

Church Matters in Natal.

(Written for the Church Guardian)

BY CANON CHURTON, OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND.

FROM the Natal *Vineyard* we learn that a general meeting was held by invitation of the Dean, in the library at Maritzburg, on October 4th, to consider the present position of the Church. The attendance was such as to necessitate an adjournment to the Cathedral. The meeting was further adjourned to Wednesday evening, October 10th, when a still large gathering, including Archdeacon Colley and others, representing the congregation of St. Peter's, met in S. Saviour's school room. A third meeting was held on October 30. The Dean opened the meeting with Prayer, and remarked that, in answer to his request, that questions might be placed in his hands before the meeting, he had received notice of eighteen questions to be asked, 15 by Archdeacon Colley, and three by others. He then briefly reviewed the proceedings of the two previous meetings, which he said had been confined to the consideration of three or four points.

1st. He had been asked—In what light the confirmations of the late Bishop Colenso would be regarded? To which he had replied that they were valid, as it had been definitely settled in the Middle Ages, that the Episcopal acts of Bishops were valid, though done when out of the Communion of the Church.

2nd. The next question put to him had been—On what terms would persons who had belonged to the congregations under Bishop Colenso, be admitted to Holy Communion? To this he had replied, that in such matters the clergy out here were guided by the Prayer Book in exactly the same manner as the clergy at home; that the case of each person desirous of being received to Holy Communion must stand on its own merits, and be governed by the Rubrics at the beginning of the office for the Holy Communion.

3rd. The third question asked, was—Whether in the event of re-union, any guarantee would be given that Churches of the several schools of thought, recognized in the Church of England, would be allowed in the Diocese of Maritzburg? To this he replied by pointing out that a resolution had been come to in the Diocesan Synod to the effect that it was a principle that the laity should have a voice in the selection of their parish priest, and although no rules had as yet been formed in accordance with that resolution, nevertheless, the Bishop had recently acted upon it in the cases of the Parishes of Karkloof and Newcastle; and this, he thought, should satisfy the inquirers of the earnest desire of the Bishop to consult the feelings of the laity.

4th. The fourth question was as to the jurisdiction of the Privy Council over the Church in the Colonies. Several of Archdeacon Colley's questions were directed to this point, so that the discussion of the subject would be renewed in replying to them. In the first place, the case of the Diocese of S. Helena was alleged. This Diocese is exempt from receiving the rules of the South African Province, and retains a right of appeal to Ecclesiastical courts at home. The Dean replied that S. Helena was a Crown Colony, to which the Bishop had been appointed by letters patent, and that he possessed to some extent a coercive jurisdiction by virtue of certain local laws which had established Ecclesiastical courts, and regulated other matters in connection with the Church. So when the Diocese expressed a wish to come into the Province, exceptional arrangements were made to meet the case. In Natal, there were no such laws, and, therefore, the position was different. The Dean thought that the present Bishop of S. Helena held letters patent. There are many clergymen of the South African Province holding benefices at home.

The next question proposed was—How does

the Church of South Africa interpret Canon II. of the Church of England, touching impugnors of the Royal Supremacy? The Dean replied that there is nothing that contravenes this Canon in their Constitution or Canons. The Crown has been advised not to exercise in the Colonies any part of its prerogative as supreme governor of the Church; consequently, we hold it to be the duty of the Church to acquiesce in this decision, whatever our individual opinions may be as to its advantages or disadvantages. On the other side, it was argued that though another Bishop was not to be appointed by letters patent, it did not follow that this deprived the Church of England of the privileges, such as the right to appeal to the Privy Council. Archdeacon Usherwood pointed out that no legal Diocese could be created by letters patent in a Colony, and that when a Bill was passed by the Natal Legislature to vest certain Church properties in Bishop Colenso and his successors, the Lords of the Privy Council had advised the Queen not to confirm the Bill, because there could be no such successor, as there was no Diocese created by virtue of his appointment under letters patent. At this moment Archdeacon Colley arrived. The Dean explained to him what had taken place, and then remarked that the Royal Supremacy was exercised in the three following ways:—1st., in nominating the Bishops: this the Crown has ceased to do in most of the Colonies. 2ndly., in conferring on the Ecclesiastical Courts a coercive jurisdiction; but such powers have not been bestowed on our Courts, consequently, the Ecclesiastical Courts in South Africa are not in any respect Courts of the Crown, and therefore, no appeal lies from them to the Privy Council. 3rdly., in dividing the country into Dioceses and Parishes, and in various ways regulating the endowments, as of the tithes and glebes attached to them; but in South Africa the Crown took no action in such matters, so he concluded that the Crown had withdrawn from exercising all the functions belonging to the Royal Supremacy. The third question proposed was this:—Why should penalties be inflicted on a clergyman in the Diocese of Maritzburg for marrying an innocent person who has effected a divorce, when in other Dioceses of South Africa this is not permitted? The Dean explained that the Canons framed in the Provincial Synod governed the whole Church, but as the Canon on the subject of Matrimony was not altogether clear nor precise in its terms, the Synod of the clergy of this Diocese had, after very mature consideration, framed a new Canon, which they laid before the Provincial Synod at its last session. Our draft Canon was intended bring the law of the Church of South Africa into exact conformity with that of the Church of England, but the Synod rejected our proposals; they are, consequently, of no force, and this Diocese is under the same law as the rest of the Province. Canon Bowditch added that the acts of the Synod of the clergy were not binding upon the Diocese until they had been accepted by the laity through their delegates.

The next question was:—Why should a Deacon in the Church of South Africa not be allowed to solemnize Matrimony, when in the Church of England no such prohibition exists? Canon Bowditch thought that the resolution referred to was only an act of the Synod of clergy, and was not binding on the Diocese. It was the opinion of the Synod, that though such marriages would be valid, the presence of a priest was necessary for bestowing the blessing of the Church. The Synod aimed at being strictly faithful to the Prayer Book and the mind of the Mother Church.

The next question was:—Why are only Communicants Members of Vestries, when no such communicant test exists at home? The Dean pointed out that we strictly followed the requirements of the Rubrics at the end of the Communion office, requiring every parishioner to communicate three times in the year. At home, Church Wardens discharged civil as well as Ecclesiastical duties, as in the oversight of the poor, roads, etc., and this led to every rate-payer claiming a vote in Vestry, contrary to the rules of the

Church. But here, Church Wardens had no such duties to perform, so we were not impeded from carrying out the requirements of the Rubric by any person from outside.

(To be Continued).

OUR AMERICAN BUDGET.

A GREAT and important work is being done by the Philadelphia Midnight Mission. The sixteenth annual report, just issued, states that the home has had 70 inmates the past year, of whom fifteen have found situations, 14 have been restored to their families, and 10 placed in other institutions, making 52 directly benefited. During the 15 years of its existence, 888 persons have been under the care of the mission, of whom 662 have been rescued or benefited. It had nearly 600 contributors last year, and received \$4,160, of which the sum of \$628 is a balance on hand. The mission has \$9,638 invested for a home in the country. It employs a missionary to seek out and rescue the lost ones.

Of the twenty-two churches or chapels in Boston, thirteen are free, and in the whole diocese more than half are free. Of the eight new buildings consecrated or opened within the last year all but one are free.

THE General Theological Seminary is to be congratulated on the prospect of having, by the end of the year, two additional buildings with which to give it suitable equipment.

NINE male members of the parish of St. Paul's Church, Brooklyn, were ordained lay helpers by Bishop Littlejohn. This is the first time this office has been administered in this country, it was an occasion of unusual interest.

IT is remarkable to notice the growth of the Church here. From one diocese of 1734 there has been an advance to 48 independently constructed dioceses. The whole number of bishops, including those of the missionary districts, is 65. Still more than in the number of bishops, appears the growth of the Church in the statistics of the clergy. From 592 clergymen in the year 1832, the number had increased to 1,052 in 1841. In 1850 it was 1,558, which increased to 2,286 in 1862, and to 3,082 in 1877. There are now over 3,400.

DURING the last decade Protestantism in this country has contributed for missions, home and foreign, \$56,135,636. In the decade beginning with 1810 the amount of contributions for these objects was \$206,210. Every ten years shows a large and steady increase.

BOSTON Churches are very active this Lent. A short daily service, lasting not more than twenty minutes, early enough in the morning to enable men to attend it on their way to business or work, is becoming one of the most acceptable and helpful features of the Lenten season, and each year more of the churches adopt it. In many of the parishes, also, a series of lectures, running through the six weeks, has been arranged, either by the rector alone, or by a system of exchanges with neighbouring clergymen.

A letter, which had been soaked for several days in the Post office, at Ironton, on the Ohio River, was received last week. The stamp had been floated from the envelope, which was accordingly marked "flood" and forwarded in a government wrapper. The *Ironton Registration* says that the generosity of the outside public is so great that "tons upon tons of food and clothing are coming, (19½ carloads in three days) until the city is fairly flooded with gifts from full hands and kind hearts. That's what tells of a great country, which hears the cry of suffering and sends ready answers in loaves and meat." Certainly the Lake Shore has some advantages over the Ohio River valley as a place of residence.

THE Philadelphia Sunday Breakfast Association has fed, in five years, 37,898 poor persons with a Sunday breakfast. Over six hundred persons were fed last Sunday. Thirty-two persons signed the temperance pledge.