

THE Home and Foreign Record

OF

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF THE LOWER PROVINCES.

MAY, 1863.

INTELLIGENCE FROM THE NEW HEBRIDES— DEATH OF MR. MATHESON.

For the last few months our pages have lost much of their interest from the want of letters from our Missionaries. At length the long-continued dearth of intelligence has been supplied by the arrival of the communications, which we publish in our present No., from which it will be seen that another trial has befallen our New Hebrides Mission. As most of our readers will have already heard, Mr. Matheson has fallen, leaving another blank among our Missionary agents—already so much reduced. With the exception perhaps of the Missions to Northern India during the fearful revolt of 1857, where beside the destruction of property four Missionaries and their wives and children connected with a single body were cruelly massacred, we know of no Mission in modern times that has within so short a time passed through such a succession of severe trials. Besides the ravages of fire, the desolations of successive hurricanes, the fearful mortality among the natives, heathen and Christian, the rage of the heathen against our Missionaries and their work, *no less than five out of eight of our agents, male and female, have died within less than two years.* In fact, as to Missionary agents, our Mission is now nearly in the condition in which it was eight years ago. Indeed in some respects it is worse. It is essential to the continuance of Mr. and Mrs. Geddie in active service that they should return for a time, to recruit their exhausted energies.—It is believed that ten or twelve years of uninterrupted labour in that climate, is suffi-

cient for any man—and that he should then return to a temperate climate. By doing so for a time he may renew his strength, so as again to be able to resume his labours.—But it will soon be fifteen years since Mr. and Mrs. G. commenced their labours on Aneiteum, during which their only relaxations from constant and harassing toil, have been occasional voyages to the neighbouring islands. A regard to their health, as well as the claims of their family, imperatively requires that they should return home. But how is this to be accomplished now, with not a single brother to aid them in their work?

The reduction of our Mission to such a position by the successive visitations of our FATHER'S hand, might almost discourage us and might induce despondency or despair regarding our undertaking, did we not know that it is the work of God in which we are engaged, and were we not assured that every one of these dispensations is appointed in the wisdom of our Heavenly Father: We know that he doeth all things well. "His ways are not as our ways nor his thoughts as our thoughts." His modes of procedure are often to us utterly inscrutable. "His way is in the sea, and his path in the mighty waters, and his footsteps are not known." "How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out." But as we have confidence in his wisdom, we must believe that he has the wisest and best ends in all that he has done, and that he will make all these events, dark and adverse though they may appear, to be the means of securing some brighter manifestations of his glory—