

PREPARING FOR WINTER.—OUR HOUSE.

As seventy or eighty degrees of frost is not uncommon in the winter months we tried to make our house as tight and snug as possible. This house (which was most kindly lent to us by Mr. Noble) was 18 feet long by 12 feet wide. We divided it into two compartments, one of which we used for kitchen and school-room, and the other was our sitting, dining, and bedroom combined. To keep out the piercing wind we had, first, an inside lining of boards; second, a coating of felt; third, inner wall of house; fourth, another coating of felt; fifth, other stout boards which formed the outer wall of house; and lastly the whole was covered with canvas which was nailed to the outer wall.

OUR WORK FOR THE LORD.

Our house being thus prepared for Arctic gales and frost we tried to gain the confidence of the people, and we then invited them to send their little ones to our house for instruction. So readily did they respond to our request that scarcely a child on the island was absent from our first meeting. We taught them the syllabic characters, Scripture texts, some hymns, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, and we found them bright, intelligent little creatures. It is an encouraging fact that out of a total of forty-five on our list we have had for three months an average daily attendance of thirty-one, and when I state that thirty altogether can now read and have a fair knowledge of the leading facts of Scripture history, friends will see that good progress has been made.

Visiting from tent to tent (the Eskimo live in sealskin tents in the summer time) was our first great means of reaching the people. We were received kindly and listened to with great attention. Remarks were heard from time to time which showed, so to speak, the utter blank in the people's lives. One woman said, "Yes, let us hear something better, something more satisfying than we have hitherto heard." Another remarked, "This is the first time we have heard such news; why did not white men tell us such before?" And why did they not hear before of Him Who is mighty to save, of Him Who alone can really satisfy the soul, and give glory beyond the grave.

OUR TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS.

As the people manifested such a desire to listen to the Gospel message, we decided to erect some building where they could meet together. A sealskin church is quite a unique structure, but as there was no timber to be had this was the only shelter we could make. Some forty sealskins were sewn together and stretched on a frame. Old provision-boxes

and a few boards were used for seats, two lamps were suspended from the roof, and a slow-combustion stove, in which we burnt coal and ashes, was placed inside. The people, as may well be imagined, had to be instructed in the most simple manner. Patiently and perseveringly we taught them the being and attributes of God, expounded God's holy laws, and set before them Jesus Christ as the only Saviour for sinners. The whole of St. Matthew's Gospel was also read aloud by the Eskimo at our meetings: this was explained by Mr. Parker and myself; and three of the people, after Mr. Parker's death, moved by the Holy Spirit, desired to be enrolled in the Saviour's "little flock." I am thankful to say that the noble Bible Society, which may well be called the backbone of our missionary societies, is now preparing the four Gospels in the Syllabic characters for the Eskimo, and, altogether, the work is full of encouragement and joy.

STARVING DOGS.—THE TABERNACLE DEVoured.

By the 15th of November we experienced (some days) about fifty degrees of frost, and as the winter advanced, the snowstorms swept our island home with terrific force. The Eskimo, not being able to venture out on the frozen sea to catch seals, suffered much through lack of food, and could not, therefore, feed their canine helpers. The poor dogs pressed by the pangs of hunger, managed one night to climb over the snow walls which we had built around our little church. Once on top of the roof they soon tore the sealskins off and devoured them. In the dim light (the moon was shining a little) we could see about a hundred of these nocturnal visitors, and the noise they made was almost deafening as they fought and growled over their tough repast. After a sharp battle we managed to drive these wretched creatures away, and we then patched up the holes with old bags, pieces of canvas, etc. I should mention here that the church is now covered and lined with canvas which friends sent out from home. It is still, however, a despicable building, quite unsuited for the worship of God, and I hope with the help of friends to have something of a more durable nature later on.

ARRIVAL OF THE "ALERT."

In spite of the feeling of utter desolation and loneliness which at times filled the soul, and the opposition we experienced from some of the conjurers, the winter passed swiftly and, on the whole, pleasantly away. On the 23rd of August, 1895, to our great joy, Mr. Noble's vessel unexpectedly arrived, bringing "good news from a far country."

OUR DAILY LIFE.

After the vessel left on the 28th of September we continued our daily routine, which was