

## The Mission Field.

## THE BOERS.

THE Rev. W. F. Taylor contributes to the *Mission Field* an interesting picture of what the Boers of South Africa were some thirty years ago. It will be seen that they have sadly parted with their primitive simplicity and purity of life. "In those days family worship, both morning and evening, was never neglected in a Boer's household. It sounded very solemn to be awakened about four o'clock on a summer's morning, just at dawn of day, by the tone of one of David's psalms, or some old hymn, sung very slowly, and perhaps not very sweetly, yet earnestly and heartily, by the whole household, before going forth to their daily labours; and then to hear the master's voice gravely reading a few words of Scripture, and uttering a few words of prayer. It was the grave earnestness with which all was done which gave its peculiar charm to this service, from which the tired traveller was always held exempt. Such were the old Cape Boers, as I found them when I first went among them, in my large Riversdale parish. Everywhere among the elders you found an old-fashioned gentle courteousness which was very pleasing, and a considerable amount of education and intelligence. But it is a sad proof how very easily man, under unfavourable circumstances, degenerates—that the lower class of the Boers everywhere are fast losing, each generation—more and more, all the best points in the character of their forefathers, and gaining nothing good as yet in compensation. Owing to the isolated position of many farms greatly hindering education, to the old laws of inheritance, which compelled division of property till farms are too small to afford sufficient support, and to close intermarriage, which are producing some very manifest degeneration, especially in mental powers, the poorer class of Cape farmers are fast sinking down into a very low, degraded position, from which, it is to be feared, they will not easily recover."

THAT is a pleasant and touching story told of the work of Miss Isabella A. Nassau on the Western coast of Africa, who was for several years the only white person in her locality. She devoted most of her time to teaching little African boys. After the lessons of the day were over the evening hours were devoted to their amusement. She would chat with them about her far off country, sing to them beautiful hymns, and show them entertaining and instructive pictures. Tenderly and patiently she taught them, till they received a culture that would do honour to students of our own land. The Master was very near, blessing the work so lovingly and faithfully done for Him. One after another of those boys—there were twenty of them—was brought to a personal knowledge of Him. Four of them have just been licensed for the Gospel ministry, and another is already a strong and faithful helper of this Miss Nassau, engaged in missionary labour further up the Ogove River.

## A MYSTERY OF THE SEA.

THE FATE WHICH OVERTOOK THE "CITY OF BOSTON."—CAPTAIN MURRAY'S IDEAS AND EXPERIENCES.

A few years ago, the *City of Boston* sailed from harbor, crowded with an expectant throng of passengers bound for a foreign shore.

She never entered port.

The mystery of her untimely end grows deeper as the years increase and the Atlantic voyager, when the fierce winds howl around and danger is imminent on every hand, shudders as the name and mysterious fate of that magnificent vessel are alluded to.

Our reporter, on a recent visit to New York, took lunch with Captain George Siddons Murray, on board the *Alaska*, of the Guion line. Captain Murray is a man of stalwart build, well-knit frame and cheery, genial disposition. He has been a constant voyager for a quarter of a century, over half of that time having been in the trans-Atlantic service. In the course of the conversation over the well-spread table, the mystery of the *City of Boston* was alluded to.

"Yes," remarked the Captain, "I shall never forget the last night we saw that ill-fated vessel. I was chief officer of the *City of Antwerp*. On the day we sighted the *City of Boston* a furious south-east hurricane set in. Both vessels labored hard. The sea seemed determined to sweep away every vestige of life. When day ended the gale did not abate, and everything was lashed for a night of unusual fury. Our good ship was turned to the south to avoid the possibility of ice-bergs. The *City of Boston*, however, undoubtedly went to the north. Her boats, life-preservers and rafts were all securely lashed: and when she went down, everything went with her, never to re-appear until the sea gives up its dead.

"What, in your opinion, Captain, was the cause of the loss of the *City of Boston*?"

The *City of Limerick*, in almost precisely the same latitude, a few days later, found the sea full of floating ice; and I have no doubt the *City of Boston* collided with the ice, and sunk immediately."

Captain Murray has been in command of the *Alaska* ever since she was put in commission and feels justly proud of his noble ship. She carries thousands of passengers every year, and has greatly popularized the William's & Guion line. Remarking upon the bronzed and healthy appearance of the captain, the reporter said that sea life did not seem to be a very great physical trial.

"No? But a person's appearances is not always a trustworthy indication of his physical condition. For seven years I have been in many respects very much out of sorts with myself. At certain times I was so lame that it was difficult for me to move around. I could scarcely straighten up. I did not know what the trouble was, and though I performed all my duties regularly and satisfactorily, yet I felt that I might some day be overtaken with some serious prostrating disorder. These troubles increased. I

felt dull and then, again, shooting pains through my arms and limbs. Possibly the next day I would feel flushed and unaccountably uneasy and the day following chilly and despondent. This continued until last December, when I was prostrated soon after leaving Queenstown, and for the remainder of the voyage was a helpless, pining sufferer. In January last, a friend who made that voyage with me, wrote me a letter urging me to try a new course of treatment. I gladly accepted his counsel and for the last seven months have given thorough and business-like attention to the recovery of my natural health; and to-day, I have the proud satisfaction of saying to you that the lame back, the strange feelings, the sciatic rheumatism which have so long pursued me, have entirely disappeared through the blood purifying influence of Warner's Safe Rheumatic Cure which entirely eradicated all rheumatic poison from my system. Indeed, to me, it seems that it has worked wonders, and I therefore most cordially commend it.

"And you have no trouble now in exposing yourself to the winds of the Atlantic?"

"Not the least. I am as sound as a bullet and I feel specially thankful over the fact because I believe rheumatic and kidney disease is in the blood of my family. I was dreadfully shocked on my last arrival in Liverpool to learn that my brother, who is a wealthy China tea merchant, had suddenly died of Bright's disease of the kidneys, and consider myself extremely fortunate in having taken my trouble in time and before any more serious effects were possible."

The conversation drifted to other topics, and as the writer watched the face before him, so strong in all its outlines and yet so genial, and thought of the innumerable exposures and hardships to which its owner had been exposed, he instinctively wished all who are suffering from the terrible rheumatic troubles now so common might know of Captain Murray's experience and the means by which he had been restored. Pain is a common thing in this world, but far too many endure it when they might just as well avoid it. It is a false philosophy which teaches us to endure when we can just as readily avoid. So thought the hearty captain of the *Alaska*, so thinks the writer and so should all others think who desire happiness and a long life.

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