

MISSION FIELD.

MARITZBURG.

Writing on the eve of the twentieth anniversary of his consecration to the Episcopate, the Bishop of Maritzburg has sent us a summary of the condition of his diocese. His Lordship says:—

In spite of the reduction in the numbers of the clergy which we have still to deplore, the parishes of Umzinto and Umhlathuzana being still deprived of the care of a resident pastor, the Church throughout the diocese appears to be growing stronger. My reports for the last few years have necessarily alluded to the commercial depression which prevailed through the whole of South Africa. We can thankfully acknowledge that this heavy cloud has passed away, and that the material condition of this Colony has considerably improved.

The Church still suffers from the absence of many who have gone to seek their fortunes at the gold-fields, but the following passage is as encouraging as anything that has reached us relating to that exodus:—

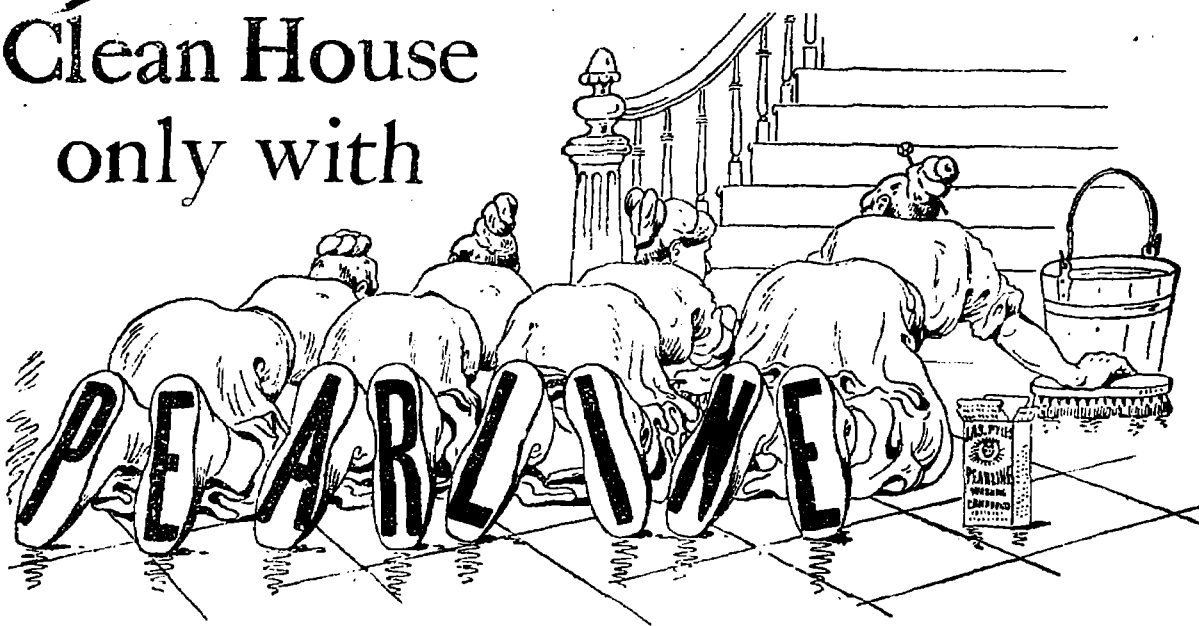
There are already instances of the recognition, on the part of those who have been successful, of the claim which the Church's work has upon their support. Our institutions in Maritzburg, the St. Cross Orphanage, the Mercy Home, and St. Albans Native College, have all received offerings in token of thankfulness to God for such success, and I hope that during the year upon which we have entered there may be increasing proofs of the prevalence of such feelings throughout the diocese.

The Bishop is anxious to be enabled to fill up the vacant cures, also to subdivide some of the larger parishes, but he pleads especially for the Missions among the natives and the immigrants from India. In both cases he urges the claim on the excellent ground that Missions owe their origin to local zeal:—

There is one feature of considerable encouragement in the last few years to which I look with much hope in the future, the springing up of little Missions under the parish priest in different parts of the Colony, such as we have at Pinetown, Howick, and Newcastle—and I might cite the instance of Estcourt, where, since Mr. Troughton became incumbent (a period of about eighteen months), two such Missions have come into existence with scarcely any extraneous aid, one of them being rendered possible by the voluntary surrender on the part of the native catechist, Kumalo, of a part of his stipend, and the other being carried on by another native almost without pecuniary help. Such efforts as these deserve all the encouragement that we can possibly give, and I long to be able to place at the disposal of clergymen who are making these ventures in such a spirit of faith, and at the same time in so practical a shape, some regular sum, even if it be small, to develop their work.

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Mission the Bishop refers to the self-sacrificing work of Dr. Booth:—

In the years 1876 and 1877, when the Indian population was flocking to these shores, and nothing at all was being done to make the Gospel known to them, the clergy out of their small income initiated a subscription for the commencement of Missionary effort in the parishes where the Indians were placed, and succeeded in the establishment of a few small schools. The work, however, for want of anyone who could devote himself wholly to it, made but little progress, and there was no fund out of which I could offer a stipend to a priest from India. Thus it seemed likely to languish, or even to collapse altogether, when Dr. Booth, at that time holding a large practice as a medical man in the Colony, offered his services freely for two years for this special work, for which he had other qualifications besides some knowledge of the Hindu language. You are aware that the work has steadily grown from that time.—*Mission Field.*

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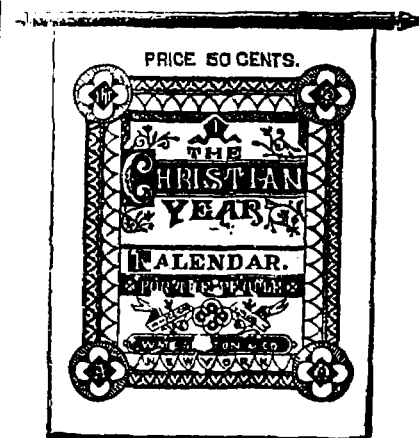
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