

state. As our hot and rainy season is now about ended, we anticipate a change for the better. We feel that we have additional cause to thank God, whose goodness we have so largely shared in this distant land.

A severe hurricane swept over these islands in January last. The houses and plantations of the natives, in exposed places, were in a great measure destroyed by it. The large Church at this station, which stands in a conspicuous place, was slightly injured by it, but the damage was soon repaired. But I regret to add that two vessels were lost in the group,—one being driven ashore, and the other foundered at sea with all on board.

I rejoice to inform you that we continue to labor with encouragement among the natives. We indeed meet with ignorance, superstition and impiety, which cannot fail to distress us; yet, on the other hand, we see much for which we ought to thank God and take courage. The attention which many of the natives give to the means employed for their spiritual improvement encourages the hope that they are in earnest about the salvation of their souls. It is pleasing to see those who a few years ago were cruel and degraded savages, sitting at the feet of Jesus like little children.

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper was dispensed at my station last week. It was, perhaps, our most solemn and impressive season of communion on the island. About 1400 persons had assembled on the occasion. The number of church members on our roll at present is 100, exclusive of those who have gone to heathen islands as teachers. The number of persons in communion in Mr Inglis' district is between 70 and 80.—The conduct of the church members at both stations is, in general, satisfactory. Cases of backsliding are much less frequent than might have been expected among persons who have so recently been rescued from the awful abyss of heathenism, and who from their earliest years have been familiar with its abominations. Our church members, I believe, if not intelligent, are at least sincere christians.

The cause of education advances by degrees. As our teachers are but meanly qualified for their office, and as the majority of the scholars are adults, it would be unreasonable to expect rapid progress. Notwithstanding these disad-

vantages, a large number are now able to read the word of God in their own tongue. In addition to our common schools, the daily class for young men and women of promise is continued at both stations. I have been unable to attend to this class for some months on account of other duties, especially translating and attending to the press. Rather than discontinue it, Mrs Geddie has taken charge of it, and she is assisted by some of the more advanced natives, who act as monitors. Between 50 and 60 natives attend this class.

The building for our Educational Institution has been completed. It was planned by Mr Inglis, and built by the natives under his superintendance. It is an imposing house of 70 feet long by 2½ feet wide, and contains a spacious and well-fitted-up class room, with other suitable apartments. It will be opened in a few weeks, on which occasion all the teachers on the island who can attend will be present. The institution will be under Mr Inglis' direction, who is eminently qualified for so important a position. I trust that our infant institution may become a blessing to Aneiteum, and that its beneficial effects may be felt on neighboring islands. May it become a nursery for training pious and devoted teachers for the missionary work!

A very sad affair took place on this island about two months ago. In a remote inland district where the people were nearly all heathen, a woman was strangled by her own two sons, on the occasion of the death of a child of one of them. The deed was done at midnight, and the bodies of the child and grandmother were carried to the sea, and thrown into it according to the old custom. As no case of strangulation had occurred on the island for nearly four years it was supposed that the practise was entirely abolished. The whole island was thrown into a state of excitement as soon as the deed was known. The chiefs agreed to hold a meeting at the place, and punish the murderers, and Mr Inglis and I were decidedly of opinion that an act so unnatural and cruel in itself, and so outrageous to the religious principles and feelings of the almost entire population should not be overlooked; but we took a pledge from the chiefs that no injury should be done to the persons of the murderers. On the day appointed the chiefs met, but the criminals fled to the bush and hid themselves. After a