

Work for God at Home and Abroad.

MISSIONARY LIFE IN THE DIOCESE OF NEWFOUNDLAND.

(Continued from page 162.)

THE travelling in winter is done by means of a wooden sleigh or cometique, and a team of those much belied Labrador dogs. These are supposed to be of such a ferocious disposition as to cause a man to go among them with his life in his hands, as it were. Experience teaches, however, that with very few exceptions they are more gentle than, and quite as affectionate and docile as, any Newfoundland dogs. Living without ever seeing domestic animals, and accustomed to make a feast upon any wild animals they come across and can master, one is not surprised to find that hens, goats, pigs, or cows are hardly safe when within their reach. It is true that now and then a woman or a child falls a prey, but such cases are rare; and, upon inquiry, it is generally found to have been caused by provocation, or possibly through the dogs mistaking the seal-clad figure of a woman or child for some wild animal. Seldom or never has a man been attacked.

Each team has a leader—a dog which goes in front of the rest when harnessed to the cometique, and guides the others in accord with the 'ouk' or 'arrak' of the driver. A long seal-skin line, with harness, attaches them to their 'cart,' and with this and two men thereon a team of six or seven dogs, with fairly good roads, has very little difficulty in accomplishing a forty-mile journey in a day; even ninety miles have been covered with a light cometique, good ice, and one driver. Their power of endurance is something wonderful. They will go for days without food, seemingly quite contented; and even when at work very little satisfies them.

From what has been said about the disposition and migratory habits of the people, it can be imagined that the missionary's work is of a very peculiar nature. Till lately there was neither church nor parsonage in the mission, a fisherman's hut answering for both purposes. Now, a fairly comfortable parsonage has been erected, and the upper storey is being converted into a chapel. With such a scattered population as there is in the mission, a church would

be of very little use. During some two months in the year a congregation of from twenty to forty can be gathered together at Cartwright and Rigoulette, and a like number at Spotted Islands. At the southern extremity of the mission some five or six families attend, but in most places and at most times we have to minister to isolated families.

The services of the Church are, of necessity, more like family prayers than anything of a public nature. The missionary calls on a family, and, having catechised the children, heard them read and spell a little, holds what may be called a public service, and then, after family prayers, at which the same congregation is present, retires for the night. The next day another family is visited, or it may be two; and so on, day after day. In addition to the unsatisfactory nature of the work itself, there are difficulties to be met with whose name is legion. A few only, I may mention. A small hut, with, perhaps, a smoky stove, dim light, dirty floor and surroundings, are by no means things that add solemnity to a service; much less so does a squalling child, or the rush of a dog or two on the birch-bark roof. At times the parent's attention is occupied in quieting a feverish infant, when the words of solemn exhortation or of prayer must fall on dull ears. Then again the rustling on the house-tops warns the proprietor that the dogs are there, and that there is danger of one of them putting his paw through. He at once seizes a junk of wood, and sallies forth to warn off the offender, and then, with a 'get out of that,' thud comes the junk against the frail roof, off scamper the dogs, and the man returns and quietly takes his seat as before.

Then, again, a fight may take place before the door between the parson's team and that of the proprietor of the establishment in which he has taken up his quarters. In the summer this is varied by the head of the house asking, in the middle of the service: 'Would there be any harm, sir, in our hauling up the boat a bit, as the tide is rising and she'll float off?' and then the best part of the congregation accompany him to haul up the boat before the service is resumed. Interruptions of various kinds take place, till the poor parson is sometimes in despair of ever getting a hearing.

It may be asked: 'Would it not be possible