

"We are now mourning the loss of Mr. Johnston, a very dear brother, who was permitted only seven short months among us. He was a young man of piety and great promise. I have met with few on the Mission field to whom my heart was more drawn out." And in another letter he says, "His death is a serious loss to the Mission. He was all that we could expect, and almost all that we could desire."

We need not, after what has been said, occupy much time in discussing Mr. Johnston's talents or delineating his character. His talents, if not superior, were certainly very respectable, and had been diligently cultivated, so that the productions of his pen were generally appreciated through the Church. In particular as a correspondent he handled the pen of a ready writer, and his Journal-letters since he left Nova Scotia were highly prized by the readers of the *Register* and *Record*. In his disposition he was gentle and affectionate. He was a man of deep tenderness, and all the kindly natural affections of our nature ruled in him with peculiar power. After what has been stated it is scarcely necessary to remark, that as a Christian he was a devoted servant of Christ. Few men have been more so. He daily walked with God; and in such a sense as is given to mortals here below "his meat and his drink was to do the will of his Father who is in heaven."

We might be disposed to dwell longer on the remarkable dispensation of divine Providence by which he has been so early removed. But the events of a still more striking character which have since occurred now occupy our attention and require us to be brief. To human apprehension it certainly appears an exceedingly mysterious arrangement that a young man possessing to the view so many qualities fitting him for usefulness in the Mission field—having spent so many years of labour as well as expended so much money in preparation for his work, after the Church had incurred such heavy expense in bringing him to his desired sphere of labour, should be cut down at the very outset of his career—when his real work could scarcely be said to have commenced and that at a time when the field stands in such urgent need of labourers. It seems to our limited views scarcely reconcilable with the wisdom of the divine procedure. It at all events makes us feel that "his ways are not as our ways," and to say "how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out."

Yet such have been the arrangements of divine Providence in every age. Not unfrequently the most zealous and devoted of his servants are called to an early crown, and at the very time that the Church on earth seems most to need their services. The good Josiah, whose faithfulness for a time arrested the destruction impending over Israel, was cut down in his early prime. John the Baptist was raised up at a critical era in the history of the Church, and was sent with a high commission to reclaim a degenerate race and make ready a people prepared of the Lord. He came forth in the spirit and power of Elias, scorning the pomps and fashions of this world, and, in the spirit of undaunted courage, rebuking the pride of kings, as well as preaching repentance to the multitude. And his success was extraordinary. "He was a burning and shining light, and many for a season were willing to rejoice in his light." But his course was short, his public ministry perhaps little exceeding that of our beloved friend in the South Seas, and he was cut off by a violent death while yet his years were comparatively few. At the outset of the Church's career in propagating the gospel she was called to mourn over a Stephen, "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," summoned to wear the martyr's crown while seemingly but beginning his work. In after ages God has been pleased