

of the national Church as the Church of a miserable minority of the population with which our ears have long been filled. We can point those who objected to the insertion of ecclesiastical statistics in the census for 1861 to this indirect confirmation of our rightful claim to be still, amid all the sects of the country, the national Church of Scotland.

"We do not claim 46 per cent. of our population as entered on the communion rolls of the Church: we know that there are very many of those who seek the parish minister's services for baptism, and more especially for marriage, who, alas! shun his face at other times, and never hear him preach. We know that there are thousands and tens of thousands sunk in a degradation than which heathendom can show none deeper, save that the tradition of ancestral piety makes them seek to be joined in wedlock by the parish minister. We can make every allowance for the number of such, and still assert, in the face of ecclesiastical opponents, that ours is the national Church—especially the Church of the national poor. To us the poor and the needy come; to our free ordinances, in their times of need and of inquiry, they look; and our open churches, our territorial charge, have still a mighty hold on their thoughts and feelings and associations. Amid all the Babel of contending sects, whose loud-voiced cries are stirring the air, is heard the call from many of the destitute, as well as of the intelligent and godly citizens of our country, that the sphere of the Established Church remains unoccupied by any other denomination, and that it can be occupied by her and by her alone. Even if the statistics of the Religious Instruction Commission were adopted—even if we believed one-sixth of the population of Scotland to be still living in practical heathenism, and assumed, further, that all these are nominally attached to the Established Church—that all the home heathen seek the services of the parish minister when they seek any,—we should still have from 46 per cent. a great superiority over any other denomination; and, in actual church-membership, be nearly equal to the united strength of the two strongest dissenting Churches. In so far as these numbers go, we might still point, after all the assaults and shocks which the Church of Scotland has borne, to her ancient motto and the Burning Bush."

Captain Speke's Advice on planting Missions.

THE following is the main part of a letter from Captain Speke, the discoverer of the source of the river Nile, respecting the establishment of missions in the tract of country he visited. It is backed by an offer of £100 towards starting a missionary in that direction. We copy from an English journal:—

"For my part, I should wish for no better plan than that of a 'United Church Mission,' for opening those extremely fertile and beautiful territories at the head of the Nile to Christianity, and so to commerce and civilization. The three kingdoms—Kanagwe, Uganda, and Unyoro, are, in my opinion, the key to Africa, and the centre from which the light ought to radiate. A mission thither, if properly managed, in combination with Government officers having authority to maintain the rights of the kings of those countries against the violence and fiendish oppression of the White Nile traders, would prove of the greatest benefit both to ourselves and the Africans. The great fault which has hitherto existed and dispirited missionary enterprise, is that of selecting places where no strong native government exists, and where the land is poor in consequence of its being subject to periodical droughts and famines. In the three countries I have mentioned, neither of these two evils at present exists; but if they are not attended to at once, there is no knowing what will happen as the White Nile traders push further south. In short, I am inclined to believe that the traders themselves will bring down those semi-Christian governments and ride over those splendid lands, as the Moors of old made their way into Spain. Hitherto the traders have confined themselves to the poor lands without the fertile zone, but now they are entering into this, and the result will be conquest—accompanied, of course, by the firm establishment of that more stubborn foe to Christianity than Judaism itself—Mohammedanism. I would strongly advise the Zambezi Mission, and also the Zanzibar, to be moved up to the Equator.

"You are aware that I maintain that the slave-trade will never be put down by vessel-hunting at sea alone. We are fruitlessly spending millions in that way at present, without any good effect, and we shall continue to do so until the Government is enabled to see, through public opinion, that the cheaper and surer way of gaining their point is to assist in the development of the Interior African."

"J. H. SPEKE."

Church in Ceylon.

The subjoined letter, which appears in the *Home Record*, from the Rev. George Spratt, for some time a missionary in this Province, will be read with interest:—

THE MANSE, KANDY, CEYLON,
January 27th, 1864.

SIR,—I beg to send you for publication a short notice of the Church in Ceylon.

When I came to the island, over six years ago, I was the only clergyman of the Church of Scotland in it. There were, however, the Rev. J. K. Clarke, of the Irish Presbyterian