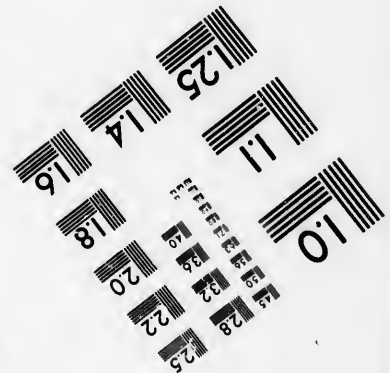
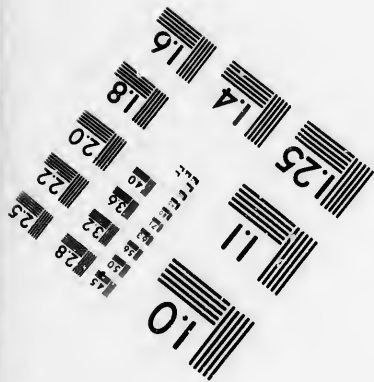
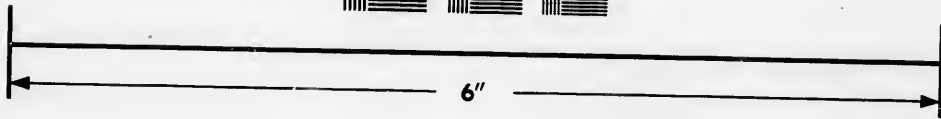
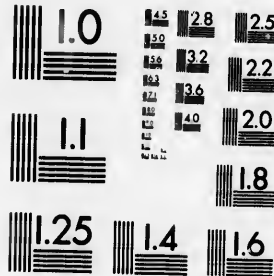


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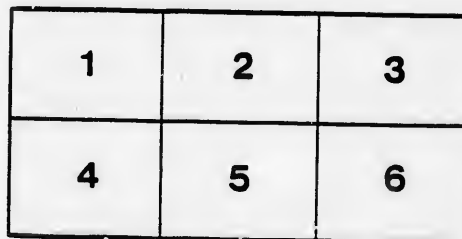
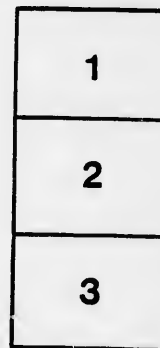
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Church in the Colonies.

No. XXVI.

THE LABRADOR MISSION.

LETTERS

OF THE

REV. H. P. DISNEY AND THE REV. A. GIFFORD.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR

THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL;

AND SOLD BY THE

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,

GREAT QUEEN STREET, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS,

AND 4, ROYAL EXCHANGE;

RIVINGTONS, HATCHARDS, AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.

1851.

THE interest generally felt in the Labrador Mission is considered sufficient warrant for publishing in a separate form the letters which have been lately received from the first two Missionaries. The Rev. H. P. Disney was stationed at Battle Harbour in the summer of 1850, but he was preceded on the coast of Labrador by the Rev. Algernon Gifford, who entered upon his ministerial duties at Forteau, on August 12th, 1849.

On November 15th, 1850, the Society granted the sum of 250*l.* to purchase some ground with premises at English Point, thus meeting the want mentioned by Mr. Gifford, page 11. .

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LABRADOR.

THE following letter from the Rev. H. P. Disney was lately received by the *Society for the Propagation of the Gospel*:—

Harbour Grace, Newfoundland,
2d Nov. 1850.

MY DEAR MR. HAWKINS,

IN accordance with the direction contained in your letter received the day I left Greenock for Labrador, I send you a few hasty notices of my proceedings in my Mission.

I arrived at St. John's, Newfoundland, on 20th May, after a pleasant passage of eleven days, in which we had one or two escapes, thank God, of running into icebergs in the fog.

I met a most kind and hospitable reception from the Bishop, and found him as usual immersed in business. After a detention of exactly a fortnight at St. John's, I sailed in one of Messrs. C. & E. Hunt's vessels, the "Cheetah," for St. Francis' Harbour, Labrador, which during last summer was my headquarters.

I here found an establishment of Messrs. C. & E. Hunt, of Winchester Street, London, in which a considerable number of Eskimaux families are employed : and their comfortable houses, good clothing, and generally their happy appearance and good conduct, do the greatest credit to Messrs. Hunt and their active and zealous agent, Mr. Saunders, and his estimable lady.

How much more prudent and politic—how much more humane and christian is it, to treat the natives of any country in which English merchants carry on their business thus, than, as is too often the case, to drive them away—to exterminate them, it may be. Generally it is very difficult to make them give up their roving and bad habits, “received by tradition from their fathers,” but such fair, kind treatment as the Eskimaux meet with at St. Francis’ Harbour and Sandwich Bay (where the Messrs. Hunt have another establishment, with a larger number of Eskimaux in their employment than at St. Francis’ Harbour,)—such treatment will not fail in any country to convert the natives from foes into useful traders or dealers.

The number of Englishmen who have married Eskimaux women, from time to time, is very considerable ; and this also produces a good feeling between us and the Eskimaux, and has prepared and made ready the way for spreading Christianity among the Eskimaux scattered through Labrador and all the northern parts of America.

As a consequence of these favourable circum-

stances, I found the Eskimaux women and children, —many of whom had been baptized by the Bishop and the Clergymen who attended his Lordship two years ago to Labrador,*—more anxious to receive instruction. I opened school the first Sunday I was at St. Francis' Harbour: and though none of the people from Newfoundland had at that time reached Labrador, I had a large school, chiefly Eskimaux. On each Wednesday and Friday, during my stay at St. Francis' Harbour, I kept school, and the Eskimaux women and children attended it, some of them coming from a considerable distance. They showed the greatest anxiety to learn to speak and read English.

I have a district of above two hundred miles of coast under my care. For there is no Clergyman or schoolmaster from Red Bay, the extremity of Mr. Gifford's Mission, to Hopedale, the most southern of the Moravian settlements, a distance of more than three hundred miles. I have a population during summer of more than ten thousand, and a resident winter population in my own immediate Mission, (which consists of Henley Harbour, Cape Charles, Battle Harbour, St. Francis' Harbour, Venison Island, and Seal Islands, and about twenty other considerable harbours,) of about six hundred. I cannot, therefore, afford to devote as much time as I wish to the teaching of the Eskimaux. I trust, however, please God, next summer to see a good boys' and girls'

* *Vide* Church in the Colonies, XIX. and XXI.

boarding and day school established at Battle Harbour, which is to be the head-quarters of the Mission; and at which a house has been begun, to be used at first as a school-house, until a house in a more convenient situation shall be built for the school, when the present one is to be used as a parsonage. I need not tell you that there was neither church, school-house, nor parsonage, belonging to the Church, (or indeed belonging to any religious denomination, except the Moravian settlements at Hopedale, Nain, Hebron, and Okkak, two, three, and four hundred miles to the north,) in Labrador, and all these have to be provided. With the aid of Messrs. Hunt and Messrs. T. and D. Slade of Poole, who have establishments at Battle Harbour and Venison Island, churches at Battle and St. Francis' Harbour will, I hope, be finished next year, please God: that at St. Francis' Harbour was commenced on the 3d September, and I hope it is now progressing rapidly, and also the school-house above-mentioned at Battle Harbour.

I give you a list of the Subscribers to the Mission:—

Messrs. C. & E. Hunt, London (annually)	£50	0	0
Messrs. T. & E. Slade, Poole	50	0	0
John Barlow, Esq.	1	0	0
Robert A. Disney, Esq.	1	0	0
Lambert Disney, Esq.	1	0	0
J. Tunbridge, Esq., Deputy Ordnance Store-keeper, St. John's, Newfoundland	1	0	0
Robert Ayles, Esq., Carbonar, Newfoundland	1	1	0

A very considerable number of the fishermen promised to subscribe quantities of fish ; and Messrs. Saunders, Bush-Bendell, Howe, Reynolds, Davis, and others, promised to receive their contributions and to convert them into money.

I ought to mention that I visited all the harbours (except one or two minor ones) from Henley Harbour to Sandwich Bay, most of which had never before been visited by a Clergyman—above twenty. I had large congregations at eight different places in stores provided by the merchants or planters. I administered the Lord's Supper at five different places. I admitted fifty persons into the Church by baptism, and married nine couples. Considering that the Bishop had last year and the year before admitted so large a number, it will be seen from the above statement how important the Mission to Labrador is likely to prove. I sailed or rowed in a whale-boat many hundred miles, and both on Sundays and week-days I was incessantly occupied with teaching and preaching, visiting the sick, dispensing medicines, &c.

Yours very truly,

HENRY P. DISNEY.

REV. ERNEST HAWKINS.

The following pages form part of a Report addressed to the Bishop of Newfoundland by the Rev. Algernon Gifford :—

L'Anse Amour, Forteau Bay, Labrador,
June 13th, 1850.

MY LORD,

ALTHOUGH I have been in possession of your Lordship's letter of the 23d of May but a few days, and see at present no opportunity of forwarding a reply, yet I hasten to record my pleasure and gratitude at the kind and friendly greeting it contains, and my thankfulness for the good Providence of God by which your lordship, my other friends in St. John's, and myself here, have all been preserved during the interval of our peculiar separation.

Your Lordship is kind enough to inquire after my personal case. I may briefly say in this behalf, that I have been preserved in perfect health during the whole of my residence here, and have been comfortably accommodated and cared for by my very worthy host and his family. I have found the *cold* somewhat severer than at St. John's, but the weather has been by no means less enjoyable. Labrador, in these respects, is not so bad as is represented. But if it be not the solemnity of a Missionary's duties here, and generally the holy influences of religion, nothing can resist its extreme loneliness and seclusion.

I regret that in my second letter of last year I should have appeared to abandon the proposal of my first, of purchasing English Point. I only intended to apologize for writing so much upon the subject, *if, after all*, the property should not be for sale. I still think, with the confirmation of the whole

winter's experience, that the *settlement of the Mission depends upon this point*. Whether there are still obstacles between the sale and purchase of the property, Mr. B—— is best able to declare. The hope of having the pleasure of hoisting the episcopal and ecclesiastical colours on the flag-staff there, was a cheering prospect I much clung to. From this hope I look forward to a church with its various blessings—to a school with its usefulness, and to the effects of both, with the blessing of the Almighty, in promoting the temporal and spiritual improvement of this hitherto much-neglected people. And I continue to hope and *pray* for these things, and endeavour to do so with all patience. There is undoubtedly a large field of labour here—much work to be done, and very many difficulties to be met and overcome:—success in all which, I know certainly, according to the ordinary dispensation of things, cannot be looked for suddenly and at once. Nor is the existence of abundant “means” and outward privileges my *sole* guarantee of immediate success. But I think, in respect of this Mission and its neighbourhood, there is a peculiar necessity of hastening the full development of its resources. The more suddenly churches and schools arise to attest the reality and permanency of the undertaking, the more strength shall we *retain* and the more gain. For these outward things avail much in nourishing zeal and good will, which multiply and increase in preservation.

I will not detain your Lordship with a whole catalogue of the inconveniences and disadvantages which attend holding the services of the Church in private houses, because I know that of most of them you must be well aware. But there is one, dependent upon the habits of the people here, which is peculiar. It is customary here, and on the opposite coast of Newfoundland, for travellers on long or short stages, compelled by necessity, or without compulsion, to "put up," without invitation or apology, at any neighbour's *house* they may pass in their journey. They stay their own convenience, and use the house and table of their host as they would their own. In the absence of houses for public accommodation, there is a general understanding to this effect. But the beautiful principle of Christian hospitality which is at the ground of it, is spoiled by the idleness and inconsiderate want of generosity by which it is abused. Thus, the congregations assembled for the services most readily consider themselves the guests of the master of the house,—nor in most cases would he desire it otherwise. While this is the case with the majority of attendants, there are a certain few whose presence one would much desire, living perhaps at a more impracticable distance, whose delicacy keeps them away, so that many times the more worthy are the less made welcome. Mr. D——'s house is remarkable for its hospitality, and during the winter my congregations were his Sunday guests. As many as

thirty have remained the whole Sunday, and many of them have sought lodging also.

Another hindrance has arisen in other places, from private differences between individuals and the family where the service may have been held. But there is an advantage in this, that it discovers disagreements, and enables me to do what I can to heal them; still it is not the less an evil. And I think that the wide difference between success and failure, so far as outward things are concerned, in the removal of these inconveniences, rests upon the early possession for Church purposes of some available spot for settlement; and further, for the weighty considerations mentioned in my first letter upon the subject, that a peculiar fitness and many favourable circumstances attach themselves to English Protestants for this object.

But leaving this reference to the things of the material Church, I may assure you that through the strength and blessing of the "upholding arms," the inward influences of religion are visibly extending their reign. There is a degree of simplicity and boldness in the increasing devotion of some of my people, which human expectations could never have presumed upon in so short a time, nor human endeavours ever deserve. I know that it would be impossible for you to accept from each of your Clergy all they might feel pleasure in writing upon such cases, so I do not venture to particularize. I know not any in the Mission who have in any way fallen off from the good desires of last

Fall ; and many—if I may not here, also, say *all*—earnestly desire greater privileges. Many elderly and young people await an opportunity for the imposition of your hands in the holy rite of Confirmation, and some with the earnest desire of thus becoming communicants.

I offer your Lordship my most grateful and affectionate thanks for the kind advice of your letter, and will give it my strictest obedience.

We can indeed avail ourselves of the efficacy of prayer, in procuring help for each other from “Him who helps, and strengthens, and supports all.” And indeed in many of my difficulties and trials, overwhelmed by a sense of my own unavailing weakness, and in the absence of personal comforters, I have received conscious comfort and strength from the assurance that many stronger prayers have prevented and accompanied my own, and that an answer will be given to their faithful requests. I would, my Lord, that many of us could seek more earnestly and enjoy more fully this sympathy of spirit !

But I must proceed, for I fear my letter is already too long.

After the date of the Report I furnished last Fall, I was occupied till January within the limits of L’Anse Amour, and Grand Point. My fixed rule for the services was *weekly* at the former place in Mr. D——’s house, for Forteau generally and L’Anse à Loup ; and fortnightly at Mr. Cribb’s, for Forteau generally, and English Point (two men), and the Jersey

side particularly. I visited Blanc Sablon, and Grand Point, as any particular duty called or convenient opportunity for the journey presented itself. I received into the Church all the children of L'Anse au Coteau, in public service, some at Blanc Sablon, and some in their own house. I have made it a rule to perform Baptisms in the full services of Sundays, or to make them the occasion of a full service. I baptized two children at Bradore, who, having been in good health, were reserved in hope of this opportunity since your Lordship's first visit. The father of one of the infants came to L'Anse Amour to seek the blessing, and to convey me to and fro. In the month of November, no doubt by the wise Providence of God, it became my anxious and solemn duty to attend in sickness, in death, and to the grave, the meek and simple-hearted Mrs. Elworthy, Mr. D——'s eldest daughter: a young woman born at L'Anse au Loup, and who had seen no more of the outward world than is comprised in twenty miles of this barren coast. But she appeared to have learnt more of the *kingdom of God which is within*, and witnessed on her death-bed brighter fruits than could have belonged to the scanty sowing and indifferent watering of the good seed which fell to her lot. We could all see plainly the hand of a merciful Father in this affliction. She was delirious throughout her sickness, with the intervention of but small periods, in which she had a mind alone for devotion. A Deacon's difficulties, therefore, under the circumstances, were somewhat

less than they might have been; but in her behalf I could remember that "much had not been given," and that "little would therefore be required." I am unable to give you the premonition of writing on mourning paper—as we possess none.

The burial-ground you so needfully consecrated here is handsomely and substantially fenced in.

Towards the end of January I started upon a visit to Red Bay, making Mr. T——'s abode at W. St. Modest my half-way house both going and returning. I arrived at Red Bay on a Friday, and stayed till Sunday. Some of the people here are of a serious mind. I think I told your Lordship, in the Fall, that I considered this a difficult part of the Mission. The people are poorer, less united, and of less spirit, than elsewhere.

Upon my return, I persevered in the plans mentioned above, till May 25th, when, the ice having opened in the Straits, I launched my boat, and under the pilotage of one of Mr. D——'s men, set out for Anchor Point; but the tide being against us, we reached no nearer than Savage Cove, ten miles eastward of my intended destination. But I had reason to be thankful in the issue for touching at this place. There is here a family of sixteen persons, two of whom are infants, born during the winter, who, being in danger of life, were baptized by a neighbour. There is not one of this large family who knows a letter of the alphabet. Some of them were at the services at Anchor Point in the Fall, but the parents were at home sick.

Eight months had elapsed since I left the Newfoundland shore last year, and during this time I found two young men, like Mr. E——, left widowers; and during this long, lonely winter, many others also have been visited with heavy sicknesses. One of these mothers left four, and the other three children. The school, I regret to say, has not been proceeded with; a drawback in some of the principal men, arising from the troubles just mentioned, and subsequently doubts as to whether they should ultimately be able to support it, having deterred them till they could make more definite arrangements. I hope to be able to settle these points upon the conditions mentioned in your letter, before I leave this season. Some of the parties interested think they can raise 50% a-year for the master's salary.

After proceeding as far to the westward as Derby Tickle, the abode of Mrs. A——, I returned to L'Anse Amour again on the 5th of June. I have had no opportunity yet of proceeding to St. John's Island.

I propose in about a fortnight's time to pay another visit to Red Bay. Before I received your letter, I had visited some of the newly-arrived Jersey men, on the opposite side of the Bay, and expressed to them my hope that they were returned for a quiet and prosperous labour during the six days, and a becoming observation of the Lord's day. I was treated very politely, and received fair promises. I have not seen their neighbours at Blanc Sablon yet.

Your Lordship will be perhaps surprised as well as pleased at reading the enclosed letters. I would that we were ready for these presents and offerings!

You will also be pleased to hear that Mr. O——, the winter agent of L'Anse au Loup, with his "crew," have regularly assisted us with some plain music, as Psalm tunes, and chants for the Gloria Patri, at our services at L'Anse Amour.

I cannot say too much in honour and in commendation of Mr. and Mrs. D——. They are both devout, simple-minded, and affectionate people. They have shown me, and still show, an unchanging respect and love. Mrs. D—— is a firm member of our Church; she has sought and received such instruction as I am able to impart, not to implant but to establish her in its doctrines.

I very much regret to inform your Lordship that this family are all to leave the coast. This will be a great loss, in many respects, and I hope yet it may turn out otherwise. He says our prospects at English Point are not definite enough for him to act otherwise upon; each year is of great importance to him, as three of his children are at an expensive school in Nova Scotia, where it will not suit him to keep them longer, and he is determined rather to go elsewhere and live more economically than bring them back to Labrador, unless there were a church, and what he hopes would follow.

It has been the worthy man's resolve for many years, if it should please the Almighty to spare him till the age of fifty years, to give up business,

and devote himself more thoroughly to the concerns of the better world. I believe he is now in his fiftieth year. He proposed, while his hopes were high in respect of English Point, to fulfil his purpose there, and build a house beside the church.

For upwards of fifteen years past, Mr. D—— has regularly assembled his family for daily *evening* prayers, and on Sundays for our Church Service, *always* in the morning, and very frequently in the afternoons also.

There are several families, thanks be to God, between Red Bay and Bradore, who use daily family prayer. Much more I might still write. And many questions I desire to ask, but I find I *must* conclude.

From, my dear Lord Bishop,

Your obedient and dutiful Servant,

ALGERNON GIFFORD.

*To the Right Rev. the Lord
Bishop of Newfoundland.*

P. S. In the course of the winter I have met with some, and heard of many more, poor superannuated Englishmen, whose circumstances afford them no prospect of an English grave, or the fostering care of a parish Clergyman and the blessings of our Church either in their declining years or in death. What, my Lord, must be done for them? I hope we shall be able to bring them within hearing of our church bells.

I expect I must send my letter to St. John's, by way of Jersey.

Copy of Letters addressed to me in reference to presents and offerings, sent for the use of the Mission of Forteau, &c.

No. I.

"Fantaisie, Isle of Jersey,
10th April, 1850.

"Mrs. Charles Pipon, and Mr. and Mrs. James Hammond, present their best compliments to Mr. Gifford. They have heard with much pleasure of his appointment as Missionary on the long-neglected coast of Labrador. They beg he will accept of the accompanying articles for the use of the Mission, and which they hope may be found useful.

"He will perhaps kindly give them some account of his Mission, and at the same time mention what would be most needed, should they be spared to send another box next year. They beg he will accept of their best wishes for his success, and earnest prayers that the blessing of God will crown his endeavours, and that he may be the happy instrument of bringing many souls to our Lord Jesus Christ."

No. II.

"SIR,—On board the 'Swift,' Captain Filleul, in the employ of the Messrs. De Quetteville, is a box

to your address, in which I send a Communion Service of plated steel, altar-cloth, and communion-cloth, four Bibles, four Testaments, twelve Prayer-books, twelve Sacra Privata, one Watson on Contentment, one La Nourriture de l'Ame, and a parcel of small books which you will dispose of in this settlement. I trust this little offering will be of use. And I would ask your prayer for the giver of this little gift; and may your labours be crowned with success, is my humble prayer.

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient Servant,

"A. PIPON.

*"At Mr. J. De St. Croix,
Homestill, St. Helier's, Island of Jersey."*

"The other things in the box are sent by Mr. and Mrs. Hammond. It leaves this place after the 15th."

No. III.

"S. P. C. K.

"67, Lincoln's Inn Fields,

"Dec. 8th, 1849.

"REV. AND DEAR SIR,—I beg leave to inform you, that, in accordance with your request, and the recommendation of the Standing Committee, it has been agreed by this Society to grant some books and tracts for your use and distribution on the coast of Labrador. The works which you specify for your

own use will accompany the other publications.
The parcel shall be sent to T. R. Crockwell, Esq.,
Torquay, for you.

" I have the honour to be,

" Dear Sir,

" Your faithful humble servant,

" THOMAS B. MURRAY,
" *Secretary.*

" I hope you will approve the selection. The
parcel will be directed to you, enclosed to Mr. Crock-
well, and sent to him carriage-free.*

" REV. ALGERNON GIFFORD."

-
- * The "other things" referred to in letter No. II. are: -
A good substantial surplice made for my length.
A copy of "Psaumes et Cantiques" arranged with music
for the organ or piano.
Two large French Bibles.
Ditto Prayer Books.

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Mr. Crock-

II. are : -
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with music



