

LABRADOR

Is an extensive triangular peninsula on the north-east coast of British North America, Lat. 50° to 62° N., Lon. 56° to 78° W.; bounded N. by Hudson's Straits, E. by the Atlantic, S.E. by the Strait of Belle Isle, separating it from Newfoundland, S. by the Gulf and River St. Lawrence and Canada, and W. by James' Bay and Hudson's Bay. Its area is estimated at 420,000 sq. miles. The vast interior, inhabited by a few wandering Nascopie Indians, is little known; the coast, mainly but sparsely peopled by Eskimoes, is rugged, bleak and desolate. Seals abound, and the sea is well stocked with cod and other fish. The wild animals include deer (caribou), bears, wolves, foxes, martens, and otters. The Eskimo dogs are trained to draw sledges, to which they are attached in teams of from eight to fourteen.

The temperature in winter ranges lower than that of Greenland, the thermometer often showing a minimum of 70° below freezing-point of Fahrenheit. The climate is too severe to ripen any cereals, and the flora is very limited.

The Moravian Mission to the Eskimoes on the north-east coast of Labrador was established in 1771 by a colony of brethren and sisters from England and Germany, who on July 1st reached Unity's Harbour, and at once began the erection of a station, calling it NAIN. An earlier attempt in 1752 under the direction of John Christian Erhardt had failed, the leader of the little band of missionaries and the captain of the ship, together with several men of the crew, having been killed by the natives. Five more stations were subsequently added—viz., ZOAR and HOPEDALE to the south, and OKAK, HEBRON, and RAMAH to the north of Nain. The distance from Ramah to Hopedale is about three hundred miles.

Since the year 1770, when the "Jersey Packet" was sent out on an exploratory trip, the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel has maintained regular communication with Labrador by despatching each year a ship, specially devoted to this missionary object. Eleven different ships have been employed in this service, ranging from a little sloop of seventy tons to a barque of two hundred and forty tons. Of these only four were specially constructed for Arctic service, including the vessel now in use, which was built in the year 1861. She is the fourth of the Society's Labrador ships bearing the well-known name "THE HARMONY."