

Report of the Medical Committee with regard to the propriety of sending out missionaries to Old Calabar direct from this country.

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CONTENTS.

Report of the Medical Committee with regard to the propriety of sending out Missionaries to Old Calabar direct from this Country	81	Continental Evangelization—1. Union of Evangelical Churches in France. 2. Belgian Missionary Church. 3. Missionary Stations in Saintonge, Western France	87
JAMAICA—Congregation of Stirling.....	84	Congregational Reports, etc.....	93
DEMERARA—Encouragement and Help.....	86		

Canada.—The Rev. R. Monteath, late of Greenlaw, and Mr R. Dewar, preachers, who sailed from Glasgow in the "Glasgow," as missionaries for Canada, have, by an injury which the ship sustained shortly after leaving, been detained till the vessel be repaired.

Old Calabar.—The Rev. H. M. Waddell, Mrs Waddell, and Miss Mary Edgerley, sailed from Plymouth, in the Mail Steamer, which left on the 24th April.

Caffraria.—Letters from the Rev. Messrs Niven and Cumming, state that in December last, they visited Tyopo, the Tambookie chief, in Tembuland, who wishes a mission to be set up among his people; that Sandilla and the Gaika chiefs decline receiving missionaries at present; and that Mr Niven intended to leave Africa in March.

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL COMMITTEE WITH REGARD TO THE PROPRIETY OF SENDING OUT MISSIONARIES TO OLD CALABAR DIRECT FROM THIS COUNTRY.

In compliance with the request of the Mission Board, expressed at a conference held with them and the Rev. Hope M. Waddell, on the 24th of February, we now beg to state our views regarding the effects of the climate of Old Calabar on the health of our missionaries and teachers; on the question whether they may in future be sent direct from this country to labour there, without incurring peculiar hazard; and, in general, as to arrangements for their comfort and safety.

From what we know of the general effects of a tropical climate on the European constitution, we cannot view it otherwise than as unsuited for permanent residence, and as injurious to the health of the great majority of those who are exposed to its influence during several consecutive years, even with all the precautions proper on the part of a resident, and more particularly so to the missionary or teacher, who has daily arduous duties to perform, and wearing-out anxieties to endure. And if this is true of tropical climates generally, it must be still more so of the Calabar country; for in addition to the high annual mean temperature during night as well as day, there are seasons of the year and local influences in it, especially trying to the constitution of the white man. Of these, we may notice in particular, the sudden transition from the chilly dampness of the

rain season to the stifling heat of the *dry or smoke season*, and also, the oppressive parching and debilitating effect of the latter, occasioned by the stagnant condition of the atmosphere, the great heat, the absence of sea breezes, and the vast exhalation from the marshes (or mud beds on the banks of the river, formed by the overflowings of the tide), and from the decay of rank vegetation. Then, too, when we consider Calabar in comparison with other fields of mission labour, Jamaica, for example, as it is likely to affect the mental constitution, besides the ordinary roughing and trials of a missionary's position, we must include, as an element, the dispiriting tendency of its moral atmosphere, the perplexities and discouragements of labouring among a people so ignorant, rude, and superstitious.

It would appear, however, that the climate of Calabar is not quite so insalubrious as used to be represented. The statements regarding it prior to the establishment of our mission, eight years ago, seem not to have been altogether borne out by subsequent experience. During all the three seasons of the year at Calabar, there are some circumstances which mitigate the evils of the climate. *The rain season*, which begins in June and ends in October, is attended with considerable coolness, the heavens being then darkened with clouds, and consequently, the sun's influence little felt. The rains,

too, however heavy, drain rapidly off, or sink into the soil, which is sandy or gravelly; and now also an occasional fresh sea breeze comes up, or some considerable intermission of the rain takes place, which breaks the period and renders it more healthy. Fever and ague generally prevail to some extent among the shipping anchored in the river; but there is often comparatively little sickness on shore. In the *tornado season*, which commences generally about the beginning of March and terminates in the end of May, the high gusts of wind, assisted by the thunder-storms and the sea breezes, clear away the smokes and purify the air, so that although this is one of the hottest times of the year, it is generally the most healthy. Even in the *dry season*, which begins in the end of October and continues until the beginning of March, the heat is mitigated by the haze called "*the smokes*," which, occurring to a greater or less extent during the months of December, January, and February, lessens the power of the solar beams. Of course, the experience of this mission has not yet been sufficiently long to warrant any positive estimate of the effects of the climate on European life. Yet of the thirteen whites who have been engaged in the enterprise, only one, the good Mr Jameson, has died of the fever of the country. All have, indeed, had attacks of it, some repeatedly; and all have had once to visit this country, more or less on account of health; but they have all, likewise, been shortly restored to such a measure of strength as, with one exception, to return to the country and prosecute again their noble work. Then, as regards the blacks from Jamaica, nine in number, who have been connected in one way or another with the mission, one death has taken place from a surgical disease and overgrowth; and of the eight children forming part of the mission band, only two, both blacks, have been removed by death, the one in teething, the other from fever.

From the above statements, it cannot be said that as yet the mission has been disastrous to life, or even more injurious to health than probably would have been the case in any other tropical region where the local peculiarities had to be learned. There can be no question that in spite of every possible precaution as regards dwellings, food, clothing, exposure, and amount and kind of mission work, the climate will be found debilitating, and particularly so in some seasons of the year. Fever of a low typhoid type, generally short in duration, but attended with much prostration, and followed by more or less weakness, is the disease which the white man in Calabar has most to fear. Ague sometimes assails the seamen, but is not considered dangerous; and it is worthy of note, that while fever is

rare among the natives, they are much affected with complaints of the bowels, the lungs, and skin, to which the whites do not appear to be particularly liable. Much, however, has already been learned by the pioneers of the mission, how by mode of living and general care to guard the health against the adverse influences of the climate, how to treat most successfully the diseases of the country, and how to promote the healthiness of their stations by clearing away the bush, thus opening them up to the influence of the sea breezes; whilst there is every reason to believe that the stations which it is proposed to open in the interior, will be still more favourable to health.

Looking then at the peculiar character of the climate of Calabar, it becomes a matter of primary importance and duty for the church to consider how the mission—hitherto so successfully prosecuted, may be carried on with least danger to the health of her devoted agents. It has generally been supposed of great consequence that missionaries and catechists destined for Calabar, should be chosen from the mission staff at Jamaica, on the idea that a period of previous "seasoning" is necessary. All assurance companies require a very considerable extra premium for a first year's policy on a good life tropically exposed, unless the individual has resided for a certain length of time in the same, or in a somewhat similar latitude; and this extra charge is continued for four or five years in a diminishing scale until acclimating is accomplished. The principle on which this demand is founded, is reasonable; for all experience has proved that during the first year or two of residence within the tropics, any peculiarity of constitution—any weakness, moral as well as physical, is likely to become apparent, and occasion bad consequences under the forcing influence of climate. But, supposing it were more practicable than we understand it to be to obtain from time to time a sufficient number of agents for Calabar, who had been some years in Jamaica, we are yet inclined to think that by attending to suitable precautions, it would nevertheless be probably as safe, now that the way is opened, to send out direct from this country those who have not been acclimated at all, as to send men who, although acclimated to Jamaica, have had their constitutions somewhat impaired by previous hard labour there.

The question, therefore is, How can the mission be carried on, and extended by agents direct from this country, with most safety to those engaged in it? and, in reply, we would say, that the much-desired object will be best secured—1st, By a *judicious selection* of agents; and, 2d, By *liberal arrangements* made for the conservation of their health.

I.—*The kind of Agents that should be chosen.*—With a view to the health and consequent efficiency of our missionaries and teachers, it is of first importance that the services of those only be accepted who possess mental and physical constitutions, in all respects adapted for the peculiar duties which they will have to perform, and the exposure to which they will be subjected. We are of opinion that the lives made choice of, should—to use an assurance company's expression—be very select. The age of those who are sent out for the first time, ought if possible, to be from twenty to thirty. They should be spare but muscular men, and rather under than above average size. They should possess a sound circulation and sound organs of respiration, and should perspire easily in exertion. They should have no peculiar liability to biliary or stomachic disorder, and, above all, indicate no tendency, hereditary or otherwise, to head affection or cerebral excitement. Then as regards mental constitution and temperament, they must be cheerful, hopeful, contented, and firm. Men who are subject either to nervous depression or excitability, who are apt to be melancholic at one time, or too much elevated at another, would be in constant danger from attacks of fever; but those who are calm and composed, who take things as they occur, and are disposed to make the best of everything, will be most likely to withstand the debilitating effects of the climate, and bear up against the difficulties and trials which may be encountered.

Of course, however well adapted in respect of physical conformation and mental constitution an agent may appear to be, a great deal will depend on himself for the preservation of health after he has reached Calabar, and is engaged in the work of the mission. It would be out of place here to lay down rules which ought to be observed in regard to food, drink, clothing, sleep, exertion, and exposure during the varied diurnal and periodical changes of the climate. On these points, we shall consider it our duty privately to instruct intending agents; and we have no doubt that common sense and prudence will induce them on arriving in the country, to avail themselves of the experience of their brethren connected with the mission.

II.—*The arrangements to be made with a view to the health of the Agents.*—While mission agents have thus an evident duty to perform to themselves and to the church, the church has also great obligations to discharge to them. It is not enough that they be carefully selected, and comfortably conveyed to the scene of labour, and left there with instructions to take care of themselves. Their position and condition should still continue to be viewed with peculiar

concern and tenderness; and every possible means adopted to lessen the risks of their service, to promote their comfort, and encourage their hearts.

In an especial manner, we would press on the attention of the church the propriety of making a distinctly understood arrangement for a limited term of service, at the expiry of which, the labourer should be allowed to return home before his constitution is impaired, and be welcomed back to his fatherland where he may enjoy a period of rest, and have his mental and physical energies repaired and renovated for the further prosecution of the good work.

This plan, we think, may be carried out in the following way—*1st*, At the expiry of three years from the time that the missionary or teacher sets his foot on the shores of Africa, he shall be at liberty to return home, if he fears that his constitution is unfit for continued exposure to the influences of climate, or is indisposed to remain from any other private or personal reason. *2d*, He shall not, however, be expected to return at this period if his constitution is standing the climate well; and will be permitted to remain in the mission even until the end of his fifth year, provided he sends home a certificate signed by a surgeon either in Her Majesty's, or in the mercantile service, or by two of his brethren in the mission, that he may do so safely. *3d*, At the termination of his fifth year, he shall return home in whatever state his health may appear to be. *4th*, When he leaves Calabar for this country, he shall do so, if possible prior to the occurrence of the next unhealthy season, so as to lessen the risk of sickness. *5th*, His stay in this country shall, at the least, extend to one year; and a return to Calabar be quite optional with himself, and only warranted under certificate by the medical examiners of the Mission Board. *6th*, When sent to Africa again, care shall be taken (as there should be in every case) that the time of his arrival there is at the most healthy season of the year. *7th*, He may be sent home any time before the third year of his mission has expired under medical certificate (such as before mentioned), that his state of health would render protracted stay dangerous to life, or if the majority of his brethren in the mission are satisfied regarding the necessity of the step. And, *8th*, On the same understanding and responsibility, he may be sent a sea voyage, or ordered to reside for a time at any other more healthy part of the coast, with the view of being recruited from any illness.

The above plan of a limited term of service is, we repeat, likely to exert a most beneficial influence both on the body and the mind of the missionary. It may, in some instances, be the means of arresting diseased action in its commencement, which, if al-

lowed to go on further, would ere long destroy life, or entirely incapacitate for future usefulness. In other instances, although the health may not in a few years have suffered materially, it may be the means of increasing the power of longer climatic endurance; and, in every case, and at all times, it will assuredly support the mind and animate with hope. The probability, at no distant date, of revisiting his native land, and of being welcomed by attached friends, will lessen the pang of the missionary's first separation from home, will cheer him during his outward voyage, and will continue to sustain him amid all his sicknesses and trials and difficulties. Nay, some young, pious, and talented ministers of the church who would not otherwise perhaps dedicate themselves to the service of the heathen in connection with this interesting mission, may now—while actuated by higher motives—be not a little swayed by the con-

sideration of such liberal provisions for their comfort and health; and, at any rate, anxious friends who would otherwise be apt to influence them against this christian enterprise, may now be less importunate in opposition.

In conclusion, we request that the Mission Board will give to the above remarks its serious consideration; for we are convinced that by attention to the various circumstances above mentioned, and by the adoption of the arrangements we have suggested, the health of our Calabar missionaries may be preserved and their lives prolonged, the funds of the church turned to the best account, a new stimulus given to the operations of the mission, and the cause of Christ advanced.

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