

bourne. About half-past one o'clock the children, to the number of about 2000, assembled in the railway shed, and were addressed by the Revs. Geo. Mackie and A. Morrison, by whom the claims of missions were eloquently advocated.

Letter from Rev. John Geddie.

The following very interesting Letter has been received from our veteran Missionary.

ANEITEUM, NEW HERRIDES,

Dec. 25th, 1863.

Rev. and Dear Brother,—

My annual letter ought to have been written months ago. I delayed because there was little to report about Aneiteum, and I also wished to give you the latest information about the neighbouring islands. This explanation will I hope satisfy you. You are aware that our fifteenth year on Aneiteum closed in July last. We have enjoyed much of the divine goodness during these eventful years. Few missionaries have stronger reasons for adoring gratitude to the Father of mercies. We feel as if we ought now to set up our Ebenezer and say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

HEALTH.

The present year I regret to say, has been unusually unhealthy. A severe epidemic passed over the island some months ago, and swept off a large number of the natives. The most of those who died were persons who had not entirely recovered from the effects of the measles. It seems indeed as if the present generation of adults would never recover their former vigour. The children however are strong and healthy, and on them the future hopes of the island depend. Our attention has of late been directed to sanitary improvements. We find by our statistics that the greatest mortality prevails on the low lands near the shore, whereas the hills in the interior are comparatively healthy. Some of the natives are by our advice building on the high lands, but they seem much averse to leave the spots where their ancestors have from time immemorial lived.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The general progress of the work is encouraging on this island. Our Sabbath day

services and schools are well attended.—Many of the natives make a consistent profession of religion. We fondly hope that not a few are Christians in reality as well as in name. If the excitement about Christianity is not so great now as in former years, it is evidently more wholesome. Crime is on the decline, and morals improve, as our chiefs have comparatively little to do at their quarterly courts.

The most important event of the year has been the arrival of the New Testament. It has been printed by the British and Foreign Bible Society at an expense of over £300 sterling. The workmanship is well done, and if the translation were only worthy of the favourable opinion expressed about it, it would rank equal to many of the Society's versions of the word of God. We are thankful for it as it is. Our next edition will be an improvement on the present one. It is an unspeakable boon to this people to possess so much of God's word in their own tongue. Our translations have awakened some interest among the British and Continental philologists, as they are among the first of a new order of dialects, and when the structure of this language is understood and compared with other dialects, it may help to throw some light on the history of the dark races which inhabit so many of the Pacific Isles.

CONTRIBUTIONS.

Our missionary contributions this year amount to £4 11s. sterling in money, and about 4500 lbs. of arrow-root. Our esteem-brother Mr. Inglis, was very urgent that the whole, though a free contribution to the mission, should be appropriated to the payment of the New Testament. As the natives have not the means at present of raising money to purchase the Scriptures, the other members of the mission concurred in the proposal. I hope you will approve of this appropriation of the missionary contributions for the present year. The arrow root will be sent to the Australian Colonies to the care of persons interested in the mission and we hope to realize one shilling per pound for it.

NECESSITY OF VISIT HOME.

I beg now to call your attention to a sub-