

THE CHRISTIAN SENTINEL.

THREE RIVERS, FRIDAY 21st JANUARY, 1831.

EXTRACTS FROM REPORTS OF THE CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

Sierra Leone. From January 1, 1819, to July 6, 1820, there were in the colony 455 marriages, 571 births, and 1261 baptisms of adults and infants; and at the latter date, there were 2097 children and adults under education. The Gazette of March 6, 1819, having announced 919 marriages, the total number celebrated in the colony amounts to 1374.

In Sir George Collier's first Report in the African Settlements, he states—"It is hardly possible to conceive the difficulties which have been surmounted in bringing the Colony of Sierra Leone to its present improved, and still very improving state. Roads are cut in every direction useful for communication: many towns and villages are built; and others, as the black population increases, are building: more improvement, under all the circumstances of climate and infancy of the Colony, is scarcely to be supposed. I visited the black towns and villages, attended the public schools and other establishments; and I never witnessed in any population more contentment and happiness."

In his second report he adds:—"The manner in which the public schools are here conducted reflects the greatest credit on those concerned in their prosperity; and the improvement made by the scholars, proves the aptitude of the African, if moderate pains be taken to instruct him. I have attended public worship in every quarter of the globe, and I do most conscientiously declare, that never did I witness the ceremonies of religion more piously performed, or more devoutly attended to, than in Sierra Leone."

From the *Calcutta and North India Mission*.—"It was delightful to witness the beautiful order and decorum of the native women. The first sight of such a congregation of worshippers is, of course, the more striking, because one has been hitherto accustomed to see the women of this country under such very different circumstances. These are precious souls gathered into the fold of Christ from among such as we once were. To hear them call on the name of the Lord Jesus confessing their sins: to hear His praises sung by them; and to witness their modest deportment and great attention—was really delightful."

I went with Mr. Rowley to hear him catechise the Christian women in one of their houses, and was indeed gratified. I was more particularly struck by their behaviour and deportment. They read too, very well, and seemed well to understand the questions and answers of the Catechism: and then they sang. I cannot tell what I felt in hearing them sound the praises of Jesus."

From *Meerut*, Mr. Fisher gives the following account:

"Last Sunday, we were conversing on the universality of the feeling that prevails in all nations, that some atonement for sin is necessary. I related to them what my three Sons had seen, as they returned with me from Hardwar. A Fakcer was observed by the road-side, preparing something extraordinary; which, having never observed before, excited a curiosity to draw near and examine his employment. He had several Hindoo Pilgrims round him, all on their way from the Holy Ghaut; who assisted in preparing the wretched Devotee for some horrible penance, to which he had voluntarily bound himself, in order to expiate the guilt of some crime which he had committed long ago. His attendants literally worshipped him; kissing his feet, calling him God, and invoking his blessing. A large fire was kindled under the extended branch of an old tree: to this branch the Fakcer fastened two strong ropes, having at the lower end of each of them a stuffed noose, into which he introduced his feet; and thus being suspended with his head downward over the fire, a third rope (at a distance toward the end of the branch) was fixed, by which he succeeded with one hand to set himself in a swinging motion, backward and forward through the smoke and flaming fire, which was kept blazing by a constant supply of fuel, ministered by many of his followers; with the other hand he counted a string of beads, a fixed number of times; so as to ascertain the termination of the four hours, for which he had doomed himself daily to endure this exercise for twelve years, nine of which are nearly expired. A narrow band-

age is over his eyes, and another over his mouth, to guard against the suffocating effects of the smoke. By this means he says he stands atone for the guilt of his sins, and be made holy for ever. The last half hour of the four hours, his people say, he stands upright and swings in a circular motion round the fire. On coming down, he rolls himself in the hot ashes of the fire. The boys went to see him again in the evening, when he was engaged in his prayers, but what or whom they could not tell."

I asked my little Congregation what they thought of all this. They sat silent, with their eyes cast down, and sighing heavily. At length, Anund turned to Matthew Phiroodeen, and, passing his arms round his neck, exclaimed, with the most touching expression of affection as well as of gratitude to God—"Ah, my brother! my brother! such devils once were we! but now (and he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and elevated his whole person) Jesus! Jesus! my God! my Saviour!" It was very affecting.

From under the head—Diocese of Nova Scotia, in the Report of the proceedings of the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts for 1828-9, we make the following extract:

"More than 7000 persons availed themselves of the rite of Confirmation administered by the Bishop during his last visitation, and considering the necessary uncertainty of the appointments in many places, and the long intervals of waste lands which separate a large proportion of the inhabitants from the few churches which have already been built, the numbers sufficiently attest their attachment to the Church of England, and offer every encouragement to those who are interested in their welfare to proceed in endeavouring to provide for them the means of religious worship and instruction. Assurances are also given, that at a future, though early opportunity, still larger numbers will avail themselves of these means of publicly professing themselves members of the Church of England. It would be unnecessary to make a single observation upon the importance of the frequent administration of this holy rite, when considered solely as it affects the individual himself, or as a means of confirming the rising generation in the principles of the religion; but in a country so exposed to the introduction of every novel and ill-digested system, where it is almost impracticable to offer the means of uniform religious worship, or to maintain a constant watch over the disposition to change, which is so apt to seize the youthful mind, the value of that public profession of Christian Faith, as the bond which tends to render the connexion insoluble, is much enhanced."

There is solid wisdom in the above remarks. They point to the paramount duty of the British Government to provide the means of religious instruction for all her Colonies, and for planting the Church among them as soon as she begins to plant her surplus population in the wilderness. Had she adopted such a policy at the first settlement of America, and prudently pursued it, the next condition of the United States would at this day have been far different from what it is. America, with all its virtues, which are a few, is now the hot bed of heresy and schism, of extravagance and infidelity; the natural consequences of departing from primitive order, of the latitudinarianism arising out of the setting aside of scripture doctrine or ecclesiastical unity, and the government setting no mark of disgrace on heresy and infidelity. The result of this has been, that when in the United States, to hear men of decent appearance put forth their infidel notions and blasphemous scriptures without the least delicacy or reserve, and sometimes in a most offensive manner; pretty much in the style of newspaper abuse with which they reward the services of their great men.

Breach of the Second Commandment.

Not long since we took into our hands a picture representing God the Father under the figure of an old man with a bald head sitting on a cloud, and sending down from his extended hand the Dove, to overshadow the Virgin Mary!

In Deuteronomy the fourth chapter we read thus:—"And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw NO SIMILITUDE; only ye heard a voice. Take heed therefore unto yourselves; for ye saw NO MANNER OF SIMILITUDE on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, &c.—lest thou lift up thine