

HOW THE GOSPEL CAME TO ONO.

The former character of the inhabitants of the Fiji Islands is too well known to need any extended description. Cannibalism was a part of their religion, and to one of their gods



CANNIBAL FORKS.

every basket of roots offered was accompanied by a human body. The chiefs sometimes killed their inferior wives to supply this horrible demand.

On Ono, one of the smaller islands of this group, it is particularly interesting to note the first beginnings of the true religion. This island is 150 miles from that of Lakemba, to which it is tributary. In 1835 it was visited by an epidemic, which so diminished their numbers as greatly to alarm the people. They made large offerings of food and property to their gods, and practised their religious rites with the greatest zeal, but all their efforts to stay the ravages of disease were unavailing. Just at this time one of the chiefs, Wai, went to Lakemba to carry the customary tribute, and while there met a chief who had visited some of the Friendly Islands and had become a Christian. From this man Wai heard of the true God, though little more than that Jehovah was the only God, and that all ought to worship him.

Perceiving that there was no deliverance through their gods from the pestilence, the Ono chief and his companions resolved to forsake them and pray to the Being of whom they had recently heard, and a few others joined them. The late visitors, while at Lakemba, had heard something of the Sabbath, and so determined that they would set apart one day in seven for their worship. They accordingly prepared their food on the day previous, dressed in their best, and anointed themselves more profusely with oil. But when assembled they were at a loss how to proceed. They had always been accustomed to invoke their deities through the medium of a priest. In this dilemma they had no other resource than to send for a heathen priest,

He came, and was induced to aid them, beginning his prayer somewhat after this style: "Lord Jehovah, here are thy people; they worship thee. I turn my back upon thee for the present, and am on another tack, worshipping another god. But do thou bless these thy people; keep them from harm and do them good." Such was the first act of worship rendered to the Almighty on the far-off island of Ono.

In 1836 a canoe, having on board a number of Christians bound for the island of Tonga, missed her course, and drifted away to an island about fifty miles from Ono. Here they heard of the longing for light and help at the latter place, and a young man, baptized Josiah, who had conducted religious services during the voyage, hastened thither.

Great was the joy of the little company at Ono on the arrival of a teacher. The old priest was at once dismissed, and daily Josiah led their devotions, instructing them more fully on the Sabbath, while some learned to pray for themselves.

By this time their number had increased to forty, and they set about building a chapel which should hold a hundred people.

By 1839 three other teachers had been sent them, and the number of converts had increased to a hundred and sixty-eight men and a hundred and sixty women. All were most anxious for instruction, and greatly desirous that a missionary should visit them and administer sacraments and marry them with religious rites.

Among the directions received by the Wesleyan missionaries in reference to polygamy was that it must not be countenanced. No

to go, after due training, to preach the gospel in other parts of Fiji. Two hundred and twenty-three persons were baptized and sixty-six couples married.

Among the candidates for baptism was a young woman named Tovo, of the highest rank, who had been in infancy betrothed to the old king of Lakemba. She had now learned to read well—was most active in teaching, in visiting the sick, and in other good works.

The missionary could not baptize her unless she refused to be one of the thirty wives of Tui Nayan. On her part she declared her firm resolve to die rather than fulfil her heathen betrothal. In this decision, the chief, her father, and all the Christians sustained her, and were ready to suffer anything rather than give her up. With this understanding she was baptized—taking the name of Jemima.

Upon the return of the missionary, Mr. Calvert, to Lakemba, he informed the king that Tovo could not now become one of his many wives, as she had been baptized. Encouraged, however, by his chiefs and the heathen party at Ono, he set about manning a fleet of canoes with fighting men to go and demand her. Hearing of this, Mr. Calvert went to expostulate with him, but the king replied that he was going to collect tribute—pearl shells, etc.

"Then why take warriors instead of sailors?"

"Oh, the warriors would make very good sailors."

"Ah," replied Mr. Calvert, "so say your lips—I know not what is in your heart. I love you, therefore I warn you. God's people are as the apple of his eye. On the sea and on all the islands

sending on in advance several canoes of desperadoes to do the king's bidding in case of resistance, which, with about a hundred souls, were never more heard of.

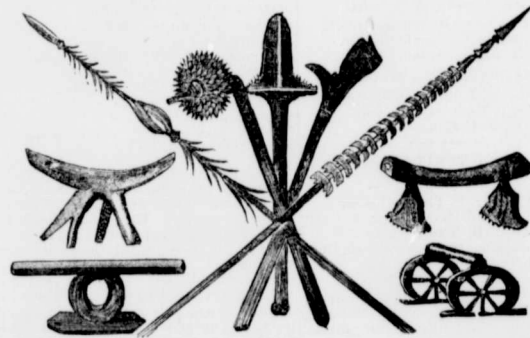
At length, a favorable breeze springing up, the expedition moved on; but ere long the wind shifted, and though they came within sight of Ono they could not reach her. Their endeavors were continually baffled. Soon all chance of making the island was gone. The canoes pitched and labored terribly in the violence of the waves. Thus they drifted about in great fear, well knowing that if they escaped the angry billows, they might be cast upon some shore where a miserable fate would await them.

As night came on the king gave up all hope. He thought of the warning words of the missionary and made up his mind to die; calling upon his gods, and promising great offerings if he should return home in safety. But they weathered the gale, and the dawn of the morning found one of the other canoes quite near. Great was the delight of the crews at meeting, and, the wind being now favorable for their homeward course, they set sail for Lakemba.

On arrival, the king begged that Mr. Calvert's warning words might never follow him again. He was henceforth very kind to him, thus acknowledging that he regarded his deliverance as a favor of the missionary's God. He even consented to give up the object of his desire and accept a gift instead. Accordingly suitable articles were sent him from Ono, but after having received them, the king returned an equivocal answer. The missionary then sent him fresh gifts, but like a king of old his heart was hardened. Evil counsels prevailed, and he intimated that Jemima must be brought. Nothing now remained for the poor girl but compliance or death. But her people refused to bring her to Lakemba. Then a chief was despatched for her, but such was the firmness of her Christian friends that he had to return without her; and the king, after his narrow escape, feared to imperil his life again upon the deep on such an errand.

Though there had been no missionary settled among them, by 1848, thirteen years from the introduction of Christianity into Ono, there were among the converts nearly fifty whose faith and ardent zeal fitted them to carry on the work at home, and to go forth to plant the gospel on distant shores. By the latest accounts we hear that no less than 900 churches may be seen, in which the true God is reverently and lovingly worshipped.

Thus truly in the Micronesian groups have the words of Holy Writ been verified, "Surely the isles shall wait for me."—*Illus. Christian Weekly.*



FII CLUBS, SPEARS, AND PILLOWS.

man or woman living in this state should be admitted to church membership or even be a candidate.

In the latter part of this year a missionary of Lakemba had an opportunity of visiting Ono, and found most wonderful and cheering progress; the people leading blameless lives, the Sabbath observed, schools well attended, and several young men offering themselves as teachers,

between Lakemba and Ono the Lord Jehovah reigns supreme. Take care what you do."

For a time the voyage was quite prosperous. They stopped at various islands, but at the one nearest Ono all disguise was thrown off, and they wantonly destroyed food and property to punish the people for becoming Christians before their king.

Here, to make sure of a fair wind, they remained some days,