

very critical position of our mission on Sarro, arising largely from the severe sufferings of our missionaries—Mr. and Mrs. Goodwill—during a long period of ill-health. 2nd. The fact that for over a twelvemonth no word had reached the Church from our missionaries on Eromanga—Mr. and Mrs. Robertson. 3rd. That there had been a serious falling off in the contributions to the fund for the past year, so much so, that, if continued, this most important scheme will be imperilled in its operations. With reference to the first ground of discouragement, we are sorry to be unable to lessen it in the slightest degree. All we know is, that Mr. Goodwill has returned to his post after a short stay in Australia; but, unless his health and that of his partner has improved, we do not see that he can work effectively under such great and trying disadvantages. Fervent prayers, we trust, ascend to the Throne of Grace on their behalf, from all our people, that the good Lord may restore them, and make plain their duty for the glory of His name. It affords us unmingled joy to be able to lay before our readers interesting letters from Mr. and Mrs. Robertson, which remove the second source of anxiety. These letters, we are sure, will be read with interest, and lead to a revival of the faith of our people in the cause in which they are engaged, and have the effect of arousing them to a sense of the solemnity of their engagements with their missionaries, who are toiling in those far-off benighted islands for the spread of the gospel and the glory of God. We have no doubt but this prolonged absence of information from the field has been productive of the third cause of anxiety, viz.:—the alarming decrease in the Church's contributions toward the fund. We cannot believe this has arisen from any indifference on the part of our people, or that they are regardless of the calls of the heathen upon them; but rather that the condition of uncertainty in which we were placed led to a partial suspension of effort in this particular direction. Of this we ought to be particularly careful. It must be remembered that communication with the South Sea islands is by no means frequent, and it sometimes occurs that letters are written for months before there is an opportunity of despatching them.

But there may be some who look upon it as vain work, this sending of the Gospel to the heathen. One objection that is sometimes urged is, that missionaries have lived and labored among them for years, and no fruit is discernible—at least for a very long time, and money is thus thrown away, when it might have been used to much more advantage elsewhere. There is nothing so natural as that people should expect to see the fruit of their efforts; but fruit should not be expected too soon. Just think for a moment of some of the difficulties to be encountered in a work of this kind. To establish a Foreign Mission is an undertaking of no small magnitude. It is very different from Home Mission enterprises. For one thing, the *climate is unfavorable* in most instances. The most robust frame has to succumb to the debilitating influence of fever and other diseases. Not many missionaries can stand it more than a few years without a change. And how can we expect great things of a man with *gradually declining health*? He may be able to effect changes, in the strength of God, which will result in promoting something like a new state of society, and which fresh workers may carry on unto completion; but we must not look for too much from the breakers-up of the way. Then *there is a language to learn*. That of itself is a formidable difficulty, and a long time must elapse ere the missionary can make himself thoroughly understood by the natives. Let us just place ourselves in their circumstances, with the advantage of civilization and education in our favor, and how would such a project work? Let a man come among us, speaking in an unknown tongue, from a distant country, to explain the working of the particular form of government under which he lived, or illustrate the benefits of certain institutions, and show how suitable they are to the wants of man; and how long would it take him to reach the public ear? and if he did at last succeed in acquiring our language, how many devotees would likely listen to his story? And if any did listen, how many would venture to follow him? And again, how long do the most beneficial reforms require to be agitated and pressed upon public attention—to be argued over and discussed in every possible light, ere intelligent people can be convinced of their soundness and