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THE

Evangelical Magazine,

FOR DECEMBER, 1796.

VOL. IV.

AN ADDRESS FROM THE DIRECTORS OF THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

IN pursuance of the important duty connected with our situation, and which binds us to an unremitting vigilance in discerning the intimations of the divine will, we are induced to state to the religious public at large, and especially to the promoters of this Institution, the nature of the plans now under consideration, and the grounds upon which we recommend them.

We cannot, however, enter upon the discharge of this part of our duty, without previously adverting to that very important undertaking, which, so far as it depended upon us, we have been enabled to accomplish. And in taking a retrospect of the circumstances connected with the mission to the South-Seas, we are constrained to make the most humble and devout acknowledgments to the Divine Being, on account of the frequent interpositions of his wise and gracious providence in our behalf; which lead us to encourage the animating hope that this measure has resulted from his own inspiration, and, therefore, will continue to be favoured with his protection and blessing. We are very sensible of the imperfections which will always mingle with our best attempts to promote so sacred a cause; and although we trust that, in the simplicity of our hearts, our sole aim has been to promote the divine glory in the conversion of the heathen, yet we feel a peculiar satisfaction in transferring the work out of our feeble and erring hands, into the immediate and exclusive care of him who is the head of the church, and has all power in heaven and in earth. We doubt not but that the Christian world will unite with us in daily and fervent intercessions at the throne of mercy, that this expedition may terminate in the honour of our Redeemer, and the extensive and lasting enlargement of his kingdom in the world.

The number of persons engaged in this mission consists of twenty-nine men, and five women, with two children; and the favourable opinion we entertained of them, on their admission, has received the most satisfactory confirmation, in consequence of their detention for six weeks at Portsmouth, where they continued to manifest every disposition that adorns the Christian and the Missionary character; and exhibited a society animated by one spirit, stedfast in their attachment to the work to which they had been consecrated, and cheerful in the prospect of its untried duties and its unknown dangers.

dangers. The serious public at large, and especially the friends of the Missionaries, will learn, with satisfaction, that some important information, obtained at Portsmouth, respecting the South-Sea Islands, and particularly Otaheite, very much confirms the hope before entertained, that they will meet with a welcome reception, and be treated with kindness and respect.

The expence to which the Society will be subject on account of this mission, is not yet exactly ascertained; but including the cost of the ship, which was 4875l. seamen's wages, and every other charge, it may amount to about 12,000l. Thus the funds of the Society, for the present, will be nearly exhausted. It must, however, be recollected, that the ship, being chartered by the India Company, will, on her safe return, entitle the Society to receive near 5000l. for the freight of the cargo she may bring. This, together with the value of the ship, being deducted, will leave the actual expence attending the mission. It is probable, however, that this expence will be lessened by the value of the articles of curiosity which may be brought from the South-Seas, and of the publication of the interesting particulars respecting the reception and settlement of the Missionaries, with the description of the different islands which may be visited. When the magnitude of the mission is considered, as well as the charge attending the equipment of the Missionaries, it will not, we presume, be generally thought, that the expence is great in proportion to the scale on which the plan has been executed.

We proceed now to announce, more particularly, the nature and extent of our further views; and our earnestness to accomplish them is in proportion to their great importance. *Africa*, that much-injured country, throughout its immense extent, has for many ages been deprived of the inestimable advantages of the pure principles of Christianity; it has been visited by Europeans, not for the friendly purpose of a communication of benefits, but in order to carry on a commerce which inevitably inflicts on its inhabitants the wounds of slavery and death. The very mention of *Africa* produces in every breast the pang of sympathy, and the mingled sentiments of pity and indignation. Its innocent blood, which is continually flowing, whilst it cries to heaven for vengeance, appeals with resistless force also to every ingenuous principle in the nature of man, and every feeling of compassion and mercy in the breast of a Christian. It is to this benighted and oppressed country we are desirous of sending the

the Gospel of Christ---that best relief to man under his accumulated miseries---that essential blessing which outweighs the evils of the most suffering life.

If it shall please God, from whom every good disposition proceeds, to incline the minds of his people, so far to encourage this work, as to put into our hands the means of accomplishing our designs, it is our wish to send *several distinct missions* to this immense continent. We cannot, at present, delineate the specific plans which will be adopted, because we are continually seeking and receiving new light and fresh information upon this subject; and it will be our duty to adapt our final measures to the general body of evidence which we may eventually receive. We must also be regulated by the assistance we derive from the friends of the Institution, in respect both to Missionaries and to funds; and as it appears to us, that there will soon be the probability of introducing the Gospel into several parts of Africa, we hope that the zeal of Christians will be enkindled in proportion to the love which they bear to Christ, and to the pity which they feel for those who drink deepest in the cup of human woe.

Our general ideas, however, at present are, that Divine Providence is opening a way for the admission of the Christian religion into the *southern* parts of Africa, through the medium of the Cape of Good Hope. In these parts, a mission from the *United Brethren*, undertaken a few years ago, is now in a flourishing state, and the last information from thence contains the welcome intelligence that the power of the Gospel is manifested in the conversion of many of the natives. This circumstance may, by the overruling providence of God, prove an invaluable advantage to the mission which we may undertake; as, we hope, that our exalted Saviour, who has received gifts for men, may be pleased to qualify some of the converted natives for the work of Evangelists, and for assisting our Missionaries in their labours among their countrymen.

Although those who possess the true missionary spirit are so inflamed with the love of Christ, and the desire of proclaiming his grace and power amongst those who are ready to perish, that they count not their lives dear to them, and are willing to spread his fame in frozen or in sultry climates, yet it is incumbent upon us, in stating the circumstances of every projected mission, to enter into the consideration of the salubrity of the country; and for this reason we mention

tion that we understand the climate of this part of Africa to be healthy, and suited to the constitution of Europeans.

With respect to the time of executing this mission, we must be governed by circumstances; but we see no sufficient reason to delay it beyond the period when we may be provided with suitable instruments for accomplishing it.

Our views are also turned towards the *western coast* of this vast continent; and it is here where the guilt of Europeans has inflicted the deepest wounds on the unoffending natives, and the footsteps of those, who have borne the Christian name, have been marked with devastation and blood.

In consequence of the institution of the Sierra Leone Company, which was founded on the purest and most disinterested principles, it is probable that very extensive advantages will be derived to the Christian cause, as the disposition of those who conduct its concerns, both here and at the colony, is highly favourable to this important object. Through the influence of this Company there appears to be the opportunity of introducing the Gospel into the different villages inhabited by the natives in the vicinity of the colony, also at the different factories which they have established, and in the districts of some of the Chiefs, with whom they are maintaining a commercial intercourse. Some persons of considerable influence, settled on the shores of the Gambia, have expressed to the Company their ardent wish to be instructed in the arts of civilized life; and it appears that the communication, which the natives from different parts maintain with the colony, excites within them the desire of receiving the advantages of European instruction. The influence of the Company is increasing daily, and will probably be enlarged in a much more rapid degree on the return of peace; and every accession of this influence is friendly to the cause of religion. The Africans are disposed to receive the advantages of civilization; and although the communication of these benefits be not directly the object of our Institution, yet we consider such disposition as a favourable circumstance, upon which, by the blessing of God, the more important principles of the Christian religion may be superinduced. The opportunities for the introduction of missions into this part of Africa are soon likely to be so frequent and encouraging, that the zeal of Christians should be roused to the most active exertions for supplying these pressing emergencies. The providence of God, which conducts the affairs of

of this world with a wise and unerring subserviency to the interests of his kingdom, and binds those events which we call contingent to the fixed determination of his counsel, seems to be entering on a preparatory work with a view to the extensive introduction of the Gospel into this benighted and enslaved continent. The African Association have now a messenger in the interior of the country, and probably at this moment in Tombuctoo, having been heard of in his way from Fatatenda to that city, which is twelve hundred miles up the Gambia. The views of this Society are benevolent and very laudable, as far as they extend; but we trust the designs of Providence extend to a higher object, and will make the messenger of the Association the precursor of the Gospel. The Sierra Leone Company also, we doubt not, as before intimated, will have the honour of administering to the introduction of Christianity into various parts of the circumjacent country. We are already indebted to their exertions for *the plan of a mission to the Foulah nation*, which now occupies our most serious consideration, and the circumstances of which we think it necessary more particularly to detail.

Our knowledge of this country arises principally from an excursion made to it from Sierra Leone by Mr. Watts and Mr. Winterbottom, two Gentlemen in the Company's service; and Mr. Thornton, who has so honourably and usefully filled the place of Chairman to that Company, has had the kindness to furnish us with the journal of that tour, kept by Mr. Watt, with a view to assist our deliberations as to the best plan of accomplishing the projected mission; and as Mr. Thornton himself abridged this journal, and published it in the Report made to the proprietors of that Company, we cannot convey a more just acquaintance with the state of the Foulah country, than by the following extracts from this publication:

"Information having been brought to the governor and council by some natives of the Foulah country, that the king of the Foulahs, a large and powerful nation, to the north-east of Sierra Leone, had expressed a desire to form an intercourse with the colony, two gentlemen in the Company's service offered to make an attempt to penetrate through a large, and as yet unknown tract of country, to his capital. They accordingly sailed to the river Rionunes, which is to the north of Sierra Leone, obtained the necessary interpreters and guides at the town of Kocundy, which lies a considerable way up the river, and then set out on foot in a party of about twenty persons.

"It appeared in a short time after their leaving the Rionunes, that a considerable intercourse subsisted between the interior country and the upper parts of the river; for no less than five or six hundred Foulahs were often seen in one day, carrying great loads of rice and ivory on their backs, which they were about to exchange for salt. The travellers found, as they went forward, a number of successive towns, distant in general six, eight, or ten miles from each other, in which they were always most hospitably received; the utmost satisfaction as well as surprise being expressed at the appearance of white men, of whom none had ever been seen even at the distance of a few days' journey from the coast. After travelling for sixteen days, through a country barren in many parts, but fruitful in others, and remarkably full of cattle, and after passing two or three small rivers, one of which was said to empty itself into the river Gambia, they arrived at the town of Laby, which is distant about two hundred miles, almost directly eastward or inland from that part of the river Rionunes, from which they set out on foot. Here they spent three or four days, being most cordially received by the chief or king of the place, who is subordinate to the king of the Foulahs. Laby is about two miles and a half in circumference, and is supposed to contain not less than five thousand inhabitants: The state of civilization is much the same here as in the farther part, which will be described shortly. From Laby they proceeded to the capital of the Foulah kingdom, called Teembo, which is seventy-two miles further inland; and having experienced every where the same hospitality, they arrived there in the course of another week.

"During fourteen days which they passed in the capital, they had many conversations, through the medium of interpreters, both with the king and with a person who acts as deputy to the king in his absence, and with many other principal persons It appears that the country, subject to the king of the Foulahs, is about three hundred and fifty miles in length, from east to west, and about two hundred miles in breadth, from north to south; and that the king exercises a very arbitrary power, both in respect to the punishment of offences, and many other points, and, in particular, that he opens and shuts up the markets and channels of trade just as he pleases. The town of Teembo is supposed to contain about seven thousand inhabitants; and the superiority of the people of all these interior parts to those on the coast, is great in most branches of civilization. The houses here

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and at Laby, as well as at some other places, are occasionally spoken of in the journals from which this narrative is taken, as very good. The silver ornaments, worn by some of the chief women, are said to be equal in value to 20l. There are people at Laby and at Teembo, who work in iron, in silver, in wood, and in leather, and there is a manufacture of narrow cloths. The chief men are furnished with books, of which the subject is generally either divinity or law; and the art of reading is common over the country, there being schools for the instruction of children established in almost every town. Horses are commonly used by the chief people, who are said to ride out often for their amusement. The soil is generally stony; much of it is pasture: Rice is cultivated in some parts, chiefly by the labour of the women, the men, a great proportion of whom are slaves, carrying away the produce on their backs. About one third of the country is said to be extremely fertile; the soil is dry, and the climate is thought very good. The nights and mornings were sometimes cold, and the thermometer was once as low as 51 at half past five in the morning, but it rose to near 90 at noon. The professed religion of the country is Mahometanism, and there are many mosques; but neither the priests nor people appear to have much bigotry in their minds, though they do not fail to observe the Mahometan ceremonies, praying five times a day. The punishments which the king inflicts are severe, especially in the case of disrespect shewn to his own authority; but it appears that no Foulahs are ever sold as slaves either for debts or crimes, and kidnapping seldom occurs, being probably not very practicable, in the heart of the country. The Foulahs, however, have been used, till lately, to carry on a very considerable Slave Trade by means of their wars; for they go to war avowedly for the purpose of getting slaves: One of the tenets of their religion, which permits them to destroy all whom they term infidels (a term which seems to include all their neighbours), affording them a convenient apology for every exercise of this horrible injustice.

"The Directors have the satisfaction of observing, that the two travellers appear, both by the propriety and consistency of their own conduct, and by the public declarations which they made of the principles which governed the conduct of the Sierra Leone Company, to have ingratiated themselves much with the natives, and to have peculiarly possessed themselves of the confidence of the chief people. *The king, being asked whether he should be willing to encourage any*

European to settle near him with a view to cultivation, readily answered, that he would furnish him with land, and cattle, and men for the purpose. Much conversation passed at different times concerning the introduction of the plough, of which no one had ever heard in the Foulah country. The king of Laby offered to send a son to England for education, and a principal priest expressed some willingness to do the same."

In addition to the above, we have also received subsequent information from Mr. Dawes, the late Governor of Sierra Leone, whose readiness to afford every aid to our Society, and to communicate to us his extensive acquaintance with African subjects, is intitled to our thankful acknowledgments. Besides confirming the particulars contained in the extracts, Mr. Dawes mentions that the climate of the Foulah country is, in his opinion, more congenial to European constitutions than that which is near the coast; the nights being sometimes 20 degrees colder than they ever are at Sierra Leone, and that he believes the country to be plentifully supplied with all the necessaries, and many of the comforts of life. He adds, also, that the inhabitants are supposed to carry on a considerable traffic with countries still more in the interior, and thinks that by means of a Christian establishment in, or near Teembo, an easy opening may present itself for others, much nearer to the centre of Africa; and that Missionaries, settled on this plan, may maintain a very frequent intercourse with the colony at Sierra Leone.

With respect to the qualifications the Missionaries to this country should possess; it is requisite in this, as in all other cases, that they should be Christians, well instructed in the principles of divine truth, and live under its active influence, possessing a supreme love to the Saviour of sinners, and a fervent zeal for his honour in the world, to promote which they are not unwilling to endure the hardships of life, or meet the conflict of death. These are the supreme and indispensible requisites, without the possession of which, no Christian should venture to embark in this work. But it seems expedient also, that some subordinate qualifications should be attended to in the persons engaging on the mission in question. The people of Teembo express a desire to have Europeans settle among them, with a view to be improved in the knowledge of agriculture and the mechanic arts; it is, therefore, desirable that our Christian brethren should carry with them this recommendation, as the condition of their introduction, and the pledge of their security; it is the point

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to which their invitation is directed; it is also the ground whereon our attempts at higher usefulness must arise. Serious and zealous Christians, acquainted with husbandry, and other useful occupations, appear best suited for this occasion; it would, however, be very desirable, that one amongst them should be a person of education, standing on equal or superior ground, in respect to philosophy and literature, to that occupied by the priests of the false prophet; and in every mission a person acquainted with surgery and the medical science, is an important acquisition.

We have now submitted, for the consideration of the Christian World, the plans which occupy our attention; and we may further add, that in proportion as we advance in the discharge of our duty, the sphere of usefulness seems to be continually enlarging, and the weight and importance of the situation we have been called to fill, impress our minds with increasing solemnity. We stand in need of friendly aid of every sort, and from every quarter; it is a work which calls aloud for the energy of every individual who bears the honourable name of Christian, and whose heart bleeds at the prospect of human calamity, or exults in its happiness.

We anticipate, from the zeal of our Christian friends, the assistance we need to accomplish the objects we have in view. When there is a project in hand which is intended to promote the good of the Africans; to chase away the shades of ignorance, which envelope their minds; to dry up their tears, and give them the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness; who will not join in the generous emulation to forward so beneficent a work? There are no people under the heavens we have so deeply injured; nor is there a virtuous disposition which warms the human breast, that is not an advocate in behalf of Africa.

Those generous minds, who deplore the degradation of their species, and exert the ardour of their spirits to restore enslaved man to the rank he is intitled to fill in the scale of rational existence, must rejoice in a plan so pregnant with blessings of every sort. What so much promotes the civilization of man as the Gospel of Christ? What so much enlightens his mind, ennobles his heart, and dignifies his nature as this? It is the engine which raises our fallen spirits, and lifts them from earth to heaven.

Although the plan of introducing the Gospel into heathen countries is replete with usefulness of every sort; is altogether good without any mixture of evil, and is a measure against which nothing can be justly alledged, and therefore merits

merits the countenance of every friend to human happiness; yet to those we principally look for assistance whose hearts are warmed with the love of Christ. *This* is the commanding principle which will produce both the instruments and the funds we need. *This* is the principle which feeds and cherishes every other excellence which can reside in the human heart. *The love of Christ* is the argument of sovereign efficacy, which comprehends every motive that can sway the breast of a believer, and rouse the sacred energies of his soul.

Without the love of Christ prevailing above the love of life, or the fear of death, let no one venture upon the missionary warfare; but those who feel the inspiring flame, those to whom the Saviour is more precious than any thing which earth or heaven contains, more precious than earthly language can express, let them come forward, and consecrate themselves to his service in this sacred work. They will have the distinguished privilege of being the first to announce the Saviour's name among the heathen to whom they are sent; they will be recorded in the annals of the church in terms of honour, and their memorial cherished and revered in succeeding generations; or, should they be forgotten in this world, their names will be enrolled in the registers of heaven, and be illustrious when all earthly monuments shall perish.

We repeat our earnest invitation to Christians of every name to aid the work with their prayers, their counsels, and their influence. We consider it to be a cause which, above all others, demands the support of every one who feels for the honour of his Saviour, or the happiness of his species. There is no period in which this duty is not seasonable; but are there not many circumstances which more especially press it upon us *now?* We profess not to unfold the mysterious purposes of the Almighty, nor to know the times and the seasons which he has put in his own power; nevertheless, we would not be inattentive to the ways of his providence, which illustrate his word. The general impression on the minds of the people of God prepare them to expect the approach of that predicted period when the Christian church shall enlarge its boundaries. The signs of the latter days advance; the shades of darkness are dispersing; the kingdom of Antichrist is falling; and the hand of Providence appears to be making arrangements for a new æra in human affairs. Under the auspices both of Providence and prophecy, is it not a season peculiarly fitting for Christians to improve, by forming and executing those plans, which have both a natural and appointed tendency to produce the happy events we are looking for? Let, then, our endeavours

endeavours to promote the enlargement of our Redeemer's dominion on earth, give energy to our prayers; let us consecrate the vigour of our powers to this most blessed work; and whilst we see the kingdoms of this world shaken to their foundation, and passing away, let it be our unceasing supplication to our Saviour, "*O let* THY *kingdom come, and last for ever!*"

Signed by order of the Directors,
WILLIAM SHRUBSOLE, *Secretary.*

November 14, 1796.

INTERESTING CORRESPONDENCE.

LETTER II.

(See the first Letter, in our Magazine for August, page 322.*)*

DEAR SIR, *From Prison*--------

I HAVE just been favoured with your's of the 1st. instant, and should but ill merit your attention did I delay a moment in returning you and the other gentlemen of your Society my most grateful acknowledgments for the interest you and they have taken in my happiness; and give me leave to assure you that such a correspondence will not only be a particular satisfaction, but will, I have no doubt, be of essential service to me in encouraging and strengthening the sentiments I have already formed. But I feel concerned you should think there ever was a time that I would have treated such a subject either with derision or resentment. The early impressions, made by the instructions of an affectionate mother, were too strong ever to be erased; and although warm passions and gay company have led me into many follies, be assured I never forgot there was an hereafter, for few days ever passed that I did not recommend myself to the protection of the Almighty. And I hope I am not guilty of presumption in flattering myself that as my heart, God knows, was innocent in this unfortunate affair, my punishment will not extend beyond this world; and should it end fatally, I am prepared to meet death with fortitude and resignation. Death, as a soldier, I have long been accustomed to look upon with contempt, and I have often voluntarily faced it in the service of my country. Such a death, however, as now threatens me, would be attended with some very distressing circumstances. The disgrace it would reflect on my family, and the