

children slain by their parents, in order to reduce the number of mouths whose cravings it was impossible to satisfy; or of starving wretches, caught in the act of pillaging the fields on the river's bank of their scanty produce, and summarily executed by the half-famished owners. Such is the state of the upper Shire, owing to the ravages of famine; while lower down the stream the agency of man is making this providential desolation more desolate still. Two wretched Portuguese slave-dealers from Tette, the infamous Mariana and another, are dragging either bank of the river, with armed bands numbering 1,000 or 2,000 hunters, in pursuit of their hateful traffic, laying waste flourishing villages, and carrying off the miserable survivors of the famine into hopeless captivity; so that where Dr. Livingstone formerly counted the villagers by thousands, he now finds but half a dozen spectre-like forms, gaunt with famine, demoralised, and brutalised, even below their natural level, by the horrors attending and following on the slave trade. A very unpromising field for missionary enterprise, it must be acknowledged; and the committees at home and at the Cape have acted honestly and well in publishing the whole truth, with all its hideous details; so as to enable the public to form a just estimate of the perils by which the Missionaries are surrounded, and to justify beforehand the abandonment of the position should it be found no longer tenable.

Hitherto, through God's good providence, the Missionaries have been enabled, by great exertions, to keep the famine at bay. First one and then another has undertaken an expedition down the river to replenish their stores from the magazines of the Portuguese traders on the lower Zambesi; and thus they have succeeded hitherto in maintaining themselves and their dependents who still number about 180, consisting chiefly of the rescued slaves committed to their charge, on their first arrival, by Dr. Livingstone; augmented since by stragglers of the Achawa and other neighbouring tribes, who have come to seek peace and security under the banner of the Mission Cross. Great progress has been made in the acquisition of the language by the Europeans, the natives have advanced as far as could be reasonably hoped in their strange and untried studies, and the moral influence of the Missionaries has been increased rather than diminished since they withdrew from the tribal conflicts. The very Achawa, with whom they were so unfortunately brought into collision, have sought their friendship, and desire to submit to their teaching; and their qualities, physical, intellectual, and moral, appear to be of a much higher order than those of the feeble and degenerate race whom they have displaced. According to the latest accounts, Dr. Livingstone was in his normal position, stuck fast on a sand-bank above the Elephant Marshes, a little below the mission-station, and was in communication with the Missionaries. A member of his expedition had joined one of the Mission party in an overland excursion to Tette for the purpose of procuring a fresh supply of animal food, which was almost exhausted; and we have since heard from Mr. Rowley himself that this expedition has been entirely successful, and he was on his way back to the Mission with a supply of sheep and goats. Lastly, the cheering intelligence that the rains have set in in real earnest gives ground for hope that it may have pleased God already to remove that terrible scourge of famine which has desolated the land.

This, then, is the bright side of the picture; and although we are far from questioning the propriety of the resolution to which the Missionaries had come, after mature deliberation, on the 24th of February, yet we earnestly hope that they may be relieved from the sad necessity of carrying it into effect. They had resolved that, if help in men and some additional provisions did not arrive from home before the 15th of June, they would proceed to make their way down the river and return at least to Johanna, Natal, or the Cape. We call it a sad necessity, because it would involve the utter failure of the Mission; and, although we should be most reluctant to say one word which could influence the decision of the Missionaries on so vital a subject, of which they only can be the adequate judges, yet, since our words can have no such effect, we need not hesitate to add, that we should regard such a failure with a bitter feeling of disappointment and distress. The character of the Church of England as a missionary Church does not stand so high in Christendom that she can afford to abandon such a work as this without grievous detriment to her credit, for which we are bound to be jealous. But worst and most sad of all is it to contemplate the possibility of "the strong man armed," recovering possession