

Missionary Intelligence.

(From Wesleyan Notices Newspaper, Dec. 1850.)

Wesleyan Missions in Southern Africa. THE BECHUANA DISTRICT.

Extract of a Letter from the Rev. James Cameron, dated Thaba-Uncu, July 25th, 1850.

I was cheered at the last renewal of the quarterly tickets, to find most of the members of our church were holding fast the profession of their faith without wavering, expressing the liveliest gratitude for their deliverance from the ignorance, degradation, and misery of Heathenism, and for their introduction to the blessings and privileges of Christianity. Five catechumens, three of whom professed to have obtained the forgiveness of their sins through faith in Christ, were after a lengthened probation, admitted to the sacrament of baptism. Amongst these was the eldest son of the Chief Moroko, with one of his companions. He has been privileged to grow up under the sound of the Gospel, and to receive instruction from his infancy. He was three years at the Watson Institution, and eight months with Mr. Smailes at Colesberg, where he enjoyed every advantage both of a scholastic and religious kind, not to mention my own efforts to instruct him. He reads English, Dutch, and Sichuana, writes a fair hand, and understands the common rules of arithmetic. Since his return from Colesberg, about a year ago, he has been upon trial for church membership; and as his Class-Leader spoke well of him, and his moral conduct was irreproachable, I thought the prolongation of his novitiate might be productive of discouragement, if not of worse consequences,—so I consented to baptize him. I do hope he will, conformably to his baptismal pledges, renounce the vanities of the world, the lusts of the flesh, and the works of the devil.

Our sacramental and love-feast occasions, on the 7th and 14th inst., were indeed times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. In no Christian Church, even of favoured England, could the memorials of the Saviour's passion have been received with greater propriety: each one, kneeling erect, reverently took from the hands of his Pastor the symbols of Christ's body and blood, as the outward seal of the Gospel covenant, with all the rich blessings it insures to penitent believers. At the love-feast many testified to their having experienced the power, as well as adopted the form, of godliness. A few spoke with so much feeling as to move the whole assembly, who seemed as with one heart to follow hard after God.

On Tuesday, the 9th inst., the foundation-stone of our new chapel was laid, with the usual formalities. From various causes, and especially the want of funds, this building has been delayed much longer than was at one time anticipated; but we have now made a commencement in good earnest, and hope, with the Divine blessing, to have it completed within two years. The people contributed money to pay for the doors and windows, and brought them hither from Colesberg, a distance of a hundred miles, in their own waggons, and at their own expense. All our male members have engaged to work by turns, in parties of ten or twelve, till the building is finished. It is in the form of a T, and comprehends an area of two thousand seven hundred and seventy-two square feet. Great was the rejoicing of the people at laying the first stone of this new and spacious edifice. I discoursed to them on the miseries of Heathenism, and the vast temporal and spiritual advantages which the Gospel had brought them. I believe every heart responded to the truth of my statements. At the conclusion of the service we repaired to the old chapel, singing a hymn by the way, and there the whole church partook of a repast, consisting of bread and meat, with plenty of tea, a beverage which a few years ago was utterly unknown among the Baralongs, but which some of them now begin to relish, as much preferable to their native beer. At this feast we were joined by Moroko and one of his head men, who thus showed themselves interested in our undertaking.—The former has promised to assist us with

his waggons in fetching wood, which must be brought from a great distance, or in any other way that I may suggest; and I have no doubt of his fulfilling his promise.

Western Africa.

GAMBIA.

Extract of a Letter from the Rev. George Meadows, dated St. Mary's, Gambia, May 23d, 1850.

We still have much to encourage us in our labours. Our schools are large, our society peaceful and flourishing, and our services are well attended, and often graciously visited by Him who has said, "In all places where my name is recorded I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee."

Several conversions have taken place lately. A Krooman—one of a class thought by some to be almost beyond the reach of the Gospel—has been awakened, and experienced the efficacy of that blood which "can make the foulest clean."

But we need more help to maintain the ground we at present occupy, as well as to extend our borders. If one of us were to be laid aside by illness, (and we cannot expect to be always well and fit for work here,) our society and schools would greatly suffer. We do hope that you will at least send us a well-trained Schoolmaster after the rains.

Family Circle.

Presence of Mind.

Presence of mind may be described as the power of determining what is fittest to be done upon any sudden occasion, and under adverse circumstances, and of carrying the design into immediate execution with such success as to lead one to suppose it an action of calm deliberation. It is, in short, the union of rapid thought and self-command. This power is possessed by individuals in very different degrees. Minds are so diversely constituted, that we often see the same circumstances producing quite opposite effects. Thus an emergency, that totally unnerves one man, is just sufficient to call the powers of another into full activity. Whilst the former cannot act at all, but seems reduced to a state of mental paralysis, the latter applies himself with calm energy to the difficulties of the case, and escapes the perils that appeared inevitable, by an intuitive selection of the only path that could lead him out in safety. Presence of mind is more generally diffused amongst men than women, but, perhaps, the most striking isolated examples are told of females. Most people have heard of the mother, who, seeing her infant so near the edge of a precipice that the slightest advance would hurl the little creature to destruction, had the presence of mind to suppress the scream of alarm that was on the point of breaking out. Simply whispering the little creature's name, and at the same time baring her breast, she drew it from its dangerous position into the safe haven of her arms. When presence of mind is combined with fortitude, the compound is very admirable; and there are few things that show, in a greater degree, the power of the mind over the body. The following circumstances, which took place a few years ago in an English county, are a pointed illustration of this unusual combination of qualities:—

A young couple, named Aubrey, inhabited a tolerably large house in the village of —, in Norfolk. The house—an old one—was built in a garden of considerable size, and had no other occupants than the gentleman and lady just mentioned, their infant, rather more than a year old, and a single female domestic, who had not been very long in their service. Every evening at nine o'clock a silence the most complete reigned throughout the village; at ten the lights in the different houses began to be extinguished, and in a short time no ray disturbed the blank darkness. It must have been a very extraordinary circumstance if any steps were afterwards heard in the streets. Judge, then, of the utter solitude of a house screened by elms and sycamores, and standing three or four hundred yards from the public way. One evening, in the month of November, Mrs. Aubrey was in the house, awaiting the return of her hus-

band, whom some affair of business had called away in the morning, to a town about six miles distant. He expected to receive a considerable sum of money in the course of the day, and his wife had prevailed upon him to take a pair of pistols, as he anticipated being detained until nightfall. About six o'clock in the evening Mrs. Aubrey, went up-stairs accompanied by the servant, for the purpose of putting the child to bed. The room was on the first floor, a large apartment, looking into the garden. The wainscot darkened by time, the heavy furniture, some family portraits with sedate countenances and in ancient costumes, gave the room a somewhat gloomy appearance. Opposite to the chimney there was a deep recess, in which stood the bed; and near this was placed the child's cradle. The curtains were drawn, but one corner had caught by accident on some piece of furniture, and a post of the bed was exposed; a fine massive piece of carving, on which some cabinet-maker of yore had expended no slight skill and patience.

The night was dark and melancholy, quite in character with the time of year.—Gusts of wind rattled on the windows, dashing the rain violently against the glass. The trees in the garden, bending under the sudden currents of air, occasionally struck the house side—a gloomy and monotonous concert this—and no human voice mingled in it to promise assistance in case of need. Mrs. Aubrey seated herself on a low chair at a corner of the hearth. The light of the fire, and that of a lamp placed on the chimney-piece, striking some objects in full, and leaving others in darkness, made all kinds of strange effects by their opposition or combination. The child, which fully occupied her attention, sat on her knee, whilst the servant executed some commands of her mistress at the other end of the room. Being about to complete the child's readiness for its couch, the mother turned towards the cradle to see that it was prepared, and just at the moment, a bright flame shooting out, threw a strong light upon the recess. Conceive, if you can, the astonishment, and the start she gave, when, under the bed, and at the place where the curtain had been lifted up, she perceived, as plain as ever she saw anything in her life, a pair of thick clouted boots, in such a position that it was evident that they contained feet. In an instant, a world of thoughts rushed through her brain, and the utter helplessness of her situation flashed upon her. It did not admit of a doubt that a man was there with some evil intention, either to rob or murder. Her husband would probably not reach home before eight, and it was then scarcely half-past six. Mrs. Aubrey, however, possessed sufficient command over herself not to do what a thousand other women would have done, namely, fall to shrieking. To all appearance the man had reckoned upon staying where he was for a considerable time; perhaps he had intended to remain until midnight, and then carry off the money that Mr. Aubrey was to receive; but, if obliged to come out of his lurking-place now, he might revenge himself upon the two defenceless women, and stop all information of theirs by putting them to death. Then who could tell? perhaps the servant herself might be in league with the fellow. Indeed, there had been of late certain grounds of suspicion, as regards the girl, which Mrs. Aubrey had disregarded, but they now forced themselves on her mind. All these reflections occurred to her in much less time than I have taken to put them down.

She came to a determination at once. She first thought of some pretext to get the servant out of the room:—"Mary," she said, with as steady a voice as she could assume, "you know what your master will like for supper; I wish you would go and make it ready. He will be pleased, I am sure, that we have thought of it."—"Will you not need me here, as usual, ma'am?" inquired the girl. "No; I can do all myself, thank you; go and cook as nice a supper as you can; for I am sure my husband ought to have something nice after a long ride, and in such weather." After some delay, which doubled her mistress's anxiety, although she endeavoured to repress it, the servant quitted the room. The sounds of her footsteps died away on the stairs, and then Mrs. Aubrey

truly felt herself alone—yet the two feet remained there, in their shadowy concealment without stirring. She kept near the fire, holding the infant in her lap, now and then speaking to it, but only mechanically, for she could not remove her eyes from that horrible sight. The poor child cried to be at rest, but the cradle was near the bed, and under the bed were those frightful feet. It was impossible to go near them. She made a violent effort, however—"Come, then, darling!" she murmured; and lifting the child in her arms, and supporting herself on her trembling limbs, she went towards the cradle. She is now beside the feet—she places the baby in its little nest; concealing as well as she can, the tremors of her voice, she rocks the cradle in time to the song she usually sings. All the time she sang, she kept fancying a dagger was lifted up to strike her, and there was no one to succour her. Well, baby fell asleep, and Mrs. Aubrey returned to her seat near the fire. She durst not quit the room, for that might excite the suspicions of the man, and the servant, was probably his accomplice; besides she wished to remain near her infant. It was now no more than seven—an hour—still a full hour before her husband would reach home! Her two eyes are chained, by a species of fascination, to the two feet; she cannot direct them to any other object. A profound silence reigns in the room; baby sleeps peacefully; its mother sits motionless—a statue; her hands crossed on her lap, her lips half open, her eyes fixed, and her breast has a fearful tightness across it.

Now and then there was a noise without in the garden, and Mrs. Aubrey's heart leaped within her, for she imagined it announced her husband's arrival and her own deliverance. But no, not yet, she was deceived; it was merely the sound of the wind, or the rain, upon the trees. She might be the only being in the world, so deep and mournful was the silence. Every minute seemed an age. Look! look! the feet stir. Is the man coming out of his concealment? No, it was nothing but a slight movement, perhaps involuntarily made to ease an unpleasant position. Again the two feet are quiet.

The clock is audible once more, but it is only to chime the half hour. Half-past seven; no more than half-past seven! Oh, how full of anguish was every minute! Repeatedly she addressed prayers on high for a period to this hideous suspense. Upon the chimney-piece there was a book of religious meditation; she reached it, and tried to read. In vain!—her eyes wandered off the page continually to see if the clouted boots were still under the bed. Then a new source of anxiety shot through her head—What, if her husband does not come at all! The weather was bad, and his parents, who lived in the town whither he had gone, might prevail upon him to remain with them over night. She would not be astonished if he complied, especially as he had a good deal of money about his person.—What, if he comes not at all!

Eight o'clock has struck, and there is no arrival. The possibility her active brain suggested becomes every moment more and more probable. For two hours did this agonized female bear up against her thoughts, but at length it became hopeless to hope. Hark! Is that a noise? She has been deceived so often before, she is afraid to believe her senses, and yet, this time, there is no deception. The entrance-door opens, is closed; steps come along the lobby, and mount the stairs; the room door turns on its hinges. But if it had been a stranger, he would have seemed a messenger from heaven. Well, in he walked, a fine athletic figure. Down go the pistols upon the table; off comes the cloak, thoroughly soaked, I can tell you;—a happy man was he to see all he loved dearest in the world. He stretched his hands to his wife, who grasped them convulsively; but, exercising her wonderful self-command once more, she stifled her emotion, and, without uttering a word, she placed a finger on her lips, and pointed with the other hand to the two feet. If Mr. Aubrey had doubted for a moment what to do, he had not deserved to be the husband of such a woman. By a sign he made her comprehend his meaning, and then said, "Just wait one moment, my

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