AMONGST THE BASUTOS.

OF late years the various colonies of South Africa have been prominently brought before the public. Many Europeans were attracted to the diamond fields with the hope of amassing a fortune, and the recent war of the English against the Boers and Zulus has also contributed to draw the attention of the rest of the world to those distant countries. Much has been said of the agricultural and mineral wealth of the colonies, the ferocious obstinacy of the natives, and mighty powers of endurance of the descendants of the old Dutch settlers. Little however was written concerning another question not at all unimportant—that of the christianizing and civilizing of the different branches of the Kaffir tribe living there. These natives dwell for the most part in the interior whither they were gradually driven by force, leaving the coast region to the new comers, the traders and miners. Each branch of the natives is known by a different name; the most known being the Zulus and Basutos. They are found in all the different colonies of the Cape, but they abound more in Basutoland and in what was formerly known as Zululand. They are a modified type of the negro, and are of good bodily appearance and do not lack in wit. When the English had subdued the warring chiefs and pacified and organized the country, the Wesleyan church attempted to evangelize these tribes, but with little or no success. Catholic missionaries were sent thither about the same time. The Oblate Fathers arrived in Natal in 1851, under the leadership of Bishop Allard, who had been appointed Vicar Apostolic of the Natal colony. Their field of labor was not to be limited to the newly established colonies, but extended as far inland as they could prudently venture. Violent opposition was offered to all white intruders; and even now in spite of the reverses experienced at intervals since the conquest in 1846, the various Kaffir tribes have not given up all hope of regaining their independence. The missionaries were at first looked upon with distrust, but they soon convinced the natives that their errand was one of peace and love. However no conversions, or very few, followed for many years. Though living on terms of intimacy with some of the chiefs, the Fathers could not induce them to become converts to the true faith. Many a weary journey inland was made over swampy roads, across high mountains and swollen torrents at the risk of life, only to return disconsolate. It was difficult to tell what was the principal obstacle to the conversion of the natives. Was it their evil habits, prominent among which is that of polygamy? was it their nigh total ignorance of God, or was it the restlessness in which they lived since the conquest, and their readiness to rally around some favorite chief, in order to shake off the yoke of foreign domination? All these together were sufficient to explain the barrenness of the missionaries labors. The Fathers were finally inspired to give all their care to the education of the rising generation; and here their efforts met with marked success. Some zealous nuns, filled with the spirit of sacrifice, came from Europe and aided the Oblates in the work of education. Schools were established in every mission and these were speedily filled with native children. In some centres such as Pietermaritzburg, d'Urban, Roma, Pretoria, etc., the number of young neophytes is very encouraging. They learn very easily, display in general good natural abilities, while their fervor emulates that of the Christians of the primitive church. These children frequently become a means of converting their parents, and it is wonderful to watch the change that gradually comes over those obstinate pagans. They all display a great love for the Catholic religion, they are charmed by its ceremonies and they respect and love the Fathers and nuns. There are now three Apostolic Vicariates: that of Natal, that of the Orange River Free State and that of the Transvaal. Bishop Jolivet, who was consecrated in 1874, and replaced Bishop Allard, is at Natal, Bishop Gaughran, consecrated in 1886, is Vicar Apostolic in the Free State, while Father Monginoux is Apostolic Prefect of the Transvaal. They are ably seconded by about sixty Oblate Fathers and brothers from France and Ireland, and by a good number of nuns as teachers.