

vere. The very fact of our being able to hold our ground on a station, where teachers have not preceded us is considered here as a hopeful sign for the future

#### MANIFOLD DIFFICULTIES.

Of course among such a people we can not reasonably expect to see much improvement for several years. The language must be reduced to a written form, and instruction given, before the heart can be touched by the Spirit of God. How many obstacles Satan puts in our way; what almost insuperable difficulties have to be met and overcome before a heathen people can be Christianized! Could you but see the horrible depths to which they have sunk, and hear the language of their social meetings, you would feel constrained to ask:—"Can these bones live?"

#### DEAD AND DEGRADED.

Our people, like the rest of the islanders, are perfectly satisfied with their condition. They have no aspirations after anything higher than the mere gratification of their sensual appetites and passions. They love their abominable practices, their religion and their revelries. They are well enough acquainted with the Gospel to know its restrictions, to understand that accepting it they must abandon many things in which they now take supreme delight; while on the contrary they know little or nothing of the Gospel's blessings. Is it any wonder then that they oppose us, and seek to keep away that which they firmly believe brings sickness and death to many.

#### BAD INFLUENCES.

The influence of the traders helps to confirm them in their erroneous views of the truth. Liquor is now used by these white heathen to enable them to carry away the natives. Every kind of deceit and treachery is employed to destroy these poor wretches. Five sixths of our young men have been away laboring among white men, in Queensland, New Caledonia and the Fijis for periods ranging from one to five years; and so far as as I can learn not one of them has been benefited by his absence from home; but on the other hand I could give you abundance of evidence shewing that they are much the worse from their contact with white men, notwithstanding what Anthony Trollope may say to the contrary.

#### OUR WORK.

These natives have as a rule had all their dealings with dishonest traders and planters, so that the missionary must spend some time among them before he can convince them that he too is not a deceiver. Their confidence must be gained before

anything else can be done, and that is no easy matter. However, it is to overcome all these difficulties, to gain their confidence, to teach them the blessings of the Gospel, and impart to them its glorious truths, so as to elevate them to Christianity, that we are here.

#### OUR HOPE.

To accomplish this we stand not in our own strength. "Our sufficiency is of God." We feel that He will bless us in His work! Brethren, pray for us, that we may enjoy the double portion of the Spirit! We have an important field, worthy of more talents and piety than we possess. The number of our people is not perhaps over 500, but many of them are youths and children—the material we so much need for the future church in these islands.—The great discouragement in many parts of Efate and elsewhere is the scarcity of children, but of this we cannot complain. Our people are the most influential on this side of Fate; and they are a terror to many of the inland villages. Were our isles to embrace the Gospel the strongholds of the enemy on Fate would be nearly gone. We hope to be able to report some progress by the next mail.

#### OUR LONELINESS.

Our hands have been almost tied thus far from want of servants or helps to get the place in order. We had no aid whatever since December last until we returned from Synod meeting. The work on a new station is so great that we could not find time to visit the people very often, and when I had time and could leave Mrs. A. alone, I dreaded the work of drawing up my boat on my return. The anxiety and labor, together with exposure to this malarious climate, proved almost too much for Mrs. A.'s strength. On the 8th of April she took "remittent fever" pretty severely, being confined to her bed for over four weeks, and part of that time completely helpless. This increased my labours and anxiety. All the work devolved upon me, there not being a soul about the place, besides ourselves, save when some savage visitor made his appearance. Mrs. McKenzie spent two days with us, but not being well herself she could not remain longer. It is under such circumstances that one feels the loss of the advantages of civilization and the loneliness of mission life. However, the Master was very near and greatly comforted us both even in the midst of affliction.

It was my duty to send the Minutes of Synod to you this year, but to save a great deal of writing the Clerk is sending a copy of them with Dr. Steel for publication in Sydney, and a printed to copy will be forwarded to you. There is little news of