

the honoured instrument of bringing the *first fruits* of Tana to his Lord and Master.

ERROMANGA.

Erromanga claims, next to Tana, our melancholy interest. There the attention, not of our Church only, but of the Christian world, has been attracted by the massacre of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon. The hostility of the natives on the island was evidently excited by the same influences that operated so fatally on Tana. The epidemic raged more violently, and carried off, in some districts, two-thirds of the inhabitants. From his own journal, it appears that Mr. Gordon had notified the obstinate heathen, that if they did not give up their hostility to the Word of God, some sore judgment would overtake them. When the unusual mortality occurred, they did not forget his words, and also how fatally were they avenged. Apart from such an incentive, however, we know that on Erromanga as elsewhere, the natives are prone to trace all their miseries and death itself, to their missionaries. Moreover, recent intelligence assures us that foreign influence was not awaiting to bring about the fatal issue. A wicked and abandoned foreigner, named Rangi, of *Singapore*, and therefore a *British subject*, persuaded the natives that the measles were caused by Mr. Gordon. This wicked man had acquired great influence throughout the island by his marriage to nine wives, each one a daughter of some influential chief, and all from different districts. With such an alliance, Rangi was all powerful to effect his base designs on the Mission family, and it becomes a serious question whether, until *British Law* vindicate its majesty on this British subject, any Church should re-establish a Mission agency on this island.

While we have thus traced the death of our beloved missionaries, Johnston and Gordon, to the embittered feelings of native hostility, excited by the ravages of disease, and by *foreign influence*—we discover the true stand point from which a fair view may be obtained, and a righteous decision given as to the degree of guilt incurred by those natives that have sought but too successfully the lives of these missionaries. This fearful crime was committed by heathen, under the persuasion that a mortality which had cut off one-third or two-thirds of their entire race, was the work of the missionaries. Their natural superstition and prejudice had been fanned into furious flame by the malignant insinuations and open charges of foreigners, and though it bring the mantle of confusion over our face, we must add British subjects. We ought to readily sympathize with a benighted people, their excited hostility to their missionaries, apart altogether from that deep natural aversion which the carnal mind always, and everywhere, entertains toward the Word of God. Under all the circumstances, we are constrained to express surprise that their wrath has been so long restrained, and that its fury when fully expressed, has not proved more fatal. Were such a mortality to be traced to the gross neglect or wanton wickedness of any individual or individuals in a christianized or civilized country, the vengeance of popular fury would with difficulty, if at all, be restrained so that the law might in regular course, overtake the guilty. Let us not then judge the heathen by a standard too stern, there is reason to fear, for the morality of christian lands.

In prosecuting our review of the Erromangan Mission during the past year, it is pleasing beyond measure to remark, that horrible as was the massacre of the Mission family, they lived not in vain, neither did they die in vain. The seventeen natives that preferred exile on Aneiteum with its christian worship to their home on Tana with its heathen customs, are living witnesses to the truth proclaimed by the life and death of Mr. Gordon and his faithful, heroic wife. Nor are these the only witnesses that have arisen to attest the success of the Mission. By the narrative of a recent visit of the *John Williams*, we learn that a company of natives met the visiting party, all clothed, and having nothing in their appearance to indicate the degradation and ferocity which are associated with the native character in this island. They were persons who had been attached to Mr. Gordon, and as they gathered around the visitors, they manifested the depth of their grief for his death by silent tears. A goodly number give evidence that the truth has made considerable impression on them. At the Bay ten persons, and at an out station not a few who were in the habit of attending schools and services under Mr. Gordon remain steadfast, observing the Sabbath day, and keeping up the