

His work is done with but little help now from the C. M. S., and surely he will not be disappointed when he says:—"I have but to express my needs and wishes to induce you to do what you can for your substitute in our God's vineyard."



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