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The New Gateway

TO THE MEMORIAL CHURCH AT AMBATONAKANGA.

By the Rev. T. T. Matthews.

The church at Ambatonakanga might almost be called the 'mother church' of the Madagascar Mission; for, although not actually the first church erected by the first missionaries, it is the oldest Christian congregation in the island, and the first of the martyr memorial churches. It stands on one of the finest sites in the capital, splendidly situated as it is on the main thoroughfare through the city, at a point where four roads meet. The church was erected from plans prepared by the Rev. J. Sibree, on the spot on which stood the prison in which the martyrs had been confined, and from which they were led forth to execution. It was opened for worship on Jan. 22, 1867.

The Rev. Wm. Ellis was the first mis-

ing, and have been waiting for untold ages, and it is the only blessing worth their waiting so long for, for it is the only blessing that will ever make nations of them in the true sense of the term.

One form that the progress of civilization has taken in Madagascar since the French occupation has been the making of roads through a great part of the island, and the laying out of streets, boulevards, and Jardins Anglais in the capital. More has been done in that way during the past four years than during the previous four thousand! Whether all that has been done was really needed, or whether it has not been slightly over done; whether even the fine roads, streets, boulevards, and Jardins Anglais, have really been worth all they have cost in life, labor, and money, are points upon which difference of opinion is possible.

In consequence of the improving and widening of the main road in front of the gateway of the Ambatonakanga Memorial

any way responsible for carrying out agreements made by the civil powers, although they had been made in the name of the French Government. In fact, we found that they were two different firms, and this 'side of the street' had no connection whatever with the other side. After a good deal of being driven from pillar to post, and post to pillar (into the details of which it is not worth entering), we found we should have to do what was required—after getting permission to do it—for ourselves. From a plan prepared by Mr. Sibree we erected the present gateway (see illustration); after lowering the ground to the level of the road, and by putting all the steps inside, instead of out, as was at first proposed, we saved our gateway from becoming the lounging place for the riff-raff of the neighborhood, and even made it more private than it formerly was. We proved the truth of the saying that, 'If you want a thing well done, you must do it yourself.' We had to pay the piper, which was hardly fair; but, after all, I think it was the best way, as well as the only one, and it was worth all that it has cost, which is saying a good deal. The thing is done now, and is never likely to require being done again, and seeing that we have now such a really handsome gateway, the best thing to do is to be as thankful as we can that it has been so well done, is such an ornament to the place, and did not cost more than it did.—London Missionary Society Chronicle.

The University Professor and the Poor Cobbler.

A highly distinguished man of letters and a professor of history in the University of Paris, also the author of a voluminous work which gained for him a high and wide reputation, was paying a visit at the chateau of a lady near Lyons, where he met Pastor Fisch, says a writer in 'Zion's Watchman.' The professor, like many other unreflecting unbelievers, sat in the midst of many cross-lights of the intellect, and could see nothing distinctly in the moral world, for his dazzling sword fence of wit and learning seemed effectually to bar all approach to him with the truth.

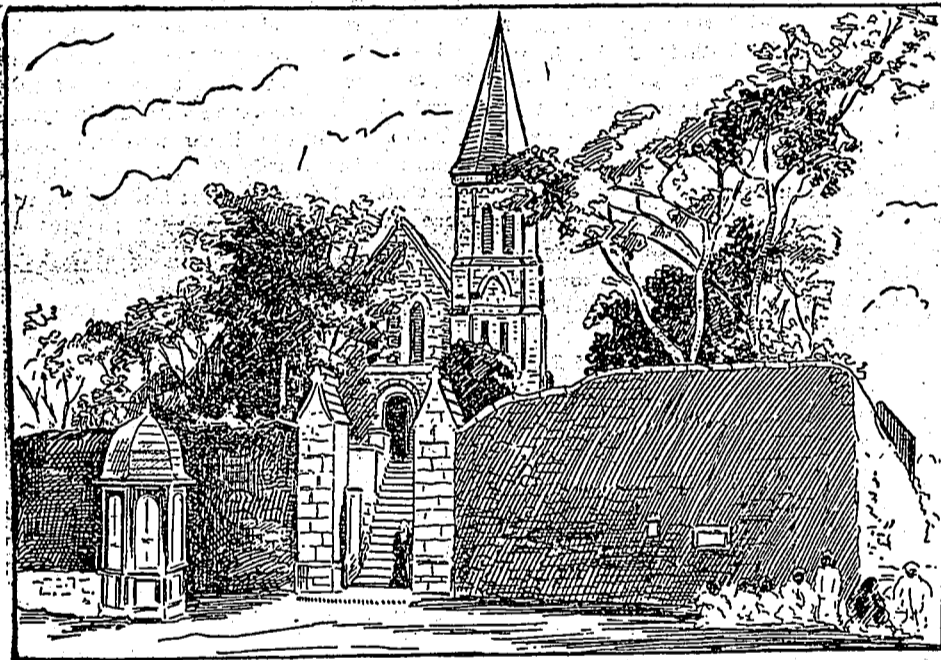
One day as Pastor Fisch was walking in the grounds of the chateau, reading the Scriptures, he met Prof. T., who remarked to him, 'I have had a great admiration of your conduct as a Christian and have wished to know what are the principles that seem to produce such an effect in your life? If you have any book which states the doctrines you profess and the principles by which you live, I should be glad to read it.'

'I have,' replied the pastor, 'an admirable treatise written by one of the early converts to the Christian faith; I will lend it to you; it is the letter of the Apostle Paul to the Christians at Rome.'

'Nonsense,' said the professor, 'I have repeatedly read it and found it an unintelligible jargon.'

'Well,' was the reply, 'this is the systematic and the same authoritative exposition of my faith, and I would have you read it carefully.'

A few days after this they met, and, in



THE NEW GATEWAY AT AMBATONAKANGA CHURCH.

sionary to have charge of the congregation at Ambatonakanga after the reopening of the mission in 1862. He was followed by the Rev. G. Cousins, on whose removal to the newly-founded College for Native Agents in 1870, the late Rev. C. F. Moss was appointed to the charge of the church. Since 1882 the church has been under the charge of the writer of this article.

There have been many changes in Madagascar since the Ambatonakanga Memorial Church was erected, especially during recent years, and some few improvements. Some of the improvements have taken the form of compelling the people to mend their ways, and make new ones—that is, their material ways. I am not at all certain that they have been very much led by recent events, and the introduction of certain forms and phases of so-called civilization, to mend their moral ways very much, and I am a good deal more than doubtful if ever they will be so led. Christian civilization—the placing of the Law of the Lord on the earth as the rule of life—is the blessing for which the nations of heathendom are wait-

ing, a good deal of money has had to be spent, which, had promises been fulfilled, and agreements carried out in good faith, would not have been chargeable to the funds of the society. When the work of improving the main thoroughfare in front of the Ambatonakanga gateway was set about under the civil regime, while M. Laroche was at the head of affairs in the island, they began by lowering the road ten feet, which left our gateway far above the level of the new road, and a pile of rough stones had to be placed in front of the gateway, over which we had to climb to get into the church yard. In return for our renouncing our rights to the piece of ground in front of the gateway, in order that the thoroughfare might be widened at that part, the French engineer, who was at the head of the Board of Works, undertook to erect a flight of steps from the road to the gateway, and we had a letter of agreement from him to that effect. Changes came, however, before the work was ever begun, and when we came under the military regime, we found that the authorities did not hold themselves in