

## 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.]

Up to Easter of the present year, Mafeting Mission was worked with that of Mohalis Hoek.\*

This town is unique, I believe, as being at present the only one in Basutoland which is fast becoming Christian. So much so is this already the case that I have been repeatedly told that heathen, chancing to come and reside here, find themselves in so great a minority, have so few kindred spirits to associate with, that they either themselves become converted to Christianity or else are disposed to leave for other villages with greater heathen populations. Even casual visitors can hardly fail to be impressed with the Christian habits of this town, for daily after the ringing of their respective bells (often simultaneously) two long lines of people are to be seen traversing the main street—the one wending its way to church for Matins or Evensong, the other to a French Protestant Mission building for their morning prayers. And, as further illustrating the same feature, I may mention that native Christians from other parts of this Mission, when visiting Mafeting and joining in the daily services, have invariably remarked to me afterwards that "in Mafeting every day seems like a Sunday, for the congregation is always so large." But the native Church people in Mafeting are not only strong numerically, they are also strong in Christian virtue. Taken singly, the congregation in Basutoland is as large as that in Mafeting, and, in proportion to its size, none is more exemplary. Of course, I can only testify of what has come under my personal notice, and it is with deep thankfulness that I am able to record that during the last twelve months the number of persons coming under censure for offences has been at the ratio of one per cent., a lower proportion than I have ever met with hitherto, either in other parts of this particular Mission or elsewhere.

Looking at secondary causes, I would attribute the prosperous condition to two things:

i. The labors and influence of a good catechist, a man who is self-taught, but of much moral and spiritual power, combined with great gentleness and a strong dislike to contention. This "Spirit of Peace" he has been allowed to infuse into the flock under his care—so much so that "Brotherly Love" is a very special mark of this congregation.

ii. The large number of men (larger than in most places in proportion to women converts) who are the very backbone of the congregation: thorough, loyal and earnest Churchmen. Of these men, eight form the Priest's "Council of Ad-

vice," four being nominated by the Priest himself, the other four elected by the male communicants, while the catechist is an *ex-officio* member. There is also a goodly number of steady, devout young men, who seem to take pains to follow the good example of their elders. Many of these latter—together with a yet larger number of girls and young women—are the good results of a large and well-managed Church Day School.

I should like to mention the following additional features of Church life in Mafeting:

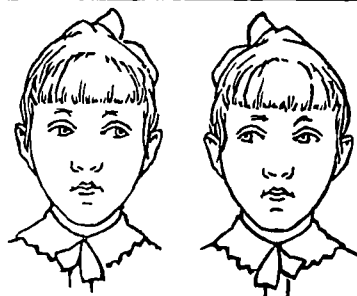
i. The reverence of the congregation in public worship. This is now greatly furthered by the enlarging and re-ordering of the church under Mr. Reading's direction and untiring energy, and still more recently by the formation of a surplised choir.

ii. The carefulness and attention with which sermons and instructions are listened to. As an instance of this I may quote the three-hours service of Good Friday, when a very large congregation remained through the whole service, and showed not the least sign of weariness.

iii. In almsgiving this congregation raised £22 in about three weeks for a large church bell; and although, like all native Christians, not as yet realising their responsibility and duty in this respect as they should, yet they are practically the only ones who have given anything at these offertories and collections throughout the Mission.

(To be Continued.)

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\*And was therefore under the care of the writer.