

A LETTER,

Containing Remarks on the Moral State of
TAHITI, NEW ZEALAND, &c.

By CAPT. R. FITZROY AND C. DARWIN, ESQ. OF H.M.S. 'BEAGLE.'

A VERY short stay at the Cape of Good Hope is sufficient to convince even a passing stranger, that a strong feeling against the Missionaries in South Africa is there very prevalent.

From what cause a feeling so much to be lamented has arisen, is probably well known to residents at the Cape. We can only notice the fact: and feel sorrow.

Having lately visited some of the principal islands in the Pacific, and passed time enough in Australia to become acquainted with the opinions of some of the first men in that country respecting Missionaries, and the Missionary system, we were wholly unprepared for such notions as those so predominant in Cape Town.

Before requesting a few minutes' attention to some facts connected with this subject,—let me ask, whether the ideas expressed in the two following extracts from the works of Sir James Mackintosh, are not of higher value than the hastily formed opinions,—I would hardly say prejudices,—of people who think but little?

Speaking of England, Sir James says, "Our scanty information relating to the earliest period of Saxon rule leaves it as dark as it is horrible. But Christianity brought with it some mitigation.

"The arrival of Augustine in Kent, with forty other missionaries, sent by Gregory the Great to convert the Saxons, is described in picturesque and affecting language, by Bede, the venerable historian of the Anglo-Saxon Church.

"It cannot be doubted that the appearance of men who exposed themselves to a cruel death for the sake of teaching *truth*, and inspiring *benevolence*, could not have been altogether without effect, even among the most faithless and ruthless barbarians. Liberty of preaching what they conscientiously believed to be Divine truth, was the only boon for which they prayed."

Again Sir James says, "Let those who consider any tribes of men as *irreclaimable barbarians*, call to mind that the Danes and Saxons, of whose cruelties a small specimen has been given, were the progenitors of those who, in Scandinavia, in Normandy, in Britain, and in America, are *now* among the most *industrious, intelligent, orderly, and humane*, of the dwellers upon earth."

If it is said that the races of men above mentioned always surpassed the Hottentots, the Bushmen, or the Caffers, in natural abilities and disposition, I will ask, are there any tribes of savages in the world, in a state more degraded than those just named? I presume the answer will be "yes, the New-Hollanders, and the natives of Terra del Fuego."

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Yet some of those *most* degraded of human beings, four natives of *Terra del Fuego*, were carried to England in the *Beagle*; were placed under the care of a schoolmaster, in whose house they lived, (one excepted) and there learned to speak English, to use common tools, to plant, and to sow. They were taught the simpler religious truths and duties; and the younger two were beginning to make progress in reading and writing when the time arrived for their return to their own country. I landed them among their people, by whom they were well received, but very soon plundered of most of the treasures their numerous friends in England had given to them. No dulness of apprehension was shewn by those natives—quite the reverse.

The dispositions of all, especially the younger ones, were so good, although with failings inseparable from a thorough-bred savage, that it was hard to believe that, in the latitude of 54 degrees south, they once went naked, destitute of any covering, except a small piece of seal skin, worn only upon their shoulders; that they had devoured their enemies slain in battle; or that they had smothered, and afterwards eaten, the oldest women of their own tribe, when hard pressed by hunger during a severe winter!

Surely, if three years sufficed to change the natures of such cannibal wretches as Fuegians, and transform them into well behaved, civilized people, who were very much liked by their English friends, there is some cause for thinking that a savage is not irreclaimable, until advanced in life; however repugnant to our ideas have been his early habits.

Humboldt says,—

“If, in the great and useful establishment of the American missions, those improvements were gradually made, which have been demanded by several bishops; if, instead of recruiting missionaries at hazard in the Spanish convents, young ecclesiastics were prepared for these functions in seminaries or colleges of missions founded in America, the military expeditions which I propose would become useless.

“Even those Indians, who, proud of their independence and their separate state, refuse to suffer themselves to be governed by the sound of the bell, receive with pleasure the visit of a neighbouring missionary.

“By leaving the Indians to enjoy more of the fruits of their labors, and by governing them less,—that is, by not shackling every instant their natural liberty,—the missionaries would see the sphere of their activity, which ought to be that of civilization, rapidly increase.

“Monastic establishments have diffused in the equinoctial part of the New World, as in the north of Europe, the first germs of social life.

“They still form a vast zone around the European possessions; and, whatever abuses may have crept into institutions, where all

power is confounded in one, they would be with difficulty replaced by others, which, without producing more serious inconveniences, would be as little chargeable, and as well adapted to the silent phlegm of the natives.

"I shall recur again to these settlements, the political importance of which is not sufficiently understood in Europe. It will be sufficient here to observe that expeditions of discovery, accompanied by an armed force, would be useless, were the government and the bishops to employ themselves seriously in the melioration of the missions.

"The progress of the missionaries would become rapid, if (after the example of the Jesuits) extraordinary succours were assigned to the most distant missions; and if the most intelligent and courageous ecclesiastics, and those best versed in the Indian languages, were placed in the most advanced posts.

"In both Americas the missionaries arrive every where first, because they find facilities which are wanting to every other traveller.

"'You boast of your journeys beyond Lake Superior,' said an Indian of Canada to some fur-traders of the United States; 'you forget, then, that the *black coats* passed it long before you; and that it was they who showed you the way to the west?'"

But who can hear, or read of the wonderful exertions and effects of missionary zeal in South America, without admitting their important utility? Very many parts of that extensive continent are now almost unknown, and inhabited only by savages; which, before the expulsion of the Jesuits, were the seats of flourishing establishments of Indians, at the least semi-civilized, increasing, and improving yearly.

Yet in how few years had the missionaries effected so much!

Southey informs us that the first six Jesuits who set foot in the New World, landed at Bahia de todos Santos, in April, 1549. "Most distinguished among them was Manoel de Nobrega, the Apostle of Brazil, contemporary of the illustrious Xavier, and his rival in disinterested exertions for the good of his fellow-creatures.

"The obstacles they had to encounter in the works of civilization were most formidable, but their zeal and assiduity rose with the difficulty of the enterprise, and the most salutary effects resulted from their exertions.

"They began by teaching the native children the Portuguese language, and thus, while they fitted them to become interpreters, were also learning the Indian tongue. The greatest obstacle they had to surmount arose from the cannibal propensities of the natives. In feasts of this horrid description, their pride, their religion, their greatest luxury, were all implicated. The missionaries resolved to try to conquer this diabolical habit; but though they succeeded in putting down drunkenness—in healing

intestine feuds—in making a man content with one wife; the delight of feasting on the flesh of their enemies was too great to be relinquished; this propensity they could not overcome!!”

A remarkable characteristic of the zealous spirit of those earlier American missionaries was their “entirely gratuitous performance of every religious ceremony.”

“Nobrega had a school near the city of Bahia, where he instructed the native children—the orphans sent from Portugal—and the children of mixed breed. Reading, writing, and arithmetic were taught them; they learned to assist at mass, and to sing the church service.

“Frequently they went in procession through the town. The singing had a great effect, for the natives were passionately fond of music.

“When on an expedition to a strange, and perhaps hostile tribe, Nobrega took with him a few of the little choristers.

“At approaching an inhabited place, one of them carried the crucifix, in advance, the others followed singing the litany.

“Every where the savages received him so joyfully, that Nobrega began to think that the story of Orpheus, however exaggerated, had a better foundation than that of a fable. The pleasure of learning to sing was such a temptation, that the little children sometimes ran away from their parents to put themselves under the care of the Jesuits.

“Nobrega died in the fifty-third year of his age, prematurely worn out by a life of incessant fatigue, consequent on unexampled exertion, and heroic virtue. The day before his death, he took leave of all his friends, as if he were about to undertake a long journey. ‘They asked him where he was going?’ He replied, ‘Home! to my own country!’”

Quitting opinions, and the tale of other times, it may be desirable to see what has been doing at Otaheite (now called Tahiti,) and at New Zealand, towards reclaiming the ‘barbarians.’ That epithet is, however, inapplicable to the natives of Otaheite, who were semi-civilized when discovered by Wallis, in 1765.

The *Beagle* passed a part of last November at Otaheite or Tahiti. A more orderly, quiet, inoffensive community I have not seen in any other part of the world. Every one of the Tahitians appeared anxious to oblige, and naturally good tempered and cheerful. They showed great respect for, and a thorough good will towards, the missionaries (of the London Missionary Society); and most deserving of such a feeling did those persons appear to be, with whom I had the sincere pleasure of making acquaintance,—Messrs Pritchard, Nott, and Wilson.

The missionary body have a considerable influence over the Queen of the Society Islands, as well as over her council, being considered the wisest men, and the truest friends, whom the natives of Tahiti can consult; but the Queen and the Chiefs are far

from allowing any approach to dictation, or authority, on the part of *any* foreigner; they are tenacious of their own honor and independence; and only yield to advice when their reason is sufficiently convinced of its propriety.

To detail all that occurred, during even our short visit, tending to shew the beneficial effects of missionary exertion in that distant island, would occupy too much of your time; I will only copy a few of the notes which are in our journals, (Mr. Darwin's and my own,) taking them as they occur—without alteration—believing that, in their original language, the feelings excited at the time will be shewn better than by an abridgment.

Monday, 16th Nov. 1835. At Tahiti.—The *Beagle* was scarcely secured at her anchorage, before a number of canoes had assembled around her. All could not get alongside—but those whose outriggers obliged them to keep at a distance, contained natives who appeared to be as happy, and as civilly-disposed, as those who patiently waited by the ship's side until leave was given for them to come on board. The necessary work being completed, permission was given, and in a few minutes our deck was thronged by men and boys. No women appeared.

Every one was more or less clothed, excepting a few little boys.

D.*—I suppose the number of natives on board the *Beagle* could not have been less than two hundred. It was the opinion of every one, that it would have been difficult to have selected an equal number of the lower order of any other nation, who would have given so little trouble, or behaved so well.

Mr. Darwin and I landed among a mob of amusing, merry souls, most of them women and children. Mr. Wilson, a missionary who came out in the ship *Duff* more than thirty years ago, was at the landing place, and welcomed us to his house. The free, cheerful manners of the natives, who gathered about the door, and unceremoniously took possession of vacant seats, either on chairs or on the floor, shewed that they were at home with their instructor, and that churlish seclusion, or affected distance, formed no part of his system.

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Two chiefs walked into the room; they shook hands, sat down, and conversed familiarly with Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, in quite a European manner. They were cleanly, and, for the climate, well dressed. Their appearance and manners were prepossessing, and totally different from those of savages.

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A proof that the missionary influence is not paramount, I may copy from Mr. Darwin's journal,—“A very unbecoming custom is now almost general. The natives cut their hair so closely, that

* N.B. The letter D. prefixed, denotes an extract from the Journal of Mr. Darwin.

the heads appear shaven like those of monks, who leave only a small circle of hair. The missionaries have tried to persuade the people to change this habit, but they say 'it is the fashion:' a definite answer at Tahiti, as well as at Paris.

19th November.—Walking towards the house of Mr. Nott, I saw an elderly native writing, in his cottage, and apparently very intent upon his employment. I asked to see what engaged his attention. It was a Tahitian version of the book of Jeremiah, written by Mr. Nott, which he was copying in a good distinct hand. Mr. Nott, the senior missionary upon the island, has almost completed a great work,—the translation of the Old Testament.

18th November.—

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D.—Suspended, as it were, on the mountain side, there were glimpses into the dark depths of vallies; and at the highest pinnacles of the central mountains, which, ascending to within sixty degrees of the zenith, hid nearly half the sky. It was a sublime spectacle to watch the shades of night gradually covering the highest summits.

Before we laid ourselves down to sleep, the elder Tahitian fell on his knees, and repeated a long prayer. He seemed to pray as a christian should, with fitting reverence to his God, without ostentatious piety, or fear of ridicule. 19th. D. At daylight, after their morning prayer, my companions prepared an excellent breakfast of bananas and fish. Neither of them would taste food without saying a short grace. Those travellers, who hint that a Tahitian prays only when the eyes of the missionary are fixed on him, might have profited by similar evidence.

D.—About two years ago, although the use of the Ava* was prohibited, drunkenness, from the introduction of ardent spirits, became very prevalent. The missionaries prevailed on a few good men, who saw their countrymen rapidly working their own ruin, to join with them in a Temperance Society. From good sense and shame, the Queen, and all the chiefs, were at last induced to become members. A law was then immediately passed prohibiting the importation, or sale, of any kind of spirit. With remarkable justice, a certain period was allowed for the sale of stock in hand; but on an appointed day a general search for spirits took place, from which even the closets or trunks of the missionaries were not exempted.

D.—When one reflects on the effects of intemperance on the aborigines of both Americas, one may estimate the gratitude due from the Tahitians to their missionary counsellors.

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20th.—Conversing with a Mr. Middleton about the Low Islands,

* Obtained from a native root.

(those coral islands extending eastward from near Tahiti to beyond the Gambier group,) among which he has spent much time, I was much struck by the personal dislike and jealousy shown by him, when alluding to the missionaries themselves; and by the strong terms in which he mentioned the good effects of their intercourse with the Low Islanders; and how much more missionaries were required. His own words, as I have them in a paper written by himself, are: "The inhabitants of those Islands are now familiarized to Europeans, and are becoming partly civilized, owing to the gospel having been preached to them by the missionaries."

In another place he says,—“On this island there are inhabitants enough to require the constant residence of two missionaries.”*

His own antipathy to the individuals, has arisen, I find, from personal differences.

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At the door of a house I saw the owner reading a book attentively. It was the New Testament. I shall not easily forget the expression of that man's countenance, as he read aloud, thinking himself alone. To my mind, such a sight tells more than any descriptions.

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21st.—One of the officers slept in a house inhabited by a large family of the middling class of Tahitians. He told me that before sleeping the oldest man said prayers; one of the young men read a short portion of the New Testament; and then a hymn was sung by the whole family. I am informed that this was no more than the general custom in Tahitian families.

22nd, Sunday.—A party of us went to Papiete; others to Mr. Nott's church. Those who could not go far from the ship attended Mr. Wilson's Sabbath meeting, to see the natives at divine service.

At Mr. Pritchard's church in Papiete, we found an orderly, attentive, and decently-dressed congregation. I saw nothing grotesque, nothing ludicrous, (as some late voyagers have seen); nor any thing which had a tendency to depress the spirits, or disappoint expectation. The church was quite full; many were sitting outside. I suppose six hundred people were present, besides children. The fluent delivery of Mr. Pritchard, while preaching in the Tahitian language, surprised, and very much pleased us. Two of them were making notes of the sermon upon paper. A few were inattentive, but very few, compared with the number present.

* From Tahiti, many natives have gone, as missionaries, to other Islands. Of late years, the natives have opened the way for the European teachers. By their united influence and unabated exertion, Christianity, and consequent civilization, is spreading rapidly amongst the natives of Polynesia.

It was evident the children had not been treated with harshness, for they clustered about their minister so closely, that he could not move without pushing them aside.

D.—Mr. Pritchard was regularly educated at the Mission College. He appears to be a sensible, agreeable gentleman, and a good man. I have already mentioned Mr. Wilson with respect. Mr. Nott, the senior missionary whom we have seen, has resided forty years on the island. His occupations are now chiefly literary. He bears a very high character. I have said this much of these three persons, because the character of those who labour in the cause to which they are devoted, has been so often attacked.

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D.—One of my impressions which I took from Beechey and Kotzebue, was entirely wrong. I thought that the Tahitians had become a gloomy race, and lived in fear of the missionaries. Of the latter feeling I saw no trace. As to discontent, it would be difficult to pick out of an European crowd so many happy, merry faces.

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D.—On the whole, it is my opinion that the state of morality and religion in Tahiti is highly creditable. Perhaps those who attack the missionaries, their system, and the effects produced, do not compare the present state of things with that of twenty years ago, nor even with that of Europe at the present day. Looking only to the high standard of gospel perfection, they seem to expect that the missionaries shall effect what the apostles themselves failed in doing. In proportion as the state of things seems to be short of their high and ideal standard, the missionaries are blamed.

Credit due for what *has* been effected, is not allowed. It appears to be forgotten by those persons, that human sacrifices,—the bloodiest warfare,—parricide,—and infanticide,—the power of an idolatrous priesthood,—and a system of profligacy unparalleled in the annals of the world,—have been abolished,—and that dishonesty, licentiousness, and intemperance have been greatly reduced, by the introduction of Christianity: In a voyager it is base ingratitude to forget these things. At the point of shipwreck, how earnestly he will hope that the lesson of the missionary has extended to the place on which he expects to be cast away!

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25th, Wednesday.—At day-light this morning I went to Mr. Wilson's school-house, now used also as a chapel, the old church at Matavi* having been blown down by a violent gale of wind.

* Mr. Pritchard lives at Papiete, near the Queen's usual abode. Matavi is the name of the village in which Mr. Wilson lives, about eight miles from Papiete.

(On each Wednesday morning a short service is performed in each of the Tahitian Churches.) This morning a hymn was sung, an extempore prayer followed, and then another hymn. The congregation was numerous and very attentive. I noticed that all the principal men of the district were present. Mr. Wilson's manner pleased me much. It was the sincere and naturally impressive manner of a kind-hearted, honest man, earnestly performing a sacred duty.

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The Queen, and a large party, passed some hours on board the *Beagle*. Their behaviour was extremely correct, and their manners were inoffensive. Judging from former accounts, and what we witnessed, I should think that they are improving yearly; and that the conduct of the missionaries, and their families, has an influence over them exceeding that of a very differently disposed people by whom, unfortunately, they are often visited.

Thursday, 26th.—At daylight this morning some of our party went to the school at Papiete. As we had heard of 'compulsion' and 'unwilling attendance,' I went early without having said a word to any one which could lead them to expect a visitor. In and about the large church, I found groups of elderly, and even old, people sitting together *helping each other* to read. While one read, the other listened; and if able, corrected him. One man, with spectacles, not less than sixty years of age, was *learning to read!* Some came in, others went out, just as they chose. During about an hour after sun-rise, these elderly people were instructing one another in this manner, previous to beginning their daily employment.

Meanwhile in the school-house, a number of children (about ninety) were occupied in reading aloud, writing on slates, or answering questions, in the usual manner of infant schools.

Mr. Pritchard asked me to desire them to write a sentence. I said 'the captain wishes you much happiness.' Mr. Pritchard having interpreted, they wrote his words instantly, and some of their own accord, added, 'and we wish happiness to the captain.' The hand-writing of many, indeed most of the elder girls and boys, was very good. The questions they answered readily; and though apparently in good discipline, a merrier, or more cheerful looking set of children I never saw.

Returning by way of the (Tahitian) church, I saw Hitote, and several other chiefs, engaged in eager discussion. Mr. Pritchard and I went in. "You are come just in time," said they, "We are disputing about the lightning conductors on board the *Beagle*; and cannot determine whether they end in the ship's hold, or whether they go through her bottom into the water." Mr.

Pritchard interpreted to me, and I tried to give them an explanation.

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As to the morality of these islanders, and especially that of the women, which, though reprobated by some, has been defended by no less authorities than Cook and Turnbull, I would scarcely venture to give a general opinion, after only so short an acquaintance; but I may say that I witnessed no improprieties, neither did I see anything that would not incline me to suppose that their habits of morality are better than those of many civilized nations.

It appears to me that the missionaries have succeeded in carrying attention to religion, and general morality, to a pitch at which it can hardly be maintained in future years, when intercourse with other countries will undermine their influence.

Human nature in Tahiti cannot be supposed superior to erring human nature in other parts of the world.

With respect to those who have severely censured the interference and effects of the missionary system,—I subscribe entirely to the following remark of Mr. Darwin :

D.—I do believe that, disappointed in not finding the field of licentiousness so open as formerly, and as was expected, they will not give credit to a morality which they do not wish to practise, nor to the effects of a religion which is undervalued, if not quite despised.

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Is it not a striking fact, and one which ought to be recorded to the lasting honor of missionaries, that, owing to their example and influence, a *Nation* has solemnly rejected the use of ardent spirits?

NEW ZEALAND.

21st December.—In a conspicuous, solitary position, an English-looking house, without a building, or indeed any object except a flag staff, near it, presented a remarkable contrast to the fortified villages of the natives, and impressed one's mind with a conviction of the great influence already obtained over the wild cannibals of New Zealand.

In that lonely house lives the British Resident, his sole defence our national flag; his interpreters, and only supporters, the missionaries of the Church of England.

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From the anchorage, in the Bay of Islands, the view is very pleasing. One of the most conspicuous objects is the new church, now building by voluntary contributions.

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22nd.—I walked with Mr. Baker (missionary) about the little village of Paihia. Mr. Henry Williams, who was formerly a lieutenant in the navy, was absent on an exploring and negotiating expedition to the southern parts of the island.

I much regretted having missed seeing him. He is considered the leading person among the missionary body in New Zealand; and is said by every one, who speaks of him, to be most thoroughly devoted to the great cause, in which he was one of the first, and most daring.

Afterwards we went to Kororadika a village at the side of the harbour opposite to Paihia.

The new church, before mentioned, is a slightly built edifice of bricks, with an abundance of bad glass windows. Placing a church at the head quarters of iniquity, at such a notorious place as Kororadika, is certainly a bold trial.

Notwithstanding the ill-will entertained towards the missionaries by our *spirit-selling* countrymen, and by the evilly-disposed of the native population, not a pane of glass has been broken, nor has the slightest impediment been offered.

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In a long list of subscribers to the building, I saw the names of many masters of merchant ships and whalers, placed before very considerable sums.

D.—This little village (Kororadika) is the very strong hold of vice. Although many tribes, in other parts, have embraced christianity, here the greater part of the people are still heathens. By them the missionaries are held in no esteem; but their conduct is inoffensive compared with that of our own countrymen. Strange as it appears, I have heard the missionaries say, that the only protection they now need, or on which they securely rely, is that of the native chiefs; and that too against their own countrymen,—English settlers.

23rd.—With Mr. Baker I went to Tapuna, the place where the first missionaries, Mr. King and Mr. Kendal established themselves in 1813. Mr. King was absent. His son told me that he was travelling amongst the natives. He was on horseback, the son said, but quite alone. Mrs. King described the former state of things which she witnessed herself, in very strong terms. She could not look back to those days without a shudder.

Many times they were told that 'before morning their house would be in flames,' and that 'stones were heating in the ovens in which they were to be cooked.' But Mr. King found a trusty friend in a well-known chief named Waripoaki, and to him he always sent for assistance.

Returning, we landed upon an island lately purchased by two Englishmen, not long ago masters of whale ships. The verbal attacks upon the missionaries made by these men, their illiberal

aspersions of Mr. Busby's* character, and their own manners, and disgusting conversation, prevented our remaining many minutes in their company. Such men as these,—strongly prejudiced, deaf to reason, and often habitually vicious,—run-away convicts, whose characters may be imagined,—and democratic, untractable natives, cause the principal difficulties against which honest, upright settlers, and the whole missionary body, have to contend.

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24th.—I went with Mr. Baker to a native village at some distance, called Cawa-cawa. It was pleasant to witness the cordial greetings which passed between Mr. Baker and the natives whom we occasionally met. He had been asked by them to visit their village in order to settle some disputes which had arisen between their neighbours and themselves. He also wished to gain advocates for the abolition of the use of spirits. By temporising, talking to both parties, and inducing each to go half way, Mr. Baker succeeded in amicably settling the disputed affairs.

Is it not gratifying to find that even in this savage country the missionaries are appealed to, and act as mediators and peace-makers?

In our return I went a little way out of the path to look at two oxen, lately imported.

Near the door-way of a house, in a retired place, a sick woman was reading a book. It was a copy of the Gospel of St. Matthew, printed at Paihia, in the New Zealand language. Now there could have been no affectation nor hypocrisy in the occupation of that woman; her being seen was quite accidental and unexpected.

Enquiring about her afterwards, I found that she was one of a long list of invalids, who depend upon the mission for advice and medicine. Mr. Baker told me that one of the most troublesome, though gratifying duties of the Missionaries, is that of acting, or attempting to act, as medical men. No regular practitioner having as yet established himself in the land, every complaint is entrusted to their attention and good will, but slight medical knowledge. How necessary it must be for a missionary to have some knowledge of medicine and surgery!

The successful wanderings of the Jesuit Faulkner would be a sufficient demonstration, if numerous other instances were wanting. Owing to his skill in medicine, Faulkner was enabled to be a solitary instance of a white man living many years in safety among various tribes of wandering South American Indians.

28th.—I went to Waimate, the settlement lately formed by the Mission, with the view of introducing agriculture, and the mechanical arts, among the natives. The thoroughly English ap-

* The British Resident.

pearance of three well designed, respectable houses, surrounded by gardens, out-houses, and well cultivated fields, was surprising and delightful. About twenty acres of land seemed to be worked. Corn was in full ear, and looked well. I was received by a person whose intelligent, kind, and truly respectable demeanor at once excited a kindly feeling. This was Mr. Davis, the superintendent of the farming establishment. Mr. William Williams and Mr. Clarke, were absent, having gone to the opposite side of the island to attend the funeral of a young missionary of the Wesleyan persuasion. In the gardens all English vegetables seemed to thrive. The farm yard was thoroughly English. A large barn, built entirely by natives, under Mr. Davis's directions; a blacksmith's shop and forge; English carts and farming implements, successively engaged attention. In the barn two natives were thrashing corn; another native was attending to the winnowing machine. A mill, and mill-dam, entirely the work of the natives, were next examined. They were good works of their kind, and would have been interesting, independent of their locality. Mr. Davis told me that when the mill was finished and first put in action, nothing could exceed the surprise and delight of the natives, especially those who had assisted in the work. They called it 'a ship of the land!' 'wonderful white men,' said they, 'fire, water, earth, and air, are made to work for them, by their wisdom!'

I was much struck by the harmony and apparent happiness of the three families of whose society I had too slight a glimpse. Instead of hours, I should have enjoyed passing days with them. An air of honesty, and that outward tranquillity which is the result of a clear conscience and inward peace, offered a forcible contrast to the alleged gloom, and even misanthropy, of which some missionaries have been accused by those persons whose own habits, or associates, made them perhaps most undesirable acquaintances for an English family.

It was very satisfactory to mark the lively interest taken by them in every detail connected with the Fuegians. Again and again they recurred to the subject. Their anxiety also about the state of other South American Savages, and about other islands in the Pacific, gave me a high opinion of their true missionary spirit. It was striking to find all the members of this isolated society so anxious to hear about and to talk of Fuegians, and other distant tribes of savages, rather than to draw attention to their own doings,—to their troubles, their success, or their wants.

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Speaking of the agricultural settlement at Waimate,—Mr. Darwin says, "All this is very surprising, when it is considered

that three years ago nothing but fern was seen on the place now occupied by houses, gardens, and corn fields."

D.—Moreover, native workmen effected this change. The lesson of the missionary has acted like an enchanter's wand. Houses have been built, windows framed and glazed; fields ploughed, and even trees grafted by New Zealanders.

At the mill, a native is seen, powdered over with flour, like his brother millers elsewhere.

When I considered this whole scene, I thought it admirable; not only because England was vividly brought to mind; nor solely because of the triumphant feeling excited by seeing such effects of English energy and devotion to a good cause; but chiefly because of the moral effect it must have upon the natives.

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D.—The young men and boys employed about the houses seemed to be very merry and good humoured. In the evening, they were playing at cricket with the sons of the missionaries. The young women who attended in the houses had a tidy, healthy look, very different from that of the women about the villages of Kororadika and Paihia.

D.—Late in the evening I went to Mr. W. William's house, where I passed the night. I found there a large party of children (of the missionaries) assembled to pass Christmas day together. They were sitting round a table at tea; a nicer, or more merry group, I never saw. (To think that this sight was in the land of cannibalism, and all atrocity!)

The cordiality and happiness so plainly visible in the faces of the young ones, seemed to be equally prevalent among the older persons of the mission.

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D.—When I took leave of these families, it was with thankfulness for their kind welcome, and with feelings of high respect for their evidently superior characters. I think it would be difficult to find men better adapted to discharge the duties of their important office.

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D.—As far as I can understand, the greater proportion of the inhabitants of the northern parts of the Island profess Christianity.

It is curious, that the religion of the others has been altered, and is now partly Christian and partly heathen. Moreover, the outward conduct of the unbelievers is said to be improving, in consequence of the general spread of some of the Christian doctrines. How far those who profess Christianity are sincere, I have had no opportunity of judging. Mr. Busby, the British Resident, mentioned a pleasing fact:

One of his young men, who had been accustomed to read prayers to the rest of the servants, left him. Some weeks afterwards,

happening to pass, late in the evening, by an out-house, he saw and heard another of his men reading the bible, with difficulty, and by the light of the fire, to the rest of his companions.

Afterwards they knelt down and prayed. In their prayers they mentioned Mr. Busby, and his family, and each of the missionaries.

* * * * *

Dec. 30th.—By all accounts the New Zealanders are improving yearly; so are the natives of other islands which have been visited by missionaries. Those islanders who have been visited only by whalers, or purveyors for Chinese epicures, have in no way profited. On the contrary, they have learned to shew less respect to their own ordinances, and have learned no better ones.

The most abandoned, profligate habits and ideas have been taught, or encouraged, by their visitors. Fire-arms, ammunition, and spirits, have been exchanged for provisions, and for women.

Escaped convicts have done very great harm in the Pacific. Unrestrained by any principle, those abandoned men have been the springs of excessive injuries. The murder of the missionaries at the Friendly Islands was caused by the dark and revengeful intrigues of a convict who had escaped to those Islands from Sydney. Judging from all I have heard on the spot, and since, I should think it difficult to form any moderate estimate of the tumultuous anarchy, and destruction of human life, which has been prevented during the last twenty years by the presence and active exertions of missionaries.

Without estimating the ships of other nations, under the colors of the United States, and of our own country, more than five hundred sail of vessels have been annually employed in the Pacific during late years. For refreshments and supplies, only those islands can, with safety, be now frequented, on which either European or native missionaries have established themselves.

When a merchant ship approaches a remote island in the Pacific, her first object is to ascertain whether it has ever been visited by a missionary. If it has, she knows she may approach with confidence; if it has not, she keeps under sail in the offing, and if she does communicate with the shore, it is with the utmost caution, and with much reluctance.

But even while profiting by the influence of the missionaries, and even assisted by them in intercourse with the natives, many persons have not hesitated to ridicule the means by which the missionary has gained that very influence by which they are profiting; and, in direct opposition to his entreaties, or well-known wishes, encourage the natives in immorality, and in the use of spirits.

Moreover, they abuse, and seek for faults in a system, and in the conduct of individuals, which has a tendency to check, or

expose, the impropriety of their own hitherto unrestrained immorality.

If the opponents of missionaries, and of the missionary system, allow no other good character to have been earned in the Pacific, by those hard working men, never can they be deprived of that of Peace-makers.

Surrounded by those who are engaged in commerce, annually increasing; unavoidably involved in local dissensions; referred to on all occasions as interpreters or mediators, and, I may say, as the consular agents of white men of all nations; does it not argue very favourably for the missionaries, that, although sneered at by nominal friends, censured by enemies, and always struggling against opposition, they have as yet upheld the character of their sacred office? Speaking of them as consular agents is, because they now attend to most of the local affairs between natives and foreigners, which would employ the time of a consul, where national agents are established. At Tahiti there is, *nominally*, a British Consul; but he lives at the Sandwich Islands! and might as well be at Kamschatka! At New Zealand there is a British Resident;—an anomalous appointment destitute of authority, yet ostensibly important.

In those places the greater part of the duties to which our government expect their agents to attend, are, in fact executed by the missionaries, not by choice, but because, as Christian men, they cannot tamely withdraw from difficulty, and deny that assistance which *they* are able to give, although they see those in official situations set the example of the Levite in the Parable.

After reading these statements, it will not be difficult to form an idea of the secular embarrassments which perplex the South Sea missionaries; after having overcome the primary dangers and difficulties of first establishing themselves among hostile and cannibal savages, yet, although they are *now* able to assist their own countrymen, who have *eagerly profited* by their exertions, and are *now* settling in every direction upon those very lands to which access was attained by their hardy, daring enthusiasm, their own strength is failing! Embarrassments of many kinds are arising. One is a mean jealousy of that very influence, which has enabled those who are jealous, to approach the place where they now revile those to whom they owe gratitude for enabling them to be there.

While their assistance was wanted, no praise of the missionaries was too warm for the adventurers to bestow, who were seeking a settlement. But when once established, and a knowledge of the language attained, "Why should Mr. — have more influence over the natives than I?" is too frequent a thought. A few respectable settlers, such as Mr. Clindon, Mr. Bicknell, Mr. Main, and Mr. Henry, have acted in a very different way: in the most honorable, and truly English manner. But for their sup-

part, the few, almost isolated missionaries, would have to contend alone against a host of reprobates.

To me it appears that the steady support, and respectable countenance of those upholders of the true character of Britons, has, in a quiet, unpretending manner, assisted in a very great degree the progress of incipient civilization and Christianity.

By those who dislike the natural influence of the Missionaries, an outcry has been raised against their alleged attempts to "monopolize the land."

Say those men—"Why should a missionary be allowed to purchase so much land as to prevent those who come after him from obtaining an eligible piece of ground near a frequented part?" or,—"Why should Mr. ——— be allowed to prevent Waripoki and his tribe from selling me that piece of ground, because he thinks that I shall sell spirits, or build a public-house?" "Have not," (say they) "Have not the missionaries already monopolized the best lands, in the finest situations?"

Now, lest it should be thought that undue advantage had been taken by any members, or by the whole of the missionary body, it ought to be here explained that a large extent of land was long ago purchased in New Zealand, by the 'Church Missionary Society'; and that it is not, as supposed by some, the private property of individuals. Other lands from time to time have been purchased by individuals of the missions, for the future maintenance of their families.

And what else could those do who have divided that tie which held them to a country which *could* not be their children's home?

Around them are a group of little ones, who will acknowledge *New Zealand* to be *their* country and *their* home.

Shall the missionaries be debarred from endeavoring to make that home acceptable to those children, and from providing for their future maintenance?

If a missionary, and a recent settler, are each in treaty for a particular piece of ground, and the former obtains it upon easier terms than the latter, in consequence of the good-will of the natives, is it not a natural and legitimate advantage earned in the fairest and the most honourable manner?

Many of the natives understand and appreciate the motives of the missionaries, and are, moreover, personally attached to their little children, whom they like to consider as belonging to *their* country.

If anathemas, indulgences, or excommunications were resorted to by protestant missionaries, one might have a suspicion of *undue* influence; but as such engines of power have not emanated from a British mission, may we not take it for granted that the influence of missionaries appointed by the Church of England or London Missionary Societies, is not *undue*?

The facts, in their simplicity, are these:—As opportunities offered, the missionaries, *always upon the spot*, and watching their opportunity, have bought lands upon terms more advantageous than those which could be obtained by visitors or recent settlers, strangers to the natives.

Owing to the same natural advantages,—those of local acquaintance, and being always near at hand,—the missionaries have selected the best lands they could afford to purchase.

Ought they to have taken the worst? After all, the property (that island in New Zealand) of the Church Missionary Society, and of individuals of the missions, *taken together*, does not bear a larger proportion to New Zealand than the country of Rutland does to Great Britain and Ireland! Is there then no room left for settlers?

With a remark or two applicable to all missionaries, this letter, already long,—though not too long for such a subject,—shall be concluded.

In the Pacific, not a single avowed disagreement, or misunderstanding, has yet taken place between officers of government and missionaries; but there are plain signs of an increasing and mutual approach towards a kind of jealousy which cannot too soon be prevented.

When authorized agents of government assume active functions in newly-settled, or recently civilized countries, is it not time for the political agency of the missionary to cease? His work, as connected with affairs of policy, or government, is done, and the crowning proof that so great a point in civilization has been gained, in consequence of his energetic exertions, is *the appointment* of such an officer.

From that time ought not the missionary to separate himself from secular affairs?

Should he not reflect, that however he may have been called upon to act during former emergencies, the special duties of his sacred calling *ought* to be separated from politics, or any kind of hostilities or dissensions.

Excepting as peace-maker, his voice should not be heard, neither should his influence be exerted in other than offices of religion and education,—while the authorized officer, or agent of government, can be referred to in secular affairs.

ROBT. FITZROY.

On the whole, balancing all that we have heard, and all that we ourselves have seen concerning the missionaries in the Pacific, we are very much satisfied that they thoroughly deserve the warmest support, not only of individuals, but of the British Government.

ROBT. FITZROY.

CHARLES DARWIN.

At Sea, 28th June, 1836.