

MISSION FIELD.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
IN OTHER LANDS.

Twelve hundred miles distant from the coast of Africa is the direct course of the South Atlantic trade-wind, there lies the Island of St. Helene, once a place of the highest importance as being in the direct route to India; now, by the formation of the Suez Canal and the consequent diversion of the route, almost bereft of trade and intercourse with the world. The Bishopric, which was formed in 1859, includes the island of Ascension, 800 miles northward, and the island of Tristan d'Acunha, about 1500 miles to the northward. Ascension is only a garrison and a sanatorium; in St. Helene the Church has worked with much blessing among the colored population; and in Tristan d'Acunha, the loneliest out-post of the Church, a very singular community has received very special care at the hands of the Church. In 1816 this islet, just five mile square, was fortified by order of the government, and a company of artillery was stationed there. In 1821, on the death of Napoleon, the soldiers were withdrawn, but a corporal named Glass, with his wife and two children and two comrades, six souls in all, were allowed to remain and to cultivate the soil. They traded with the whalers that touched at the island; some shipwrecked persons found a refuge among them, and gradually their number nearly reached a hundred souls. One or two clergymen, on their way to India, had in the course of twenty years landed and baptized the children and married several couples; the good old Corporal Glass continuing to exercise a sort of patriarchal priesthood among the people. In 1851, the Propagation Society sent out a young clergyman, who for five years ministered to the little flock, holding daily school, and having among his scholars persons whose ages varied from five to twenty-five years. In 1856, Bishop Gray visited this, the most inaccessible part of his Diocese, and found that the people were willing to leave it and to settle on the mainland. Sir George Gray sent a ship of war to fetch them away; but, at the last moment, thirty determined to remain. In 1867, when the Duke of Edinburgh visited Tristan, he found that the population had again risen to eighty-five, who greatly desired to have a clergyman with them. In 1881, the Propagation Society sent out the Rev. E. H. Dodgson, who found a Parish with 107 souls waiting to receive him; but, after four years of very patient and isolated work, he returned to represent to the Colonial Office the absolute necessity of removing the people from their barren home and leaving the island to the penguins and other sea-birds, for which alone it is adapted.

On the eastern coast of Africa there are two islands which are scenes of important Church work; one is the colony of Mauritius, the

other the large kingdom of Madagascar. Mauritius came to Great Britain in 1814 from the French, and French it remains to this day in language and in religion. The English government pledged itself to the maintenance of the French ecclesiastical establishment which had existed for a hundred years, and the English Church has been the Creed of only a small minority of the colonists. Nominally attached to the Diocese of Calcutta, no English Bishop ever landed on the island until Bishop Chapman, of Colombo, visited it in 1850, when he consecrated the Churches and confirmed a number of persons.

But if the island is small, and the people largely alien in language and faith, the necessities of trade have made it one of the great Mission-fields of the world. There are in the island about a quarter of a million of Hindoo, Tamil, or Telugu speaking coolies, who come under engagement for five years, and then return to their homes. There is also a motley population of Africans, Malagache, Singalese, Arabs, Malays, and Chinese. In the Seychelles there is a large African population which has been increased by bodies of slaves released from men-of-war. Of the eighteen clergymen in the Diocese seven are natives.

The island of Madagascar is about the size of France and has a population, which is estimated at five millions. It is occupied by several races, of whom the Sakalava, supposed to be the original children of the soil, dwell within well-defined regions of their own. The Betsimisaraka, who dwell chiefly on the coast, are the lowest class, and are for the most part in a kind of slavery of the patriarchal type, while the Hovas, who are the dominant race, having invaded the country at a very early period of its history, occupy the high table-land in the interior. About 1820, Radama I, a chief of the Hovas, succeeded in subduing the several tribes and placing them under himself as supreme monarch. A clever and far-seeing man, he entered into friendly relations with England, who, in return, gave him some munitions of war and allowed some officers to go to Madagascar and drill his troops. On his death his queen, Ranavalona I, succeeded him; she dreaded the presence of foreigners, and ordered all aliens out of the kingdom. This was followed by a most savage persecution of the native Christians, of which more will be written hereafter. In 1861, she was succeeded by her son, Radama II, who desired that peace and toleration should characterize his reign. He was a weak man and a drunkard, and after a year was murdered in the palace. His queen succeeded him, and her reign was uneventful. In 1868, she was succeeded by Ramona, who became Ranavalona II. At her coronation all heathen rites were absent. By the side of the throne was a table supporting a copy of the Malagasy Bible and the laws of the island, and on the canopy over the throne was inscribed "Glory to God. Peace on earth,

go will to men. God be with us." W. Tucker, A.M.

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