

little interest in them; the immoral conduct of many of them was also a great disqualification, and a source of much trouble.

A SINGULAR DEMAND FOR BIBLES.

For the Bibles there was a singular demand, or rather, as the missionaries describe it, a rush whenever they were available for distribution. This was interpreted to imply an unparalleled eagerness for the Word of God, and yet the most prudent of the missionaries judged it in a different light. The Rev. Mr. Armstrong, who had the charge of distributing the New Testament, writes, in 1836:—“What the motives of the people are in thus seeking the Word of God is easy to tell; certainly it is not, in most cases, the love of truth or righteousness, as their daily conduct shows.” So also the Rev. Mr. Andrews, who was principal of the Hawaiian High School, attests in 1834:—“A great circulation of books here does not prove that they are much understood. It is fully believed that were the mission to print off an edition of logarithmic tables, there would be just as great a call for it as for any book that has been printed. The truth is a palapala (book); it is all new to them, and all considered equally good. They have been told that the perusal of these and similar books constitutes the difference between them and ourselves; that they are able to make people wise; and what is still more, most of our books we are able to call the Word of God.”

The missionary rule gradually degenerated into a tyranny, and became particularly distasteful to the foreigners who, in considerable numbers, began to settle in Honolulu. Complaints were made and freely circulated to the effect that the missionaries were too intent on worldly gain, that they appropriated to themselves the richest lands in the islands and built up fortunes on the misery of the poor natives. As early as September 15, 1832, an English resident in Honolulu writes to the *Literary Gazette*, complaining that the natives were treated harshly, whilst one of the leading missionaries had already amassed 20,000 dollars' worth of property. He adds that the missionaries would not allow an English or American gentleman to ride on horseback on Sundays, 'whilst they themselves are driven about the town and about the country, four-in-hand, with their wives and families, Sundays and working days; not by horses, which are plentiful and cheap enough in those islands, but by human beings, by four blackfellows, their own bearers.' (Letter of T. Horton James in *Literary Gazette*, September 15, 1832.)

ENCOURAGING SELF-SACRIFICE IN OTHERS.

A correspondent of the *Sandwich Islands Gazette*, in 1839, relates that he saw 'a heavy horse waggon, drawn by 15 females, harnessed like beasts of burden, and found that they were performing a penance imposed by the missionaries.' Mr. Melville, an American, writes in 1845:—“Not until I visited Honolulu was I aware of the fact that the small remnant of natives had been civilised into draught horses and evangelised into beasts of burden. But so it is. He then goes on to describe 'a missionary's spouse, who, day after day, for months together, took her regular airings in a little go-cart drawn by two of the islanders.'”

The complaint of the Protestant missionaries taking to themselves the best lands of these islands was repeated as late as 1893, when Colonel Ashford, a prominent resident in Honolulu, addressed a letter to the United States Commissioner Blount, deprecating American interference in the political difficulties that had arisen:—“The feeling is strong here,” he says, “that no American Commissioner can fail to be influenced by the Protestant missionary party here, and that the proposed scheme of annexation would result in the plutocratic rule of a half-dozen men who came here poor to serve the cause of religion on starvation salaries, and who have developed by thrift into a moneyed aristocracy, owning all the valuable lands and industries of the country. This class has always been the enemy of the native race, and their efforts to reduce the Kanakas to inferior political position, as well as their arrogance to those not so rich as themselves, have alienated all classes from them.” That is a severe arraignment of those missionaries, but it was made by one who knew them well.

The year 1834 marks the first great crisis of the Protestant mission in the Hawaiian Islands. Some of the chiefs and foreign residents, prominent among them being Mr. Charlton, the English Consul, suggested to the King to suspend for a time the manifold enactments and restraints which the missionaries had imposed. He would thus, they said, be the better able to judge whether the conversion of the natives was, as a matter of fact, a reality, or whether it was nothing better than a mere mask to conceal the old condition of things. Mr. Jarves, in his history already referred to, faithfully sketches the results hitherto attained by the missionaries when this crisis supervened. “The Protestant missionaries,” he says, “numbered but few real converts, though they justly claimed the amelioration of manners, the desire of instruction, and much of the gradual change for the better to be the result of their labours. Still, following the example of the rulers, it had become fashionable to be of their belief; all important offices were in their hands, and interest, more than intelligence, conspired to produce an outward conformity to morality. While numbers to the best of their abilities were Christians, thousands joined their ranks for unworthy motives. Perhaps in no instance have the united cunning and mendacity of the Hawaiian character been more strikingly displayed than in their stratagems to deceive their religious teachers. By fraud, by even giving up much-loved sins, and by ready knowledge of the Scriptures, many managed to become Church members, because by it their importance was increased and their chances of political preferment better” (p. 229).

The King lent a willing ear to the insidious counsel which was given to him. He issued a proclamation centreing all legal authority in himself, and removing, with few exceptions, the various existing penal restraints. At once the mask of Protestantism was flung aside, and the pretended converts were seen in their true colours. We will allow Mr. Jarves to describe the result:—

THE LAPSE INTO BARBARISM.

“The scene,” he says, “that followed beggars description. The worst scenes were enacted at Honolulu; but a general, civil, and modern anarchy prevailed throughout the group. Schools were deserted, teachers relapsed, congregations were thinned, excesses abounded, and in some places, especially in the district of Hilo, Hawaii, idolatrous worship was again performed. Several churches were burnt, and some lives lost. The wilder orgies of heathenism rioted over the land; men left their wives, wives their husbands; parents, brothers, sisters, and relatives united like wild beasts in common prostitution; they gambled, they fought, for old grudges were then scored off; they drank, and they revelled.”

In a few weeks, however, the king allowed the old stringent laws to be re-enacted, and once more the natives, being duly converted to all appearance, became Protestant as before. The missionaries now resolved to leave nothing undone to secure their triumph. Their friends in the United States gave every assistance in their power. A number of new and energetic agents were sent to this promising mission field; 240,000 Bibles or New Testaments were scattered broadcast among the natives, additional schools and churches were opened, and what may be described as a religious revival was witnessed everywhere throughout the islands.

A second crisis, however, supervened. During the short period that the Hawaiian Islands were annexed by Lord George Poulet, in 1843, and still more emphatically during the 10 days' jubilee that was kept to celebrate the repudiation by the British Government of such an annexation, the Puritanical laws were suspended. Again the natives availed of the opportunity to resume their Pagan festivities and to lay aside the masque of conversion which under the missionary regime they had been compelled to assume. Once more the irreligious scenes of 1834 were everywhere renewed. The Rev. Dr. Brown, in *History of the Missions*, writes that multitudes of the natives began to imagine—“They might practice any and every vice with impunity. The laws regarding morals were prostrate. Drunkenness and debauchery no longer sought a hiding-place, but were openly and shamelessly practised, and were increasing every day. Many returned to their old heathenish practice, and strenuous efforts were made in some instances to revive the idolatry of their ancestors” (p. 76). In the *Asiatic Journal* (vol. xxxi.) the scene of these jubilee days in particular is thus described:—“Who that happened to be at Honolulu during those 10 memorable days will ever forget them! The history of those 10 days reveals in their true colours the character of the Sandwich Islanders, and furnishes an eloquent commentary on the results which have flowed from the labours of the missionaries. Freed from all restraints of severe penal laws, the natives almost to a man plunged voluntarily into every species of wickedness and excess, and by their utter disregard of all decency plainly showed that, although they had been schooled into a seeming submission to the new order of things, they were in reality as depraved and vicious as ever.”

A HUGE FAILURE.

With the return of the old regime the Puritanical laws were renewed, and for some years the religion of the American missionaries continued to be alone recognised by the State. Since 1860 a greater spirit of toleration has prevailed, and official interference in matters of religion has ceased. As a result the Protestant churches have become gradually deserted, and the once all-important American mission is now little better than a by-word or an empty religious name. From the testimony of its friends, indeed, it is more than manifest that, despite its boasted triumphs, it at no time produced much religious fruit. In 1840 Commodore Read, an American officer, thus commemorates his impression of what had hitherto been achieved by the efforts of a quarter of a million sterling:—“I must say” (he writes) “that the mass of the natives, notwithstanding all the efforts of the missionaries, appear to be still indolent, licentious in disposition, and quite ignorant of the term virtue.” About the same time Mr. Jarves wrote that with the great mass of the natives Protestantism ‘was an external habit, like the clothes borrowed from civilisation.’

In 1854 Rev. Mr. Brown thus commented on the result of this once so promising missionary enterprise:—

“There are few things which we find more difficult than to form a correct estimate of the religious and moral results of missions. Physical changes, which are perceptible by the senses, it is comparatively easy to estimate and describe; but religious and moral changes, involving as they do the state and movements of the human heart, it is impossible for man to determine and delineate with certainty. This difficulty we have felt, in a very peculiar manner, in regard to the American mission in the Sandwich Islands. In its earlier stages exceedingly favourable accounts were given of its state and prospects; but after some years it was found that much had been taken for gold turned out to be dross. The aspect of the mission was, in fact, from time to time, very changeable; like a summer day in some countries, it was now sunshine, now cloud. Even at the same period it would present different aspects, a bright side and a dark. It strikes us, too, that many American missionaries are apt to make strong statements, not, we are persuaded, with the design of giving false or exaggerated views of things, but yet in some degree with this effect. The accounts of the mission in the Sandwich Islands often appear, in fact, scarcely reconcilable with each other. The statements of the good done, it is not easy to reconcile with the statements given at another time, or even at the same time and by the same writer, of the evils still existing among the islanders, and even among the Church members. Never, perhaps, were the homely yet emphatic lines of Ralph Erskine more fully realised than in the Sandwich Islands converts—

‘To good and evil equal bent
I’m both a devil and a saint.’

OLD HEATHEN RITES RESTORED.

The latest phase of the far-famed Protestant missionary enterprise is sketched for us in the pages of Rev. Dr. Pierson in his

THE FAMOUS “VICTORY” SEWING MACHINE.
for Catalogue (mention this paper).

EASY TO WORK, EASY TO LEARN, EASY TO PURCHASE on our Special Terms. Write
6 PRINCES STREET, DUNEDIN.