

MISSIONARY ITEMS.

The Wesleyans had commenced a mission on the Fijis, since gloriously successful. But all the islands to the West were in unbroken heathenism, and their inhabitants, as the majority are yet, were in a state of brutal debasement, scarcely exceeded by that of any people on the face of the earth. To these people Mr. Geddie's mission was to be directed, and through it the gospel was to win its first triumphs among them. He was now awaiting the arrival from England of the "John Williams," the missionary vessel of the London Missionary Society. She arrived on the 27th May, 1848, and on the 3rd July, she set sail for the West with our mission band and several missionaries of the Society on board. After visiting several islands, Aneiteum, the most southerly of the New Hebrides group, was chosen as the spot on which to commence a mission. This group consists of about thirty islands, two of them about 200 miles in circumference. They lie about 200 miles from New Caledonia, and 1500 from Australia. With the exception of the Fijis and New Zealand, no group in the South Seas can compare with them in extent and resources. The name was given by Capt. Cook, from his observing a striking resemblance of some of them to the Old Hebrides. They are nearly all of volcanic origin, and most of them still exhibit evidence of volcanic action. Coralline islands are generally low and flat, but these are generally either mountainous or hilly, and exhibit much greater variety and beauty of scenery. In fact, to no part of the world do Bishop Heber's words more aptly apply:

"Where every prospect pleases
And only man is vile."

The Island of Aneiteum is the most southerly of the group. It is small, being only about 40 miles in circumference, but it was chosen as the spot on which to commence missionary operations, partly that it seemed to present the most favourable opening, and partly that from its position, affording ready communication with the other islands, it seemed the key to the group. It had also the advantage, not always to be found, of a good harbour formed by a coral reef a little distance from the shore on the south side.

A particular account of his labours here we must reserve for another article.

A NEW PRESBYTERY.—It is not in Canada, not even in the United States. Presbyteries in these countries are too numerous to be matters of special interest. The new Presbytery has just been organized in Mexico. For centuries that beautiful land had been solely under Roman Catholic control. Its people were kept in ignorance and superstition. Civil wars and successive revolutions kept the country sadly behind. Twelve years ago Presbyterian missionaries entered the field; and now there are nine ordained missionaries from the United States, ten ordained natives, thirty-five native helpers, seven thousand five hundred communicants, and five hundred scholars. There are other Protestant missions in the field, but none so prosperous as the Presbyterian mission. The number of new congregations is rapidly increasing. Persecution was tried; some of the missionaries were murdered; but the result was to strengthen truth. The Bible and good religious tracts and books have been widely disseminated and are sought after by the people. It is expected that the organization of a Presbytery will be conducive to the success of the mission. Another step not less important is the establishment of a Theological Seminary to train native preachers. Appearances indicate that a genuine reformation movement has commenced in Mexico.

THE FREE CHURCH, and indeed the cause of Missions, has met with a great loss in the death of *Mr. James Stewart* who has been employed as missionary engineer in South Africa for five years past. In this capacity he built a road around the Shirè rapids, surveyed the shores of Lake Nyassa, erected the mission stations and at the time of his death was engaged in the construction of a road of two hundred and ten miles connecting Lakes Nyassa and Tanganyika at the sole expense of Mr. James Stevenson of Glasgow. He was stricken down with fever in the midst of his active labours. He was a son of the well-known Dr. Stewart, of Lovedale, South Africa, a man of great ability and energy and thoroughly devoted to the cause of missions.

"**I AM COMING. BE READY!**" Such is said to be the message sent by the False Prophet of the Soudan to rouse Mohammedan fanaticism. As such it concerns us but little. But ONE has said, "Be ye also ready, for in an hour that ye think not the Son of Man cometh." Opportunity of doing good is passing swiftly away. The night cometh when no one can work. It becomes us to give with increasing liberality and promptitude; to labour with warmer zeal; to endure with greater patience, for the time is short, and the work before us is vast. Canada has to be evangelized, yea, the world has to be converted to Christ, and He expects us to be fellow-workers with Him in this noblest of all enterprises. The Prince of Peace calls us to enlist under His banner. Let us not refuse Him any service we can render