

MISSIONARY WORK IN COLD REGIONS.

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(Continued.)

IN the year of Grace, 1771, as related in our previous article, the first Moravian missionary settlement was established on the coast of Labrador. For the more stability of this laudable and Godly enterprise the missionaries not only obtained a grant of land from the British Government, which, of course, would have been sufficient, but they also formally purchased the same from the Eskimos, a proceeding which made a deep and lasting impression upon the savages, who, from first to last, have been treated with the utmost consideration and respect by their evangelists. The occupants of this first centre of missionary operations consisted of fourteen persons, amongst whom were the veterans Haven and Drachart. Although, at this time, the Eskimo generally seemed amicably disposed towards the Brethren, they nevertheless considered it prudent, after having erected their dwellings, to surround them with pallisades. "Their situation," writes one of the missionaries, "was critical, it was, as if each, with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other held a weapon."

This first settlement was distinguished by the name of Nain. It had for many years formed the meeting place of hundreds of the Eskimo of the Nuenguak tribe, and here, at this period, they gathered together in large numbers during the summer months, for the purpose of being instructed by the Moravians, and at the approach of winter, withdrawing to various parts of the coast.

The work of the missionaries having thus assumed somewhat a character of permanence, it now became necessary to make provision for the wants of the Brethren, which, notwithstanding their frugality and simplicity, could scarcely be adequately supplied by the resources of the land of their adoption. To meet this necessity a company of the Brethren in England united to send a ship annually, laden with supplies, to the missionaries; and to recompense themselves for the immense expenditure such an undertaking would necessarily involve, it was agreed that the ship should also prosecute trading with the natives. The missionaries themselves, at the same time, readily undertook to earn something for their own subsistence, and this they nobly did, either by building boats, or making tools and utensils for the natives. To the ship just mentioned there attaches a remarkable interest from the fact that she made a voyage annually to the coast of Labrador, for upwards of a century, without a mishap or loss of any kind, and, unless very recently condemned, the writer is of opinion that she still continues her eminently successful career, under the blessing of that good Father whose protecting Hand has guided and di-

rected her movements during numberless perils on the deep. Her name is the *Harmony*.

Day by day did the missionary grow in the confidence of the natives, and although many heard the preaching of the Gospel with grave astonishment, and some indeed with ill-concealed contempt, not a few were visibly moved thereby, and expressed profound awe and reverence for religious truths. It was, however, with the greatest difficulty that they convinced the natives of their natural corruption. They were ready to believe this of other peoples, but by no means disposed to believe it of themselves.

In 1773 the Rev. P. E. Layritz was deputed to visit the newly established missionary settlement of Nain, by the Brethren in London. Having arrived on the southern coast somewhere in the vicinity of Camp Island, many of the Eskimo inhabitants who had enjoyed a by no means creditable reputation, put off to meet him in their kayaks, and in the most friendly and hospitable manner invited that gentleman and his companions to land. Mr. Layritz was good enough to be obedient to their wishes, and, having reached the shore, he speedily collected a large congregation to whom he preached with the assistance of an interpreter. At the conclusion of his discourse, which was heard with much attention by the savages, they promised to visit Nain in order that they might hear more of the good news which had that day been made known to them. A few of them who had already spent a short time at the settlement, declared that Mr. Drachart had told them the very same words. Thus the faithful labors of the men of God were already receiving blessings both earlier and greater than they had dared to hope for. The Eskimo are naturally and persistently the most unimpressible little people in existence, and it is doubtful whether they are not the most hardened, and the least amenable to spiritual influences of all the savages of heathendom. This feature in the character of the people of Labrador was not wholly unknown to the early Moravians, many of whom, as we have shewn, having spent years amongst the same people in Greenland. They were therefore fully aware of the almost insurmountable difficulties of their self-imposed task; but heartily did they set themselves to perform it.

Governor Pallisier, of Newfoundland, who had done what lay in his power to further the efforts of those who had set themselves, under the protection of the Almighty Creator, to the work of evangelizing the benighted Eskimo of Labrador, continued to take an interest alike true and deep, in their future labors, and ever and anon he sent a representative from the capital to inspect personally on the coast of Labrador and to report to him. On one occasion, about the space of two years after the establishing of Nain, Lieutenant Curtis was sent by the Governor of Newfoundland to make an inspection of the newly founded settlement. At his request the heads of the thirty families who comprised the settlement, were gathered together