

Report of "Dayspring's" voyage among the New Hebrides Group during part of the months of November and December, 1870.

BY REV. DR. GEDDIE.

ANEITYUM, Dec. 20th, 1870.

DEAR SIR,—I beg to lay before you the following statement of my annual voyage among the islands of the New Hebrides group. It was made during the months of November and December, and was later than usual on account of the *Dayspring's* visit to Eastern Polynesia for teachers. No new islands have been visited this year, and the lateness of the season prevented us from calling at some places visited in former years. Our voyage has nevertheless been one of much interest to ourselves, and I trust of benefit to the cause.

FUTUNA.

Our much-esteemed friends, Mr. and Mrs. Copeland, who labour on this island, are well. The mission still suffers from the opposition of the heathen; but this is by no means an unfavourable symptom. The kingdom of Satan has never yet been overthrown without a struggle. The old system of heathenism is doomed, however, and shall ere long be supplanted by the religion of the gospel. I was struck with the improvement in the external appearance of the natives which is visible to a stranger. There was less painting of the face than formerly; many of the natives were unarmed; and not a few make feeble attempts at clothing themselves. These external changes indicate the existence of a deeper work, which shall end in the moral and religious elevation of these deeply-degraded islanders.

The missionary work on Futuna has been seriously retarded during the past year by visits of slavers from Queensland and the Fiji Islands. Many of the natives under instruction have been induced to embark in these vessels. It is no ordinary trial to the missionary to see those for whose good he has laboured snatched away at the very time when the fruits of his labours begin to appear. Should any of these people ever return to their own islands, they will be different from what they now are. The civilization with which most of them come in contact has a demoralising and hardening influence on them. The most degraded characters on these islands are to be found among those who have returned from the Queensland and Fiji plantations.

A vessel recently called at this island from the Fiji in search of natives. The Captain endeavoured by stratagem to secure some native women. He became enraged with the missionary when he failed

in his attempts; and put all sorts of mischief into the heads of the natives against him. He told them that the Bromangans had killed a missionary, and the Fijians had killed one also. The missionary's wife might well say, "isn't it horrible!" If the missionary on Futuna has not shared the fate of his martyred brethren, 't is not the fault of this white savage.

Mr. Copeland is assisted by four Aneityum teachers. We left an Eastern island teacher with him also, named Solomona; he is a native of Niua, or Savage Island. As the language of his island bears a strong resemblance to that of Futuna, he will soon be able to labour in the work.

ANIWA.

Mr. and Mrs. Paton continue to labour with encouragement on this island. The most of the natives are under Christian instruction, and some of them have begun to wear clothing, and adopt some of the habits of civilized life. The rate of mortality is very high among the natives, and unless a change for the better takes place, the inhabitants must at no distant period disappear.

We left one of our Eastern teachers to assist Mr. Paton; his name is Jonne, a native of Niua. The language of this island is nearly the same as that spoken in Aniwa. This island, and Futuna also, must have been peopled by natives of Eastern Polynesia, drifted to them at some remote period. They differ much in appearance and language from the Papuan race which inhabits these islands.

Mrs. Paton was delicate at the time of our visit, and one of the children suffering from a complaint which required medical skill; it was deemed advisable, for these reasons, that Mr. and Mrs. Paton should proceed to Lifu, and consult the French doctor there. The season being far-advanced, to save time they accompanied us during our whole voyage round the islands, and called at Lifu on our way home. The voyage has been very beneficial to both mother and child.

TANNA.

We arrived at this island on a Sabbath morning, and landed at Mr. Neilson's station. The native worship was delayed a little to afford us time to land. Our meeting was small, but the natives were attentive. The number who favour Christianity is on the increase. The natives were suffering from an epidemic which had proved fatal in many cases. The first intimation we had of this was their appearance, for many of them had their long hair shorn and their bodies blackened, which are the usual tokens of mourning. Mr. Watt came to the harbour to meet the vessel, and we were glad to hear from him favourable