

at all obvious, since, according to Ains worth, *Tridacna* or *ostrea tridacna* means shells that can be eaten at three bites, it must have been by some of the giants who warred against Jupiter, and who heaved up Ossa on the top of Pelion, and compared to whom Goliath must have been a pigny; or by some of the less fabulous *megatheria* which basked in the sun, and disported themselves in the deltas, during the far remote palæozoic ages recorded in the chronicles of geology. These two shells, which are mates, are each four feet long, two feet seven inches broad, and nine inches thick at the umbo. I have not the means of weighing them; but each of them is as much as two men can with some difficulty lift up from the ground. Some time ago, I found a single shell of the same species nearly, but not quite so large; and there are some others which I have not seen, but of whose existence the natives have informed me, and which are imbedded in the sand or adhering to the rocks. Small bivalves—that is, small compared with these—either of the same or of a similar species, from six inches to twelve or fifteen inches long, are found alive, adhering to the reefs in great numbers; but no live specimen of this large size has been seen on this island even by the oldest natives. The native name of these shells is *nippineri*; but this one which I have obtained, was worshipped as a *natmus*, or god, in the days of heathenism, by the name of *Neelhuig*. From time immemorial the upper part of this shell was seen above the stones and mud in the channel of the stream: and when the natives were feeding pigs for feasts, before giving the food to the animals, they laid it upon this shell, in the belief that, by doing so, virtue would proceed from the *natmas* to make the pigs large and fat. When they were about to plant taro, they laid their *niraks*, the sticks with which they dig the ground, on the shell, in the belief that, by doing so, they would secure an excellent crop of taro. Every undertaking on this island seems to have been preceded by an act of homage to some *natmas*. Like the Athenians, in their own way, they were “very religious;” and here, as in Athens, it was easier to find a god than a man. How these shells came to be in such a place, and how long they had remained there, no one knows. But time’s destroying

fingers, by the agency of the elements and the help of accidents, have left their impress on them both; the edges are chipped, and the enamel is corroded and they have not that smooth and white appearance which they must have had when the animal was alive, and had not yet enjoyed the honours of “an apotheosis and rites divine.”

The prospects of the mission, I am happy to say, still continue highly encouraging. The prayers of the Church on our behalf are, I trust, being heard and answered. Oh that earnest believing prayer may be continued and increased in behalf both of the missionaries and the mission! The four gospels and the Acts of the Apostles are now printed. Genesis is translated; and also several of the Epistles. Education is advancing favourably. I am just about to conclude the second session of the Teacher’s Institution. I teach four hours daily—an hour in the morning, from six till seven, in the Normal School, which has been attended this year by 170; two hours in the afternoon in the Institution; and an hour in the evening, four days in the week, with a Bible class, attended by about fifty. The pupils attending the Institution are divided into two classes. The senior class contains fifty; they meet the first hour, and are taught writing on paper and arithmetic: The attendance upon this class is very regular. During the second hour I teach both classes. This hour is occupied with reading, spelling, writing on slates, arithmetic, geography, &c. The number in the junior class is about one hundred, but their attendance is less regular, and varies from fifty to eighty. They are making very creditable progress in writing. In arithmetic their progress is slower. In no branch of human knowledge were the natives of this island more deficient than in arithmetic. Their ordinal numbers extended only to three, viz. first, middle and last; their cardinal numbers, one, two, &c. only to five; up to ten, it was five and one, five and two, &c. In counting any number they invariably ran over their fingers till they came to five, and then held up one hand, saying, “my hand,” that is, five; they ran over the fingers of the other hand, saying, “a hand and one,” “a hand and two,” till they came to ten, when they held them both up, and exclaimed, “my two hands,” that is,