TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CORAL LEAGUE.

HAVE a vivid recollection of making many promises to send you news through African Tidings; and, as promises must be kept, I will try and write to you who are helping us so much in providing for the boys and girls in our African schools.

Perhaps some of you will like to hear how I found Magila and the country around on my return.

You will remember I left England very early in January, and, after a most delightful journey, arrived in Zanzibar on January 27th.

I am not going to give you an account of the voyage, as that has been written so many times in days gone by. I will only say I enjoyed it immensely, for it was beautifully cool, and even in the Suez Canal and in the Red Sea we were glad of nice warm wraps and European clothing. Our first hot day was when we reached Djiboute * on January 21st, and from there to Zanzibar it was certainly very warm. Zanzibar itself was very steamy, and it felt like being in a perpetual vapour bath! We arrived just in time to take leave of a party of missionaries returning home on furlough. That was very nice, though I was sorry to have to say "Goodbye" so soon.

I found the Mission members in very good health, and our Bishop, I thought, looking remarkably well, considering he had been out some time, and it was then the very hottest season in Zanzibar.

After spending a week at the hospital * On the west coast of the Red Sea.

THE SUEZ CANAL.
(not as a patient, but as a visitor), I found myself one morning on board a small steamer in route for Tanga. How delighted I was at the thought of soon being at Magila again, and taking up my work! Soon I saw the lovely Shambala Hills in the distance, looking so blue (did you ever see blue hills?). These hills often look blue; in fact, they take almost every shade imaginable in the sunlight. The shades are wonderful!

I enjoyed the crossing, being a good sailor. We dropped anchor at 5.30 p.m., and soon I found my way through the German Customs; and, upon making inquiries, learnt I should have to wait until Tuesday for a train to Mheza (the Magila terminus). Now, it was not a case of hailing a hansom cab, and being driven off to one's quarters comfortably; no, I must settle myself to wait three days for the train. I did so, and, as all things come to an end, so my period of waiting ended, and on Tuesday, at 5.15 a.m., I started off with my baggage for the little station. There was a long wait, but finally, at 6.30, we got fairly started; but we had not gone far before I began to realize the desolate state of the country. Everything was looking parched and dried up—no signs of the beautiful waving millet or graceful Indian corn; everything bare; even the palm trees looked brown, and in many cases only the centre stem was left, all the green having been devoured by locusts!

At 10.45 we arrived at Mheza, and now I eagerly looked about for a Magila face and a Magila Punda (donkey). But, alas! neither was to be seen; so concluding I was not expected, I got porters together, and was just starting off when I heard a familiar voice at my elbow, "Bibi Dunford, is it really you?" and, upon turning round, found myself face to face with the Rev. Peter Limo. After our greetings he said, "If you have to walk to Magila, start at once, as every ten minutes makes a difference, and the sun is very hot. Already I am afraid you will find the roads trying."

And so, taking leave of him, I started off. True, it was hot! but I soon got over the ground, and, at 11.45, found myself once more climbing Magila Orange Grove. I was soon observed, and out rushed a bevy of school girls, and I was hailed with cries of, "Oh, Bibi wangu! Oh, my teacher!" and such a shaking of hands, then loud lamentations of regret that they had not met me at Mheza. It was very nice to be back again, and to see all these dear black faces; it was certainly like a return home.

And now I want to tell you what a state I found the country in—plague, famine, and pestilence, on every side. I was astounded at the sad state of the people. The Mission was besieged by crowds from morning until night begging for food and help. Men bringing their children, and asking that they might be taken in. Alas! things were bad when I arrived, and they have gradually been getting worse. The Archdeacon had started "relief work" for those who could work, and the very bad cases were taken in and attended to; but the numbers increased very rapidly; from 200 working when I came we have now 1,200! Sick cases numbered 10 only, and now there are between 250 and 300 cases. Three houses were opened, and these were soon filled, and crowds were unable to get sleeping room inside! The Bishop has given permission for another large house to be built on one of the hills close by, and no doubt it will soon be filled up; already numbers are living outside waiting for it to be ready.

Ah! dear children, how can I write of the sad sights I have seen! Men, women, and children, reduced to mere skeletons, scarcely able to drag themselves to our
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CORAL LEAGUE.

gates, so weak and emaciated had they become from hunger and disease, the weaker ones dying on the way. I remember one day a woman coming in and begging for food to take to her children. She had started from home with five little ones, and one after the other they had dropped down on the road, too weak to travel farther. She begged so hard that she might have food given her to take to them. Her wants were soon supplied, and off she started in quest of her lost family, finally returning in triumph with all five. But what a state of starvation they presented! They were sent to one of our refuge houses and taken care of. But all are not as fortunate as this poor mother.

Many of the women work in the fields with their little babies tied on their backs; and it is not at all unusual to hear that a mother has found she has been working with a dead baby, the child having just quietly passed away, and the mother not even aware of it!

We are certainly living in the midst of death. People are dying all around, and many are the sad stories we hear and see. As Nurse Boon and I were going out to visit some of these poor creatures the other afternoon we were told, “Don’t go by that road, as the body of a woman is lying on the little bridge. She died of ‘njaa’ just now,” which meant she was trying to come to us for help, and had died from exhaustion ere she could get here. We did not pass by that way, as we were quite helpless if she was, as they said, already dead. But when we got back we inquired what was to be done, and that night the Rev. Samuel Chiponde, with some of our teachers and Christian boys, set off with lanterns and tools, and dug a grave and buried the body. I cannot tell you how weird it all was as we stood on our baraza and saw them start in the darkness on their errand of mercy. No one knows who she was or from where she had come. Another day a mother and baby, both dead, were found lying in the road just outside the Mission grounds.

I could write you no end of sad stories. I think I must tell you of the father who brought us his little baby of seven days old —his too, was a sad story. The mother had died three days before. He said, “I have come with my baby; will you take it? I have no friends or relations left—all have died of ‘njaa.’ The baby’s mother is dead, and I left home yesterday to bring the baby here to the European.” I looked at the little creature, and it was the tiniest mite you could possibly imagine. Nurse got one of our Christian women to take charge of it, and she went off in triumph with the little mite in her arms, saying, “Now I have a child of my own, I shall love it and will take care of it, for it will be my own son!” She had long been looking for a child to care for; but alas for her disappointment! the little mite only lived a few days.

March 25th. At last there is a gleam of hope. Rain has come, and we trust now people will be able to plant, and that there may be a harvest later on; but there can be no end to the famine before July or August, even if then. Now another difficulty has arisen. There is little to plant with; people have eaten up their seeds, and now they say, “What shall we do?” The troubles seem many for these poor afflicted people. We must go on feeding them as long as possible; and even though we feed them, many die; and why? Because we cannot give them the kind of food they need. We can only give rice, and in extreme cases, milk or gruel. The numbers are so many that, as it is, it costs £80 per week to do what we are doing. Oh! I do hope you children will try and help us all you can. If only you could see and hear the sad things going on, I am sure you would.

The schools are increasing every week. Boys now number nearly 180. These live
and sleep and are clothed by the Mission. Girls in my school number 140, and they have to be fed and clothed. At present I have no clothing left. I hope you will notice this, and the working parties will send me out some nice garments soon. I want quantities of sheeties of all sizes!

I am sure the Coral League members will not forget their African brothers and sisters in their prayers, and will try and help all they can. I will try and write you again, and next time I shall hope to have better accounts to send of the Bonde country.

L. M. DUNFORD.

Magila, March 20th.

A LETTER FROM MBWENI.

Thackeray went in her bath chair and took one of our tiniest in front of her, i.e. Pauline Waridi, the child from Pemba. Then followed Miss Sharpe and Miss Barrand walking; then all the girls from the Industrial Wing, looking so clean and gay in their white frocks and many-coloured scarves and head-squares; then followed Miss Norgate on the donkey. She somehow managed to hold tiny Mary Kasese on her knee. A boy held her bridle and the baby donkey trotted around. I came next in the "wheels," with poor Semeni on my knee; then all the school-children, and finally Miss Janet Phillips and Miss Andrews brought up the rear walking.

We three took turns with the wheels, and after a time it was found that the company so upset the baby donkey, who up to that time had lived a somewhat secluded life, that he galloped right away over the fields. Of course his mother went after him, and of course Miss Norgate held on to the donkey, Mary to Miss Norgate, and the boy to them all; after which Miss Norgate thought it better to keep her party (I mean the donkey, the baby donkey, Mary and the boy) well in the background.

The Kiungani boys have lately been getting a band together, and as we streamed up the hill to the College they began to play in our honour. It sounded so nice, and made us think we were very important people indeed.

It was such a pleasant day, and as we came home and I caught sight of the lamps lighted all over our house by the women we had left in charge, I thought how successful it has been; and now there is a nice meal of rice and meat ready for the children before they go to bed; when oh! I was disappointed, for some bad people had come into the house in our absence and had taken more than half of the children's portions of meat. I gave them some tinned meat instead, but of course it was not half so nice as fresh meat just cooked with good gravy. I must say the children were very good and patient about it. I felt quite grateful to them for not abusing me! But indeed I think they
knew how very sorry I was, and that another time I should be sure and have the kitchen door locked.

Do you know what a kitchen is like here? It is just a yard with a piece of thatch running along one side. Under the thatch you would see three stones—that is the fireplace. Between the stones you see bundles of sticks, each stick about 4 feet long—those have to do for coals; and on the top is a great big cooking-pot—it reminds me of Agrippa's inkstand in "Strewel Peter"—which once or sometimes twice a day you would see filled, not with naughty boys, but with "plain boiled rice," the food above all others which these children love; but it isn't quite plain boiled, for we always put four coconuts shredded up into it, and therein we consider our rice very superior to some other people's. The children each have a plate and as much rice put on as it is supposed they will eat, and either meat and gravy or fish or lentils or something to eat with it.

Since Christmas we have had two weddings and two brides each time.

I do miss the girls so when they marry and go away, and it seems so lonely for them to go far on to the mainland where they have no friends and know no one but their husbands. Pray that they may keep good and remember what they have been taught here.

Now it is Lent; but as soon as Easter comes probably there will be more weddings and leave-taking.

The drought here is terrible. There has been no real rain since I came out—that is sixteen months ago now—only occasional showers. Women bring us all our water on their heads, and we have to be very careful of it. The garden and all the country round is parched and dried up and hard, and the poor goats are so thin, for they can find no grass. Our donkey was very thin, but grass is bought for her now and she is happier.

Ellen M. Nelson.

Mbweni, Feb. 26th.
on the top of sleepers, rails, etc., and, at last, just a little after three, we were able to start. The train consisted of the engine, four large water tanks for the coolies working on the line, five or six truck loads of rails, sleepers, bolts, etc., and the guards' van, inside which were packed the guard, one engineer, the Government official and myself in one small compartment, in addition to all the stores for the English workmen who were employed on the line; and in the other compartment were the donkeys, who already were letting us know only too plainly by their kicking and unpleasant odour that they were much too near us.

The first eight miles or so of the journey was through a most lovely part of the country; then at the eighth mile we stopped to fill the water tanks; for all the rest of the journey was through a country absolutely devoid of water of any sort, so that every drop, both for the coolies and engine, has to be taken up by train every day. After waiting there some time—it seemed much too long to us—we at last went on, but only for four miles, and then came the most exciting part of the whole journey.

We had, some three miles before, begun to climb the hills, and now at about the twelfth mile we came to a steep incline and a rather sharp curve, both at the same time, and the difficulty was heightened by having to cross a temporary trestle bridge. When we were half way over the bridge the train stopped dead! The engine was unable to pull the load up the incline and round the curve, because the wheels of the trucks got jammed! There we were some sixty or seventy feet above the ground on the bridge, and owing to the curve the van we were in was very much tilted, so that without putting our heads out we could easily see the bottom of the gully. At last, they decided to go back about a mile and try to get up more speed for climbing the incline. So back we went, and again came forwards with a little more steam, a little more snorting and straining of the engine; but it was useless, we only went about five or six yards further along the bridge than the first time, when we came to a standstill once more. Again we went back, and this time we did cross the bridge, but could not reach the end of the incline; so they decided to divide the train and take the front half to a siding some
three or four miles on ahead, and then come back for us. This they did, and while the engine was gone we arranged to water to drink, when we found it was all warm in our bottles; so we used one bottle of water to cool the other ones before we could drink it. This we did by pouring the water from one bottle on to the felt covering of the other and letting it evaporate.
A DAY ON THE UGANDA RAILWAY.

The usual way is to dip the bottle in water when it is filled, then the evaporation of the water in the felt keeps the water in the bottle cool; but the felt on our bottles had become quite dry, so the water inside was warm.

It seemed a long time before the engine returned and took us on to where they had left the first part of the train; but now the journey was very slow indeed, for they were continually stopping to leave water and food for the coolies at different places, so that by the time we reached the thirty-third mile, where the two engineers were getting off, it was more than half-past six and pitch dark. As the train was only going two miles further with the rails and sleepers, and it was too dark to see anything, I thought I would get off too. We were refreshed by a good wash, and after dinner we sat for some time talking under the only big tree near us before lying down for our rest. During the night I heard some lions roaring at a little distance from the camp, but they did not come near us.

Next morning we were up at 5.30 and on the line once more. This time I was with the engineer of the section, riding on his trolley, with two coolies to push it up the inclines or on the flat; when we came down an incline they would get on behind and let it run as it liked. In this way we went on to the end of the laid line, where our engine of the night before had left the sleepers and rails, etc. While we were there the first train came in with more material, so, as I was to go back by this one, we returned to camp for breakfast. On the way we came across the Government official, still struggling with his donkeys. He had then twenty of them with him, but I never heard whether he got the rest. There were still fifteen to come, and he had to start walking up country next day.

We returned to camp in a very hungry state—we had only had a cup of tea on rising. Soon after breakfast—between nine and ten—the train came, and after about an hour’s shunting, they told us they were ready to start back, so I mounted the engine in order to be ready. Then we waited and waited for the start. While waiting I heard that another train from Mombasa was to leave at eleven, and it was only a single line! Well, we waited till about three; then they decided to start and go slowly for fear of meeting the other train. We had gone only about five miles when we saw the other train just appearing round the side of a hill. So we pulled up and whistled loudly. The other train pulled up about a quarter of a mile ahead of us, and a long argument then ensued as to which train should go back to the siding. At last, after waiting about half an hour, they decided that the siding we had left was the nearer of the two, so back we had to go to the place from which we had started. We only waited a very few minutes there this time, but it was past five before we were again on our way home.

Nothing exciting occurred on the way back; but once, when we were on a very long straight part of the line, we could see the other train coming behind us.

It was about seven when we got to Kilindini, and after saying good-night to the officials who had so kindly allowed me to go for this trip, I went back to Mombasa. It was not till I reached Mombasa that I realized what an awful spectacle I was! When I left there I had on white clothes; but now, from riding in luggage vans, on trolleys, and on the engine, it would have puzzled any one to have told what colour my clothes ought to have been. Next morning my steamer came in and left in the afternoon for Zanzibar, where we arrived on the following morning.

Q. C. L.
OUR AFRICAN MAIL.

R. HENRY MATHEWS, writing from Kondowe, on February 14th, where he was enjoying the hospitality of Dr. Laws, of the Free Church of Scotland Mission, says:—

"Bishop Maples' grave is finished, and it looks very nice. I have bricked and cemented it. I hope to do the same with Rev. A. F. Sim's when I can get cement. Is there a cross or railing coming for Percy Faulkner's grave? At such a place as Kota Kota (where about five years ago slave dealing was in its height), there lie now the bodies of a bishop, priest, and deacon. What will be the outcome of this? Surely not but a faithful body of Christians, who, I believe, will be the means of spreading and strengthening the Church of God in Africa. It was the worst place on the Lake, the greatest enemy to Christianity. It even planned the death of one who was alone in his work; yet not alone, for the Comforter was near. God was watching over His servant, and saved him from an untimely death. May we each one think of this, and learn a lesson of patience, contentment, striving daily to do our duty as he did his. May we read his "Life and Letters,"* not for reading's sake, but to try our level best to be like him. Kota Kota has been blessed; the work of that man, the first Missionary of Kota Kota, is showing fruit. The seed that was sown, although he thought he was not doing any good, has been the means of raising a body of young Christians whom, I firmly believe, will serve their Master faithfully. May God give them strength, for they have a heavy cross to bear. May our friends at home remember these people in their prayers."

Kologwe.

We had no priest on Christmas Day, only a deacon was at Kologwe. We deco-

* "Life and Letters of Arthur Fraser Sim."

rated the church. Our brethren from round about at Kwa Sigi, Magunga, and Ngua all came on the morning of the great festival. Carols were sung; we rejoiced as we were able. On December 29th Padre Samwil S. Sehoza came; fourteen people were baptized.

On the Sunday after Christmas Padre S. Sehoza celebrated Holy Communion. Many Christians came, and thirty-five communicated. At a later service seven people were made catechumens.

A VISIT TO CARLISLE.

THINK our readers may be interested to hear a little about the East African Court in the Missionary Loan Exhibition lately held at Carlisle.

The Church Missionary Society kindly asked some of our Mission to go up and take part in interesting people in Mission work in Africa, so Mr. Webb and myself went. We received the kindest welcome on all sides.

I was specially helped by Mrs. Ware, the daughter of our old friend and great supporter, Bishop Harvey Goodwin.

I went North, armed with about 140 dolls. Brown dolls, big and small, dressed in the native costumes of our dear people in Africa.

These dolls did not harmonize very well with native curios, spears, mats, baskets, etc., so Mr. Malaher very kindly gave me a special table to set them out on, but, of course, only room for part of them.

I will describe the group for our younger readers:—

In the background, on both sides, were palms and tropical vegetation; in the middle a native thatched hut, two women standing at the door; one of them having come from the far interior (perhaps Uganda), dressed in bark cloth, near the hut sits two or three little people playing; on the right behold a wedding party, bride, bridegroom and
followers, and one little chorister looking through the trees to see the last of them, still in his scarlet cassock and surplice; in front are a group of Mbweni children having a feast; then on the left you see a lady on her way to visit the native village, two women stand pounding rice in the usual native mortar, and boys from our schools are walking along; then in front, on the left, is a group of native women seated sewing patchwork, in fact a little "mothers' meeting" (only there ought to have been from twenty to thirty women), and behold, safe tied on the mothers' backs are their babies; no meeting would be perfect without them! A lady stands giving an instruction while the mothers work.

The whole thing was very simple, but I think helped to convey to people the happy life of a Christian village after the sorrow and privation of the slave path and captivity.

From 9 to 11 o'clock every morning, streams of children came from the Board Schools of Carlisle, and were taken round the courts by sixty in a group, to have short lectures upon work in the Mission field.

Many children visited the dolls in large groups, and when my voice was tired Mrs. Ware kindly spoke to them, Mr. Webb being hard at work in the East African Court.

At 12 o'clock each day the Exhibition opened, when two or more stewards were always on duty in each court to explain the curios.

One thing of great interest was the dreadful slave yoke which the Arabs pressed upon the poor slaves, and drove them to the coast, often 400 miles or more, bearing this instrument of torture.

Another great interest was Bishop Hannington's last Diary, which many looked at with reverence and loving feelings.

Then again, a knife which Mr. Webb had brought from Nyasa, most beautiful native workmanship, the handle made of hippo's tooth (either this knife, or one like it, was used by the brave teacher Richard, who went into the water and killed a great crocodile, large enough to have destroyed a man).

Then there were native mats, the work of our women; the Medicine Man's stick, with its little secret cupboards in which he secreted the "Dawa" or native medicine. Some of the drinking cups, made of woven grass, were also greatly admired.

Mr. Webb spoke many times a day, and once in the Great Hall to a mass meeting of children.

I trust a great deal of interest has been aroused, and who can tell where it may end? Among those crowds may be some devoted missionaries in years to come?

And even the little dolls' stall was successful. The sale of our dolls brought in more than enough to keep one of our children for a year.

Mr. Webb and myself will not easily forget Carlisle and the great kindness showered upon us on all sides.

April, 1899.

M. A. B.
of locusts; they were in such multitudes that the train had to be stopped, and it took two hours to clear the line. By a miracle a wind arose which blew two ways; half the locusts were cast into the Dead Sea and half into the sea at Jaffa; the seas were covered with them as with a thick scum. We should have had a famine if they had eaten the young corn. I came through miles of them in the train, and their wings glittered beautifully in the sun."

The Malvern Branch of the Coral League held their Annual Sale of Work on Thursday, April 20th. The Rev. W. H. Kisbey gave an interesting address on the work of the Mission generally, and especially at Kologwe. The amount realized by sale, after paying expenses, was £19 7s. The Malvern Branch supports one boy and three girls.

African boys have their regular round of games, just as their white brothers in England. At one time tops are "in"; at another they make tee-to-tums, and sitting in two rows facing one another, they set up corn cobs, and spinning their tee-to-tums quickly along the ground, they knock over their opponent's corn cob. If all the cobs in one row are down together, the opposite side has won, and a short war dance ensues, after which the game begins again.

Just now our boys are mighty hunters. Armed with bow and arrows, they boldly follow and persistently stalk flocks of very little birds, and sometimes (I am glad to say not often) they bring one down. Of course, all their toys and weapons are home-made.

poles across, with large stones in between, filling up all spaces with mud; then on the top of that a quantity of lime was spread, making a flat roof. At this point we were told, "Ten women are coming to do the roof." They carried up baskets of lime, each woman carrying the basket on her head. They mounted a rough sort of ladder, with the rungs set very far apart. The overseer came to say, "Would the ladies give him all their old shoes?" as the women have to tread down this lime with their
feet, and without shoes their feet become very sore. But alas! our shoes are always snapped up by the children. There is nothing they love so much as to clatter about in European shoes; the excuse always is, "We want to get shells on the shore" (where the coral rock is very sharp); but those shoes may be heard in a good many places, far from the shore. Thus the amount of shoes was rather small. However, a plentiful supply of rag was given. One large piece of blue serge was promptly used as a flag, fixed to a scaffolding pole; the rest they wrapped round their legs and feet. Each woman was provided with a small wooden tool, looking rather like what we use in England for beating turf, and then the work began. They tread down the lime with their feet and flatten it with their tools. But all this cannot be done without much singing. So they hire a man to help them sing. Our people were poor and could not afford a really good singer; however, they made a great deal of noise. The hired man sings the first line and the women give an answering refrain, and the same line is sung again and again. Each one shouts at the top of her voice, and beats her tool in exact time. The effect is really most inspiring, and you can quite understand that they work much better with this accompaniment. This went on for three days. The only drawback was that it all took place close to our school and class-rooms; but our children were wonderfully good, and though when an extra cheerful song began, they longed to join, they restrained themselves, with the exception of one tiny boy about a year old. He was a teacher's child, and plays round whilst his mother teaches; but once he recognised a song, and shouted back the refrain at the pitch of his voice, and at this there was a perfect shout of laughter. I asked one of the women, when the three days were over, whether their throats were not very sore? "Oh yes," she said, "dreadfully sore and swollen." But evidently for such a cause they are willing to sacrifice their voices.

J. P.