

THE NEW HEBRIDES.

From Erromanga, Mr. Robertson writes as submitted to the Assembly:—

It is now twenty-five years and nine months since Mrs. Robertson and I took possession of Erromanga in the name of the King of Kings. Our prayer the night the first "Day-spring" left us here—the day of settlement—was "Erromanga for Christ!" That prayer has been answered; to God be all the glory.

Surely it is no small honor to succeed such men, in their work here, as John Williams, James Harris, James McNair, and the brothers Gordon; and our Church, too, has been honored, for the Gordons, McNairs, as well as the present missionary and his wife, were all sent out and supported by the Canadian Church.

Again, your three missionaries now in the New Hebrides have been twenty-five years each in the field, making a record, say for one laborer, of seventy-five years, and if we add to Mr. Macdonald's, who joined the mission when we did, we have four men, bring up the record to one hundred years for one man. And four of your mission families namely, the Geddies, MacKenzies, Annands and Robertsons, tolled for a quarter of a century in this mission, or equal to 100 years' work of a missionary and his wife.

During the year, or since May, 1897 I have received on the island towards the Teachers' Fund up to the present time (March 5, 1898) in sterling money, the sum of £44, and of this, £4. 3s. 9d. was marriage fees! I do not make a charge, but state our needs and say that if any man young or old, whom I marry, is able and willing to give ten shillings, more or less, for the Teachers' Fund, it will be gratefully received and applied to that worthy object, which they should all regard as a sacred duty to maintain.

A few, chiefly young fellows, who get beautiful young brides (?), respond gracefully, and sometimes an old man who gets a young wife; and a short time ago the bridegroom gave 5s. and the bride came smiling up, after the ceremony, with 5s. too. She seemed pleased with her bargain. Others of the men seemed doubtful about it until they get better acquainted with their wives (many of them have never exchanged words with their life companion until that day of their marriage, but most of them have their full share of words after marriage).

Over the whole island our teachers and the better classes among their people prepared, in all, 4,000 lbs. of arrowroot last year, of a superior quality. This is 1,000 lbs. more than we ever made in any one year, and I promised the people if they would put forth a special effort last year, and make a large quantity I would apply a proportion of the

proceeds, less expenses, to "The Erromangan Teachers' Fund," and I intend to apply one-fourth, or proceeds of 1,000 lbs., to that object.

We have refunded to the B. & F. Bible Society the cost of printing and binding 2,000 copies of the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. The Society very generously made a reduction of £28, and Mr. Barnett forwarded out to me quite lately their receipt in full for the balance against us. We are now going to begin to bank something with Society towards paying for printing the entire N. T. when it is ready.

Three of our best teachers died during the year, of whom two were old and tried elders, and one of these was a young teacher and helper with James D. Gordon over twenty-eight years ago.

We have on Erromanga 36 teachers, 300 communicants, and a population of 1,500.

FORMOSA.

The report to Assembly says:

The year 1897 in North Formosa has been one of trouble, anxiety, and danger. Armed bandits scoured the country wrecking vengeance on solitary Japanese—plundering natives and seizing individuals, only to be liberated with large sums of money. Especially in Kap-tsu-lan the poor Pe-po-hoan Christians were hunted like partridges—men, women and children spent days and nights during fierce storms under Pandanus hedges. Since the Japanese enlisted a few as militia, the hatred of the outlawed bandits knows no bounds.

One preacher writes: "The Pe-po-hoan have to hide like rats."

At one village a man fifty-eight years of age was sitting in his hut after dark. Robbers appeared. He shouted for help, whereupon a gun was rammed into his mouth and his head was blown off!

As anticipated when in Canada, Japanese Buddhist Priests have poured into our field. The following are their methods:

1. Natives are threatened to be reported as rebels if they don't become members.
2. Natives are assured of safety from officials and soldiers by enrolling their names.
3. Natives are reminded that they are Buddhist anyhow, so don't need to change much!
4. A picture of an idol on paper is stamped and given as a pledge of security. Some natives frame and hang it in a conspicuous place in the house.

The past year has been characterised by "Rumors of wars." At one time Germany,