

ritory and population than Aneiteum. There is, however, and always has been but one resident missionary there, so that Mr. Gordon's labours ought to be estimated in view of such obvious disadvantages as this fact implies. The martyrdom of Williams on this island, during his exploring voyage in the *New Hebrides*, was quite sufficient to deter any missionary from choosing such a scene of labour, while other fields less hazardous to human life could be obtained. We cannot fail to estimate highly the Christian fortitude and zeal, which induce Mr. Gordon to enter first into the footsteps of "The Martyr Missionary," and continue *alone* with his not less heroic wife, to confront all the perils and privations of hourly contact with *such* savage society. He left Nova Scotia in the fall of 1856, sailed in the *John Williams* from London, July, 1857, reached Aneiteum, June, 1858, and landed on Erromanga on the 17th of the same month. His last report under date June, 1860, does not give us therefore more than the results of two years service, which is just the period that elapsed before the first fruits were gathered on Aneiteum.

The state of the population when he first settled, was fully equal he says, to the Apostolic description in Romans i. 28—32. About twenty years ago idolatry had its stronghold on Erromanga, but about that time an epidemic overran the island, and swept off many of the sacred men who died without successors. Hindrances to mission progress may be recounted thus—the sandal wood establishment—war even among those who profess the new religion, and the influence of the Taneese. Shame, confusion and hatred have seized the natives by the reading of the law of Moses, and their pride has been wounded by the admission of females to Christian worship. While in these and other matters the missionary did not fail to recognize the working of the Enemy of souls, he saw evident tokens too that God reigneth. Providential occurrences have recently produced a very favourable impression. Some who openly profaned the Sabbath and despised the authority of Jehovah have died in dreadful agony. The tribe that forsook the house of God to fight lost their head in a few days by a sudden attack of illness. From this and similar occurrences great fear had seized many, while others shunned the missionary. The result has been that increased numbers have attended public worship and seem more than usually in earnest, as if the Spirit of God were at work. The schools have not yet succeeded, chiefly on account of the want of suitable teachers. Mana, the native who lived on Samoa for several years and accompanied Mr. Gordon on his arrival at Erromanga, has been more successful as a teacher than all the foreign teachers, so that it is confidently anticipated, when a sufficient number of duly qualified natives shall have been trained, great progress shall be made. Of about 20 young men that were induced to attend school at different times 10 have made some proficiency in reading, &c., and of these one or two will make efficient teachers. Mrs. Gordon has been severely tried in her efforts to teach the females, who are no sooner brought under her care and show evidence of improvement than they are driven away. It would thus appear that the missionary experience on Erromanga resembles much the advancing tide, which raises high its crested billow only to break upon the shore and retreat, seemingly as far as it advanced. Let us fondly indulge the hope that as each secures higher ground, the pure waters of the Spirit's life-giving influence will soon wash out the last vestige of heathen abomination from that blood-stained isle. Let the missionary's words dwell on our hearts: "We now see several instances of reformation about us, but no case I fear of real conversion. Pray, Oh pray that another year may not pass away without hearing of converts." Erromanga.

MR. MATHESON'S LABOURS ON TANA.

Mr. Matheson, our third missionary, left this Province October 1857 and reached Aneiteum July 1858. He was located on Tana, October following. His period of service, therefore, falls short of Mr. Gordon's by only a few months. We must, however, judge of the fruits in remembrance of his long continued and severe illness, which rendered necessary his retirement from active labour, and indeed his departure from the mission field. This illness seized him April 1859, some months before he had completed his first year. He did not return to Tana until the same month in the year following, so that at the date of his last com-