

tion from Christianity," and that Abraham, one of their number, one of the first converts under Mr. Geddie, "spent much of his time reading the Scriptures to them, exhorting them, and praying with them, for which they all seemed very grateful," showed that the truth had been embraced by them in reality. These facts, and many similar that could easily be enumerated, show that God is making his word to be felt as a new and a vital power among those islands, and if the first-fruits be of such a character what may we expect from the full harvest?

During the first six and a half years of my connexion with the New Hebrides Mission the Lord favoured us with uninterrupted prosperity; our hearts were again and again cheered by the arrival of new missionaries. For the last two years and a half, however, although the progress of the Mission has been equally satisfactory, it has been chequered with manifold trials. For several months our letters from the New Hebrides have been like the messengers that came to Job, every one has brought us sadder and more distressing tidings than another, till at last we are appalled by the massacre of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon, an event that has not been paralleled since Williams and Harris met their death at the same place twenty three years ago. But the present calamity is more discouraging than that. At that time the natives were all heathen, and knew nothing of the character and objects of missionaries. In the present instance it was after the missionary and his wife had lived four years on the island, and after Mission families had been residing for thirteen years on the group. Our first stunning trial was the death of Mrs. Paton; then came the sickness of Mr. Matheson, which partially broke up the Tannese Mission for a twelvemonth. The same year Nemajin, a native teacher from my side of the island of Aneiteum, was murdered on Aniwa. On the following year Namuri, another Aneiteum teacher, from Mr. Geddie's side of the island, the first convert on Aneiteum, was attacked by the Tannese at Port Resolution, and sustained such injuries that he died of his wounds. Moreover Mr. Paton suffered repeatedly from attacks of fever and ague, and was frequently in danger of his life. The present year, however, eclipses all the past in the fearful calamities that have fallen on the Mission. Into the space of five short months there has been crowded an amount of disaster, suffering and crime, which would have filled up the average proportion of those evils, though spread over a quarter of a century. There has been an unprecedented loss of property, a still greater loss of native life, while the breaches in the Mission band have been distressing in the extreme. The brand of the incendiary kindled a flame on Mr. Geddie's two Churches that reduced the roof of the one and the whole of the other to ashes. God commissioned the elements and hurricane after hurricane swept over the islands with desolating fury, till on the 14th and 15th March a cyclone, unparalleled there in the memory of living man, completed this work of destruction. This was pre-eminently destructive on my side of the island, and the sea was greatly more so than the wind. The centre of the cyclone passed over Aneiteum. This was known from the dead calm that occurred. In the centre of the cyclone there is always more or less of a vacuum, and into this vacuum the sea rushes. At my station the sea rose seven feet above high water mark, while about three miles distant from my station, at a jutting headland, it rose upwards of thirty feet above what it rises at spring tides: and the consequence was that it made a clean sweep over the whole side of the island. And to say nothing of the destruction of native houses and native plantations of food, and that was very great, and the damage done to the personal property of the missionaries, the loss to the Mission in my district, in school houses, churches and mission buildings, cannot be less than £1000 sterling. The labour of years perished in a night. But this is neither the whole nor the worst: the mortality among the natives has been without a parallel. Measles were brought from Sydney and carried by trading vessels from island to island, till they spread over New Caledonia, the Loyalty Islands and the New Hebrides. Measles were followed by dysentery, and the natives were swept away by thousands. On Aneiteum, in spite of all that the missionaries could do, nearly a third of the entire population have died, while on many of the other islands the mortality may be estimated at one half or two thirds of the whole population. To add to our loss and grief Mr. Johnston, whose name was begun to be much set by, and who is so highly spoken of by all who knew him, was re-