

MISSIONARY INTELLIGENCE

Melanesian Mission.

(By Rev. C. E. FOX.)

By the April steamer we said good-bye to Mr Howard, who is returning to England. The state of his health made it impossible for him to continue his work in the Islands. We were very sorry to say good-bye, but the best of friends must sometimes part. He was very much missed by the boys whose affections he had won completely and a cricket blazer he had bequeathed to one of his Melanesian clams was worn in turns by the principal mourners. He took a keen interest in the history of the Melanesians, especially the Solomon Islanders, their manners, customs, and folklore, and their curious way of looking at things and we can ill afford to lose such men from our staff.

May 1st, the opening of the shooting season, was, as usual, a whole holiday, and a party from the staff perambulated the mission property firing vigorously (some seventy shots, it is said), and returning with one pheasant, two pigeons and a parrot.

The usual meeting was held in the Big Hall to elect a captain for the football season. The election is by ballot and is entered into with great zeal by all the boys. A time-honored joke is always perpetrated by two or three wits, who write down the name of the smallest boy in the school, a joke which never fails to cause great amusement. This time it was a little Santa Cruzian, not much bigger than a good-sized football, and it was thought such a capital joke that when the committee came to be elected the small Santa Cruzian had quite a number of followers.

A small Guadalcanar boy told a white friend of his that until lately he had always supposed the Holy Land to be a land midway between earth and heaven where all the "holy acts" were done and the "holy people" lived from time to time. He never grasped the fact that it was a real country you could sail to.

Chatting with the boys as one works with them in the fields, one hears all sorts of yarns from the Islands. One of the boys from Mala was telling us the other day about the first piece of soap that reached his part of the world. The proud possessor supposed it to be a large kind of seed and planted it with care, and a good heavy rain fell to water it. He waited patiently some time for the soap tree to appear, but at last determined (like many a young gardener) to dig up his seed and see how it was getting on. One can imagine his disappointment.

When the first umbrella reached these parts there was great exaltation. One day the owner, who had left the umbrella in his hut, was asked by a friend for the loan of it. Consent was given and the friend proceeded to the hut, but here a difficulty confronted him; the umbrella was open and would not go through the narrow door. Nothing daunted, the friend removed part of the thatched roof and went off with the umbrella. But the problem puzzled him and he proceeded to the owner telling him how he had broken through the roof. The owner's remarks may be guessed at.

The "Guardian" understands that it has been decided to establish a new diocese for Polynesia. During his stay in England the Primate of New Zealand—who is returning to Dunedin on the 23rd inst.—has been in communication with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London on the subject, and the project has won their cordial support. The necessary official steps for the formation of a new See—which will include the Fijian, Tongan, and Samoan groups in the Eastern Pacific—will be taken shortly.

The new Cathedral at Kaffraria has been consecrated. At the opening ceremony an honored and welcome guest was the Bishop of Glasgow, who came as the representative of the Church in Scotland, and bore from that Church a noble offering of £11,000 towards the new Cathedral. Most faithfully has the Scottish Church fulfilled her obligations to her daughter in Kaffraria. "As we sat in clerical Synod," writes a correspondent, "on the eve of the consecration, and listened to the simple, affectionate words spoken by the Bishop of Glasgow, we felt as never before, that we are linked to our brethren in Scotland by the closest ties."

WOMEN'S WORK IN THE MISSION FIELD.

At the great Festival service, to be held next year in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, the members of the Church of England will present, through their Bishops, the monies collected throughout the world as a thank-offering to Almighty God for the many blessings bestowed upon the British Empire.

That part of the thank-offering collected in New Zealand has been allocated by the General Synod to the work of women in the mission field.

In a recent article in the "Ceylon Observer," the Hon. John Ferguson, C.M.G., M.L.C., says that

he has often silenced cavillers against missions by a single word, and that word was "Woman." "In what condition were the women of the Hindus or even the Mohammedans before the advent of Christian missions, and to what is the instruction, enlightenment, freedom from many terrible burdens and uplifting of a host of them due if not to the influence of Christianity and its teachers." And in a recent speech Sir W. Mackworth Young, who has spent a long and influential life in India, said:—"The Punjab woman is, as a rule, a person who has little love for anything beyond rice or vice, but she will listen to the foreign sister who comes to India to relieve her agony, or to minister to the suffering of her darling child. So it is all the world over. The touch of love, the soft word, will prepare the way for the access of the truth to the hearts of men for the old, old story of Jesus and His love."

The statement of the Bishop of Ely is indeed true:—"If the Indian Church was to be in any true sense national its stronghold must be in the family; and before that could be achieved the women of India must be won. Christian Europe was awakening to the supreme duty of regenerating the family life of the East through the ministry of Christian women."

And how many Christian women are at work in the Mission field? I give the statistics of Protestant Missions for 1895 and 1905:—

	1895	1905
Wives of Missionaries ...	3682	5061
Unmarried	2578	4306
	6260	9367

And this army of at least 10,000 this year (1907) are at work in Tehara, and schools and hospitals, teaching, comforting, healing the women of the East, and the call is urgent to the women of Christian lands to come over and assist in regenerating the families of the East.

A striking fact is the overwhelming proportion of Christians amongst the female literates of India. Our C.M.S. institution, the Sarah Tucker College at Palamcotta, Tinevelly, has contributed largely to this result in India. A few weeks ago the "silver jubilee" of Miss A. J. Ackwith's connection with the college was celebrated. She joined the staff in 1881, and there are no less than 535 of those who have come under her training now working as teachers in South India, while a few others have gone to Burmah and Ceylon. The institution attained collegiate rank in 1846, and it has already sixteen "First Assistants" and two B.A.'s amongst its present or former students. The college has 348 pupils