

The scene of our mutual foreign mission is of great importance from its mutual features, its surroundings, its prospects and its history. Polynesia, the fifth quarter of the globe, is a continent of islands stretching  $30^{\circ}$  on each side of the equator in a belt that traverses almost the whole of the great Pacific. These ocean abodes are stepping stones, or at least convenient places, of call for the lone mariners who, by thousands, plow these seas. They are fair and opportune resorts upon the great highway between Australia and vast Asia on the west, and America on the east, rapidly filling with the surplus population of the world. They are a milkyway of beautiful stars, clustered into constellations or groups with which the blue bosom of the great deep is studded. Their beauty and fruitfulness transcend the cold conceptions of our sterner skies. Like all tropical countries, they are sometimes desolated by the tempest or shaken by the volcano and the earthquake. Their forms do not weary the eye by uniformity, like the rolling prairies of the west, or the vast plains of South America, or the snow wastes of Russia, or the rocky solitudes of Arabia, or the huge river basins of India. For some have been thrown up out of the depths by subterranean fires, and others are columns of coral, manufactured by that quiet little architect who both prepares the material and frames and builds the house for higher beings, and then dies; hence the volcanic peak and the rounded summit equally relieve the eye with quaint and stranger outlines than we see here. Colossal trees clothe their summits: verdant lawns, with opening vistas into the forest, encircle their shores. Their yams, bananas and taro are so large that they seem to us vegetable monsters. Their soil and climate are such that vast nations might dwell in these retreats, some of them very large, and produce and raise and fabricate for mankind, and take no mean share in the trade of the world.

Nearly all the eastern or Malay islands are christianised. Such things hath God wrought. Missionary enterprise in the South Seas reads like one of the wondrous

supernatural tales with which the Arabian Princess charmed the evenings of the eastern caliph. Let me recommend Williams' book to those lovers of the marvellous, who waste their sympathies upon novels, which contain nothing new. About half a century ago, these islands were an unbroken preserve of Satan, where that old murderer was served with murder and bloodshed, cannibalism and lust. Cook and others had revealed these lands, and the time to favor them seemed to have come, for a missionary spirit had sprung up among the dry bones of decency and tradition; but where was the man? Forthwith "there was a man sent from God whose name was John," and John Williams came forth, lived and labored with unexampled genius and zeal, and died a martyr's death upon an island destined to show an evil record in the annals of heathen cruelty. The Melanesian islands of the west were still untouched by the light that had risen upon the groups of the east. Williams had perished in commencing the work in 1839. For two or three years, by means of native teachers, the work had, in the New Hebrides, small beginnings, but in many cases a bloody ending. About 1847 a favorable opening, after many days, presented itself in Aneiteum. A European missionary was wanted,—but where was the man? and again, from an obscure corner of the earth, of which few had heard, a man, who had secretly and silently, and without sympathy from his brethren and friends, been preparing himself with a chivalrous zeal for a work on the opposite side of the globe—a man was sent from God whose name was John. John Geddie gave up his charge on P. E. Island, and with his gifted spouse appeared on the scene. After a wonderful success followed labors, attended by self-denial, fatigue and danger to life, Mr. Geddie felt the need of a co-adjutor. But where was he to be found? He looked across the waters with that hope deferred that maketh the heart sick, and again a man was sent from God whose name was John. Bishop Selweyr's vessel appeared, and landed Mr. and Mrs. Inglis from a different part of the