

## REVIEW.

*A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands; with remarks upon the Natural History of the Islands, Origin, Languages, Traditions, and Usages of the Inhabitants.* By JOHN WILLIAMS, of the London Missionary Society. London, 1837. pp. xviii. 590. 8vo.

(Continued from page 241.)

In 1821, it became necessary, in consequence of the ill health of Mrs. Williams, and indisposition on the part of Mr. W. himself, to visit New South Wales:—in prosecuting their visit, they took with them PAPERUA and VAHAPATA, two native christians “to place them as teachers in the island of Aitutaka.” The people of Raiatea had been awakened to the importance of extending the knowledge of the Gospel, by a very singular circumstance which had just before occurred,—the relation of which, we now sub-

join.

“An Island called Rurutu, about 350 miles to the south of Raiatea, was visited by an epidemic, which appears to have been exceedingly fatal. As the natives regard every such calamity to be the infliction of some angry deity, two chiefs of enterprising spirit determined to build each a large canoe, and, with as many of their people as could be conveyed, to launch upon the mighty deep, committing themselves to the winds and the waves in search of some happier isle. They felt convinced, if they remained, that they would certainly be “devoured by the gods,” whose anger they had in vain endeavoured to appease; and that, should they not succeed in reaching any other land, they could but perish in the billows of the ocean.

“Every thing prepared, Aura and his party launched their canoe, unfurled their sails, and were soon out of sight of their lovely but devoted Island, and, as they supposed, out of the reach of their infuriated deities. They arrived at the island of Tubuai; and after having recruited their strength and spirits, determined on returning to their native isle, hoping that the plague was stayed. They launched their vessels, and committed themselves again to the waves of the ocean, little anticipating the perils that awaited them. Scarcely had they lost sight of the mountains of Tubuai, when they were overtaken with a violent storm, which drove them out of their course. Of the crew of one of the canoes the greater part perished at sea. The chief, Aura, to whom the other belonged, and his party, were driven about, they knew not whither, and for three weeks they traversed the trackless deep, during which time they suffered exceedingly from the want of food and water. At length, he who holds the winds in his fist, and the waters in the hollow of his hands, to whose merciful designs the elements are subservient, guided them to the Society Islands. They were driven on the coral reef which surrounds the island of Maurua, the farthest west of the group. Had they not reached this island they must have perished.

“The hospitable attentions of the inhabitants of this little isle, soon restored the strength of the exhausted voyagers, who related the dreadful calamities which had befallen their country and themselves. The Mauruans informed them that they formerly worshipped the same deities, and attributed every evil that befel them to the anger of their “evil spirits;” but that now they were worshippers of Jehovah, the one living and true God; giving them a detailed account of the manner in which Christianity had been introduced among themselves, and pointing to the demolished maraes and mutilated idols in confirmation of their statements.

“The astonished strangers, on hearing that white

men, who had come in ships from a distant country to bring them good tidings, were living at islands, the summits of whose mountains were in sight, determined to proceed there immediately. A westerly wind setting in, Aura and his friends again launched on the deep, not to fly from the anger of their gods, but in search of those who could explain more fully to them the nature of the astonishing news they had heard. Not being acquainted with the coast of Parapora, they missed the entrance, and were driven to Raiatea. There their astonishment was again excited; the Missionaries, their wives and families, the natives in European dresses with hats and bonnets, their neat white cottages, together with the various useful arts which had been introduced amongst the people, filled the strangers with admiration and surprise. They were conducted to public worship on the Sabbath; beheld with astonishment the assembled multitude; heard them sing the praises of the one living God, and listened with the deepest interest to the message of mercy. They were convinced at once of the superiority of the Christian religion, and concluded, that God had graciously conducted them there for the purpose of making them acquainted with its inestimable blessings. They placed themselves immediately under our instruction, when we gave them in special charge to our deacons, and supplied them with elementary books. Aura was exceedingly diligent in learning, and made most rapid progress. In a short time he completely mastered the spelling-book, could repeat the greater part of our catechism, and read in the gospel of Matthew. They were only with us a little more than three months, and before they left, he and several others could read, spell, and write correctly; although they were previously ignorant of the formation of a letter, or a figure.”

Aura was anxious to return to his native island to make known to his countrymen what he had learned of the true God and his worship: a vessel touched at Raiatea on her way to England, with the very first cargo of native produce ever shipped from that part of the world, consisting of cocoa-nut oil, which had been subscribed by the converted natives in aid of the London Missionary Society's funds: “His late Majesty King George IV., upon being informed of the circumstance, graciously commanded that the duty should be remitted, which enhanced the value of the property £400:” the total amount of the cargo was £1,800, which was contributed to the funds of this Society. The Captain of this vessel cheerfully offered to take the chief and people to their own island, with whom a boat, with a native crew, was sent to bring back intelligence. At Aura's special desire, two native Christian teachers were sent with him, who were set apart to their work by an interesting service.

“The greater part of the night previous to their departure was spent in providing them with the articles which they would find both necessary and useful. Every member of our church brought something as a testimonial of his affection; one a razor, another a knife, a third a roll of native cloth, a fourth a pair of scissors, and others, various useful tools. We supplied them with elementary books, and a few copies of the gospels in the Tahitian language, from which their own does not materially differ. Thus we equipped them for this expedition as well as our means would allow.

“After an absence of little more than a month we had the pleasure of seeing the boat return, laden with the trophies of victory, the gods of the heathen taken in this bloodless war, and won by the power of the Prince of Peace. On reading the letters we received,