

MISSION FIELD.

ST. HELENA.

St. Helena is the smallest of colonial dioceses. The island itself contains but forty-seven square miles, but the diocese includes also the distant Tristan d'Aounha, and Ascension. The island was discovered by the Portuguese in 1501, but it was uninhabited until the Dutch became possessors of it. From them it passed, two hundred years ago, into the hands of the East India Company. The population is between five and six thousand. It consists of a few English families, with a mixture of natives of India, China and Africa. Many of these owe their presence there to the slave trade; for the island was a depot for slaves liberated by the British West Coast Squadron from slave ships. St. Helena has somewhat of a romantic interest from its being the scene of the captivity and death of the first Napoleon. His house, Longwood, is shown in one of our illustrations. It had at one time other reasons for being well known. It is situated in the heart of the South Atlantic trade wind, blowing from the south-east for an average of 327 days in the year, and in the direct track of vessels homeward bound from the East round the Cape of Good Hope. It was therefore a port of call for a vast quantity of shipping and passengers to and from India, and the other parts of the East, and, in consequence of its importance in connection with the Eastern trade, large civil and military establishments were maintained. The opening of the Suez Canal, of course, destroyed the greater part of this prosperity.

The diocese was formed out of that of Capetown in 1859. There is a band of six clergymen, of whom four are the Missionaries of the Society. One of them, the Rev. S. J. Ellis, is stationed at Jamestown, the pretty little capital of the colony, which is situated on the north-west side of the island. One of our illustrations shows its charming situation. The town contains about three thousand people, three quarters of whom are members of the Church.

The Rev. J. O. Hands is stationed at Longwood, near Napoleon's old residence. Mr. Hands describes the decadence of the colony in its bearing on Church work:

'In looking back to the beginning of the year things have not proved so bad as they then appeared. Still poverty is again our 'war cry.' In maintaining the spiritual conflict obstacles almost in every shape meet us.

'The country houses, reared and inhabited by well-to-do folks in the more opulent times, are now fast falling into decay and becoming ruinous, and quite beyond the means of repair by the present occupiers. The continual decrease in the number of ships annually calling here, and the irregularity of the mail steamers under the new contract, prove also very detrimental to the prosperity of the island, and in consequence the very small

means received from the revenue makes it utterly impossible for our present administrator to render any aid, and the still more limited income of our venerable Bishop, nearly an octogenarian (which is now little more than many an English curate would receive), makes it most difficult to meet the many demands daily presenting themselves, for the religious, educational, and, in fact, all that goes to make up the moral, social, and commercial machinery of a community suffering from want of means, and totally unable to help themselves out of their present difficulties.

'Under these circumstances, is it any wonder that any Church work should fall off? And were it not for the valuable aid rendered by your venerable Society, so long and so generously given, certainly much of our work must cease altogether. 'Should the Government see fit to withdraw what few troops now garrison our shores, as is anticipated this, together with the laying of the cable to Ascension, I fear, will prove the death-blow to poor, struggling, penurious St. Helena.

'But, in spite of our poverty, and all that now stares us in the face, there seems a decided improvement in the morality of the people, and a greater interest exhibited towards Church work generally.'

At a place called St. Paul's, the Rev. F. H. Baker has a population of two thousand under his charge. He writes in a similar strain of the poverty of the island, and has had an additional trouble in the shape of illness, which has much hindered his work. The fourth Missionary of the Society in the diocese has his station, not in the island itself, but in remote Tristan d'Aounha. Mr. Dodgson's work in that isolated rock has been often described in the *Mission Field*. Now we are sorry to say that it is interrupted in consequence of his health failing. He has come to England, and is found to be seriously unwell.

The present Bishop, Dr. Welby, is the second occupant of the see, which he has held since 1862. The help given by the Society to his diocese is an example of the varied character of the claims which the Society has to endeavor to meet. Among these poor people of St. Helena there is work, in its measure, important and valuable, which should be done, and would be almost impracticable without the Society's aid. Here is no case of helping the foundation of the Church in colonies where the future is full of prosperity, as has been the case in Australia, and New Zealand, and Eastern Canada, and will doubtless be the case in Manitoba and other colonies which are being liberally aided now. Nor is it a case of Missions to the heathen in Asia or Africa. It is simply that the mixed races of St. Helena have been brought into the fold of the Church of England, and in their poverty cannot yet stand alone.—*Mission Field*

Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.—*Confucius*.

Heaven is principle.—*Confucius*.

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