

Prince and a Saviour to give repentance—repentance of sins, and by His Holy Spirit to apply to human hearts and lives that remedy for all our ills which is fitly spoken of by the great apostle of the Gentiles as “the power of God unto salvation.”

WORK AMONG THE ESKIMOS.

BY THE BISHOP OF MACKENZIE RIVER.

The following is a summary of an account of two more visits paid by the Rev. I. O. Stringer to the Eskimos last year, which, I am sure, will be read with interest by all who pray for the extension of the Saviour's kingdom throughout the world and His saving health among all nations.

The first visit was to the Eskimo village near the mouth of the Mackenzie, which he reached on August 4th. Pitching his tent alongside the chief's camp, in the middle of the village, he stayed there three weeks and taught the people daily as opportunity offered. A hearty welcome was given him, and he derived much encouragement at the outset by hearing them singing a hymn which they had learnt the previous summer, their voices rising above the noise of the stormy wind and reaching his ears as he approached the village.

They have a good-sized, roughly built log building, which is used as a council chamber, and for other public purposes. In this he held service almost every day. He says: “At first it was an uncertain thing, and interruptions might occur at any moment; but before I left we used to have quite orderly services—singing, reading, and prayer—and sometimes they were hearty. One day in the midst of the service the head of a whale was brought in for all to eat. Some wished to begin at it then and there, but at the word of the chief all refrained. As soon as the last prayer was said and I told them ‘taima’ (that will do) a rush was made for it, and it soon disappeared. A choice piece was given to me to cook and eat. The others omitted the cooking. I learned to like fresh whale whilst there, and ate a good deal.”

Hunting the grampus is their chief occupation in summer, and last season one hundred and fifty-five were killed. After a day's hunt all would meet in the council house and the exploits and adventures of the day would be related with great animation and considerable eloquence. Some of them had said that they would not hunt on Sundays; but one day when Mr. Stringer was in a tent visiting a sick person a cry was raised that whales were in sight, and when he came out of the tent all the men were off in their kyaks. Unable to get the others to attend service, and discouraged and disappointed with the day's proceedings, he was just about to retire for rest when a message

came to say that he was wanted at the council house. He went, “wondering what was wrong, and was surprised to see nearly all the men sitting there quietly” (Their hunt had been quite unsuccessful.) “They said they wanted me to teach them to sing like the Ithillys (Indians). So I sat down and we sang and read and prayed for about two hours. They were very attentive, and we had a most profitable time. There in the midnight twilight, after the worry and disappointment of the day, I learnt a lesson of trust and patience that stood me in good stead for many a day. ‘It is always darkest before the dawn,’ and we often complain at disappointments and discouragements, when they may be but the prelude to opportunity and blessing. So the days went on—one day dark and dreary, the next bright and joyful. Many seemed eager to learn. Others were careless and seemed to take no interest.”

Amongst other purposes the council house was used for dancing. On the night after his arrival, as he was sitting there, a dance commenced, which is best described in his own words: “I watched them for a while, and before I knew it they had turned it into a ‘medicine making’ performance. So I thought I would see it through. It became wild. Had it not been that the ones who took part were those who were friendly to me I think I should have been nervous, or, in other words, *scared*. When you see a big knife brandished in close proximity to you, and the brandisher going through all sorts of contortions and mimicry, such as few lunatics would be guilty of, you begin to wonder what is going to happen next. At least I did, and several times would have been glad to be out of there; but I thought if I left they would think I was scared, and that would never do. So I saw it to the finish. I think several of them were possessed. Otherwise, I don't know how they could have gone through the performance as they did. Perhaps it is just as well that I witnessed it once, but I don't think I shall again.”

Having made considerable progress with the language, he, on this occasion, took no interpreter with him. He had, therefore, to depend on himself—the best way, probably, of getting hold of the people, as well as of the language. On one occasion, when teaching in a small village on the opposite side of the channel, “one of the men exclaimed with great earnestness: ‘Oh! I hope you will be able to teach us all soon. Hurry up and learn our language well, so that we may understand everything. We may soon die, and we are not prepared. Kyeta! kyeta!’ (Quick! quick!).” Mr. Stringer adds: “Something about the manner of the man and the eager assent of the others went through me like a thrill, and I realized what a responsibility rested upon me, and how little I had been doing.”