

THE
PRESBYTERIAN RECORD
 FOR THE
DOMINION OF CANADA.

Vol. VI.

NOVEMBER, 1881.

No. 11.

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No. VIII.

The Gospel in the South Seas.*

My Righteousness is near; My Salvation is gone forth: The isles shall wait upon Me, and on mine arm shall they trust. *Isaiah LI: 5.* Surely the isles shall wait for me *Is. LX: 9.* All the isles of the heathen shall worship Him. *Zeph II: 11.*

POLYNESIA—many Islands, is the general name given to the countless islands of the South Seas lying between the Pacific coasts of America and the island continent of Australia—an expanse of sea seven thousand miles in length by five thousand miles in width. Sometimes the name is applied to that part of Oceania south of the equator, the designation Eastern and Western Polynesia being given to those portions respectively east and west of the 180th parallel of Longitude. Mr. Inglis prefers the not uncommon nomenclature of MICRONESIA—little islands—for all the groups north of the equator; MELANESIA—black islands (from the colour of the natives) for those south of that line and west of 180°, and POLYNESIA for those in the southern hemisphere east of long. 180°. According to this last division,

* *Polynesia and New Guinea*—By Rev. A. W. MURRAY, of the London Missionary Soc.: Carter Bros., New York, 1876. *Ten Years in S. Central Polynesia*, by Rev. Thomas West: J. Nisbet & Co., London, 1865. *Life of John Williams*, by E. Prout: Snow, London, 1842. *Fiji and the Fijians*, by Rev. James Calvert: Boston Congregational Publishing Co., 1871. *The New Hebrides and Christian Missions*, by Rev. Robert Steel: J. Nisbet & Co., London, 1880. *The Missionary World*, by Rev. W. Moister: Elliot Stock, London, 1872. *The South Sea Islands, as they were, and as they are*, by Rev. John Inglis: in "Good Words," 1861. &c.

Micronesia embraces the Caroline, the Marshall, the Ladrone, the Gilbert, the Kingman and many others west of the Sandwich Islands. *Melanesia*, includes the Fiji, the New Hebrides, New Caledonia, the Loyalty and Solomon groups; and *Polynesia*, the Society, the Hervey, the Ellice, the Samoan or Navigators, and The Tongan, or Friendly Islands, with other smaller groups. The total population of this island world, exclusive of New Guinea, is supposed to be about two millions, composed of mixed races, speaking many different languages, having very little in common save the melancholy feature that they are decaying races, all of them, previous to the introduction of Christianity amongst them, sunk into the lowest depths of degradation in which it was possible for human beings to exist. The missionary literature of the South Seas is voluminous, minute, romantic, and exceedingly interesting. It abounds in details of the condition in which the natives were found by the early missionaries, of their disgusting rites and practices; it pictures in glowing and graphic terms how the gospel found an entrance, and ultimately achieved its greatest triumphs in these dark abodes of heathenism, and draws a striking contrast betwixt the condition of the people at the beginning of this century and at the present time. Our aim in what follows is to give an outline of the successive steps which have led to the happy change.

BALBOA, the governor of Darien, was the