

THE LABRADOR MISSION.

REPORT FOR 1878-79.

It is proposed in this Report to take a cursory view of the work accomplished during the past two years, 1876-78. Not that there has been very much of moment to notice, or any important changes to comment on, but that friends may be kept informed of the steady progress of our mission, in the face of many discouragements.

In February, 1876, an appeal addressed particularly to ladies, was circulated in the hope that the mission might gain subscriptions from Ladies' Missionary Associations, and similar societies. Though not successful to any great extent, yet we now number such amongst our contributors, in various parts of Canada, the United States, and England.

The Winter Station of the Mission is at Esquimaux River, which is now quite a settlement. It is almost deserted in summer, when the people move to the outside islands to carry on their fisheries. Writing in July, 1876, the Rev. Mr. Butler says, "The River always looks so pleasant in summer it seems a pity we cannot live there the year round; but besides being out of the way of the vessels and fisheries, it is infested with swarms of flies and mosquitoes, which make it almost intolerable in calm weather." In the same letter Mr. Butler mentions the work of the previous winter as "very pleasant and encouraging." Formerly the church had also to serve as a school-house, but being too large, and not easily heated, the people built a new school. It is a log building, put up in the style of their own houses, and covered with birch-bark and sods. The teacher (Miss Brodie) and children were glad to get into it. Mr. Butler further writes:—"The pleasantest feature of the winter's work to me was the interest shown by the boys in the little meetings on Sunday evenings. So anxious were they to be present that some would come long distances, over dangerous ice and snow, to meet together." By the arrival of Miss Warriner in the summer of this year (1876) Miss Brodie was at last relieved from her devoted and untiring services among the people, returning to Montreal in feeble health. Mr. Butler also took a short trip to the United States, and on returning to Labrador in September, passed through Montreal, where he addressed a meeting on behalf of his mission work. He stated that two years previous he had felt discouraged and thought it would be best to give up the Mission, but shortly after, the work of God's Spirit was so evident in their midst that he soon felt quite differently. Some desirable people had come into the settlement, and had taken hold with those already there, in the church work. Many men in winter spent the week away from home, cutting wood, returning for Sunday. They held a weekly prayer meeting, and spent other evenings in singing the "Moody and Sankey" hymns, &c. In the revival of the winter before last, a number of boys were converted; these afterwards joined the little church, and proved earnest workers. They often went out on the hills to pray, and sometimes held meetings among themselves in the house. They were frequently found talking together on religious subjects. The people value the mission highly, giving up to, and even beyond their means, for its support. They do more in proportion than many in more favored lands. Besides working at the buildings gratuitously, they do other necessary work, and furnish all the fire-wood used. They are also pledged to give fifty dollars a year in money, but the last two years having been exceptionally poor ones in the fisheries, the whole amount has not been contributed. Some of the men own salmon posts and seal fisheries, but these and the herring fisheries are always uncertain—their principal means of support is the cod fishery.

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