

THE MORAVIAN MISSIONS IN LABRADOR.

ABOUT a Century and a half ago whaling ships brought tidings to Europe of a heathen nation far away in the icy regions of the north. Foreign Missions were then generally thought to be a dream of fanatics, but the Moravian Church at Herrnhut, though small in numbers, felt impelled to help this people living in ignorance and wretchedness. Wide expanses of ice, huge bergs, and Arctic snows seemed barriers impassable to the Gospel and civilization; but before the power of Christian love even barriers of ice melt away.

While these Christian people were deliberating, two cousins, men of dauntless courage, resolved to be the bearers of the Gospel of Christ to these regions, and without friends, and with but two shillings in their pockets, they left home for Copenhagen. By Royal consent they shipped as carpenter and cook in order to work their passage to Greenland, where their first experiences were full of hardship. Their lodging was a hole dug in the earth, and raw seal-flesh prepared with oatmeal and train-oil their frequent fare.

Five long years they sowed without any evident fruits, but in due time the harvest came, and the heathen began to accept Christ in hundreds, and to publish the news of the Gospel to their fellow-countrymen.

As years rolled on the Home Church sent out more missionaries, extending their labors to the opposite shores of Labrador where the natives were in keeping with the wilder and more desolate character of the coast. The first missionary and boat's crew which left for that land never returned. In the following year one of the Greenland missionaries who could speak the Esquimaux tongue visited the coast, and being well pleased with the inhabitants, settled at Nain, where, not without much labor, he gathered the people together in a mission station for instruction. Additional men were sent out from the mother church and new stations were opened, until there are now in Labrador six centres with from one to four missionaries at each, and above 1500 Esquimaux who are professing Christians. The names of these stations, beginning from the southernmost, are, Hopedale, Zoar, Nain, Hebron, Okak and Rama. A description of Nain will be a good representation of the method of life at these stations.