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"SPEAK UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, THAT THEY GO FORWARD."—*Exodus xiv., 16.*

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## Religious Intelligence.

### AUSTRALIA.

#### VISIT OF THE REV. MR. HAMILTON TO AN ENCAMPMENT OF THE NATIVES.

*Native Encampment.*—I should have stated that when at Ballarat I visited an encampment of natives in the neighbourhood, and endeavoured to communicate some ideas on religious subjects, in as simple a form as possible. I could not be satisfied, however, that I was at all successful. Their knowledge of the English was by far too scanty to allow their receiving easily any religious impressions. After attempting to convey some simple ideas respecting God and the sending of his Son into the world, they pointed with the fingers to their ear, with the discouraging remark, "me stoopd" (stupid), intimating they did not understand. They seem not altogether without religious ideas of some kind. From their inability to express themselves freely in what is to them a foreign tongue, it is difficult to ascertain correctly the amount of their religious notions, and even then it is equally difficult to determine how far these may be original, and how far derived from intercourse with Christian settlers, who in some cases have taken pains to teach them the word of God. They have evidently an idea of a hereafter, and this seems to be general among them. They imagine, "when black man die, he go up to live with white man, and soon turn into white man and get plenty good." They have a heathenish dance which they call "corroborree," which is evidently associated with religious ideas. On the occasion of "corroborree," a great many assemble at the now moon, and with the help of a blazing fire, engage in a barbarous dance, using the most extravagant and fantastic gesticulations, while some of the women hum the notes of some rude music, and beat time with their hands. The scene is wild and dismal in the extreme; and, whether the idea is general I know not, but some of them imagine that their departed friends return and share in their sport.

The Australian natives have been an exceedingly neglected race. I do not mean that no efforts have been used for their conversion. Missionaries have laboured amongst them in all the colonies, but from all accounts with very little success. It is said that missionary labours are being bestowed upon the natives in South Australia, but with what success I am not able to say. At present there are no special missionary efforts being put forth in Victoria, that I am aware of, in behalf of the miserable natives. The Buntingdale missionary station has been broken up, and without having effected any substantial good amongst them. I believe it to be an ascertained fact that all the secular education which can be imparted, has no effect in thoroughly reclaiming them from savage life. I have not heard of a single instance of genuine conversion having been effected among them. Some of the older colonists from Sydney affirm that there have been very few, if any, real decided cases of a change of heart through the power of the Gospel. Is it not a matter of lamentation that a race of immortal beings like ourselves, lying prostrate in the ruins of the fall, and capable of elevation to the dignity of becoming the children of God, should have been brought into intimate connection for more than sixty years with professed British Christians, and yet that they should never have felt, to any extent worth mentioning, the influence of the regenerating, transforming, and ennobling principles of the

word of God? Instead of this, here they are as a race in all their savage manners and habits as we originally found them when we first landed on their shores. They still wander about in indolence and filthiness, with no other covering than the opprobrious skin or dirty blanket, excepting instances of European dress wholly or in part, which, while the manners are unchanged, only serve to caricature their persons. One has only to look to their features to be convinced that they are capable of rising in the scale of civilization, and of receiving the sanctifying influence of the Gospel equally with other savage tribes who now "know the joyful sound." To appearance, they are possessed naturally of much higher intellectual powers than the negro race. Characterized by similar dark complexion, but without the woolly hair, a thick lips, flat nose, and retiring forehead, many of them have as fine intellectual countenances as may be seen among Europeans, and with good reason might be supposed capable of rising, through proper training, to the highest intellectual eminence, and through the Gospel, to the condition and character of saints. Why is it that no section of the Christian church has ever caused its sympathies to flow forth on behalf of this degraded race, promoting to such decided and persevering missionary labours among them as those of the distinguished Moffat, of a Brainerd, or a Martin? Instead of this, they have been shot like wild dogs, hunted down to death as a nuisance, taught the art of self-destruction by means of intoxicating drinks, subjected to destructive maladies which were unknown till the white man came,—and wasted by a combination of fatal instrumentalities to so great an extent that they promise speedily to become extinct. We rob them, at least take from them, their rich agricultural lands, their unlimited pastures for flocks and herds, their splendid mineral treasures, and their boundless gold fields, and confer upon them in return a few buttons and blankets, with the speedy prospect of annihilation.—*Ms. Record.*

### MADAGASCAR.

Bright and hopeful prospects are now opening anew for this island. The tidings are now confirmed of the death of the late prime minister, under whose baleful influence the reigning queen had been for so many years the persecutor unto death of many native converts, and would have exterminated, had a holy Providence permitted her, Christianity from the country. Her late husband, Radama, had, from the establishment of the mission in 1817, proved its active and faithful friend; but was spared to be its protector only eight years. Until 1835, the reigning queen, who succeeded to the government at his death, concealed or avowed her hostility to the religion of Jesus, as policy for the time recommended; but in March of that year the fatal edict was issued, by which the people were forbidden to profess Christianity, under pain of death, and the missionaries compelled soon after to leave the island. During the fifteen years of their residence, nearly 100 schools had been established, containing 4000 scholars; and more than 10,000 children in all had received in them the elements of useful instruction and religious truth. Elementary books were provided; and many of the principal scholars directed their attention to the English language, and became familiar with the English Scriptures. Two large congregations were formed at the capital; and nearly 200 persons were admitted to the church fellowship. Preaching stations were established in several towns and villages; and many week day services were held at the dwellings of the native Christians. Two printing presses were in constant operation; and, besides school-books, not fewer than 25,000 tracts were printed and put in circulation. A dictionary of the language also was prepared, and printed in two volumes. But, above all, the whole of the Scriptures had been translated, corrected, and printed, in the native language—a language first reduced to a written form by the missionaries. All this holy work was brought to a stand in 1835—the schools shut up—the congregations dispersed—religions ordinances, and even the possession of the Scriptures prohibited; and the missionaries compelled to quit the field of so much fruitful labor and sanguine hope. Then followed the fierce persecution, by which hundreds were degraded, hundreds reduced to slavery, and forty to fifty consigned to various cruel deaths. But during the reign of terror, the spread of the faith of Jesus, instead of being checked, increased; so that no less than 5000, and probably more, have studied the Scriptures, observed the Christian Sabbath; and in the mountains and caves of Madagascar, have