

which it is possible to estimate the prospects of the missionary enterprise, and the grandeur of the results which its success must yield. The gains which have been in some instances already secured may be trusted to guide us in forming our expectations for the future.

In 1778, in the Southern Pacific, not far from the equator, lie the Sandwich Islands—a members of a vast insular family which stretches five thousand miles from north to south. The existence of these islands was made known to Europe by Captain Cook, who himself perished here, murdered by the natives. Every advantage of soil and climate has been bestowed upon them. The grove of bread-fruit trees around the villages is itself a sufficient maintenance for the population. The coconut tree yields food and drink; its bark can be converted into clothing; from its leaves the natives manufacture baskets and fishing-lines, and obtain thatch for their houses. The sugar-cane, the cotton and coffee plants grow almost without human care. Many trees yield valuable dyes and gums. Fish swarm on the coasts. Nature in her most bounteous mood has profusely endowed these lovely islands with the elements of material welfare.

But the inhabitants had sunk to the lowest depth of degradation. They fed on raw fish and the flesh of dogs. They had found among the products of their soil a narcotic root which readily produced intoxication, and they used it to excess. Human sacrifices were frequent. The family relation was unknown. Licentiousness was without limit or restraint of shame. Two thirds of the children born were strangled or buried alive by their parents. So given to stealing were the natives that expert divers endangered Captain Cook's ships by carrying off the nails which fastened the sheathing to the timbers. Population was rapidly diminishing under the wasting influence of the vices which prevailed.

After some years of intercourse with foreigners the islanders became dissatisfied with their religion. At the suggestion of one of their kings they suddenly rebelled against the gods. The images were cast into the sea; the temples were demolished; human sacrifices ceased; the priests who adhered to the discarded system were slain. The old faith was overthrown; but nothing came in its room. The nation left itself wholly without a religion.

In 1819, while this revolution was in progress, there sailed from Boston a small missionary party, intent upon Christianizing the Sandwich Islands. The king, an amiable but drunken young man, received them with kindness. The missionaries quickly acquired the language and began to preach. The king and his court were persuaded to take lessons in reading and writing. The chief people favored the new religion, and followed the royal example in seeking to possess a little education. The influence of the missionaries steadily increased. In a few years the observance of the Sabbath was enjoined by law; applications for baptism were received; and one of the great chiefs, an old man who had spent his days in war, died professing Christianity. Gradually, as the missionaries were reinforced from home, churches and schools were built, and the whole population were under the influence of Christian teaching. In course of years Christian marriage was adopted; a temperance society was formed; and one third of the people were attending school.

Christianity made its way steadily, until in twenty years it had become the accepted faith of the nation. The deeply ingrained vices of the old days were hard to conquer, and many disappointing falls grieved the missionaries. But upon the whole the progress in virtue kept pace with the progress in faith. The people became quiet, orderly, industrious. From among themselves an adequate