

Missionary Intelligence.

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

Tuesday, February 5th, 1856.

The following extracts from letters recently received from the Rev. G. H. Nobbs, Chaplain of Pitcairn's Island, addressed to the Rev. T. B. Murray, were laid before the meeting:—

"Pitcairn's, June 29th, 1855.

"H.M.S. 'Amphitrite' touched here Feb. 17th, on her way to Valparaiso, from the Sandwich Islands. Having forwarded my letters so short a time before, I had none ready to send by her. Besides, her stay was so short (24 hours); and the bustle and excitement consequent on such occasions preclude the possibility of writing, even did not etiquette demand my attendance on the commander. By this ship I received your letters, dated respectively, Oct. 8th, 1853, and Feb'y 2nd, 1854, so that you may easily conclude our postal facilities are not first rate.

"I noted in my letter of November last the arrival in good order, of the numerous articles brought to Valparaiso in the 'Narwhal.' H. M. S. 'Dido' brought them hither."

Mr. Nobbs then proceeds to relate the circumstances attending the death of his eldest son Reuben, who had returned ill from Valparaiso to Pitcairn. The melancholy death of Daniel M'Coy by a fall from a rock on the Island is also described.

"Such, and so sudden was the death of Daniel M'Coy; a young man beloved by all the community, and most deservedly so. He is the third of the family, who has met an untimely end within a very few years. William M'Coy died from lock-jaw, occasioned by a splinter of wood running into the upper part of his foot; Matthew M'Coy, from wounds received by the accidental explosion of the 'Bounty's' and now the third brother, Daniel, by falling from a precipice on the north-western side of the island. May the God of the widow support poor Lydia under the awful calamity! She has no children to rest her affections upon, but she has a mother, and brothers, and sisters, and she has the sympathy of the whole community. Oh Him, who, above all others, well deserves the name of Friend, may she place her unwavering trust; to Him let her flee as a very present Help in time of trouble; and all will be well, both for time and eternity.

"The number of deaths on the Island this year has been six; a larger amount than have occurred in any one year, since our unfortunate visit to Tahiti. Up to the present date the deaths exceed the births.

"We are most grateful that so large a sum as £500 stg. has been secured for our future benefit. I do not think there will be a necessity for drawing a portion of it for these next two years, if we should remain here so long. If there should be a removal to Norfolk Island, that may alter the case. The next time you favour me with a letter, I want your opinion as to what I ought to do, if some families remain here, in preference to removing to Norfolk Island, whenever an opportunity is offered them. I have no choice on the subject. I have mentioned it to my Diocesan, the Lord Bishop of London, in my former letter; but I should like to have your advice also. I think it probable that some families will remain; and I have no objection to remain with them; but of course I hold myself in readiness to go if desired to do so.

"I learn from letters from good Admiral Moresby, that he has been busily engaged since his return, regarding the proposition for our removal. May his strenuous efforts for our welfare, temporal and spiritual, be attended with all the success he so unhesitatingly anticipates. And may he be spared to witness the beneficial results of his wisdom and liberality.

In another letter, which arrived at the same time, Mr. Nobbs said,

"Pitcairn's Island, July, 19, 1855.

"We have Divine Service twice on the Sabbath; and a Sunday-school for five classes (60 persons) afterwards. The teachers are Jemima Young, Mary Young, Jane Nobbs, Francis Nobbs, and myself. There is also public service every afternoon at four o'clock, with the exception of Saturday, on which days the men are generally out in their canoes fishing, and the women busy in preparing food for the Sabbath.

"The Holy Communion was administered on the first Sunday of each month. The total number of communicants is 78. At the age of sixteen, after due preparation, they are admitted to the Lord's Table. Our day school is from 8 in the morning till one, five days in the week. Edward Quintal is the schoolmaster. I attend every day from ten until the dismissal.

These duties, with the care of the sick, keep me in constant employ and, I am happy to say, beneficially so. The young man who keeps the school being incapacitated from bodily infirmity for any other occupation, I have made over to him the pecuniary resources of the school, to wit, one shilling per month for each scholar, paid in potatoes, &c. So that I am altogether dependent upon my stipend from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel; the more especially as I have now no beloved son in Valparaiso to contribute to my necessities.

"Nevertheless, I will take my stand upon these declarations of the son of Jesse; 'trust in the Lord, and be doing good; dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.' 'He hath given meat unto them that fear him. He will ever be mindful of his covenant.' But a greater than the son or grandson of Jesse has prescribed the line of conduct imperative on the believer in these words: 'Therefore, I say unto you, Take no thought,' &c. &c. St. Matt. vi. 25—33. May I have grace to appropriate them!"

"Pitcairn's, July 16, 1855.

"The greater part of the community are holding themselves in readiness for a removal; and several have relinquished house-building. We are now on the eve of yam-harvest, and though the crop is quite a poor one, we have a good stock of sweet potatoes to turn to; but few or none to spare for ship. However humanly speaking, the pinch of this year is over; and perhaps by next March, we may, if it please God, be on our route for Norfolk Island. We are going on very comfortably at present. Both church and school are well attended, and a very great degree of unanimity exists."

"P.S.—Sept. 14, 1855. We are all well. I forward this by a whale-ship going to Juan Fernandez. We learn from this ship the death of the Czar; but there is not a newspaper on board; so we are still in the dark.

A letter was read from Mr. G. M. F. Young, the Island Magistrate, dated Pitcairn, Sept. 18, 1855. The following is an extract:—

"As Capt. Fremantle, of H.M.S. 'Juno,' will call at Tahiti on her return to Sydney, I embrace the opportunity of sending you these few lines. The 'Juno' has been sent by the governor of New South Wales to see how many of our people will remove to Norfolk Island. At the request of the Captain, I assembled the heads of the different families together, to know what they intended to do. One hundred and fifty-three have given in their names to go to Norfolk Island, which will leave but thirty-four behind. Oh! it is hard to part from dear Pitcairn's; but we have seen and felt the necessity of doing so, and as the Government have made us the most noble offer that has ever been made to any other people, we feel that it is folly to refuse it. Unless circumstances prevent them, I think that those who have given their names will certainly go.

"The 'Juno' is going from here to Tahiti to water. From there she will proceed to some other islands in this ocean, and then to Sydney. As soon as an opportunity occurs, the Governor will send a vessel to remove us, which the captain says will be by the beginning of the next year. So you see that the time is not long when we shall be called upon to bid farewell to dear Pitcairn's Island."

Youths' Department.

THE TRESS OF HAIR.

BY ALBERT LAUGHTON.

A SIKKLE tress of golden hair;
A sacred relic kept with care;
A memory of one so fair.

That angels left their hymning band,
And came to earth, to take his hand,
And led him to the Unseen Land.

But ere he trod the starry way
That leadeth to eternal day;
As calm and beautiful he lay,

This curling tress of golden hair,
This sacred relic kept with care,
She gathered from his forehead fair.

Oh, lingering o'er the treasure long,
A thousand tender memories throng—
She hears again his cradle song!

And yesternight before she slept,
She pressed it to her lips and wept:
Warm tears down her pale face fell.

While to her aching heart she said,
"Why mournest thou that he is dead?
He sleepeth in a peaceful bed;

"God called him to a sweet repose,
And he hath slept through winter's snows,
Till now the dewy violet blows.

"Above his grave—soft mosses spring,
And birds with free and happy wing
All day their heaven-tuned praises sing.

"Ah, yes! with joy the April rain
Thrills Nature's breast—but mine with pain
Sigheth, he will not come again."

THE HOUSEHOLD "GOOD NIGHT."

"Good night!" A loud clear voice from the stairs said that it was Tommy's. "Good night!" murmurs a little something from the trundle bed: a little something we call Jenny, that filled a large place in the centre of one or two pretty large hearts. "Good night!" lies a little fellow in a plaid ruffe dress, who was christened William, about six years ago.

"Now I lay me down to sleep.

I pray the Lord my soul to keep;

If I should die—before—before—"

and the small bundle in the trundle-bed has dropped off to sleep, but the broken prayer may go up sooner than many long petitions that set out a great while before it.

And so it was "Good night" all around the home-stead, and very sweet music it made, too, in the twilight, and very pleasant melody it is now, as we think of it, for it was not yesterday, nor the day before, but a long time ago; so long, that Tommy is Thomas Somebody, Esq., and has almost forgotten that he ever was a boy, and wore what the bravest and richest of us can never wear but once, if we try—the first pair of boots.

And so it was "good night," all around the house; and the children had gone through the ivory gate, always left a little ajar for them, into the land of Dreams.

THE UNGRATEFUL SON.

The following incident was related last year by Rev. R. Weiser.

"The eye that mocketh at his father, the raven of the valley shall pluck it out." Prov. xxx. 17.

This is a terrible denunciation against ingratitude to parents, and even to the present day is sometimes virtually fulfilled.

Some years ago an Irish gentleman who was an extensive contractor on the public works, was reduced to poverty by the profligacy and dishonour of an ungrateful son. The old man lost his wife, and to add to his calamity, his health failed, and to fill his cup of sorrow, he lost his sight. Thus poor, friendless, blind, and forsaken, he found an asylum in the Franklin County Almshouse, Pennsylvania.

While an inmate of this refuge for the afflicted, his wicked and ungrateful son travelled that way; he was informed of his father's situation, and that his parent wished to see him; and although he passed within two hundred yards of the almshouse, he refused to stop and see the kind father he had ruined. Now mark the result.

The very day he passed the almshouse on his way to Gettysburg, in an open carriage, he was overtaken by a storm, and took a severe cold, that resulted in the destruction of his eyes. He lay at Gettysburg in a critical situation until his funds were exhausted, and those who had him in charge took him to the Franklin County Almshouse.

The very day he was brought in, his father, having died the day before, was carried out. He was put in the same room, occupied the same bed, and in a short time followed his neglected and broken-hearted father to the judgment-seat of Christ. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God.

Selections.

DIOCESAN SYNOD.—The following remarks of the Bishop of Montreal, after the division on the recent meeting to form a Diocesan Synod in that Diocese, will be read with interest:—

The Bishop said he supposed the vote just taken might be considered as expressing the opinions of the meeting with respect to the necessity for the formation of a Synod. He desired at that stage of the proceedings to make a few remarks. He felt a deep responsibility rested on himself in this matter, but his first wish had been to have it so brought before the Clergy and Laity of his Diocese as to enable them to understand fully the real state of the question. They had had something substantive before them which had awakened feelings of interest and called forth the opinions of both Clergy and Laity. But he did not desire to have the constitution and rules for the government of a Synod hastily adopted. He wished them to be duly considered and intelligently discussed. It was not likely they could retain all the delegates here a sufficient time to discuss them as they should be now, and he therefore thought it best, not on account of any threats of withdrawal, but to give full time and opportunity to all to consider them, not to proceed farther than to affirm the necessity for a Synod on the present occasion. He had never wished to force Synods upon his people. They had been demanded