

THE CALL.

How long the time since Christ began
To call in vain on me!
Deaf to his warning voice, I ran
Through paths of vanity.

He called me, when my thoughtless prime
Was early ripe to ill;
I passed from folly on to crime,
And yet He called me still.

He called me in the hour of dread,
When death was full in view;
I trembled on my feverish bed,
And rose to sin anew.

Yet could I hear Him once again
As I have heard of old,
Methinks He should not call in vain
His wanderer to the fold.

O Thou, that every thought dost know,
And answerest every prayer!
Try me with sickness, want, or woe,
But snatch me from despair.

My struggling will by grace control,
Renew my broken vow:
—What blessed light breaks on my soul!
My God! I hear Thee now.

Bishop Heber.

A NARRATIVE OF MISSIONARY ENTERPRISES IN THE SOUTH SEA ISLANDS.*

By John Williams, of the London Missionary Society.

We give below some extracts from this interesting work. The following paragraphs convey a general idea of what has been done and what remains to be done for the evangelization of those extensive and populous Islands:—

Notwithstanding all that has been effected in the Tahitian and Society Islands, in transforming their barbarous, indolent, and idolatrous inhabitants into a comparatively civilized, industrious, and christian people, I never considered this group alone as worthy the lives and labours of the number of Missionaries who have been employed there. It is only by viewing the Tahitian Mission, as a fountain from whence the streams of salvation are to flow to the numerous islands and clusters scattered over that extensive ocean, that we can perceive it to be worthy of the importance that has been attached to it, or of the labour and expense which the London Missionary Society has bestowed on it. To this Mission, however, considered in its relation to other islands, too much importance cannot be attached; for, in addition to the numerous islands now professedly Christian, there are, within a comparatively small distance, many large and extensive groups of which little is known. Among these are the Fiji, the New Hebrides, New Caledonia, Solomon's Archipelago, New Britain, New Ireland, and, above all, the immense island of New Guinea. This island is said to be 1200 miles in length, and in some parts, about 300 in breadth. It is reported to be a most beautiful island, rich in all the productions of a tropical climate, inhabited by several millions of immortal beings suffering all the terrific miseries of a barbarous state, and dying without a knowledge of God, or the Gospel of his Son. The Fiji is an extensive group, said to comprise from 100 to 200 islands, which vary in size from five to 500 miles in circumference—all teeming with inhabitants, in the most degraded and wretched state of barbarism.

These various islands and clusters are inhabited by distinct tribes, diverse from each other in appearance and habits; but principally by those of the negro race. They are men of immense stature, with black complexion, spreading noses, and curly hair; decidedly distinct from those inhabiting all the islands to the eastward, who are distinguished by their light copper colour, Malay countenance, and straight hair. I sincerely hope that the London, or some other Missionary Society, or the Societies unitedly, will adopt some effective measures, by which these extensive and inviting fields may be brought under

* This work is for sale at the book store of Mr. C. H. Belcher, Halifax

moral culture. It will, no doubt, be attended with much danger, as some of the inhabitants are cannibals of the worst character; others of ferocious habits and cruel practices, using poisoned arrows, and poisoning the very food they bring to sell, and even the water which is taken from their shores; whilst others are mild in their manner, and kind in their treatment of strangers.

The adventurous trader, however, braves all these dangers: and shall the devoted Missionary of the Cross, whose objects infinitely surpass in importance that of the merchant, and who professes to be influenced by motives of a higher order, be afraid to face them? Has he not the arm of Omnipotence for his protection, and the promises of a faithful God for his encouragement?

The places to which the Gospel has already been conveyed, from the Tahitian and Society Islands, are the Sandwich Island group, 3000 miles to the north of Tahiti, inhabited by a population of 150,000 souls;—the Austral Islands, a group of 400 miles to the south;—the Paumotu, the Gambier, and the Marquesan, to the eastward;—together with the Hervey, the Navigator's, and the Friendly Islands, to the eastward. These various groups are inhabited by a population, little short, I think, of 300,000 persons; the greater part of whom have abandoned idolatry, with all its barbarous practices, its horrid rites, and superstitious customs. Their sanguinary wars have ceased; the altars of their gods are not now stained with the blood of human beings, offered up in sacrifice; and mothers have ceased to destroy their innocent babes. Captain Cook and his scientific associates little thought, when observing the transit of the star, that in a few short years the island on which he stood would itself shine resplendent, like a bright speck in the ocean, whence the light of salvation was to diverge in all directions over that mighty mass of waters.—Pp. 6—9.

After eulogizing the efforts and giving some details respecting the lives of the South Sea Missionaries, such as Captain Wilson, Messrs. Henry, Nott, Davies, &c., we meet with the remark,—

From that time to this (scarcely forty years) one rapid series of successes has attended our labours, so that island after island, and group after group, have, in rapid succession, been brought under the influence of the Gospel: so much so, indeed, that, at the present time, we do not know of any group, or any single island of importance, within 2000 miles of Tahiti, in any direction, to which the glad tidings of salvation have not been conveyed.

Thus it will be seen (says Mr. Williams,) that God was "not unrighteous, to forget their work of faith and labour of love." The fathers of our Society had cast themselves, in the "confidence of hope," upon the promises and faithfulness of God; and it is not in accordance with the one or the other that, having sown bountifully, they should reap sparingly. My earnest desire is that the mighty work may go on with equal rapidity, so that within a few years every island in the Pacific, even to New Guinea itself, may be elevated from its moral degradation, and made to participate in the blessings of the Gospel. Nor am I devoid of the cheering hope that I also may be an instrument in accelerating this great work.—P. 15

To facilitate this object, the author in his first voyage, and now again in the second just commenced, undertook his Missionary labours; and as it may be useful to learn what was their immediate sphere, we take his account of certain of the groups of islands, of which he has made mention.

This Island of Raiatea, the largest and most central of the Society Islands, about 100 miles from Tahiti, has been the immediate scene of my labours since I joined the Mission, in 1817; but, as much information has been given, in various ways, respecting the Tahitian and Society Islands, I shall say little about them.

The two groups, about which the following pages contain much information, are, first, the Hervey; and, secondly, the Samoa, or Navigator's Islands; both of which are new fields of Missionary labour.

The Hervey Islands are seven in number—Mauke, Mitiaro and Atiu, Mangaia, and Rarotonga, Hervey's

island and Aitutaki. They are from 500 to 1000 miles west of Tahiti. Very little was known of them until they were visited by myself and colleague, Mr. Bourne, in 1823. To prevent the interruption of the narrative, and to render the sequel more intelligible, I shall give a short description of each island, with its position, size, and population.

Hervey's Island, from which the group takes its name, is really composed of two small islets, 18 m. S., 158 d. 54 m. W. long. It was discovered by Captain Cook, and by him named, in honour of Captain Hervey, R. N., one of the Lords of the Admiralty, and afterwards Earl of Bristol. It is surrounded by a reef, into which there is no entrance. I visited it in 1823, intending to place a native teacher there, as I expected to find a considerable population; but on learning that, by their frequent exterminating wars, they had reduced themselves to about sixty in number, I did not fulfil my intention. Some six or seven years after this, I visited the island again, and found that this miserable remnant of the former population had fought so frequently and so desperately, that the only survivors were five men, three women, and a few children; and that period there was a contention among them as to which should be king.

Mauke is a small low island, discovered by myself and Mr. Bourne, in 1823, in lat. 20 d. S., 157 d. 20 m. W. long. It is about fifteen miles in circumference. By an invasion of a large fleet of canoes laden with warriors, from a neighbouring island, about three years prior to our arrival, the population, previously considerable, was by the dreadful massacre that ensued, reduced to about 300.

Mitiaro is a still smaller island, of the same description. It lies about twenty miles north-west of Mauke. By famine and invasion this island has likewise been almost depopulated; there not being 10 persons remaining.

Atiu is a larger island, than either Mauke or Mitiaro. It was discovered by Captain Cook, and is situated 20 d. S., 150 d. 15 m. W. It is about twenty miles in circumference; not mountainous, but hilly, and a beautiful verdant spot. We found the inhabitants something under 2,000. Captain Cook called it Wateoo.

Mangaia was also discovered by Captain Cook, and is situated lat. 21 d. 57 m. S., 158 d. 7 m. long. It is being about 120 miles south of Atiu. Mangaia is about twenty or five-and-twenty miles in circumference, and moderately high. The island is rather singular in its form and appearance; a broad ridge girdling the hills, at about 100 feet from their base. The foliage is rich; the population between 2,000 and 3,000. These four islands differ from the Society Islands in the very important feature, that the surrounding reef joins the shore: there is consequently neither passage for boats, nor any safe anchorage for vessels.

The sixth and most important island of the group is Rarotonga. This splendid island escaped the wandering researches of Captain Cook, and was discovered by myself, in 1823. It is a mass of mountains, which are high, and present a remarkably romantic appearance. It is situated lat. 21 d. 20 m. S., 160 d. 10 m. W. long. It has several good boat harbours, is about thirty miles in circumference, and is surrounded by a reef. The population is about 6,000 or 7,000.

The seventh and last island is Aitutaki, which was discovered by Captain Cook. Like most of its companions in the group, its landscapes are rich and variegated; it is hilly rather than mountainous, and surrounded by a reef, which extends a very considerable distance from the shore. There is a good entrance for a boat on the west side of the island. It is about eighteen miles in circumference, and has a population of about 2000 persons. The situation is 18 d. 54 m. S., lat., 153 d. 41 m. W. long.

By this brief description of the Hervey Islands, the reader will be enabled, as we proceed, to refer to this mind to the relative importance of each island; he will also perceive that the whole group contains a population of from 14,000 to 16,000 persons.—Pp. 16—9.—Chr. Remembrancer.

To be continued.