

MISSIONS IN THE SOUTH SEAS.

Our readers will, we are sure, peruse with interest the missionary notices which here follow; and that interest will not be diminished when they know that the esteemed correspondent who modestly subscribes himself "A Subscriber," is one who is soon, we trust, to be a messenger of the gospel in Canada, and is a brother of the Samoan missionary whose letters he quotes:—

To the Editor of the Record.

Toronto, October 31, 1849.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—Your readers, perhaps, remember seeing an article in the last No. of the 3rd vol. of the Record, entitled "Light and Shadows of Missionary Life in the South Sea Islands." It formed a part of a letter from one who has for several years been labouring as a missionary in these islands. Several letters have since been received from the same individual; and as we are interested in the spread of the gospel of peace in all parts of the earth, it may not be uninteresting to your readers to hear something of what the Lord is doing in these lovely islands—lovely physically, but generally far from lovely in a moral and spiritual point of view.

In the present communication I shall furnish you with an extract from one letter; and next month (if your space permit) I may give you extracts from two which have been received very recently.

It may be well to state that the missionary who writes these letters went to the South Sea Islands immediately after the death of the lamented Williams. For several months he laboured with another British missionary and some native teachers on the island of Tanna, New Hebrides, (the last island on which Williams left native teachers.) From thence the missionary company barely escaped with their lives, on account of the opposition of the native priesthood, who saw that their "craft was in danger." Since that time several attempts have been made to establish the gospel in Tanna, but hitherto without much success. At present two native teachers are labouring there; but they live in much fear, and are subject to many trials. But these simple-minded Samoans have counted the cost, and having felt the power of the truth, and the value of salvation, are full of desire for the spread of the glorious gospel throughout the almost innumerable isles in which stud these seas.

A perusal of these extracts may perhaps excite our praying friends to remember before God the numerous and degraded tribes who have their habitation in these islands of the sea, remembering that God hath promised that the "isles shall wait for his law." The missionaries have peculiar difficulties to contend with—the attachment of the people to their heathen customs—the numerous tribes into which they are divided—their savage disposition—their natural fondness for war;—and, add to all, the attempts which the Papacy is now making to overturn the superstructure which they have unconsciously reared.

The Samoan Reporter, referred to in these extracts is a quarterly paper published by the missionaries in the island of Upolu; only one number of it has come to hand, it appears to be lost in the course of transit.

I have thought it proper to prefix these remarks, in order to explain some of the allusions made in the extracts.

Very sincerely yours,

A SUBSCRIBER.

Vaier, Upolu, Samoa, 15th Oct. 1847.

• • • I suppose you will have begun to think that it is time for me now to tell you something about ourselves and Samoa. The Reporter (if you receive it) will give you some idea of the affairs of the mission, &c., or I need not say much about these.

As to my own station, I think that during the past year we have had some indications of some-

thing like a little improvement—in several respects—some sources of hope for the future. May the Lord confirm our expectations, yea in the multitude of his mercies, go beyond them all in blessing this people. Since I last wrote we have had nine new members added to the church; but we have also been under the necessity of excluding one woman for very inconsistent conduct. One has been removed by death, but his end appeared to be peace. He expressed hope in his death, and spoke of his joy in being present with his Saviour. So you see that the gospel is still the power of God to salvation, wherever it is received, and that it sustains all in the hour of need. He employed his last hours in exhorting those about him to cleave to the Word of God. He was taken in one of the two severe and fatal epidemics with which Samoa has been afflicted during the past year. Many died; but, by the blessing of God, on active treatment, many seemed snatched from the jaws of death and recovered. On such times of affliction a large supply of medicine is required, and much of the missionaries' time is taken up in attending to the sick; but many of the people feel sensible of the benefit, and appear grateful.

There is a large number of can didates—of whom we think some are very hopeful, but others we are obliged to look upon with much doubt. I hope that from among them we shall be able to select some young men and women who will be useful in the cause of the Saviour. In the public services we have all the variety of decided indifference, listless formality, and a good degree of earnest attention. That some do attend is evident, from their answers in catechising on the subjects explained and preached from; for you will have no difficulty in conceiving that in order to impress the subjects upon their minds, and make them familiar with the truths of the gospel,—we have often to depart from the strict mode of formal preaching to which we were accustomed at home. We preach and catechise, and catechise and explain, and, by the blessing of God, some appear to be increasing in knowledge. May it also be accompanied by growth in grace.

At present something like the following is a scheme of my work:—Every morning before breakfast (Saturday excepted), children's school. After breakfast, four days in the week, my class for young men and teachers; then preparation for classes or translation of scripture. After dinner, diocesan medicine; and then either have a class, or meet candidates, or have a public service—except on Friday, when I go to a village about five or six miles distant, to hold a Bible class. This, by the way, is a village which has long been noted for its opposition to the truth, and zeal for old customs. Its inhabitants have now, however, so far acknowledged the claims of religion as to abandon some of these practices; and a few of them are perhaps attending somewhat seriously to instruction from the gospel. On Sabbath, I have generally three services at different villages, and the native preachers attend to the rest of the places. The more distant division of the district I generally visit within every two months; but the teachers there come every week for sermons and an exposition of a part of Luke, which we are going over consecutively. At our last May meeting we had an improvement in contributions.—The day schools are not in such a flourishing state as I could wish—may be called middling, the children are not regular, still some are making progress. My dear S—'s boarding-school for girls acts on very well—greatly increased in numbers, being now twenty-eight. The parents are just now finishing a house for their accommodation, larger and more substantial than the old one; the people now seem more sensible of the benefits to be derived from it, and so appreciate it more fully.

The Popish priests have not reached this port yet; but report says that we may soon expect them. One old man, who was once a candidate here, has joined them; but I had never any confidence in him. However, he has returned to his

village, and is using his influence to induce the chief of it to become the head of a Popish party in this district, but he has not yet succeeded. Pray for us, that our people may be preserved from this snare of the Devil.

From the Reporter, you learn something of the threatened war by the dominant party in these islands, and some of its results. It is a great drawback, felt in all the stations, but especially so in the districts more particularly concerned. My district has not quite escaped—one end of it being politically connected with the party threatened. The people have for the present left their lands, and joined them in their present exile. I hope and pray that it may end in peace, and be overruled for good—"He maketh the wrath of man to praise him."

We had expected to have visited the stations to the west by this time, having made an engagement with a vessel during the absence of the John Williams, but the captain has broken his engagement, and we are disappointed. My heart is sad at the thoughts of it; and as the season is far advanced, sailing about these latitudes becomes dangerous now. Well, the Lord will arrange.

We have heard of the return of two of the teachers left on Anicetum to Tanna. They were fetched by one of the chiefs; but they also have been beset with difficulties and dangers. The Lord keep and bless them.

We have heard of a new scheme of one of the rich men in Australia, viz., that of taking a large number of Tanes and Lifu people to the colony, to make shepherds of them. It will be, I fear, a sad scheme for them. It is said that the Governor was displeased at it.

CHINA.—JOURNAL OF THE REV. M. S. CULBERTSON, MISSIONARY OF THE AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

View of the Island of Pootoo—Large Temple—
Birthday of a God less—Numerous Temples—
Exposure to Danger.

After visiting two temples, in one of which they heard "a solitary priest vociferating his prayers with headlong rapidity, as if working by the job," the missionary company went to the highest point of the island at which place we begin our extracts from the journal.

From the summit of the hill we had a view of the whole island, except so much as was concealed by intervening hills. The shore could be traced through the entire circumference of the island, and we were much surprised to find this celebrated seat of Buddhism so contracted in its limits. It seemed to be not more than four or five miles in length, and from to two three in width. Its shape it struck my fancy as resembling the figure of a man stretched out, and lying on his back; and one of my companions remarked that it resembled the figure of the image Buddha.

Near the summit of the hill, half concealed by the trees around it, stands a large temple. Some of the buildings have apparently been but recently erected, or at least thoroughly repaired, and all are in better order than any I have yet seen on the island. There were also a large number of newly finished idols, which with their gaudy colors, gave to the place an air of neatness quite unusual in such establishments. The priests are about thirty in number. They received us with every mark of cordiality, and took pleasure in showing us the buildings, and telling us the names of their numerous array of gods, which looked as if dressed out for the parade of some great gala day. They carried their civility so far as to bring a plate of rice for a dog belonging to one of our party.

30th. Long before day, the temples were resounding with the noise of chanting, accompanied by that of the drum, and the cymbal. The worshippers seemed to be animated by more than