

Missionary Intelligence.

OUTRAGES OF THE HEATHEN ON CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES.

Our missionary intelligence this month is of a sad and melancholy character, only cheered by the good hope that ere long the habitations of horrid cruelty will be pervaded by the gentle, loving spirit of the Gospel, and such outrages as we have now to describe be for ever unknown. For some time past, the rage of the heathen in some of the Polynesian groups has been exhibited in many unmistakeable ways against the missionaries, and it has now culminated in the murder of the Rev. G. N. Gordon and Mrs. Gordon of the Nova Scotian mission at Erromanga. We may observe that previously barbarous attacks had been made on the missionaries at Tana, producing, in the case of the Rev. Mr. Johnston, excitement and illness which terminated in death. At Aniteum barbarous outrages were committed, including the burning down of a new church and school-house with other property. At Mare five of the native converts were waylaid and barbarously murdered. This led the Christians at Mare to prepare for their defence, and when a combined attack was afterwards made, it was bravely repelled, and the heathen forced to retreat. But, as we have said, the saddest result took place at Erromanga, where almost on the spot where Williams and Harris were massacred, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon were cruelly murdered. The following is a detailed account of the murder:—

“About noon of the 20th May, a party of nine Bunkhill natives, of whom the chief Lova was the leader, called at the mission-house, and inquired for Mr. Gordon. They were informed that he was working a little further down the hill, at a house which he was building as a winter residence. They went towards the place, but in passing through a grove near the house, eight of the men concealed themselves, while the ninth, named Naru-bu-leet, went further down to inveigle Mr. Gordon into the trap thus laid for his destruction. Mr. Gordon had unfortunately sent all the boys away to gather grass for the roof of the new house, and was unattended, when Naru-bu-leet walked up to him, and asked for some calico for himself and the others of his party, who, he said, were waiting at the mission-house. Mr. Gordon took up a piece of board, and wrote on it with a piece of charcoal, ‘Give these men a yard of cotton each.’ This he gave to the savage, and told him to take it to Mrs. Gordon, who would give him what he wanted. This, however, would not have suited the intentions of Naru-bu-leet. He told the missionary that Lova wished particularly to see him, and to get some medicine for a sick man, and that he had therefore better go up to his own house. Mr. Gordon, pointing to a plate containing some food which Mrs. Gordon had sent him, said, ‘I have not yet eaten, but never mind, I can do so as well at the house.’ And wrapping up the plate in his handkerchief he started up the hill, followed by the native. On arriving at the ambush, Naru-bu-leet buried his tomahawk in Mr. Gordon’s spine. He immediately fell, uttering a loud cry. Naru-bu-leet gave him another stroke on the right side of the neck, which almost severed the head from the body; and the others, rushing from their concealment, quickly cut their poor victim to pieces. While this tragedy was being enacted, another native, whose name was ‘Ouben,’ ran towards the mission-house, and Mrs. Gordon, who had been alarmed by the fiendish yells and laughter of the savages, had run out and was standing near an out-house. She asked Ouben what all that noise was about? He laughed, and said, ‘Nothing; it is only the boys amusing themselves.’ She said, ‘Where are the boys?’ and turning round. Ouben then, with the tomahawk, which he carried concealed behind his back, struck her a blow below the shoulder blade; and, on her falling on a heap of grass, he nearly cut the head off, and otherwise mutilated her in various parts of the body. Such was the fate of two of God’s most zealous servants. It is now four years since Mr. Gordon and his wife arrived here—viz., since 14th June, 1857—and during this time they have laboured hard among the rude and ferocious Erromangans with little apparent success. Privations of the most distressing kind have been cheerfully and uncomplainingly borne, and the many attempts made against their lives, although hitherto unsuccessful, have rendered their residence here continually full of anxiety and alarm.”