

bungalows here are like those bowers of delight I have described to you in other tropical countries. There are no wide verandahs, over which veils of luxuriant creepers weave garlands of delight, and no heavy scent of tropical blossoms perfumes the night air. Here few people have time, or care, to cultivate flowers, and somehow those who have, have only succeeded on a very small scale. Even the fire flies, which we demand as a positive right in all tropical lands, are very few and very dim. As to the houses, they are all alike hideous, being built of wood (weather-board is the word), and roofed with corrugated iron or zinc, on which the mad tropical rains pour with deafening noise; or else the burning sun beats so fiercely as we'll nigh to stifle the inmates, to whom the luxuries of punkahs and ice are unknown."

FIJIAN SCENERY.

It was found, too, that Fiji was not a land flowing with milk and honey. The high price of the ordinary supplies of daily food, together with the difficulties attending the vexed question of servants, made residence in these islands less desirable than one might suppose. A more extended acquaintance with her new house led Miss Cumming to make the subjoined statements: "This island is itself quite beautiful, though by no means a desirable one on which to establish a capital, as it consists entirely of very steep hills, rising to a height of about 3,000 feet, crowned with great crags, and rent by deep gorges densely wooded. . . . I must say the little town greatly exceeds our expectations. We had imagined it was the haunt of uproarious planters, and white men of the lowest type, described by visitors of a few years ago, instead of which we find a most orderly and respectable community of about 600 whites, inhabiting 180 wooden houses. We are told that the reformation in the sobriety of the town is partly due to the Good Templars, who here muster a very considerable brotherhood."

The shops, though modest, were found to be "fully stocked with all things needful." The main street possessed houses on one side only, and a stranger was amazed to find a town every house of which was destitute of a chimney! One source of disappointment was the almost total absence of flowers. Horses, too, were unknown until the arrival of a few belonging to the Government party. The first horse seen by the natives called forth the somewhat remarkable exclamation, "Oh, the great pig!"

FIJIAN CHURCHES.

Of one thing there is no lack in the Fijian island, namely Churches. In Levuka alone Miss Cumming found, "besides the Wesleyan native chapels," "A large Wesleyan Church for the white population, a Roman Catholic Church, and an Episcopal one." In native work the Wesleyans of course lead the van, "the Church of England most wisely judging it best to leave the Fijians wholly in the care of the Wesleyans, whose mission here has been so marvellously successful." The heathenism of these islands, before the Wesleyan Missionary took them captive for Christ, was of a terribly revolting character. In addition to the cannibalism for which the Fijians are so painfully notorious, every form of cruelty was practised. Human life

was held very cheap, virtue was unknown. Seldom have the ravages of sin been more apparent, or the victories of the cross more complete and glorious than in Fiji.

A MISSION TOUR.

Miss Cumming was soon afforded an admirable opportunity of forming an accurate estimate of the work of Wesleyan missions in these islands. The Rev. Mr. Langham, accompanied by his devoted wife, was about to make a tour of inspection into the interior. Miss Cumming was invited to join them. This she very gladly accepted. As a member of the Church of England her testimony has a peculiar value. A few facts and incidents we shall venture to repeat. A description of a native house—a chief's by the way—is too good to omit. Having explained that it consists of one large room for everyone, but that "in a very fine chief's house, such as this, large curtains of native cloth are hung up at night to divide the upper end into several snug compartments," Miss Cumming adds:—"There is no furniture whatever; and a pile of soft mats is the only bedding required. A Fijian pillow consists of a bamboo, or a bar of wood, standing on two wooden legs, six inches high, which supports the neck only very much like the pillows of the Kassirs, and on the same principle as those of Japan."

SUCCESS OF MISSIONS.

Mr Langham's work is referred to eulogistically. For years he went "to and fro, among the cannibal tribes, when they were all at war, as mediator and teacher, urging them to make peace and to abstain from the horrible customs of heathenism, and accept the loving law of Christ."

"I think," she writes, "it might well startle some of our sleepy congregations to find themselves in a Fijian Church, of which there are 900 in these isles, for every village which becomes Christian begins by building a church and a teacher's house, and undertakes to feed and clothe the latter."

SUNDAY IN FIJI.

A Sabbath among the converts gives Miss Cumming great delight. "The form of service" she found to be "much the same as in a Presbyterian Church, with the addition of the *Te Deum* and Apostles' Creed, which are chanted in the native fashion, the missionaries having wisely made use of native customs when practicable." Of the genuineness of the devotion which she saw manifested she found no reason to be skeptical. "Everything in daily life tends to prove its reality." The exceeding honesty of these native Christians is delightful. "Boxes and bags which are known to contain knives and cloth and all manner of tempting treasures, stand unlocked," and are perfectly safe. Nor is their generosity less remarkable than their honesty. They are very poor, and yet "not only does each village support its own teacher, but considerable offerings for a general fund are made at the annual school examinations and 'missionary meetings.'" These missionary meetings differ in character from our own. "They are simply great days of native merry-making, when the missionaries very wisely encourage the people to keep up the most popular and innocent of their national customs, and when all who attend those meetings

bring offerings according to their ability and inclination."

A NATIVE MISSIONARY.

Another singular and noble man, whose acquaintance Miss Cumming formed, was the Tongan minister Joeli Mbulu. The Tongans and their faithful minister have played too important a part in the evangelization of Fiji to be dismissed with a single sentence. The Tongans anticipated the work of the Wesleyan Missionary in Fiji. Themselves converted to God through the labours of Wesleyan teachers in the Friendly Isles, like the early Christians they went everywhere proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation; "and as they had frequent intercourse with some parts of Fiji it was not long before the Tongan sailors taught all they had learned to such of their own kinsmen as had already settled in Fiji and to such Fijians as could be induced to hear them." But they did more. By "the moving tale of awful horrors" which they told, and by the encouragement afforded by "the sowing of that first seed," the Revs. W. Cross and David Cargill were induced to "leave the comparative comfort of their homes in Tonga to come and establish the mission in Fiji, where they landed in October, 1835. They found many Tongans already settled at Lakemba, the island where the mission was opened. They were good pioneers, and rendered valuable aid in promulgating the doctrines of Christianity. From their ranks devoted teachers came forth, ready to labour, and, if need be, to die for their new faith. Of these Joeli Mbulu was the chief. The story of the conversion of these islanders, whose pastor Joeli became, is touching and sweetly illustrative of the Scripture, "Unto the upright there ariseth light in darkness."

WAITING FOR THE GOSPEL.

A series of misfortunes had shaken the faith of the Tongans at Ono, in their temples and their gods. Just then they learned something of Christianity: not much indeed, for all they were taught was, "that there was one God, whom all must serve continually, and that one day in seven was to be devoted to His worship." Faint as the light was they followed it eagerly.

"So on the sixth day they prepared their food for the seventh, on the morning of which they dressed as for a festival, and assembled to worship this unknown God. But here a difficulty arose, as to how to set about it. In their dilemma they sent for the heathen priest, whose god they were now forsaking, and requested him to officiate for them. This he did, to the best of his power, offering a short and simple prayer for the blessing of the Christian's God, but intimating that he himself is merely a spokesman for his neighbours, being himself a worshipper of another god!"

These sincere and earnest seekers, dwelling on the far-away isles of Ono, sent messengers to Tonga for Christian teachers. In the meantime Christianity was spreading at Lakemba, where the Wesleyan missionaries had gone. A number of converts from Lakemba determined to return to Tonga. A storm drove a canoe load of them to the island of Vatoa, about fifty miles from Ono. Hearing of the anxious enquiry after truth on the part of their fellow-countrymen at Ono, one of their number, Josiah,

went as a teacher to instruct them in the way of life. His labours were greatly blessed, a chapel soon being built capable of holding a hundred persons. "All this was done ere the messengers from Tonga returned to tell that white teachers had gone to Lakemba, and that to them they must apply for help." A native missionary was, however, marvellously raised up to supply this lack of service, so that when Mr. Calvert visited Ono he found a band of faithful disciples anxiously desiring to know the way of the Lord more perfectly. Notwithstanding persecution from their heathen neighbours—for it should be remembered that the islands of Fiji differ essentially from each other in the character of their inhabitants—Mr. Williams, who visited the isle in 1842, was delighted to find that out of 500, of a population, all were nominal Christians save three. And when Miss Cumming made the acquaintance of this people their piety was of so pure a type, their godliness so simple and true, that she felt constrained to echo Keeble's sad words:

"And of our scholars let us learn
Our own forgotten lore!"

DEATH OF JOELI.

Joeli Mbulu had been ordained as the native minister of Ono not long before Miss Cumming's visit. Her testimony to his character is emphatic. "I have rarely met any man so perfectly simple, or so unmistakably in earnest." His death, which is recorded towards the close of the volume, justifies the oft-repeated words, "Our people die well." Writing from Bau, May 7, 1877, Miss Cumming says:

"Last night there was great wailing and lamentation in Bau, for soon after midnight Joeli passed away, and died nobly as he lived. He was quite conscious to the very last, and the expression of the grand old face was simply beautiful, so radiant, as of one without a shadow of doubt concerning the home he was so near. No man ever more truly earned the right to say, 'I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith.'"

Purple Asters and Golden Rod.

O AUTUMN days, with your dreamy splendor;
Your crimson trees and withered sod;
Your golden haze in the sunset tender;
Your purple asters and golden rod!

Where the grass grew green along the hedges,
The dust lies thick on withered leaves,
The breeze loud rustles in the sedges,
And the nest is empty beneath the eaves.

The air is rife with haunting sweetness;
A half-breathed sigh for the days of yore;
A sense of the present incompleteness;
Regret for the dreams we can dream no more.

Dreams that are broken and lost in the dreaming;
Good that we could do, that we never have done;
Friendship is sweet, (that was sweet but in seeming)
Love we would win, that we never have won.

Ah! so many roses bloom for some,
Who heedlessly throw them from their hands;
So many lips through pain are dumb;
The hearts low cry who understands?

Perhaps at the end of some Autumn day,
When our eyes are turned to the "hills of God,"
We shall find by the dust and leaf-strewn way,
Our purple asters and golden rod.