

these refugees, "would to God that France were so supplied with Gospel writings, that in cottages and in palaces, in cloisters and in the inner sanctuary of all hearts, a powerful witness might be borne for the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." The presses stationed at Basle, were incessantly employed in multiplying French works, which were forwarded to Flavel, and by him introduced into France, through colporteurs—"poor men, of good character for piety, who bearing their precious burden, went through towns and villages, from house to house, knocking at every door." Thus, as early as 1524, there existed in Basle, and having France for the field of their operations, a *Bible Society*, an *Association of Colporteurs*, and a *RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY*.

This brief review is sufficient to show the estimate in which the press was held by the Reformers; and it furnishes some insight into the means by which that amazing Reformation was achieved, in the blessings of which ten generations of men have rejoiced, and which will be the joy and wonder of all succeeding ages.—*From a Report presented to the American Tract Society.*

#### COMMERCIAL IMPORTANCE OF MISSIONS.

BY REV. JOHN S. C. ABBOTT.

SEVERAL years ago, the whale ship *Essex*, from Nantucket, sailed for the Pacific Ocean. She was well provisioned and manned for a voyage of three or four years. Several on board of the ship had families on the land, who were anxiously to wait for the lapse of these weary years, before they could hope again to see their husbands and fathers. The ship proceeded prosperously on her voyage, crossed the Equator, doubled the Cape, and was successfully cruising on the whaling ground of the Pacific Ocean. One day a school of whales appeared; two of the boats were lowered and went in pursuit of them. The mate, and one or two men were left on board the ship. Suddenly they saw an enormous whale, his head full out of the water, his mouth open, and apparently in a phrenzy of rage, coming with almost inconceivable velocity towards the ship. In a moment, he struck the ship. Her bows were stove in as though a mountain had been hurled against her. The whale appeared to be for an instant stunned by the terrible blow, and slowly sank below the ship. Soon, however, the enraged monster appeared several rods off on the other side of the ship, rushing down upon her again with the same frantic fury. She this time struck the stern of the ship, and crushed it in like an egg shell. Having thus apparently satiated its rage, the whale sank again into the depths of the ocean and disappeared. The seamen stood almost motionless in their utter consternation, and the ship sank immediately to the water's edge, and rolled an irreparable wreck in the trough of the sea.

The absent boats were immediately recalled by signals of distress. But no one can describe the despair which overwhelmed them, as they contemplated their awful condition. There they were, thirty men, on the broad bosom of the Pacific, in open whale boats, with all their provisions under water, the nearest land several hundred miles distant, and that inhabited by the most ferocious savages. The coast of South America was some two thousand miles distant. The idea of navigating such an expanse of the ocean in open and frail whale-boats, with the slight quantity of provisions which could be obtained or stowed away, seemed utterly hopeless. Death then stared them in the face. Horrible alternatives—to die either by the spear and the club of the cannibal, or by the slow process of starvation on the sea.

The winds in that region were such that they could with much comparative ease have run to the Marquesas Islands, and thus, were it not for the savage, every man could have been saved. But they dared not do it. It was more safe to encounter famine and thirst, the storms and monsters of the deep, than to venture near the luxuriant and fruitful groves of those tropical islands, where man is living, as Rousseau expresses it, in "*the innocent simplicity of Nature!*" Thus excluded from all hope of refuge in the neighboring islands of heathenism, these unfortunate men, after making every preparation in their power for their desperate voyage, with sad and despairing hearts raised their sails to move slowly across the trackless ocean for the coast of South America, clinging to the hope that they might be picked up by some passing ship.—Days and nights came and went, and no sail appeared in the distant horizon. To-day the three boats would sleep becalmed upon the glassy ocean, and the suffering men were blistered by the burning rays of a tropical sun; the next day, perhaps, opposing winds would drive them from their course. One night a terrible storm arose, and when the morning dawned over the darkness of that dreadful night, one of the boats had disappeared forever. Weeks passed away, and still there was no relief. Their provision was gone, their water was gone, and still these unfortunate men, reduced to skeletons in their unutterable wretchedness, saw nothing around them but the dreary expanse of ocean and of sky. Some became frantic, and laughed and shouted in that horrible mania attendant upon starvation, and others rolled in the bottom of the boat in the most frightful convulsions. Soon one died, and then another, and the survivors greedily devoured the remains of their departed comrades. Thus ninety-three days passed away, while these wretched men upon the merciless sea were enduring anguish and agony indescribable. At last, a sail was seen. It espied their signals of distress, and the few surviving sufferers, reduced to perfect