

South's Corner.

A LETTER TO ONE WHO CANNOT READ.

There was a poor widow living in Marlow, lonely and sorrowing. When her husband died, a kind and industrious son was left to her, by whose help all her wants were supplied, and whose society was the greatest comfort to her in the world. But one hard winter, when work became scarce, and the young man was thrown out of employment, he began to fret at the thought of being unable to provide for his mother: a recruiting party offered large bounty to young men who would enlist in a regiment on the point of sailing for India; and the widow's son fell into the temptation. He took the bounty-money to a neighbour to lay it out to the best advantage for his mother's support, and he promised to send more as soon as he could; to his mother he did not go back to say farewell, for he was afraid it would break her heart and would make him feel more wretched than he did already. So he stole away to join his regiment, and he had to embark immediately. Soon, the vessel was gallantly on her way over the great ocean; but the widow was disconsolate, for her life was bound up in the life of her child, and she knew not how long it might be before she heard of him—if God should spare him to write.

Many days, and weeks, and months had passed by, when one morning the postman stopped at the door of the widow's cabin, and showed her a letter which he said was addressed to her. The poor woman was trembling with joy and fear; for she could not read, and the letter might either be from her son to give her good news respecting him, or it might be from some one of his comrades to tell her of his death. But there was another trouble that she had: "Here's a deal of money to pay for the postage," said the man; "and I cannot give up the letter unless you can pay." But all the money that the widow had did not amount to half what was required; and so she had to see the letter go away again from her door: yet the postman promised to keep it for her, and she might come as soon as she had procured what was wanting, and get it from him.

The widow looked after the postman, as long as she could see him; she then sat down in her kitchen, and burst into a violent fit of weeping. She seemed to feel her poverty more than ever, now that the want of a little money kept from her the tidings, whatever they might be, contained in the letter.

Some neighbour, however, had heard of the letter, and came in to bring her a few pence towards making up the sum; encouraging her at the same time to go and ask the gentles in the village to help her—as she was sure they would willingly contribute for such a purpose as that.

The old woman was cheered up, so that she went; and, really she had hardly stated her case before money was given her, more than sufficient to pay for the postage. She found out the postman, and immediately the letter was given up to her.

Now she had the letter in her hand, and was hastening back to her cabin, "but," said she to herself, "what good will it do me there, if I have not somebody to read it to me?" She then began to think who would be the most likely person to read the letter to her, and also to feel with her at whatever its contents might be: for, indeed, she did not like to apply to a person that could not enter into the feelings of a mother and a widow in loneliness and poverty.

She did find a kind and gentle friend who read the letter to her, and read many a passage over again afterwards; for it really was written by the widow's own son, and spoke of her with so much affection that she stopped the reader again and again, and begged that the sentence might be read over once more. "What!" she cried out, "does he really say that of me, of his poor old mother? Does he remember me so tenderly? Pray, let me hear that again!" And then tears rolled down her cheeks, but they were tears of joy and of exultation.

She made her way back, at last, to her lonely habitation, and there she often looked at the letter again, and the sight of it seemed to recall to her memory its cheering contents, though she had not skill to read them. Some person or other now and then stopped at her cabin to express joy at the news which had spread through the village concerning the letter from her son in the Indies. She was always ready to bring it forth, and to beg that it might be read aloud to her; and though she heard it read ever so many times, it seemed to her always new, and she delighted to think that by and by she might be able to know the whole of it by heart, which would be as good as reading it.

It was not many days before the Rector of the parish where she lived called in also, and, having read the letter, heard her express the delight she derived from having it, and hearing it, and indeed from getting it by heart and ever thinking upon it. After listening to her very kindly, for a good while, he put the question, at last, did she also find delight in the knowledge and love of our Lord Jesus Christ. She certainly said "Yes;" but it was in so dull and lifeless a manner, that the Rector asked several more questions, and made short remarks, to which she listened like a person who did not feel that these were matters that she had much to do with: and when he stopped in good earnest to wait for an explicit answer from her, she said: "Oh, yes, Sir, to be sure all that you say is very good, and very true; but I'm no scholar. Learning is a fine thing; and I wish I could read; but there were no schools in my younger days for poor girls like myself to go to; and now I am old and ignorant, what can I know of these matters?" The Rector fixed his eyes upon a large, thick

volume which lay on a high shelf: "May I look at that book?" he asked. "Certainly, Sir," replied the old woman; "it is a book that I value very much: my poor husband's Bible!" She had taken it down from its place, by and was wiping off, with her apron, the dust which had gathered thick upon it.

To be Continued.

A SAILOR'S ADVENTURES.

Related by the Rev. B. G. C. Parker, Rector of the Floating Church of our Saviour, New York. I wish to tell you of a sailor who became a communicant in the Floating Church of our Saviour, the 2d day of this month, who has been nine years a captive in the island of Rotuma, among the cannibals or man-eaters. This island is about ten degrees south latitude, in the Pacific Ocean, 30 hours' sail from Navigator's and the Feejee Islands, and about three days' sail from the Society Islands, which you will find on the map. He went on shore in a whale boat from a whale ship from Sydney to get water. The natives came upon the crew and surrounded him before he could escape with the others to the boat. His companions, as they shoved off the boat in haste from the shore into the surf, hallooed to him and told him they would come back from the ship with guns and a larger number of men and fight for him: but he begged them not to attempt it. It would cost six of their lives, he said, to save his one, should they come to battle, and then it was not certain he might not escape in some other way. He saw the ship afterwards fill her sails and bear away, and become only a small speck on the dim distance of the horizon, and then his heart sank within him. The chief gave him a piece of land and a hut to live in, and made him interpreter when ships stopped at the island, and sent their boats on shore for water or to buy provisions. But they always kept a strict guard over him. The chief seemed greatly pleased with his prisoner, and treated him with a kindness he did not expect, protecting his life and guarding him from the ferocity of his subjects. He cultivated on his piece of land the yam-root, plantains and bananas, and owned some trees at a distance on which the bread fruit grew. He kept hogs and poultry, and had eggs, and raised a few goats, and cultivated corn, and had more than he could use, because he was more industrious than the lazy idle savages. They managed, however, to steal from him most of his provisions before the season was out. When the natives came down with him to the shore, (for the island was thirty-seven miles in circumference, and with some surrounding islands contained 6000 inhabitants, divided into seven tribes,) they always kept a strict guard round him. These tribes often quarrelled, as savages are wont to do among themselves; and in their engagements twice his hut was burned to the ground. The natives would sometimes ill-treat him when they could escape the vigilance of the chiefs; and oftener after the death of the first chief, by whose protection he was many times saved from being killed at one of their feasts, and eaten up by the savages.

He once got so discontented and in fear of his life that he determined to make a desperate effort to escape. One night he took a small canoe and put out to sea, in hopes of meeting some ship which would take him on-board. He rowed a great way off from the island, so that it was shut down on the horizon, and seemed like a little object floating on the water. Here he rowed about, looking anxiously in every direction for some vessel, but did not see any. He was every day afraid some storm would arise and blow him out of sight of the island, and he might never find his way back. He lived six days and seven nights without seeing, as he most fondly hoped to see, some vessel, when his provisions, which were only a few cocoa nuts he had gathered up hastily near the shore on the night he took the boat, failed, and he was obliged to return. They were glad to get him back again, and thought he had been blown off by a wind in his boat while fishing. He at last made his escape in the following manner:

He got an opportunity one day when he was acting as interpreter for the savages in their intercourse with a boat's crew who landed for water, to send a message to the captain of the whale ship to which it belonged, giving intelligence of his captivity and situation, and of his desire to ship on board his vessel. As that whale ship was short of hands, the captain agreed to try to rescue him, and the next day he sent, according to appointment, a boat to the shore when all the tribe were away in the bushes, digging for a certain root which they procured at that season, and when only old men and women were left behind in the huts. The boat came, and before they could prevent his escape he was safe on the deck of the ship, where he was among a people who spoke his own language and bore the Christian name. He had then been nine long years and twenty nine days a captive among the savages, and most of the time lived in constant fear and danger of his life. When he reached England he sent word to his mother, who lived near Hyde Park, in London, that he was alive, and would come on a certain day. She was so overjoyed she could not speak. When the day arrived he missed the rail road cars, and did not arrive at home. His mother trembled and wept, and then in the anguish of her disappointment gave up all hope of ever seeing him again, and would not believe he was alive, but that she had this cruel trick played upon her by some wicked person sending her such good news. When he came at last, he seemed to her so altered, for he had been absent more than eleven years, nine of which he had lived among savages, she would not believe her eyes for a whole day that he was her long lost son, till she found a certain mark on his body which he had when he was a child. She was then almost beside herself for joy. He staid with her for some time, and then made a voyage to America,

and when he came to New York, he came on Sunday to the Floating Church of our Saviour. I gave him there a religious book to read, which he took with him to sea. He was at church, he told me, last November, when I preached there a funeral sermon over the body of the brother of the mate of the New World. On Easter day he had returned again in the ship Margaret Evans, from London, and was again at church, and after the service came into the vestry to ask me to let him have a copy of a part of the sermon he then heard, which had been on his mind ever since. He said he had now given himself up to the service of his Saviour, and he hoped for the prayers of the congregation on his behalf. He said the book I gave him he had read over and over again, and had been much benefited by it, and that he lived in the daily habit of prayer to his merciful Preserver and Maker who had so often miraculously delivered him from shipwreck, danger, and death. On his last voyage that book was washed out of his hands by a very heavy sea which they had shipped while he was reading it in the galley, (or cook house,) a succession of which had nearly destroyed and sunk his vessel. He was struck down by the galley's being stove and swept off. He was thrown violently to the other side of the ship, and with his head among some spare spars which were lashed on deck, where he lay insensible for some time. He at last recovered his senses, and found he was much wounded in the head, and arms, and thigh; he, however, soon got well. For so many unnumbered mercies he feels as if he could not be too thankful to God, and he hopes to be able to live to his glory as long as he may yet be spared; for he feels as if God's overruling Providence interposed, and his arm had been outstretched many times to rescue him from innumerable perils and an awful death.

SURVEY OF SOUTH AMERICA.

Continued.

The present divisions of the South American continent may now be noticed.

Brazil is the largest, and contains about three and a quarter millions of square miles, with a population of about five millions, thus giving less than two for each square mile. In addition to all the tropical productions, lying, as it does, nearly all in the Torrid Zone, Brazil is noted for its gold and diamonds, and it is noted, too, I may say, for its slavery.

Buenos Ayres, or the Argentine Republic, may be next mentioned. Its extent is 900,000 square miles, and its population 1,800,000, giving exactly two in the square mile. It is noted for its grand river, the Plate, and for its immense plain, stretching from the Atlantic to the Andes, say 1,100 miles. Part of this plain is covered with large herds of cattle, but not running wild without owners, as some have stated, but all owned and marked. In the city of Buenos Ayres there are said to be some 20,000 foreigners. The productions are those of the most favoured portions of the Temperate Zone.

Patagonia is a portion of the territory embraced in this republic, though generally marked apart in the maps. Savages of various tribes and statures roam over this large tract, and come to the city of Buenos Ayres at times to traffic.

Uruguay lies on the north side, near the entrance of the River Plate, and formerly belonged to the vice-royalty of Buenos Ayres. It is small, containing only about 75,000 square miles, with perhaps 100,000 inhabitants, or one and a quarter to the mile. A very large portion of this population consists of foreigners, chiefly French, of which there are said to be about 12,000.

Paraguay is another small republic lying north of Uruguay, but separated from it, occupying a space between the rivers Paraná and Paraguay. It contains 80,000 square miles, and some 250,000 inhabitants, making three and odd to the square mile. Paraguay is within the tropics, and yields all the fruits of hot countries. The river Paraná is navigable to its capital, Assumption, and far above it.

Chili lies on the west and south of the continent, and contains 170,000 square miles, and 1,200,000 inhabitants, or seven to the square mile. Earthquakes are here frequent, particularly at the entrance and outgoing of the rainy season. The snows of the Andes are the sources of its rivers, and their only supply during the eight months of summer, or dry weather. Hence these rivers exhibit, in that season, the singular phenomenon of being larger near their sources than at their mouths on entering the sea. Chili has an excellent climate, and is rich in its productions, being those of the Temperate Zone. It has also mines of gold and copper of considerable extent.

Peru lies to the north of Chili, skirting the western coast. Its extent is 490,000 square miles, and its population is 1,600,000, or about three and a half to each mile. Ancient Peru was much more extensive and populous. It extended northward beyond the Equator. On the coast of Peru there is no rain, thunder, nor lightning, but earthquakes are very frequent, and more so than in Chili, and they happen at all times alike. The whites form about one-eighth of the population, the Negroes one-tenth, and the rest, or greater half, are Indians. Its productions near the coast are those of the Torrid Zone, in which it lies; but in the interior they are those of the Temperate Zone, owing to the great elevation of the land.

Bolivia is situated to the south and east of Peru, and before the revolution was an integral part of the vice-royalty of Buenos Ayres. It is of the extent of 450,000 square miles, and has a population of 1,500,000, or full three and a quarter to the square mile. The famous silver mine of Potosi lies in this state. Though within the tropics, its productions are chiefly those found in temperate climates, the elevation being considerable.

Ecuador, or, as we would say, Equator, comes next to be noticed. It lies to the north of Peru, and was all embraced in the territory of the Ancient Peruvian empire, as is clearly indicated by the same language being spoken there as in Peru down to the present day. The Equator runs through the state, a few miles to the north of Quito, its capital, which is elevated nearly 10,000 feet above the level of the sea. Owing, however, to the great height of the territory generally above the level of the sea, the climate is over the greater part temperate. The number of square miles in it is 290,000, and its population is 700,000, or nearly three to each square mile.

New Granada is to the north of Ecuador, and partly eastward. A large portion of this state also is highly elevated, and hence its productions on those parts are those of a temperate region, instead of being tropical, as the latitude indicates. Here there is a population of 1,800,000, on a surface of 450,000 square miles, which makes four to each mile. Gold and platinum are the principal metals here.

Venezuela. This state occupies the middle portion of the northern coast of the continent, and forms a noble head to it in its high prominent land abutting on the coast. The surface of Venezuela extends over 420,000 square miles, and its population may be set down at one million, thus showing somewhat more than two and a quarter for each square mile. Some two-thirds of this population are of the African race: one-sixth may be whites, and the rest Indians and mixtures. The best cacao anywhere found is grown here. This is the fruit from which the chocolate is made, and which we improperly call cocoa, which is the term used in speaking of the cocoa-nut, a fruit of a totally different kind. The climate of this country, in its variety, suits all articles anywhere grown. An agricultural phenomenon is to be seen in this quarter; namely, a wheat field and a sugar-cane field side by side of each other. The beautiful valley of Arragua exhibits this rare and interesting sight.

Guayana, lying between the mouths of the Amazon and Orinoco rivers, on the north-east, is the only part of the continent now remaining as connected with Europe on the colonial system, under which all was in former times, and say for 300 years. Guayana is divided into three portions, and belongs to England, Holland, and France. These colonies form part of the West Indies; but we must be careful not to say they are part of the West India islands, for islands they are not. The productions in Guayana are, as in the West Indies generally, and the labouring population, as there, emancipated Negroes in the English part, and slaves in the other two.

The Falkland Islands might here be mentioned at the close of this enumeration, by way of embracing all, as they are islands connected with the continent of South America. These are claimed and held by the English, though we cannot say they form a colony, or even a settlement, there are so few settled there. These islands lie to the north-east of Terra del Fuego.

The distinct and independent nations occupying the continent of South America, and as above described, are ten in number. Formerly, and since the days of independence, there was a nation there styled Colombia. This, however, as a name, is no more; for its territory now constitutes the three republics of Ecuador, New Granada, and Venezuela.—The Rev. Dr. James Thomson; in "Evangelical Christendom."

PLANK ROADS vs. McADAM ROADS.

A New York paper offers some remarks on the comparative advantage of plank roads: and as, in a wooden country like Canada, the question is of much interest, we copy them for the information of the reader as follows: [Brookville Statesman.]

Plank Roads vs. McAdam Roads.—The original cost per mile of a good plank road is about \$1,400. It needs no repair worth naming for 8 years, when, if made of pine or Hemlock, it should be replanked. The yearly cost for repairs will, therefore, average but \$150, less than the interest on the average of the 8 years.

The cost of an equally good McAdamsed road, as stated by the Chief Engineer of the Canada Roads, J. Cull, is \$7,220. The cost of repairs for 8 years was \$3,156, averaging \$682 a year with interest added from year to year.

The plank road system originated in Canada about 12 years since, and owes its existence to the difficulty experienced by the commissioner of highways to better the condition of a few rods of quicksand. After trying various expedients without success, he finally conceived the idea of sinking heavy timber and planking it similar to bridging, except that he filled the vacancy between the sleepers or sills, with stone and earth. He watched the operation of it with interest, and found that he had overcome the quicksand trouble. At the end of two years, the plank still remained solid. He then tried the experiment over a marshy soil, and it worked well; and from this he conceived the efficacy of a common road made of plank. Within the two years following, a plank road was constructed by a company from Toronto to the River Rouge, which has fully met the public expectation; and since then several others have been erected in Canada, some 15 or 16 miles in length, which have been sufficiently tested to the satisfaction of all, as being the best roads for ordinary passage that are made, and capable of being used next to railroads for expedition of travel.

Little of plank roads was known in the United States till within the last three years, and but one—121 miles long—between Salina and Brownston (Onondaga county) has yet been built. Two other charters for these roads in the western part of the State, have been granted; and there are now 14 applications before the legislature for Charters to build roads of this description—four

of them to lead from the city of Rochester.—N. Y. True Sun.

Wire Fences.—The February number of the Prairie Farmer contains a communication on the subject of fencing prairie farms with wire. The plan adopted is to set posts in the ground six rods apart, then stretch lines of wire from post to post, fastening them by spikes and clamps, after bringing them to the proper tension. A fence of five wires high, made of No. 9 wire, (the cost of which, in New York, is \$6. per 100 lbs.) is estimated to cost, when constructed, and the wires painted to preserve them from rusting, about 374 c. per rod.

A BARBAROUS SPECULATION.—On Friday evening, at midnight, the Princess Helena steamer landed 56 Savoyard peasants at Folkestone in the most wretched state of filth and raggedness imaginable, we suppose to be employed as itinerant musicians and white mice boys in London. The poor wretches were shivering with cold (it being a frosty night, with a keen wind from the north) and in that state were kept for an hour in the harbour, the man in charge of them not being able to come to terms for a lodging for them, having only offered 4s. 6d. for that purpose. However, the landlady of the Checkers kindly gave them a resting-place in her stables on the straw, where the poor creatures were huddled together like swine. Many persons assembled the next morning to see them depart, who commiserated their unhappy condition. Surely something might be done to prevent these poor fellows leaving their sunny clime to endure a life of slavery, privation, and misery in England; the object being not to employ them as labourers, but to excite charity from the benevolent for the benefit of their inhuman masters.—Aldstone Gazette, April.

VALUE OF STREET-SWEEPINGS.—In Aberdeen, the streets are swept every day at an annual cost of 1,400L, and the refuse brings in 2,000L a-year. In Perth, the scavenging costs 1,300L, and the manure sells for 1,730L.

VOYAGE ROUND THE WORLD.—A letter, a short time since, was received by a person in Wales, which, from an error in sorting in London, had performed a voyage round the world. It was directed to South Wales, and by mistake was forwarded to New South Wales. It was then returned by a ship mail, landed at Penzance, endorsed "not known here, try South Wales, England," where it actually found its proper owner.—Falmouth Packet.

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