

THE following letter from a Missionary in Africa has been kindly forwarded to us by the Rev. R. F. Fisher, Minister of Flisk.

After 5 weeks of suffering and pain I began again to address my people; and you may have some idea of my feelings when I chose for my text, "The living, the living, he shall praise Thee, as I do this day." Before my sickness I had just finished a five weeks' journey in my waggon to my people at Taung. I shall give you a short account of it. On the 1st March I began with a span of ten good fat oxen, a good driver, a trustworthy leader, and a youth of all work, as we proceeded. My waggon is large and commodious, being a small moving house, containing my bed, my books, my study, our general store-room, and refuge for all in a storm. Two days' steady travelling brought us to the Christian village of Mornane; and there I intended to collect all the people, who may number about 4 or 500, and to administer the ordinance of the Lord's Supper to believers. In both I was disappointed, as almost all were engaged in watching their gardens; for, unless birds are frightened away from the corn, they very soon destroy it all. The country is so thinly populated, the arable land so small, and the wilderness so vast and extensive that this land cannot at all be compared to your beautifully cultivated fields. However a few villagers and a good many visitors were called to meet on Sabbath morning at sunrise for prayers, for it is our unspeakable comfort that our God is the hearer and answerer of prayer. Besides Sabbath school twice, morning and mid-day, I had three preaching services, when I endeavoured to show Christ and Him crucified, then to direct them to the New Testament promise of the Holy Spirit being given to the people of God and to their children; and in the evening to the largest meeting, on account of the corn-watchers, I showed the true necessity of being born of water and of the Spirit. So we spent the solemn holy day. On Monday morning we again proceeded on our way, and by dint of good management of my servants we arrived at Taung on Saturday next. Perhaps I should have said that on Wednesday, as we passed the village of Likhathong, we saw our brother Helmore busy at the Herculean task of leading out the Hart River. A large flood had destroyed about 30 yards of the wall, about 20 feet high 40 feet thick at the base. This wall is made only of large stones and surface mould, but, strange to say, though he has already wrought three years, and spent several hundred pounds upon it, he was working hard, hoping soon to finish it; and all he benevolently intends is, to give it to his people to irrigate their gardens and corn-lands! Observe how the Clergy work in this land, and how they spend any spare cash they have. Taung is the town of Mahura, containing between 5 and 6 thousand people, and the same with whom I so long lived and laboured. Heathenism and its rites are there exhibited on a large scale, but it was truly a pleasant sight to see many of the Church members prospering in every good work. Others were prevented at this time from seeing me. On the Lord's Day we met as usual, and found it a reviving time for all. In the morning meeting, when many heathen met, I spoke from the text, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." In the afternoon, when the people of God were more particularly addressed, the text was, "As ye have received the Lord Jesus, so

walk ye in him." From these texts I had ample fields for warning sinners and building up saints. I remained there for another week, attending to all the meetings in my power. On Thursday I visited a heathen village, named Mohangkoe, and had rather a novel meeting in the evening. I was told that the heathen would not meet; however I determined to try. I prevailed upon a sort of doctor to call "Sekaku," the word of calling; the people called sat by a fire. The darkness was favourable for them, and, though I could not see sufficiently to read, I gave out my text from memory, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour," &c. I showed how to come, the Saviour's excellencies, their own necessities, and the nature of the rest promised. They listened attentively and, after imploring the Holy Spirit to make wise unto salvation, they dispersed. God's Word is quick and powerful. The next Sabbath at Taung was still more cheering. Many came from great distances to hear how the Gospel had been hid from the wise and prudent, and had been revealed unto babes. I baptized 10 children, and we closed the day by commending them all to God and to the word of His grace, &c. On Monday they brought, of their own free will, contributions to the value of £12, and pleaded that I would again return to dwell among them as formerly. Now we began to return to our present home by way of Motito and Kuruman, but, before we started, the chief Mahura pleaded that I would return among them; believers truly wished it, and the heathen earnestly sought it. On thus leaving I was truly grateful that after three years I found that the Gospel had not been preached in vain, but that a pleasing revival was evident among all Church-members, and that they seemed to watch over one another with godly jealousy. We journeyed well during the first day, but in the night we were waked from our slumbers. The herders were calling from cattle-post to cattle-post to take all cattle to town in honour of the circumcision. Our waggon oxen were among other strange oxen in an enclosure; the cattle lowed, the herders raved, and, as they were faithful to take every hoof of theirs, our great difficulty was to retain ours, but, strange to say, in the black and dark night, though we knew not precisely till morning light, we succeeded. We could scarcely believe our own eyes, but it was even so. The next day my driver was so successful as to shoot two pretty spring-boks; he had frequently shot wild peacocks on the journey, and other African game. No game laws here, but all who wish may kill and eat. At a place called Lithakoaneng, where I may build one, I had the pleasure of declaring the faithful saying to a number of our people who live there. Our next Sabbath was at Motito, a French station. Being called upon to preach, my text was, "We are journeying to the place whereof the Lord has said, I will give it you," &c. During the next week we were delayed and hindered greatly with rain. Next Lord's Day I had the pleasure of taking two services for the far-famed Mr. Moffat, when I rejoiced to proclaim that "I know that my Redeemer liveth," &c., and to explain the cheering words of our Saviour, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour," &c. In the course of next week that I spent at Daniels Keril I directed the people there to "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world;" and on Thursday we arrived at Griqua Town, after five weeks busy travelling, preaching and visiting. I

thank you sincerely for the many news which you gave me in your last. We have nothing here worth mentioning, except perhaps to say that an epidemic is going the length and breadth of the land both among horses and cattle. It is known by the name of "lung sickness." If it visits us in this quarter it will be lamentable, for many live almost entirely upon what their herds produce.—H. & F. Miss. Rec. for February.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

"As regards the religious denominations of the population (amounting to nearly 90,000) these returns (taken March last) state that the Church of England numbers 34,812 persons, standing therefore the first on the list of numerical position. The next numerous is that of the Wesleyan Methodists, whose various communities include 11,178 persons. The denomination third in number is the Roman Catholic, numbering 8835 souls. The fourth is the Lutheran body, composed chiefly of German settlers, and including 6151 persons. Fifth in numerical order are the Congregationalists, numbering 5355. In this enumeration are included both Independents and Baptists. The sixth body in respect to number is the National Scotch Church, the members of that community being set down at 5264. The seventh is the Free Scotch Church, numbering 1542 members. The eighth is the Jews, of whom there are 405 in the Province. The ninth consists of smaller Presbyterian sects, amounting in number to 314 persons. The tenth is the Society of Friends, of whom there are 186; and the eleventh, Mahomedans and Pagans, of whom there are 159. Seventy-five persons avow themselves of no religion all."—*Australian and New Zealand Gazette*, 8th December, 1855.

The above extract may be read with some interest by the readers of the *Missionary Record*. It is inserted, however, with the view of directing attention to the present condition of our brethren of the Church of Scotland in South Australia. According to the last census it would appear that they amount to 5264, while the Free Church number only 1542; yet the latter have 4 Ministers of their denomination labouring in the colony, while among the National Church there is only one. This, it should be noted, does not arise from indifference on the part of the Colonists, or neglect of what falls to them to perform for obtaining pastoral instruction from the Church of their fathers. In connexion with that Church, they have built 4 places of worship, and a manse for their only Minister in Adelaide, the capital. Mr. M'Bean, who last year was translated to Ceylon, was provided with an income of £176, a glebe and free house. And the congregation, before he left, had commenced an Endowment Fund to which £200 had been subscribed. At other stations, where churches had been built, a very spirited effort had been made to get up endowments. Altogether in the Province not less than £25,000 had been contributed, in land and money, for this purpose; exclusive of £200 of an annual permanent income, which the Adelaide congregation had provided in addition to the former provision made for their minister. All this was the work of a few weeks, a commencement only, and, it should be remarked, was contributed in great measure for a prospective benefit. (See *Missionary Record* of September, November and December, 1854.) Had the long wished-for Ministers been on the spot, additional spirit and perseverance would have been given to the movement, and an ample measure of success, whatever now may have been the result of hopes long deferred and disappointed.

The fact is, as is evident in this colony and others, that it is not the lack of material means, which deprives our Scotch Colonists of divine ordinances, but the dearth of preachers: at least of those gifted with a missionary spirit. In South Australia there is reason to believe that 2 if not 3