

Modern Miracles.

THE FIJI ISLANDS.—THE PAST AND PRESENT.

THERE is no more powerful testimony to the effect of modern missions than in the marvellous change wrought in the Fiji Islands under the auspices of the Wesleyan Miss. Society. The name "Fiji" was synonymous with every cruelty and abomination. Cannibalism was indulged in constantly. Sick and aged relatives were killed—often buried alive. Widows were not allowed to survive the death of their husbands. Slaves were killed to accompany their master to the regions beyond, and though there was a certain politeness and courtesy—there was a perversity that was not practised. Now all is changed. One writing in these olden times—not so remote either, but within the memory of any living, says:

"It is a startling, but incontestable fact, that in Fiji there exists a general system of parricide, which ranks, too, in all respects, as a social institution.

If sick persons have no friends they are simply left to perish. Should they be among friends they are cared for until they become troublesome, then, through weakness, offensive; whereupon they are generally put out of the way. . . . The death of the patient being once determined, any appeal on his part is useless.

A DREADFUL SCENE.

"Ratu Varani" spoke of one among many whom he had caused to be buried alive. She had been sick for a long time, and the chief, thinking her likely to remain so, had a grave dug. The anxiety of the poor girl was excited by loud reclamations, as though something extraordinary had appeared, and, on stepping out of the house, she was seized and thrown into her grave. In vain she shrieked with horror, and cried out, 'Do not bury me, I am quite well now.' Two men kept her down, while others drew the soil in upon her, until she was heard no more.

Human bodies are sometimes eaten in connection with the building of a temple or canoe, on launching a large canoe, or on taking down the mast of one which has brought some chief a visit, or for the feasting of such as take tribute to a principal place. A chief has been known to kill several men for rollers, to facilitate the launching of his canoes, the 'rollers' being afterwards cooked and eaten. A chief would kill a man or men on laying down a keel for a new canoe, and try to add one for each fresh plank. These were always eaten as food for the carpenters. It was common to murder men in order to wash the deck of a new canoe with blood. The men used as rollers were often not killed before, but crushed to death."

MISSION COMMENCED IN 1835.

The mission was commenced early in 1835. The Rev. William Cross and the Rev. David Cargill, A. M., were appointed to commence the new mission. Mr. Cross had been eight years, and Mr. Cargill two, in the Friendly Islands. With their wives and their little ones they sailed at Vavau for an opportunity of proceeding to the new scene of labour. While here they began to learn the language. An alphabet was at the same time fixed, and at the Tonga press a "First Book" in Fijian, of four pages, was printed. The captain of a schooner calling in at Vavau had agreed to take the missionary party to Fiji, and the two families embarked on the 10th of October, 1835, and reached Lakemba on the 12th of that month. Mr. Cross, at the close of 1837, went to Mbau, a small islet scarcely

separated from the coast of the great island of Na Viti Lera.

In April, 1838, the Rev. John Hunt, T. J. Jaggar, and James Calvert, with their wives, sailed from England, and in the following December landed at Lakemba. Fiji was now made a separate district, with the Rev. David Cargill for its chairman.

Mr. Hunt, at the request of the district meeting went to Rewa to relieve Mr. Cross, but Mr. Cross remained with him. Scenes too horrible to be described, too full of fiendish cruelty to be imagined by anyone who had not witnessed them, were constantly taking place within a short distance of the missionaries: while every vice was committed, and every form of suffering endured, by the people among whom they lived. Cannibalism soon lost its dreadful novelty, and began to be regarded as a matter of course. Yet the great converting work was going on, and the servants of God, in all their toil and danger, knew that they had kindled in Fiji a light which should never be put out.

In July, 1839, Mr. Hunt was removed from Rewa, and, accompanied by Mr. Lyth, went to Somosomo. What the missionaries and their families suffered there will never be fully known. Much which became dreadfully familiar to them by daily occurrence could not be recorded.

A CANNIBAL FEAST.

Take one scene. On Feb. 7, 1840, Mr. Hunt wrote: "Last Monday afternoon, as soon as our class-meeting was over, a report came that some dead men were being brought here from Lauthala. The report was so new and so indefinite that at first we did not know what to make of it. Almost before we had time to think, the men were laid on the ground before our house, and chiefs, and priests, and people, met to divide them to be eaten. They brought eleven to our settlement; and it is not certain how many have been killed, but some say two or three hundred, others not more than thirty. Their crime appears to be that of killing one man, and when the man who did it came to beg pardon, the chief required this massacre to be made as a recompense. The principal chief was killed, and given to the great Ndengel of Somosomo. I saw him after he was cut up and laid upon the fire, to be cooked for the cannibal god of Somosomo.

O! shame to human nature! I think there are some of the devil even that must be ashamed of their servants eating human flesh. The manner in which the poor wretches were treated was most shameful and disgusting. When they took them away to be cooked they dragged them on the ground: one had a rope round his neck, and the others took him by the hands and feet. They have been very strange with us ever since. . . . Here we rest. *God is ours in Christ, ours if we live, ours if we die, ours in all respects, our Father and our Lord!*"

THEIR LIVES IN THEIR HANDS.

Every day the position of the missionaries became more trying and dangerous. The ovens in which the human bodies were cooked were very near their dwelling; and, when cannibal feasts were held, the blinds were closed to shut out the revolting scene. But this greatly offended the natives. These bold and faithful servants of God were now plainly told that their lives were in danger, and would soon be at an end.

One day Tuikilakila, the king's son, club in hand, came in a fury to kill Mr. Lyth. He seized Mr. Hunt with the one hand, and Mr. Lyth with the other. Mr. Hunt begged him to be calm, and after considerable entreaty, succeeded in cooling him down. Threats were