

SOUTHERN AFRICA.

(From the Tablet's Correspondent.)

Cape Town, September 10th, 1848.—I am now able to send you the full Particulars of the Torture of the Kaffro, by the great "Christian" Chief, Maqcomo, to which I alluded briefly in my last.—The *Cape Frontier Times*, of the 31st ult., contains a long Letter from an Inmate of Fort Beaufort,—that Fort into which, if it be possible to prevent it, no Popish Priest, according to the Whig Lord John Russell, ought to enter;—and beneath the Guns of which the infamous scene took place. The *Cape Frontier Times* makes some forcible and just observations, on the infamy redounding to the patrons and instructors of the murderers, as well as to the authorities at Fort Beaufort, from the transaction. But, then, with a lop-sided logic—not unsuited to the present day, at which Afghan and Chinese Wars, Anglo-Spanish Legions, Texian Independence, Circassian and Polish Conquest, and other such violations of international and domestic laws, are all the fashion—the Journal invokes the armed intervention of the British, to restrain the Kaffres from putting into effect these Kaffro laws; of which, "the British Government have guaranteed, by treaty, the Administration;" and thereby, "to smooth the Way for the gradual introduction of moral and religious Truth, amongst the benighted and barbarous inhabitants." So that it now seems, that these poor People, far from being Christianised, as has hitherto been pretended, are not as yet prepared for even the gradual introduction of truth of any kind, but need to have the way smoothed for it! By the way, the "Moral Truth" of the *Cape Frontier Times* itself is in some need of enlightenment, as will be seen from what has been said already. Not that the Editor will attach overmuch importance to my judgment in the matter. "Should there be," he says, "a single human being in this colony, or in the world, who, after perusing the treaties, which, in a moment of insane folly, we made with them [the Kaffres] should be preserved inviolate, we say he is a fallen spirit; his mind is diseased; his heart-strings are ajar; and he is without a soul to enjoy what is beautiful and bright and holy." I subjoin the narrative in Question:—

"It appears that Maqcomo's son, Koma, was sick: the usual course was pursued in such cases, and a witch doctor was consulted, to ascertain the individual from whose evil influence he was suffering; and, as is also usual under such circumstances, a man of property, and by reputation a courageous man, of Maqcomo's tribe, was selected, and condemned to forfeit his life for alleged crime—unheard, and without the slightest opportunity being afforded him of asserting, still less proving, his innocence; it was sufficient that the doctor had said he was guilty—he must die! Accordingly, to prevent his being made acquainted by his friends of his awful situation, a party of men left for his kraal, early in the

morning, to secure the recovery of the sick young chief, by murdering one of his father's subjects. The day selected for the immolation appears to have been a sort of gala day with the unconscious victim; he was in his kraal, had just accomplished the slaughter of one of his cattle, and was merrily contemplating the convivial duties of the day before him, over which he thought himself about to preside; the arrival, therefore, of a party of men from the "great place," gave him no other concern than what part of the slaughtered animal he should give them—he looked upon them as his guests!—but, alas! he was too soon undeceived! The party seized him in his kraal, whither he had gone, of course, unarmed; when he found he was secured, and felt the rein round his neck, he calmly said, "It is my misfortune to be caught unarmed, or it should not be so." He was then ordered to produce the matter with which he had bewitched his chief's son. He replied, "I have no bewitching matter that I know of, other than the body you have seized—I have been twice smelt out before—no bewitching matter has been found, and I am not conscious of having secreted any—my person alone can possess the evil influence, therefore destroy it, but do it quickly, if my chief has already consented to my death." His executioners expressed their determination to torture him until he produced it; he replied, "Save yourselves the trouble for torture me as you will I can never produce what I do not possess." He was then held to the ground, and several men now pierced his body all over with Kaffro needles, two or three inches deep—the victim bore this with extraordinary resolution. His tormentors tired, complaining of the pain it gave their hands, and of the needles, or skewers, bending. By this time a large fire was kindled, into which large square stones were placed to heat. The sufferer was then ordered to stand up. He complied. They pointed out to him the fire, telling him it was for his further torture, unless he produced the bewitching matter. He replied, "I told you the truth when I said, 'save yourselves such trouble; it is my misfortune, not my crime.' As regards the hot stones, I can bear them, for I am innocent. I feel no more apprehension than I should at sitting comfortable in my house" (here he described a particular position Kaffres are fond of sitting in).—"I would beseech you to strangle me at once, but that you will say I shrink at what you are about to do to me. If, however, your object is merely that of extorting confession from me, save yourselves the trouble, and kill me outright, for your hot stones do not scare me."—Here, his wife, who had also been seized, was stripped perfectly naked, and most cruelly beaten, and otherwise ill-treated. The victim was then led to the fire, where he was laid on his back, with his feet and arms tied to pegs driven into the ground for the purpose. The stones being by this time as hot as they could be made, were taken out of the fire and placed upon his groin, stomach, and chest.—

These were supported by others on each side, also heated, and pressed against his body. It is impossible to describe the awful effect of this process. I must leave the scorching and broiling of the body—the fumes of smoke, and occasional flashes of flame arising therefrom, to the imagination of your readers—the very stones, as if refusing to be made further instruments of such cruelty, slip off the body, in consequence of the unctuous matter they have drawn from it, and are kept on by being pressed down with sticks by the fiendish executioners. With all this, the sufferer still remained sensible. He was asked whether he wished to be released, to discover his hidden charm. He replied, "Release me." They did so, fully expecting that they had vanquished his resolution. To the amazement of all, he stood up—but what a sight—a human being broiled alive—his flesh hanging in large pieces from his body, like the seared hide of an ox! He composedly asked his tormentors, "What do you wish me to do now?" They repeated their original demand: He resolutely adhered to his declaration of innocence, and begged of them, now that they appeared tired of their labour, to shorten it, and put him out of his misery. The noose of the rein round his neck, which had been hitherto secured from slipping by a knot, was released, and while the heroic sufferer was still standing, it was violently jerked by several men until he fell, when he was dragged about the ground until they were satisfied; and, finally, placing their feet on the back of his neck, they drew the noose so tight as to complete the strangulation.—Then, as if not satisfied so brave a man had ceased to be, he was taken into his own house, tied to one of the supporting poles of it, the house set on fire, and the body burnt to ashes. Thus died a man whose extraordinary fortitude and endurance deserved a better fate. His sufferings commenced about 10 A.M., and terminated with his existence a little before sunset."

In reply to these facts and comments, the *Commercial Advertiser* of yesterday has come forward on the side of its Missionary Pets, [by endeavouring to show that the Anglicans and Puritans, under Charles I. and Archbishop Laud, were no better than the Kaffres are now under Protestant Missionaries! Now far these many-creded men will feel flattered, by this wholesome compliment to Protestantism of all times, Countries, and Sects, I, of course cannot pretend to say; but I wish them joy of their advocate. By way of set-off to Maqcomo's case, his pious organ quotes those of Leighton and James Naylor; and then enquires:—"How have the English People, as a Community, been delivered from the influence of this gloomy and dangerous spirit? Find that out;—and you will see how the Kaffres may be delivered from it!" It was," he concludes, "by faithful Preaching, by faithful Teaching, by unwearied Rebuke, and good Example, on the part of true Christians; that this grand Transformation was effected?—

described below, kindle zeal to enlighten How much should such a scene, as that the dark places of the Earth!" &c. &c.

Look now to the extract I gave in my last from this same *Advertiser*, boasting to us about the numbers of his Missionaries, in and about Kaffreland, and many of them in the territory or domicile of this Maqcomo;—and about the wonders they perform there; and then say, if their conversions must not have been all lies, their "Preaching" (in the language of the above extract,) not "Faithful" any more than their "Teaching;"—their "Rebuke" and good "Example," a nonentity; and the Kaffres, accordingly under the influence, not merely of Missionaries, but of "the gloomy and ferocious spirit!"

Neither by the *Advertiser's* Congregationalist Missionaries, nor by their Wesleyan rivals, nor by the French Calvinist Missionaries, who, with the others, infest Kaffreland, can "the grand Transformation" be "effected." Blessed be God, we are in daily expectation of "true Christian" Missionaries, whose "good Example," "unwearied Rebuke," "faithful Teaching," and "faithful Preaching," will, we trust, be "effective" as "faithful."

If our respected Correspondent had had the Fortune to peruse Mr. Missionary Moffat's late Book, about his Missionary career at the Cape, he would have wondered less at these doings of Maqcomo. Swaddling Kaffres are not the only people in Southern Africa, who make use of judicial torture to elicit hidden Testimony. We quote the following from the first of two recent articles in the *Catholic Magazine*, reviewing Mr. Moffat's Book. "A Bushman had entered Griquatown," to "spy the place;" as the Missionaries thought. He was put to the Torture; or, as our Author prefers to describe it, "in order to make him tell the Truth, received a severe Castigation, and was put in Irons." To escape from this infliction he did tell "a fine Tale indeed." Unhappily, this afterwards proved to be "a perfect Falschood." (Moffat, p. 476.) [This reminds one, by the way, of the methods of Torture employed by Protestant Loyalists, upon the Irish of 1798!—Ed. TABLET.]

Mr. Wharton, United States minister at Berlin, in a long and interesting letter lately published on the contemplated connection of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, says that a Spanish Catholic priest has long since accomplished the task with the aid of the Indians under his spiritual care! The communication thus opened may not be the easiest, or the most direct, but at any rate the humble priest has the merit of having first achieved this great work, with the feeble means at his control; while the great nations on this and the other side of the Atlantic, are discussing its practicability. It is thus that in every age of the world, our clergy have been the pioneers of every great improvement in the world in matter of mind. They do not always, as in the case of Copernicus, obtain credit for it.—*Catholic Telegraph*.