

THE MISSION FIELD.

AFRICA.

The Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette gives the following interesting account of a tour made in September last, by the Rev. J. J. Cooper, formerly of St. Stephen's, Dublin, and the Rev. A. H. Turpin, round some of the Mission Stations in the Diocese of Grahamstown. Mr. Cooper writes:—

"At the close of our first day's journey (Saturday, September 27) we had reached Breakfast Vlei. We had intended starting early the next day to a small Mission Station to give the natives their quarterly celebration of Holy Communion, but it became so stormy and wet in the night that we were obliged to wait a little, but the weather moderating we left about 7.30 a.m., and reached the catechist's cottage in about an hour. Here we breakfasted. The natives felt cold and wet, so much that it would have been useless coming on earlier. Moreover, at this place, the 'Rura,' the only place at present available for service is a Kaffir hut, far from waterproof. This is the first of a group of Mission Stations worked by the catechist and native readers under him; both are again under Mr. Turpin, who visits these and other stations every three months to note their progress, enquire into cases of discipline if need be, and celebrate Holy Communion, also Holy Baptism. At 11 a.m. we had matins, Holy Baptism, and Holy Communion, in Kaffir—about 40 people. We had 16 communicants. It was a solemn service; the people so reverent, and all in a poor mud hut—but still a sanctuary of God. They sing so sweetly. They sing everything; it is perfectly natural to them. No instrument is needed. I gave a short address on the Gospel for the day. Then dinner, and talk with the catechist. He lives on the very edge of his district, which extends at least 30 miles from his home seawards; but the small town of Peddie, 9 miles off, where the strongest congregation exists, ought to be the centre and will be as soon as possible. At present Mr. Patteson, the catechist, is building a little church at the 'Rura,' (it takes its name from the stream). They had a little building here, but being rudely built it was blown down some time ago. Mr. P. works hard himself at it; he has made the bricks with the help of his people, and he did nearly all the brickwork himself. It is, of course, plain, but will be quite suitable. When this church, St. James's, is finished, which will be about Christmas, he will move into Peddie, and there set to work at the new church. At present the native Christians at Peddie worship in a building in the yard where the English temporary church is, but it is so close that it is not possible to hold services at the same time owing to the noise. How I wish

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some of our friends at home could have heard the Peddie natives sing in Kaffir, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty,' as we came into church. I can quote the words, 'ingewele, ingewele,' and the tune was our own. But I must hurry on. We saddled up after dinner, and rode two hours and a half over a rough country into Peddie, a pretty little spot, a fort of some note in the old days of war. Part of the fort is now used for the English church, school-house, and the native church building. Here we had Kaffir evensong at 5, with several baptisms, which made the service a little fatiguing—it is very difficult not to be wearied after a little in joining in the Kaffir service. A chapter in the Bible in Kaffir is about as long as three chapters in English. On Monday we visited another Mission Station, matins and Holy Communion. Next day we rode to Alice—most beautiful scenery; I was perfectly charmed. After a ride of 31 miles we had dinner, then walked a couple of miles to Kaffir evensong, and returned via Lovedale, the great Presbyterian Missionary Institution, and back to the English evensong, when I preached. It had been a hot day, and I confess I felt done up at night. My companion, however, had strained his back, and was quite hors de combat, hence I had to go on next day without him to Fort Beauport. About 2 miles from Beauport is Holy Trinity Mission. Mr. Turpin was to have celebrated here for them, and I now did so. We had a large congregation. The native deacon, Stephen Muykama, assisted me, and said the necessary parts in Kaffir, commandments, creed, etc., while I said the rest in English, and preached, he interpreting. Fifty communicants! A solemn and impressive service, which I much enjoyed. I finished my day by riding 12 miles with Stephen to a farmhouse, where I spent the night. I had ridden more than 150 miles in five days." A letter received by Mr. Cooper from a deacon examined by him for Holy Orders, in the extreme

north-east of the Diocese, nearly 400 miles from Grahamstown, is interesting and encouraging:—"The district of Herschel is anything but an inviting spot. The Mission is situated amongst the mountains at the eastern end of the reserve. The people are about as wild a set as you could find, and rank heathenism exists on all sides. O! how odious is heathenism when one is right in the centre of it, and how feeble one's efforts also appear when compared with the gigantic enemy which one has to grapple. It was a day of great rejoicing with us on the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels. It was the sixth anniversary of the foundation of the Mission. All the people came in their festive attire, so that the station looked very gay with their vari-colored handkerchiefs, parasols and dresses. There were 18 candidates for baptism, so that we commenced with the Baptismal Office. We have no font in the church, but the late Bishop selected a spot in the river close by to serve for that purpose. It is quite a natural font worn out of the solid rock by the action of air and water for many years. We formed a procession from the church to the river, singing, in Kaffir, the hymn, 'As pants the hart.' The banks of the river were lined with people, both Christian and heathen, to witness the reception of their friends into the Church of Christ. The usual method of baptism here is immersion, but it was too cold on this occasion, so that each candidate knelt by the river while Mr. Cox poured water upon them. We then returned to the church for the sermon and Communion office. The church was filled. It seemed so strange to have such a congregation of black faces all so attentive. The service was choral, and there were 60 communicants. It must have been a joyful sight to Mr. Cox (the clergyman in charge of the Mission), and to everyone else who saw it. One could but thank God and take courage. It was quite evident how the work in the past had been signally blessed.

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