

SEED SOWN.

(Contributed.)

BETWEEN fifty and sixty years ago, when our Queen, in the first flush of her girlhood and her heavy responsibilities, was winning the hearts of her people; when the stir and clamor of the Reform Bill was still ringing in men's ears; when the great religious movement of our century had—as had happened once and again in former days—turned the eyes of men to Oxford, some in sad foreboding of, they hardly knew what, dire calamity to the Church—some in careless scorn of the doings of a group of fanatic enthusiasts—some half-hoping, half-doubting “whereto this might grow”—occurred the following little incident, which, to the writer's mind, so vividly links that wonderful past with our, perhaps, no less wonderful present.

A country clergyman in the south of England—a loyal son of Oxford himself, and, although taking no active part in the “movement,” bound by ties of closest brotherly affection to some of those whose names are so well-known to us in connection with it—had gone to the West Indies to visit his parents, who were living in one of the smaller islands under foreign rule—one of those where, at the time, slavery still existed. During his stay Mr. H.—as for convenience, he may be called—assisted the clergyman of the place, and, owing partly to his simple but forcible presentment of the truth, partly perhaps to his being a son of one of the leading English residents, many came to hear him, among others a young Jewish lady.

The sermon that she chanced, as we say, to hear was an especially powerful one on the Incarnation of our Lord.

The truth, so clearly, definitely put, led her to study the New Testament for herself, with the result that she was baptized and became a faithful member of the Church. Strangely enough her family, though sorely grieved at her change of faith, do not seem to have shown any unkindness or bitterness in consequence; possibly—though this is the merest surmise—because, there being no synagogue or other authority to compel them to act with severity, they followed the dictates of family affection, rather than of religious scruples.

In the meantime, Mr. H. had returned to England, knowing nothing of the effect of his sermon until told of it long after by some member of his own family. A little later a younger brother of the lady—led probably by his sister's influence—came to the resident clergyman, seeking further instruction preparatory to becoming a Christian.

About the same time a gentleman in the island, who was managing for others the estate that should have been his own but for the extravagance of his predecessors accidentally

discovered that a young African on the plantation had never been baptized, and spoke to the clergyman, who at once received him, too, as a candidate for holy baptism.

When the appointed time came they knelt together to receive the sacred rite, the young Jew—descendant of so proud, so unique, a race—parting with some at least of the most cherished traditions of his fathers—do we always realize to the full the cost of that sacrifice?—the young African—to whom life could scarcely offer less than it did—a bare existence of toil for others—for that once equal even upon earth. Behind the slave—as his sponsor—stood his master—moved surely to this token of sympathy by the common brotherhood that underlies all our human distinctions.

Clearly, distinctly, through the years, comes still the remembrance of that touching scene to one who witnessed it, and whose deepest, fullest sympathies—then as now—went out to the Jew and to the slave.

MADAGASCAR.

The Rev. W. E. Cousins, chief reviser of the Bible in Malagasy, says with regard to Madagascar: “France is attempting to crush the Hova independence, and we, on the other hand, are providing new editions of the Scriptures. France is sending out her men provided with all the modern appliances which science can supply for the destruction of human life; we are sending out that Word which brings life wherever it goes. We are not, I suppose, so foolish as to believe that the Bibles we ship to Madagascar will keep back the French army; but we do believe this—that the Bibles which we prepare for these people, helping them to a fuller and more intelligent study of the Word which they have so long received, will, in God's goodness, be their shield and defence from the great evils we fear. There is something in the minds of many of us quite apart from the thought of a French protectorate being established in Madagascar. It is this, that if a Roman Catholic body gets the predominance Protestant Christianity will be doomed, but I do not think the latter can be so readily overthrown. There were only twenty-six or thirty Protestant churches when I first landed in Madagascar, and there are to-day 2,000 with a total number of worshippers in the island of more than 300,000. The faith of these people has been nourished on the Word of God. They love that Word, and they have made it their guide. I may say, indeed, that the open Bible is the glory and strength of these congregations; and I do not believe that anything France can do will destroy a work which rests upon such foundations. I do not think for a moment that anything which the Church of Rome can offer will take the place of what these people have