

## A Missionary Meeting in Honolulu.

BY J. E. HIGGINS, (ACADIA, '95.)

It is not impossible that to some even of the very intelligent readers of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR the name of Hawaiian or Sandwich Islands would not long ago have brought to mind a state of barbarism, and perhaps, even of cannibalism. It may be that some who have long since set aside their geographies would not object to have their memories refreshed as to the location of this little group in the Pacific. About twenty-one hundred miles south west from San Francisco they are to be found, just within the northern tropic and somewhat separated from the other important islands of this the greatest of oceans.

This is not the abode of darkness, but for many years has been a centre from which has radiated the light of Christian civilization unto the isles of the sea. The forces for carrying to these the good tidings of Jesus have long since been organized under the name of the "Hawaiian Board of Foreign Missions," and the good ship "The Morning Star"—a unique combination of sailing vessel and steamship with her smoke-stack which serves also as mast—makes regularly her tours to the islands of the Carolines and other groups, to which service she is dedicated. At Honolulu, the chief city of the Hawaiian Islands, are the headquarters of this missionary activity which is in conjunction with the Congregational Board of the United States. Here, then, is located a Theological school for the training of the natives of these and other islands for missionary work, and many noble examples of Christian service are to be found among these dark-skinned converts.

It was the privilege of the writer to attend, not long since, a meeting in Central Union church, Honolulu, in the interests of Foreign Missions, and there to learn something of the work of the Hawaiian Board and especially of that among the Gilbert Islanders, where, however, for some time the American Congregational missionaries also labored. By mutual consent the London Missionary Society cares for those fields south of the Equator while the Hawaiian and American Boards confine their labors, among the islands, to those north of this line. The meeting just mentioned was interesting, unique and inspiring. Hoping that it may not lose all its value in the writing, some account of it will be given.

This was a missionary meeting which while thoroughly orthodox in its length (being about two hours in all) was at least somewhat unusual in its method of presenting facts of missionary history. The members of the Gilbertese Sunday School of Honolulu, to which city quite a number of these people have come from their homes in the South Pacific, were present in full force and represented in a graphic way the history of the work done in their islands by the heralds of the Cross. After a sermon upon the subject "Publish Good Tidings," these Christians marched up the aisle, singing a hymn in their native language, and arranged themselves in a row facing the congregation. Those who lead the procession represented the condition of their people when the missionaries first came to them. The first two or three carried great spears, more than twenty feet in length, which were exceedingly formidable looking weapons. Another somewhat aged representative in the front ranks, the lobe of whose ears had been greatly lengthened in his youth, according to the custom of their people, was decorated in a curious but significant manner. The lobes were enlarged downwards by cutting out a small piece of flesh and inserting in the lobe (not through it) first a small earring and then larger and still larger ones until finally the ear in some cases touched the shoulder, leaving a huge opening surrounded by a ring of equal size, held in place by the rim of flesh. The man just referred to had not been mutilated quite so badly in his youth but he wore, according to the custom, a "fig" of tobacco in one ear and a pipe in the other, since pockets, in those days, were not numerous for reasons which it may not be difficult to surmise. The next in order was one who wore the armour of the old king in which he had received the missionaries when they first came to his islands. This was a curious protection for a warrior, and consisted of a covering for the head and upper part of the body, made apparently of thick fibrous leaves or of splints woven together somewhat after the manner in which the American Indian weaves baskets. Following in order came a woman whose part it was to illustrate the style of dress worn by her sex in the days before the arrival of Christianity. In this case, however, it was deemed best that the garment should not be worn, so it was carried in the hand and seemed neither burdensome nor too close in texture for a warm climate. Another held in her hand an idol and others had other emblems of their ancient barbarism, giving quite a vivid picture of their former condition.

Soon after the line had marched in, one of their number who had remained about half way down the aisle addressed them in their native tongue, asking them in what state they were when the missionaries first came to them in the year 1857. They responded in the same language, telling of their miserable degradation and calling attention to the symbols of their barbarism which

have been mentioned above, though they were not cannibals. Then the question came from the centre of the church "How did your people treat the first missionaries?" To this they responded in concert that some treated them kindly, some cruelly, and some indifferently. These conversations were made intelligible to the congregation through an interpreter—the Rev. Hiram Bingham, through whose consecrated efforts the Gilbert Islanders now have a complete translation of the Bible. Next they were asked about the present condition of their countrymen and they told us that now they call themselves a Christian people, they have judges, courts of justice, houses, churches, schools and the other institutions of civilization. About half of the population of 20,000 is now interested in the story of Jesus of Nazareth. Then was asked of them the question "How came about this change?" At this point attention was called to a ladder which they had borne in with them on their spears, the latter being inserted between the rungs. This was placed upon the platform and showed by what steps they had risen from heathenism to Christian civilization. Upon the first round of the ladder there was now placed a copy of the Hawaiian Bible—the first Scriptures brought by the missionaries which were at all available to them. Their language is related to that of the Hawaiians.

At this point the spears, the armour and the emblems of their barbarism, were set aside or placed at the foot of the ladder upon which they were to climb. On the second rung was now placed a large school chart in the Gilbertese language which was published in the early days of the mission by the Hawaiian Board, with it also were hung needles, cloth, soap and other articles, symbolical of what the wives of the missionaries had taught these people to do at that stage of the progress. On the third rung was hung a slate, paper, pencil and ink and the translations of some portions of the Scriptures into their own language. Each of these different rungs was filled by a different member of the Gilbertese Sunday School. As the next man was called for and appeared at the ladder, the question was asked "And what do you bring?" "I bring a catechism which was given to our people for their instruction, and more translations of certain Scriptures." On the fifth round was placed a book which told of the plow and gave instruction in agriculture and other industries.

From the sixth round there was seen hanging a coconut and two more books. The coconut is symbolical of their chief industry which goes hand in hand with their progress in spiritual things. The books were an arithmetic and a geography for the schools.

The seventh round received as its burden three books in the language of the people. The first and the greatest of these was the Gilbertese Bible, complete, which is the crowning work of the faithful Dr. Bingham, of whom mention has been made in a former paragraph, and which was published by the American Congregational Board of Foreign Missions. Another of the books was one containing a collection of Bible readings.

The eighth round bore a book telling of the use of simple medicines, and this valuable work has just been sent to them in the missionary ship "The Morning Star" which left this port of Honolulu, on its errand of love, only a few weeks ago. (It was the writer's privilege to visit this ship while in the harbor and it was with much interest that she was examined.)

The ninth step upwards was symbolized by some of the products of their more recent industry as hats, baskets, mats, etc., and finally the tenth and last step short of the top is marked by a Gilbertese hymn book now about ready for their use.

At the top of the ladder was placed a plain showing the "plain" of Christian civilization to which they have now by the blessing of God attained. In its centre was the cross surrounded by churches, school houses and respectable residences.

Before the close of the meeting a collection was taken up in the interests of Foreign Missions which brought into the treasury of the Hawaiian Board over ten thousand dollars.

All the members of the Sunday School are united in singing their free translation of "My Jesus I love thee," and after a brief address the benediction was pronounced by the Rev. James Kekela of the Marquesas Mission, a veteran a worthy missionary of this people and the man to whom President Lincoln gave a gold watch in recognition of his services in lending his boat to some American citizen who otherwise would have lost their lives at the hands of the savage natives of this group.

Such transformations in the lives of a people indeed make glad the hearts of the missionary and of every true lover of the gospel of Jesus whose quickening power can raise men from the death of heathenism and make them to live in Him. Glory be unto God who giveth the victory.

Dept. of Agriculture, Govt. Normal and Training School, Honolulu, H. I.

## Our Appeal.

I notice in the MESSENGER AND VISITOR of April 19 that Bro. Manning, in referring to our Appeal, says: "Our brethren on the field are laboring under a slight misapprehension as to the bequest recently made to the Board. It is not in hand yet and so any calculation based upon it is a little wide of the mark." Permit me to say that I do not think we are laboring under any misapprehension as to the recent bequest, nor do I think our calculation is "wide of the mark." We were informed that Bro. Forrest left \$10,000 to the Board, and that it would be available in about a year from the death of the donor for any use that the Board wished to make of it. Bro. Manning's language would almost seem as if there was some doubt as to whether the money would ever be realized, but I understand that there is no such doubt, and that it will only be a matter of a few months until it

is in hand. We hoped that it would be in hand in time to send out the new men this fall. In this we may be disappointed. Please notice that our Appeal was based entirely upon the fact of this Forrest gift. Bro. Manning did not quote all of the Appeal, and therefore this is not made clear. In the last paragraph of our Appeal we asked that this \$10,000 (of course when it does come to hand) be used in sending out two new families and providing them with homes, etc. We also suggested that before sending out any new missionaries with this money, part of it be used in wiping out whatever debt may now be resting upon the Board. It has been suggested by some that this Forrest gift should be invested as endowment and only the interest be used for current expenses. We think the very best way to invest it is to use it in sending out new missionaries. I do not know that the Board will vote to lay it by as an endowment, but if they do it will be because they feel the need of having something more to fall back upon when the churches fail them. But shall we thus make provision for future neglect in the matter of giving? Bequests are often made conditionally, and when the donor insists upon the money being invested as endowment, the Board have no other course to pursue, but this Forrest gift was made unconditionally. With the appalling need upon the field, we missionaries feel that this money, or at least a good part of it, should be used in making a forward move, and we plead for that. Does it not seem like mocking the Almighty when we refuse to advance after He has thus placed the necessary funds in our hands? Shall we not rather move forward thanking him for this timely gift and trusting him to provide us with other Forrests as we respond more and more heartily to his call? Who knows how many more such gifts the Lord has for us? If we stow this away on interest perhaps it will be a long while before He will give us another similar bequest. Our denomination will perhaps not grow rapidly in numbers or wealth. But surely there is vast room for rapid growth by leaps and strides in the matter of giving. If our people would only adopt the habit of giving the tithes the denominational treasuries would be flooded. Oh that our people would humble themselves before God and confess their sin in this matter of neglecting the interests of His Kingdom. Oh that they would awake to their glorious privilege which is fast slipping away from them while the heathen are slipping into the bottomless pit! Two hundred thousand Savaras are wandering in the darkness upon these hills, like sheep without a shepherd. How much of the mind of the Master have we as we think of them? We read that he was "moved with compassion," and his compassion did not spend itself in any "crocodile tears." He fed them and he healed them, and he taught them. Surely God will hold every member of every Baptist church in the Maritime Provinces to account for the evangelization of those people, to the extent of our several ability to supply the need. Who shall say that our lack of large success at home and on the foreign field, is not due, in part at least, to our withholding from the Lord the money that is His and that he wants for this work? I incline to think there may be a closer relation between the two facts than we suppose. By the Year Book, which has just come to hand, I see that 239 out of 409 churches report no Baptisms for a whole year. Here in India we only had 38 baptisms. The fact that more than half of the churches in the Provinces had no baptisms to report for twelve months is a matter for serious reflection. I am not casting any stones; but these facts point out a sad defect in our denominational life.

Bro. Manning further says: "That there should be at least another family sent to the front is clear to anyone who has any idea of the nature of the work entrusted to the Baptists of these Provinces." Does our brother realize what he has written? It would be far nearer the truth to say: "That there should be at least ten families sent to the front, etc." Knowing the lack of funds and the apparent lack of men (for it is a fact that there are very few men willing or ready to come) we have ceased to ask for what is really needed. Possibly we have erred in not keeping the awful need in its gigantic proportions before the denomination more constantly. May God burn the facts and the true need into all the hearts of his people. We did not wish to discourage by making the picture too black, and have asked for small increments to our staff, frequently sent forth, until the required number are supplied. Half of the ten families could settle down upon this one field (Tekkall) and have 50,000 people to each mission family. Perhaps it sounds like fanaticism to say it, but I venture the assertion that the sending of ten families to the front this fall and supporting them, is quite within the power of our churches. Some talk of "hard times," "failure in the fishing, lumbering, farming," etc., (they should add also "failure in the grace of giving")—and they apologize for the meagreness of the churches' giving. This sort of thing is even heard upon the lips of some ministers. Some say: "Our people are poor and this foreign mission is more than they can carry," etc., etc., *ad nauseam*. 'Tis false! Let the Baptist tobacco bill for 1899 be laid at the Master's feet next convention and we shall stand in wonder at the pile. Let the feathers, jewelry, and