

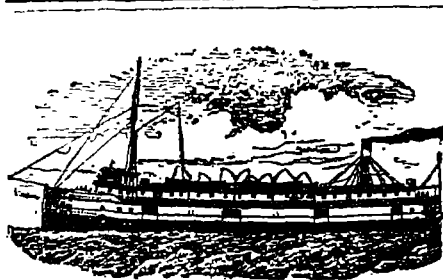
MISSION FIELD.

PONGAS MISSION, WEST AFRICA.

Archdeacon Holme, of St. Kitt's in the Diocese of Antigua has recently visited the interesting Mission sent by the West Indian Church to the West Coast of Africa. He has reported to the Committee of that Mission on what he saw, and the following extract from his account has appeared in the *Jamaica Churchman*: "I landed from the steamer at Bullabina, the nearest point of what may be called the mainland to the Isles of Los. Here I spent two days visiting the surrounding villages, speaking to the Christians and Mohammedans, and trying to influence for good the European clerk. A young German lay dying of consumption in one of the factories, far away from home and friends. This district which includes Conakry a telegraph station, and the office of the French commandant, besides two large factories, promises to be one of great importance. It is a free port, under the French protectorate, and the factory which used to be on the Isles de Los has been removed here in order to escape the obnoxious duties imposed by the English Government, by which they have succeeded in extinguishing all trade in their colony. From Bullabina I crossed over to Potoba, the furthest of the Isles de Los in the St. Christopher Mission boat. Here I stayed five days, visiting all the stations and most of the villages on the three islands—Potoba, Crawford Island, and Factory Island. I also climbed the heights on the two larger islands and found most desirable sites for a residence on both, with good water and landing places on the beach. The distance from Bullabina (practically the mainland) to Factory Island is only two miles, to Potoba four miles; this distance is easy and safe to cross except in July and August, and even then at chosen opportunities. On Monday, December 27th, I started for Rio Pongo very early in a crazy old boat, in which we were soon out of sight of land upon the open sea. By night we were anchored off the bar of the river, and the next morning we sailed up the ill-flavoured muddy stream between thick groves of mangrove bushes to Domingia, which we reached at 4 p. m. Exchanging our heavy sea-boat for a lighter one, we went further up the river to Farringia, the most inland station of the Mission. Returning to Domingia, and finishing my work there, I embarked again and sailed down the stream to the entrance of the Fallangia Branch, which she ascended and soon reached the scene of the first labours of the noble pioneers of the Pongas Mission. It was here that Chief Wilkinson greeted Mr. Leacock with the 'Te Deum.' It was here that he and Mr. Duport worked together so faithfully and fought side by side as well against heathenism and Mohammedanism as against the fatal fever which so soon smote down the brave old missionary. The graves of Neville, Higgs, and

Deane bear witness to further self-sacrifice. It is to be regretted that none of these graves are distinguished by any inscription; they are simply nameless mounds though honoured in the memories and hearts of the people. From Fallangia I walked 21 miles across the country to Bramaia, where I obtained from the king a grant of land for the Mission, together with a promise of hearty co-operation in the Church's work. From Bramaia we went down the river to the Debrooka Chanel, up which we passed to the thriving colony of Debreoka. This place has all the trade of the country at this time. About ten factories are in full swing. Large caravans from the interior were present, composed of Mohammedan masters and gangs of slaves bearing merchandise. Mr. McEwen has collected sufficient money within £10 to build a church here. All the factory agents seemed kindly disposed to the Mission. They received me with great cordiality, and I was most hospitably entertained by one of them. No words of mine could convey to your minds what an actual inspection of the Mission has brought to mine. Its value and importance exceed all that could have been hoped for. I cannot believe that a purer and healthier Mission—one more fitted for its work, and more necessary to its surroundings exists anywhere in the world. It is true that converts from Mohammedanism are rare, but even Mohammedans in some instances allow their children to be taught, and I believe that the time is not far distant when Mohammedanism will give way and expire before the influence of Christian teaching. Polygamy is the backbone of Mohammedanism. When the present generation of polygamists die out, monogamy will come into fashion, and the great obstacle to Christianity will be removed. For this we must look mainly to our schools, and some special effort should be made to secure the girls, in the meantime the Christian Mission is looked upon with respect and even favour by those who do not belong to it; it stands out conspicuously as a model of purity and love. That such a Mission should be impeded, dwarfed or abolished, would be a fearful calamity to the district, and the far-off countries with which it is in constant communication. At present there are three ordained priests, the Rev. Mr. McEwen, Morgan, and Hughes. Mr. Cole at Domingia is now only a catechist, but it is hoped he will be ordained shortly. All these are men devoted to their work, and such missionaries as we may well be proud of. It would be well indeed if every Bishop of our Church could boast of such a staff. On all sides they appear to be loved and respected. The European traders spoke highly of them, and contribute largely to the Mission. Mr. McEwen received a high tribute to his character from Natives and Europeans, including captains of English steamers. The King of Bramaia was demonstrative in his expressions of friendship, rising from his chair, shaking hands with our party, with a spe-

cially warm welcome to Mr. McEwen. With the exception of the Isles de Los the Archdeacon found the schools a failure. At all the stations he held meetings of headmen, and urged upon them the necessity of self-support, especially in the present depressed condition of the West Indies, and in many cases obtained a promise from them that they would undertake the care of the Mission buildings.



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