

## HUDSON'S BAY MISSIONS.

To bring Hudson's Bay as a Mission field before the reader, it may be necessary to make a few historical statements, to connect in his mind the Society's present undertaking with past proceedings. The Territory is so vast that it sweeps through nearly every degree of latitude and longitude between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans,—the Lakes and the Arctic Circle; and has a character of its own,—an aspect unlike that of any other great section of this continent, for intersected mountain, rock, and plain,—lake, river, and morass,—forest and prairie. Its waters are abundant, and after descending for hundreds of miles, some reach the St. Lawrence, others the Atlantic direct, some the Pacific, and others the Arctic Sea. According to the testimony of explorers, residents, and Missionaries, the timber in some parts is of the finest dimensions and quality, and the soil well adapted to agricultural purposes; while other parts are discouragingly sterile, and apparently useless, except for the minerals they may contain. But the furs and fish of this region are a source of wealth to the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company. In 1699 the Company obtained its Royal charter when Charles II reigned, and though the hostility of the French in 1782 destroyed half-a-million of property, yet many forts and stations, widely scattered, and drearly located, are now possessed.

The chief agents, clerks, voyageurs, and other servants of the Hudson's Bay Company form no insignificant, uninteresting body of persons calling for the attention of our Missionary Society; and the periodical visits of thousands of Indians to, and rather protracted stay of some at the forts, greatly increases the loudness and urgency of the call for that attention. It was supposed some years ago that not less than 110,000 Indians were in the Bay Territory; but we should make a higher calculation,—certainly, of the number of souls accessible to our Missionaries within and beyond the Company's boundaries. But taking the lowest calculation, there is an extensive range for the display of Missionary charity and self-denial. There are already Protestant efforts made in some directions; and we wish christian success to a candid, christian course. But there is a Papal power there in wakeful exercise, only less pestiferous and godless than Paganism itself, which must be enervated and annihilated, with all the inane superstitions, and corruptions, and savagism of every debased tribe of the frigid North.

More than twenty years ago our Missionary Society in Canada sent Missionaries on visits to a few of the Company's nearest posts; the "true, immortal seed" was sown; fruit continues to this day. It was not, however, till 1840 that there was a systematic occupation of the Territory by Wesleyan Missionaries. In that year the Parent Society in England, which had made arrangements with the Honourable Company, sent out the Rev. Messrs. Barnley, Mason, and Rundle, who were soon joined by the Rev. Messrs. James Evans, T. Hurlburt, and P. Jacobs. These occupied five Stations, Norway House, Edmonton, Moose Factory, Lac-La-Pluie, and the Pic: and it is a pleasing recollection, that of the six labourers, three were from Canada. Mr. Evans was the first and last resident Superintendent of Missions in the Territory; and when he died, an indomitable zeal was felt to have become