

taught by carefully trained native ministers and teachers.

LIFE IN THE VILLAGES.

During a residence of two years in the Fijian archipelago, I had occasion to visit a large number of these villages as a guest in the house of the teacher or the chief. I lived in the midst of the kindly courteous people; I marked the reverent devoutness of their lives, the simple earnestness of their bearing, at the never-failing morning and evening family worship and frequent church services; and I found it hard to believe the facts related to me by reliable eye-witnesses of the appalling scenes of carnage, fighting, human sacrifices, most debasing idolatry, and grotesque cannibal feasts, which five, ten, or fifteen years previously had formed the incidents of daily life in districts where now English ladies and their children may travel, or even settle, in perfect security.

THE CHANGE OF TWO SHORT YEARS.

I spent one Christmas in a village where two years previously scenes of cannibalism had been enacted by the very people who now received us so kindly, and assembled for worship in a church recently built by themselves. Several years have passed since then, and no symptoms of any relapse have been shown by any tribe in the Fijian group. The work accomplished in Fiji by the agency of the Wesleyans, is, perhaps, the most remarkable instance of a successful mission that could profitably be quoted.

OTHER GROUPS OF ISLANDS.

On leaving the Fijian Isles, I passed on to the Tongan, or Friendly Isles; thence to the Samoan, or Navigators Isles; and then, still sailing eastward, to the Society group. In each of these I found the same wonderful change wrought by the agency of missions. The workers in these groups have been sent out by the Wesleyan and the London Missionary Society, and will have done their part with such excellent results that not one trace of idolatry is to be found in any of these isles; moreover, the wicked customs of old days, notably, the terrible prevalence of infanticide, are utterly abolished, and are replaced by Christianity of a thoroughly practical sort—a Christianity which exercises a more decided influence on daily life than it appears to do in our own British Isles.

Many of these isles, as also of the beautiful southern group of the Marquesas, are receiving the light from Hawaiian teachers, sent out by the Congregational Church* of the Sandwich Islands, a group which was thoroughly Christianized in the early half of the century by the agency of the American Congregational Mission. That the conversion of the Hawaiians was no fiction but a great fact was proved by the radical change in all the habits of the whole race, which was uplifted from the lowest state of degradation to the standing of a people determined to live Christian lives.

Within thirty years of the day when the first Christian teacher landed on the shores of Honolulu (now a green paradise) this great change had been wrought. The contrast between the wild and desolate volcanic soil, now transformed to the loveliest tropical gardens, is not more marked than between the Hawaiians of 1819, celebrating wild, heathen orgies at the funeral of the great Kaneka Meha, and those of 1850 forming devout congregations in upwards of a hundred Christian churches, built by their own hands, and sending forth carefully-trained and most zealous Hawaiian missionaries, to try to establish a footing among the fierce cannibals of the Marquesas.

In her two volumes, "At Home in Fiji," Miss Gordon gives further testimony to the effect of missions.

CAVILLERS REBUKED.

"I often wish that some of the cavillers who are forever sneering at Christian missions could see something of their results in these isles. But first they want to recall the Fiji of ten years ago, when every man's hand was against his neighbor, and the land had no rest from barbarous, intertribal wars, in which the foe, without respect of age or sex, were looked upon only in the light of so much beef, the prisoners deliberately fattened for the slaughter.

Think of the sick buried alive, the array of widows who were literally strangled on the death of any great man; the living victims who were buried beside every post of a chief's new house, and must needs stand clasping it while the earth was gradually heaped over their devoted heads; or those who were bound hand and foot, and laid on the grass to act as rollers when a chief launched a new canoe, and thus doomed to a death of excruciating agony; when whole villages were depopulated simply to supply their neighbours with food.

Just think of all this, and of the change that has been wrought, and then just imagine white men who can sneer at missionary work in the way they do. You may pass from isle to isle, certain everywhere to find the same cordial reception by kindly men and women. Every village on the eighty inhabited isles has built for itself a tidy church, and a good house for its teachers or native minister, for whom the village also provides food and clothing. *Can you realize that there are 900 Wesleyan churches in Fiji*, at every one of which the frequent services are crowded by devout congregations; that the schools are well attended; and that the first sound which greets your ears at dawn, and the last at night, is that of hymn singing and most fervent worship, rising from each dwelling at the hour of family prayer.

What these people may become, after much contact with the common race of white men, we cannot of course tell, though we may unhappily guess. At present they are a body of simple and devout Christians, full of deepest reverence for their teachers and the messages they bring, and only anxious to yield all obedience.

Of course there are a number of white men here, as in other countries, who (themselves caring not one straw about religion) declare that Christianity in these isles is merely nominal, adopted as a matter of expediency, and that half the people are still heathen at heart. Even were this true (and all signs go to disprove it), I wonder what such cavillers expect. I wonder if they know by what gradual steps our own British ancestors yielded to the light, and for how many centuries idolatrous customs continued to prevail in our own isles. Yet here all traces of idolatry are utterly swept away.

HONESTY AND LIBERALITY OF THE PEOPLE.

One thing that strikes us forcibly in all our dealings with these people is their exceeding honesty. Day after day, our goods are exposed in the freest manner, more especially on Sundays, when, for several hours, not a creature remains in the house where we happen to be staying, which is left with every door wide open, and all our things lying about. Boxes and bags which are known to contain knives and cloth and all manner of tempting treasures stand unlocked, and yet, though the village is invariably within a stone's throw, we have never lost the value of a pin's head.