

Feb. 1.—Yesterday was the festival of escorting the gods to heaven. This is done by cracker-firing, burning gilt paper, incense-offering, and candle-burning. It always happens on the 24th of the last month in their year, and answers in time to our Christmas, being a week before their New-Year. The terrestrial, or the gods that are on the earth, go up to heaven, and the celestial, that is, those that are in heaven, come down to the earth; and this change of places is made, as they believe, that the gods who have been on the earth may tell the "Great Spirit" what they have been doing through the year, and the treatment they have received. The celestial gods, or those who come down from heaven, are to comfort and rejoice the people during the festivities of the new year.

TUPE OF RARATONGA.

Far away in the southern part of the world, in the midst of wide seas, many beautiful little islands are found. Their shores are lined with coral rocks; over the valleys the bread-fruit, cocoa-nut, and palm-trees, spread their boughs; and around the high mountains, vast numbers of most beautiful birds are seen flying, with their golden, green, and purple wings. These pleasant little spots are called the South Sea Islands. The people who live in them were once all idolaters; but the word of salvation has been carried to them, and many are now Christians.

Tupe was a chief in an island called Raratonga. Before the Missionaries went to his land he was active in the service of vain idols; but when he heard the Gospel he believed it, threw away his false gods, and worked hard to build the first house of the Lord that was raised where he lived.

There were some who did not love Tupe, because he left the worship of the idols, and they set fire to his house when he was asleep. His house was burned down; but God watched over him, and saved him. The fire caught the chapel, which was next door to Tupe's house, and that was also destroyed. "O Teacher," he said, "the book of God is consumed! My house, my property, never regard; but oh, my book! my book! and oh, the house of God?"

The next morning he called a meeting of the chiefs. "See," said he, "the house of God in ruins! what shall we do?" "Build it again," they replied. "Yes, friends, that very good; when shall we begin?" "To-morrow," they cheerfully added. "Teacher," he said to the Missionary, "be not cast down; let them burn, we will build; we will tire them out; but, teacher, do not leave this wicked place." At sun-rise the next morning, Tupe and his friends were seen with their axes on their shoulders, on their way to the mountains, to cut wood to build another chapel.