

MISSION FIELD.

[From the S. P. G. Mission Field for November].

Nassau, the Diocese of the Bahamas, has its condition and recent progress thus summarised by its Bishop:

'In the summer of 1886 there were but twelve clergy working with the Bishop. This was unusually small but it had happened so through the vacancy in the See just before. Five island parishes were without a resident priest, a sixth became vacant the same autumn. Now we have only one parish vacant, and twenty clergy instead of twelve, among whom are a Dean of the Cathedral, an Archdeacon, and a Diocesan Missioner (designate).

'During the same of about four years, twelve new churches have been completed and opened for service besides several others which have been enlarged or improved in other ways

'Houses for the clergy were, and still are, wanting in several of the islands. However three new parsonages have been built, and nearly £100 raised towards a fourth, while excellent houses have been bought for the parishes of St Mary's Nassau and St Thomas, Turk's Island. A House of Rest has also been provided in Nassau by the purchase of commodious premises between the Cathedral and Church Hall. This has been found a great boon, as supplying a temporary home for out-land clergy who before had no place to receive them during a holiday.

'In the summer of 1886 there was a Grammar School for boys, but no High School for Girls, in the capital. The latter has now been in existence for more than three years, is well attended and has good schoolroom accommodation.

'The Diocesan Library has been nearly doubled, and beginnings have been made of parochial lending libraries in several places. Courses of lectures have been given in the winter at Nassau both secular and religious, for the better educated classes.

'Three of our missionaries have been provided with boats for the visitation of their parishes, but more requires to be done in this direction.

'Services have been multiplied and better rendered; choral celebrations have become common throughout the Diocese; the Three Hours Service, long adopted at some of the churches has been held this year on Good Friday at the Cathedral and in nearly every parish. The altars and sanctuaries have been very gradually improved, and appropriately furnished.

'Baptisms have increased to very near a thousand in the year. Confirmations to between seven and eight hundred; communicants are registered now at over four thousand. In each case there has been steady progress.

'Of deeper spiritual progress, conversion of souls to God, growth in grace, holy living in its manifold fruits, but we cannot of course speak here, but must leave our readers to

form their own conclusions from the facts as stated. But if our people are scarcely so thoughtful or so stable as Europeans, there is no reason to doubt the sincere piety of many among them. And perhaps almost the best of all our news is when we say and say truly, that they are learning self-control, and that their moral tone, though still far from what Christ's holy law requires, is certainly higher than it used to be.

'We to all this blessing resting on our labours, we are not to think of staying where we are; necessarily is laid upon us that we should go forward still.'

MISSION WORK IN PEKING

Slowness must necessarily be a feature in the progress of Mission work in Peking for the present. One great difficulty is that of the secular occupation of the converts, who by becoming Christians almost destroy the ordinary chances of obtaining a livelihood. The report of the Rev. W. Brereton shows how his industrial schools promise to solve this problem to some extent. After mentioning the baptism of two men and three women, he speaks of his boys' school and adds:

'You will remember there are two industrial departments attached to it, namely, carpentry and Chinese type cutting in wood, with printing of the same. Most of the pupils in these departments have now completed their prescribed period of pupilage and have become qualified mechanics. Of these, two carpenters and four printers. They are now in the position of earning their own living, and are working independently of the Mission. This new step in their lives is also an important step in the history of the Mission. For the question is now being determined whether the rising generation of our Chinese Christians can

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remain faithful to our Church, or indeed to any Christian profession, without being mere stipendiaries. The material and worldly inducements to joining the Roman Mission are very considerable. The same can be said in a somewhat less degree of inducements to join some of the American Protestant sects. Again, the temptations which might induce a mechanic to abandon all Christian profession what ever are great.

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