

CHRISTIAN NATIVE WORKERS IN KAFFRARIA.

By THE BISHOP OF ST. JOHNS

HOW do our native workers and catechists live? In much the same way as other natives. In the first place, their huts are the same shape, round for the most part, and of the same materials, sods generally, thatched Kafir fashion. Some people think that a square home is a necessity to a Christian, that the round shape is essentially heathen; for my own part, I would rather see a well-built, well-kept round hut, than an untidy, rickety square building; and practically the round shape suits the common material better, as it obviates the difficulty of corners, which constitutes the weakness of the wattle-and-daub, or sod, rectangular building.

The difference between the heathen and Christian hut is rather in the neatness, outside and in; the well-laid floor of "ant-heap," which, carried from the veld and broken and well beaten, makes a floor of a solidity approaching that of asphalt. This is the woman's work, as what is not? But among the Christians the woman's lot is *so much* easier; she is ashamed to be a *vila*—that is, a lazy person but the excessive burdens laid upon the wives in the *Christian* village are shared by the men. The furniture is better. First of all, a side of the hut is screened off for the bedroom; there is a table in the middle of the hut, and a chair or two, and the food is served in clean earthenware. The food is much the same as other natives use, with a little more variety—potatoes and beans form a change with the mealies and millet, and then the mealies are stamped, not boiled merely, and stamping gets rid of the husk and makes the grain much more palatable.

But outside the native Christian evangelist has his plough; for every native is a farmer, a peasant-farmer, and long may they remain so! only under very exceptional cases can a native cease to be so. I think the change is not by any means salutary when it comes; so that it is better that they should all have their field of maize, and millet, and pumpkin. Even while the men who have given their whole time to the work may hire men to do the actual work of ploughing, the occasional preachers, whose work only takes up a day or two besides their Sundays, will generally be found with their coats off in the fields themselves, when the spring rains have covered the hills with verdure, and have softened the earth sufficiently after the long winter drought (our winter is a season of drought, gentle reader) to allow the plow to turn up the soil. And the cattle! The student has his books, and the

doctor his drugs and instruments, and the Kafir his cattle, whether he be heathen or Christian, layman or priest. At the milking-time at 11 a.m., and again at sunset, he loves to be among them while the boys and young men are milking; the calves one by one are led out of the calf-kraal or enclosure, run off to their mothers, finding each its own after one or two mistakes and consequent rebuffs, and sucking away vigorously until it is driven away by the small boy, and the remainder of the milk is drawn off for the use of the owner and his children, and the men are discussing the merits of each with the eye and knowledge of connoisseurs, while the milk is poured into the calabash to curdle. Such is the secular life and such the daily occupations of the native, which the catechists share with their lay brethren. In the day-time they have their more serious duty of giving the religious instruction in the school, taking the classes of catechumens and candidates for confirmation, which is generally done after morning service, with which the day is begun, and visiting the kraals—the heathen kraals. The sick, too, have to be attended to; the catechist prays with them, instructs them, and prepares them for the visit of the priest. And besides all this the catechist is general adviser to all his neighbours. Has any difficulty arisen in family matters—some quarrel between a man and his wife? The catechist is the mediator; he calls them up, and each will have his or her say, and many a family has been saved from being broken up by his intervention; all this requires infinite tact, and wisdom, and patience. And these qualities are by no means uncommon among our native men; the Christian catechist brings a nature with him into the Christian Church which, touched by the Spirit, easily develops these qualities. The more uncommon virtues of entire truthfulness, trustworthiness, and punctuality gradually develop under training and the example of their superiors. We are able to feel generally that they are perfectly sincere, that they are one with us, that they do not shield evil-doers, but tell us exactly what is going on, a very important matter where we have to trust so largely to their ears and eyes.

REVERENCE in the use of the divine name was far more prevalent in former ages than it is now. The fact is stated with respect to the ancient and beautiful manuscript copy of the Gospel recently found in Asia Minor, that while the ordinary letters are in silver on purple-dyed vellum, the sacred names are in gold. How much of the spirit of real reverence there was back of these forms of respect we do not know, but a little more of care and thoughtfulness in writing and speaking the name of the Deity would not nowadays be amiss.