

A TRIP THROUGH OUR MISSION FIELDS.

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VI.—DIOCESE OF COLUMBIA.

EVENTS move rapidly in this new country of ours and any one absent for a few years has much to learn on his return. For instance, one returning to this country after a few years absence might, perhaps, speak of the "Diocese of British Columbia," and would be surprised to hear that that Diocese which was founded in 1859, under Bishop Hills, and comprised, at the time, the whole Province of the same name, was divided into three Dioceses in 1879, and that the portion which retains the original name, and over which Bishop Hills still has jurisdiction, consists only of the Island of Vancouver and adjacent isles.

And how encouraging it is to know that where, in 1858, one clergyman alone witnessed for Christ, now there are three Bishops and over forty clergymen ambassadors for Him.

The Diocese of Columbia at present contains twenty-six Parishes and Missions, but few of these, outside the city of Victoria, however, can be self-supporting. For this reason and because the Diocesan Mission Fund was at a very low ebb, the coffers being empty, and the small salaries of many of the poor missionaries being in arrear, Bishop Hills while in England, at the time of the Lambeth Conference, succeeded in raising money for a Clerical Endowment Fund, toward which he also obtained grants from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and from the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge.

On his return the synod unanimously decided to call this fund the "Bishop Hills Endowment Fund" in grateful recognition of the Bishop's arduous labours in connection with it, and as a fitting perpetuation of the name of the first Bishop of the Diocese. How valuable has been the help received from this fund will best be understood by the following extract from the Bishop's last report, where he says: "Much encouragement has been afforded by the assistance of the Clergy Endowment Fund. The arrears due to the clergy at our last meeting have been paid by it. We have been enabled to resume the work which had been dropped at Chemainus for lack of funds. Some grants to the clergy have been increased, in view of the expensiveness of this colony. Confidence has been given to the recipients by the prospect of more punctual payments of their small stipends, and congregations, we trust, have been stimulated to do their part."

Although, however, so much good has been accomplished by this fund, still much more

money is required to carry on the rapidly increasing work in this Diocese.

Here, as elsewhere, settlers are going in rapidly, and are as yet unable to contribute much, if anything, towards the support of their Church, and for the ordinary expenses of the Diocese no outside aid is received, with the exception of the two grants to the Endowment Fund already mentioned. Why this should be so is not easy to see, as the Bishop points out in an appeal for aid to the S. P. G. in February, 1889, in which he states:—"We have not in any way the advantages possessed by those dioceses of Canada, which the Society still largely and properly aids, such as Nova Scotia, Fredericton, Quebec, Newfoundland, etc., and compared with these more westward, assisted largely by the Society, for instance, in Manitoba, we are at great disadvantage. They obtain considerable assistance from all the Dioceses of Canada, from which we, in Columbia, by our distance are debarred. In the Diocese of Rupert's Land there are about twenty-five clergy on their Mission Fund, towards whose support the S. P. G.'s grant is \$7,500, or thereabouts, but the Colonial and Continental Church Society contributes also about \$1,500, and Eastern Canada gives about \$1,675, and a clerical endowment yields more than that. We have not one of these helps.*

"Our only resource is the one town of Victoria, which has its own three churches to provide for, and a poor and sparse population scattered over a distance of 300 miles. How then is it possible we can carry on a missionary work without external help? Surely our thirteen missionary districts require a proportionate assistance equally with twenty or thirty Districts of Rupert's Land. Still more have we need of aid if we are to occupy the field which immigration, in God's providence, is now opening out to us on the western shores of British America."

Alas! that to this earnest appeal the Society could only answer that they were unable to give any assistance save the grant to the Endowment Fund!

Besides the work among the white settlers, a most pressing work awaits the attention of the Church—I mean mission work among the Chinese, who already are there in large numbers. We were told that in the city of Victoria alone are between 1,600 and 1,800 Chinese, all heathens, earning their living as domestic servants, market gardeners, etc., and for them the Church is doing nothing.

Rev. A. J. Beanlands kindly took us to see Chinatown, as it is called, and we also visited the Joss house, a place which from its small size could never have been intended for gatherings of many people, and which bears a stronger resemblance to a masonic lodge room, or benev-

* This was written before the endowment was raised.