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No. III.

Missions in Africa.*

"ETHIOPIA shall soon stretch out her hands unto God."
 Psalm LXXVIII : 31.

THE "DARK CONTINENT"—"The Missionaries' Grave!"—"The Land of pestilential fevers, of wild beasts and wilder men!" such are the uninviting epithets applied to that great continent which occupies nearly one-third of the habitable globe, and towards which the eyes of Christendom are now turning with intense interest, hope and expectation. Until very recently, little or nothing was known of the interior of Africa, except that it was rich in gold, and ivory, and apes, and *slaves*. In quest of these, the nations of the earth have long since made themselves familiar with the outline of its sea-board, and fringed its entire vast circumference with colonies. But the discovery that the Kaffir, and the Hottentot, and even the savage Bushmen have souls, capable of understanding and receiving Christianity, and of being elevated by it, this is a discovery which was reserved for the nineteenth century, and the importance of which is only now being fully recognized and appreciated. David Living-

stone was mistaken in many of his geographical theories. He planted no missions. He did not live to see the results of his arduous labours. In these respects he was a failure. But it is to Livingstone the world is mainly indebted for the knowledge of the fact that the interior of Africa is not a desert, but a land of enormous possibilities. Speke, and Grant, and Baker, and Cameron, and Stanley might never have seen Africa but for Livingstone. To him we owe it that the *slave-trade* in its most revolting form has been almost totally suppressed, and to him very largely is due the increased interest in African missions manifested at the present time by all the Churches.

It is difficult to realize the vastness of this field for missionary enterprise. Extending from 35° N. to 35° S. Latitude, and from 20° to 50° S. Longitude, it is nearly 5000 miles long, and of equal breadth at the widest points. It is eight times the size of India! although the latter has a larger population. So numerous are the Christian agencies now at work, it is impossible for us to do more than give a very brief outline of the rise and progress of Protestant missions in Africa. To the Moravian Brethren belong the honour of having been the first to occupy this field for Christ. In 1737, George Schmidt, one of their number, sailed from Holland for the Cape of Good Hope. Though opposed and persecuted by both the government of the colony and the native chiefs, he persevered and ultimately succeeded in establishing a

* SOUTH AFRICA AND ITS MISSION FIELDS, by Rev. J. E. Carlyle, late Presbyterian Minister at Natal; London, 1878. HISTORY OF MISSIONS, by Rev. William Brown, M. D., Secretary of the Scottish Missionary Society; 3 vols. London, 1864. FIFTY YEARS OF FOREIGN MISSIONS, by Rev. George Smith, L. L. D., Secretary of the Free Church Foreign Mission Board; Edinburgh, 1879.