

poral advantages of pusillanimous slaves to be very superior to the original condition of the wild infidel hunters? I know there are none of those benevolent persons who would be satisfied with such a transformation; but I fear some of their own enterprises have not had much better success. It is true that their agents and missionaries have other aims than those of the Spanish catholic friars: their views are to instruct those they convert; and they are more fastidious in admitting their neophytes to the rites of baptism and other privileges of christianity. This is, no doubt, as it should be; but it has the effect of diminishing greatly the number of proselytes: and experience has shown how infinitely more successful the catholic missionaries have been than the protestant. I do not mention this with a view to recommend the catholic system; but I cannot help thinking, that some modification of the rigid British missionary plan might be adopted which would be more successful. I even venture to think, that men might be easier reclaimed from a savage, barbarous, or semibarbarous state, by other means than by that of religion. I do not mean that they should be left without religious instruction; far from it: but I mean to say, that the first attempt to civilize them might be better done by teaching them, by degrees, the arts and comforts of a more advanced state of society by

laymen. How is it to be supposed that a savage could, on the very first contact with a stranger, be made to comprehend a series of mysteries of which he never before dreamed, and which are in exact contradiction to all the knowledge or prejudices of his by-gone life,—to every thing which he had hitherto considered sacred and venerable, and which had been handed down to him, in the ancestral legends, with the character of incontrovertible truths?—those new mysteries, too, being such, that reason alone cannot enable the most powerful mind even of those born under the christian dispensation, to comprehend? It is impossible that savages should be made at once saints or philosophers; but I think a system of progressive instruction by enlightened and prudent teachers, whose duty should be, not to instil literary or religious knowledge so much as the common arts of life, might be successful in bringing a people living in a state of barbarism and ignorance to adopt great improvements in the course of time; and finally accomplish their complete civilization. I do not despair that the time will come when instead of illiterate fanatics with cargoes of bibles and religious tracts only; prudent men will be sent among the heathens carrying with them—bibles and tracts certainly, but also agricultural and manufacturing implements,—useful mechanical inventions, furniture and clothing,



with instructions to reclaim the savage, not merely by the terrors of future punishments, but likewise by the fascination of a more comfortable worldly existence.

I much question if ever the task should be undertaken of attempting to instruct the adult savages in any sort of literary knowledge; and I have some doubts of the possibility of instilling into their minds the rudiments even of the christian religion; but, under a proper system, no difficulty need be apprehended of the children imbibing as much literary instruction as should be thought necessary, and of their learning thoroughly all the tenets of christianity. I should hope, however, it would in all cases become consistent with the promotion of religious instruction to teach it in a milder form than is usually done by the protestant missionaries abroad. Can it be supposed that a human being arrived at the use of reason will hear for the first time, without the most appalling horror, the announcement of a future abode of penal fire into which he must be cast for ever, if he do not renounce all his former customs and religion, and conform to certain conditions which must at first sight appear to him impossible? In this first encounter is it to be wondered at, that the savage imbibes an unconquerable aversion to the new creed, or is inspired with a disbelief of its truth, never afterwards to be overcome?

Those missionaries, however well meaning they may be, take generally an erroneous view of the means they ought to adopt for the accomplishment of the end they are pursuing. It also happens but too often that those men, in addition to their profession of religious teachers, assume the character of legislators and governors, for which offices none can generally be more unfit: and when they are so situated that they can, without control, exercise such powers, the greatest disorder and mischief have ensued. Instead of making good christians, or a moral and industrious people of the natives, they have merely broken up all their old customs and rude rules of morality and order, and converted them into a lawless and profligate rabble. This, according to the report of some of the most respectable voyagers, is the case in many, at least, of the Islands in the South sea, where the missionaries have had the most unlimited opportunity of domineering.

Is there then no possibility of civilizing mankind but by divines? Would an enlightened layman have no influence over savage people? Would the announcement of the art of agriculture, of mechanical inventions, of the use of clothing, of good houses and furniture, of the comforts enjoyed by other men, have no charms for people destitute of all these things? Would the advantages of improved



implements and improved accommodation, good clothes and good food have no attractions for them? Would the plain and easily-understood explanation of all these advantages, told by a man of this world, be less attended to, than the rapsodies of an enthusiast, whose benefits are all in prospect, and the most comprehensible of whose doctrines announces an eternity of horrors in another life?

When religious instruction becomes necessary and practicable, certainly let it be taught; but let it be taught as in every civilized country, under the control of the civil power: experience teaches us, that missionaries—such missionaries as have heretofore been sent to foreign countries, among savage tribes, are not fit to be entrusted with civil power: they have never yet succeeded in governing well,—not even an Island of Madripores inhabited by a few families.

The foregoing observations apply to religious missionaries such as they are at present, or at least, such as they were formerly: and I repeat, that laymen, capable of merely instructing savages in things concerning their temporal weal and comfort, would be infinitely more serviceable to them and to the cause of humanity and christianity as primary teachers, than such men can possibly be. I am, however, far from thinking that religious mis-

sionaries might not be so educated as to combine all the advantages to be found in lay-teachers, with the capacity and authority to instruct in religion also. In regard to such instructors, I would only say that they should be careful, in combining the spiritual with the temporal information, not to give too prominent a position to the former, but rather to insinuate than enforce their severer precepts, trusting, in the first instance, to the means already mentioned, as more suited to the capacities and ignorance of their pupils. I have been so long absent from England that I know not whether there is any special education for those who are now sent abroad as missionaries; but I am sure there will be no success in the undertaking until they are not only instructed in the arts of life most calculated to attract and benefit the savage, but taught also (to pious men the severer lesson of the two) to let the earthly food of temporal knowledge take the precedence, and even for a time to supersede the heavenly manna which it is their more especial duty to administer.

Although the system of the catholic missionaries may not much improve the moral or physical state of their converts yet their success in gaining proselytes must ever be superior to that of the protestant, particularly the English methodist protestant. Nothing can be better adapted to captivate the simple



savage, than the gorgeous ceremonies of the catholic service; nor can there be agents more fitting than the persevering and well disciplined Friar, whose whole life and studies have been directed to this end; whose angry passions no injury can rouse; or whose humility and patience no insult or obstacle can overcome. With him, our missionary can bear no comparison; any more than can the attractions of their respective forms of worship. To a savage who must be chiefly taught through the medium of his senses, the catholic service is most fascinating. The whole ceremony of the mass is performed by a sort of dumb shew, accompanied with music and glittering ornaments, which may be said to be just as well understood by a savage of California as by a Hidalgo of Spain; and which will soon become to the one as it is to the other, a duty or a show which he feels himself uneasy at missing. He will also soon be made to believe, that on such easy terms as attending punctually on this pleasing exhibition, he will be entitled to everlasting happiness. By the tenets of the Catholic church this title is not doubtful but *positive*; for its dogmas teach, that the fiat of the priest in this world, is certainly confirmed in heaven, if the exercises prescribed are performed. Not so the doctrine of protestantism, even when administered by the calm and rational minister of an established church; for even then a

doubt hangs over the mind of the most virtuous: but when the doctrine of a doubtful salvation and an eternity of punishment is inculcated by a fanatical methodist, who not unfrequently may be taken from the anvil to hammer divinity into the heads of the heathen, then a truly sledge-hammer method of conversion is the result, and the astonished convert cannot but be confounded with horror! This gloomy doctrine is increased by the nudity and sombre style of their places of worship; sometimes also by the austere and forbidding physiognomy of the preacher, whom the frightened hearer often regards as directing his eyes and his denunciations to him individually: under such circumstances there are not wanting examples of the scared savage fairly taking to his heels, and fleeing from the preacher and his doctrines for ever.

When the protestant missionaries have absolute dominion, as in some of the islands, and among insulated tribes, they put down all the ancient customs and diversions, however innocent; not solely by persuasion, but by coercion: and in this way their gloomy system is carried to its extreme. This is another of the great causes of their inferiority to catholic missionaries, in gaining the good will of savages. The prohibition of sports and diversions to men bred in a savage state, and comparatively idle, will be always intolerable. They have much



time which cannot be otherwise filled up ; and so strongly will their ancient customs have fixed themselves in their very constitutions, that it will be impossible for them to forego altogether their use ; and when it is attempted to deprive them thereof, the loss of their friendship and confidence will inevitably be the consequence. Of the diversions amongst savages, music and dancing form the chief part, and as both these exercises are contrary to the tenets of some of the protestant missionaries, they must be absolutely prohibited ; so that on the first encounter the missionary and his convert are at issue. The poor savage finds himself debarred from all his pleasures, and deprived of what he thought a recompence for his toil and his privations ; the white man comes and takes away the few comforts he hitherto enjoyed—and what does he give him in return ? Why, he promises him, that if he lays aside the song and the dance, forgoes all pleasure and mirth—puts on a sour instead of a laughing countenance—attends to the rapsody of the preacher—then he promises, that he may *perhaps* escape being damned for ever, and avoid passing his eternity amid fire and brimstone prepared for him in the world to come. This is no encouraging outset for one who was taught to think, that he could dance and sing till the end of his mortal days, and then join his departed friends in the land of

spirits beyond the western wave, to spend his eternity in bliss. It is no wonder if such expounders of the scripture appear to the untutored savage more like the agents of an evil spirit sent on earth, to terrify mankind, than the ministers of a benevolent God who “ willeth not the death of a sinner ; ” —more like the sowers of the seeds of evil than the cultivators of the vineyard of the Lord of mercy ! There can hardly be a greater contrast than between a jolly, laughing friar, cajoling his converts into his fold by indulging their innocent foibles and propensities, and the spare, sour, ascetic methodist who takes from his followers all their pastimes and pleasures : but it must be admitted that the contrast in the numerical results of their conversions is no less striking.