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## South Sea Islands.

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**M**ARITIME discovery and land exploration have largely influenced missions. Dr. Livingstone knew it would do so. His dictum has passed into a proverb: "The end of geographical discovery is the beginning of missionary enterprise." Captain Cook thought it very unlikely that Christian missions would ever attempt to evangelize the islands of the Pacific. Yet it was the publication of his "Voyages" which led to the revival of missionary work 100 years ago. Dr. Carey read the "Voyages," and was stirred by the state of the people revealed in them. He was providentially led to India; but Dr. Hawies also read the "Voyages," and the result was the formation of "The Missionary Society," in 1795, which selected Tahiti as its first field of evangelization. Thirty missionaries, a number of them artisans, sailed in 1796. When they reached the islands they found that Captain Cook's accurate description of the natives did not sound all the depths of Polynesian depravity. They found the people very low and thievish. Most of the missionaries left Tahiti; some died; some lapsed into wayward courses. Mr. Nott alone remained. At length a reinforcement came, and some returned from Australia, whither they had gone. In 1813 a native Tahitian was overheard praying as a penitent sinner to the true God. If angels rejoiced over such, these weary missionaries shed tears of joy over this scene. Their idols were burned in 1815, and the king became a Christian. Two men arrived who exercised a great influence on the rising cause, Messrs. Ellis and Williams. Mr. Ellis brought a printing press, which awakened great interest and did eminent service to guide and satisfy inquiry. John Williams became the Apostle of Polynesia, reaped great harvests of souls, and advanced Christian work. He "could not be content on a single reef," and built a vessel, discovered Rarotonga, and carried the Gospel to Samoa. When he visited England and published his "Missionary Enterprises," the Archbishop of Canterbury said they were "an additional chapter to the Acts of the Apostles." Great enthusiasm arose from the perusal, and new reinforcements went to the South Seas. In 1836 two thirds of the people in the Society Islands could read, and 2,000 were communicants. The Word of God was printed in the language of the people. Naval officers, notably Captain Fitzroy, of H.M.S. Beagle, on board of which was Charles Darwin, testified to the remarkable effect of missions on the people.

The Samoan Mission began in 1820 by native pioneers. A great desire for missionaries arose. The first band reached Samoa in 1836. When Mr. Murray opened a church, so great numbers attended that 2,250 pigs were killed and cooked, with vegetables to suit, to satisfy the wants of the company! The results now are—all the Samoans can read and write. They are a Christian people 30,000 in number. The Malur Institution has educated in fifty years 1,000 native teachers and pastors. They raise £1,000 a year for the London Missionary Society. The Hervey Islands are evangelized. In 1823 Rarotonga was

ignorant of God; in 1834 family worship was in every house. Eleven islands are in the Church, and the character of the people is excellent. Dr. Macfarlane baptized 5,000 in Lifu. Already in New Guinea 500 are baptized, and the New Testament is printed in Motu. Eighty stations are occupied. A mission vessel has long served these islands, and it is to be replaced by a steamer.

In Tonga the work began in 1796. Appalling difficulties fell on the missionaries during a long and gloomy period. At length most were killed or had left. The Wesleyan Mission undertook the work. A great awakening occurred in 1831. The king, lately deceased, then became a convert. He built churches, liberated slaves, encouraged the missionaries, and even preached. The Tongan church became self-supporting in 1870, and gave liberally to missions. There are thirty-two inhabited islands, with 20,000 Christians.

Fiji was a hotbed of all the vices. The people were savage cannibals. Messrs. Cargill and Cross went there in 1835, at the peril of their lives. Messrs. Culvert (lately deceased) and John Watsford, who still survives, went in 1838, while the fierce struggle with heathenism was proceeding. Great has been the change. In 1835 there was not one Fijian Christian. In 1885 there was not one Fijian heathen in eighty inhabited islands. There are only 10 European missionaries, but there are 65 natives ordained, 41 native catechists, 1016 teachers and preachers, 1889 local preachers, 28,000 communicants, 4,000 on trial, 1,884 Sabbath-schools, with 40,000 scholars, and 104,000 attendants on public worship. There is a church in every village, with a house for the minister built by the people. There are 1,100 churches, with a Christian college in Fiji. The Bible is printed in the language, and as Miss Gordon Cumming has testified, the last sound at night in every house is the praise of God, and the first in the morning.

The New Hebrides were a sphere of violence and crime in the time of the sandal-wood trade, in which 300 white men perished. John Williams resolved to take the Gospel to these isles. He also perished in the attempt, at Eromango, in 1839. Other lives were imperilled, as those of Nisbet and Turner, at Tanna, from which they had to flee in 1842; the Gordonso were killed in Eromanga in 1861 and 1872. But Geddie and Inglis triumphed in Aneityum and won the island for Christ. Dr. Paton won Aniwa after his romantic perils on Tanna. Ten other islands are Christian, and 30 islands have mission stations. There are 18 Presbyterian missionaries and 200 teachers, and translations of whole or parts of Scripture in 12 languages. There are 10,000 Christians in the group.

Many difficulties met the work in the South Seas, not only from native depravity, but from white men vagrant in the islands, from lustful crews, from intoxicating liquors, kidnapping, etc., but the results are that 350 islands of the Pacific are Christianized, 500,000 people have been brought into the Church, and the expense has been only two millions sterling in nearly 100 years! Missions in the Pacific have not overlapped each other in rivalry, but have worked in different groups and with great effect for God. "What hath God wrought!"