

ever since been increasing in interest and importance. The Society's first mission ship, *The Duff*, set sail for the south seas in the month of August, 1796, with twenty-nine missionaries on board, and after a seven months' voyage, reached the island of Tahiti, the largest of the group since called the Society Islands, which you will see by the map, lies about twenty degrees south of the equator, west from South America, from which they are distant about 5,600 miles. The lines

“Where every prospect pleases
And only man is vile.”

well describe Tahiti, for it was, and is, a lovely and fertile island where flowers, and fruits such as cocoa-nuts, bread fruit, bananas, plantains, yams and many others grow in abundance. But the poor people were in a dreadful condition, they offered human sacrifices to their idols, considered human flesh their choicest food, murdered the sick and aged and many of their infant children, were constantly quarreling and fighting, and lived in such sinful vice that their minds were debased and their bodies diseased. Did not they need the Gospel of peace? But alas! for long years they would not listen to it, and some of the missionaries got discouraged and left; but others, noble good men they were, remained and laboured, and prayed on, and at last in the year 1811, fifteen years after their first landing, a change came and the good seed began by God's blessing to yield fruit. First the King Pomare became a Christian, and a good many of his people followed his example; then his heathen subjects rebelled, and for a considerable time there was civil war, but the king was so merciful to his enemies that they began to think that his religion must be a very good one, so they, too, gave up their idols, stripped their chief god of all his ornaments and set him up—his body was first a big log of wood—in the king's kitchen to hang baskets of food on, which they thought the meanest use they could put him to. In a wonderfully short time after this churches were built all over the island; the people eager to be taught crowded to the schools, and soon learned to read the portions of Scripture which the missionaries had translated into their language and printed. They held prayer meetings among themselves, had family worship in nearly every house, and on the Lord's Day no work was done, (all food was got ready on Saturday,) and the whole day was spent in church, or quietly in their own homes. These also were greatly improved, and peace and comfort, decent clothing and orderly habits soon became the outward indications of the happy effects