

Mission Field.

A CHRISTIAN TOWN IN BASUTOLAND.

BY REV. H. C. SANDERSON, M.A., S.S.A.

[From S.P.G. Mission Field for Sept.]

[CONTINUED.]

Again, quite lately, in pursuance of the resolution of Synod in 1893, they have themselves voluntarily fixed the amount of annual subscription towards church expenses at 5s. for each adult communicant, this rate being higher than that of any other native congregation in Basutoland.

iv. Great respect for and deference to their clergy—a happy result (not always found elsewhere) of their being, as a whole, better educated and more infused with general Christian civilisation than in any other part of the country.

For a long time past it has been rightly considered that it is quite impossible for one priest only to work Mafeteng, Mofalis Hoek, and the Quithing together. At a Rural-decennial Conference of the Basutoland clergy held in 1892 at Thlotse Heights, it was resolved that the Rural Dean, the Rev. Canon J. Widdicombe, should represent to the then Bishop-elect, upon his arrival in the diocese, the great need of subdividing the South Basutoland Mission. His lordship, upon taking the matter into consideration, judged that the best way of beginning to effect such subdivision would be to detach Mafeteng from Mofalis Hoek and place it under the charge of the rector of Wepener, from whence it had been previously worked in its early days by the Rev. E. W. Stanson.

Accordingly, during the recent sacred Synod of the clergy in Bloemfontein, the Bishop solemnly instituted the Rev. Thomas Woodman, the new appointed rector of Wepener, as Director also of St John's, Mafeteng, on April 10th. Mr. Woodman's induction into his new charge took place in Mafeteng Church on Monday evening, April 16. There were many circumstances connected with this latter service which tended to make it of additional interest, besides inducting the reverend gentleman, and causing him to sit in the seat usually occupied by the parish priest, and delivering into his hand the key of the church. The service was essentially of a mixed character. The congregation was composed of European and native Churchmen combined. The hymns (suitably chosen so as to have the same tune and same number of verses) were sung both in English and Sesuto simultaneously; the one part of the congregation being scarcely conscious that at the same time others were singing in a different tongue. Lastly, the sermon, preached by the newly instituted and inducted Director, was addressed first to the Europeans in English, and ended in some remarks to the native brethren in Sesuto.

In all the above records of Church life and work in Mafeteng I have purposely dwelt upon the Native rather than upon the European as-

pect of it; not only because Church work among the English and Europeans all the world over is generally very similar to the same work being done at home, but also because in a place where the class referred to is composed of a few units it is impossible to enter into any details and at the same time avoid being personal. I desire, however, to avail myself of this opportunity (a) of stating how much I shall miss the quietness and reverence of the all but full choral English Matins and Evensong both on Sundays and often on week-days; (b) of testifying to the kindness always shown towards myself by the Europeans—whether Church people or otherwise—and also of their sympathy and assistance given to me in every department of the work.

The English seemed to vie with their Basuto brethren in the pride and pleasure they take in their nice little church, and in longing for better things.

It can be well understood how, with so much to encourage and so little to discourage, that to visit Mafeteng again was always a pleasure in store, and that one's life and ministry there was very happy.

There is one thought which is always uppermost in my mind whenever thinking or speaking of St. John's, Mafeteng, and it is this—that it is (certainly to me at least) "that beautiful flock." Not that I would for a moment be supposed to represent them as perfect; but they are, as a body, nearer to perfection than any among whom it has hitherto been my lot to minister, and one thanks God for the refreshing privilege of having been sent to them, though it has been but for a short season.

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