

Well did I know that the sympathy and prayers of my dear parents were warmly with me in all my studies and in all my Mission work; but for my education they could, of course, give me no money help. All through, on the contrary, it was my pride and joy to help them, being the eldest in a family of eleven; though I here most gladly and gratefully record that all my brothers and sisters, as they grew up and began to earn a living, took their full share in this same blessed privilege. For we stuck to each other and to the old folks like butts, and had all things "in common," as a family in Christ—and I knew that never again, howsoever long they might be spared through the peaceful autumn of life, would the dear old father and mother lack any joy or comfort that the willing hands and loving hearts of all their children could singly or unitedly provide. For all this I did praise the Lord! It consoled me, beyond description, in parting from them, probably for ever, in this world at least.

CHAPTER X

TO THE NEW HEBRIDES

On the first of December 1857—being then in my thirty-third year—the other Missionary-designate and I were "licensed" as preachers of the Gospel. Thereafter we spent four months in visiting and addressing nearly every Congregation and Sabbath School in the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, that the people might see us and know us, and thereby take a personal interest in our work. On the 23rd March 1858, in Dr. Symington's church, Glasgow, in presence of a mighty crowd, and after a magnificent sermon on "Come over and help us," we were solemnly ordained as Ministers of the Gospel, and set apart as Missionaries to the New Hebrides. On the 16th April of the same year, we left the Tail of the Bank at Greenock, and set sail in the *Clutha* for the Foreign Mission field.

Our voyage to Melbourne was rather tedious, but ended prosperously, under Captain Broadfoot, a kindly, brave-hearted Scot, who did everything that was possible for our comfort.

He himself led the singing on board at Worship, which was always charming to me, and was always regularly conducted—on deck when the weather was fair, below when it was rough. I was also permitted to conduct Bible Classes amongst both the crew and the passengers, at times and places approved of by the Captain—in which there was great joy.

Arriving at Melbourne, we were welcomed by Rev. Mr. Moor, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Wilson, and Mr. Wright, all Reformed Presbyterians from Geelong. Mr. Wilson's two children, Jessie and Donald, had been under our care during the voyage; and my young wife and I went with them for a few days on a visit to Geelong, while Mr. Copeland remained on board the *Clutha* to look after our boxes and to watch for any opportunity of reaching our destination on the Islands. He heard that an American ship, the *Francis P. Sage*, was sailing from Melbourne to Penang; and the Captain agreed to land us on Anceityum, New Hebrides, with our two boats and fifty boxes, for £100. We got on board on the 12th August, but such a gale blew that we did not sail till the 17th. On the *Clutha* all was quiet, and good order prevailed; in the *F. P. Sage* all was noise and profanity. The Captain said he kept his second mate for the purpose of swearing at the men and knocking them about. The voyage was most disagreeable to all of us, but fortunately it lasted only twelve days. On the 29th we were close up to Anceityum; but the Captain refused to land us, even in his boats; some of us suspecting that his men were so badly used that had they got on shore they would never have returned to him! In any case he had beforehand secured his £100.

He lay off the island till a trader's boat pulled across to see what we wanted, and by it we sent a note to Dr. Geddie, one of the Missionaries there. Early next morning, Monday, he arrived in his boat, accompanied by Mr. Matheson, a newly-arrived Missionary from Nova Scotia; bringing also Captain Anderson in the small Mission schooner, the *John Knox*, and a large Mission boat called the *Columbia*, well manned with crews of able and willing Natives. Our fifty boxes were soon on board the *John Knox*, the *Columbia*, and our own boats—all being heavily loaded and built up, except those that had to be used in pulling the others ashore. Dr. Geddie, Mr. Matheson, Mrs. Paton, and I were perched among the boxes

on the *John Knox*, and had to hold on as best we could. On sheering off from the *F. P. Sage*, one of her davits caught and broke the mainmast of the little *John Knox* by the deck; and I saved my wife from being crushed to death by its fall, though managing to swing her instantaneously aside in an apparently impossible manner. It did grate Mr. Mathieson, but he was not hurt. The *John Knox*, already overloaded, was thus quite disabled; we were about ten miles at sea, and in imminent danger; but the captain of the *F. P. Sage* heartlessly sailed away, and left us to struggle with our fate.

We drifted steadily in the direction of Tanna, an island of Cannibals, where our goods would have been plundered and all of us cooked and eaten. Dr. Geddie's boat and mine had the *John Knox* in tow; and Mr. Copeland, with a crew of Natives, was struggling hard with his boat to pull the *Columbia* and her load towards Aneityuna. As God mercifully ordered it, though we had a stiff trade wind to pull against, we had a comparatively calm sea; yet we drifted still to leeward, till Dr. Inglis going round to the harbour in his boat, as he had heard of our arrival, saw us far at sea, and hastened to our rescue. All the boats now, with their willing Native crews, got fastened to our schooner, and to our great joy she began to move ahead. After pulling for hours and hours, under the scorching rays of a tropical sun, we were all safely landed on shore at Aneityuna, about six o'clock in the evening of 30th August, just four months and fourteen days since we sailed from Greenock. We got a hearty welcome from the Missionaries' wives, Mrs. Geddie, Mrs. Inglis, and Mrs. Mathieson, and from all our new friends, the Christian Natives of Aneityuna; and the great danger in which both life and property had been placed at the close of our voyage, made us praise God all the more that He had brought us to this quiet resting-place, around which lay the Islands of the New Hebrides, to which our eager hearts had looked forward, and into which we entered now in the name of the Lord.

Mr. Copeland, Mrs. Paton, and I went round the island to Dr. Inglis's Station, where we were most cordially received and entertained by his dear lady, and by the Christian Natives there. As he was making several additions to his house at that time, we received for the next few weeks our first practical and valuable training in Mission house-building, as well as in

higher matters. Soon after, a meeting was called to consult about our settlement, and, by the advice and with the concurrence of all Mr. and Mrs. Mathieson from Nova Scotia were located on the south side of Tanna, at Umairarekar, and Mrs. Paton and I at Port Resolution, on the same island. At first it was agreed that Mr. Copeland should be placed along with us; but owing to the weakly state of Mrs. Mathieson's health, it was afterwards resolved that, for a time at least, Mr. Copeland should live at either Station, as might seem most suitable or most requisite.

Dr. Inglis and a number of his most energetic Natives accompanied us to Umairarekar, Tanna. There we purchased a site for Mission House and Church, and laid a stone foundation, and advanced as far as practicable the erection of a dwelling for Mr. and Mrs. Mathieson. Thence we proceeded to Port Resolution, Tanna, and similarly purchased a site, and advanced, to a forward stage, the house which Mrs. Paton and I were to occupy on our settlement there. Time for plastering had to be burned in kilns from the coral rocks; and thatch, for roofing with sugar-cane leaf, had to be prepared by the Natives at both Stations before our return; for which, as for all else, a price was duly agreed upon, and was scrupulously paid. Unfortunately we learned, when too late, that both houses were too near the shore, exposed to unwholesome miasma, and productive of the dreaded fever and ague,—the most virulent and insidious enemy to all Europeans in those Southern Seas.

CHAPTER XI

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF HEATHENDOM

My first impressions drove me, I must confess, to the verge of utter dismay. On beholding these Natives in their paint and nakedness and misery, my heart was as full of horror as of pity. Had I given up my much-beloved work and my dear people in Glasgow, with so many delightful associations, to consecrate my life to these degraded creatures? Was it possible to teach them right and wrong, to Christianity, or even to civility then? But that was only a passing feeling!

I soon got as deeply interested in them, and in all that tended to advance them, and to lead them to the knowledge and love of Jesus, as ever I had been in my work at Glasgow. We were surprised and delighted at the remarkable change produced on the Natives of Aneityum through the instrumentality of Mrs. Geddie and Inglis in so short a time; and we hoped, by prayerful perseverance in the use of similar means, to see the same work of God repeated on Tanna. Besides, the wonderful and blessed work done by Mrs. Inglis and Mrs. Geddie, at their Stations, filled our wives with the buoyant hope of being instruments in the hand of God to produce an equally beneficent change amongst the savage women of Tanna. Mrs. Paton had been left with Mrs. Inglis to learn all she could from her of Mission work on the Islands, till I returned with Dr. Inglis from the house-building operations on Tanna; during which period Mr. and Mrs. Mathieson were also being instructed by Dr. and Mrs. Geddie.

To the Tannese, Dr. Inglis and I were objects of curiosity and fear; they came crowding to gaze on our wooden and lime-plastered house; they chattered incessantly with each other, and left the scene day after day with undisguised and increasing wonderment. Possibly they thought us rather mad than wise!

Party after party of armed men going and coming in a state of great excitement, we were informed that war was on foot; but our Aneityumese Teachers were told to assure us that the Harbour people would only act on the defensive, and that no one would molest us at our work. One day two hostile tribes met near our Station; high words arose, and old feuds were revived. The Inland people withdrew; but the Harbour people, false to their promises, flew to arms and rushed past us in pursuit of their enemies. The discharge of muskets in the adjoining bush, and the horrid yells of the savages, soon informed us that they were engaged in deadly fights. Excitement and terror were on every countenance; armed men rushed about in every direction, with feathers in their twisted hair,—with faces painted red, black, and white, and some, one cheek black, the other red, others, the brow white, the chin blue—in fact, any colour and on any part,—the more grotesque and savage-looking, the higher the art! Some of the women ran with their children to places of safety; but even then we

saw other girls and women, on the shore close by, chewing sugar-cane and chaffering and laughing, as if their fathers and brothers had been engaged in a country dance, instead of a bloody conflict.

In the afternoon, as the sounds of the muskets and the yelling of the warriors came unpleasantly near to us, Dr. Inglis, leaning against a post for a little while in silent prayer, looked on us and said, "The walls of Jerusalem were built in troublous times, and why not the Mission House on Tanna? But let us rest for this day, and pray for these poor Heathen."

We retired to a Native house that had been temporarily granted to us for rest, and there pled before God for them all. The noise and the discharge of muskets gradually receded, as if the Inland people were retiring; and towards evening the people around us returned to their villages. We were afterwards informed that five or six men had been shot dead; that their bodies had been carried by the conquerors from the field of battle, and cooked and eaten that very night at a boiling spring near the head of the bay, less than a mile from the spot where my house was being built. We had also a more graphic illustration of the surroundings into which we had come, through Dr. Inglis's Aneityum boy, who accompanied us as cook. When our tea was wanted next morning, the boy could not be found. After a while of great anxiety on our part, he returned, saying, "Missi, this is a dark land. The people of this land do dark works. At the boiling spring they have cooked and feasted upon the slain. They have washed the blood into the water; they have bathed there, polluting everything. I cannot get pure water to make your tea. What shall I do?"

Dr. Inglis told him that he must try for water elsewhere, till the rains came and cleansed away the pollution; and that, meanwhile, instead of tea, we would drink from the cocoa-nut, as they had often done before. The lad was quite relieved. It not a little astonished us, however, to see that his mind regarded their killing and eating each other as a thing scarcely to be noticed, but that it was horrible that they should spoil the water! How much are even our deepest instincts the creatures of mere circumstances! I, if trained like him, would probably have felt like him.

Next evening, as we sat talking about the people, and the

dark scenes around us, the quiet of the night was broken by a wild wailing cry from the villages around, long-continued and unearthly. We were informed that one of the wounded men, carried home from the battle, had just died; and that they had strangled his widow to death, that her spirit might accompany him to the other world, and be his servant there, as she had been here. Now their dead bodies were laid side by side, ready to be buried in the sea. Our hearts sank to think of all this happening within ear-shot, and, that we knew it not! Every new scene, every fresh incident, set more clearly before us the benighted condition and shocking cruelties of these Heathen people, and we longed to be able to speak to them of Jesus and the love of God. We eagerly tried to pick up every word of their language, that we might, in their own tongue, unfold to them the knowledge of the true God and of salvation from all these sins through Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XII

BREAKING GROUND ON TANNA

Our small Missionary schooner, the *John Knox*, having no accommodation for lady passengers, and little for anybody else except the discomfort of lying on deck, we took advantage of a trader to convey us from Aneityum to Tanna. The Captain kindly offered to take us and about thirty casks and boxes to Port Resolution for £5, which we gladly accepted. After a few hours' sailing, we were all safely landed on Tanna on the 5th November 1858. Dr. Geddie went for a fortnight to Umairarekar, now known as Kwamra, on the south side of Tanna, to assist in the settlement of Mr. and Mrs. Mathieson, and to help in making their house habitable and comfortable. Mr. Copeland, Mrs. Paton, and I were left at Port Resolution, to finish the building of our house there, and work our way into the goodwill of the Natives as best we could.

On landing, we found the people to be literally naked and painted Savages; they were at least as destitute of clothing as Adam and Eve after the fall, when they sewed fig-leaves for a girdle; and even more so, for the women wore only a tiny

apron of grass, in some cases shaped like a skirt or girdle, the men an indescribable affair like a pouch or bag, and the children absolutely nothing whatever!

At first they came in crowds to look at us, and at everything we did or had. We knew nothing of their language; we could not speak a single word to them, nor they to us. We looked at them, they at us; we smiled, and nodded, and made signs to each other; this was our first meeting and parting. One day I observed two men, the one lifting up one of our articles to the other, and saying, "Nungsi nari enu?"

I concluded that he was asking, "What is this?" Instantly, lifting a piece of wood, I said, "Nungsi nari enu?"

They smiled and spoke to each other. I understood them to be saying, "He has got hold of our language now." Then they told me their name for the thing which I had pointed to. I found that they understood my question. What is this? or, What is that? and that I could now get from them the name of every visible or tangible thing around us! We carefully noted down every name they gave us, spelling all phonetically, and also every strange sound we heard from them; thereafter, by painstaking comparison of different circumstances, we tried to ascertain their meanings, testing our own guess by again cross-questioning the Natives. One day I saw two men approaching, when one, who was a stranger, pointed to me with his finger, and said, "Se nangin?"

Concluding that he was asking my name, I pointed to one of them with my finger, and looking at the other, inquired, "Se nangin?"

They smiled, and gave me their names. We were now able to get the names of persons and things, and so our ears got familiarised with the distinctive sounds of their language; and being always keenly on the alert, we made extraordinary progress in attempting bits of conversation and in reducing their speech for the first time to a written form—for the New Hebrideans had no literature, and not even the rudiments of an alphabet. I used to hire some of the more intelligent lads and men to sit and talk with us, and answer our questions about names and sounds; but they so often deceived us, and we, doubtless, misunderstood them so often, that this course was not satisfactory, till after we had gained some knowledge

of their language and its construction, and they themselves had become interested in helping us. Amongst our most interested helpers, and most trustworthy, were two aged chiefs—Nowar and Nourka—in many respects two of Nature's noblest gentlemen, kind at heart to all, and distinguished by a certain native dignity of bearing. But they were both under the leadership of the war-chief Maki, a kind of devilking over many villages and tribes.

The Tannese had hosts of stone idols, charms, and sacred objects, which they abjectly feared, and in which they devoutly believed. They were given up to countless superstitions, and firmly glued to their dark heathen practices. Their worship was entirely a service of fear, its aim being to propitiate this or that Evil Spirit, to prevent calamity or to secure revenge. They deified their chiefs, like the Romans of old, so that almost every village or tribe had its own Sacred Man, and some of them had many. They exercised an extraordinary influence for evil, these village or tribal priests, and were believed to have the disposal of life and death through their sacred ceremonies, not only in their own tribe, but over all the Islands. Sacred men and women, wizards and witches, received presents regularly to influence the gods, and to remove sickness, or to cause it by the *Makab*, i.e. incantation over remains of food, or the skin of fruit, such as banana, which the person has eaten on whom they wish to operate. They also worshipped the spirits of departed ancestors and heroes, through their maternal idols of wood and stone, but chiefly of stone. They feared these spirits and sought their aid; especially seeking to propitiate those who presided over war and peace, famine and plenty, health and sickness, destruction and prosperity, life and death. Their whole worship was one of slavish fear; and, so far as ever I could learn, they had no idea of a God of mercy or grace.

But these very facts—that they did worship something, that they believed in spirits of ancestors and heroes, and that they cherished many legends regarding those whom they had never seen, and banded these down to their children—and the fact that they had ideas about the invisible world and its inhabitants, made it not so hard as some might suppose to convey to their minds, once their language and modes of thought were understood, some clear idea of Jehovah God as

the great uncreated Spirit Father, who Himself created and sustains all that is. It could not, however, be done off-hand, or by a few airy lessons. The whole heart and soul and life had to be put into the enterprise. But it could be done—that we believed because they were men, not beasts; it had been done—that we saw in the converts on Anietyum; and our hearts rose to the task with a quenchless hope!

CHAPTER XIII

PIONEERS IN THE NEW HEBRIDES

A GLANCE backwards over the story of the Gospel in the New Hebrides may help to bring my readers into touch with the events that are to follow. The ever-famous names of Williams and Harris are associated with the earliest efforts to introduce Christianity amongst this group of islands in the South Pacific Seas. John Williams and his young Missionary companion Harris, under the auspices of the London Missionary Society, landed on Erromanga on the 30th of November 1839. Alas, within a few minutes of their touching land, both were clubbed to death; and the Savages proceeded to cook and feast upon their bodies. Thus were the New Hebrides baptized with the blood of Martyrs; and Christ thereby told the whole Christian world that He claimed these Islands as His own. His cross must yet be lifted up, where the blood of His saints has been poured forth in His name! The poor Heathen knew not that they had slain their best friends; but tears and prayers ascended for them from all Christian souls, wherever the story of the martyrdom on Erromanga was read or heard.

Again, therefore, in 1843, the London Missionary Society sent out Messrs. Turner and Nisbet to pierce this kingdom of Satan. They placed their standard on our chosen island of Tanna, the nearest to Erromanga. In less than seven months, however, their persecution by the Savages became so dreadful, that we see them in a boat trying to escape by night with bare life. Out on that dangerous sea they would certainly have been lost, but the Ever-Merciful drove them back

to land, and sent next morning a whaling vessel, which, contrary to custom, called there and just in the nick of time. They, with all goods that could be rescued, were got safely on board, and sailed for Samoa. Say not their plans and prayers were baffled; for God heard and abundantly blessed them there, beyond all their dreams.

After these things, the London Missionary Society again and again placed Samoan Native Teachers on one or other island of the New Hebrides; but their unhealthiness, compared with the more wholesome Samoa or Rarotonga, so afflicted them with the dreaded ague and fever, besides what they endured from the inhospitable Savages themselves, that no effective Mission work had been accomplished there till at last the Presbyterian Missionaries were led to enter upon the scene. Christianity had no foothold anywhere on the New Hebrides, unless it were in the memory and the blood of the Martyrs of Erromanga.

The Rev. John Geddie and his wife, from Nova Scotia, were landed on Aneityum, the most southerly island of the New Hebrides, in 1848; and the Rev. John Inglis and his wife, from Scotland, were landed on the other side of the same island, in 1852. An agent for the London Missionary Society, the Rev. T. Powell, accompanied Dr. Geddie for about a year, to advise as to his settlement and to assist in opening up the work. Marvellous as it may seem, the Natives on Aneityum showed interest in the Missionaries from the very first, and listened to their teachings; so that in a few years Dr. Inglis and Dr. Geddie saw about 3500 Savages throwing away their idols, renouncing their Heathen customs, and avowing themselves to be worshippers of the true Jehovah God. Slowly, yet progressively, they unlearned their Heathenism; surely and hopefully they learned Christianity and civilisation. When these Missionaries "came to this island, there were no Christians there; when they left it, there were no Heathens."

Further, these poor Aneityumese, having glimpses of the Word of God, determined to have a Holy Bible in their own another tongue, wherein before no book or page ever had been written in the history of their race. The consecrated brain and hand of their Missionaries kept toiling day and night in translating the book of God; and the willing hands

and feet of the Natives kept toiling through fifteen long but unwearying years, planting and preparing arrowroot to pay the £1200 required to be laid out in the printing and publishing of the book. Year after year the arrowroot, too sacred to be used for their daily food, was set apart as the Lord's portion; the Missionaries sent it to Australia and Scotland, where it was sold by private friends, and the whole proceeds consecrated to this purpose. On the completion of the great undertaking by the Bible Society, it was found that the Natives had earned as much as to pay every penny of the outlay; and their first Bibles went out to them, purchased with the consecrated toils of fifteen years!

Let those who lightly esteem their Bibles think on those things. Eight shillings for every leaf, or the labour and proceeds of fifteen years for the Bible entire, did not appear to these poor converted Savages too much to pay for that Word of God, which had sent to them the Missionaries, which had revealed to them the grace of God in Christ, and which had opened their eyes to the wonders and glories of redeeming love!

CHAPTER XIV

THE GREAT BEREAVEMENT

My first house on Tanna was on the old site occupied by Turner and Nisbet, near the shore for obvious reasons, and only a few feet above tide-mark. So was that of Mr. Mathieson, handy for materials and goods being landed, and, as we imagined, close to the healthy breezes of the sea. Alas! we had to learn by sad experience, like our brethren in all untamed Mission fields. The sites proved to be hot-beds for Fever and Ague, mine especially; and much of this might have been escaped by building on the higher ground, and in the sweep of the refreshing trade-winds. For all this, however, no one was to blame; everything was done for the best, according to the knowledge then possessed. Our house was sheltered behind by an abrupt hill about two hundred feet high, which gave the site a feeling of cosiness. It was surrounded,

and much shaded, by beautiful breadfruit trees, and very large cocoanut trees; too largely beautiful, indeed, for they shut out many a healthy breeze that we sorely needed! There was a long swamp at the head of the bay, and, the ground at the other end on which our house stood being scarcely raised perceptibly higher, the malaria almost constantly enveloped us. Once, after a smart attack of the fever, an intelligent Chief said to me, "Missi, if you stay here, you will soon die! No Tanna-man sleeps so low down as you do, in this damp weather, or he too would die. We sleep on the high ground, and the trade-wind keeps us well. You must go and sleep on the hill, and then you will have better health."

I at once resolved to remove my house to higher ground, at the earliest practicable moment; heavy though the undertaking would necessarily be, it seemed our only hope of being able to live on the island. Alas, for one of us, it was already too late!

My dear young wife, Mary Ann Robson, landed with me on Tanna on the 5th November 1858, in excellent health and full of all tender and holy hopes. On the 12th February 1859 God sent to us our first-born son; for two days or so both mother and child seemed to prosper, and our island-exile thrilled with joy! But the greatest of sorrows was treading hard upon the heels of that joy! My darling's strength showed no signs of rallying. She had an attack of ague and fever a few days before; on the third day or so thereafter, it returned, and attacked her every second day with increasing severity for a fortnight. Diarrhoea ensued, and symptoms of pneumonia, with slight delirium at intervals; and then in a moment, altogether unexpectedly, she died on the 3rd March. To crown my sorrows, and complete my loneliness, the dear baby-boy, whom we had named after her father, Peter Robert Robson, was taken from me after one week's sickness, on the 20th March. Let those who have ever passed through any similar darkness as of midnight feel for me; as for all others, it would be more than vain to try to paint my sorrows!

I knew then, when too late, that our work had been entered on too near the beginning of the Rainy Season. We were both, however, healthy and hearty; and I daily pushed on with the house, making things hourly more comfortable, in



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the hope that long lives were before us both, to be spent for Jesus in seeking the salvation of the perishing Heathen. In our mutual inexperience, and with our hearts aglow for the work of our lives, we incurred this risk which should never have been incurred; and I only refer to the matter thus, in the hope that others may take warning.

Stunned by that dreadful loss, in entering upon this field of labour to which the Lord had Himself so evidently led me, my reason seemed for a time almost to give way. Ague and fever, too, laid a depressing and weakening hand upon me, continuously recurring, and reaching oftentimes the very height of its worst burning stages. But I was never altogether forsaken. The ever-merciful Lord sustained me, to lay the precious dust of my beloved Ones in the same quiet grave, dug for them close by at the end of the house; in all of which last offices my own hands, despite breaking heart, had to take the principal share! I built the grave round and round with coral blocks, and covered the top with beautiful white coral, broken small as gravel; and that spot became my sacred and much frequented shrine, during all the following months and years when I laboured on for the salvation of these savage Islanders amidst difficulties, dangers, and deaths. Whenever Tanna turns to the Lord, and is won for Christ, men in after-days will find the memory of that spot still green,—where with ceaseless prayers and tears I claimed that land for God in which I had "buried my dead" with faith and hope. But for Jesus, and the fellowship He vouchsafed me there, I must have gone mad and died beside that lonely grave!

Dr. Inglis, my brother Missionary on Aneityum, wrote to the Reformed Presbyterian Magazine:—"I trust all those who shed tears of sorrow on account of her early death will be enabled in the exercise of faith and resignation to say, 'The Will of the Lord be done; the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the Name of the Lord!' I need not say how deeply we sympathise with her bereaved parents, as well as with her sorrowing husband. By her death the Mission has sustained a heavy loss. We were greatly pleased with Mrs. Paton during the period of our short intercourse with her. Her mind, naturally vigorous, had been cultivated by a superior education. She was full of Missionary spirit, and took a deep interest in the Native women. This was seen

further, when she went to Tanna, where, in less than three months, she had collected a class of eight females, who came regularly to her to receive instruction. There was about her a maturity of thought, a solidity of character, a loftiness of aim and purpose, rarely found in one so young. Trained up in the fear of the Lord from childhood, like another Mary she had evidently chosen that good part, which is never taken away from those possessed of it. When she left this island, she had to all human appearance a long career of usefulness and happiness on Earth before her, but the Lord has appointed otherwise. She has gone, as we trust, to her rest and her reward. The Lord has said to her, as He said to David, 'Thou didst well in that it was in thine heart to build a House for My Name.' Let us watch and pray, for our Lord cometh as a thief in the night."

Soon after her death, the good Bishop Selwyn called at Port Resolution, Tanna, in his Mission Ship. He came on shore to visit me, accompanied by the Rev. J. C. Patteson. They had met Mrs. Paton on Anietyum in the previous year soon after our arrival, and, as she was then the picture of perfect health, they also felt her loss very keenly. Standing with me beside the grave of mother and child, I weeping aloud on his one hand, and Patteson—afterwards the Martyr Bishop of Nakupu—sobbing silently on the other, the godly Bishop Selwyn poured out his heart to God amidst sobs and tears, during which he laid his hands on my head, and invoked Heaven's richest consolations and blessings on me and my trying labours.

Sorrow and love constrain me to linger over her last words. She cried, "Oh, that my dear mother were here! She is a good woman, my mother, a jewel of a woman."

Then, observing Mr. Copeland near by, she said, "Oh, Mr. Copeland, I did not know you were there! You must not think that I regret coming here, and leaving my mother. If I had the same thing to do over again, I would do it with far more pleasure, yes, with all my heart. Oh no! I do not regret leaving home and friends, though at the time I felt it keenly."

Soon after this, looking up and putting her hand in mine, she said—

"I, C. wrote to our Janet saying, that young Christians

under their first impressions thought they could do anything or make any sacrifice for Jesus, and he asked if she believed it, for he did not think they could, when tested; but Janet wrote back that she believed they could, and (added she with great emphasis) *I believe it is true!*"

In a moment, altogether unexpectedly, she fell asleep in Jesus, with these words on her lips. "Not lost, only gone before to be for ever with the Lord"—my heart keeps saying or singing to itself from that hour till now.

It was very difficult to be resigned, left alone, and in sorrowful circumstances; but feeling immovably assured that my God and Father was too wise and loving to err in anything that He does or permits, I looked up to the Lord for help, and struggled on in His work. I do not pretend to see through the mystery of such visitations,—wherein God calls away the young, the promising, and those sorely needed for His service here; but this I do know and feel, that, in the light of such dispensations, it becomes us all to love and serve our blessed Lord Jesus so that we may be ready at His call for death and Eternity.

CHAPTER XV

AT HOME WITH CANNIBALS

In the first letter, sent jointly by Mr. Copeland and myself from Tanna to the Church at home, the following statements occur:—

"We found the Tannese to be painted Savages, enveloped in all the superstition and wickedness of Heathenism. All the men and children go in a state of nudity. The older women wear grass skirts, and the young women and girls, grass or leaf aprons like Eve in Eden. They are exceedingly ignorant, vicious, and bigoted, and almost void of natural affection. Instead of the inhabitants of Port Resolution being improved by coming in contact with white men they are rendered much worse; for they have learned all their vices but none of their virtues,—if such are possessed by the pioneer traders among such races! The Sandal-wood Traders are as a class the most godless of men, whose cruelty and wickedness make us

ashamed to own them as our countrymen. By them the poor defenceless Natives are oppressed and robbed on every hand; and if they offer the slightest resistance, they are ruthlessly silenced by the musket or revolver. Few months here pass without some of them being so shot, and, instead of their murderers feeling ashamed, they boast of how they despatch them. Such treatment keeps the Natives always burning under a desire for revenge, so that it is a wonder any white man is allowed to come among them. Indeed, all Traders here are able to maintain their position only by revolvers and rifles; but we hope a better state of affairs is at hand for Tanna."

The novelty of our being among them soon passed away, and they began to show their avarice and deceitfulness in every possible way. The Chiefs united and refused to give us the half of the small piece of land which had been purchased, on which to build our Mission House, and when we attempted to fence in the part they had left to us, they "tabooed" it, *i.e.* threatened our Teachers and us with death if we proceeded further with the work. This they did by placing certain reeds stuck into the ground here and there around our house, which our Anelymnese servants at once knew the meaning of, and warned us of our danger; so we left off making the fence, that we might if possible evade all offence. They then divided the few breadfruit and coconut trees on the ground amongst themselves, or demanded such payment for these trees as we did not possess, and threatened revenge on us if the trees were injured by any person. They now became so unreasonable and offensive, and our dangers so increased, as to make our residence amongst them extremely trying. At this time a vessel called; I bought from the Captain the things for payment which they demanded; on receiving it, they lifted the Taboo, and for a little season appeared to be friendly again. This was the third payment they had got for that site, and to yield was teaching them a cruel lesson; all this we felt and clearly saw, but they had by some means to be conciliated, if possible, and our lives had to be saved, if that could be done without disonour to the Christian name.

After these events, a few weeks of dry weather began to tell against the growth of their yams and bananas. The drought was instantly ascribed to us and our God. The Natives

far and near were summoned to consider the matter in public assembly. Next day, Nouka, the high chief, and Miki, the war-chief, his nephew, came to inform us that two powerful Chiefs had openly declared in that assembly that if the Harbour people did not at once kill us or compel us to leave the island, they would, unless the rain came plentifully in the meantime, summon all the Inland people and murder both our Chiefs and us. The friendly Chiefs said, "Pray to your Jehovah God for rain, and do not go far beyond your door for a time; we are all in greatest danger, and if war breaks out we fear we cannot protect you."

But this friendliness was all pretence; they themselves, being Sacred Men, professed to have the power of sending or withholding rain, and tried to fix the blame of their discomfiture on us. The rage of the poor ignorant Heathen was thereby fed against us. The Ever-Merciful, however, again interposed on our behalf. On the following Sabbath, just when we were assembling for worship, rain began to fall, and in great abundance. The whole inhabitants believed, apparently, that it was sent to save us in answer to our prayers; so they met again, and resolved to allow us to remain on Tanna. Alas! on the other hand, the continuous and heavy rains brought much sickness and fever in their train, and again their Sacred Men pointed to us as the cause. Hurricane winds also blew and injured their fruits and fruit-trees,—another opportunity for our enemies to lay the blame of everything upon the Missionaries and their Jehovah God! The trial and the danger daily grew of living among a people so dreadfully benighted by superstition, and so easily swayed by prejudice and passion.

The Natives of Tanna were well-nigh constantly at war amongst themselves, every man doing that which was right in his own eyes, and almost every quarrel ending in an appeal to arms. Besides many battles far inland, one was fought beside our house, and several around the Harbour. In these conflicts many men were bruised with clubs and wounded with arrows, but few lives were lost, considering the savage uproar and frenzy of the scene. In one case, of which we obtained certain information, seven men were killed in an engagement; and, according to Tannese custom, the warriors and their friends feasted on them at the close of the fray, the

widows of the slain being also strangled to death, and similarly disposed of. Besides those who fell in war, the Natives living in our quarter had killed and feasted on eight persons, usually in sacrificial rites.

It is said that the habitual Cannibal's desire for human flesh becomes so horrible that he has been known to disinter and feast upon those recently buried. Two cases of this revolting barbarism were reported as having occurred amongst the villagers living near us. On another occasion the great chief Nouka took seriously unwell, and his people sacrificed three women for his recovery! All such cruel and horrifying practices, however, they tried to conceal from us; and many must have perished in this way of whom we, though living at their doors, were never permitted to hear.

Amongst the Heathen, in the New Hebrides, and especially on Tanna, *woman* is the down-trodden slave of man. She is kept working hard, and bears all the heavier burdens, while he walks by her side with musket, club, or spear. If she offends him, he beats or abuses her at pleasure. A Savage gave his poor wife a severe beating in front of our house and just before our eyes, while in vain we strove to prevent it. Such scenes were so common that no one thought of interfering. Even if the woman died in his hands, or immediately thereafter, neighbours took little notice, if any at all. And their children were so little cared for, that my constant wonder was how any of them survived at all! As soon as they are able to knock about, they are left practically to care for themselves; hence the very small affection they show towards their parents, which results in the aged who are unable to work being neglected, starved to death, and sometimes even more directly and violently destroyed.

A Heathen boy's education consists in being taught to aim skilfully with the bow, to throw the spear faultlessly at a mark, to wield powerfully the club and tomahawk, and to shoot well with musket and revolver when these can be obtained. He accompanies his father and brothers in all the wars and preparations for war, and is diligently initiated into all their cruelties and lusts, as the very prerequisite of his being regarded and acknowledged to be a *man* and a warrior. The girls have, with their mother and sisters, to toil and slave in the village plantations, to prepare all the materials for fencing

these around, to bear every burden, and to be knocked about at will by the men and boys.

Oh, how sad and degraded is the position of Woman where the teaching of Christ is unknown, or disregarded though known! It is the Christ of the Bible, it is His Spirit entering into Humanity, that has lifted Woman, and made her the helpmate and the friend of Man, not his toy or his slave.

CHAPTER XVI

SUPERSTITIONS AND CRUELITIES

ABOUT the time of my dear wife's death, our brother Missionary, Mr. Mathieson, also became exceedingly unwell. His delicate frame fast gave way, and brought with it weakness of the mind as well; and he was removed to Anetymun apparently in a dying condition. These sad visitations had a bad effect on the Natives, owing to their wild superstitions about the cause of death and sickness. We had reason to fear that they would even interfere with the precious grave, over which we kept careful watch for a season; but God mercifully restrained them. Unfortunately, however, one of my Anetymunese Teachers who had gone round to Mr. Mathieson's Station took ill and died there, and this rekindled all their prejudices. He, poor fellow, before death said, "I shall not again return to Port Resolution, or see my dear Missi; but tell him that I die happy, for I love Jesus much, and am going to Jesus!"

Hearing these things, the Natives insolently demanded me to tell them the cause of this death, and of Mr. Mathieson's trouble, and of the other deaths. Other reasoning or explanation being to them useless, I turned the tables, and demanded them to tell me why all this trouble and death had overtaken us in their land, and whether they themselves were not the cause of it all? Strange to say, this simple question turned the whole current of their speculations. They held meeting after meeting to discuss it for several days, and returned the message, "We do not blame you, and you must not blame us, for causing these troubles and deaths; but we believe that a

Bushman must have got hold of a portion of something we had eaten, and must have thrown it to the great Evil Spirit in the volcano, thereby bringing all these troubles and curses."

Another Chief vindicated himself and others thus :—"Karamanamu, the Aurumamu or great Evil Spirit of Tanna, whom we all fear and worship, is causing these troubles ; for he knows that if we become worshippers of your Jehovah God, we cannot continue to fear him, or present him with the best of everything, as our forefathers have always done ; he is angry at you and at us all."

The fear of the deaths and troubles being ascribed to them silenced their talk against us for a season ; but very little made them either friends or foes, as the next event will too painfully show.

Nowhat, an old Chief of the highest rank from Aneityum, who spoke Tannese and was much respected by the Natives all round the south side of Tanna, came on a visit to our island. After returning home, he became very ill and died in a few days. The deluded Tannese, hearing of his death, ascribed it to me and the Worship, and resolved to burn our house and property, and either murder the whole Mission party, or compel us to leave the island. Nowhat's brother was sent from Aneityum to talk to the Tannese and conciliate them, but unfortunately he could not speak the language well ; and the Aneityumese Teachers felt their lives to be at this time in such danger that they durst not accompany him as interpreters, while I, on the other hand, did not understand his language, nor he, mine. Within two days after landing, he had a severe attack of ague and fever ; and, though the vessel he came in remained eight days, he was prostrated all the time, so that his well-intentioned visit did us much harm. The Tannese became furious. This was proof positive, that we were the cause of all their sickness and death ! Inland and all along the weather side of the island, when far enough away from us, they said that the Natives were enjoying excellent health. Meeting after meeting was held ; exciting speeches were delivered ; and feasts were given, for which it was said that several women were sacrificed, cooked, and eaten,—such being the bonds by which they entered into covenant with each other for life or death.

The inhabitants for miles around united in seeking our

destruction, but God put it into even savage hearts to save us. Old Nowar, the Chief under whom we lived, and the Chief next under him, Arturat, set themselves to rescue us. Along with Maunman and Sirwia they opposed every plan in the public assembly for taking our lives. Some of their people also remained friendly to us, and by the help of our Aneityumese Teachers, warned us of danger and protected our lives. Determined not to be baffled, a meeting of all our enemies on the island was summoned, and it was publicly resolved that a band of men be selected and enjoined to kill the whole of those friendly to the Mission, old Nowar among the rest, and not only to murder the Mission party, but also a Trader who had lately landed to live there, that no one might be left to give information to the white men or bring punishment on the Islanders. Frenzy of excitement prevailed, and the blood-frenzied seemed to override the whole assembly ; when, under an impulse that surely came from the Lord of Pity, one great warrior Chief who had hitherto kept silent, rose, swung aloft a mighty club, and smashing it earthwards, cried aloud, "The man that kills Missi must first kill me,—the men that kill the Mission Teachers must first kill me and my people,—for we shall stand by them and defend them till death."

Instantaneously, another Chief thundered in with the same declaration ; and the great assembly broke up in dismay. All the more remarkable was this deliverance, as these two Chiefs lived nearly four miles inland, and, as reputed disease makers and Sacred Men, were regarded as amongst our bitterest enemies. It had happened that, a brother of the former Chief having been wounded in battle, I had dressed his wounds and he recovered, for which perhaps he now favoured us. But I do not put very much value on that consideration ; for too clearly did our dear Lord Jesus interpose directly on our behalf that day. I and my defenceless company had spent it in anxious prayers and tears ; and our hearts overflowed with gratitude to the Saviour who rescued us from the lions' jaws.

Leaving all consequences to the disposal of my Lord, I determined to make an unflinching stand against wife-beating and widow-strangling, feeling confident that even their natural conscience would be on my side. I accordingly pled with all who were in power to unite and put down these shocking and

disgraceful customs. At length, ten Chiefs entered into an agreement not to allow any more beating of wives or strangling of widows, and to forbid all common labour on the Lord's Day; but alas, except for purposes of war or other wickedness, the influence of the Chiefs on Tanna was comparatively small. One Chief boldly declared, "If we did not beat our women, they would never work; they would not fear and obey us; but when we have beaten, and killed, and feasted on two or three, the rest are all very quiet and good for a long time to come!"

I tried to show him how cruel it was, besides that it made them unable for work, and that kindness would have a much better effect; but he promptly assured me that Tannese women "could not understand kindness." For the sake of teaching by example, my Aneityunese Teachers and I used to go a mile or two inland on the principal pathway, along with the Teachers' wives, and there cutting and carrying home a heavy load of firewood for myself and each of the men, while we gave only a small burden to each of the women. Meeting many Tanna-men by the way, I used to explain to them that this was how Christians helped and treated their wives and sisters, and then they loved their husbands and were strong to work at home; and that as men were made stronger, they were intended to bear the heavier burdens, and especially in all labours out of doors. Our habits and practices had thus as much to do as, perhaps more than, all our appeals, in leading them to glimpses of the life to which the Lord Jesus was calling them.

CHAPTER XVII

STREAKS OF DAWN AMIDST DEEDS OF DARKNESS

ANOTHER war-burst, that caused immense consternation, passed over with only two or three deaths; and I succeeded in obtaining the consent of twenty Chiefs to fight no more except on the defensive,—a covenant to which, for a considerable time, they strictly adhered, in the midst of fierce provocations. But to gain any such end, the masses of the people must be

educated to the point of desiring it. The few cannot, in such circumstances, set up to it, without laying themselves open to be down-trodden and swept away by the Savages around.

About this time, several men, afraid or ashamed by day, came to me regularly by night for conversation and instruction. Having seen the doors of the Mission House made fast and the windows blinded so that they could not be observed, they continued with me for many hours, asking all strange questions about the new Religion and its laws. I remember one Chief particularly, who came often, saying to me, "I would be an Avuaki man (*i.e.* a Christian) were it not that all the rest would laugh at me; that I could not stand!"

"Almost persuaded"—before you blame him, remember how many in Christian lands and amid greater privileges live and die without ever passing beyond that stage.

The wife of one of those Chiefs died, and he resolved to imitate a Christian burial. Having purchased white calico from a Trader, he came to me for some tape which the Trader could not supply, and told me that he was going to dress the body as he had seen my dear wife dressed, and lay her also in a similar grave. He declined my offer to attend the funeral and to pray with them, as in that case many of the villagers would not attend. He wanted all the people to be present, to see and to hear, as it was the first funeral of the kind ever celebrated among the Tannese; and my friend Nowar the Chief had promised to conduct a Service and offer prayer to Jehovah before all the Heathen. It moved me to many strange emotions, this Christian burial conducted by a Heathen and in the presence of Heathens, with an appeal to the true and living God by a man as yet darkly groping among idols and superstitions! Many were the wondering questions from time to time addressed to me. The idea of a resurrection from the dead was that which most keenly interested these Natives, and called forth all their powers of inquiry and argument. Thus the waves of hope and fear swept alternately across our lives; but we embraced every possible opportunity of telling them the story of the life and death of Jesus, in the strong hope that God would spare us yet to bring the benighted Heathen to the knowledge of the true salvation, and to have and serve the only Saviour.

Confessedly, however, it was uphill, weary, and trying work.

For one thing, these Tannese were terribly dishonest; and when there was any special sickness, or excitement from any cause, their bad feeling towards the Worship was displayed by the more insolent way in which they carried off whatever they could seize. When I opposed them, the club or tomahawk, the musket or *kawas* (*i.e.* killing-stone), being instantly raised, intimated that my life would be taken, if I resisted. Their skill in stealing on the sly was phenomenal! If an article fell, or was seen on the floor, a Tanna-man would neatly cover it with his foot, while looking you frankly in the face, and, having fixed it by his toes or by bending in his great toe like a thumb to hold it, would walk off with it, assuming the most innocent look in the world. In this way, a knife, a pair of scissors, or any smaller article, would at once disappear. Another fellow would deftly stick something out of sight amongst the whip-cord plaits of his hair, another would conceal it underneath his naked arm, while yet another would shamelessly lift what he coveted and openly carry it away.

With most of them, however, the shame was not in the theft, but in doing it so clumsily that they were discovered! Once, after continuous rain and a hot damp atmosphere, when the sun shone out I put my bedclothes on a rope to dry. I stood at hand watching, as also the wives of two Teachers, for things were mysteriously disappearing almost under our very eyes. Suddenly, Maki, who with his war-companions had been watching us unobserved, came rushing to me breathless and alone, crying, "Missi, come in, quick, quick! I want to tell you something and to get your advice!"

He ran into my house, and I followed; but before he had got into his story, we heard the two women crying out, "Missi, Missi, come quick! Maki's men are stealing your sheets and blankets!"

I ran at once, but all were gone into the bush, and with them my sheets and blankets. Maki for a moment looked abashed, as I charged him with deceiving me just to give his men their opportunity. But he soon rose to the occasion. He wrought himself into a towering rage at them, flourished his huge club and smashed the bushes all around, shouting to me, "Thus will I smash these fellows, and compel them to return your clothes."

One dark night, I heard them amongst my fowls. These I

had purchased from them for knives and calico; and they now stole them all away, dead or alive. Had I interfered, they would have gloried in the chance to club or shoot me in the dark, when no one could exactly say who had done the deed. Several of the few goats, which I had for milk, were also killed or driven away; indeed, all the injury that was possible was done to me, short of taking away my life, and that was now frequently attempted. Having no fires or fireplaces in my Mission House, such being not required there,—though sometimes a fire would have been invaluable for drying our bedclothes in the Rainy Season,—we had a house near by in which all our food was cooked, and there, under lock and key, we secured all our cooking utensils, pots, dishes, etc. One night that too was broken into, and everything was stolen. In consternation, I appealed to the Chief, telling him what had been done. He also flew into a great rage, and vowed vengeance on the thieves, saying that he would compel them to return everything. But, of course, nothing was returned; the thief could not be found! I, unable to live without something in which to boil water, at length offered a blanket to any one that would bring back my kettle. Maki himself, after much professed difficulty, returned it *minus* the lid,—that, he said, probably fishing for a higher bribe, could not be got at any price, being at the other side of the island in a tribe over which he had no control! In the circumstances, I was glad to get kettle *minus* lid—realising how life itself may depend on so small a luxury!

CHAPTER XVIII

THE VISIT OF H.M.S. "CORDELLA"

ONE morning, the Tannese, rushing towards me in great excitement, cried, "Missi, Missi, there is a God, or a ship on fire, or something of fear, coming over the sea! We see no flames, but it smokes like a volcano. Is it a Spirit, a God, or a ship on fire? What is it? What is it?"

One party after another followed in quick succession, shouting the same questions in great alarm, to which I replied, "I

cannot go at once; I must dress first in my best clothes; it will likely be one of Queen Victoria's Men-of-war, coming to ask of me if your conduct is good or bad, if you are stealing my property, or threatening my life, or how you are using me?"

They pled with me to go and see it; but I made much fuss about dressing, and getting ready to meet the great Chief on the vessel, and would not go with them. The two principal Chiefs now came, running and asked, "Missi, will it be a ship of war?"

I called to them, "I think it will; but I have no time to speak to you now, I must get on my best clothes!"

They said, "Missi, only tell us, will he ask you if we have been stealing your things?"

I answered, "I expect he will."

They asked, "And will you tell him?"

I said, "I must tell him the truth; if he asks, I will tell him."

They then cried out, "Oh, Missi, tell him not! Everything shall be brought back to you at once, and no one will be allowed again to steal from you."

Then said I, "Be quick! Everything must be returned before he comes. Away, away! and let me get ready to meet the great Chief on the Man-of-war."

Hitherto, no thief could ever be found, and no Chief had power to cause anything to be restored to me; but now, in an incredibly brief space of time, one came running to the Mission House with a pot, another with a pan, another with a blanket, others with knives, forks, plates, and all sorts of stolen property. The Chiefs called me to receive these things, but I replied, "Lay them all down at the door, bring everything together quickly; I have no time to speak with you!"

I delayed my toilet, enjoying mischievously the magical effect of an approaching vessel that might bring penalty to thieves. At last the Chiefs, running in breathless haste, called out to me, "Missi, Missi, do tell us, is the stolen property all here?"

Of course I could not tell, but, running out, I looked on the promiscuous heap of my belongings, and said, "I don't see the lid of the kettle there yet!"

One Chief said, "No, Missi, for it is on the other side of

the island; but tell him not, I have sent for it, and it will be here to-morrow."

I answered, "I am glad you have brought back so much; and now, if you three Chiefs, Nauka, Miaki, and Nowar, do not run away when he comes, he will not likely punish you; but, if you and your people run away, he will ask me why you are afraid, and I will be forced to tell him! Keep near me and you are all safe; only there must be no more stealing from me."

They said, "We are in black fear, but we will keep near you, and our bad conduct to you is done."

The charm and joy of that morning are fresh to me still, when H.M.S. *Cordelia*, Captain Vernon, steamed into our lovely Harbour. The Commander, having heard rumour of my dangers on Tanna, kindly came on shore as soon as the ship cast anchor, with two boats, and a number of his officers and men, so far armed. He was dressed in splendid uniform, being a tall and handsome man, and he and his attendants made a grand and imposing show. On seeing Captain Vernon's boat nearing the shore, and the men glittering in gold lace and arms, Miaki the Chief left my side on the beach and rushed towards his village. I concluded that he had run for it through terror, but he had other and more civilised intentions in his Heathen head! Having obtained, from some trader or visitor in previous days, a soldier's old red coat, he had resolved to rise to the occasion and appear in his best before the Captain and his men. As I was shaking hands with them and welcoming them to Tanna, Miaki returned with the short red coat on, buttoned tightly round his otherwise naked body; and, surmounted by his ugly painted face and long whips of twisted hair, it completely spoiled any appearance that he might otherwise have had of savage freedom, and made him look a dirty and insignificant creature.

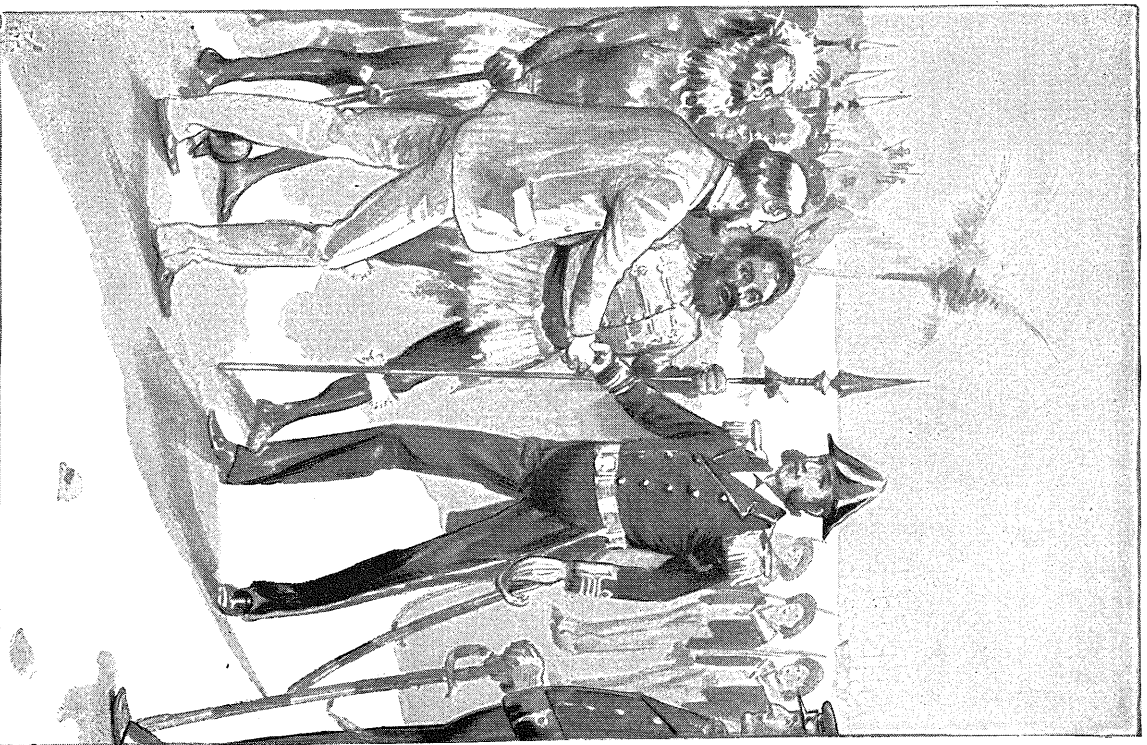
The Captain was talking to me, his men stood in order near by—to my eyes, oh how charming a glimpse of Home life!—when Miaki marched up and took his place most consequentially at my side. He felt himself the most important personage in the scene, and with an attempt at haughty dignity he began to survey the visitors. All eyes were fixed on the impudent little man, and the Captain asked, "What sort of a character is this?"

I replied, "This is Miski, our great war Chief"; and whispered to the Captain to be on his guard, as this man knew a little English, and might understand or misunderstand just enough to make it afterwards dangerous to me.

The Captain only muttered, "The contemptible creature!" But such words were far enough beyond Miski's vocabulary, so he looked on and grinned complacently.

At last he said, "Missi, this great Chief whom Queen Victoria has sent to visit you in her Man-of-war, cannot go over the whole of this island so as to be seen by all our people; and I wish you to ask him if he will stand by a tree, and allow me to put a spear on the ground at his heel, and we will make a nick in it at the top of his head, and the spear will be sent round the island to let all the people see how tall this great man is!" They were delighted at the good Captain agreeing to their simple request; and that spear was exhibited to thousands, as the vessel, her Commander, officers, and men, were afterwards talked of round and round the island.

Captain Vernon was extremely kind, and offered to do anything in his power for me, thus left alone on the island amongst such Savages; but, as my main difficulties were connected with my spiritual work amongst them rousing up their cruel prejudices, I did not see how his kindness could effectually interpose. At his suggestion, however, I sent a general invitation to all the Chiefs within reach, to meet the Captain next morning at my house. True to their instincts of suspicion and fear, they despatched all their women and children to the beach on the opposite side of the island, beyond reach of danger, and next morning my house was crowded with armed men, manifestly much afraid. Punctually at the hour appointed, 10 A.M., the Captain came on shore; and soon thereafter twenty Chiefs were seated with him in my house. He very kindly spent about an hour, giving them wise counsels and warning them against outrages on strangers, all calculated to secure our safety and advance the interests of our Mission work. He then invited all the Chiefs to go on board and see his vessel. They were taken to see the Armoury, and the sight of the big guns running so easily on rails vastly astonished them. He then placed them round us on deck and showed them two shells discharged towards the Ocean, at which, as they burst and fell far off, splash—splash—



VISIT OF H.M.S. "CORDELIA."—Page 72.

ing into the water, the terror of the Natives visibly increased. But, when he sent a large ball crashing through a cocoa-nut grove, breaking the trees like straws and cutting its way clear and swift, they were quite dumbfounded and pled to be again set safely on shore. After receiving each some small gift, however, they were reconciled to the situation, and returned immensely interested in all that they had seen. Doubtless many a wild romance was spun by these savage heads, in trying to describe and hand down to others the wonders of the fire-god of the sea, and the Captain of the great white Queen. How easily it all lends itself to the service of poetry and myth!

CHAPTER XIX

"NOBLE OLD ABRAHAM"

Fever and ague had now attacked me fourteen times severely, with slighter recurring attacks almost continuously after my first three months on the island, and I now felt the necessity of taking the hint of the Tannese Chief before referred to—"Sleep on the higher ground." Having also received medical counsel to the same effect, though indeed experience was painfully sufficient testimony, I resolved to remove my house, and began to look about for a suitable site. There rose behind my present site, a hill about two hundred feet high, surrounded on all sides by a valley, and swept by the breezes of the trade-winds, being only separated from the Ocean by a narrow neck of land. On this I had set my heart; there was room for a Mission House and a Church, for which indeed Nature seemed to have adapted it. I proceeded to buy up every claim by the Natives to any portion of the hill, paying each publicly and in turn, so that there might be no trouble afterwards. I then purchased from a Trader the deck planks of a shipwrecked vessel, with which to construct a house of two apartments, a bedroom and a small store-room adjoining it, to which I proposed to transfer and add the old house as soon as I was able. Just at this juncture, the fever smote me again more severely than ever; my weakness after this attack was so great, that

I felt as if I never could rally again. With the help of my faithful Aneityumese Teacher, Abraham, and his wife, however, I made what appeared my last effort to creep—I could not climb—up the hill to get a breath of wholesome air. When about two-thirds up the hill, I became so faint that I concluded I was dying. Lying down on the ground, sloped against the foot of a tree to keep me from rolling to the bottom, I took farewell of old Abraham, of my Mission work, and of everything around! In this weak state I lay, watched over by my faithful companion, and fell into a quiet sleep. When consciousness returned, I felt a little stronger, and a faint gleam of hope and life came back to my soul.

Abraham and his devoted wife Nātin lifted me and carried me to the top of the hill. There they laid me on cocoa-nut leaves on the ground, and erected over me a shade or screen of the same; and there the two faithful souls, inspired surely by something diviner even than mere human pity, gave me the cocoa-nut juice to drink and fed me with native food and kept me lying—I know not for how long. Consciousness did, however, fully return. The trade-wind refreshed me day by day. The Tannese seemed to have given me up for dead; and providentially none of them looked near us for many days. Amazingly my strength returned, and I began planning about my new house on the hill. Afraid again to sleep at the old site, I slept under the tree, and sheltered by the cocoa-nut leaf screen, while preparing my new bedroom.

Here again, but for these faithful souls, the Aneityumese Teacher and his wife, I must have been baffled, and would have died in the effort. The planks of the wreck, and all other articles required, they fetched and carried; and it taxed my utmost strength to get them in some way planted together. But life depended on it. It was at length accomplished; and after that time I suffered comparatively little from anything like continuous attacks of fever and ague. That noble old soul, Abraham, stood by me as an angel of God in sickness and in danger; he went at my side wherever I had to go; he helped me willingly to the last inch of strength in all that I had to do; and it was perfectly manifest that he was doing all this not from mere human love, but for the sake of Jesus. That man had been a Cannibal in his Heathen days, but by the grace of God there he stood verily a new creature in Christ

Jesus. Any trust, however sacred or valuable, could be absolutely reposed in him; and in trial or danger I was often refreshed by that old Teacher's prayers, as I used to be by the prayers of my saintly father in my childhood's home. No white man could have been a more valuable helper to me in my perilous circumstances; and no person, white or black, could have shown more fearless and chivalrous devotion.

When I have read or heard the shallow objections of irreligious scribblers and talkers, hinting that there was no reality in conversions, and that Mission effort was but waste, oh, how my heart has yearned to plant them just one week on Tanna, with the "natural" man all around in the person of Cannibal and Heathen, and only the one "spiritual" man in the person of the converted Abraham, nursing them, feeding them, saving them "for the love of Jesus"—that I might just learn how many hours it took to convince them that Christ in man was a reality after all! All the scepticism of Europe would hide its head in foolish shame; and all its doubts would dissolve under one glance of the new light that Jesus, and Jesus alone, pours from the converted Cannibal's eye.

CHAPTER XX

A TYPICAL SOUTH SEA TRADER

THE prejudices and persecutions of Heathens were a sore enough trial, but sorer and more hopeless was the wicked and contaminating influence of, alas, my fellow-countrymen. One, for instance, a Captain Winchester, living with a native woman at the head of the bay as a Trader, a dissipated wretch, though a well-educated man, was angry forsooth at this state of peace! Apparently there was not the usual demand for barter for the fowls, pigs, etc., in which he traded. He developed at once a wonderful interest in their affairs, presented all the Chiefs around with powder, caps, and balls, and lent among them a number of flash-muskets. He urged them not to be afraid of war, as he would supply any amount of ammunition. I remonstrated, but he flatly told me that peace did not suit his purposes! Incited and encouraged thus, these poor Heathen

people were goaded into a most unjust war on neighbouring tribes. The Trader immediately demanded a high price for the weapons he had lent; the price of powder, caps, and balls rose exorbitantly with every fresh demand; his yards were crowded with poultry and pigs, which he readily disposed of to passing vessels; and he might have amassed great sums of money but for his vile dissipation. Captain Winchester, now glorying in the war, charged a large hog for a wine-glass full of powder, or three or four balls, or ten gun-caps; he was boastful of his "good luck" in getting rid of all his old muskets and filling his yards with pigs and fowls. Such is the infernal depth to which we can sink, when the misery and ruin of many are thought to be more than atoned for by the wealth and prosperity of a few who trade in their doom!

Miaki the war Chief had a young brother, Rarip by name, about eighteen years of age. When this war began he came to live with me at the Mission House. After it had raged some time, Miaki forced him to join the fighting men; but he escaped through the bush, and returned to me, saying, "Miaki, I hate this fighting; it is not good to kill men; I will live with you!"

Again the war Chief came, and forced my dear young Rarip to join the hosts. Of course, I could only plead; I could not prevent him. This time, he placed him at his own side in the midst of his warriors. On coming in sight of the enemy, and hearing their first yells as they rushed from the bush, a bullet pierced young Rarip's breast, and he fell dead into the arms of Miaki. The body was carried home to his brother's village, with much wailing, and a messenger ran to tell me that Rarip was dead. On hastening thither, I found him quite dead, and the centre of a tragic ceremonial. Around him, some sitting, others lying on the ground, were assembled all the women and girls, tearing their hair, wounding themselves with split bamboos and broken bottles, dashing their heads to the earth, painting all black their faces, breasts, and arms, and wailing with loud lamentations! Men were also there, knocking their heads against the trees, gashing their bodies with knives till they ran with streaks of blood, and indulging in every kind of savage symbol of grief and anguish. My heart broke to see them, and to think that they knew not the love of our dear Lord Jesus for consolation.

I returned to the Mission House, and brought a white sheet and some tape, in which the body of dear young Rarip was wrapped and prepared for the grave. The Natives appeared to be gratified at this mark of respect; and all agreed that Rarip should have under my direction a Christian burial. The men prepared the grave in a spot selected near to his own house; I read the Word of God, and offered prayer to Jehovah, with a psalm of praise, amidst a scene of weeping and lamentation never to be forgotten; and the thought burned through my very soul—oh, when, when will the Tannese realise what I am now thinking and praying about, the life and immortality brought to light through Jesus?

As the war still raged on, and many more were killed, vengeance threatened the miserable Trader. Miaki attacked him thus, "You led us into this war. You deceived us, and we began it. Rarip is dead, and many others. Your life shall yet go for his."

Captain Winchester, heartless as a dog so long as pigs and fowls came to the yard at whatever cost to others' lives, now trembled like a coward for himself. He implored me to let him and his Maré wife sleep at my house for safety; but I refused to allow my Mission to be in any way identified with his crimes. The Natives from other islands, whom he kept and wrought like slaves, he now armed with muskets for his defence; but, having no faith in them protecting or even warning him, he implored me to send one of my Teachers, to assist his wife in watching till he snatched a few hours of sleep every day, and, if awake, he would sell his life as dearly as he could by aid of musket and revolver. The Teachers were both afraid and disinclined to go; and I could not honestly ask them to do so. His peril and terror became so real that by night he slept in his boat anchored out in the centre of the bay, with his arms beside him, and a crew ready to start off at the approach of danger and lose everything; while by-day he kept watch on shore, armed, and also ready to fly. Thus his miserable existence dragged on, keeping watch alternatively with his wife, till a trading vessel called and carried him off with all that he had rescued—for which deliverance we were unfeignedly thankful! The war, which he had wickedly instigated, lingered on for three months; and then, by a present given secretly to two leading Chiefs, I managed to

bring it to a close. But feelings of revenge for the slain burned fiercely in many breasts; and young men had old friends handed on to them by the recital of their fathers' deeds of blood.

CHAPTER XXI

UNDER AXE AND MUSKET

Around this time, our Sabbath audiences at the Mission numbered forty or so. Nowar and three or four more, and only they, seemed to love and serve Jesus. They were, however, changeable and doubtful, though they exerted a good influence on their villages, and were generally friendly to us and to the Worship.

One morning at daybreak I found my house surrounded by armed men, and a Chief intimated that they had assembled to take my life. Seeing that I was entirely in their hands, I knelt down and gave myself away body and soul to the Lord Jesus, for what seemed the last time on earth. Rising, I went out to them, and began calmly talking about their unkind treatment of me and contrasting it with all my conduct towards them. I also plainly showed them what would be the sad consequences, if they carried out their cruel purpose. At last some of the Chiefs, who had attended the Worship, rose and said, "Our conduct has been bad; but now we will fight for you, and kill all those who hate you."

Grasping hold of their leader, I held him fast till he promised never to kill any one on my account, for Jesus taught us to love our enemies and always to return good for evil! During this scene, many of the armed men slunk away into the bush, and those who remained entered into a bond to be friendly and to protect us. But again their Public Assembly resolved that we should be killed, because, as they said, they hated Jehovah and the Worship; for it made them afraid to do as they had always done. If I would give up visiting the villages, and praying and talking with them about Jehovah, they intimated that they would like me to stay and trade with them, as they liked the Traders but hated the Missionaries! I told them that the hope of being able to teach them the Worship

of Jehovah alone kept me living amongst them; that I was there, not for gain or pleasure, but because I loved them, and pilied their estate, and sought their good continually by leading them to know and serve the only true God.

But my enemies seldom slackened their hateful designs against my life, however calmed or baffled for the moment. Within a few days of the above events, when Natives in large numbers were assembled at my house, a man furiously rushed on me with his axe; but a Kasarumini Chief snatched a spade from which I had been working, and dexterously defended me from instant death. Life in such circumstances led me to cling very near to the Lord Jesus; I knew not, for one brief hour, when or how attack might be made; and yet, with my trembling hand clasped in the Hand once nailed on Calvary, and now swaying the sceptre of the Universe, calmness and peace and resignation abode in my soul.

Next day, a wild Chief followed me about for four hours with his loaded musket, and, though often directed towards me, God restrained his hand. I spoke kindly to him, and attended to my work as if he had not been there, fully persuaded that my God had placed me there, and would protect me till my allotted task was finished. Looking up in unceasing prayer to our dear Lord Jesus, I left all in His hands, and felt immortal till my work was done. Trials and hairbreadth escapes strengthened my faith, and seemed only to nerve me for more to follow; and they did tread swiftly upon each other's heels. Without that abiding consciousness of the presence and power of my dear Lord and Saviour, nothing else in all the world could have preserved me from losing my reason and perishing miserably. His words, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," became to me so real that it would not have startled me to behold Him, as Stephen did, gazing down upon the scene. I felt His supporting power, as did St. Paul, when he cried, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." It is the sober truth, and it comes back to me sweetly after twenty years, that I had my nearest and dearest glimpses of the face and smile of my blessed Lord in those dread moments when musket club, or spear was being levelled at my life. Oh the bliss of living and enduring, as seeing "Him who is invisible"!

One evening, I awoke three times to hear a Chief and his

men trying to force the door of my house. Though armed with muskets, they had some sense of doing wrong, and were wholesomely afraid of a little retriever dog which had often stood between me and death. God restrained them again; and next morning the report went all round the Harbour, that those who tried to shoot me were "smitten weak with fear," and that shooting would not do. A plan was therefore deliberately set on foot to fire the premises, and club us if we attempted to escape. But our Anelyumese Teacher heard of it, and God helped us to frustrate their designs. When they knew that their plots were revealed to us, they seemed to lose faith in themselves, and cast about to circumvent us in some more secret way. Their evil was overruled for good.

CHAPTER XXII

A NATIVE SAINT AND MARTYR

NAMUKI, one of my Anelyumese Teachers, was placed at our nearest village. There he had built a house for himself and his wife, and there he led amongst the Heathen a pure and humble Christian life. Almost every morning, he came and reported on the state of affairs to me. Without books or a school, he yet instructed the Natives in Divine things, conducted the Worship, and taught them much by his good example. His influence was increasing, when one morning a Sacred Man threw at him the kawas or killing-stone, a deadly weapon like a scythe stone in shape and thickness, usually round but sometimes angular, and from eighteen to twenty inches long. They throw it from a great distance and with fatal precision. The Teacher, with great agility, warding his head and received the deep cut from it in his left hand, reserving his right hand to guard against the club that was certain to follow swiftly. The Priest sprang upon him with his club and with savage yells. He evaded, yet also received many blows; and, rushing out of their hands, actually reached the Mission House, bleeding, fainting, and pursued by howling murderers. I had been anxiously expecting him, and hearing the noise I ran out with all possible speed.

On seeing me, he sank down by a tree, and cried, "Missi, Missi, quick! and escape for your life! They are coming to kill you; they say they must kill us all to-day, and they have begun with me; for they hate Jehovah and the Worship!"

I hastened to the good Teacher where he lay; I bound up, washed, and dressed his wounds; and God, by the mystery of His own working, kept the infuriated Tannese watching at bay. Gradually they began to disappear into the bush, and we conveyed the dear Teacher to the Mission House. In three or four weeks, he so far recovered by careful nursing that he was able to walk about again. Some petitioned for him to return to the village; but I insisted, as a preliminary, that the Harbour Chiefs should unitedly punish him who had abused the Teacher; and this to test them, for he had only carried out their own wishes.—Nowar excepted, and perhaps one or two others. They made a pretence of atoning by presenting the Teacher with a pig and some yams as a peace-offering; but I said, "No! such bad conduct must be punished, or we would leave their island by the first opportunity."

Now that Sacred Man, a Chief too, had gone on fighting with other tribes, till his followers had all died or been slain; and, after three weeks' palaver, the other Chiefs seized him, tied him with a rope, and sent me word to come and see him punished, as they did not want us after all to leave the island. I had to go, for fear of more bloody work, and after talk with them, followed by many fair promises, he was loosed.

All appearing friendly for some time, and willing to listen and learn, the Teacher earnestly desired to return to his post. I pled with him to remain at the Mission House till we felt more assured, but he replied, "Missi, when I see them thirsting for my blood, I just see myself when the Missionary first came to my island. I desired to murder him, as they now desire to kill me. Had he stayed away for such danger, I would have remained Heathen; but he came, and continued coming to teach us, till, by the grace of God, I was changed to what I am. Now the same God that changed me to this, can change these poor Tannese to love and serve Him. I cannot stay away from them; but I will sleep at the Mission House, and do all I can by day to bring them to Jesus."

It was not in me to keep such a man, under such motives, from what he felt to be his post of duty. He returned to his

village work, and for several weeks things appeared most encouraging. The inhabitants showed growing interest in us and our work, and less fear of the pretensions of their Heathen Priest, which, alas! fed his jealousy and anger. One morning during worship, when the good Teacher knelt in prayer, the same savage Priest sprang upon him with his great club and left him for dead, wounded and bleeding and unconscious. The people fled and left him in his blood, afraid of being mixed up with the murder. The Teacher, recovering a little, crawled to the Mission House, and reached it about mid-day in a dying condition. On seeing him, I ran to meet him, but he fell near the Teacher's house, saying, "Missi, I am dying! They will kill you also. Escape for your life."

Trying to console him, I sat down beside him, dressing his wounds and nursing him. He was quite resigned; he was looking up to Jesus, and rejoicing that he would soon be with Him in Glory. His pain and suffering were great, but he bore all very quietly, as he said and kept saying, "For the sake of Jesus! For Jesus's sake!" He was constantly praying for his persecutors, "O Lord Jesus, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing. Oh, take not away all Thy servants from Tanna! Take not away Thy Worship from this dark island! O God, bring all the Tannese to love and follow Jesus!"

To him, Jesus was all and in all; and there were no bands in his death. He passed from us, in the assured hope of entering into the Glory of his Lord. Humble though he may appear in the world's esteem, I knew that a great man had fallen there in the service of Christ, and that he would take rank in the glorious Army of the Martyrs. I made for him a coffin, and dug his grave near the Mission House. With prayers, and many tears, we consigned his remains to the dust in the certainty of a happy resurrection. Even one such convert was surely a triumphant reward for the Missionaries, whom God had honoured in bringing him to Jesus. May they have many like Nannuri for their crown of joy and rejoicing in the great day!

CHAPTER XXIII

BUILDING AND PRINTING FOR GOD

FOR fully three months, all our available time, with all the native help which I could hire, was spent in erecting a building to serve for Church and School. It was fifty feet long, by twenty-one feet six inches broad. The studs were three feet apart, and all fixed by tenon and mortise into upper and lower wall plates. The beautiful roof of iron-wood and sugar-cane leaf was supported by three massive pillars of wood, sunk deeply into the ground. The roof extended about three feet over the wall plates, both to form a verandah and to carry the rain-drop free beyond the walls. It was made of sugar-cane leaf and cocoa-nut leaves all around. The floor was laid with white coral, broken small, and covered with cocoa-nut leaf mats, such as those on which the Natives sat. Indeed, it was as comfortable a House of Prayer as any man need wish for in the tropics, though having only open spaces for doors and windows! I bought the heavy wood for it on Aneityum—price, fifty pairs of trousers for Natives; and these again were the gift of my Bible Class in Glasgow, all cut and sewed by their own hands. I gave also one hundred and thirty yards of cloth, along with other things, for other needful wood.

As we were preparing a foundation for the Church, a huge and singular-looking round stone was dug up, at sight of which the Tannese stood aghast. The eldest Chief said, "Missi, that stone was either brought there by Karapanamun (the Evil Spirit), or hid there by our great Chief who is dead. That is the Stone God to which our forefathers offered human sacrifices; these holes held the blood of the victim till drunk up by the Spirit. The Spirit of that stone eats up men and women and drinks their blood, as our fathers taught us. We are in greatest fear!"

A Sacred Man claimed possession, and was exceedingly desirous to carry it off; but I managed to keep it, and did everything in my power to show them the absurdity of these foolish notions. Idolatry had not indeed yet fallen throughout

Tanna; but one cruel idol, at least, had to give way for the erection of God's House on that benighted land.

An ever-memorable event was the printing of my first book in Tannese. Thomas Binnie, Jun., Glasgow, gave me a printing-press and a font of type. Printing was one of the things I had never tried, but having now prepared a booklet in Tannese, I got my press into order, and began fingering the type. But book-printing turned out to be for me a much more difficult affair than house-building had been. Yet by dogged perseverance I succeeded at last. My biggest difficulty was how to arrange the pages properly! After many failures, I folded a piece of paper into the number of leaves wanted, cut the corners, folding them back, and numbering as they would be when correctly placed in the book; then folding all back without cutting up the sheet, I found now by these numbers how to arrange the pages in the frame or case for printing, as indicated on each side. And do you think me foolish, when I confess that I shouted in an ecstasy of joy when the first sheet came from the press all correct? It was about one o'clock in the morning. I was the only white man then on the island, and all the Natives had been fast asleep for hours! Yet I literally pitched my hat into the air, and danced like a schoolboy round and round that printing-press; till I began to think, Am I losing my reason? Would it not be liker a Missionary to be upon my knees, adoring God for this first portion of His blessed Word ever printed in this new language? Friend, bear with me, and believe me—that was as true worship as ever was David's dancing before the Ark of his God! Nor think that I did not, over that first sheet of God's Word ever printed in the Tannese tongue, go upon my knees too, and then, and every day since, plead with the mighty Lord to carry the light and joy of His own Holy Bible into every dark heart and benighted home on Tanna!

Yet dangers darkened round me. One day, while toiling away at my house, the war Chief and his brother, and a large party of armed men, surrounded the plot where I was working. They all had muskets, besides their own native weapons. They watched me for some time in silence, and then every man levelled a musket straight at my head. Escape was impossible. Speech would only have increased my danger. My eyesight came and went for a few moments. I prayed to

my Lord Jesus, either Himself to protect me or to take me home to His Glory. I tried to keep working on at my task, as if no one was near me. In that moment, as never before, the words came to me—"Whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, I will do it;" and I knew that I was safe. Retiring a little from their first position, no word having been spoken, they took up the same attitude somewhat farther off, and seemed to be urging one another to fire the first shot. But my dear Lord restrained them once again, and they withdrew, leaving me with a new reason for trusting Him with all that concerned me for Time and Eternity.

CHAPTER XXIV

HEATHEN DANCE AND SHAM RITE

THE Chief, Nowar Noukamara, usually known as Nowar, was my best and most-to-be-trusted friend. He influenced the Harbour Chiefs and their people for eight or ten miles around to get up a great feast in favour of the Worship of Jehovah. All were personally and specially invited, and it was the largest Assembly of any kind that I ever witnessed on the Islands.

When all was ready, Nowar sent a party of Chiefs to escort me and my Aneltyumese Teachers to the feast. Fourteen Chiefs, in turn, made speeches to the assembled multitude; the drift of all being, that war and fighting be given up on Tanna,—that no more people be killed by Nahak, for witchcraft and sorcery were lies,—that Sacred Men no longer profess to make wind and rain, famine and plenty, disease and death,—that the dark Heathen talk of Tanna should cease,—that all here present should adopt the Worship of Jehovah as taught to them by the Missionary and the Aneltyumese,—and that all the banished Tribes should be invited to their own lands to live in peace! These strange speeches did not draw forth a single opposing voice. The Tannese are born talkers, and can and will speak on all occasions; but most of it means nothing, bears no fruit.

After these speeches, a scene followed which gradually as-

sumed shape as an idolatrous ceremonial and greatly horrified me. It was in connection with the immense quantity of food that had been prepared for the feast, especially pigs and fowls. A great heap had been piled up for each Tribe represented, and a handsome portion also set apart for the Missionary and his Teachers. The ceremony was this, as nearly as I could follow it. One hundred or so of the leading men marched into the large clear space in the centre of the assembled multitudes, and stood their facing each other in equal lines, with a man at either end closing up the passage between. At the middle they stood eight or ten feet apart, gradually nearing till they almost met at either end. Amid tremendous silence for a few moments, all stood hushed; then every man kneeled on his right knee, extended his right hand, and bent forward till his face nearly touched the ground. Thereon the man at the one end began muttering something, his voice rising ever louder as he rose to his feet, when it ended in a fearful yell as he stood erect. Next the two long lines of men, all in a body, went through the same ceremonial, rising gradually to their feet, with mutterings deepening into a howl, and heightening into a yell as they stood erect. Finally, the man at the other end went through the same hideous forms. All this was thrice deliberately repeated, each time with growing frenzy. And then, all standing on their feet, they united as with one voice in what sounded like music running mad up and down the scale—closing with a long, deep-toned, hollow howl as of souls in pain. With smiles of joy, the men then all shook hands with each other. Nowar and another Chief briefly spoke; and the food was then divided and exchanged, a principal man of each Tribe standing by to receive and watch his portion.

At this stage, Nowar and Nerwangi, as leaders, addressed the Teachers and the Missionary to this effect: "This feast is held to move all the Chiefs and People here to give up fighting, to become friends, and to worship your Jehovah God. We wish you to remain, and to teach us all good conduct. As an evidence of our sincerity, and of our love, we have prepared this pile of food for you."

In reply, I addressed the whole multitude, saying how pleased I was with their speeches and with the resolutions and promises which they all had made. I further urged them to

stick fast by these, and that grand fruits would arise to their island, to themselves, and to their children.

Having finished a brief address, I then walked forward to the very middle of the circle, and laid down before them a bundle of stripes of red calico and pieces of white calico, a number of fish-hooks, knives, etc. etc., requesting the two Chiefs to divide my offering of goodwill among the Tribes assembled, and also the pile of food presented to us, as a token of my love and friendship to them all.

Not without some doubt, and under considerable trial, did I take this apparently unfriendly attitude of refusing to take their food. But I feared to seem even to approve of any act of devil-worship, or to confirm them in it, being there to discourage all such scenes, and to lead them to acknowledge only the true God. Yet all the time I felt this qualm,—that it might have been better to eat food with men who acknowledged some God and asked his blessing, than with those white Heathens at home, who asked the blessing of no God, nor thanked Him—in this worse than the dog which licks the hand that feeds it! Nowar and Nerwangi explained in great orations what I meant, and how I wished all to be divided amongst the assembled Tribes to show my love. With this, all seemed highly satisfied.

Heathen dances were now entered upon, their paint and feathers and ornaments adding to the wildness of the scene. The men seemed to dance in an inside ring, and the women in an outside ring, at a considerable distance from each other. Music was supplied by singing and clapping of hands. The order was perfect, and the figures highly intricate. But I have never been able to a sociate dancing with things lovely and of good report! After the dancing, all retired to the bush; and a kind of sham fight then followed on the public cleared ground. A host of painted Savages rushed in and took possession with songs and shoutings. From the bush, on the opposite side, the chanting of women was heard in the distance, louder and louder as they approached. Snatching from a burning fire flaming sticks, they rushed on the men with these, beating them and throwing burning pieces of wood amongst them, till with deafening yells amongst themselves and amidst shouts of laughter from the crowd, they drove them from the space, and danced thereon and sang a song of victory. The

dancing and fighting, the naked painted figures, and the constant yells and shoutings, gave one a weird sensation, and suggested strange ideas of Hell broken loose.

The final scene approached, when the men assisted their women to fill all the allotted food into baskets, to be carried home and eaten there; for the different Tribes do not sit down together and eat together as we would do; their coming together is for the purpose of exchanging and dividing the food presented. And now they broke into friendly confusion, and freely walked about mingling with each other; and a kind of savage rehearsal of Jonathan and David took place. They stripped themselves of their fantastic dresses, their handsomely woven and twisted grass skirts, leaf skirts, grass and leaf aprons; they gave away or exchanged all these, and their ornaments and bows and arrows, besides their less romantic calico and print dresses more recently acquired. The effusion and ceremonial of the gifts and exchanges seem to betoken a loving people; and so they were for the feast—but that laid not aside a single deadly feud, and streams of blood and cries of hate would soon efface all traces of this day.

CHAPTER XXV

CANNIBALS AT WORK

EARLY one morning, the savage yells of warring Tribes woke me from sleep. They had broken into a quarrel about a woman, and were fiercely engaged with their clubs. According to my custom, I rushed in amongst them, and, not without much difficulty, was blessed in separating them before deadly wounds had been given or received. On this occasion, the Chiefs of both Tribes, being very friendly to me, drove their people back from each other at my earnest appeals. Sitting down at length within earshot, they had it out in a wild scolding match, a contest of lung and tongue. Meanwhile I rested on a canoe midway betwixt them, in the hope of averting a renewal of hostilities. By and by an old Sacred Man, a Chief called Sapa, with some touch of savage comedy in his breast, volunteered an episode which restored good humor

to the scene. Leaping up, he came dancing and singing towards me, and there, to the amusement of all, re-enacted the quarrel, and mimicked rather cleverly my attempt at separating the combatants. Smashing at the canoe with his club, he yelled and knocked down imaginary enemies; then, rushing first at one party and then at the other, he represented me as appealing and gesticulating and pushing them afar from each other, till he became quite exhausted. Thereon he came and planted himself in great glee beside me, and looked around as if to say, "You must laugh, for I have played." At this very juncture, a loud cry of "Sail O!" broke upon our ears, and all parties leapt to their feet, and prepared for a new sensation; for in those climes, everything—war itself—is a smaller interest than a vessel from the Great Unknown Beyond sailing into your Harbour.

Not many days thereafter, a very horrible transaction occurred. Before daybreak, I heard shot after shot quickly discharged in the Harbour. One of my Teachers came running, and cried, "Missi, six or seven men have been shot dead this morning for a great feast. It is to reconcile Tribes that have been at war, and to allow a banished Tribe to return in peace."

I learned that the leading men had in council agreed upon this sacrifice, but the name of each victim was kept a secret till the last moment. The torture of suspense and uncertainty seemed to be borne by all as part of their appointed lot; nor did they prepare as if suspecting any dread assault. Before daylight, the Sacred Men allocated a murderer to the door of each house where a victim slept. A signal shot was fired; all rushed to their doors, and the doomed ones were shot and clubbed to death, as they attempted to escape. Their bodies were then borne to a sacred tree, and hung up there by the hands for a time, as an offering to the gods. Being taken down, they were carried ceremoniously and laid out on the shore near my house, placed under a special guard.

Information had reached me that my Teachers and I were also destined victims for this same feast; and sure enough we espied a band of armed men, the killers, despatched towards our premises. Instantaneously I had the Teachers and their wives and myself securely locked into the Mission House; and, cut off from all human hope, we set ourselves to pray to

our dear Lord Jesus, either Himself to protect us or to take us to His glory. All through that morning and forenoon we heard them tramp-tramping round our house, whispering to each other, and hovering near window and door. They knew that there were a double-barrelled fowling-piece and a revolver on the premises, though they never had seen me use them, and that nay, under God, have held them back in dread. But the thought of using them did not enter our souls even in that awful time. I had gone to save, and not to destroy. It would be easier for me at any time to die, than to kill one of them. Our safety lay in our appeal to that blessed Lord who had placed us there, and to whom all power had been given in Heaven and on Earth. He that was with us was more than all that could be against us. This is strength; this is peace;—to feel, in entering on every day, that all its duties and trials have been committed to the Lord Jesus,—that, come what may, He will use us for His glory and our own real good!

All through that dreadful morning, and far into the afternoon, we thus abode together, feeling conscious that we were united to this dear Lord Jesus; and we had sweet communion with Him, meditating on the wonders of His person and the hopes and glories of His kingdom. Oh, that all my readers may learn something of this in their own experience of the Lord! I can wish them nothing more precious. Towards sundown, constrained by the Invisible One, they withdrew from our Mission House, and left us once more in peace. They bore away the slain to be cooked, and distributed amongst the Tribes, and eaten in their feast of reconciliation; a covenant sealed in blood, and soon, alas, to be buried in blood again! For many days thereafter we had to take unusual care, and not unduly expose ourselves to danger; for dark characters were seen prowling about in the bush near at hand, and we knew that our life was the price. We took what care we could, and God the Lord did the rest; or rather He did all—for His wisdom guided us, and His power baffled them.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE DEFTING OF NAHAK

SHORTLY thereafter war was again declared, by the Inland people attacking our Harbour people. It was an old quarrel; and the war was renewed and continued, long after the cause thereof had passed away. Going amongst them every day, I did my utmost to stop hostilities, setting the evils of war before them, and pleading with the leading men to renounce it. Thereon arose a characteristic incident of Inland and Heathen life. One day I held a Service in the village where morning after morning their Tribes assembled, and declared that if they would believe in and follow the Jehovah God, He would deliver them from all their enemies and lead them into a happy life. There were present three Sacred Men, Chiefs, of whom the whole population lived in terror—brothers or cousins, heroes of traditional feats, professors of sorcery, and claiming the power of life and death, health and sickness, rain and drought, according to their will. On hearing me, these three stood up and declared they did not believe in Jehovah, nor did they need His help; for they had the power to kill my life by Nahak (*i.e.* sorcery or witchcraft), if only they could get possession of any piece of the fruit or food that I had eaten. This was an essential condition of their black art; hence the peel of a banana or an orange, and every broken scrap of food, is gathered up by the Natives, lest it should fall into the hands of the Sacred Men, and be used for Nahak. This superstition was the cause of most of the bloodshed and terror upon Tanna; and being thus challenged, I asked God's help, and determined to strike a blow against it.

A woman was standing near with a bunch of native fruit in her hand, like our plums, called quonquore. I asked her to be pleased to give me some; and she, holding out a bunch, said, "Take freely what you will!"

Calling the attention of all the Assembly to what I was doing, I took three fruits from the bunch, and taking a bite out of each, I gave them one after another to the three Sacred Men, and deliberately said in the hearing of all, "You have seen me eat of this fruit, you have seen me give

the remainder to your Sacred Men; they have said they can kill me by Nahak, but I challenge them to do it if they can, without arrow or spear, club or musket; for I deny that they have any power against me, or against any one, by their Sorcery."

The challenge was accepted; the Natives looked terror-struck at the position in which I was placed! The ceremony of Nahak was usually performed in secret,—the Tannese fleeing in dread, as Europeans would from the touch of the plague; but I lingered and eagerly watched their ritual. As the three Chiefs arose, and drew near to one of the Sacred Trees, to begin their ceremonial, the Natives fled in terror, crying, "Missi, Jawé! Alas, Missi!"

But I held on at my post of observation. Amidst wavings and incantations, they rolled up the pieces of the fruit from which I had eaten, in certain leaves of this Sacred Tree, into a shape like a waxen candle; then they kindled a sacred fire near the root, and continued their mutterings, gradually burning a little more and a little more of the candle-shaped things, wheeling them round their heads, blowing upon them with their breaths, waving them in the air, and glancing wildly at me as if expecting my sudden destruction. Wondering whether after all they did not believe their own lie, for they seemed to be in dead earnest, I, more eager than ever to break the chains of such vile superstition, urged them again and again, crying, "Be quick! Stir up your gods to help you! I am not killed yet; I am perfectly well!"

At last they stood up and said, "We must delay till we have called all our Sacred Men. We will kill Missi before his next Sabbath comes round. Let all watch, for he will soon die and that without fail."

I replied, "Very good! I challenge all your Priests to unite and kill me by Sorcery or Nahak. If on Sabbath next I come again to your village in health, you will all admit that your gods have no power over me, and that I am protected by the true and living Jehovah God!"

Every day throughout the remainder of that week the Conchs were sounded; and over that side of the island all their Sacred Men were at work trying to kill me by their arts. Now and again messengers arrived from every quarter of the island, inquiring anxiously after my health, and wondering if I

was not feeling sick, and great excitement prevailed amongst the poor deluded idolaters.

Sabbath dawned upon me peacefully, and I went to that village in more than my usual health and strength. Large numbers assembled, and when I appeared they looked at each other in terror, as if it could not really be I myself still spared and well. Entering into the public ground, I saluted them to this effect, "My love to you all, my friends! I have come again to talk to you about the Jehovah God and His Worship."

The three Sacred Men, on being asked, admitted that they had tried to kill me by Nahak, but had failed; and on being questioned, why they had failed, they gave the acute and subtle reply, that I also was myself a Sacred Man, and that my God being the stronger had protected me from their gods. Addressing the multitude, I answered thus, "Yea, truly; my Jehovah God is stronger than your gods. He protected me, and helped me; for He is the only living and true God, the only God that can hear or answer any prayer from the children of men. Your gods cannot hear prayers, but my God can and will hear and answer you, if you will give heart and life to Him, and love and serve Him only. This is my God, and He is also your friend if you will hear and follow His voice."

Having said this, I sat down on the trunk of a fallen tree, and addressed them, "Come and sit down all around me, and I will talk to you about the love and mercy of my God, and teach you how to worship and please Him."

Two of the Sacred Men then sat down, and all the people gathered round and seated themselves very quietly. I tried to present to them ideas of sin, and of salvation through Jesus Christ, as revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures.

The third Sacred Man, the highest in rank, a man of great stature and uncommon strength, had meantime gone off for his warrior's spear, and returned brandishing it in the air and pointing it at me. I said to the people, "Of course he can kill me with his spear, but he undertook to kill me by Nahak or Sorcery, and promised not to use against me any weapons of war; and if you let him kill me now, you will kill your friend, one who lives among you and only tries to do you good, as you all know so well. I know that if you kill me thus, my God will be angry and will punish you."

Thereon I seated myself calmly in the midst of the crowd,

while he kept about in rage, scolding his brothers and all who were present for listening to me. The other Sacred Men, however, took my side, and as many of the people also were friendly to me and stood closely packed around me, he did not throw his spear. To allay the tumult and obviate further bloodshed, I offered to leave with my Teachers at once, and, in doing so, I ardently pled with them to live at peace. Though we got safely home, that old Sacred Man seemed still to hunger after my blood. For weeks thereafter, go where I would, he would suddenly appear on the path behind me, pointing in his right hand that same Goliath spear. God only kept it from being thrown, and I, using every lawful precaution, had all the same to attend to my work, as if no enemy were there, leaving all other results in the hands of Jesus. This whole incident did, doubtless, shake the prejudices of many as to Sorcery; but few even of converted Natives ever get entirely clear of the dread of Nahak.

CHAPTER XXVII

A PERILOUS PILGRIMAGE

THE other Mission Station, on the south-west side of Tanna, had to be visited by me from time to time. Mr. and Mrs. Mathieson, there, were both in a weak state of health, having a tendency to consumption. On this account they visited Anietyum several times. They were earnestly devoted to their work, and were successful so far as health and the time allowed to them permitted. At this juncture, a message reached me that they were without European food, and a request to send them a little flour if possible. The war made the journey overland impossible. A strong wind and a high sea round the coast rendered it impracticable for my boat to go. The danger to life from the enemy was so great that I could not hire a crew. I pled therefore with Nowar and Manuman, and a few leading men, to take one of their best canoes, and themselves to accompany me. I had a large flat-bottomed pot with a close-fitting lid, and that I pressed full of flour; and, tying the lid firmly down, I fastened it right in the

centre of the canoe, and as far above water-mark as possible. All else that was required we tied around our own persons. Sea and land being as they were, it was a perilous undertaking, which only dire necessity could have justified. They were all good swimmers, but as I could not swim the strongest man was placed behind me, to seize me and swim ashore, if a crash came.

Creeping round near the shore all the way, we had to keep just outside the great breakers on the coral reef, and were all drenched through and through with the foam of an angry surf. We arrived, however, in safety within two miles of our destination, where lived the friends of my canoe's company, but where a very dangerous sea was breaking on the reef. Here they all gave in, and protested that no further could they go; and truly their toil all the way with the paddles had been severe. I appealed to them, that the canoe would for certain be smashed if they tried to get on shore, that the provisions would be lost, and some of us probably drowned. But they turned to the shore, and remained for some time thus, watching the sea. At last their Captain cried, "Missi, hold on! There's a smaller wave coming; we'll ride in now."

My heart rose to the Lord in trembling prayer! The waves came rolling on; every paddle with all their united strength struck into the sea; and next moment our canoe was flying like a sea-gull on the crest of the wave towards the shore. Another instant, and the wave had broken on the reef with a mighty roar, and rushed passed us hissing in clouds of foam. My company were next seen swimming wildly about in the sea, Manuman the one-eyed Sacred Man alone holding on by the canoe, nearly full of water, with me still clinging to the seat of it, and the very next wave likely to devour us. In desperation, I sprang for the reef, and ran for a man half-wading, half-swimming to reach us; and God so ordered it, that just as the next wave broke against the silvery rock of coral, the man caught me and partly swam with me through its surf, partly carried me till I was set safely ashore. Praising God, I looked up and saw all the others nearly as safe as myself, except Manuman, my friend, who was still holding on by the canoe in the face of wind and sea, and bringing it with him. Others ran and swam to his help. The paddles were picked up amid the surf. A powerful fellow came towards me with the pot of