

MISSION FIELD.

MELANESIA.

The Report of the Melanesian Mission for 1887 mentions the evil resulting from the wholesale introduction of arms and ammunition which is tolerated by the French Government. England has stopped this traffic among her people, and the Queensland and Fiji Governments vigorously enforce prohibition; but outside the actual possessions of France, those who trade under the French flag may do what they like, and the result is disastrous. The traffic helps to depopulate the islands where it prevails. In Opa, men, women and children have been shot at night by their own firesides.

The "Southern Cross" is too small for the work in its present dimensions; there is barely room to accommodate the increasing staff and the want of a hold apart from the main cabin is sorely felt. It is proposed to sell her when a favorable opportunity offers.

There are now 78 schools in the Mission, with 165 teachers. The number of baptisms of adults in Florida reached 126; in the Banks' Islands, 112.

In Santa Cruz, the Bishop visited the place where Commodore Goodenough was killed, and made arrangements with the chief to put up a cross similar to that erected by Bishop Paterson at Nukapu. In Mota the schools have suffered from the Rev. G. Sarawia's illness; he was confined to his house for many weeks with rheumatism. This also interrupted the Confirmation classes on the island. In Lakona, the Rev. Maros Tamata, a native of Mota, is doing excellent work; old and young resort to him for advice, and his influence was sufficient to prevent an attack upon the boats of a labour vessel led by a man in revenge for an injury received from the traders.

At Opa, in the New Hebrides, there had been much fighting and evil practices, even to the extent of cannibalism; but the people connected with the Tavolavola school would not be drawn into them, though they were threatened with punishment by the head men. Firearms of all descriptions abound in the island, notwithstanding rules to the contrary.

In S. Barnabes' College, Norfolk Island, there are 200 pupils, the largest number yet reached. They are better taught when they first come up than heretofore. Yet the supply is still insufficient for the ever growing demand for teachers. The crops, especially the yams, suffered from the drought, and the supply of food has been a heavy drain upon the resources of the Mission. On June 21st, 1887, there was a touching farewell at the departure of Dr. Codrington, who was presented with a parting token of the boys' affection. They were keeping festival in honour of the Queen's Jubilee, but they could hardly eat for sorrow at their impending loss.

The Bishop says: "No pains which can be taken in teaching the



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boys music is thrown away. They delight in it, and readily attain to considerable proficiency on the harmonium. Our organ in Norfolk Island is always now played by a Melanesian. But alas! harmoniums are a failure in the Islands. No harmonium have we yet discovered whose constitution will stand the combined attacks of heat and damp, ants, cockroaches, and mice. Only the other day one of my teachers looked mournfully at a piece of music, and said, "What is the use of this when I have nothing to play it on?" It would be a lasting benefit to us if someone would discover a harmonium, the glue of whose bellows will not melt, and the wood of whose keys will not stick, and can be fortified against cockroaches and mice. I have found a cockroach fraternizing with B flat, and a mouse with her nest in the valve. It seems a hopeless waste of money to import harmoniums; yet the natives like them much, and we want them badly.

On the island of Santa Cruz, the Bishop was much struck by the innate courtesy of the people. Visiting them is a matter of far greater ceremony than in other islands. The day is fixed beforehand, and when you arrive, you are ushered into the Mandai or club house, where a clean mat is spread for

you in the place of honor, outside of which the people sit. Then ensues an exchange of betel nuts, which is a very funny custom. All the home people dive into their bags and produce betel nuts which they throw to their visitors, who gravely return them. After a while the leading men slip out, and presently you find yourself sitting in the midst of a pile of mats, bags, coconuts, betel nuts, &c. These you gravely accept, and make a few presents in exchange. The multitude of small mats obtained in this way was rather embarrassing at first; but we find out that they were great items in the dowry given for wives; so we had a means of disposing of them to our boys as a nest egg for future matrimony.

The Rev. T. C. Cullwick's report is full of curious incidents and descriptions; at one place he was conducted through a Salagoro. This is a road where women, boys, and the uninitiated are not allowed to go. The right of way is acquired for pigs and money. The one about to be initiated has to keep a fire lit for 100 days in the Salagoro. To see that he conforms to the rules six men are told off, who spend the amount charged for admission out of their own pockets, and when this is spent, the initiated one reimburses them, and is allowed a certain amount of liberty till the

expiration of the 100 days. The tradition of the Salagoro appears to be that in the old days a man, who was some distance away, heard a great voice which he found proceeded from a place where a woman was making money with the leaf of a tree to shade her from the sun; he drove the woman away, took away the leaf, and stuck it up to mark the spot. This seems to have appeased the injured Tamate, the noise ceased, and this place remained consecrated ever afterwards as the abode of the spirit.



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