

in the sea by the action of volcanoes. There is evidence that, at some time or other, they have all been under water; for on the tops of the highest mountains yet reached, corals, shells and other marine substances, are found. You may think what a heaving there must have been below to raise up these hills; what earthquakes to rend them asunder; and then, perhaps, what burning and boiling on the island for ages, till the volcanoes had cooled down, or burned out their fire, and left the place fit for man to live on. Then, following the volcanic in order of beauty, are the crystalure islands. These are thought to have been at one time coral, but being upheaved by some great convulsion to from 100 to 500 feet as they now stand above the level of the sea, and thus exposed to the action of air, and light, and sea, for many ages, the rocks have become hard and bright, and are now crystalized carbonate of lime. These islands are not so magnificent as these above named, but extremely beautiful, and though less rugged, are even more clothed with a fine and luxuriant vegetation than those with loftier and more broken hills.

Still lower than these, only a few feet above the level of the sea, are the far-famed coral islands. These are often small, and always flat and low. The soil on them is very thin, and the vegetation in general less luxuriant, though some of them are very fertile and beautiful. These islands are universally believed to be the work of the little coral insects, which, beginning their labours far down in the sea, have toiled on with constant perseverance, adding particle to particle of the lime they gathered from the surrounding sea, till they had piled up a wall of many hundred feet in height, and reached the surface of the ocean. There their work has ceased, and the rolling waves have done the rest to finish the island for the residence of man. Sand, rubbish, trees, sea-weed, and other matters, have gradually been washed upon the island, so forming a

sort of soil on its surface in which trees and plants might grow. Seeds have been dropped by birds, or brought by the sea, and by and by the island has been covered with lovely shrubs and trees.

Such are the gems of the ocean. Fancy yourself as placed like a bird in the air, high up above the lofty hills of the island of Upolu; and now look far and wide upon the sea, spreading out on every hand. Just below you is the Samoan group, with Savai Upolu, Tuituila, and others of the volcanic class. Some hundreds of miles to the south-east are seen the Hervey islands, one of the largest of which is Aitutaki. Far to the east of these again are the Society islands, the chief of which is the ill-used but ever deeply interesting island of Tahiti, and beside it the lovely little Eimeo. East of these you see the Dangerous Archipelago, studded with little islands; and on, far to the north of these, the Marquesas group. Looking due north—far as the eye can reach you catch a glimpse of the Sandwich islands, where Hawaii, the largest is still burning and boiling away. On to the west and north-west, innumerable islands are to be seen; and coming nearer, and close at hand, are the New Hebrides, the Figii, the Friendly, and other groups. All these islands are more or less filled with people. Many of them are yet covered with pagan darkness, but about 200 have now been claimed for Christ; and from their lovely groves, sweet songs and holy prayers go up daily to His throne, the delightful earnest of *all* being some day converted by his love.

Joys and Sorrows of Sunday-School Life.

At the opening and reorganization of our school on this charge, it may not be inappropriate to let the friends of the good cause know something of our school, its success the past year, our number this year, and our prospects for the future.

Our number, as I have it from the superintendent, is about one hundred