

consist principally of translations of such passages of Scripture, as will be deemed most useful in the present stage of the mission.

PROGRESS OF CHILDREN AT SCHOOLS.

There are but few who can be got to attend our schools, but those few are by no means wanting in ability to learn. There are a few who will very soon be master of our elementary book. They appear quite delighted with the idea of reading, an idea which they never seemed fully to comprehend, until they began to read a little themselves; and we hope that as the design of reading and writing is better understood that many will be prevailed on to attend.

INDICATIONS OF IMPROVEMENT.

You will be gratified to learn that the number attending Divine service at this place has considerably increased of late and the good cause appears to be gaining ground throughout the Island. Whether there are any really converted, we are not prepared to determine, but one thing is very evident, that idolatry and superstition are breaking away. There are not a few who, when we first came to the Island, would not have dared to speak irreverently of their objects of worship, who now hold them up to scorn and ridicule; and grounds which have long been held sacred as the residence of the gods, and consequently not approached by man are now carelessly trampled over without fear. Before my sickness at the other side we were preparing timber for a small chapel. I objected to their going so far for timber when there was plenty near at hand. They said that what I alluded to was sacred to spirits and that they dare not touch it. I replied that I would commence alone. Many old men warned me of the danger I incurred, but it was resolved that I might do so if I would run the risk. I accordingly worked alone the next day and the people seeing no harm come upon me were soon prevailed on to join me in the work. When I last visited the spot the natives were digging up the wild yams, which were growing luxuriantly on ground enriched by their growth and decay on the same spot for ages.

LOW STATE OF MORALS.

But, generally speaking, it is less difficult to pull down a system than to build up one. As we become better acquainted with the habits and customs of the people, we see much to lament and deplore. Lying is so common that it is difficult to convince the people that it is an evil custom.—

Thieving, too, is very common, though we personally have not suffered much by it. The women are much abused by their husbands. They perform all the labour of cultivating the soil and preparing and cooking the food, and they are liable to be brutally beaten for the slightest offence. The natives, too, are also guilty of the inhuman practice of cannibalism. A few months ago a whaling boat was upset on a reef near the shore at the south point of this island, and four of the crew perished among the breakers. Search was made for the bodies by the foreigners here, but they were not discovered, but two of them were afterwards found by the natives and eaten.

OPPOSING INFLUENCES.

There are also influences at work at the present time, which tend to retard missionary operations. There are no less than 40 foreigners here engaged in Capt. Paddon's employ. Many of these are runaway convicts and others of the lowest character. These are freely supplied with spirituous liquor. This they barter with the natives for vegetables, &c., and it is painful to see the desire they manifest to obtain it. There have been four French Catholic missionaries here ever since we came, but, as far as we can learn, they are making little effort to make converts. This appears to be a depot where they remain to watch for openings that may occur at other places. This is at present their only station on the group. They have been frequently repulsed from New Caledonia. They have yet one station on the main land, but this is at a village where there are but twenty inhabitants. Twenty-three natives from the former station, whom they have baptized, have been removed to the new station. But, though the French are not permitted to remain among them, they are not averse to Englishmen. They have a great dislike to the French. They say we want English missionaries, not French. You will hear all important particulars by the report of the deputation, who visited them lately in the "John Williams." Since that time a sandal wood boat has been taken at Erromanga, and the five unhappy sailors cut up and distributed on the beach.

We are all enjoying a comfortable degree of health and happiness. Eliza joins me in kind love to Mrs. W. and to all those who take an interest in our work.

I remain, dear sir,

Your affectionately,

ISAAC ARCHIBALD.