THE MISSION FIELD.

JUNE 1, 1861.

ZANZIBAR.

Missions of the Church of England have now been established on every side of Africa; and lately, the island of Zanzibar, on the east coast, was pointed out as an important centre for missionary operations. As, however, before taking any step in this direction, it was incumbent on the Society to obtain the fullest information about the climate, physical features, and moral and social condition of the people, Francis Galton, Esq., F.R.G.S., was requested to read a paper on the subject at one of the Evening Meetings of the Society. With this request he kindly complied, and has since been good enough to allow the Society to print his address for the information of its friends throughout the country.

"Those who set sail from England may, in about eighty days, or in the same time it would take to reach Australia, find themselves in sight of the low green island of Zanzibar. Referring to the map, we see it lying near the equator, about twenty miles from the coast of Eastern Africa. It is a coral reef twice the size of the Isle of Wight, surrounded by many smaller ones, here fringing its outline, there raising their heads through the sparkling tropical sea.

It is especially a land of verdure—of dense tropical vegetation, where trees mass themselves along the sea-shore like green cliffs. The gently rounded low eminences of the interior are covered with..."
a continuous sheet of verdure, which the eye, at first reposing on
that colour with eager pleasure, soon weary of and begins to
loathe in a manner hardly possible to describe. The perpetual
greenness of the Elysian fields is the pleasant dream of poets, who
lived in a land that had a winter and a summer contrast; but the
never-ending reality of the oppressive vegetation of a tropical island,
lke Zanzibar, is very different to a poet’s pleasant dream. More-
over, a fatal mangrove swamp indents the shore; the coral reefs
form a fringe of still lagoon, where a fecund and irresistible vegeta-
tion chokes the water.

I believe no European writer has seen much more of Zanzibar than
the town, and the way thence to the Sultan’s country residence, which
occupies one of the most elevated rises of ground in this low island.
The interior is largely laid out in clove plantations and gardens of
tropical produce, but no roads exist in the island; there are only foot-
ways, broad and well trodden near the town, and mere garden paths
elsewhere. No person of any means lives in the interior, on account
of the solitude and the malaria; the gardens are tilled by slaves,
their masters live in the town. The water-courses are choked with
fever-producing vegetation, even slight hollows will retain the rain
water, and becoming overgrown with rush, form hot-heaps of malaria.
In fact, the island, as we now see it, is pestilent. I presume the
insurance value of an European’s life would be as low there as
in any other place in the world.

Where, then, lies the interest of Zanzibar? What attracts Indians
and Arabs and negroes to its town, and gives it a population of
50,000 souls, and what is it that now induces us to gather facts
about it?

It is because it is the heart, the seat of commercial activity in
Eastern Africa, north of the Portuguese. Politically speaking,
Zanzibar is an offshoot of that part of Arabia which is in the closest
connexion with India, and here it is planted by the side of the
continent of Africa, opposite villages whence long lines of traffic
extend through far distant negro communities to fully one-third of
the entire distance across that continent. It is essentially an Arab
country, for its education, its creed, and dominant races come from
Arabia, although its population is chiefly negroid and negro, due to a long intermingling of the Arab with the Black. On the one side, its merchants are in intimate relationship with Muscat and Bombay; on the other, with the absolute savagdom of Eastern Africa.

Again, Zanzibar is not only a channel of commerce, but is in itself a kingdom of some wealth, and it might be of strength. There is a squadron—a wretchedly dilapidated one, I willingly concede—but still a squadron of eight ships floating in her harbour: one corvette, at least, is serviceable. The flng of Zanzibar flies over many settlements that dot the Eastern African coast, and she claims the entire littoral far away down south, to Cape Delgado. A fringe of Moslems, to whom Zanzibar is a metropolis and a home, skirts the shores all the way between that Cape and the equator, and even farther. Zanzibar can coerce somewhat; she can influence widely and largely. In proof of this, we find that in no place is the Moslem so tolerant, of those not his co-religionists, as here; and it is acknowledged that this feeling dates from the personal influence of the late estimable ruler of the country, Sultan Sayid Said, commonly called the Imam of Muscat.

It is, then, on the grounds of the influential position of Zanzibar that it has been recommended as a centre of Missionary labour. I trust nothing will be done blindly; and it is with the desire of giving accurate information upon this almost unknown island, that I have undertaken here to address you.

My knowledge of it is partly derived from sources of information open to all—that is to say, from the published works of Owen, Guillain, Kräf, and Burton, besides the published reports of our Consul there, on slave-trade matters; but these give comparatively scanty information. Captain Burton accounts, in his narrative of travels in Eastern Africa, for having treated too lightly on Zanzibar, by the miscarriage of the MSS. he had written upon it, which were lost on their way to England. Fortunately, however, the exceedingly copious, rough notes, which that inquiring traveller and accomplished orientalist made on the spot, and which were the foundation of the missing MSS., have been preserved; they were kindly lent to
one by Captain Burton, and I hold them now in my hand, and I have read them with great interest and instruction. Again, Captain Spence, who, as many of you are aware, has returned on a second
mission of exploration to Eastern Africa, has lately sent to the
Geographical Society a series of photographs taken by his com-
partners, Captain Tenison. They are of no professed artistic value,
but are revealing interest in bringing accurately before us the
features of the island and its inhabitants. Lastly, I owe much to
conversations with Captain Spence and Burton, and also, some
years ago, with the Rev. Mr. Edward of the Church Missionary
Society, who had resided near Mombasa, the vividness of whose
descriptions I have rarely heard equalled. All this testimony, from
different men who have described Zanzibar as it is, and speculated
on its possible future, taking their view from many different points
of observation, has given me that information which I will endeavor
to communicate. I have no personal knowledge whatever of the
island.

Let us begin considering the climate. The following table
will explain its peculiarities, better than any other description.

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The Thermometer ranges between 71° and 94°.

The population of Zanzibar, slaves included, is, as I have said, about
30,000. How they got there, I will endeavour shortly to describe.
In the old classical times, Arabs were scattered hereabouts along the
coast of Arabia, under several chiefs, probably tributary to Arabia.
They were more or less intermingled with the negroes, and had
given rise to a sub-race, now called the Swahili. The communi-
cation between East Africa and Arabia seems to have been frequent and intimate, and, consequently, when Mahommedanism appeared, the East Africans were early converts.

Vasco da Gama touched at Zanzibar in 1499, where he was well received and supplied with provisions. Other Portuguese expeditions followed, and in their train came the usual results of the discovery of new lands by enterprising European nations. That is to say, misunderstandings arose, then an attack, and lastly the subjugation of the natives. In a very few years from Vasco da Gama's visit, the Portuguese had captured Mombasa and Kilwa, on the mainland, and also the islands Pemba, Manda, and Zanzibar. Their occupation of the latter was of a temporary character; they built barracoons and shipped slaves, but made no permanent settlement. It appears that they were partly deterred by the exceeding unhealthiness of the climate. Zanzibar now dropped out of history. We hear nothing of it from Arab records, and very little from those of the Portuguese. Our British accounts date no further back than the visit of H.M.S. Leopard, at the beginning of the present century, the result of whose observations form the sailing directions still in use.

It is not clear, neither is it worth our while now to inquire, how and with what alterations the loose connexion between Zanzibar and Arabia became strengthened to its recent state. Suffice it to mention that, in about the year 1700, the then Sultan obtained a firm hold upon the coast; and also that, in 1804, the late Sultan, commonly styled the Imam of Muscat, came into recognised possession of Muscat, Zanzibar, and the coast of East Africa, from about the equator to Cape Delgado. His authority was quite independent, save to the extent of an annual tribute of 2,600l. to the Chief of the Wahabees, to whose sect the Sultan belonged: that is to say, he and the majority of his people were of that austere, Puritanical dissenting class among the Moslems who refuse to believe in the efficacy of saints and the validity of tradition, but adhere to the letter of the Koran, as their ultimate authority; who, drinking no wine as Moslems, abstain also from tobacco, the great luxury of life in Eastern lands, because they are Wahabees.
The Sultan we are speaking of was a prince after the heart of his Arab subjects; he was the principal ship-builder, merchant, and cultivator in the island. Cloves were largely grown by him, and became a most important produce. Cocoa-nut oil was largely exported for candles: even at this moment the reek of Zanzibar town, from the drying of this oil previous to exportation, is wholly insupportable at times. In that land of ill-health, where trifling causes bring on an ailment, the horrid oily smell causes vomiting and disease, as well as simple nausea. The Sultan was a shrewd, sensible man, who, being abundantly troubled by European importers of all classes, showed considerable tact in disembarrassing himself of them, and in maintaining his position as an independent Moslem ruler: showing every tolerance, but no subservience, to representatives or subjects of stronger Christian nations. His probity, generosity, and great tolerance, unusual in an Arab, together with his willingness to treat loyally for the suppression of slave exportation, made him a favourite with European powers. Princely gifts were exchanged with him. At this moment, a ship that he presented to the English sovereign, and called the Imaum, is now at a West Indian station as a guard-ship. Undoubtedly she is not worth much; but there she is—an eighty-gun man-of-war. Consuls were sent to him by America, England, and France; while to the cordial and sensible support that he received from our late lamented representative, Colonel Hamerton, a vast amount of good effect, and evil averted, may be justly ascribed. The Sultan died four years since, and is succeeded by his two sons, who, after some struggle for supremacy, have settled in peace,—the elder taking the Arabian possessions, and the younger Zanzibar and East Africa. The latter follows, as able as he can, the footsteps of his father: clinging to the English, and firmly resisting the French, with their restless interferences and free labour movements, directed from Réunion.

I have already stated the population of the island at about 50,000. These consist of pure Arabs, of numerous negroid half-castes, of black slaves from the mainland, of 600 Indians (British subjects), from the mouth of the Indus, and about twenty-four Europeans;
part of the latter are members of three consular establishments—
English, French, and American—and the rest are agents of Ham-
burgh, French, and American trading establishments. They are the
only Christians on the island, except a few Portuguese servants.
As to the Indians, it has been their custom for centuries to frequent
this coast of Africa. Vasco da Gama found Banyans from Cutch
settled hereabouts; but there is not a single Hindu woman. The
men expatriate themselves for a term of years, and by their probity
and commercial skill have become indispensable to the Mooslems.
They have monopolized the trade on the mainland on whose coast
they live, making use of the Arabs and their caravans into the inte-
rior, but never going there themselves. It is stated that they show
themselves hostile to Europeans penetrating into Africa and opening
lines of commerce.

Now, as to the Europeans in Zanzibar, they do not appear to
unite well: there is little society among them, and few opportunities
of rational pleasure. A latitude of body, due to the climate, brings
with it a want of mental energy, besides which, the frequent ailments
have generally a cerebral tendency. Sleep is heavy. Any organic
defect in Europeans soon makes itself felt irresistibly. Life in
Zanzibar is living under difficulties.

Native schools exist in abundance, where boys learn to write and
read the Koran; but more advanced learning is unrepresented, far
otherwise to what it used to be in Arab countries.

Zanzibar itself is a wealthy, commercial town, whose prosperity is
based entirely on Arab principles. It resembles Jeddah and such
like towns that are dotted along the shores of the Red Sea, more
nearly than any others that could be mentioned. It is an exceed-
ingly expensive place to live in. A dollar goes no further there
than a shilling in England.

The productions of the island, on which its prosperity mainly
depend, are the cocoa and clove-trees. The clove plantations have
began to be badly managed, and their produce is falling off. There are
no dates. The people are too lazy to attend to sugar. Some garden
experiments have been tried in this productive island: for instance,
bread-fruit was planted and grew well, but the negroes pulled
it up; indeed, a garden cannot be kept without a guard of slaves, or, some day, everything will be pulled up, in mere wantonness of destruction.

Before making any remarks on the manners in which English influences might most wisely be brought to bear on those regions, let me next call your attention to the populous mainland of which Zanzibar is the key, and without which that island would have no more claim to your consideration than as a mere speck on the broad surface of the globe.

We are becoming well acquainted with that interior which a few years ago was the subject of wild speculation. Kräpf, Robmann, and Eduard's stay at Mombasa, and their short journeyings and reports, excited an interest which induced the Geographical Society to obtain the appointment of Burton and Speke's very successful exploring expedition. The latter of these gentlemen is again returned to the country in a still more arduous undertaking. Now, there are two very different estimates of the character of the negroes of these parts, so far as it is possible to group many different races under one general description. Those who look at them from an Arab's point of view are wholly disgusted with their character. Burton's description, and I believe I am justified in adding the late Consul Humerton's ideas, are of this description. Burton's account conveys a repulsive picture of a vulgar, boisterous, and drunken savagery overspreading the land. The missionaries' accounts appear to confirm this. Kräpf talks of them (p. 58, in the preface) as "a crooked and pervers generation," and Robmann (p. 567) stigmatizes them as "profitable in nothing, either to God or to the world." On the other hand, Speke and the present Consul take the negroes' part. The latter describes them, to the disparagement of the Arabs, in a letter recently published in the newspapers, as "a most good-natured, docile, merry race, who soon become very much attached to Europeans." This picture may possibly be true of the Wanyamwezi, but I confess myself staggered by the Consul's sweeping and flattering statement. My own belief leans strongly towards the unfavourable view, and I feel alarm lest an undectecting leaning on the part of England towards the blacks
should end by weakening the power of the Arabs over their rightful subjects, and introducing discord and revolts where a strong and just rule is an absolute necessity for any kind of civilization. I say I lean to the unfavourable view of the character of these blacks, because, leaving aside sentiments which we cannot estimate at a distance, and dormant capacities which cannot be judged of even on the spot, unless evoked, I find that in the overt matters of murder, falsity, cowardice, drunkenness, and the like, there can be no shadow of a doubt that these East Africans are as bad as any on the Continent. There is not even a tendency to political aggregation among them; there is no stirring activity, even for evil, among them. Their very slave-hunts have the cruelty and the guilt without the dash that accompanies the slave-hunts of North-west Africa. Of the four travellers who have penetrated into the country,—Maizan, Burton, Speke, and Roscher, two have already been murdered; Maizan some years back, and Roscher quite lately.

However, what is much to our purpose is this, that small communities of Arabs do hold themselves in security in the very midst of the negroes. Whether they are protected on commercial grounds, for it is the consistent aim of the more reflecting class of savages to plunder just up to the point where fear begins to tell on the amount of caravan traffic and not further, or whether it is that these Africans have not enough power of organization to unite in sufficient numbers for a serious attack, or, whatever else be the cause, we find that not only on the sea-shore but also far in the interior, as at Kazeh, a village of a few substantial, half-fortified Arab houses, never containing more than fifteen, and sometimes not more than four Arabs, with their slaves, and full of valuables, are never over-mastered.

As to matters of health, the low lands are pestilential. In the Mombasa Mission of eleven individuals, every one suffered from severe fever within three weeks of their arrival; on the whole, two of them were sent back invalided to Germany after a very short stay, and four died. This is a deplorable result; but on the high lands the case would be different. There certainly seems no reason why missionary stations, if armed themselves, or protected by those who
were armed, should not exist there in health and security; but what as to their influence and utility? The natives are most assuredly no inquiring race, open to influence, but the very contrary. Again, their countries are intersected by commercial routes through which a tide of Moslem ideas is constantly flowing, and how could a handful of Missionaries, looking at past and present history to guide us in our speculations, be supposed to avail against it? It strikes me, too, as something not quite generous to avail ourselves of the courtesy and the unusual tolerance of a Moslem power to sow seeds of a certain harvest of discord. What we find in Zanzibar is a far-reaching and far-influencing, but not a strong power; anxious to do well, seeking to consolidate itself, amenable to a good English influence, but above all things, the _sine qua non_ of its existence is that it should be Moslem. With our very limited Missionary agency, it seems to me that we should divert its current to healthier and more hopeful fields than Zanzibar, and that England, so far as she may interfere at all, whether through her representative or by any other agency, should try to effect the following results:—To relieve the Sultan, by means of our moral support, from the embarrassment of foreign pressure; to promote safe lines of legitimate and civilizing traffic into the far interior of Africa; and to open better communication between Zanzibar and the more civilized world, than now exists. This is the schedule of what England is actually doing, and I further believe it is all she ought, for the present, to undertake in Zanzibar.”

THE PONGAS MISSION.

Mr. Lewis Wilkinson, in a letter of April 8th, informs us that he is coming to England by the July steamer, with the view of entering St. Augustine's. He says, "Mr. Phillips's house at Domingo is finished. It is well built on a rising ground fronting the sea, the spot having been marked out by Mr. Phillips himself, and the building commenced previous to his leaving. The chief,