

eight or ten in number. They are from different parts of the island, and have been attracted to the harbour by the sandal wood establishments, on which they are a sort of dependants. They neither profess heathenism nor christianity, but live without any religion. They are much more demoralized than their heathen countrymen by their intercourse with white men. Now a man belonging to this party is known to have said that if one of their number, who was very ill, should die, the church would be burnt; the man died and the church was burnt soon after. Another of the party confesses that he said it was *his* intention to burn the church when the thatch was dry enough for his purpose, but of course denies having done so. It was known at one of the sandal wood establishments two weeks before the church was burnt that the party alluded to intended to do it, but no intimation of their design was given to me or to any of the natives. I believe that they regret the strange omission now, and are not without fears that men who burn churches may not scruple to molest them in a similar way. The reason given for silence was the improbability of such a thing being done.

Since the loss of our church we meet in a new school house which was opened only a week before the sickness broke out. The church was not taken from us without a reason. We were all most probably too proud of it. It was no doubt the best building in Western Polynesia. Perhaps we have been devoting too much attention to the externals of religion, and too little to the things which are vital, essential and saving. May the event be sanctified to us all. We hope to repair the building in due time, and perhaps to improve it. I long for the time when we may be permitted again to assemble in it, but alas! many who worshipped with us there, will worship with us no more on this side of the grave.

FEARFUL HURRICANE.

I close my account of disasters by a brief notice of a fearful hurricane which passed over this island on the 15th of last month. We had two hurricanes this season previous to the cyclone to which I refer, but they will bear no comparison to it. Few of the present generation have witnessed so severe a storm. The centre of the hurricane passed directly over the island. This we know because we had a short interval of dead calm after which the wind came up from another quarter. Now it has been ascertained that there is a sort of vacuum in the centre of the revolving hurricanes which prevail in these latitudes. The amount of damage done by the hurricane was immense, and it will be years before the island recovers from the effects of it. Trees were torn up by the roots, houses blown down in every direction, and a great quantity of food destroyed. Food will be very scarce this year, and it is only the great mortality from disease that is likely to save the island from the horrors of famine. The only injury sustained by us, was the loss of all our fences, and the thatch partly blown off our houses. Mr. Copeland's station however has suffered severely. The sea came up into the house, destroyed the large and beautiful building in which the Normal School was taught, and battered in the front of the church, which was also injured by the wind. Nearly all Mr Copeland's school houses were destroyed, and a few of mine. The sea on the north side of the island must have been 10 feet above high water mark. Two lives were also lost on the night of the hurricane. One woman was swept away by the sea and seen no more; and a man was burnt to death in a grass house, which was blown down, and caught fire before he could escape. Two vessels which were lying in the harbour were wrecked. As the hurricane came the week after the church was burnt, the natives regard it as a judgment on the island for that wicked deed. The natives of this and other evangelised islands seem to view all calamities as the effects of sin. They are like the Jews of old who said, "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents that he was born blind?" or like the barbarous people of Melita who said of Paul, "No doubt this man is a murderer, whom though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live." The visitations of God are sent for trial as well as for punishment. It is a much wiser and safer course to endeavour to improve them, than pronounce judgment on God's design in sending them.

REFLECTIONS.

I have now given you a brief account of disasters, which have followed each other in quick succession. It is a remarkable fact that severe calamities have be-