

Negone, four chapters of which had been translated by Mr Nihill before his death, and Mr Supdelaud, with the assistance of the teachers and natives, is endeavouring to keep up with the press; eight chapters are already translated, and I have no doubt the rest will be forthcoming as the press requires them. You will thus learn that we enjoy peculiar advantages with respect to the language of this people. I hope we may be ever found improving them, and studying to turn every rivulet into the broad channel of usefulness. However, the language is by no means easy as appears to be the case more or less with most of the dialects of Western Polynesia. A knowledge of the Eastern dialects appears to be no help whatever to the obtaining of these, except at first by communicating with the Native Teachers from the Eastern groups. The pronunciation is very much more harsh, consonants are more abundant, and double consonants nasals and gutturals—unknown in the Eastern dialects—are more or less abundant than those of the Western; consequently we find the Native Teachers a long time before they can master the language, and indeed they can never pronounce it, but by long practice they become accustomed to its peculiarities, and the natives to their brogue, and hence they are generally intelligible.

“In speaking of my engagements at this station, the language of course has claimed the first attention; without a thorough devotion to this there can be neither pleasure nor satisfaction afforded by communicating with the natives. And—what is of far greater moment—the Gospel, with all its wondrous and life-giving truths, cannot be correctly presented to their minds; hence they are in danger of entertaining erroneous views of their Creator, of the relation they sustain to Him both as creatures and rebels, of the gracious reconciliation he is ever so ready to effect through our Lord Jesus Christ, and of eternal life through belief in his name.

“Though I had much to do—and still have, in the shape of manual labour (there being no Raratonga teachers to help me at this station)—I was able to commence preaching within two months after our arrival in this island. I first took alternate Sabbaths with the teachers, and sometimes a week-day service. After a residence of six months among the people I commenced preaching ex-

tempore, and soon found myself adequate to a sermon every Sabbath, besides an address on Fridays.

“Anxious to secure the children as much as possible from acquiring any of the heathen tendencies still remaining among the people, Mrs Jones, together with myself, have organised a day school in addition to one on Sabbaths. I take a mixed school of boys, girls, and young men, daily at sunrise, to impart instruction in reading. The mornings I devote to translations and other engagements: in the afternoon Mrs Jones teaches the girls sewing and reading, and I devote the afternoon to teaching the boys in writing; but at present our efforts are very much retarded, having scarcely any slates. We muster only ten, inclusive of pieces, and the only plan which we can adopt here is, to write upon the forms by means of sand. The island produces no stones except coral, and these cannot be substituted for slates as were the stones of Raratonga, related by the Rev John Williams.

“I have made a large black board (unvarnished), which helps to supply our great lack of books suitable for a school. I could make more smaller ones to serve as substitutes for slates, but I have only one lump of chalk, which I must use very carefully lest my large board become silent. How acceptable now would be that box of school material from the British and Foreign School Society which we had hoped would have reached Sydney before ourselves, but of which we have heard nothing since we left England. The number of boys down in the school book is 155, of girls 112.—Many others attend occasionally. The general attendance at school is very fluctuating, owing to their engagements in the bush; this, too, is their harvest season, so that we cannot form a proper estimate of the attendance.

“I think, with a good supply of slates and school materials, we could command almost any number; but they have a deep impression that the sand is far inferior to the slates.

“The people attend all the services in great numbers. Their behaviour, while in the house of God is very respectful and sedate, and their attention very fixed while listening to the good news of the Saviour's love. On Sabbaths the chapel is densely crowded, many unable to obtain seats sit upon the ground; but we know, with all our efforts to teach