

THE PITCAIRN ISLANDERS.

A FAMOUS MUTINY AND ITS RESULTS.

It was in 1789 that a party of the officers and crew of the British ship "Bounty" mutinied near the Friendly Islands and turned the captain and loyal sailors adrift in an open boat. This boat and all on board made a safe voyage of three thousand miles, and landed at Timor in the East Indian Archipelago. The mutineers made for Tahiti. Nine of them took Tahitian wives, and with nine other Tahitians sailed the "Bounty" to Pitcairn's Island. This island had been discovered by a son of the Major Pitcairn who was killed in the American Revolution. It was known to be uninhabited, and thus would afford a safe hiding-place. Far off it looks like a desolate rock, rising steep from the sea. But on nearer approach its volcanic peaks and cliffs appear covered with trees, and lying just outside the tropics it abounds in tropical fruits; while it will also bear the vegetables of the temperate zone. Its rocky coast and tremendous breakers make landing difficult, and the only safe harbor is Bounty Bay.

Here the mutineers landed, and broke up their ship to avoid discovery. Safe from punishment, free from restraint, they may have expected to be happy in that lovely isle. But sin brings misery everywhere, and only two of the men died a natural death. They fought and killed each other till, in ten years after their landing, only one remained alive! This was John Adams, a sailor who had never been to school. He found himself with the Tahitian women and twenty fatherless children dependent on him alone for guidance. He had seen the awful consequences of sin, and now felt the responsibility of these souls. Only one book had been saved from the ship: the Bible and English Prayer-book bound together. Adams began to pray and to study the Bible, and was soon able to read easily; then he taught the children reading and writing, with the law of God and the blessed Gospel of Christ. The children all loved him and called him father, and learned readily what he could teach them. Peace now began her reign upon the island. Adams had morning and evening prayers and held Sunday services, aided by the English liturgy. At first he always lived in fear of discovery; but no British ship touched at the island for twenty-five years after the landing of the mutineers. At last, in 1814, two men-of-war appeared there. Their officers were surprised to see a canoe put off, and two fine, handsome young men soon hailed them in excellent English and said: "Won't you heave us a rope?" Springing on deck, they gave their names as Thursday Christian and George Young, and avowed themselves the sons of the lost mutineers of the "Bounty." The English captains were astonished at this extraordinary discovery of men so long forgotten, but were still more surprised and excited when they took the young men below and placed some food before them. Both rose, and one of them folded his hands in prayer, saying in pleasant and suitable tones, "For what we are going to receive the Lord make us truly thankful."

This wonderful island colony was found to contain forty-six persons, mostly grown-up young people, with a few infants. The young men and women were tall, handsome, athletic, and graceful, and their faces beamed with kindness and good humor. Adams assured the visitors that they were truly honest and religious, industrious and affectionate. They were decently dressed in cloth made from the bark of trees. Their houses were built around an open lawn, and were furnished with tables, beds, chests, and seats. Their tools had been made out of the iron of the "Bounty." After a delightful stay, the ships sailed, leaving a few gifts of kettles, tools, etc., and it was nearly twelve years before the Pitcairners were again visited by an English ship. Captain Beechey, of the "Blossom," landed among them in 1825. He found that an American whaler had been there before him, and that one of her men named John Buffet "had been so infatuated with the behavior of the people that, being himself of a devout turn of mind, he had resolved to devote his life to them." He had proved an able and willing schoolmaster, and had become the oracle of the community.

Captain Beechey was warmly welcomed and spent some days on shore with a party

of his men. Every day they dined with one or other of the families, and were treated to baked pig, yams, taro, and sweet potatoes. These were cooked in heated stone ovens made in holes in the ground. Their beds were mattresses made of palm-leaves, covered with sheets of cloth beaten out of the bark of the paper-mulberry tree. An evening hymn was sung by the whole family and at dawn the guests were waked by the morning hymn and the family prayer. Grace was always said at meals, and if any one came in late the others all paused while he also repeated it, and they responded "Amen." On Sundays the church service was well conducted, Adams reading the prayers and Buffet the sermon. What will our restless young folks say to the fact that the sermon was repeated three times, lest it should be forgotten, or any part should escape attention! Hymns were sung and no one seemed wearied. No work was done on Sunday, nor any boat allowed to quit the shore. Captain Beechey wrote: "We

leader of the flock. He lived to the age of eighty-five.

In 1852 Admiral Moresby, with the "Portland" man-of-war, paid the islanders a visit, and attended their church service on Sunday. The report sent home to England says: "The most solemn attention was paid by all. They sang two hymns in most magnificent style; and really, I have never heard any church singing in any part of the world that could equal it, except at cathedrals. . . . It is impossible to describe the charm that the society of the islanders throws around them. They are guileless beyond description. They depend for supplies on whaling-ships, and the sailors behave in the most exemplary manner among them. One rough seaman to whom I spoke in praise of such conduct, said: 'Sir, I expect if one of our fellows was to misbehave himself here, we should not leave him alive.' No intoxicating liquors are allowed on the island, except a little for sickness.

In 1856 the population had increased to

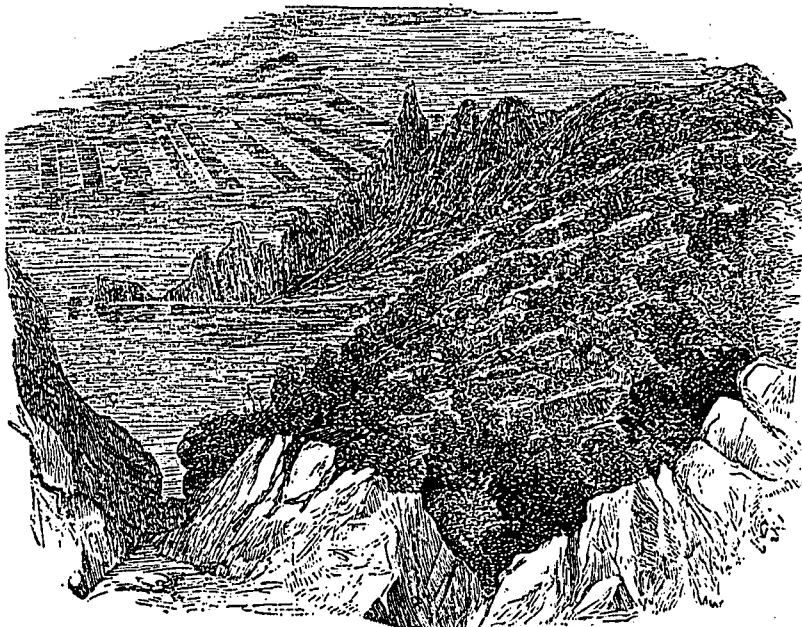


THE HOUSE OF JOHN ADAMS.

remained with them many days, and their unreserved manners gave us the fullest opportunity of becoming acquainted with them. They live in perfect harmony and contentment, are virtuous and cheerful, and are hospitable beyond the limits of prudence."

Four years after this visit, in 1829, John Adams died. Another leader had, however, been raised up for the happy islanders in 1828. Mr. George Nobbs, an Irish lieutenant in the Chilean service under Lord Cochrane, was returning to England in a ship which had just touched at Pitcairn. The captain said so much of the goodness and happiness of its people that Mr. Nobbs resolved to go there. He did so, and became pastor, teacher, and surgeon for the community, which now numbered sixty-eight persons. He married a granddaughter of Lieutenant Christian, the chief mutineer, and for fifty-six years, until his death the news of which only reached England a few months ago, he continued to be the beloved

194, and it was thought the island was too small for them. It is, in fact, only two and a quarter miles long and a mile broad, and a portion is too rocky for cultivation. The English Government therefore transferred the people to Norfolk Island. Six families of forty persons who became homesick for Pitcairn have returned thither, and have now increased to 103, while the Norfolk Islanders number 476. Mr. Nobbs remained with the latter. They continue the same kind, contented, God-fearing race. Many gifts find their way from England to Pitcairn, and Queen Victoria herself has sent them a church organ, of which they speak with great pride and delight. One of a ship's company which touched there last year asked the islanders, as they were about to leave the vessel, if they wanted any Bibles or other books. They said they had plenty of Bibles, but eagerly and anxiously asked for a concordance, or for books explaining the Bible. After getting into their boat they said: "We will sing you a hymn,



BOUNTY BAY.

captain, before we go"; and they sang "The Lifeboat" and "Pull for the Shore" in beautiful harmony.

May we not learn many lessons from these Christian Children of the Sea?—*Missionary Herald*.

WRONG EXPECTATIONS.

Said one parent to a little girl, scarcely a dozen years old, who had begun to serve God, "Now, my child, if you are a Christian I shall never expect you again to show the least sign of fretfulness or impatience as long as you live; and if you do, I shall conclude that you are deceived." If some great, supernatural being—an archangel, for example—should take that woman by the arm, and say to her, "You are a church member; now I shall never expect to see the least imperfection in your character; and if I observe the least flaw in temper, in disposition, in imagination, or in word, I shall conclude that you are deceived," we wonder how she would stand the test. "A child," says Dr. Bushnell, "acts out his present feeling, the feelings of the moment, without qualification or disguise; and how, many times, would all of us appear if we were to do the same?" We should expect only childlike faith of child Christians. A boy Christian does not become a gray-haired patriarch all at once. We should hope that he would love his skates and his sled and his marbles and his gun still. A girl Christian does not develop into a conventional matron all at once. We hope she would not discard her doll and her picture book and her games until she ceases to be a girl. The boy Christian can show his religion by playing marbles fairly, as well as the man Christian by selling goods fairly. The school-girl can show her religion by the soft answer and by docile amiability, as well as her mother can show her religion by her gracious, lady-like bearing and her deeds of charity. The restrained temper, the ready obedience, fairness in sports, the willingness to pray and to read the Bible, the love of children's meetings,—these should all be taken as indications of the new life growing up within the young soul. The quick, parental eye, that is neither caustic nor over critical, will very soon discern the germs of grace in the boy or girl whose heart is touched.—*The Children and the Church*.

A NOTE OF WARNING.

For all classes the Sunday rest is essential to true living, but for brain workers it is almost the only safeguard against mental depletion. Yet there is a special temptation to use the quiet leisure of the day for the furtherance of the weekly tasks. But he who yields to the temptation, with his brain already overstrained with its six days' labor, is doing himself a greater wrong, mentally and physically, if not spiritually, than he who spends the day in hunting and fishing.

Often a similar temptation comes to our overtaken school children. We heard not long ago of a teacher in one of the public schools, who advised her scholars to devote a part of Sunday to the preparation of their Monday lessons, and of a mother that gave the same advice to her boys. It is easy to foresee the fruits of such teachings, for those thus trained will almost inevitably, as they advance in years, continue to let the work of the week infringe on the Sunday rest. And inevitably, too, they will sooner or later pay the penalty, for there is no command in the Decalogue for which surer punishment is meted out to the transgressor.

When man refused to listen to the voice of God under the green palms of Eden, he was compelled to hear it in the wilderness; and it sometimes happens that he who in health refuses to observe this divinely appointed rest day is forced to take rest and leisure in the silence of the sickroom. But too often the warning is unheeded, though again and again repeated, and at last the sword of Nemesis falls. Everywhere these unrested workers are helping to fill the insane asylums, and to swell the list of suicides; and it behooves those who are still sane, to sit down and calmly consider whether simply as a sanitary measure it will not be the part of wisdom to give Sunday its due.—*Christian at Work*.

MR. MACKAY, of the Nyanza Mission, writes: "Drink is the curse of Africa. Go where you will, you will find every week and, where grain is plentiful, every night man, woman, and child reeling from the effects of alcohol. The vast waste of Africa is ruined with rum."