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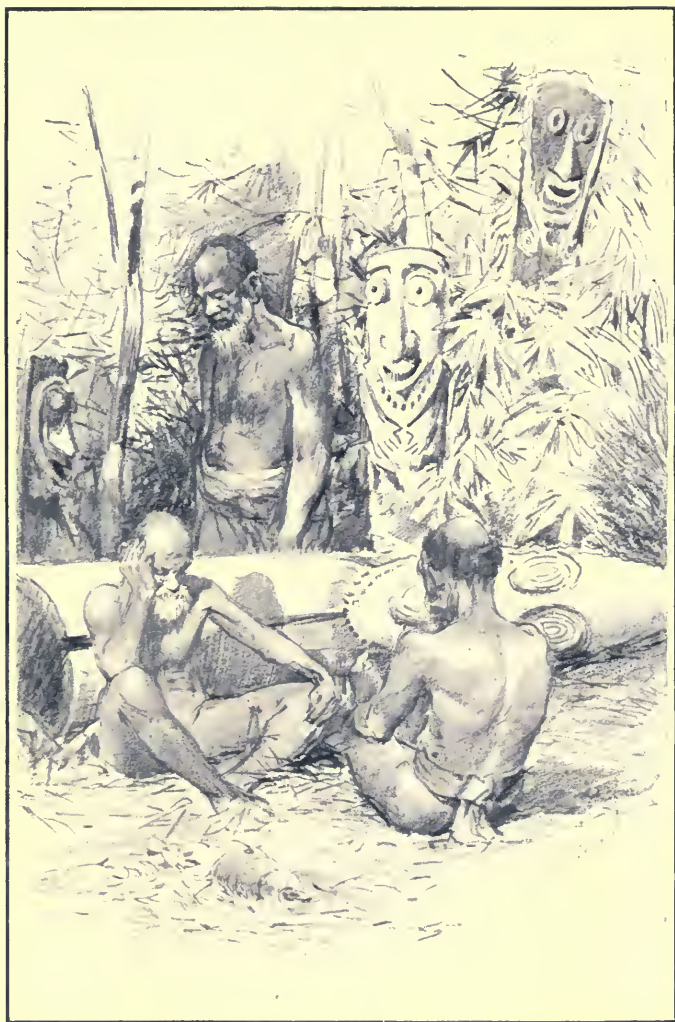
Laurel of R. Rawnsley.
October 1906

Saints and Savages

“I now see more good, and more evil, in all men than heretofore I did. I see that good men are not so good as I once thought they were. . . . In the wicked, usually there is more for grace to make advantage of, and more to testify for God and holiness, than I once believed.”—RICHARD BAXTER.

“I know that people are called saints who are supposed to be better than others: but I don't know how much better they must be in order to be saints; nor how nearly anybody may be a saint and yet not be quite one; nor whether everybody who is called a saint was one; nor whether everybody who isn't called a saint isn't one.”—RUSKIN.

“When I would do good, evil is present with me.”—SAINT PAUL.



"AMONG THE BROKEN GODS."

"THE OLD MEN . . . SIT DOWN TOGETHER AND WEEP."—PAGE 224.

A. Jackson 1933.


Saints and Savages

The Story of Five Years in the
New Hebrides

BY

ROBERT LAMB

M.A. (N.Z.), M.B., CH.M., B.D. (EDIN.)

FORMERLY SUPERINTENDENT AND HON. SUPERINTENDENT
MEDICAL MISSION, AMBRYM, NEW HEBRIDES



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

JULIAN R. ASHTON, SYDNEY, N.S.W.

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L16's

DEDICATED TO
THE STUDENTS OF EDINBURGH,
ESPECIALLY MY OLD FELLOWS
WHO ARE SCATTERED FAR AND WIDE
DISSEMINATING THE GOSPEL;
AND TO THE
YOUNG MEN OF NEW ZEALAND.

1001230

In Preparation.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THE VISION OF GOD.

A Companion Volume to
'SAINTS AND SAVAGES.'

P R E F A C E.

'SAINTS AND SAVAGES' represents a study in black and white. It is an endeavour to give a glimpse of the heathen as they were seen by the writer,—a glimpse which enables us to understand in a measure how they lived and what they lived for, before white sails were first seen flitting among these isles, bringing a disturbing element into their simple lives.

A glimpse is also given of the forces, good and bad, now at work, which are fast sweeping away every vestige of what once was. The story of Eden is being repeated before our eyes. The black man has been tempted to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. The result is the same—death to his race and expulsion from his fair heritage.

The contrasts are, as the title indicates, strongly marked. The black is very black. It shows what may and does occur beyond the sky-line of civilisation.

As for the white, experience compels us to admit that the linen garments of the purest of earth's

saints (I think I have been privileged to meet some of them) are nothing to boast of. We may well sympathise with the disconsolate washerwoman as she gazed at her line of clothes against a background of newly fallen snow, and muttered to herself, "God Almighty's white is hard to beat." Still, we do get glimpses of that white, occasionally amid strange surroundings.

There is no attempt to classify the characters, or even to define what is meant by sainthood and its opposite. In our young days it seemed an easy matter; easy also on paper; but contact with the real men and women alters all that. And such are these. The gradations as we pass from one extreme to the other are so fine, that we may say with the ancient Rabbis, "Between Gehenna and Paradise there is only the breadth of two fingers." Probably the originator of that saying meant the chink between the fingers. Nevertheless the chink is a fact, and represents the line of cleavage.

One thing we learn beyond all doubt—that colour is no bar; nor is the want of it. That at which men draw the line is less than skin deep.

The book is the outcome of an effort, during a period of illness, to weave as simply as possible the incidents and experiences of these five years into a readable story. A few facts from the before and the afterwards are utilised to lead up to and round

off the tale. It is not so much a history—though it is that too—as a study and portrayal of character as seen from one corner of the field. The details of the narrative are subsidiary, and have been handled freely to form the setting. For obvious reasons—some of the originals being still alive—it has been necessary here and there to adopt a thin veil of disguise. Some names have been changed, some scenes shifted, some groups of incidents rearranged and wrought into a unity. The principal characters are therefore, in a sense, fiction. It is better to be frank than to be misunderstood.

Nevertheless, the tapestry of our tale, such as it is, has been woven on the loom of actual life. The pictures given of Island ways and native character are authentic. Once and again Imagination has, of necessity, been allowed to assist Memory at the shuttle; but every thread is spun of fact.

In the field of anthropology nothing has been attempted beyond a little prospecting. Others must mine and win the gold. The hope is humbly cherished that the result of this love-inspired task will have justified the effort, and that the reader may find herein some few grains, dollied and shining, of pleasure and of help.

For, not without some misgivings, this brief tale of broken lives, with the lesson learned therefrom, is sent on its way—like bread cast upon the waters.

Preface

With pleasure I acknowledge Mr J. W. Mansfield's cordial co-operation in obtaining information concerning some of the native customs. To him and to Mr J. F. Byrne, and others, I am indebted for the photographs on which several of the illustrations have been based. Other acknowledgments will be found in their appropriate places.

ROBERT LAMB.

WENTWORTH FALLS,
BLUE MOUNTAINS, N.S.W.

New Year, 1905.

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BOOK I.

BUCKLING ON THE ARMOUR

SAINTS AND SAVAGES.



CHAPTER I.

The Call.

“GIVE us a whole man.”

His voice rang round the gallery and echoed into the dimmest corner of the great church. He was a tall gaunt Scot, whose grey eyes burned in their caverns as they ranged over the pews, vision following appeal hard afoot. His face, or what was visible of it from out the grizzly hair and beard, was tanned by many a tropic sun. An accurate scholar; a lifelong toiler, he was one of those unimpassioned souls whose work is done in silence. With high resolve and flint-like purpose he had followed his ideal through long and lonely years on a sea-girt rock, striving to tame a few tribes of wild savages. Success or failure made no difference. The path was there, and the vision; and he followed on unflinchingly. So, much of the finest work on this earth is done; and the doers pass from our planet, untrumpeted and unsung. Certainly they could never raise the trumpet to their own lips,

be the reason an inborn pride or a humble sense of unworthiness. Alas! the world takes a man at his own valuation.

A nature cold as steel, yet to-night the sparks were flying. For once the fire reached the surface, and his heart found voice in burning words:—

“Before you to-night the poor widow pauses. 'Tis but for a moment. Note her dress: it is shabby, though clean. Her eyes are downcast. She is ashamed of her small offering—‘two mites which make a farthing’—as they chink together and fall into the treasury. Yet into the sacred chest with the mites went her whole heart,—‘all her living,’ says our Lord. We ask *you* not for all *your* living; give us but a day’s wage. We ask you not for your *whole* heart; give us but a share of your sympathy. But cannot this great congregation, out of its abundance, give us a whole man? Ay, give us a *whole man*.”

His cry was being answered. In the left-hand angle of the gallery, the second seat from the top, sat a lad of sixteen years, the soil of whose heart had been prepared for this living seed. His name was Will Goddard, as English as that Englishest of English names, “Tom Brown,” if Somerset and Dorset are English; for his mother hailed from Marston and his father from Sherborne. As the name Stuart originally denoted the *sty-warden*, and Shepherd the *sheep-herd*, so Goddard would be the *goat-herd*; but the dictionaries tell us that it is Old German for *pious*, *virtuous*. However that may be, Will himself was born amidst the ferns of the New

Zealand bush, in the early 'Sixties. And of all the fair countries on earth, there were none to him so fair as the two Britains.

Fifteen years ago he had listened to this same messenger, then a swarthy, black-haired man in his prime, who had left his islet in the ocean once before to plead for help, not for himself, but for the islets and islands around, and for a benighted people who were perishing for lack of knowledge. At that time Will was but an infant in his mother's lap, and all of the message he imbibed must have come through his mother's milk. Certainly the text had remained with her, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." It had saturated her mind, and given permanent direction to her thoughts.

She had come, too, of martyr stock—being a direct descendant of Hooper, the eloquent Bishop of Gloucester ("famous next to Latimer"), who, for his sleepless energy, scrupulosity, and loyalty to the truth, was slowly roasted to death before the eyes of his flock. From her grandfather's lips she had heard the story of how the green faggots had thrice to be kindled, as, in the midst of the drawn-out agony, the good man was heard praying and calling for "More fire!"

Apparently the missionary had come back to claim the babe, who was now shooting up towards manhood, a manhood that ought to be broad-minded and liberal-hearted. For, in the meantime, he had been baptised by an itinerant Wesleyan; confirmed by a bishop in robes of silk and sleeves of lawn; and now he was listening to a sermon in the kirk, and being called to

its ministry. Such are the vicissitudes of colonial life.

Will had already been four years in business, and latterly had been helping at home. Now, having reached the end of the home tether, he wished to learn some trade, and set about his life's work. One desire dominated his ambition—to find a sphere in which he could serve the Master and devote all spare earnings to His cause. On the morrow he was to set forth and seek his place and work in the world.

As the appeal rang round the church, his colour came and went, the blood surging and ebbing again. Of what use could he be in the mission-field? What were his qualifications? All that remained with him from his schooling, so frequently interrupted, was a knowledge of the three R's and an honest and willing heart. He could hew wood and draw water, fetch and carry, be a servant to the prophet, and clean his master's shoes. At least he could offer—and he would. Ere the organ pealed forth and the congregation dispersed into the darkness and coolness of the night, the resolve was fixed.

Trying to see his way through the uncertainty that hid the future, by the light of the stars he hastened, slowly, along the path to his home.

It was his duty every night to give the horses their late supper. The groom lived at a distance, and left early. Changing his coat, he gathered his buckets and set to work. He had reached the crisis of his life, and his heart was full. As bucketful after bucketful of feed was dipped out of the bin, the tears fell fast, dropping among the oats and chaff, and moistening the bran. Even the two greys, frisky Kate and

placid Mag, as each received her share,—with a kindly pat of the hand on the neck,—seemed to know there was something unusual. If ever the cloud came down and filled the temple with glory, so was the stable filled that night. The heart laid upon the altar was filled with a joy that could only find relief in floods of silent tears, a joy never to be forgotten. Through a life of sorrow, of trouble and disappointed hopes, it remained—a steady beacon, shining most brightly when the darkness was deepest. It is strange how in the greatest moments of life the smallest details seen by the eye remain fixed indelibly on the memory, as though the brain for that brief instant had become a camera. The lantern seemed to shine with unusual brilliance, and the clean straw flashed back its beams from floor and stall. There were no angels visible, and no rustle of shining wings; only a plain white-washed stable, the scraping of restive hoofs, the whinnying of happy contented animals. But the glory was there; and the stable became a vision, as of heaven on earth, of the golden floor, or as when the angels sang and their flame lit up the sheepcotes on the meadows of Bethlehem. Like Moses, he had come to a “burning bush” and had received his call.

At last the work was done. He blew out the candle, closed the stable-doors, and, fixing the peg in the staple, recrossed the yard, the light of a new-born hope, and joy, on his face. His heart was filled with a new purpose and with a new sense of power to attempt it.

“Mother, may I speak with you a minute?”

They withdrew into the passage; it was dark there.

“I want to go to the mission-field, and I am going to offer to-morrow. Will you tell father?”

Buckling on the Armour

There was a long pause. Then came a tender kiss, the only answer, and—

“Good night, Will.”

“Good night, mother.”

He did not know then, what he was to learn years afterwards, that this was seemingly the answer to a long-continued prayer of some thirty years. There were twelve in the family, and from her first-born onward she had offered a son to God's service. So far the only answer had been in the case of wee Harry, who was taken in infancy, and was growing up and doing service “in the palace of the King.” Such is a mother's faith.

His father, too, was quite willing, and proud that it should be so.

Two days later the tide of Will's enthusiasm had ebbed—till the beach was dry. He was down on his knees in the clay of the stable, paving a stall with cobble-stones. That was a light task, but the sweat rolled off his brow with the struggle going on within. It seemed as though the snapping of a straw would have turned him from his purpose. The missionary, and his pastor too, had both been interviewed, and they had both told him that unskilled labour was not wanted in the mission-field. There were plenty of natives for that. He must brush up his education; study for ordination; learn to address meetings; and then go forth, himself fully equipped.

Shy and diffident, to him the ordeal of having to face a crowd was crushing. For, in those four years, the technicalities of his learning had evaporated from the memory, leaving a deposit in which even verbs, adverbs, and conjunctions had become indistinguishable. How could he, with nervous, stammering

tongue, ever be able to address others? For he did stammer at times, and that badly. Yet his advisers were quite right. If a man cannot get the best training for such a high calling, let him get the best he can. Unskilled assistants are as much a humbug in the mission-field as elsewhere; and they are the last to think it of themselves. Let a man know something well; be a carpenter, engineer, teacher, electrical operator. Such men, teachable and apt to teach, are wanted in this field as they are elsewhere. It is the fluent nobody, who cannot drive a nail; who runs about, Bible under arm, and knowing little of its spirit; who can never see when a window needs cleaning, a floor sweeping, a lamp trimming, though his leader must both see and do,—such men, untrained to steady application, and ignorant of their own deficiencies, are ever ready to claim the prophets' shoes, and waiting to demand his mantle. One thing they often can do—write up glowing reports.

So he was told, and so he learned by bitter experience in after-years.

“God help me!”

He did. For had He not spoken a parable to this end, “that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.”

So men rise above difficulties; and so, in this case, the straw did not snap.

“It was the toughest battle of my life,” he said long afterwards. Nothing ever after assailed his courage so severely, not even the facing of large congregations nor of the General Assembly itself. For he had met them already—and conquered.

He paused.

Buckling on the Armour

“No,” he added, “there was one other day that tried me sorely. I once answered my dear old mother back sharply. The words were hardly out of my mouth when my heart smote me. There were two miserable people in the house that day. When bedtime came, there was no sleep for me till we had met in the passage again, and I had been forgiven. I thank God for such a mother.”

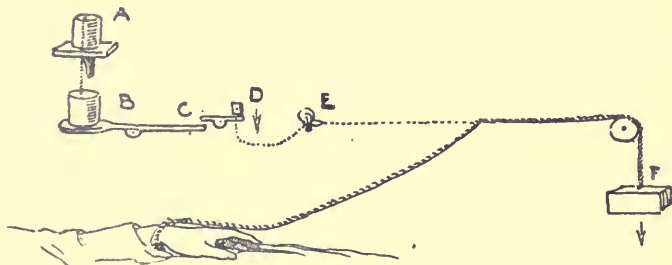
Will was not a man “to carry his heart on his sleeve for daws to peck at.” I never knew a lad, or man, more reticent concerning himself. At times there was a look in his eyes that made one instinctively turn away; he was filled with some thought “too deep for tears,” which it was sacrilege to probe. Indeed, he himself would lament that he was a “dumb dog” and could not speak, as could others, of what are known as religious experiences. But there are times when the sacred doors are fitly thrown wide, and the glory of the inner sanctum shines forth. Such a moment came one night on Ambrym. We were sitting on a bank of broken coral in a bay on the north-east end of the island, waiting for the tide to rise high enough to float our boat over the reef. The risen moon cast her glow upon the waters, the silver pathway reaching almost to our feet, barred only by the black line of the yet uncovered rocks. At every flow of the incoming tide the water softly lapped the coral fragments, down whose steep banks the hermit-crabs rolled and tinkled unheeded. In quiet undertones, as of a chant, Will recited the story of how he had been led to these distant bounds of the habitable earth. It was a story intended only for my own ears, but it was so truly “a feast of reason and a flow of soul”—though chiefly the latter—that I am constrained to share it with others.

In doing so I hope I am not proving untrue to my friend's now sainted memory.

For, of a truth, Will was a saint.

The hours sped swiftly. Will was the first to note the change. Suddenly springing to his feet, he exclaimed—

“Let us up, and be off; the tide is in.”



THE WATER-CLOCK.—SEE PAGE 14.

CHAPTER II.

Will as a Student.

“YOU are burning the candle at both ends; and you have only one candle to burn.”

So his fellow-student, Lang, advised him as they stood in cap and gown before the fire. It was a raw day in winter. They were in the mathematical classroom. The lecture was over; the professor had retired and the body of students dispersed; and the two were free to enjoy their pocket luncheons and compare notes.

Three years had passed since the inward tussle over the cobble-stones. Will was now an undergraduate and a junior scholar.

Though almost at the foot of the ladder, he had forthwith begun study in earnest. Several kind friends, themselves students, were found willing to lend a guiding hand. By the time he had crossed the “pons asinorum” in Euclid, the untrained brain-cells began to rebel through sheer weariness. Again, at a missionary meeting, a cloud as of Egyptian darkness seemed to envelop him. And though, at these times, in response to prayer, there seemed to be “no voice, nor any that answered,” he had put his hand to the plough and would not turn back.

Success followed perseverance, and was the best kind of encouragement. Up in the early mornings, pacing the floor by candle-light,—softly, to avoid waking his brothers, and wrapped in an ulster, he read hard at ‘Sound, Light, and Heat.’ Often as he reached the end of the attic, he forgot to turn, and unconsciously slept, till his knees gave way, or the book fell with a bang to the floor. Pocket-money was scarce in those days, and, scared at his own extravagance, he hid his first parcel of books, a Smith’s Roman History and an Ancient Atlas, under the shrubs in the garden, till he could smuggle them upstairs unobserved. On another occasion he sold a valuable gold chain, a gift from an employer, to pay for college fees. In two years the matriculation examination was passed; but in two or three subjects the marks fell just below the scholarship line. He put back for a year, and tried again.

It was a race for knowledge—a race in which many fall, not to rise again. For the prizes were a necessity, and competition was keen. Already he had found kind and unostentatious friends among the teachers and professors. One of them was an enthusiast for English Literature, and some of the struggling and deserving students, Will among the number, occasionally found, on the rack in the hall of the College, sealed envelopes addressed to them. Each contained a cheque covering the fees of that class for the ensuing session. Will rewarded his benefactor by finally taking his M.A. with first-class honours in English and Latin Literature.

Thus encouraged, severer application followed. At home he was allowed a room to himself; and he filled the lining of the walls with sawdust, and constructed a double door likewise, to shut out extraneous noises.

Seven to eight hours was the maximum of sleep taken, and nine o'clock the hour for bed.

As an alarm-clock failed to rouse him in the morning, he cast about to construct a water-clock, which, after a little adjusting, proved effective.

This simple piece of mechanism was fastened on the wall beside his bed. It consisted of a bracket, a long and a short lever, and a rope, one end of which was knotted round one wrist and the other attached to a weight, in this instance a brick. The water in the full tin A was conveyed by capillary action along a wetted thread of worsted, and dripped into B. At the end of eight hours the accumulated drips in B were sufficient to raise the lever at C and release the small weight (an iron nut) at D. D, falling, pulled the ring E off its curved peg, and thus released the brick F, which thereupon gave a sharp tug to the sleeper. It kept tugging and pulling at the hand beneath the bedclothes till he was roused up. Sometimes Will was awakened by the pain at the wrist; sometimes he found himself sitting bolt-upright in bed; at other times the knots were untied while the brain slept on, and only the blue mark on the wrist remained to tell the story. Sometimes, too, that best of mothers would steal into the room before going to bed, and gently untie the knot, if it could be done without waking him.

Again, that the brain might remain clear and an extra half-hour be thus gained for study, the amount of food taken at meal-times was reduced to the minimum. Alas, what a fool he was!—robbing both nerve and body cells of the mental and physical stores of energy that should have been laid by for his life's work. Despite this self-inflicted rigour and discipline, he developed into a stout, square-shouldered man. That

year's work (the third) added 1042 marks to the total, and secured a university scholarship for three years. Therewith cap-and-gown life began, and at the end of that period came the B.A. degree, an exhibition in science (£20), and a senior scholarship. Another strenuous year of teaching and study won for him the M.A. with the coveted honours, and therewith the Arts course was complete.

And the Arts course of the University of New Zealand was a fair test of education. The Senatus Academicus had determined that her degrees should be above suspicion or reproach. To this end they had secured the services of the professors of the University of London to act as examiners. Consequently there was some delay in obtaining the results of the examinations. But no true student regretted the unavoidable expenditure of patience; rather, he weighed it against the higher status thus attained, and felt more than content to wait for the cables from home.

In the meantime his horizon had widened, and new ideals had risen to view. Some friends in the ministry were impatient for him to be gone to the mission-field. At the same time there was a conflict in his own breast. Should he confine his efforts to preaching, pure and simple, or try to win men by combining with it a life of service? So acute a phase did the question assume, that, one morning early, taking with him his pocket Bible and Arthur's 'Tongue of Fire,' he sought a secret spot beneath the oaks on the far side of the wide-spreading park. There, on the river's bank, he pondered the matter and sought for guidance. No mystic voice gave answer from out the clouds of uncertainty; only the rats came out of their holes and nibbled at the acorns, or sat up like squirrels and

played "hide and seek" among the leaves and grass. Yet the ideal of a life of service triumphed. From that day the burden of life seemed lighter and the road straight ahead.

He felt more in sympathy with men, and could pursue his path with buoyancy. For with many the "Stand and deliver" policy addressed to their souls only drives them farther from the Kingdom. The Christ first healed the sick, and then said unto them, "the Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." Thus the Prince of sowers first prepared His soil. Moreover He sent out His disciples to do likewise. "The Son of man is come to minister and to give His life." The programme of Christianity is towards the poor, the maimed, the captive, and the lost, to give them a garland and the oil of joy. An era of strenuous service is dawning, and the "Angels of the Churches" are becoming the angels of the gutter and the slum. For Christianity is a campaign of love.

So the truth shone anew at Will from every page of the Gospels. The waving grass and rustling oaks, the placid crystal stream, and even the confiding little creatures around, with their shining, beady, black eyes, seemed to whisper the lesson of Nature—

"Trust in God, and do the next thing,"

and to join in the note of the Evangel—

"Despairing of no man, never despairing."¹

At sunset he withdrew from his hiding-place, and returned home to his studies with a lighter heart, and in happier vein.

¹ R.V., Luke vi. 35, and marginal reading.

CHAPTER III.

Edinburgh.

Two dangers were looming large ahead—rocks on which many a promising youth, destined for the ministry, has ended his career: The theory of Evolution, and the doctrine of the Authority of the Scriptures. Many of his fellow-students in the colonial university were seriously inclined; and these subjects were earnestly discussed and debated among them. Will felt more every day that some satisfactory solution of these questions must be reached, if he were to be able to give an answer for the faith that was in him. Therefore he resolved to go to the sources of learning and attempt to reach the bed-rock of knowledge. At least he would see what was already known for fact, and ascertain how the best minds were solving these difficulties. And so, before the results of the last examination were known, with but a few pounds in his pocket, he was on board the s.s. *Doric*, of the White Star line, bound round Cape Horn for London and Edinburgh. There, at the head-waters of learning, he hoped to be able to pursue his studies, and, if possible, obtain a training in medicine and divinity.

Arriving in Edinburgh at the beginning of the summer, he took in hand at once the subjects of

Hebrew and Botany. Funds soon ran low, and no suitable work seemed obtainable. At the critical moment a five-pound note came to hand unexpectedly from his college friend in New Zealand. Thereafter the path was fairly easy, despite occasional pinchings of the shoe.

Once only was he really dumfounded. It was in this wise. During one winter session he had to hurry from the Divinity Hall to the University, to be in time for the next lecture. Passing along George IV. Bridge, he got a glass of hot milk and a couple of biscuits at a shop by the way. His pockets were empty, but he yet had one coin left—a half-sovereign. Drawing his purse from his breast-pocket to pay for his rapid lunch, he found it—empty!

Puzzled for a while, he afterwards remembered that his coat had been hung where another could get at it. His suspicions were afterwards confirmed. In innocent trustfulness and desire to help another, he had been harbouring a snake in his bosom, which afterwards bit him venomously. This experience accounts for the development of a harder trait in his character. He changed the rule of conduct hitherto followed, "Speak no ill of any man," to "Speak of every man as you find him; and suffer no nonsense." Always after that he refused to cherish suspicions, and either dismissed the thought, or, at the risk of giving offence, demanded a straight-out answer from the person concerned. To do so is not always possible. But to harbour a suspicion is to cherish a canker at one's heart: it destroys one's peace, and robs life of its beauty. Despite his gentleness, this firm demand for honesty in look and deed engendered respect in others, and in some fear.

Hitherto his Sundays had been devoted to teaching and preaching, so that on becoming a student of the Medical Missionary Society, he was appointed assistant, and then superintendent, of the Cowgate Children's Church. The children met in the ancient, historic Magdalene Chapel, the chapel of the "Guild of the Hammer-men." It is the birthplace of Presbyterian Assemblies. John Knox preached there, and the chair he used is still shown. Thus Will could truly say that he had sat in the seat and taught from the pulpit of the great Reformer.

During part of their training the students resided in the Cowgate beside the Chapel, so that they might be in close touch with the poor of the slums, for whom they laboured gratuitously. Soon Will had a fairly wide practice, week-days and Sundays, among the little ones, whom he loved both to teach and to tend. When confronted with cases more difficult than ordinary, the students could fall back on the assistance of the seniors and of the resident physician. However, Will was never quite in the position of the man who, when asked why he had failed to diagnose a case of scarlet fever, replied—

"Sir, we have only just finished measles."

Two Drummond scholarships won in the Divinity Hall lightened the financial burden. But, like so many students of the Scottish Universities, he was indebted to a mother's love for instalments, which, though coming so far and somewhat irregularly, sufficed for him to hold on without check.

Truly it was a difficult problem to solve, how to follow the two courses of study at one and the same time successfully. The children, too, demanded the whole of Sunday and many an hour in the week. The

task had been an impossible one had his previous work not been thorough. No knot had been allowed to go by untied, no skein left in a tangle. He understood what he had learned, and the ground felt firm beneath his feet. Some one had said, "Revision is the secret of success; revise, and again revise; and revise again." Will endeavoured to do so, though once and again he had only two minutes to prepare for an examination as he stood at the doorway in the quadrangle, kicking the snow off his shoes and glancing rapidly over the summarised notes. His fellows had already entered and were driving their quills.

"You can't do it, sir. You will find medicine hard enough a mistress in herself. She claims all your homage."

Thus Sir William Turner, as he ate his lunch out of a packet on his knee in one of the side-rooms of the anatomy theatre. In order to retain his divinity scholarship, Will found it necessary to take the lectures on anatomy in the College of Surgeons. Sir William's permission had to be asked; and it meant a refund of four guineas by the professor. It was not that, but the indignation of the enthusiast for his own subject, which flavoured the sound advice with a spice of wrath. Will listened humbly; secured permission; and went his way.

"What? Are you going to make converts with bad surgery? D'ye call that Christianity?"

So Professor Chiene. "Honest John" the students called him; whose Socratic method of questioning

was as much feared, as he himself was respected and admired. It was Chiene who, addressing his students, said—

“Gentlemen, if you are going to succeed you must be angels. You must make each patient feel that there is only one patient in the world; that the case of greatest interest is the one before you.”

But Will was no mean surgeon. I have watched him do the most serious of operations with complete success. With myself giving the chloroform, he had but one assistant, an untrained woman. With needles already threaded, the instruments laid out around him, and every step thought out beforehand, he was able to accomplish what in civilisation required two or three assistants, and as many nurses.

Saturday was a high day among the students. The big theatre in the Royal Infirmary was packed with them, rising in semicircles, tier above tier, to the very ceiling, a living wall. It was Edinburgh's palmiest days, when streets and theatres swarmed with students, Scottish and English and from overseas. A curly-headed little fellow, from the West, lay on the table. His right foot was to come off. He glanced at the gruesome trays of knives and saws, the awesome bottles, the living wall of faces. Suddenly, pushing aside the chloroform towel, he looked into the eyes of the surgeon bending over him, and his shrill voice piped aloud—

“Will ye no pray first?”

There was a time when writers loved to describe students of medicine as a lot of rollicking swillers and rakes; when such a cry might have been drowned in ribald laughter. But all this had been changed. The University had discovered the secret of control; had

Buckling on the Armour

given the students a voice in the government, and made them responsible for keeping order. Lister and Syme, the author of 'Rab and his Friends,' large souls like Sir James Y. Simpson, Henry Drummond, and Walter Smith, had not lived and taught in vain.

Glancing from the surgeon to the wall of faces beyond, and back again, he fixed his eyes wistfully on the face, palest of all, above him. A tear trembled on each of the young lids, and again the distressed little voice was heard—

“*Can ye no pray?*”

The surgeon wheeled round on his heel.

“Now, you mission lads, show your mettle.”

There was dead silence. As no one else seemed about to move, a tall dark figure in the third row stood up. He was an African; French, Dutch, and English blood ran in his veins—in short, he was a Boer. There was an incipient round of applause, but the surgeon raised his hand.

“Our Father in heaven, bless the little man on the table and bring him safely through; and bless the efforts of Thy skilful servant. For Thy name's sake. Amen.”

Again there was a round of applause.

“‘Cute beggar,” whispered a wag audibly from the ceiling; “he'll pass!”

A titter of laughter rippled from bench to bench, and even the surgeon smiled. The African blushed. He was quite innocent; but, seeing the point, he joined in the laugh. Curly-head on the table opened his eyes in wonderment. He could not understand it. He too smiled and fell asleep. The operation proceeded.

In those days John Stuart Blackie was still to be

seen in the streets of the city. His flowing white locks and the grey check plaid round his shoulders were a familiar sight. Occasionally he gave a lecture, and the students crowded to hear him. I have still by me a cartoon which appeared in 'The Student,' the weekly organ of the Students' Representative Council of those days. Though he was now "professor emeritus," he was still possibly the youngest in spirit of all Edinburgh's Students, and ready for a frolic. The mischievous artist has not forgotten that.

But the prince of teachers and lecturers was Professor A. B. Davidson. No class-room was more orderly—no work more strenuous. For he was pre-eminent not merely for flashes, but slashes, of wit. The men hung on his lips, and the whip was seldom used—on them.

The merriest of all class-rooms was, perhaps, Bili-rubin's (Professor Rutherford's). The students provided their own mirth, and strove to get their innings before the stout, dark-haired man "sailed" on to the platform. There was no chance afterwards. Sometimes he was greeted with "Here comes the bogie man!" at other times with a song or a psalm, as the "Old Hundredth"; and he had to wait patiently, wagging his head from side to side, and rolling his eyes, till the singers had bestowed on themselves, with the floor as their sounding-board, a prolonged measure of applause.

Times had indeed changed. A genuine, manly, Christian sentiment had taken a firm grip of chair and auditorium. There was no sickliness about it. Life had lost none of its rosiness or vigour; nor was learning less eager, less keen and ambitious. Men were not ashamed to confess their convictions.

Rather was it the other way. It was Sir James Simpson himself, who, when asked by an admirer what he considered his greatest discovery, replied—

“That I have a Saviour!”

Such an answer is explained by the fact that a wave of evangelism was passing over the city. There was no half-heart about these men. They were Christians without shame or sham. And they proved their sincerity by the thoroughness of their work.

“No, I don’t believe in this combining of Divinity with Medicine,—I don’t believe in it.”

This was said in a thin, high-pitched voice, and the tall figure of the speaker, clad in black, with a strong look of disapproval on his face, vanished through the doorway. This was Dr Thomas Smith, who had himself successfully taught in Indian class-rooms as Professor of Mathematics and Divinity.

However, Will was not daunted. Specialisation is the cry to-day. And the man who would succeed in the highly developed centres of modern civilisation must needs be a specialist. But among primitive peoples it is the man who is good all round that is required. Every finger must be developed; for there the one-fingered man is at a discount.

No; in the winter sessions it was not easy to prevent the medical and divinity lectures from clashing, and only by reading up in the vacations was Will able to hold his own. It is noteworthy how the wisest men sometimes make mistakes. One day Will found himself in the study of that ardent student and abettor of students, the minister of Free St George’s. He brought away three words—

“Work ; work ; work ;—your student days will never come back.”

Such advice in this case was, to use the colonial phrase, like “carrying coals to Newcastle.” Will was working much too hard already—indeed, always had. Twice, when the winter sessions were in full swing, brain fever was threatening. He had to crawl home to his “digs” across the Meadows, take a purge and a sleeping-draught, draw the blinds, and try to sleep for two or three days. As soon as the congestion was relieved, and the temperature had fallen, he crept forth and began to attend lectures again with the utmost caution. In this he was not alone; for, in many of the more thronged classes, there were men at the top who visibly wore the flesh off their bones as the examinations drew nearer. Like them he won a fair share of the honours and prizes: two medals in Chemistry and Biology in the College of Surgeons and Medical School; also the first senior prize in Midwifery and Diseases of Women. In the fifth year the L.R.C.P.S. in the College, and the B.Sc. and B.D. degrees in the University, capped his efforts. In the final divinity examinations, anticipating only a good pass, he relaxed his efforts, but found himself only a few marks behind the Cunningham scholar: thus he just missed the highest prize obtainable, a travelling scholarship.

But Will, like other men, had his failures. Once, indeed, he had to admit a “plucking,” and that for a small paper in Greek, set by the Edinburgh F.C. Presbytery. The paper contained a few “nuts,” put in as a test of special preparation. Will, relying on his general knowledge of Greek, failed to crack them. For the University examinations were then proceeding,

and demanded all his attention. Thus, strange to say, he was "plucked" for working too hard.

For Will had to learn, with others, that it is possible to attempt too much even in a good cause. He had also to learn that goodness and success have each their price, and that, to keep the one, a man may have to part with the other. It may and does happen that a man, in being unselfishly true to the ideal of his nobler self, must forgo winning the highest academic honours,—so dear to the soul of the student. In a series of sensational articles appearing in an influential religious weekly, the character of the colonial students had been unfairly, nay, scurrilously besmirched.

They appealed to Will, among others, to help in refuting the gross charges. With another good-hearted fellow he spent many a precious afternoon over the University records, and thereby helped to re-establish the good name and standing of the colonials. It was proved that for some years the Australasians had carried off a much higher percentage of prizes, medals, and honours than an equal number of average students. But when the final examinations came, the hope thereby of winning distinction and a gold medal for himself had vanished. It was but a common incident in—

"The deadly trial of goodness—the doing right, and suffering for it, quite finally.

"And that is life, as God arranges it."¹

¹ Ethics of the Dust.

BOOK II.

ON THE FIELD

CHAPTER I.

Reconnoitring: Dreams and Realities.

“A TIGHT fit this!”

“Yes, rather.”

It was nightfall, and we were perched up on top of the little skylight, my wife and I.

By the side of the mail-steamer the ss. *Croydon* seemed about the size of a launch. When at last the cargo had been transferred, and the signal to leave given, we climbed down into her and were cast off. Then it was we found that she was laden with another cargo, for the most part invisible, of odours and cock-roaches. But she was to be our home among the islands for a month to come, and we were determined to make the best of things.

I went down to the saloon to explore our quarters. The bunks looked right enough, and the linen snowy white; but, on pulling out a drawer below the under berth, there was a tremendous “scutter.” I shut it to with a bang, hoping that the “brownies” would keep within their hiding-place. Praising the little cabins as being both cool and cosy, I next introduced my wife to hers. Alas! as we descended the companion-way, a huge red fellow, some two inches long, sailed in at the door before our eyes, and perched

himself on the topmost pillow. He turned and waved his antennæ,—whether to welcome or dispute our entry remains unsolved. It was enough.

“Ugh! what bed-fellows. The deck for me.” That was final.

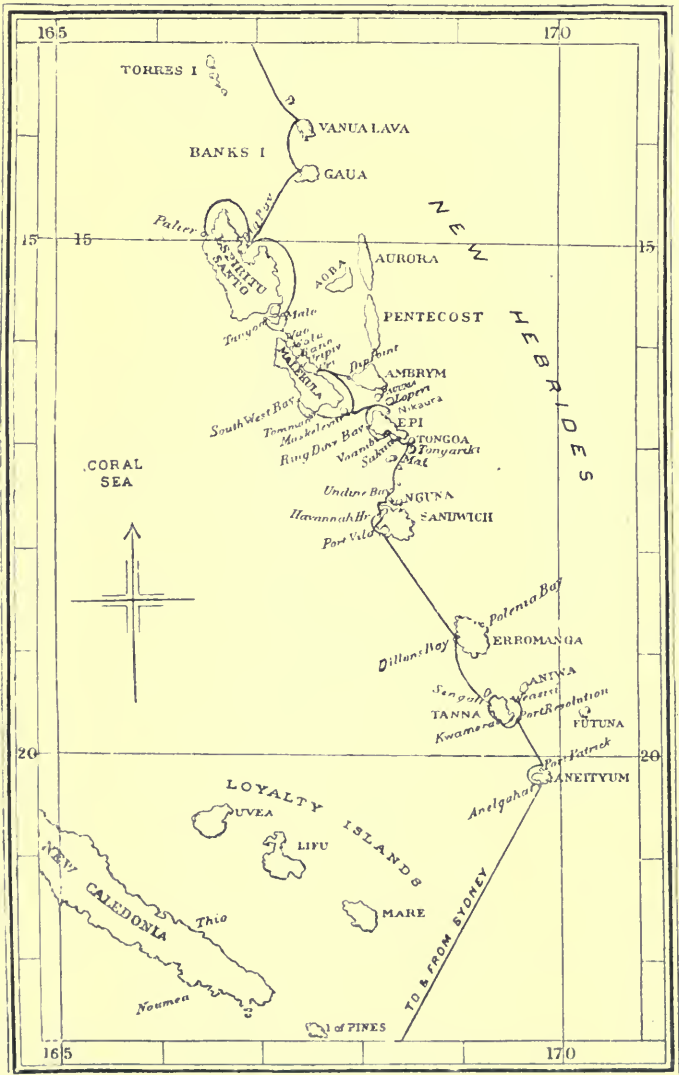
The wind rose and the rain descended. The little steamer ducked beneath the waves, and rolled from side to side, till the decks were swamped.

From the centre of the skylight an iron stanchion passed upward to support the frail wooden awning overhead, the stanchion being stiffened by an iron stay at each side sloping up to its middle. By persevering we found it possible to wriggle between stanchion and stays; and so, curled up as if on a table, and firmly gripped by the bars at the waist, we were soon sound asleep,—more sound, perhaps, than Jacob at Bethel, though our dreams were not so “high and lifted up.”

We saw but the lower half of his ladder, and it had widened with time till it was as broad as a great stairway. Not angels, but poor weak mortals, were on it; men of every garb, and no garb; of every tongue and age, who strove and climbed—to fall and climb again. Most of them had no wings; but, as they climbed, the wings budded, and they passed from sight. For, even among the heathen,—

“Some there be that by due steps aspire
To lay their just hands on that golden key,
That opes the palace of eternity.”

Like Jacob, too, we were very tired, so heeded not the rattle of the thunder and the angry hiss of the sea. We were literally hugging the mountain-tops, on the bosom of the flood. There was no dreaming about



THE ROUTE THROUGH THE GROUP.

that fact. For these islands are but the central, and the topmost, peaks of a long and lofty range submerged beneath the waters. The range extends over seven hundred miles from north to south; and as the earth here whirls round at a thousand miles an hour, and as the tides rise and fall, the ocean sweeps through the gaps on the mountain ridge, giving rise to rough seas, swift currents, and tossing rips.

The land is slowly moving upwards, and extending its area. As the earth's crust contracts and creases, the ridges rise, and the furrows deepen. The coral polyp descends once more to fresh depths and builds again, dotting the Pacific with clear lagoons, walled in with white beaches and green islets.

Thus the islands are volcanic with fringing reefs. A few are still alight, shooting up flames and great volumes of dust, darkening the sky by day, and showing up red on the canopy of clouds at night.

In the land of dreams the events of the past and the present were strangely jumbled together. We seemed to be back in the old *Dayspring* days, when the sails of the mission ship were seen on the horizon but twice in a year, bringing fresh stores for body and mind, and welcome as an angel from heaven.

I awoke with a shock, and found myself gripping the stanchion hard. It was only our little vessel giving a great lurch.

Beautiful though the islands appear, sometimes beautiful as a dream, yet the life itself is sternly real. Experience and necessity soon toughen the fibre, physical and moral. Christmas-cakes and plum-puddings, the love-gifts of far-away friends, may on arrival be found far from appetising. But we are no worse off than our Australian cousins. The "bush

canary," as they call the big brown fly, is a worse plague than our bluebottle, for which an equally elegant name would be "blue-jay." Both vanish as civilisation advances. And now that the steamer service had supplanted the slow mission ships (peace be to their rotting ribs!), weevily biscuits, and flour that spontaneously rolled down the sides of the cask, would be a thing of the past. Comforted by the thought, I fell asleep again.

When we woke it was morning, and a group of men stood by the taffrail conversing somewhat loudly. It was the mate rapping his pipe on the rail that woke me.

"To trade under that flag," said he, rapping the bowl again to dislodge the ashes and emphasise his disgust, "was a trick worthy of a Noumea nigger."

By "that flag" he apparently meant a white tie.

"Every man to his trade," chimed in a short yellow-whiskered man, Dougal the boat-builder. "But let him stick to his trade and not spoil his neighbour's living."

"Look here, Geordie," said a lanky one-armed Scot known as Dick, addressing the mate,—he had been quietly puffing away at his pipe and watching the smoke,—"your story won't hold water. Hoots, man, do you think a chap's going to leave a good business in the Old Land and come down here among savages to make a few dirty pence in that way? No, no, it's not good enough." Turning to an old man with flowing white beard, and another sallow-faced little fellow who seemed half dead with fever, he went on: "Look at it this way, chaps; what's the good of getting excited. I'm a trader mysel', and I don't mind. Suppose they send a man down here who is a better

hand at buying and selling than preaching, you needn't listen to him."

"Why don't their blessed Synod legislate and stop 'em from tradin'?" said the old man, with a frown. "I send 'em up petitions every year, and they won't do nothin'."

Dick laughed a low soft laugh, resembling a chuckle.

"Perhaps they don't want to legislate. And suppose they did, every man's a bishop on his own island. Don't you know they want to see all the kanakas in petticoats and top-hats? That's not much in our line, eh?"

"I guess not."

"Well, we'd better make it our line. If you don't sell the calico cheap enough, they'll do it for you! For my part, I'm inclined to give 'em a hand. It's going to be. So we'd better fall in and keep pace."

"They might keep their hands off the copra, anyhow," said the little man with the sallow face.

"I wouldn't vex mysel' over that," replied Dick. "I had a look through Goddard's note-book, and I assure you every bag of copra his boys made was for building the church—in which we are all welcome to a free seat. As for any profit on axes and knives, it went to buy blankets to cover sick niggers and such-like,—and," he added quietly, "sick white men, too, when they want it."

Dick spoke feelingly, from experience. He spoke, too, with an accent that clearly betrayed his nationality. One of the decentest fellows in the Group, he had lost his arm in shooting fish with dynamite, of which spoil the natives get the lion's share. Yet he had held the cartridge and bit the fuse with his own

fingers instead of giving it to some luckless boy, as some do, to throw for him. Beneath his rough bristles there was a kind heart and a fund of humour. Liked and trusted by all, even by cannibals, his opinion was respected.

The mate felt the thrust, and suddenly discovered that he was wanted at the wheel. Seeing me moving, the little group dispersed.

I slipped out from between the iron rods and sat up, feeling rather uncomfortable. It was not that one's motives were unworthy or the qualifications defective; it was the sudden revelation of the atmosphere one had to live in. A missionary may be the "salt of the earth," but down here, too, he was still to be, like the "city set on a hill," a mark for the enemies' guns and a target for every shaft. Doubtless it is well so.

If in pioneering one has to eat with closed or unobservant eyes, and ask no questions for the poor stomach's sake, equally true is it that one must with open eyes see many things, and ask no questions for the conscience' sake. Ten years of the commercial steam services, French and English, in which all classes rub elbows, have wrought a great change in the social life of the Group. It was no uncommon thing in the early 'Nineties to see a trader of the old style coming aboard in island costume—pyjamas—leading a dusky belle. They were setting out to begin life in another island. There is no "marriage bureau" in the New Hebrides, and the missionary does not always live next door. "There is an engagement," of course, but it is not of the usual kind. At the end of three years the woman may obtain her pay and release, and go home. The "kids"

remain with the father. Their mother may have to go, whether she likes it or not.

However, there are some noble exceptions. Dick was one. He brought a Samoan girl with him from the East, and settled with her on an islet here. They had been living together many years before I met them. In certain company there is no subject regarding which these men are more reticent than that of their domestic relationships.

“No,” he said confidently, “I’m not going through any white-tie ceremony now. Anis and me are man and wife. I was a wild wanderin’ fellow, and I took her and she took me, and she’s been a good gal to me all the way along. We’re married afore God more’n some as have a score o’ prayin’ parsons in at the feast. And I’m not agoing to bring a blush to her face now by making her think we ain’t.”

And he kept his word to the end.

If one is to be of service to these men and prove their friend, it will not do to “elevate the nostrils” and affect a moral superiority. They are quick to scent a Pharisee, and woe betide him. They don’t want you to condone their offences, but it is in the bond that you should be able to “eat and drink with publicans and sinners,” and enjoy a good joke with them when one comes along. Even an ex-convict claims to be a judge of true Christianity, and of yours in particular. Any deflection of the needle from the pole soon becomes the subject of unfavourable comment, and the ship’s deck is the market-place for island gossip. It is not necessary for a story to be true; it is enough that it fits the man and ought to be so. Some one of the missionaries had got into their bad books, and a story was being told about

him with much quiet chuckling. Their voices had mingled with our sleep and had given colour to our dreams.

Yet we liked these men. Perhaps it was that we had come determined to like them and to find their good points. After all, they were but big brothers who had wandered from home a few years earlier, and had somewhat missed the track.

CHAPTER II.

The Search.

IT took about a fortnight to make the jaunt round the northern islands. We were anxious to find a healthy site for a central hospital to serve the whole Group, and at the same time to bring the healing art to play on savagery in its pristine nakedness. There were two islands that had special attractions and claims—Santo (north-east) and Ambrym. The former was not only the largest in the Group and the first extensive island to be discovered in the Pacific, but it contained the site of De Quiros' prospective city, the "New Jerusalem," and his river "Jordan." The records show that at first the relations between the islanders and the voyagers was cordial enough. But, after a few days, Spanish improprieties and arrogance stirred the resentment of the natives. The chief, "with perfect justice," drew a line upon the sand, and forbade the white man to cross it. In defiance, the sub-captain, Torres, stepped over it. Instantly an arrow rang against his steel corselet. A volley was the response. The chief and several of his followers bit the dust. Thus the whites were the first aggressors.

The people at North Santo, too, had reached the length of making simple but artistic pottery. And so

far its heathenism was almost untouched. But it is away from the centre.

Ambrym, on the other hand, is central. It is a garden of cocoa-nut palms, and for its size is about the most populous island of all. Selwyn, Patteson, Copeland, Mackenzie, Paton, and others had landed upon its shores, and my two predecessors had built a house at Ranon in a bay at the north-east. After a few months of arduous service, each had been compelled to retire in broken health. For four or five years the people had been without a missionary, and the committee in New Zealand, to whom that island had been assigned as a field, were desirous to resume the work there as soon as possible should the locality be found suitable. But I was left a free hand.

Soon after daybreak on a Sunday morning we steamed into the bay on Santo that seemed most desirable for our purpose.

Two or three miles up the coast we had passed a station manned by two Catholic priests, the first missionaries on this side. We must give these their due, for, as a rule, they were seldom first in this field.

The sun shone brightly down on a sheet of blue water. Behind us a timbered island, shaped like a high-crowned broad-brimmed hat, closed in the entrance. On either side limestone cliffs rose abruptly from the water's edge, green vines trailing adown their face. At the head of the bay a white beach sloped gently down from the woods to the water's edge. But there was no sign of life, or of human habitation. Again and again the steamer's whistle awoke the echoes from far and wide, and at last a crowd was seen gathering on the sand.

A smart lad, who had been in Queensland and

could speak a little English, came off in a canoe and clambered on board. David, our warm-hearted colleague and cicerone, and one of the purest, most guileless souls that ever set foot on a deck, was soon in conversation with him, and sent him off to summon the people to come and meet us.

David had his own story to tell, and carried a tragedy and a great disappointment hidden in his breast. We had passed his station on one of the savage islands a little farther south. During a preliminary visit to that island one of the bigger chiefs had expressed a willingness to receive him, and had promised to light a fire on the beach as a signal on the return of the vessel. The day came, and they looked in vain for the smoke. A few miles farther on they saw a fire, landed, and were welcomed. When the other chief heard of the arrival, though the fault was on his side, he was indignant. He was feared by all the lesser tribes around, including the people among whom David had settled. Indeed, he was accustomed to send now to one village, now to another, and demand a human "roast." The petty chiefs dared not refuse, and at one time a child, at another a well-fed youth, had to be given up and sent along, pig fashion, slung to a pole, to fill the maw of the man-eater.

Now his ill-will was directed against the missionary, and bullets began to find their way through the windows of the mission-house. At nightfall the doors had to be closed and barred, and if a light were required, the windows had first to be blanketed. Otherwise the missionary and his wife sat in darkness from sundown till bedtime. One night, hearing a noise on the verandah, he stepped out into the darkness, and was confronted by a bright flash and a loud report.

But the bullet missed its mark and the miscreant fled. Such trials are not without their due physical effect, and "shattered nerves" result. About this time a brother and a sister missionary arrived for company and aid, the latter also with "shattered nerves." A catastrophe followed, over which we draw the veil. David had shortly to forgo the ambitions of his young life and rejoin his wife in Australia. He is now shepherding a portion of his Master's flock in the droughty inland west. Happy the people who have such a shepherd.

After a hurried breakfast a boat was manned, and we were pulled rapidly to the shore. Suddenly the supercargo, a stalwart German, rose up in the boat with the cry—

"This is madness: we'll all be murdered. There isn't a weapon in the boat."

We all smiled, my wife too; and at David's calm response, "No, no; that is where our safety lies," he subsided into his seat.

Nowhere have I seen more beautiful shallows. The deeper pools were tinted with the colours of the sky. Nearer the shore the rippling water, clear as a crystal prism, scattered the rays of the morning sun, and transformed the golden grains below to gleaming opal.

But there was little time to admire, for we were already in touch with the black crowd before us. The men were armed with muskets and belts of cartridges, the women and children with long knives. They believed our mission to be one of peace, but were prepared for emergencies. Strong arms drew the boat to land, and we all jumped out,—all except my wife. David called the chief and asked him to bid

his people lay down their arms, for we had none, and the lady too would come ashore. In a few moments muskets and knives were piled in a heap on a bank in the shade of the wood, and two youths, like shining statues, proudly mounted guard. Then we had a good look at one another, and many and various were the questions put. But eyes and tongues were not enough, and soon their hands were busy. To the women and girls their white sister was the centre of attraction. White feathers adorned their own hair, and the sight of a white wing in the little grey felt hat drew their smiles and formed a bond of sympathy. Softly they touched it, and gazed with cries of delight at the rosy cheeks, blue eyes, and golden hair. But the acme of excitement was reached when a sleeve was unbuttoned and revealed an arm of purest white. Their eyes sparkled; their delight knew no bounds; and they found relief in a chorus of shrill voices, waving their hands and dancing on the sand.

Leaving them thus occupied, we turned our attention to the men. Some of them were broad, deep-chested fellows, and I drew out my tape to measure the tallest. Two or three of them were six feet or over. We questioned them. Did they want a missionary? Would they sell him land? Yes, they were quite willing; and led us away to see the ground. Then we had to go and see their village too. An hour or two sped by quickly, and we once more gathered to the boat.

With the cry, "Very good, you come back soon!" they pushed us off, and we returned to the steamer. We were never there again. Two years afterwards a young Scotsman—a Glasgow graduate—with his

wife settled in their midst, but not before those pearly waters had been stained with blood.

A few days later we were dropping anchor in Ranon Bay. Rocco & Son were settled here on the white sands, doing a big trade in copra. A quarter of a mile farther along the shore, on a stony bluff, and partly hidden by an iron-wood tree, was the pioneer mission-house. We passed Rocco senior going to the steamer in his boat as we pulled ashore, so I did not visit his station. Report credited him with being rather a fierce neighbour. At the mission landing the sea water was muddy and uninviting, soiled by a neighbouring stream. There was no beach, but a stretch of cobble-stones washed up by storms.

We climbed up the track. Perched on huge cobble-stones laid singly, some on their edge and some on the flat, and looking down on the sea, was the house—of two rooms and a lean-to. It smelt fusty from long disuse, lacked paint, and had been officially described as a “shell.” It was more than that. It was a tomb of sad memories—a dead wife, a broken heart, an unhinged mind, ruined hopes! It had been built, and that neatly, before the days of steamers; and there were many worse houses in the Group.

The native church at the rear, built of thatch and reeds, had collapsed. The preacher’s desk had fallen to the ground, and was occupied by a huge black tusker. At my approach he jumped to his feet and ran off, grunting out his irritation.

Needless to remark, my spirits were damped, and my heart sank. But for faith in a Living Flame—ever-present, invisible, omnipotent—one might have been tempted to turn and flee in despair. At such a time one’s soul feels naked and powerless; feeble

in the face of a foreign tongue, hostile neighbours, and entrenched heathenism. And the lower the grade (this was pretty low), the more difficult is it to assail. A glance over a stone wall in the village at some carved and painted images had revealed a degree of depravity that was hideous. And here was I, come to fight and transform all this, with an Idea, and from such a fulcrum.

Yet are we told that "an idea is still the alchemist that turns the world to gold." And already there was a ray of light shining amid the dreariness. Kalasong, the teacher, had beat the school drum; and, in response, some twenty to thirty ill-looking, limping specimens, of all sizes and both sexes, gathered on the verandah. To honour the occasion they had hastily donned their five-year-old shirts, sere and yellow with smoke and age.

Looking round for a seat, I inquired of Kalasong what those old biscuit-barrels contained,—there were two in the driest part of the verandah. We stepped up to them and looked in.

"What's this, Kalasong?"

"Straw."

"What straw?"

"From the mattresses."

Honest fellow! As the rats had devoured the bedding he had gathered up the falling straws and saved them for the new missionary. Ultra-honest boy!

How could one fail to be tickled, and, indeed, re-heartened?

However, I preferred to build on a virgin foundation, and at a spot more central to the Group. A few hours later we were anchored near Dip Point, the most westerly angle of the island. Here we found

On the Field

a fine anchorage for ships, and an extended reef protecting the shore, with good boat passages. The beach was of black sand, but the water was clear, and the bathing grounds ample and safe.

Best of all, from the Peak, a spur of which, terminating abruptly, forms the Point, most of the islands could be sighted, and we were right in the track of the shipping. But could we get land?

We wandered along through the woods to the village, and when we saw the people, sitting in dust, working in dust, and more or less covered with dust, and black dust at that, I confess my heart gravitated towards my boots again.

Nevertheless their need was the greater. They could not help being dusty. The soil is of volcanic ash, and when dry resembles fine gunpowder.

When, at a later date, Will and I took a day to explore, the mercury in the spiritual barometer rose again. We found there were ten villages within a gunshot of the mission site. And we went home singing "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." We found, too, what time also proved true, that these children of the woods fall readily in love with a merry nature, as they are slow to draw to one who is staid and solemn.

On the beach, after much hunting, we at length came upon the chief. He was followed by a troop of red, white, and black terriers. They were his body-guard by day and night. Yes, he would sell us a site, and at once trotted us round a triangular block, right between the boat-landings. But he was not going to take barter for land; it must be pigs and some tobacco, the coin of his realm. We deferred the purchase to a later visit.



"CHILDREN OF THE WOODS."

On the shore we faced each other again to say farewell. He looked at me, and I looked at him. In that brief glance we summed each other up.

“Here,” said he to himself, “is the man I want. Now I’ll have a boat, pigs, tobacco, axes, knives, calico, desirable things of all kinds. True, he’s a missionary; but that doesn’t concern me. Best of all, I’ll be the biggest chief on the coast, and have protection from the bushmen. Moreover, he seems a pleasant fellow, and shows one respect. Can’t go far wrong in taking him. Am sure he’s soft and easily managed.”

And said I to myself, “I like the chief. He’s a pleasant old fellow—though not so old either. Can’t see much of his eyes; but he has a passable face, and a fairly good smile; seems genial, and unobtrusive, and does not say much. Should get on well here with such an ally. Feel sure he’s soft and easily managed.”

Again we were aboard, and the little steamer was ploughing her way southwards.

The object of our search had been gained.

CHAPTER III.

No Man's Land.

IT was about ten in the morning. Once more we had dropped anchor—this time in an open roadstead, but close inshore. A long white beach lay spread out before us. A small station, consisting apparently of a one-roomed house and some outbuildings or sheds, over which the tricolour floated, formed the point of interest. To the rear of this the bush-covered hills rose to a central ridge, whose outline against the sky resembled the back of a whale. It was known as the Isle of Fair Women, being peopled by the fairest skinned of all the tribes, and one that freely bartered away its maidens, a commodity much in demand among a certain class.

“Are you going ashore, Doctor?”

“Certainly, if we may, Captain.”

We jumped into the black boat with its brown gunnel, David and I. And glad was I of my companion's company and assistance in this work of prospecting.

“Who lives here, Mr Kay?” Kay was the supercargo.

“Jean Pasquin, the shell-carver. Take a look round when you're there. He's a clever sort of chap. You may see something that will interest you.”

"They're a hard-hearted lot here, sir," said one of the white sailors as we neared the shore. The boat's crew consisted usually of natives with two whites.

"Why do you say that, Jack?" He had hesitated, needing a little encouragement to proceed.

"I was round here last year, sir, in a labour ship, and we pulled in just t'other side of those rocks at yon point, to pick up some boys. There was a man and his girl—a young couple they seemed. She had a youngster, who began yelling at sight of the boat.

"'Can't take that youngster!' the boss shouted.

"The woman said she wanted to come too.

"'No; we can't ship that squalling little beast. Leave him with his auntie.'

"There was no 'auntie' in sight. So the kanaka, after taking a look around, caught the kiddy by the heels, swung her round like a rabbit, and dashed her head agin a tree. 'She was only a girl, anyway,' he said, and slung her body into the scrub. Then they both hopped into the boat and were shipped aboard."

"The ——— brute!" muttered Kay under his breath. "Ship oars!" And the boat grated on the sand.

A wizened, grey little man with a goat-beard, and dressed in loose pyjamas and slippers, was waiting for us on the beach. He was thin and wiry, and little more than a skeleton, a liberé or ex-convict from New Caledonia.

"Good morning, monsieur; any copra?"

"Yes."

"Are you wanting any stores or trade?"

"Yes. Come up to my house and we will arrange."

There was no mistaking the accent and nationality. We were introduced, and told to make ourselves at home; but the welcome was not given with great

heartiness. The house did consist of one room. It was built of concrete, smoothly plastered, and furnished with green louvred shutters. The floor was raised several feet above the ground, and a trap-door in the floor led to the cellar beneath. The work was well done, for the islands, by a Chinese carpenter, who afterwards came to our assistance on Ambrym. A high double bed, high almost as its owner, filled most of the space—for the room was only about twelve feet square—and the mosquito-nets and sheets were invitingly clean. But when we raised our eyes to the enlarged photographs arranged artistically around the walls our vision failed us. It was as though our "inner man" had received a sudden blow. Woman—the pure, the beautiful, the embodiment of all that is holiest—was here so depicted, that Hell itself, from its bottomless pits, could furnish nothing more profane.

"Let us go for a stroll." We were glad to escape to the outside, to inhale large draughts of the fresh air, and look upon the unsullied purity of sea and sky.

We turned to the right along the sand, and a few yards away passed an open shed, the workshop of the shell-carver. His bench was covered with bottles of acid, fine chisels, gouges, and files. A grindstone stood near by, and a small circular saw worked by a treadle. Here at odd times every day he sat behind his bench and polished the shells, being shaded from the sun by the rustling palms and an awning of faded cocoa-nut leaves, which stretched across the front of the shop. It was his hobby this—to portray in mother-of-pearl the treasures of his mind, such as they were; and some of his work was truly beautiful. Here, too, he filled in some idle hours, gazing across the sea, above whose far horizon the distant islands

peeped as faint blue clouds. Unmolested, he could sit absorbed in reverie and dream of "la belle France," which he still loved; whose curse had doomed him to years of manacles and prison walls, and, now, to exile among these "cursed hogs" at the ends of the earth.

Yet Jean Pasquin was not unhappy. Was he not free? Could he not, within certain limits, very wide limits, "play the devil" with all and sundry, including his own base self? Nay; he was a master, an employer of labour, virtually an owner of slaves, with whom he also "played the devil."

Poor Pasquin! France fondly hailed him as one of her "lost ones." And they in their revels smiled and responded, "Te morituri salutamus." Had she ever given them a chance to be anything better? Why do the French, "the most artistic and beauty-loving people on the face of the globe," thus expose their blots and failures to the gaze of all nations?

We tramped along the sand for a few hundred yards, and seeing a track, followed it into the bush. The sound of voices and the bark of a dog told us that a village was near. Quickening our steps, we were soon in the midst of the huts. We saw a group of women intent on some operation, and went up to them. They were dyeing mats in crimson patterns, and we found the process interesting. Before the principal woman, who acted as designer, a mat was spread out. From a vessel containing the liquid dye, slips of dried leaf, of various lengths, soaking in the dye, were selected. These were laid on the mat in regular order, so as to form the patterns. The mat was then carefully rolled up and fastened, and placed in an old canoe containing water and hot stones

covered with leaves. Then the whole was covered over securely with leaves and earth, so as to enclose the steam. When the mat had been duly steamed, dried, and again unrolled, the pattern was found transferred in bright colour to its surface.¹

A warning whistle from the steamer bade us hasten back. When we reached the boat, we found the captain there, and the labour boys fetching the last sacks of copra from the smoke-house.

“Hurry up, Kay!”

It was the captain shouting. Kay came out of the wood and hurried down to the boat. As he jumped in the captain exclaimed—

“What’s the matter, man? What makes you so white in the gills?”

Kay, whose face was whiter than the coral beach, seemed scarcely able to speak. Waving his hand towards the steamer he whispered hoarsely—

“By-and-by.”

Half an hour later we forgathered on the bridge in anticipation. As soon as the boats were hoisted and the steamer under way, Kay appeared. For the most part he had regained his colour, and anger was fast taking the place of fright.

“Captain,” he blurted out, “that fellow” (pointing to the shore) “is a devil escaped from Hell.”

“Must be,” said the skipper, keeping his eyes steadily on the point of land ahead. “Judging from your face, I doubt if the devil himself could give a man a worse fright. But what happened to you?”

“You know,” said Kay, “that I went into the bush

¹ I quote from memory. According to Codrington, it is also applied by means of a stencil cut out of banana leaf.

a few steps just at the finish. There I heard a tremendous buzzing close by. I thought I'd take a look and see the cause. 'Blue-jays' in plenty were knocking around, heaps of them; the very leaves were black with them. I wondered what they were after. By heavens! I shan't be so curious another time. In a bit of cleared space I found a carcass hanging to the bough of a tree. I took it for a pig at first; the blessed 'jays' were so thick one couldn't be sure. God's truth! it was a corpse. Some poor devil of a kanaka, hung up by the wrists, and beaten to death. His back was thrashed to a pulp, and those — flies——," he went to the side of the ship.

"Come, Kay," said the skipper, "you've made a mistake. It must have been a pig."

"No, sir; I'm telling the truth. I took a walk round to the other side, and that's what gave me the fright. Poor devil!" he muttered, raising his hand to his eyes as if to shut out the horrible sight. "He must have killed that boy yesterday. I heard some of the labour boys say that Tom would help them no more. He'd filled his last bag. 'The boss, he kill¹ him along bush yesterday.'"

"Can nothing be done, Captain?"

He turned towards us. "What do you mean?"

"To prevent such atrocities?"

"Well, that is for you gentlemen to say. You must see that it is a very difficult matter to prove a case of this kind. He's a French subject, and months may elapse before a French man-o'-war could get here to investigate; and where, then, are your witnesses? Are you going to rely on the word of these 'boys'? No fear; 'mum' is the word for them; and they

¹ Pigeon English for "beat," severely or fatally.

know it. Some of them would swear anything to save their own skins, and small blame to 'em."

"But you can't let a thing like this pass."

"Let a thing like this pass!" replied the captain, pitching his voice in a higher key. "It don't pass. Look here, gentlemen; this is a 'No man's land,' no doubt about that, but there's a rough sort of justice here all the same. It don't pay a man to play the scoundrel in these parts. Any man who plays that game is only qualifying to be his own judge and executioner. You couldn't wish him a worse punishment than the fate he's preparing for himself. That poor kanaka don't feel the 'jays.' They can't make his skin creep. He's gone, poor devil. But don't the old Book say (you should know) that a 'blood-thirsty man won't live out half his days'? Well, mark my words. Those flies will have him too," waving his hand back towards the spot we had left, "and what's more, they'll eat him alive. So don't worry about punishing him. As for the kanakas, well, better times are coming, or you gentlemen wouldn't be here."

The old captain's speech may have lacked both passion and logic. But there was a something behind its ruggedness—call it faith if you will—that calmed one's indignation and incited to greater effort. Doubtless he was only generalising from his past experience; nor do we for a moment think that he anticipated any such fulfilment of his words.

Yet, in this instance, as the future will show, his words came literally true.¹

¹ Some years have passed since transportation was stopped, and we have been assured that incidents like the above have ceased to be. However, a writer in a recent number of 'The New Hebrides Magazine' appears to be of a different opinion.

CHAPTER IV.

The Black Man's Fate.

IN company with David—for all the missionaries are experienced in medical work—I was summoned to attend a young French planter and his English wife. We rode on horseback for a mile or two along the beach, and then through densely crowded plantations of bananas. Buried among the foliage in one of these, we found the house, a plastered concrete structure, of which the enthusiastic owner was justly proud. His wife, though suffering, was as bright and clean as her irons and the ironing on which she was engaged. For the labour, all except one boy who was mixing mortar, were busy on the shore, getting the bananas to market. The mail-steamer had arrived for her cargo; the trade with Sydney was brisk; and the planters were rejoicing in the prospect of quick returns.

It was still afternoon when we got back, and we sat down on the deck to watch the crowds of kanakas trudging along in the soft sand. "Boys" and women of all ages were there; some with the bunches poised on their heads, others balancing them over their shoulders by the long stalks. All were heavily laden. Some occasionally sank down and rested on the sand as if unequal to the task, and were helped up and on again by friendly hands.

On deck there was a busy scene. Officers and men were hurrying to get the steamer away. Boats, heaped up with the green bananas till their gunnels were level with the water, were jostling one another around the gangways, up which the huge bunches followed one another in quick time. The kanakas were being hustled along with a sprinkling of mild oaths by a burly Portuguese bo'sun.

"Now, Doctor, I reckon that is the way kanakas ought to work. You can't make them do this on their own islands."

The passenger who spoke thus was an ex-captain of the merchant marine. He had recently been appointed British Consul to a neighbouring Group. Thus far, from his trips among the Pacific islands, he had come to know the natives only from the outside. Indeed, he had once dropped the remark that these people were scarcely above the level of orang-outangs.

It is quite true that the natives will not work thus on their own islands. There they are free men; here they were little better than slaves. I use the word advisedly. Recruited from other islands by men who often ignore all tribal or family rights—of chief, father, or husband—whose only object is to secure a profitable cargo, the natives, once away from their own "passage" (landing-place), were at the mercy of their masters. Brought to a place such as this, they were disembarked and drawn up in line on the road above the beach for inspection, and were disposed of to the planters at the highest figure the skipper could obtain. At the end of three years, if the engagement were honourably fulfilled, the native would receive his pay and be returned to his island.

In this inter-island recruiting, while the French

were "absolutely unrestricted," British subjects were virtually prohibited from taking part—as they were also from the sale or barter of liquor, firearms, and explosives. The British Government is apparently actuated by two motives: to protect the interests of the natives, and to keep the hands of its own subjects clean.

Meanwhile the French had been trying to obtain possession at all costs, and to make the islands the happy hunting-ground of Noumean ex-convicts. Coupled with this were the forced sales and fraudulent seizure of lands, of which the grab at Iririki, the islet which dominates the principal harbour, was the crowning example. The grab failed; for the rights of British subjects were affected, and the Foreign Office was appealed to. But the natives in the outlying islands had no Foreign Office to interfere for them. An ignorant, innocent native affixed his mark to a deed, selling an acre of land on the beach. A few years later the deed is produced before a Commission (possibly by some one who has purchased the piece of paper in good faith), and is found to specify a square mile. Strife, the uprooting of gardens and fences, the burning of huts and schools, and possibly bloodshed, may follow, and the native goes to the wall. Indeed, were it not for the missionaries, who at the present moment have some thirty stations with flourishing schools and churches, who have, and have had, amongst their number men of the first standing from American, Colonial, and the Home universities and divinity halls, including such names as Williams, Turner, the Selwyns, Patteson, Inglis, Geddie, the Gordons, Paton, and others equally famous, the dismal fate of these islands and islanders

would long since have been sealed. For upwards of fifty years these men, at the cost of lives, and vessels lost, and hundreds of thousands of pounds expended by the Churches they represent, have held and manned the Group, directly for their Master, and indirectly for the Empire.

What would have been the fate of these tribes if France had got her way and filled the islands with convicts, is not difficult to imagine.¹ The Colonies barred her scheme. Happily a new constellation has risen in these parts—for the British, and, if Britons be still Britons, for the black races too. It seems to me that the great star in the Commonwealth flag represents Sirius, the Dog Star—brightest in the Southern sky—keeping watch on the confines of the Empire; keeping watch, too, under the light of the Cross. May that watch be long kept, nobly and unselfishly, true to the flag.

As the convict scheme has failed, owing to opposition on the part of the Colonies, the French are trying to give weight to their claims by sending out a more worthy class of settlers; and competition between the two nationalities is keen. But the bulk of the trade persists in following the union-jack! One result of the Missions, whose stations cover the whole Group in a network, is, that a white man whose hands

¹ The French have now a new solution to offer—viz., the definite suppression of convict transportation to New Caledonia in exchange for the total cession of the New Hebrides. "New Caledonia needs labour. Now, the New Hebrides possess a large reserve of native labourers, whom, the day we were completely master of the Archipelago, we should be able to use for the development of New Caledonia. That island could then do without convicts."—'La Mois Colonial.'

Some people seem unable to rise to the conception of the black as a brother man. To them he is still a beast of burden, fitted to fill the convict's shoes, and, possibly—his chains.

have not already been imbrued may land almost anywhere in perfect safety. Yet some Britishers, whose sympathies are averse to mission work, and whose eyes are entranced by the sight of a few flourishing plantations, are disposed to think that the French have as good a claim. So it appeared to be with our fellow-passenger. I turned to him.

"Captain," I said, "you have touched on a question at once medical and ethical. In fact, you have grasped a double-barrelled gun, and, if I mistake not, the trigger end is in my hands."

He looked puzzled.

"How so?"

"Well, in the first place, these natives are not constituted for such hard work. We, as missionaries, live with them, study them, and know them. You and others blame us for not teaching them to work in this style. I tell you they are not able for it. Look at those 'boys' on the jetty yonder. One of them came to me with a ruptured vessel at the back of the eye. He was carrying a sack of potatoes, and suddenly went blind in that eye. Another was lifting a sack of flour and strained his back. Inflammation followed, and he was carried to hospital, and his pelvis found to be riddled with abscesses. The sacral wedge, or keystone of the pelvic arch, had given way. There was no hope for him; and he died after a few weeks of profuse suppuration.

"It is the same with the natives who go to Queensland. They can't stand the long hours, and the sudden changes of climate; and you know the great reproach against the trade is, that it kills three or four kanakas to one white man. Their tissues are too soft. They get consumption; come home to die;

and infect their fellows. Look at Aneityum. Five thousand people there have dwindled down to some five hundred. The same dismal fate apparently awaits them all. Of six young men who joined one of our mission-stations a few years ago, all about the same age, and apparently in good health, four are dead—their deaths seemingly due to the extra strain thrown upon their physical and mental powers by contact with white men. It is sheer nonsense to say that these kanakas can do work on plantations that white men cannot stand. Say, if you will, that the black skin is the cheaper article, despite the death-rate, and we understand each other.”

“Well, then, of what other use are they?”

“I should say, adjust their work to their strength. One would get more out of them—for it does not pay to work even a machine beyond its strength. Commercially, too, judging from the bloody history of the Pacific and the risks taken, they seem to make pretty valuable cargoes. There’s the *Rio Loge* yonder with some 150 labour aboard. That, at ten pounds a-head, means £1500. It beats gold-mining or pearl-diving. They are worth handling with care.”

“True; but your mission seems to have been pretty hard on its own staff.”

“No; they were allowed three hours’ rest in the heat of the day, and half a day off on Wednesdays and Saturdays. One got a wetting in the boat; another took measles; a third was persecuted by his people; and in each case consumption laid hold of them, and they failed to reach their prime.”

“Apparently, then,” said the captain with a smile, “they are best left entirely to themselves, even as regards missionaries.”

“Not so, Captain. You must not blame us for introducing the bacillus. Its introduction is recent, and I have already indicated the source. It is slow, insidious, and the most deadly foe they have. True, left to themselves for ages, these races flourished and spread. In that condition, dwelling in the darkness of savagery, the Gospel pure and simple would have come to them as to other nations, as “the dawn from on high.” But times have changed. Now the flood of the white invasion is upon them, with its vices, epidemics, and stress of life. The Gospel is still the best gift civilisation has for them.¹ We missionaries must help them to rise with and upon the tide, and try to secure for them at least the recognition of the golden rule, ‘Do ye unto them as ye would that men should do unto you.’”

“Can nothing save the black races?”

“Yes. Help them to maintain their self-respect, and let them see that they too have a share in the future. Nothing kills like contempt. That more than all——”

“Can't you get them along without the swearing, mate?”

It was David's voice. He was calling down to the Portuguese bo'sun.

The latter looked up in blank astonishment, feigning innocence.

“Swearin'? I was teachin' 'em to avoid bad language.”

“You're teaching them bad English, anyway.”

¹ “Iron, tobacco, calico, a wider knowledge of the world, have not compensated native people for new diseases and the weakening of social bonds.”—Codrington.

A smile went round the lower deck. The bo'sun grinned. There was that in David's tone which forbade him taking offence. The swearing ceased.

"I was saying that contempt, more than all the white man's diseases and vices, is to blame for destroying the black races. Annexation, followed by education and paternal control, might save even these soft islanders. The Maori was dying out, but since there have been a Native Department and Minister, Maori representatives in Parliament, and the Maori King on the Executive, the decrease has ceased. The ebbing tide has turned. The same experiment is now to be tried in Fiji. Give the black man hope, and a measure of kindly help. Under British justice, taxation and representation go together. Educate him and give him a share of both; and as he regains his courage and self-respect, his virility will return."

"Is he worth it?"

"Surely, even as cheap labour."

I took the lowest ground. For even the average Britisher is slow to see in his black brother anything more than a useful slave. In the ears of the majority it is as though the echo of the curse—"A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren"—was still heard across the centuries.

Nevertheless, our success as an Empire in ruling the dark races is due to our recognition of the fact that, though they are servants, they are also brothers. To put them on a lower plane is to degrade ourselves, and to fail as other nations have done.

"Do you really think there is any possibility of saving these islanders?"

"I am afraid not. They are such a heterogeneous lot, and are widely infected. They are too decadent already, and destined to fade away before a hardier race, brown¹ or white. What we want to see is law and order established, and justice and kindness dispensed. And if, in a Christian colony like Queensland, the Government find it necessary to institute hospitals for the kanakas at the planters' expense, and to appoint inspectors to see that the coloured labourers get their due amount of food, clothing, and wage, and that their terms are justly kept, and even to send an agent for the same purpose with every labour ship, how much more necessary must it be in a land like this, where there is no law, and no government, and foreigners have practically a free hand? But law and order, founded on right, we shall not get till a just Power takes possession."

Just then the gong sounded for dinner, and we hurried below.

When we came on deck again it was dusk. The anchor had been weighed and the steamer was returning up the bay. Meanwhile the bo'sun, his pipe alight, sat on the combings of the hatch for a brief rest. David, who had been watching his opportunity, strolled up and sat beside him.

"You weren't offended, bo'sun, at what I said this afternoon?"

"No, sir." He paused to remove his pipe from his mouth, and spat vigorously into the scuppers. "Certainly not!"

¹ I say brown advisedly. For, we are told, if the present decline in the birth-rate in the Colonies continues, "the dream of a great Australian nation guaranteeing the peace and progress of the Southern World must soon come to an end."

“Well, I’d like to show you something that kept me straight many a time when I was a prentice lad at the bench among my mates, if I may.”

“Heave ahead, sir.”

“Here it is.” He drew a Gospel, bound in red calf, from his breast pocket. It was a treasured companion, well marked inside. The leaf was turned down at one text. David read it out—

“But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof at the day of judgment.”

“It’s the Master’s own word, bo’sun, and I’ll give it to you if you’ll look at it sometimes.”

“I’ll find a corner for it, sir.”

And he did, in the bottom of his big sea-chest. Whether he ever looked into it again to scan its many priceless gems is another question. But, whenever a foul word rose to his lips, there rose up also the vision of a little red book. He remembered that it contained a message for him; and that it was folded up in a yellow silk handkerchief once worn by his mother, and was hidden away among his treasures, gathered on the sea.

CHAPTER V.

The Labour Trade.

“STOP talking clotted nonsense, and organise us an Institute!”

We were at Synod. Will had not come, but had sent a letter instead. The Clerk, a dignified man, tallest of us all, with flowing beard and a deep bass voice, paused, and glanced at the Moderator.

“Oh, go on, it’s only Goddard,” interjected a dapper little man in white ducks, sitting in the front bench. The truth was, Will’s words sometimes fell like the blows of a sledge-hammer. He could be as hard as adamant when brought face to face with wrong-doing in those who ought to know better. Consequently he had enemies. Antipathies were stirred and opposition roused where gentleness and suavity might have been crowned with success. While the sight of great wrongs wrought upon his soul till it burned like a slow furnace, it was the pin-pricks that rasped and irritated, producing sudden sputterings and explosions of temper. The offenders were somewhat singed thereby, and resented it accordingly. So far as I knew him, this was Will’s only fault, if it can be called one.

On starting out in life there was, to me, in the whole world, one man at least who could be called a

saint ; and he was advertised as such. In later years we met, and—my ideal was shattered. But I owe him a debt, for he did me a service. Thereafter I ceased to expect perfect men and took a saner view. Nor have I been disappointed. One looks within, suspicious of defects in self ; grows tolerant of faults in others ; and gathers hope for all mankind.

For we are all made of the same stuff, the best being moulded out of faults, and every one but a man in the making. And the perfection of the saints, in this life at least, resembles more the product of soap and the bag of blue than the purity of God's snow. Possibly the bleaching-ponds are on the road to the next sphere. Indeed, they must be, if the saint is to arrive there perfected. But the saints do not so arrive ; and hence the leaves of healing in the Paradise of God.

However, the Synod took no offence at Will's pungent message, and actually did set to work to establish an Institute. By "clotted nonsense" was probably meant discussions on trading and tobacco. One of the crying needs of the Mission was an institution for educating and training a staff of native evangelists and teachers. Moreover, the Synod went a step farther. It cordially approved of Dip Point as a suitable site, being central, for a fully equipped hospital and medical mission, for black and white. And as soon as the Synod's business had been completed, we went north again to secure the land.

It was Sunday afternoon, and I had just stepped aboard the labour ship *May* to see a patient who was very ill with fever. On the previous afternoon we had entered the strait between Nguna and Efate, and dropped anchor in the broad sheet of blue water in

front of the mission station. Here we met the *May* coming in the opposite direction, bowling towards us on the wings of a fresh breeze. She had threaded her way through the narrow passage between the reefs which, with the aid of an islet, almost block the strait and unite Nguna with the mainland.

Over these coral reefs the waves rose in successive hillocks of green, sparkling in the sunshine, and dashing themselves to pieces with a sullen roar, to hiss and glide onward in sheets of harmless foam. Boys and girls shouted and laughed with glee in the natural shower-bath, as they dived out of sight beneath the rolling seas and reappeared shaking the shining drops from their frizzly locks.

As the anchors dropped and the cables rattled, the beaches became unwontedly active. Dark figures rushed along the sand; the coloured dresses of the women appeared beneath the trees; canoes were pushed into the water and hurriedly paddled to meet the boats. The work of landing had begun.

To-day all was hushed. Even the waves had ceased their play. Though the Christian Sunday is not the Jewish Sabbath, so hallowed had the day become to the native mind that boys and girls regarded the plucking of a flower as a breach of sabbath law. No fault of the missionary's this; the people's minds are crude and slow to reason for themselves. He had been caught in the early morning coming out of the boat-house, his hands full of tools. "The sabbath was made for man," and he had possibly been tightening a plank in one of the boats to prevent the ladies getting a wetting as they went aboard at nightfall. He was a splendid worker. Enough to say that the great church was filled three times over that day with

devout worshippers, who themselves paid by their collections for a large band of teachers. It was the most visible evidence of successful work we had seen in the Islands.

Our little steamer, the *Croydon*, was returning the missionaries who had met in Synod at Aneityum to their stations, and introducing new men to the Group. The *May* was likewise working her way through the Islands, landing returned labour at their "passages," and picking up new recruits.

"Your cabin is well stocked, Captain."

"Yes," said Captain Spender, glancing round the walls. They were well lined with hatchets and guns of various kinds; with here and there a handsome Santo spear, glittering with sharks' teeth, or a bunch of Santa Cruz arrows.

"Whom do you require these for?" I asked, pointing to an assortment of revolvers.

"Oh, we keep these for the Ambrym boys."

"The Ambrym boys! You're rather hard on my future parishioners. Why for them more than others?"

"Well, they are a surly lot, and always too ready to give us a welcome of lead."

I eyed the revolvers with more interest. I had no such weapons,—only a toy the size of my index-finger and too rusty to fire, which a well-meaning friend had thrust into my pocket. It disappeared in the hurricane.

"It's a pretty thirsty afternoon, Doctor. What'll you have? Guess you don't take spirits. We have some splendid ginger-ale. Here, boy," to the steward, "get us some glasses."

"So you're thinking of going to Ambrym," he

continued. "Yes; they are a surly lot. Yet in Queensland they say there are no better workers on the plantations. By the way, we have some 'goods' on board that will suit you—a parcel of boys from school at Bundaberg. They are a bright lot, too, always 'making school' as they call it, and singing like larks. What say you, Williamson?" appealing to the Government agent.

"They seem to mean business," was Williamson's reply.

"You'll see them before you go ashore, if you will; and you'll find that the Labour Trade has some good things in it anyway." This was said in a tone that manifested some soreness.

The Labour Trade was still carried on under the dark shadow of the past. "Black-birding," as it was called, had been a game with some men, as bloody as it was remunerative. If we are to believe some of the early reports, whole villages were sold and the people driven aboard ship like sheep, having to choose between death and slavery. Within our memory, canoes have been sunk at the ship's side, the natives shot in the water if they attempted to escape, and the boys' throats cut on the ladder to instil fear into the others. Crimes unspeakable were committed in the name of civilisation.

But these days were past. Exposure had led to cessation of the evils. Public opinion compelled the Governments to interfere. Every ship had now to be licensed, and had to carry a Government representative or agent, whose presence prevented abuses. Further, every labour ship had to hoist a black ball at the masthead to indicate her character to the islanders. More than this, some of the planters were

themselves moved to pity, and endeavoured to teach and Christianise the kanakas while in Queensland.

In these pages I shall speak of the Labour Trade as I saw it. The reader must know that the older missionaries were bitterly opposed to it, and felt at times that they had good cause to curse both the Trade and its originators. There is no doubt it is responsible in a large measure for depopulating the Group, and for retarding the work of the Mission. It is very hard for a man, after spending the best years of his life on their education and training, to stand on the shore and see the cream of his young men shipped away to Queensland for the benefit of the planters. These young converts were destined to be teachers, but suddenly infatuated with a desire to see the world, they were gone within an hour, often to return as wrecks or not at all. He must begin his task all over again with the younger lads, perhaps with a similar result; and there was no protection, nor remedy.

“I understand, Captain, that times are changed.”

“Yes,” he said, “they have. But the kanakas haven’t changed much, so far as I can see. There are exceptions, of course,” he added; “but you be careful when you get to that parish of yours. One of my mates had a bad time on the east coast of Ambrym some time ago. He did not like the look of the people, and kept the boat going along on the outside of the reef. The ‘decoy,’ a boy called Bob, would give him no peace.

“‘Look here, Mr Calton,’ he said, ‘why don’t you let us get into smooth water. I know these fellows. There’s no fight in them.’

“For a time Calton took no heed. He was no coward, but one never can tell what is going to happen. The people were a dangerous-looking set, and the place unfrequented. Perhaps he had a presentiment. At that moment Bob interjected—

“‘I really believe, boys, our mate is frightened he’ll see the inside of these chaps’ stomachs.’

“‘No, Bob,’ said he; ‘if anybody will see their inside, it’s you.’

“‘Oh, I’m not afraid o’ seein’ their tripe.’

“‘Very well; we’ll pull in at the next opening and give you the chance.’

“A few minutes later they were inside the reef and steering towards the nearest village. As soon as the keel grated on the sand, Calton and Bob jumped out, while the crew, all armed as usual, kept watch by the boat. The natives seemed very friendly; and, chatting merrily, conducted their two visitors into the village. As it was a common occurrence to see the natives with arms,—indeed they often bought recruits with these,—they laid no stress on the fact that two of the crowd carried muskets, full cock. The chief led them to the *mel*, the chief house in the village, for them to admire the decorations at the principal entrance. Bob laughed at the daubs of red paint, and saying ‘Clever fellow, my word!’ pointed at the fragment of a mirror which, amidst shells and pigs’ tusks, occupied the place of honour under the gable. Impish-looking heads, the ends of the purlines, carved out of bamboo roots and coloured red, grinned at them from the eaves. All at once there was the report of a musket right behind them, and Bob leaped into the air, and dropped without a groan, a bloody writhing heap, at

Calton's feet. His heart had been shot to pieces, and the whole front of the *mel* dripped with blood. The musket had been heavily charged with slugs, and was fired close at his back. Calton, fearing the same fate, swift as thought threw one arm around the chief and the other round a native lad, and grasped them tightly to himself.

““They couldn't shoot me then,' he said, 'without shooting one of themselves. For once I felt that a blackfellow's life was as good as a white man's.'”

“Just then there was a shout from the bank above the sea, followed by a volley of musketry. A shower of bullets scattered the gathering crowd, two or three of whom lay wallowing in the dust. The boat's crew had heard the report, and, suspecting mischief, had run to give assistance. Calton dropped his burden and ran to his men; nor did they breathe freely till they were outside the reef again. They got no recruits that day.

“So have a care, Doctor, and be content with examining your parishioners from the outside. Come, now, and see the specimens we have aft.”

We went aft to the hatchway and descended into the hold, which had been transformed into one large sleeping apartment for the men and boys. Right round the sides of the ship were one or two broad wooden shelves about six feet wide, on which they slept side by side, to the number, perhaps, of a couple of hundred. The raw recruits when shipped were each given a coloured loin-cloth and a red blanket. Those returning from the plantations were, of course, more or less fully clothed; and their boxes were piled in a heap at the bottom of the hatchway. What

treasures they contained for the folks at home!—the gatherings of three, and perhaps of ten years. Sitting here, hymn-book in hand, were two men, the one tall and dark with skin of inky tint, the other short and of a light copper colour. The two types, Papuan and Malay, are intermingled throughout the Group. They rose as we descended the ladder.

“Where are your boys, Albert?”

“The class is finished, Captain, and they go along deck.”

I turned to the little fellow and asked him his name.

“Moses.”

He was all smiles, and as bright as a navy button.

“How many in your class, Albert?”

“Eight.”

“You all belong to Ambrym?”

“Yes.”

“What are you going to do when you get there?”

“Be missionaries to our fellow-countrymen.” H’m!
I thought that was my *rôle*.

“Who taught you?”

“Miss Young, Fairymead Plantation, Bundaberg.”

This was a sister of two well-known planters. Touched with pity for the exiled lads, she had devoted week-nights and Sabbath afternoons to their instruction. The “boys” almost worshipped her. From this beginning the work has spread till all the larger centres in the land of the sugar-cane have their mission schools.

“Well, I am coming to your island to help you. You will look out for me?”

“Yes, yes!”

A few minutes later the boat, to the measured beat

On the Field

of the rowlocks, was ripping through the water towards the shore. The Labour Trade, stained with blood through its lust for mammon, has slain its thousands; but purified by the Christ-born love of a simple maid, and in right hands—

“Out of the eater had come forth meat, and out of the strong had come forth sweetness.”

CHAPTER VI.

Will at Work.

“WILL you give the Doctor a lift along the coast?”

It was not a question of “can you” but “will you,” for the tough old captain knew that “where there’s a will there’s a way,” and did not intend to give a loophole for a refusal. Moreover, among these distant isles sea-captains are kings, and have favours to withhold or dispense.

“All right, Captain,” responded the individual addressed, Morin by name. He was French, from one of the Balearic Isles; spoke English imperfectly, and with a very foreign accent; and, dressed in loose blue serge, wore a sailor’s straw hat with fluttering black ribbons.

Thus I was handed over to the tender mercies of a stranger and a foreigner. He was a kindly simple soul, and rowed me ashore to his whitewashed, two-roomed, slab hut, situated about a hundred yards from the beach. As soon as we had arrived, he led me into the inner room and introduced me to his “wife,” a fair native girl, and his baby boy. As we stood chatting, a stalwart savage in nature’s dress reeled into the room, caught up the baby, rocked it in his arms, and crowed and chuckled to it; then he gave the little yellow thing back to its mother, and reeled out again.

He appeared to be half drunk. Morin took it as a matter of course.

Morin offered me a smoke, which I declined with thanks. He produced a plug of golden leaf about the size of a leg of lamb, and began to shave off enough from the thick end to fill his pouch.

“What do you think of that?”

I examined and smelled it. “Seems first-class.”

“Well, it’s my own growing.”

“Why don’t you go in for growing it in quantity?”

“No fear! No more!” he laughed musically. “That would never do. Would spoil our trade in no time. The natives wanted to get some of the plants. I had to watch night and day, and was glad when the last one was pulled up and burned. No, no!” and again he laughed.

In the centre of his backyard I observed a heap of glass bottles,—bottles of every size and shape, black and white, brown and green; whisky, brandy, gin, and wine. I looked at my sober friend, and was puzzled. Enough liquor had been drunk to poison a herd of cattle. Still puzzled, I gave up the problem.

As night approached we were called to dinner. We dined by the light of a kerosene lamp, and a close company we were around that little table. There was Morin, his wife and child; myself; John, a Queensland boy I had picked up by the way, and his wife and son,—seven in all. The fare, under these circumstances, was wonderful. There were sardines, locally pickled, sausages, boiled fowl, green peas, cabbage, potatoes, soup, and coffee. I must not omit the “butler”: he was a fat boy of some sixteen summers, black as his own pots, stout as a bailie,

and waited on us, erect and grave, as if attending a regal function. To him it appeared to be all that; and truly he magnified the importance of his office. His master, too, with the air of a king, commanded his services, and obtained full homage. But what amused me most was the simplicity of the "butler's" dress. Above, his only garment was a greasy old waistcoat, open in front from chin to waist, and displaying gastric proportions more than ample. Below, attached to his belt, was a small square of calico that had once been white. Half an hour later the "butler" had become scullery boy, and I had to express regret for disturbing him at his duties. I found him in the backyard, perched on the edge of a small puddle in front of his little grass kitchen. Around him on the mud were the knives, forks, spoons, &c., that lately had graced the table. It was the "wash up"; and what could be simpler? There was only one party that took offence—the ducks, who seemed highly indignant at being dispossessed, if only for a few minutes.

Primitive it was, and marvellous the result. There was the maximum of effect for the minimum of labour, and no loss of temper withal. If only some of our troubled housewives could have been there to take notes. Possibly, though, he would have failed to convert them.

I spent the night comfortably on a stretcher in the lean-to at the back; and in the morning, after a long and weary wait, with a stomach aching for the French breakfast which did not appear till near noon, I was overjoyed to see Will's boat heading towards the landing.

Bidding Morin a hearty good-bye, we set out on

the return journey. Towards evening we landed, picnicked, and again hastened the boat forward with sail and oar. By this time it was raining. Night, too, fell rapidly, and the wind rose.

How long we were being jogged and tossed about in those cross seas I do not know. Sleepy and seasick, I dozed and leaned over the gunnel by fits. Once and again the clouds parted, and in the faint light that illumined the darkness we were dimly conscious of a flapping white sail, and of dark figures on the look-out beside the mast. Will was holding the tiller.

“You seem to know your way about here in the dark, Will.” Just then a big sea struck the boat and the spray washed over us; a squall of wind and rain was passing.

“Yes; we have been in here several times at night, but we have to keep our eyes open.”

“Have you ever been in a tight corner?”

“Yes; but I’ve never had such an experience as one of our senior colleagues. One afternoon, with a full boat, he was sailing along the windward side of his island. Looking seaward, he saw a rapidly advancing wall of water topped with foam. It was a tidal wave. There was nowhere they could run for safety; nor was there time. He struck sail—all but the jib—and kept the boat half on to the sea. They had to leave the rest to God.

“The wave struck the starboard bow, turned the boat on her side, and poured down upon her. In fact, the sea passed right over her without sinking her. They were all drenched, and the boat was half filled. But she rose like a bird, and kept on her course. That surely was good seamanship!

“But the calmest men have nerves, and our friend, cool though he always is, told me that he should never forget the sensation he had of the boat sinking, and still sinking, beneath his heel. Nightly, for weeks afterwards, he had the same feeling in his dreams—of the boat sinking from beneath him—and would wake with a start, bathed in perspiration.”

“There’s the point!” exclaimed one of the native teachers, indicating a black object ahead to the right.

In the darkness we discerned the outline of a steep bluff.

“That’s home,” said Will.

A few minutes later we had rounded the headland, and were pulling shorewards against a strong current.

On the left, great seas were crashing over the reef; and those that missed the reef tossed our boat on their crests, and then boomed against the cliff to our right. Before us, protected by the reef, was a coral beach; and from the windows of the mission-house, some two hundred and fifty feet above, shone a steady light.

“Ha,” said Will, “Madge is there; and your own girl is waiting beside her.”

It took us the best part of an hour to reach them, for the current was strong and the boat had to be hauled up and housed, and the climb was a stiff one. But then came our reward.

Next morning we were able to witness the ordinary routine of a mission-station. At daybreak the school drum was beaten by the native teachers, and the scholars assembled, some of them coming long distances. The classes ranged from the A B C scholars, seated at the foot, or far end of the school, to those

who, near the desk, stood and spelled aloud the big words from the Gospel reading-books.

Each class was in charge of a senior scholar or teacher, and Will passed from one to the other, taking a turn at each.

The New Hebrides and sister Groups form a strange chapter in the study of human history. Here life is at its lowest ebb, and the people are as the washed-up foam and *débris* at the margin of sand and wave. This Group forms a line of demarcation between east and west. Tribes have come from various directions,—have fought for and obtained a footing. By tribes we mean districts that speak the same tongue. Organised tribes there are none. In origin children of Ham, they came from Asia. Their footprints have been traced through India and down the Malay Peninsula to the Pacific. As the centuries passed, they were driven eastward—as the Celts were to the west—by stronger tribes and new invasions, onward and forward, till, about seven hundred years ago, the first canoes are believed to have reached these islands.

By contact and intermarriage on the way, and afterwards, the jet-black and the much-coveted nut-brown complexion are now found in members of the same small village. A single islet is the home of Malay and Papuan. Thus, too, it has come to pass that in the New Hebrides alone there are some thirty different dialects or languages,—so different in structure and form as to need almost as many versions of Scripture. On this island there are three main dialects, and those who speak the one are foreigners to the rest.

Every village, too, though comprising only five or six huts, is an independent unit, and, according to its size, is strong or weak, the friend or foe of its neigh-

bours, fearing and being feared. There is no such thing as a natural death: if a man die, it must be due to "poison" (a kind of witchcraft), and the suspect is shot; war and devastation follow. True, there are many specimens of the noble savage; but the people generally are of a low type, and are falling a prey to the violence of their own superstitions, and to diseases constitutional and parasitic.

After breakfast medical work began. Some of the patients had been at school. Others had arrived later. Besides the contagious and epidemic diseases introduced by whites, or brought back from the Colonies, viz., "specific," tinea, scabies, whooping-cough, consumption, and measles, there are native elephantiasis, yaws, bronchitis, pleurisy, dysentery, malaria, and a form of struma almost universal, manifesting its nature in offensive abscesses, glandular swellings, and ulcers of skin and bone. And to this loathsome work, with clean apron and basins of lotion and lint, Will, despite the danger of contagion, now fearlessly buckled himself. It occupied nearly the whole forenoon. Thereafter there were visits to be paid, translating to be done, building to be attended to, and all the many-sided duties of an island station.

Towards evening we took a walk along the beach to visit a few huts and see some more of the sick. At the entrance of three of these kennel-like abodes (a thatch roof built over a hollow in the ground) we stopped and called to the inmates—when, in each case, there crawled forth an old man, black with dust and soot, shrivelled, nude, and ashamed of his sores. The oldest case was, perhaps, the most pitiable. From head to foot he was suffering from a loathsome contagious skin disease, while from every toe pus was

oozing. This hardly seemed the worst feature. He lived within a stone's throw of the sea, and was yet so foul that the grey hair seemed rooted in earth rather than in a human scalp. Some one has coarsely remarked that medical and surgical work among these people is several degrees below that of a veterinary surgeon; but these savages are, after all, members of the human family, though its waifs, and have the same doubts and fears, sorrows and hopes, as ourselves.

Capital cases these for the medical missionary to score by—that is, to exemplify to the native mind in the most telling way the real nature of the Gospel of Christ. Let no one infer that nothing as yet has been done for them. The Presbyterian Church throughout the world has sent into this field men and women who for half a century have sorrowed and wept with the heathen in their degradation, seeking to raise them to better things, not without much success. Perhaps the most striking, though silent, witness to this is the fact that nearly every mission-station has its own graveyard, and there are churches and congregations here that put to shame many a colonial settlement. Still, much remains to be done. Every missionary is doing more or less medical work; but as Christianity has founded its free hospitals in every civilised community, so the necessary complement of the Christian teaching and help here being given was a similar institution.

On Sunday we had a service in the native-built school-house about 10 A.M. There was a fairly large audience, over eighty in all. It is not easy to speak to natives; you have to do it in concrete terms and very figuratively, or you won't be understood. There

is scarcely an abstract term in their language. They have little or no idea of what is meant by a "city," and none, perhaps, had ever seen a "lamb," both of these words being in the text.

In the afternoon I accompanied Will to a village at some distance along the shore. The ladies could not go with us owing to the roughness of the path, or no path, which crossed heaps of huge boulders, tons in weight, brought down by the storms and transient torrents from the cliffs overhead. These walls of coral rock and earth, no matter how high, no matter how steep, are green from base to crown, the bare rock itself affording abundance of nourishment, even for large trees, which ultimately wedge it into fragments. We reached the village, and held service on a slope on one side of the irregular circle in the centre of which stood the wooden drums and symbols of heathenism. There were about fifty present. The old chief sat at the feet of the missionary, and his son, a handsome, strapping, intelligent young fellow, recently returned from Queensland, sat on the rock beside me and looked on my book.

The Gospel has had a powerful influence upon the people, who are now beginning to understand the missionary and look up to him as their friend. Peace is established, and there is comparative safety in travelling. The natives from the more distant villages come to barter, and to buy medicine and books. Several of these are asking for teachers, and, alas! there are none to send. Although there were 180 such teachers already in the field,¹ still the one great need of the New Hebrides was and is—more native teachers. Hence the demand for an institute in which

¹ Now nearly 400.

to develop and strengthen, for this service, the physical, mental, and moral fibre of the most promising of the native young men and women.

The reaping was not yet; but it came later on. As the Communion season approached, the people in ones and twos sought the way of life. As many as 300, the bulk of them candidates, come to the week-night meetings. All day long Will was busy in the study or on the verandah teaching and directing them. The question asked over and over again was that of the Philippian jailer—

“What must we do to be saved?”

“Nothing! Jesus has done everything for you.”

“Then have we nothing to do?”

“No, nothing! It’s all done.”

“Then we are saved?”

“Yes; out and out.”

Needless to say it was the old story over again, yet ever new. Hearts were melted, and souls entered into joy.

“Now,” said Will, “go home, and sit down and consider what it cost Him to do this for you. Then let all men see that you truly love Him by the fruit you bear.”

It was in the midst of this harvest that the summons suddenly came, and Will, as the sequel relates, was translated to a wider sphere.

CHAPTER VII.

The Drink Fiend.

“WILL you come?”

“Come where?”

“Up the hills. The old chief, Batik, is sick, very, they say; and you may be able to help me.”

In a few minutes I was ready to accompany him on his morning walk to the distant village. We climbed the high ground at the back of the station, passing the church and schoolhouse, and the lime houses of the mission servants; and thence over the stile and through the fenced garden of the grim old chief, Lintak, and by the scattered huts of his village.

Before us was a scene of great beauty. In every direction, ridges, valleys, and mountain slopes were covered with vegetation in all shades of colour, from pale to dark green, and in endless variety of form. But the one impression that fixed itself in the memory was that of fertility, exuberance, prodigality of natural growth, telling of wondrous richness of soul.

The islands are truly beautiful, but their beauty has been just sufficiently overpraised to deprive one of the delight of surprise. There is variety and contrast—beaches black and white, flat islets and lofty mountains, still lagoons and foaming creeks, reeking

swamps and glowing rumbling craters. Nor is the vegetation everywhere quite alike. Ambrym and Aoba are vast gardens of the cocoa-palm; Tongoa and Epi are specially the home of wild creepers, which overtop the tallest trees, and bury all except the towering palm beneath the one green mantle. All the northern islands are covered by dense tropical forest, in which the banyan is king, while the shade is beautified by a luxuriance of ferns and many-hued crotons. The soil in the south is somewhat barren, and the land more open. Towards the north, Nature is more bountiful, and there is abundance of deep black mould.

Already a trade has sprung up in coffee of the finest quality, in copra and maize. Cotton, tobacco, and sugar-cane grow admirably. Bananas—some thirty species—arrowroot, pineapples, oranges, lemons, chillies, the custard-apple, sweet potatoes, and the bread-fruit are among the staple products of the native gardens. Some of our common vegetables and grasses, when introduced, flourish well. Cattle, goats, pigs, and possibly sheep, thrive, as do all our domestic pets. Some kinds of *bêche-de-mer* abound, and there are plenty of fish, though the natives are but poor fishermen. Kauri, a hard wood like teak, and a light durable wood that seems to resist the white ant, are among the timbers. These islands are of great value, destined to be a garden of tropical fruits and spices—a gem among the possessions of Australasia—if the Colonies be wise in time.

Truly the white men are taking possession of a fair heritage. Are they giving the original owners, their dark-skinned brethren, a just return?

“Come, now,” said Will, “what are you thinking about?”

“Who is Batik?” I asked. “Have you seen much of him?”

“He is a wiry little grey-headed fellow with a Roman nose. He had heard so much about the wonderful art of reading, and the strange book the young people were learning, that one morning he presented himself with the other scholars requesting to be taught. Of course he was conducted to the A B C class; and humbly he sat down to one side, listening to the children, and quietly repeating the sounds. So intent was he, you would almost think he could see through the board. After the lessons were over the scholars dispersed, but Batik sat on. He secured the teacher for himself, and began work in earnest. All day long you could hear his voice shouting the letters, as if the better to make them stick. Occasionally I went up to see how he was getting on. He would then start afresh, and go steadily on till he began to flounder. By sunset he could go correctly through the board from A to Z. Then, tired, hungry, but triumphant, he disappeared up the track towards home.”

“How long did he keep up the pace?”

“Not for long. There is no royal road to learning, and the old man soon found that out. But he comes to the services, prizes his book, and though occasionally you see him trying to read it upside-down, he gets along. The most satisfactory thing about him is, he carries away every word that is said, and drills it into his people.”

“Ho! what does this mean?”

A human thighbone was hanging by the neck in the fork of a species of dracæna, a plant sacred to the higher ranks of the chiefs.

“Oh, that is the way the chiefs teach obedience. A young fellow had returned from Queensland, and, proud of his experience, crowed and took delight in ridiculing the airs of his superiors. One day Batik's predecessor was passing along the track just here, and met him. The young fellow sniggered. Instantly the old chief swung round and tapped him on the skull with his club. Then roasted him and picked his bones. That bone is meant for a warning and a memorial.”

We found the village high up on the east side of one of the slopes. The dogs barked as we approached, and some boys ran to us and conducted us to the chief. He was seated on the ground, leaning back against the roof of his hut.

The old fellow looked up at Will piteously, and wept.

“Oh, save my people, save my people!” he cried.

We could see that he was very ill—in fact, almost at the last gasp. But he seemed to be in greater mental distress.

“What is the matter, Batik?”

The chief pointed to two black grog-bottles that were lying empty beside him.

“They are paying the boys with that, and ruining them. It has killed me.”

Then we learned that the French traders were buying the cocoanuts and paying the wages with drink. There is no duty; the liquor is cheap; and the profits are therefore great. They say that some of the English are doing the same. If so, it is in a small way, and under cover; for with them the law is stringent. The chief had been induced to try a

draught of the liquor, and a drinking-bout had followed. Owing to exposure in the drunken state, a chill was caught, and led on to pneumonia.

As Will was examining him, a young chief staggered up to us holding up a bottle two-thirds full. It was part of a whole case he had procured from the white men. Will remonstrated with him, calling it poison.

“Poison? Missionary!” he hiccoughed with a laugh. “Ha, ha! no good you speak all same. Drink, he finish along Noumea? Eh? White man, he finish drink a long time [cease to drink it]? Eh? Grog, he finish along man-o’-war? Eh? Me savey; suppose grog he good along white man, he good along black fellow. Me no make him; what name [wherefore] white man he make him? Poison? No fear! Me fellow no fool!”

And, satisfied with his own argument, he raised the bottle to his lips and reeled off to his hut.

Seeing the serious condition of the chief, Will advised some of the men to make a stretcher and bring him down to the station for treatment.

“No, no,” said the old chief; “I am not worthy; bury me outside the fence. And—save my people.”

These were his last words: he became comatose, and died in the afternoon.

As I followed Will down the hillside I heard him muttering some strange words very bitterly. In answer to my question, he exclaimed—

“The mean blood-suckers! I was quoting in regard to them the cry of Plutus in Hell.”

It was the untranslatable cry of the Money-god—“Pape Satan, Pape Satan, Aleppe”—which greeted the ears of Dante and his ghostly guide as they left

the circle of Drink and Gluttony, and reached, farther down, that of Avarice and its devotees.

“What meaning do you take out of it?”

“Well, the meaning that suits the present occasion is, that it is a welcome to fresh guests and a cry to Satan to stir the flames anew.”¹

No language is too lurid to describe the baseness and greed which can wrest from these weak children of Nature their labour and their lands, and which, in haste to fill miserable, moth-eaten money-bags, can give them in return that which spells quick damnation of body and soul. And I said so.

“Don’t be too hasty,” said Will, who had himself begun to cool. “We must not forget that men say the cry of Plutus is ‘more like their own tongue to the English than it is to any other nation.’ That should humble us. Moreover, I have seen down here as yet no money-bags for the moths to eat. These men, as a rule, spend their money before they make it. They are less kind to themselves than they are to the natives, and destroy themselves in the act of ruining others. I sometimes wonder what there is in the life to keep them here.”

“Do they own to giving the natives grog?”

“They make no secret of it. ‘Hell-fire Bill’ tells me they entice the boys to their shanties and nourish a taste in them for the stuff. Then they give it them as pay; and finally the boys refuse to work unless they can get it.”

“But is it not a risky experiment to make their labour drunk?”

“Rather. But they are careful not to give it to

¹ See Plumptre’s translation, footnotes.

their imported labour, unless in moderate quantities. They are cautious enough to see that the imported men don't absorb more than their pay, and that they don't become incapable. As for the local boys, they may drink as much as they like, provided they take it home."

"Do you use any alcohol in your practice down here?"

"I do—as a drug; and it is one of the best drugs we possess. When you get a man dying of dysentery, or of continued fever, with a failing heart, you must give sufficient to keep his heart going—of course, in a disguised form and only in conjunction with easily absorbed liquid nourishment. Otherwise, you must be prepared to see your patient collapse before your eyes."

"The traders excuse themselves by saying that it staves off the fever."

"The fools! to take it unnecessarily, and as a beverage, especially the abominable stuff they get down here, only weakens the system, and in time makes them certain victims. Did you hear about young Hills?"

"The carpenter, you mean?"

"No; not him. Another young fellow who came down here with great hopes and some promise. He came down to plant coffee and build a station, and was getting along fairly well too; but one day, when pulling down a house to shift it, he got a touch of the sun. As usual, fever followed; and his only nurse was poor old Bill. At last he got so bad that Bill sent for me. Poor fellow! you know how difficult it is to treat in that condition. He would only take

stimulant, and it made the delirium worse. To attempt to put out fire, inside or out, by pouring on alcohol, is a fatuous move. When I got there, he was raving. I found him in his bedroom, trying to dress himself. And really one could hardly help laughing. He was trying to get a pair of trousers on the wrong end of him. Thought they were his waistcoat, and that his arms had shrivelled, because they weren't long enough to go through the legs. We got him into bed, and then he imagined he was getting chloroform, and fought, and spat in all directions. It was not necessarily the drink he had taken; the fever was at his brain. At length we got him quietened, and left him apparently sleeping.

"I was lying down under a tree, trying to read. It was very hot, not a breath of wind, and the sea shone like a mirror.

"All at once there was a loud shout, a shriek from the house girls, and a chorus of voices. There was Hills flying along in slippers towards the sea, followed by Bill and some of the boys. I joined in the chase. As he neared the stile above the beach his slippers flew high behind him; with naked feet he leapt over the obstruction, and rushed down the bank towards the sea. He outdistanced us all.

"The boat was lying in deep water a few yards from the shore, tethered by the stern to the bank with a stout rope. Hauling her in, he jumped aboard, and pushed off again. Stepping rapidly from thwart to thwart, he gained the bow and picked up the anchor. We reached the top of the bank in time to see him holding it aloft in his right hand. With his left he was twirling the chain round his neck. Three times he did this, and then—plunged.

“It was all done in a twinkle. There was a great splash. The chain rattled over the gunnel; and all was still. A few bubbles rose and burst; and the surface of the water shimmered on, as before, like oil in the blazing sun.”

CHAPTER VIII.

The Joy of Living.

“All one’s life is a music, if one touches the notes rightly and in time. But there must be no hurry.”—RUSKIN.

IT was the heart of the cool season, the thermometer registered 75° in the shade, and we all felt as brisk as it was possible to be in such a climate.

We had been through the Group almost twice, and had made the acquaintance of nearly every white person, settler or missionary. Our first impressions were not wholly favourable. A warm welcome met us at every door of house or hut, but most of the white faces that greeted us seemed those of men and women who had just returned from the grave—so white and emaciated were they. It was the end of the hot season, an unusually hot one, and “influenza” along with malarial fever had been prevalent. Still, there were a few who were looking well, and some who had not known as yet what fever means. These were the exceptions. The universal experience so far has been that the roses of health which bloom in other lands are doomed to wither in these islands. The deep black soil with rank vegetation forms a steaming hot-bed of “fever and ague.” But the fever is mild, seldom causing more than weakness and emaciation,

from which, with the proper remedies, recovery is rapid. Settlement and cultivation, letting in the air and sunshine, may ultimately dispel the miasma, but much muscle must waste, and the bones of many whiten in the soil before that condition will be attained.

But these thoughts belong not to the morning of life. Happily our experiences were yet in the distance; and in the plan of the universe there are everywhere compensations. We were fresh from civilisation, with young blood coursing evenly through our veins; and, while resting and planning for the next step in advance, gave ourselves up to quiet enjoyment and to communion with nature.

Will's mission-station is built on a spur, which, beyond the reed enclosure and a cluster of palms, drops perpendicularly to the beach. A zigzag path leads up the face of the steep; but once up you are fully rewarded. A fresh breeze, of absolute purity, is always blowing off the sea—the south-east trade-wind—and the air is deliciously cool.

The scenery, too, is equal to any in the Pacific. Right at our feet is an immense fringing reef, on which the billows unceasingly break in milk-white floods, filling the bay with what seemed to be tossing snow, beneath the moon.

The deafening roar re-echoed from the mountain slopes, and, blending with the rustle of the palms, suggests, on a pitchy night, the presence of Alpine heights and rushing torrents. To the right and left are wooded bays and headlands, also fringed with reefs; and right in front stands Lopevi, an almost perfect cone, 5000 feet high, down whose slope the black lava—sometimes a fiery red—pours sheer into the ocean. From the centre of the crater a thin column

of smoke or steam curls upwards, warning the few inhabitants of slumber that may any day give place to activity, as happened ten years ago, when the refugees on this very shore were clubbed and eaten by their professing friends.

To the right of Lopevi is the open sea, and to its left is Paama, with Ambrym in the distance. The face of nature changes with every passing hour. The colours of the sea, the gorgeous cloud-scenery at sunrise and sunset, the weird effect of black shadow and silver glow chasing each other over the surface of the deep on a cloudy moonlight night—all were ours just then. We were dwelling amid scenes that dwarf the works of the greatest masters, surpassing them in extent and magnificence as nature can surpass art.

Yet in communing with nature grandeur is not an essential. Health there must be, and inward peace, or love—for all things small and great. A full-toned laugh—the efflorescence of health—must be as grateful to the Divine ear as a crimson rose to the Divine eye. The most exquisite enjoyment I have known was a half-hour spent in one of the gardens of our island colony. It was a morning in early summer. Leaning over the bridge, I watched the salmon basking in the sun and feeding among the green reeds at the bottom of the clear-flowing stream. The wattles were in bloom, a blaze of glory. The shadows beneath the weeping willows played hide-and-seek among the gnarled and knotted roots; the bees hummed lazily among the opening flowers; and the air was filled with perfume and with the twitter of birds on the wing.

To breathe such air seemed like feasting on the ambrosia of the gods. It was such a draught of the

elixir of life as sends one on with winged feet to fulfil the behests of duty.

“ The lark’s on the wing,
The snail’s on the thorn ;
God’s in His heaven—
All’s right with the world ! ”—

or nearly so—except that a necessary something is left for man to do and bear.

Saturday morning came, and we were all at breakfast, enjoying our porridge and island coffee, with plenty of goat’s milk. The butter was white, being made from the latter. It was churned in a bottle by a little fellow who came every day to shake it for some thirty minutes, and thereby earn a biscuit. The scones were Madge’s own baking.

“ Now,” said Will, “ the tide is to be very low this morning, and as it is an off day, we are going to take you out *on* the reef to see its treasures.”

“ Any special precautions needed ? ”

“ Yes ; protect your feet with a pair of old boots, on account of the sharp coral and the sea-urchins. Even the natives have to do that, and make sandals out of the cocoanut husks.”

So, as a party, we went down to the shore to picnic and explore. The tide was low, and we could go a long way out. We found sea-urchins in plenty, of all sizes, the largest as big as a fair-sized orange. The little black rascals had dug for themselves cup-shaped hollows in the reef, into which they just fitted. In these they hid, and kept their uppermost spines ready for all assailants.

Armed with a hammer and steel chisel, we waded about, peeping into the pools and knocking off choice

lumps of coral. The fish in the pools were small, but exquisitely beautiful—green and gold, peacock-blue, pink and white, silver and black, red and green—all colours in almost endless diversity.

“Hist! Will, what is this?”

Will came to look. It was an octopus, less than a yard in diameter. He was brown above, blue and white beneath, and, spread out in the water, resembled a giant passion-flower. Gliding stealthily along the edge of the reef, just below the surface, he slowly projected forward a long arm, and suddenly dived it into the next hole, frightening the little fish and grasping the prey. Arm followed arm, much after the fashion of a swimmer, each, in like manner, making its sudden plunge and securing some spoil.

As for the coral, it is a very different thing from what one sees under glass cases. Our attention was first caught by what looked like a rhododendron blossoming in a shallow pool—it was a lovely growth of coral, a pale pink or purple. And then we began to find almost as many colours of coral as of fish—cream-white, emerald, lilac or lavender, dark browns and purples, pale yellows and sky blues. Within a small area we collected eighteen different varieties, classifying them according to form. After gathering till we were about tired, we had a delightful time on the beach. The native servants and those attached to the mission had come down to the reef for a holiday too, and had gathered several small baskets of shell-fish. The “billy” was on the boil, and soon we were enjoying a substantial lunch.

“What have you got for dessert, Madge?”

“Mangoes and granadillos. Will they do?”

“Rather.”

The granadillo is an oblong fruit about the size of a small rock-melon, which it somewhat resembles on being laid open. There is this difference: the central juicy interior rivals the most delicious passion-fruit, and is the part to be eaten. The thick melon-like rind, as Madge explained, is, when peeled and cooked, quite equal to the best pastry apples, and supplies their place on the table.

"Well," said Will, "I have been in all the Australian colonies, and my eyes have glistened and teeth watered at the sight of their oranges, grapes, and pine-apples. But while citrus fruits may be the best for the Cornstalk race, for downright wholesome, savoury food, for red beef and still redder tomatoes, for brainy men and rosy-cheeked women, give me New Zealand."

A clapping of hands, and rattling of spoons and dishes, greeted this little speech.

"Perhaps you are right," said a voice; "but the statement would come better from an outsider. Moreover, you have forgotten one fruit that grows superbly there."

"What is that?"

"A guid conceit o' oursel's!"

"Ah, well," said Will, when the laughter had subsided, "the Cornstalks will forgive me, for they are patriots too."

After some fun in pelting one another with the green berries which autumn was showering down on our heads, we explored along the shore. A successful hunt after crabs and shells added zest to the walk. Resting on the clean sand and white coral washed up by the hurricane tides, one felt that after all there were pleasures to compensate for living on a cannibal island.

It took me a day and a half, while waiting for the steamer, to boil and cleanse the coral, tubful after tubful being put on the fire. The colours fade rapidly once the polyps are out of the water, and the smell as they die is repulsive. So, to whiten our specimens, we boil them for a few hours in a solution of washing soda, then pour clean water on them from a height, and lastly expose them to the sun and rain. In this way we secured several trophies, intending to send them back to the many friends whose hearts were following us from afar.

In the evening Will asked me to give him a hand with a big chest which had got a wetting on the shore in being landed. It was a black chest bound with iron clasps and lined with zinc.

“What have you here, Madge?”

“Napery, I think.”

So it proved to be, with bed-linen, towelling, and suchlike articles. Alas! they were already stained through and through with greenish-grey mould. Will grew sympathetic, but Madge only smiled. Biting her lips, she said—

“Salts of sorrel and sunshine will soon remedy that.”

“Ah! what have we here?”

It was something black, but when taken out and turned over it assumed all the colours of the rainbow. For a minute we gazed at it in silence.

“O Will, I’m so sorry! It’s your hood.”

So it was. And it had a story all to itself. The silks and white fur were of the best, gathered by a mother’s love. It had done duty at more than one graduation, different colours being required; and in itself was a record of his academic triumphs. Under a brave show it had covered a palpitating heart. And

at the last event Love's fingers had sewed the purple over the pink. It was now a drabbed and salt-stained rag; being at the bottom, it had fared the worst.

"I am so sorry, Will!"

It was now Will's turn to smile.

"Dinna mind it, lass!" he said, breaking into Scots, as he often did when in merry mood. "It's no' millinery, but the man, that tells down here,—

'The rank is but the guinea stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that.'

It must be God's will it should be destroyed; so here it goes, up the lum." And to put an end to all regrets quickly and to destroy the memory, he danced across the floor towards the kitchen-stove, hiding his loss under an appearance of gaiety.

"Wait a minute, Will," and she ran after him. "That fur will trim a coat for little Douglas."

For the next quarter of an hour I heard him at the stove, poker in hand—

"For a' that and a' that,
Their tinsel show, and a' that;"

accompanying every "a' that" with a vigorous thrust into the grate—

"For a' that and a' that,
His ribbon, star, and a' that;
The man of independent mind
He looks and laughs at a' that."

I was busied helping Madge to sort the linen. She had all the pride of a Scottish lass in the contents of the chest—the quality and snowy whiteness of her

damask treasures. Still he could be heard thrusting away—

“For a’ that and a’ that,
 Their dignities and a’ that ;
 The pith o’ sense, and pride o’ worth,
 Are higher rank than a’ that.”

Then as the last of the colours disappeared in smoke up the stove-pipe he broke into full song—

“Then let us pray that come it may—
 As come it will for a’ that—
 That sense and worth, o’er all the earth,
 May bear the gree, and a’ that.
 For a’ that and a’ that,
 It’s coming yet, for a’ that,
 That man to man, the world o’er,
 Shall brothers be for a’ that !”

So in these islands we began to learn the lesson that everything beautiful in this world is made only to be cruelly broken up and destroyed. Every form of beauty is but a passing show. Life itself seems but a bundle of sensations. And as for its transient joys, to quote the worn lines—

“Pleasures are like poppies spread,
 You seize the flower, its bloom is shed.”

Nevertheless for long their memories linger with us—bright spots by the roadside of life, to which the thoughts fondly return, and return again.

A similar fate was in store for my specimens of coral. When the steamer reappeared outside the reef, the captain, surly son of Neptune, because, forsooth, his beard had once been singed here, refused to send in more than one boat. What with bedding, baggage, goats, natives, and ourselves—for Will, his wife, and

four of his teachers came to help—we were all but swamped. To make matters worse, the captain steamed out into the swell, and we had to follow him. There we were in imminent danger, and the steamer herself rolled so hard that we stepped off the thwarts on to her deck. For which our skipper had another bad half-hour, this time from the ladies. He took it very humbly, his best defence.

The last I saw of my trays, they were lying at the water's edge waiting for the rising tide.

However, there are things that cannot be destroyed, the gold-dust of life—character and work. And the latter was at last coming into view.

BOOK III.

THE CONFLICT

CHAPTER I.

Skirmishing.

“WE, the undersigned, do hereby grant, bargain, sell, and convey the said land, together with all the fruit-trees and other trees thereon, also all the stone and other things thereon——”

The speaker paused and looked around. The scene was weird. All that afternoon we had been surveying, with the aid of a compass and our own legs, the piece of land Mal was willing to sell. Night fell before the work was done, and now on the steamer's deck the transaction was being completed. A yellow flare lit up the deck and showed a circle of silent spectators, sailors, traders, and missionaries. Along the rail the chiefs had perched themselves, like big crows in the darkness. The solicitor, for such he was, had written the deed on the hatch for a table, while his friend, an LL.D. from Sydney, held the lantern. They were delegates to the Synod that year, and we were happy in having their help.

As soon as David had explained the terms of the deed in Malekulan, which the chiefs understood, they, one by one, stepped down and took the pen. Their hands being guided to the right place on the paper, each made a cross opposite his own name. Then

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five shining sovereigns were dropped one at a time into Mal's palm. True, Mal objected to the gold, but he wanted the missionary. Pigs were the coin of his little kingdom—in fact, the only large coin he knew; but the missionaries objected on principle, for pigs happened to be at the root of the heathenism and idolatry of these islanders. And, for the present, I was guided by my colleagues. The transaction finished, the natives disappeared over the side into the darkness; and, a few minutes later, we were satisfying our eager appetites at the dinner-table, and blithely discussing the events of the day.

A month passed, and again the steamer's whistle woke up the echoes from valley and hillside. In response, a crowd assembled on the beach, naked, but cheerful and ready to help. With many shoutings they carried or rolled the boxes and barrels, iron, timber, and tanks, over the shingle and sand. By two o'clock the boats had landed their last load, and the smart-looking craft, flying both mission and mercantile flags, the cross and the thistle, steamed away, allowing us to concentrate all our attention on the work before us. Of afternoon visitors we had not a few. By sunset the laughter and shouting had ceased; the natives, one by one, had delivered up the armlet of pink twine—the badge of service for the day—and, having received their pay in tobacco twist, returned to their villages, near and distant. Will and his teachers had been very active, and had cleared a space just within the edge of the scrub, which came right down to the shore. The tents were pitched, an iron shelter hastily erected, goods unpacked, and the stove set up. After a hearty supper, we worshipped by lamplight on the heap of straw. When

the stars came out, the camp was snug, and the first day's work at an end.

The moisture thrown out at night by our leafy bower was excessive, soaking even the bedding. So we shifted our tent again, and pitched it on top of some planks, just above high-water mark. Here we found companions, some large, juicy, amber-coloured ants, that had never seen a portmanteau before, and thought ours a capital place to colonise in. This was but one of the trifling incidents of the daily life.

Our relations with Mal and his people were a more serious matter. As we objected to the presence of the ants, so now did he to us. We shook the ants out smartly. Mal apparently would have done the same with us, but the task was more difficult.

He did his best. The fact was, he had failed as a diplomatist, and had brought a hornet's nest about his ears. The people were not satisfied. The land and the trees were theirs, and they were getting nothing. Mal had "pocketed" four of the coins and had given the remaining one to his brother, Melun-Netum, an ugly, little, diabolical old fellow whom he found a willing tool. Though here also the rule is "once a chief, always a chief," the people are democratic in spirit, and a chief cannot afford to be unpopular.

Possibly he expected to squeeze us for a second payment; and the process soon began.

The land they had sold us was shaped like a wedge, its base being on the sea and its edge terminating in the bush, against a big rock called "The Devil's Stone." This rock was the termination of a spur or ridge which came down from the central

dominating mountain at that end of the island, "Minne Peak." The ridge formed a wall between the villages up the valley and those along the shore to the right. In fact, Mal and his people in Fanting, as their village was named, wished to continue the wall of protection down to the sea, and had sold us this land to make us the stop-gap. Our ground, indeed, was the original site of the village; but so many of their people had been shot there, owing to the position being exposed to enemies in the bush, that they had moved farther along. The rock, too, was probably so called from an enemy being seen above it in some weird dress, or painted in black and white. The people had learned from Queensland that there is a devil, and believed that he was sometimes seen.

The site contained about four and a half acres. Half of it was sand and shingle just above water level, densely covered with scrub of the bastard cotton-tree. Back of this the bank of black soil, volcanic ash, rose some 20 feet, and was crowned with stone circles, altars, bread-fruit trees, and cocoa-palms. A skull and some bleached bones, which had come to the surface on what was once the site of a hut, was at first our best landmark, so dense was the bush. The bread-fruit trees were laden with a rich store of fruit, and we viewed the crops with satisfaction. But other eyes were also viewing both it and us with gleams of anger.

"Tell your boys not to pick the bread-fruit."

"Very well, Mal," we said; "but remember that the trees are ours. As the fruit is not yet ripe, I am quite agreeable; but you must tell your people to sell us food, or we shall have to pick it straightway."

He told the people, and we were well supplied. Cooanuts and bread-fruit were bought at the rate of ten for a stick of tobacco. Bananas cost from one to three sticks per bunch, according to size. A number of the men, and a few women, had been to Queensland, and could speak broken English, so we had no difficulty in understanding one another.

It was necessary from the outset for them to learn that agreements are made to be kept. If we began to back down, they would soon have us backed into the sea.

Mal's next request was more in the form of a command. He went among the teachers and forbade them to cut the scrub. They came to me and laid down their axes and long knives.

"What's the matter?"

"Mal's cross; he says no good we cut down the trees."

"Oh, go along; Mal's not master here now. You do as we tell you. He won't harm you."

This happened more than once. True, the scrub formed a slight break-wind to the trees; but we wanted fresh air and a site to build on.

Our second Saturday afternoon had come. A crowd of natives with their chiefs began to assemble. Will and I were cutting out rafters. At length Mal arrived, followed by his dogs. One reason for keeping them was to give the alarm at night. Werwer-Melun, the chief of Melbongan, up the valley, had once walked into Fanting, killed his man, and walked out again.

"What does this mean, Will?"

"Wait a bit, and we'll see."

We went on sawing, but kept an eye on them. Mal

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laid his five sovereigns down on the timber. The other chiefs did likewise with the presents they had received—hatchets, calico, tobacco, everything except a few sticks that had been smoked. Not a word was spoken. A few drops of heavy rain began to fall. We took refuge in the iron shelter and called them in. We sat down; they all sat down. There was absolute silence. We watched them over the top of a newspaper; they watched us over the top of their neighbours' heads. The rain stopped. We rose; they rose. Still not a word was said. We went outside; they came outside. Surely no deputation was ever more impressive. Then, apparently satisfied, they went off in a body up the track.

What did it mean? We followed after, determined to find out.

Near "The Devil's Stone" they began to disperse.

Then we called to "Skinny Charlie," so named because his epidermis hung in scales—a tropical kind of ringworm.

"Look you here, Charlie; you tell Mal that if he wants us to go away, he will have to pay the steamer to take us—that's all."

"He no want you to go away, master. He says, no good you cut down the trees; and very good you pay him along [with] pigs; money no good belong [to] him."

"Mal must keep his bargain, Charlie. He knows we can't give him pigs, and we must have a place to build on. Tell him to sell us some more ground for the house, then; and we won't need to cut down the fruit-trees."

This was done. They sold us a piece of ground to the left of the track. We wanted the sea frontage.

No; that had been sold a long time ago to some old white man. They did not even know who he was. Again and again we found them honest in this respect, here and at other villages on the coast.

But they declined to take back the money and gifts. And still Mal was dissatisfied. We were not sure that mischief was not brewing.

One sunny morning I was on the way from the camp up to the house, whistling a tune, with an armful of tools. There was no one about, and, owing to the density of the bush, both camp and builders were out of sight. As I passed between the stone circles, something whizzed past my shoulder and fell on the ground. With a start I looked up. There was Mal overhead, smiling, and plucking bread-fruit. It may have been a pure accident. I took it as a warning. A green bread-fruit is hard enough, but a cocoanut would be worse, and a second aim perhaps surer. It would be well to get the fence up and the bush cleared away at once. To do it in peace we must catch our weasel asleep, and no time like the early morning.

So one morning at daybreak we were all at work. We had cleared the boundary, got the holes dug, and many of the posts in, when out came Mal. He was too late. He talked loud, but we held the winning card; and a man cannot continue angry long in the presence of good-humour. As a rule, too, we were very courteous to each other. So, to mollify him, we agreed to leave a stile just where he was standing, across the "burangs," or ceremonial stones.

That same day the steamer returned (a month had sped swiftly), and Will and his party left us. But our own staff was growing; we had the Chinese carpenter,

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also four or five lads, and the teacher, Kalasong, from Ranon.

And now a fresh request was made. Mal wanted the use of the boat. Gladly would we have lent it to him, but dare not. Boat accidents with natives are not rare, and boats are easily damaged. If anything happened to them, they would almost certainly blame us as having purposely bewitched the craft. And to warn them beforehand would only confirm them in that opinion. On the other hand, Mal wanted the boat to collect pigs, pose as an important person and attend feasts; and for the boat's safety, my own lads would have to go with him, and possibly myself. But we had no mind to become a part of Mal's retinue and follow him in procession about the island, to the toot, toot, of his conch-shells, which were blown before him to proclaim the approach of a great chief. We had, perforce, to refuse. He "cut up rough" over it, and pursued a policy of obstruction.

In the meantime we were getting on well with the people. He was but one chief, and his but one village. The others came and received back again their presents and their pay. We wanted thatch for the big native house, a building near "The Devil's Stone." Mal opposed, but the other villages plighted, and brought it to us by water. When he saw them getting the spoil—calico and knives and tobacco—cupidity triumphed, and Fanting joined in. Competition was healthy. Thereafter we had no trouble in getting thatch and labour.

As he had failed to coerce us by fear, he would try a new move—the "boycott"—and thereby starve us into submission. In some way he had discovered that our supply of stores was limited, possibly through a spy.

One such we discovered in the camp. An innocent-looking man, black as a pot, whose bald pate and oily face was in a continuous shine or smile. He went about playing a set of Pan's pipes, the only set I saw in the islands. The most common musical instrument on Ambrym was a miniature bow, about eight inches long, which was played like a Jew's harp, one end being placed in the mouth. Kop-kop, for that was his name, was for ever sitting near the stove, and must have heard many a remark, till one day we heard him explain something in English. He found a seat at a distance thereafter. We got to like him later on, and still think kindly of him. Sorrow brought us together. He was proud of his two children. His son, a spirited youth, died in Queensland; his daughter, wife to a chief, was taken in adultery. His grief was too much for him. The trouble broke his heart; but he died repeating the Lord's Prayer, and we drew to him yet more.

You see I was his missionary.

To return to Mal. His boycott, though well organised, failed, as did all his other evil schemes. Our last yam disappeared, and we sent the boys out to forage. No one came near us; not a cocoanut nor a bread-fruit could we get. Then the biscuit-barrel, the flour-bin, the last rice-bag became empty in turn, and finally we had used up the last handful of barley. Mal must have been feeling very happy that day. Just then the steamer's whistle was heard; and when nearly half a ton of sweet yams were stacked on the beach, not to speak of biscuits, rice, and flour, his face grew a trifle longer. He and his followers sat down at a distance and watched proceedings. We required little imagination to guess the subject of their talk.

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By this time we had got our land completely fenced in. The women came in a body from different villages and worked for a day at a time, cleaning the ground. Our yam-tops had been saved. These were planted, and soon, on the bank above the sea, we had a series of extended bowers, formed by the springing vines. The successive lines looked very pretty. But they were viewed with jealous eyes. On a Saturday afternoon—Saturdays were eventful days with us somehow—Mal, with his favourite young wife, Botingi, walked past the bowers down the path to the sea. It was an unusual and a pleasant thing to see the chief and his wife walking proudly side by side. They seemed in confidential mood. She was a handsome girl, full of spirit, and her frizzly curls were crisp and black. To-day she was dressed in style, with armlets and anklets of pandanus, dyed in yellow, and tags of the same in thick short fringe, worn low round the hips, which served for skirt. Some feast or ceremony had been going forward, and all unconsciously I took note of the dress.

That night, as usual, we had retired early. The lights were not long out when the dog, a black retriever, suddenly growled and barked. In a moment I was at the window, watching from behind the blind. A pig squealed. I saw a fire-stick waving. (These were used by the natives as lanterns.) Then a figure stooped and lifted back into place the big native drum, a fallen one which helped to close the gate. The moonlight shone for an instant on a woman's dress. It was Botingi's. She had put her pig in to destroy our yams.

I went across to the men's house and found them speechifying by lamplight. There had been some new

arrivals, and they were being duly welcomed. We organised a hunt with torches, and quickly bailed up the miserable creature in a corner. He was nearly half snout, and flat as a board, as if starved for the occasion. His snout served him in good stead, for he charged with it so vigorously at a hole in the fence that he shot clean through.

Next morning, at six o'clock, we walked into the village and beat the biggest drum. The men hopped out of their huts in amazement.

“Where’s Mal?”

The bird had flown. He had found an excuse to visit another village that early.

“Tell him we shall be back in the afternoon, and have something to say to him.”

There was a third offence, besides the boycott and the attempt on the yams. A man in Fanting had, under cover of night, carried off a chest from the beach. It had been left in care of Kalasong by the absentee owner, and we were responsible. This man claimed to be the owner’s companion. We insisted on the chest being returned. But, so far, in vain.

If we allowed Mal to pile up offences this way, he must necessarily develop into an enemy, and a rupture, with more or less serious consequences, would follow. We had to master them, and yet keep their goodwill. Remember, we were among cannibals, and absolutely without arms. People were being eaten on the opposite coast.

At the afternoon service in the village we hit out from the shoulder. Mal was there, but kept moving to and fro at a distance, with a scowl on his face as black as thunder. At the close we spoke so that he should hear it—

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"Yesterday," pointing to the sea, "you saw a man-o'-war go by. Let me tell you, that ship is your friend. If we do you wrong, you go to the captain and he will punish or take us away. If you do wrong, the captain when he comes here will ask us, 'Are these people good to you?' We cannot tell him a lie; and he will be angry with you. So let us do what is right, and be friends."

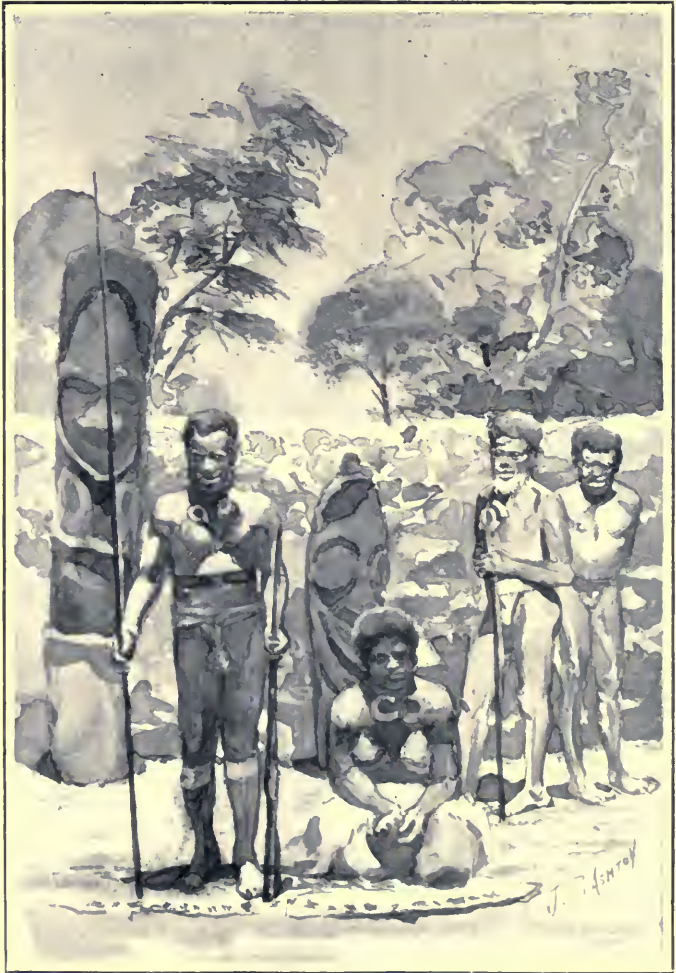
For, under the present system of Dual Control in the New Hebrides, it is customary every cool season for one or more warships, English and French, to visit the Group, and, incidentally, all the mission and trading stations,—in the interests of the respective flags, to prevent abuses, and to see that all goes well.

As we left the village the rain fell heavily, and with Kalasong we sat under a pig shelter. Kalasong was agitated.

"Doctor, no good for a missionary to speak that way. The chief is very angry, and he is a big fighting man."

Next morning, at breakfast-time, we saw Mal coming jauntily across the ground swinging a bill-hook. I went out and met him, and drew him to the gate, where we sat down on the old drum. I was determined he should get the sermon, and, without preaching, gave him the gist of it. We parted pleasantly enough.

That night the box came back on the offender's shoulder; and next morning Mal himself appeared with a smile on his face, an unspoken apology, and a present under his arm—a pig, and round its neck a wreath of the tabu-palm.



MAL AT HOME.

CHAPTER II.

The Polity of the Heathen.

THE frond of the tabu-palm (cycas) was one of the insignia of Mal-ship. It never occurs to us to apply the terms government, democracy, law, to savages. We imagine them as little better than a low grade of unthinking humans, living an animal life, spending their time in feasting, fighting, and idleness; whose food grows without tillage, and drops, when ripe, into their mouths, supplying all their wants. It is we who, in this matter, are the unthinking, ignorant ones. For every village has its constitution,—of course, unwritten,—and its institutions, Every tree and every nut an owner. Every man a policy—either to advance and take up the burden of life, or to stagnate and thereby keep humble, and avoid the perils. In short, every village on Ambrym is a democracy, and that of a peculiar type.

I have already referred to the large stone circles, or “war-wars,” on the bank above the camp. These are about fifteen feet in diameter. The wall, or dyke, is about four, sometimes five, feet high, and is built of loose pieces of coral. Inside, there is room for a hut of the ordinary size. Only the Mals, the chiefs of highest rank, are allowed to have these walls built

round their huts. During their lifetime the circle is not complete; the ends of the dyke overlap, so as to allow of an entrance and yet secure privacy. Inside the wall the chief has his flower-garden, if it can be so called, of brightly coloured and strong-smelling crotons, or the still more brilliant coleus and amaranthus, a blaze of crimson, green, and gold.

At death the body of the chief, after the wailing is over, is placed on a frame inside the hut, and a slow fire kindled beneath. The principal wife; white-washed from head to foot, attends on the corpse. As soon as the period of mourning is past, the entrance is closed, and the hut and its owner's body left to decay.

In some villages a different custom is followed. When Werwer-Melun, the chief of Melbongan, died, his body was exposed to the sky on a high platform supported by a framework of bamboo poles. The ground below was carpeted with coloured croton leaves.

Beside the "war-wars" was a "maki," a circular structure like an altar, built of slabs of coral. It was about five feet across and two feet high, and had apparently been built at some great ceremony to kill pigs on. It is called a "war." Around it grew four or five slim trees resembling poplars, the "li-ra" (blood-tree), whose buds, bursting into scarlet bloom, indicated the beginning of the native New Year. It was the signal for making new gardens and planting the yams ("dem"); and thus a year is itself called a "dem," a yam-season.

Between the "li-ra" trees and set in the ground round the altar-like structure were a number of large, black, weird-looking heads with human features, which had been carved out of the inverted stems of fern-

trees. Each of these was also called a "maki"¹ (or *nenna* = image, likeness). Some small "makis" of coral, called "burangs," each of which had been built for a tusked pig to be slaughtered on, extended in a line from the side of one of the "war-wars." The stile, as we have seen, was built across the "burangs."

On looking over the stile we saw a sight more weird and interesting still. Past two or three more "war-wars," and on the opposite side of the open space, or dancing ground, a space sacred to the men, stood a lofty bamboo screen, the full height of the bamboos. Across its front, about ten feet from the ground, was a platform, and beneath the platform stood three or four gigantic "makis," images carved of fern trunks. In some islands the number is much greater; there may be as many as twenty or thirty standing in a row. They are usually eight or nine feet high. The magnified features are smoothed over with some kind of clay or composition, so as to take on colours.

The pigments prepared by the natives themselves—black, white, brown, dark-green, and magenta—were much more tasteful than the coarser colours they obtained from the traders. One of these images at Fanting was sunk and half-hidden in an open pit, apparently to conceal the lower part of the structure. It was the only one of the kind there, and its position indicated at least some degree of shame on the part of its owner. The worst thing of this kind I ever saw was at the door of a chief's hut in a distant village; but he too was not without some virtue, if

¹ "Maki" is the general term for all these rude structures, whether built of earth, or wood, or stone. A "tusked" pig is one in which the upper tusks have been removed at an early stage of their growth. The lower ones thereupon develop unchecked, may complete the circle, and in doing so may enter and pierce through the jaw again.

shame may be counted among the virtues, for one rebuke proved sufficient: it had disappeared on our second visit

Nevertheless, first impressions are often wrong. The fact that sex is so often emphasised in these carvings is not necessarily a proof of depravity. In assuming that it is, we may be doing the people an injustice. The images, as a rule, simply represent men in their everyday attire. To go about thus is the custom, and—as we shall see—their scant attire need not be taken as an indication of a want of modesty.

Near by the “makis” stood a group of native drums—trees hollowed out, with an open slit up the front. Above they graduated to a point; some, having an uncanny-looking face carved above the slit, seemed to be wearing a huge old-fashioned nightcap. Some smaller drums of high pitch lay on the ground and were beaten with sticks; the drum-sticks for the larger ones were about a foot long, and were shaped out of the thick end of the midrib of a cocoanut frond.

Various crotons, lilies, and a row of tabu-palms grew within the area, and added to its sacredness. No woman dare pass that way.

“These, doubtless,” said one of our visitors from civilisation, “are their altars and idols?”

“Not at all; at least, not in the sense you mean.”

“What are they, then?”

“Take first that which you call an altar. There is no trace of worship or sacrifice connected with it. It is simply a monumental receipt, witnessing that Mal has paid for his wives. After a chief has had possession of a wife for a sufficient time, the father and relations demand that he complete the payment. A day is fixed; they bring presents of food for the feast and



A DRUM.
(FANTING.)

build the 'maki'; he crowns it with pigs, which is their coin. The 'maki' then becomes his property, and is preserved as a witness that his obligations have been fulfilled; a witness also to his rank and influence."

"But those big painted images are surely idols?"

"No. Everything you see here is a sign or monument of social rank. Just as a student displays his diploma and hood as proofs of having taken a degree; or as a fully fledged lawyer dons a wig and gown; or a knight shows his crest,—so when a chief attains a certain rank and receives a new name to indicate his rise in the social scale, the chiefs greater than he, who came to perform the ceremony,—from distant villages or from the neighbouring islands,—erect the 'maki' for him, and receive the pay."

Thereupon we had to explain once more that among these people there were ten ranks¹ or castes, beginning with the common folk, and terminating with the Mal, the highest.

There are also various degrees of each rank. All those of the same rank cook and eat at the same fire, and, in the earlier stages before marriage, may have one house in common, a kind of bachelors' hall. The one ambition of life was to climb the social ladder,

¹ The ranks are :—

1. The common folk.
2. Berang, small chief—got by killing 5 pigs, of which one must be tusked.
3. Vir, on payment of 7 more pigs.
4. Sakran, " 15 " "
5. Ngurur, " 15 " "
6. Gulgul, " 18 " "
7. Naim, " 20 " "
8. Melun, " 30 to 40 "
9. Lugubaru, " 100 "
10. Mal, " 200 to 300 "

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and ascend from rank to rank, and attain chieftainship and power.

In fact, the system may be compared to a terraced mountain, one terrace rising above another to the summit. Flights of steps, carved out of the mountain-side, lead upward from terrace to terrace. On the plain below are the common folk and the women and children. All the youths and men of any spirit or worth in the village are mounting the steps somewhere on the mountain-side, each climbing and striving to pass his neighbour. No man likes to be classed with women and children, and to avoid it must strive upwards. The system is a direct incentive to thrift, and it offers a fair field and no favour. Ambition supplies the stimulus. The climb is lifelong. At the top are the thrones, or seats of power.

“But when the pigs are killed on these altar-like structures, are they not in some way offered to these images or idols?”

“Not at all. Just as among ourselves some men worship fame, some wealth, and some power, and spend life in striving to attain their desire, so is it with these people. Say, if you will, that the pigs are sacrificed at the shrine of ambition. But these images are not idols, nor is there sacrifice or worship offered to them.”

“But I saw offerings of plantains and cocoanuts placed on the ground at their feet!”

“Just so; but they were not offerings to the images. The big image, ‘nenna,’ is, like the ‘war,’ a monumental receipt. It is a standing witness to the fact that the owner of it has paid for its erection, and has risen to a higher rank and is known by a new name.”

“But what about those plantains and cocoanuts?”



MONUMENTS OF SOCIAL RANK.

“The owner of the ‘nenna’ you refer to was dead. At the feasts that are made in his memory, the image is often painted up afresh, and some of the food laid beside it, not as offerings, but as a token of memory and affection; also that the great man’s ghost, should he revisit the scenes of his life, might be pleased to see that he was not being forgotten.¹ His spirit does not live in the image, nor has the image any supernatural power. It is sacred only in the sense of being ‘sacred to his memory,’ and that only for a time. For in due time it may be sold by his son to procure the wherewithal to pay for his own advancement.”

For with every step a man takes upwards he has to pay for his footing. As we have noted already, there is only one coin—pigs. And to get pigs a man exercises all his ingenuity. The result is that men of most parts, and of the greatest cunning, keep to the front.

Popularity, or a father’s generosity, may help a young fellow upward; but the system is democratic, and the road to power is open to all.

After a great chief’s death his pigs are all eaten, a feast being held every fifth day for that purpose. In that way his sons are prevented from reaping an unfair advantage over their fellows. So strict is the system that a member of a lower order may not eat the food, or cook at the fire, of a higher order. The penalty for so doing is a heavy fine, or death. A “Melun” (pronounced meloon) and a “Lugubaru” are allowed to build wooden fences round their huts, and to cultivate the plants and flowers belonging to their order. We passed a dead fire one day on the track. My boy at once exclaimed—

¹ See also Codrington’s ‘Melanesians; their Anthropology, &c.,’ chap. xi. But note also Lesson vii., p. 218, *post*.

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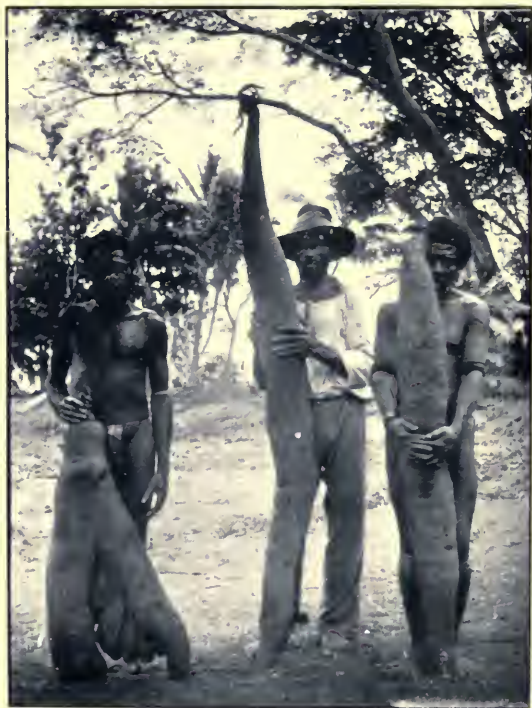
“That was a Melun’s!”

“How do you know?”

He pointed to a plant stuck in the ground beside the fire. The Melun could not wait for the fire to die, so he put the plant there to warn the lower orders. In a large village I noticed a ladder, of native construction, which crossed the roof of a chief’s hut and led up to a scaffold. To every rung of the ladder was bound a palm frond, probably representing a pig; and from the scaffold some royal (crimson) mats were displayed. Thus he exhibited the steps by which he had ascended to power.

When a sufficient number of young men or chiefs in a village or district are ready to pay the fees and take a step upward in rank, preparations are begun on a large scale for a feast. A day is selected—possibly after the new gardens have been fenced, cleaned, and the crops planted. Every year a fresh site is selected for these, the bush cleared away, and pig-proof fences built. They have to rely on leaf-mould for manuring the soil; and, as the fences decay rapidly, each season a virgin part of the bush, or a part that has long lain fallow, is selected, and the whole work gone through again,—no light task.

A more suitable time for the ceremonies is after the crops have matured—principally bananas and yams, taro and cabbage (a shrub), sweet potatoes, pumpkins, and sugar-cane. The bread-fruit affords them an extra supply of food from August to September. But the yam is the chief article, and ripens about May. They sometimes attain a length of five or six feet, and so it may take half a day’s labour to dig up one potato. These are stored in the open—laid on a platform, or tied cross-wise to an upright slab, or suspended to a framework. In some villages



YAMS.

"HALF A DAY'S LABOUR TO DIG UP ONE POTATO."

the event is celebrated with great rejoicing. One sunny forenoon a strange volume of sound was wafted down the valley from the mountain-side—a medley of voices in weird exultation, which at first woke a feeling of terror in the hearts of those who heard it. It was the harvest-home of Melbongan.

When the high day has come, the people gather in from all directions. Whole villages may arrive in a body, singing and dancing, the women bearing loads of garden produce, the men carrying pigs on poles. The fruits of the earth are laid in a great heap in the village. A committee of chiefs is appointed, who carry out their duty of reapportioning the various items with great gravity. Each carries a list—a notched stick—of the donors from the village he represents. In this way no one is forgotten, and each carries home again an exchange of food, and therefore of seed for the next season's planting.

As for the men, they carry their burdens into the sacred area and throw them down on the ground. Thereupon the owner of each pig seizes the unlucky animal and twists one of its feet, bending it back and dislocating it. A most cruel procedure, which elicits nerve-grating squeals. This is a guarantee that the pig shall be eaten and not kept. I remember watching one youth cast down his pig and plant his pole in the ground beside it.

"Is he, too, paying for a new name?" I whispered to the man next me.

"No; he's a good fellow: he does that for merit. He wants a good place in the next world."

Amid great rejoicing the "makis" are unveiled. Each candidate mounts the platform above in turn, and is received with a shower of missiles, which he cleverly dodges. Suddenly there is a great uproar.

A huge crocodile rushes through the village, apparently pursuing a man, who leaps and flies from before it, scattering the spectators on every side, amid shrieks and yells and bursts of laughter. Again a band of strange creatures appear in the woods and threaten to attack the village in different quarters. At length, growing bold, they throw themselves boisterously among the villagers, and, reaching the central area, begin dancing and singing. They wear queer and terrifying masks, and wild flowing locks, and are covered to the ground in rustling hoods of brown ribbons—the dried sheaths of the banana plants. Originally they were believed by the uninitiated to be ghosts. The dancers (and the festival too) are called “rom.” Their appearance is a feature in the day’s amusements.

If there is a high-chief, or Mal, among the candidates, a great chief and his followers are engaged to come from a distance, it may be from another island, to perform the ceremony and build the stone wall. The feasting and dancing go on for days. The candidate levies on all his neighbours and friends for the requisite number of pigs. There is a great display of these animals, the new name is given, and the visitors retire, their big canoes laden with spoil.

They get the names from strange sources at times. One day, passing an old “war-war,” I asked the lad at my side who was buried there.

“My father, Mis-mal.”

“What did you call him?”

“Mr Mal.”

“Where did he get that name?” I asked.

“From Queensland. Some boy come back, and he say they call all big master there all same.”



A SMALL "PLATFORM."

Strange to say, the first step in climbing the ladder of Ambition is circumcision. All the lads in a village who are about the age of eight or ten years, and are ready for this step, are assembled in a large hut which, thereafter, may become their dwelling. Some of the young men take charge of the rite, and two of their number perform it. A piece of glass bottle or a bamboo knife is used to cut against a pointed stick of soft wood. A single dorsal slit is thus made in the part, sufficient to prevent phimosis and paraphimosis. The boys remain in the big hut for seven or ten days till healing is complete. The terminal part is then rolled in a wide strip of young banana leaf and attached to the belt above. This is all the dress required for manhood's years; even a high chief requires no more. He may supplement it with a plaited crimson strap or belt with tassels, but this is merely an ornament and a sign of rank. They are as modest as ourselves, and the strip of leaf is as much to them as a whole suit of clothes to us. Let our refined sisters, when next they come on holiday tour, remember this. A company of them were walking the beach on a neighbouring island, and met a body of the islanders. Instantly the umbrellas were dropped, to cover a line of blushing faces. The natives were puzzled. Were the ladies so ugly? As the truth dawned upon him, the chief might well ask indignantly—

“Why this rudeness? We are as fashionably dressed as they!”

And the same may be said of the native women. Though their whole array is but a short fringe wound again and again around the hips, many of them are possibly as modest as their overdressed sisters.

As the operation on each youth is completed, the

performers put their heads outside of the hut and give vent to three or four shrill whoops. Thereupon the women and girl wives in the village begin to wail. In passing through on one such occasion, I found them actually shedding tears. The reason was not far to seek. Here as elsewhere the women are the sufferers. They are doomed ever to remain on the plain. But the boy had become a man; his childhood was past, and, in a sense, he had for ever left his mother's side. Every day and every year the distance must increase.

"But," asked our visitor, "do the women not share in their husbands' advancement?"

"Yes, and no. They belong as it were to a lower order of beings. They may not approach the men's fires, nor eat of their food. To them the sow's flesh is assigned, which a man will not touch. But it is not in human nature for them not to imitate their lords. So they have formed themselves into society sets or cliques, and give parties and 'at homes.' They have organised themselves into ranks¹ or grades, and have set about climbing a Hill of Ambition. It is a noteworthy fact that their highest rank barely reaches the first grade among the men, and is called 'Berang-Vir.' In other words, the summit of their Hill does not quite reach the height of the first terrace on the men's Mountain. So that the best they can

¹ The degrees of rank among the women are eight in number :—

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. Salinda. | 5. La-war. |
| 2. Ling-fa. | 6. Mo-na-tan. |
| 3. La-vit. | 7. Berang. |
| 4. Yim-mar-kon. | 8. Berang-Vir. |

The term Berang seems to be applied to a man of no rank. He has only begun to climb. So that Berang-Vir, as applied to a woman, marks a stage between nothing and the first definite grade of manhood (Vir).

say of the most worthy and advanced woman amongst them is, that she is almost a man."

If the men happened to be seated, a woman must crawl past on her knees, or wait till they rise. She is sold for pigs almost from the time she can toddle. Five or six of these animals are paid in instalments. And at the age of seven to ten years the child-wife is delivered to her purchaser, possibly an old villainous-looking chief. Injury and lifelong suffering are often the result. Sometimes the child is allowed to remain with her people till she has reached the age of twelve. Then with tears and great crying she is borne off to her husband's village. This may have to be done several times, and the whip may be used. If the young wife is high-spirited and will not stay, the husband may chop off a foot, or more commonly fasten a hot stone in the bend of the knee till the skin is burned through and the sinews are affected. This does not often occur, for all men are not fiends; and in some homes there grows a very fond attachment. But there may come a still greater trial—division of the affections. Mal had three wives, and Botingi, whom we have already met, was his youngest, and the favourite. But he took a fourth, a young "gip" of about twelve. At the marriage feast, or reception, Botingi had now to put out her own fire, and, taking an ember from the dying coals, creep along on her knees and light with it the fire of the young bride. It was terribly significant of a dead affection, and its effect soon appeared. To a true woman there is no throne like that of her husband's affections. She grew old, withered, cynical. The light faded from her eyes. She took ill; became spirit-broken; and within two or three years passed out of life.

CHAPTER III.

The Struggle for Supremacy.

IT was against this system, all unknowingly, we had pitted ourselves. On the other hand, Mal-Pang-kumu, to give him his full title, had bargained for a servant, and not a master. A conflict was inevitable. Nor was the conflict long in coming.

Our advent had brought them new ideals, new knowledge, new modes of living, and had lifted the horizon of life to an immense distance. In the light of the broad world their little lives and systems seemed insignificant. With the conceit of citizens of the great world, we are tempted to despise and belittle. Yet, viewed from their standpoint, there was much in their way of life to claim our admiration. Compelled to spend the whole of their existence within the scope of a few square miles, and ringed in with a wall of violent foes and of foreign tongues, the wonder is they achieved so much. In like circumstances Europeans could hardly have done better. We may affect to despise their pride in pigs; but if the derivation of the name Stuart is correct, our royalties were once on the same level. As for their canoes, I saw in an Edinburgh museum a similar "dug-out," at one time used by our forefathers, and now recovered from the mud of the Clyde.

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To the chiefs their system was as dear as life itself. Indeed it was the one thing that had made life worth living. They would be slow, very slow, to acknowledge that—for them—the ways of the white man were better than their own. So we set ourselves to woo them patiently towards the better part, and sought to adopt a manner kind and sympathetic, and a method at once firm, just, and tactful.

The young people were the first to see where the advantage lay. They had no prejudices, and the whole of life was still before them. So one morning I was startled by a voice at my feet, saying—

“Master, me come and work for you?”

He was a little fellow about twelve years old, so deformed that he could not rise from the ground, and had to crawl along on hands and knees.

“What is your name?”

“Lili.”

“What can you do?”

“Climb trees. Pull up weeds.”

He could scramble up a tall palm, fifty feet high, like a squirrel—to pluck the nuts. As for weeds, there were plenty to pull. With him came a big lump of a boy with an injured arm. He too wanted to join our growing staff. To them heathenism had not much to offer, and trouble had sharpened their wits. After a little demurring we took them; not for what they were worth, but because they would serve as a mode of contact, and bring us into vital connection with the life of the village. Then came another lad, Bongmimi, from a village on the shore a mile away. Him also we took on.

Mal had been trying in every way possible to gain the upper hand and show his authority. It was all in

vain. The attempts generally ended in a brief tempest of high words—on his side. And he still covetously eyed the boat. One day he preferred a request in his most polite manner. He was afraid he was asking too much, the missionary was so busy. Would I go and see a sick man a few miles up the coast.

“Nonsense, Mal; you know we are always ready to help the sick.”

We were glad to be able to gratify him in a legitimate way, and readily granted him a passage: We found the sick man, and found, too, that there was little wrong with him. We even thought he seemed surprised to see us—“It was such kindness on our part.” When we got back to the boat, we discovered the real reason for our visit. In our absence a great tusker had been stowed in the bow. Night overtook us; the sea got up; the brute broke loose. There was scarcely a sound rib in the boat, and the planks were old and thin. We had been properly taken in. It was with immense relief we felt the keel grate on the sand once more. We would not be caught again. Mal, so far as one could judge of his face in the moonlight, looked a picture of innocence all through.

On another occasion it was reported that Fanting was short of food. The calamity we are about to describe had destroyed their crops. Would we lend Mal the boat to go to Ranon—some 15 miles away—to get yams? This time we were glad of a chance to heap coals of fire on his head for his mean boycott of us in similar straits. The boat was given, and Mal sailed away up the coast in a new guise—wearing a shirt! Now, to wear a shirt is a sign of joining the new faith, in goodwill if not in actual fact. The old rogue! On his return we learned that he had been

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away to arrange for a "singsing." It was about the only time in his life he was seen with a shirt on.

Our first Christmas had come and gone. It was a time of merriment and goodwill. We had large gatherings, hearty services, a day of sports and feasting, and had begun the year with great good feeling. In the meantime the staff had been strengthened. The Mission Committee in New Zealand had appointed and sent down two lay-assistants: one of them was married, and the other, being a thoroughly practical man and an engineer of experience, was a decided acquisition.

On New Year's Eve two other little missionaries had come, or were sent, to our aid: and right worthy did they prove themselves to the title. A third room was hastily added to our wee house, and a double cot constructed. Two little men were they, one fair, the other dark, straight from God's own hands.

In them intelligence dawned rapidly. And when, hammer and rule in hand, one paused for a brief moment to bend over and smile at them, the little blue gowns were kicked aside and the cot became a thicket of waving fingers and toes, each little digit giving tongue to the story which they would fain tell with shining eyes and voiceful chirrupings. No parent bird had ever warmer welcome from its fledgeling nest.

The native youths, too, were coming about and inclining favourably towards us. One morning four of them, the pick of the young men in the village, applied for employment. They had put off their ornaments, and had washed their faces free of decorative designs.

"What is your name?" I asked of one of them.

"P...im."

"But you are a 'sakran,' are you not?"

"Yes, master." (The term "master" had been introduced from Queensland.)

They had come prepared to lay aside their rank, wear clothing, and join the mission. This involved staying on the premises, attending the classes, and working during bell hours. In return they were fed, clothed, and paid a fair island wage. We hoped they would become teachers in good time, and meanwhile there was plenty to do.

The day of trial was not far distant. Mal was jealous of every accession to our strength, and he was determined to maintain his authority over these lads. Preparations were being pushed forward for a "sing-sing" in a village at the head of the valley. The Fanting people were to be among the guests, and were nightly practising their parts and songs. Bongnaim and his fellows were warned of the impossibility of serving two masters. Attendance at the "sing-sing" would mean dismissal.

When the feast-day arrived the lads were not at their posts. On making inquiry we learned that they had joined the festive party. We were soon on the track, and overtook them as they were nearing their destination. They presented a picture I shall not willingly forget. The woods echoed to their song, and the caverns beneath to the stamping of their feet. Happy, dancing children of Nature, they were as much a part of their wild surroundings as the birds and the flowers. Their rounded forms and shining copper skins were ornament and dress in one. A touch of red powder or a scarlet blossom gave all the colour that was needed, and was the only addition to their

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scant and simple dresses. The men were the dancers; a dense knot of interlocking, wrestling limbs and forms in the centre of the track, they rapidly changed places and swung again to the outskirts of the band. The women and girls followed, keeping step, joining in the refrain, advancing and retreating, but slowly progressing.

Among the dancers we soon perceived our boys. We were sorry to interrupt or spoil their pleasure, but the path of duty was clear. Watching my chance, I caught the arm of the eldest as he swung outwards towards me.

“What does this mean, Saran?”

“Can't help it, master!”

“Why so?”

“You look. Suppose I no come, they shoot me. Suppose I go back, they shoot me.”

I stooped down and looked in the direction he indicated, and among the feet of the dancers, in the centre of the knot, could be seen the brass-bound butt of a Tower musket.

“Are you afraid to come?”

“Yes, master,” apologetically.

“Very well; speak to me to-night.”

When evening came, they received their pay and were dismissed to the village, towards which they went off reluctantly. We were sorry, too, for already we had become attached. During the next few days they hung about us, and at length gained sufficient courage to ask to be taken back. They promised to be faithful thereafter, and so they were—even to death.

One of the first tasks of the New Year was to provide house-room for the assistants. With that

end in view they went to Ranon in the boat, taking all the older boys and men to assist in pulling down the old mission-house. During their absence Mal made one more effort to reassert his power.

It was a Friday afternoon. I was busy indoors when my attention was aroused by loud angry voices. I hurried outside, and found Mal with some of his followers roundly abusing and threatening the three young boys, the cripple and his companion and Bongmimi, for eating bread-fruit off the mission-trees. I warmly defended the boys as having acted within their right; then, turning to "Skinny Charlie," who was one of the number, I said—

"What does Mal mean by this?" Mal himself by this time was quiet.

"Mal and all the men of Fanting are very cross because these boys eat the food belonging to the chiefs."

"But the trees are not Mal's, Charlie. He sold them, and his money is still here."

"Master," pleaded Charlie, "that money no good along this country. Suppose you no pay all same men do here, that not fair. All men say you no speak good. And the taboo on the trees stop (remains in force) all the time."

So feeling in Fanting ran high. The chiefs were feeling insulted that these boys should be eating the food of the higher social ranks. According to native ideas gold could not remove the taboo. By this time we understood the position better; so we now promised Mal the best his money could buy. So the Master, "lest we cause them to stumble," paid tribute and rendered to Cæsar his due.

But Mal was not yet appeased, and at a feast next

day in the village, while haranguing the crowd, declared his intention of "closing Bong's eyes"—by violence or "poison." That night, after all were in bed, the stillness was suddenly broken by the report of a musket at close quarters, and a noise like bedlam arose in the village—a medley of shrieks, cries, yells, and the beating of drums. In the darkness a figure rushed past the back of the house, leaped over the gangway that led to the kitchen, and disappeared into the garden among the bananas and rustling corn. We hurried outside, but the noise died away as suddenly as it had arisen, and all was quiet. Therefore no one could have been shot; and, considering discretion the better part of valour, we postponed an investigation till the morning.

During the past few months we had been called upon to mediate between several of the villages and prevent bloodshed. Every time a death occurred some one was blamed for having occasioned it by "aple," poison. He or a fellow-villager must be shot in revenge. The chiefs professed to be able to detect the poisoner by a method of divination. Having gathered a bunch of bracken fronds, the chief concerned sat down and with solemn face examined them one by one. Satisfied that all were perfect, he drew each quickly between the finger and thumb of the left hand, stripping off all the side leaves, and apparently keeping a certain village or person in mind. If the leaves stripped off evenly, that village or person was out of the question, and *vice versa*. Thus they divined first the village and then the man. So I judged from watching the proceeding, for the chiefs were very chary about explaining their secrets.

This, then, would be an attempt to take revènge on

some suspected person in Fanting. I was wrong. It proved to be Mal's first step towards "poisoning" Bong—by striking terror into the boy's soul.

The explanation given in the morning was, that a man had seen the Devil on the bank above the sea and close to the "mel," and had given the alarm. A son of Mal's fired off his gun, and the others yelled and took shelter. But Bong understood it all, and for safety fled to the mountains.

It was Mal's turn next. Despite his threats, we had no intention of barricading the doors and blanketing the windows, and sitting down in darkness to be shot at. Windows and doors were kept open, the blinds remained up, and the lamps at night burned brightly as ever. The fact that we did nothing, took no notice, and went calmly on our way, brought a great fear into Mal's heart. He was not used to that, and concluded that there was some dread power at work behind. An enemy conveyed a malignant whisper into his ear; it found ready lodgment. Within two days, terror-stricken, he and his abettors, except "Skinny Charlie," had fled by canoe to the east of the island, and remained in hiding for fourteen days.

During his absence we learned many of the facts recorded in the previous chapter about the polity of the people. With Charlie and some others we went over the ground and inspected the trees, and discovered that of claimants to ownership there were no less than twenty-two. It was as we had surmised. These men were angry at the sale of their property, which gave them nothing, not even a feast. We promised to deal fairly by them, and bade them send word to Mal. Bong too came back.

My own boys were much exercised in spirit at Mal's

return, and were going about with faces as long as fiddles. The morning after his return he took an opportunity of glowering savagely into the school—to some purpose. For, from that moment, Bong lost his tongue, and seemed three or four years older. He got worse day by day, and by Sunday was delirious. I found him lying on the ground, clutching an axe, and raving in fear and fever, with a temperature of 104°. As soon as we had got him through the attack, it seemed to us best to pay him well and send him home. This was our first experience of “aple” and its working. The weaker members of society so feared the power of the chiefs, that, when threatened, they would die, in a few days, of sheer terror.

Mal also and his followers were in an uneasy state of mind, as the sequel showed. That Sunday we went into Fanting, as usual, for an afternoon service. As we neared the “mel” a mat was thrust in our face, closing the door. It was meant as an insult, and we took it as such. Suddenly the mat was dropped.

“Who did that?” we asked sharply. “We are your friends.”

“There are friends—and friends!” retorted a wizened spitfire sardonically, from the corner next the door. He struck one as being the philosopher of the village. It was he who had put up the mat.

Mal himself was glaring at me across the “mel.” I looked at him quietly, and said—

“We are come to have a talk with you.”

But they were not to be caught with suavity this time, and seeing the book in my hand, he shouted angrily—

“Go and preach elsewhere!”

The Conflict

It was my turn to feel hot, but I was able to answer him calmly—

“Bad manners, Mal! Come with your men in the morning and let us settle this affair. I am your friend, but you are not mine.”

To our surprise, some note had been struck that thoroughly alarmed them. Mal sprang out of the big hut towards us, and extended his hand. Lugo-Baru, his brother, did likewise, and reminded us that he had always been a friend, and had with his own hands shouldered goods up from the shore. The other men followed in like strain. One of them handed us a mat to sit on, and the service was proceeded with.

During the past few days we had been trying to formulate some plan of action which would ensure safety to our boys, curb the power of the chiefs, and make for amity and peace. And at last success crowned our efforts. Before another week had passed we had a general meeting in the schoolroom, the whole mission party at one side of the table, Mal and his followers at the other. We explained to them that our ways of thinking and theirs were so different we could not help misunderstanding one another at first, but the time for that was gone by. We could not give them back the land; but they should keep their trees and the fruit during their lifetime, and every man's trees should be duly marked. With the price of the ground we would procure for Mal and his brother as fine a pig as possible. On the other hand, we reminded them that for evil-doers, black or white, a ship of war was no phantom. Mal must admit his offence and promise in writing that such should not occur again. This he did. The document, stained with the

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rain of the hurricane, lies before me; its last sentence is as follows:—

“Wherefore I, Mal-Pang-kumu, at Dr Lamb’s request, and to prevent possible evil arising to me and my people, do this day retract the above threats (of ‘poisoning’ and shooting), do declare myself a friend of the Mission, and do assure all members and would-be members of the Mission party of their personal safety.”

Dated and signed.

MAL-PANG-KUMU, his mark.

The trees were then formally transferred to them again, and a metal ticket was attached to each, indicating the ownership. Next morning Mal appeared at our door, his face all smiles, with another pig and the tabu-palm.

Thus, in this circle of villages, the battle was fought and won. It was to be fought over again in every district on the island.

But a far different settlement was in store. Within a month a cyclone overwhelmed us all in one common ruin, and with giant scythe mowed every tree to the ground. It was a catastrophe which drew forth many touches of nature and made our whole world kin.

CHAPTER IV.

A Hurricane.

“ You certainly haven’t built for a hurricane, have you, now ? ”

“ Surely you don’t expect a hurricane to pass right over our heads the first season we are here ? ” I said in reply.

“ Don’t know. Hurricanes are queer things. Come and see the house we are putting up. Guess a hurricane won’t shift us anyhow.”

Rocco was standing at our front door looking up at the ventilators and eaves. He had brought down the first load of old timber from Ranon in his smart ketch, the *Circe*. It was the first time I had met him, and he was inclined to show a little pique because hitherto he thought he had been passed by. That explained, he was genial enough. However, he proved a true weather prophet. It was his first and last load—to us; for before he could come again, the dreaded hurricane was upon us, and his little vessel found a last resting-place on the bed of the ocean.

We were not ashamed of our little abode: it was meant to be temporary; put together with bolts and screws, to be easily pulled apart and shifted when we had become satisfied as to the best site. It was

covered with iron on walls and roof, and lined and ceiled with half-inch kauri and Indian matting. A feature worthy of notice in passing was the method of ventilation. The hot-air chamber in the roof had no connection with the rooms below, and was ventilated through the gables and open eaves. There were no ventilators in the ceilings; for experience had shown that whenever there is a breeze, light or strong, the current is reversed, and the heated air is driven downwards through these into the rooms underneath. And how warm that air can be after contact with the iron may easily be inferred from the fact that, in the hot season, the natives sometimes rush across the exposed parts of a track shouting: despite the thickness of their soles, the ground is hot enough to burn.

So a ventilator, six inches wide, was carried right round the house, by affixing hinges to a weather-board, a short distance below the eaves.

Thus, day and night, the rooms received an abundant supply of fresh cool air. This contrivance probably saved the lives of some of us on the eventful night.

For, in the progress of a cyclone, there is a succession of terrific blasts, during which the air is densely compressed. The blasts suddenly cease, and the air as suddenly expands. It must find a vent, or way of escape. Seldom does it find a sufficient vent ready, as in such a storm doors and windows are usually tightly closed. In such a case, the sudden expansion of the air acts like an explosion of gunpowder. The walls are forced apart and the roof is lifted. Hence the woeful destruction in the track of a cyclone.

Such was our experience. Before the breath of

the giant, our humble dwelling was but a house of cards; but, with the passing of each blast, the ventilators spontaneously rose and fell, and its life (and ours) was prolonged till we had escaped from the danger.

We accepted Rocco's invitation, and one morning, before the breakfast-hour had arrived, presented ourselves at the new house. His son was glad to see us,—had just laid aside his trowel, and was preparing for a few whiffs before the meal. He showed us round.

The structure was substantial enough,—a single, four-square chamber, eight or ten yards in diameter, with walls about eight feet high. These were about two feet thick, built of cobble-stones and mortar. The lime, burned fragments of finger-coral, sets like cement. Windows and doors were few. The roof was shaped like a pyramid, so that the wind should find no projecting angles or gables to catch hold of. As for the rafters and joists, they were great beams, thick enough to please the eye and test the strength of a Samson.

But what caught my attention at once was the intense heat within. There was no outlet for the hot air from the roof, which, by means of the plaster, was hermetically sealed down on the walls all round. Perhaps it is as well that we don't all think alike. But from what has already been said, the result may be forecasted. In the midst of the hurricane the building suddenly exploded. The walls were, in part, forced from their foundation and laid flat, split from end to end. The roof was lifted and carried away like an umbrella, being borne off in triumph and dropped in the sea. Bits of corrugated iron, stuck in the branches far overhead, showed the path it had taken. One tree was so unfortunate as to be

in the way, and its trunk being struck by the end of a beam, was literally transfixed, spear-wise, the end projecting on the other side.

Cyclones have been compared to the whirls and eddies seen in a flowing stream. In the South Pacific these circular storms arise near the equator, and are carried along by the great upper and lower currents of the atmosphere. At first they travel westward, veering more and more to the south: when the middle latitudes are reached, the direction is reversed, and they turn back towards the south-west.

Along this path they travel at twenty to thirty miles an hour, or faster. In the cyclone itself the wind is gyrating in a circle, or ellipse, at an enormous speed—from left to right, like the hands in a watch. In the centre of the circle is a region of absolute calm. Judging from experience, in our hurricane this region was five to ten miles across; but the influence of the storm was felt over a path hundreds of miles wide.

Saturday, March 4, 1893, was a stormy, wet day. The wind blew from the east, the usual quarter with us, in irregular gusts. As the rain and wind were increasing, we secured the boat and the timber, and covered the latter to keep it as dry as possible. By the afternoon a storm was raging. Darkness came early. At eight o'clock, in a flash of lightning, I saw the engineer, Mr Mansfield, passing the window. He was taking a look round and trying to make things more secure. At 9 P.M. we retired. Sleep we could not. The house shook with the violence of the wind, and the noise of the rain was deafening. At ten o'clock we got up again, and turned up the lamp. The babes slept on, all unconscious. The aneroid

showed a rapidly falling barometer. Outside the trees were being torn up by the roots. Then came a loud knock at the door. The assistants were there.

“Our roof was lifting, and we thought it wise to come over.”

There was another rap at the door, and the boys, in twos and threes, came crowding into the little dining-room. The lights began to flicker, the back-door and wall to bend in. With every passing gust the ventilators flapped up and down; and the hand of the aneroid rose and fell like a miniature flail. Thus far, though high-set, it had fallen to 28·2. The wind was now coming from the south. The advance rim of the storm was upon us. The heavy timber we had chained upon the roof of the store, behind the house, was hurled on to our own roof; and the water began to trickle through the ceiling. The books were now tumbling from the shelves. I put my back to the door; and the boys put theirs to the wall, in the vain hope of supporting it. A section of the Ranon house, lying on the ground outside, was picked up and hurled against the gable end. The picture inside was shattered, and the glass fell in a shower. One assistant cried, “Let us pray!” Said the other, “Nay, let us fly!”

And “fly” it was—whither we knew not. The lightning was intense and constant. We were stumbling along in a blue electric flame.

Mr Mansfield went first with a little one under his cape; I followed, guiding and supporting others, with a similar burden. The ground was already covered with a network of branches. I shouted to Mansfield—

“To the old war-wars!”

There, by lying on the ground behind the stone

walls, we could find some shelter, and be safe from falling palms. But he could not hear, the noise was too great; and he went towards the village. Once he fell on his knees in a network of branches. As we passed the new concrete cottage, the roof exploded, and the fragments scattered with a report as of a bomb. We paused for shelter behind the bole of a tree, and one sheet of iron struck me, broadside on, but did no harm. At length we reached the chief's hut. Mal let us in at once, and by the light of the smouldering embers of his fire we saw Botingi and, beyond, the gleaming tusks of a huge grunter. We were glad to sit down beside the brute in the darkness, first on our heels, and, when our joints got cramped, in the dust and mud. The rude wall of coral stones surrounding the hut protected it to some extent from the violence of the wind. The little thatch covering—for, like the other huts, it was but a roof set on the ground—was heaving and falling like the wings of a panting bird. Mal, afraid that the hut was going to fly away altogether, extended his arms, and, grasping a rafter on either side, threw his whole weight on them. During the more violent gusts he cried out in terror, "Timar! Timar!" He was calling on the ghost of his father to save him.

The rest of our company, which then numbered some twenty souls, made their way to the large native house in front of "The Devil's Stone." There they sat in fear and trembling, praying for salvation. I knew not what had become of them, and could not go to see. A tree had fallen across the entrance to our hut, crushing the stone wall; and to go hunting in the storm would be fruitless folly. The hours seemed endless.

At length, about half-past one o'clock, there came a lull. The wind had veered round to south-west, and then ceased absolutely. The noise died away. Stillness reigned.

Mr Mansfield hurried outside, and, as soon as I had safely bestowed my burden, I followed after. The path was lost under fallen trees and ruined huts. I met him, returning, at the stile. He grasped me by the arm—

“Come back, come back, quick! They say the storm is coming again.”

“What about the station? Where are the others?”

“They are all safe in the big hut. Everything else is swept away.”

The words were hardly out of his mouth when the storm burst on us again, with a crashing, tearing sound it is impossible to describe; and in its violence and the darkness I lost him. The blow came from the opposite quarter, between west and north. The rain and sand were blinding. So fierce was the wind that I can remember noticing afterwards how the sand had polished the side of a canoe on the beach, scraping it as with a knife and restoring the original colour of the wood.

I had lost my way, and was clinging to the shattered stump of a bread-fruit-tree, trying to dodge the falling palms. Their weight was crushing. Once I saw one bending over me like a whip. It was then our end seemed to have come, not from the palms, but from the sea. The water was only a few yards distant down the bank, and its roar filled one's soul with horror. It was as though the waves were upon us and about to sweep all away.

At length, through a more vivid flash of lightning,

I again discerned the projecting gable of the chief's hut, and made towards it, creeping along the ground. In the darkness I ran against something soft, which moved, close against the wall.

"Hallo! who is this?"

"It's me! I don't know where I am."

It was Mansfield. We got into the hut at last, the water pouring out of one's dressing-gown in rivers. The women and children were still safe. There was nothing else for us to do but sit down flat in the dirt, and, with sore eyes, stiff limbs, and growing chill, wait for the morning. The babes alternately slept and cried on our knees. Poor little mites! They got a shock from which they never recovered.

As we crawled out of Mal's hut in the grey dawn, the scene around us was both awesome and pitiful. Only four huts remained comparatively whole. The people's staff of life—a splendid young crop of bread-fruit—lay on the ground, the green balls of all sizes, and the trees prostrate or broken off short.

The landscape was completely changed. Before, we could not see the hills for the leafy woods. Now, they were black and bare as if fire had swept over them, staring in their nakedness. The land was smitten and blasted from sea-shore to hill-tops. The forest had vanished, the leaves had been carried away, and the ground was knee-deep in branches. Over them we picked our steps back to the station. The house had apparently been swept up in the air and hurled down again; for the floor, which was all one piece and firmly clamped, had been knocked to a lozenge shape, and was upside down on the top of the ruins. The walls had collapsed, and the roof was

jammed against the bole of a hardwood-tree, which had stopped its progress towards the sea.

We took refuge in the big hut, the only place left to us. Its ridge had been shorn of thatch as by a knife. As we stepped into it, it was reeking with smoke, and dripping like a sieve. Our first work was to search in the slush and rain for a few articles of food and clothing. Then to secure the front gable with anchor and chain, as the wind, now from the north-east, was still strong. It had gone right round the compass. With bags and the boat's sail we covered the gaps in the roof. By evening we were comparatively comfortable, though into the one hut there were crowded no less than twenty-one of us, babe and filthy savage. And thus, working early and late to construct a new house out of the ruins, we lived for a fortnight.

Two days later we were able, at great risk, to communicate with the steamer. The sea was still lumpy, and we had a narrow escape from drowning. But we managed to send an appeal to the Colonies on behalf of the starving populace. As for the people, they were sympathy itself. We had suffered worse than they, and so our fortunes were identified with theirs. They were inclined to fight their enemies on the hills to the south-west whence the great blow first came. It was an easy matter to show them their folly and to dissuade them, for, in truth, they are not fond of fighting for its own sake, though they are afraid to appear cowards.

Each day brought back letters, papers, and photographs from the sand or scrub. The trees had been stripped so bare that shade there was none. The



UNDER THE BANYAN.

birds were homeless wanderers, and, hovering around, added to the sorrow of desolation. The sun was merciless.

We soon had a roof over our heads. At first it was unlined, and not till it was too late did we discover that in the children's corner the temperature reached 108° F. Their food and medicine had been destroyed. The goats could not find proper sustenance, and the milk was affected. The picture on the following page completes the tale.

The village, and indeed the whole district, had in their hearts adopted these little ones as their own. The dignified, blind, old chief, Mal-bongnaun, of whom more anon, had given them names that confirmed the fact. It was his great delight, morning by morning, to sit beside the cradle, and chuckle with pleasure as he felt the clasp of their little fingers round his own. If sorrow could have saved them, his was surely deep enough. Another chief, Mal's brother, brought his young wife and offered her as a wet nurse. Might that not save them? Delicately was the offer made, and as delicately refused. It was too late. Their work was done.

As the little procession picked its steps across the ruins, these strong wild men, as they were passed, turned their backs to hide their tears, their whole frame shaking with sobs of suppressed grief. Call them savages! They were human enough that day.

We laid them to rest in the bower beneath the banyan; the one, as the great yellow moon rose above the mountains and poured his sombre beams through the freshly springing leaves; the other, as daylight and the morning breeze came out of the east. Upon

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his work the sun, new-risen, looked down with blushing face. Cruel, cruel Orb!

So, having accomplished their work of peace and goodwill, they passed wholly into the safe keeping of the glorious ministry of spirits. For "In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."



"SMITTEN AND BLASTED."

CHAPTER V.

A Swim for Life.

IT was about four o'clock on the afternoon of the hurricane Saturday when some one called out, "There goes Rocco!"

We looked out seaward and saw two small craft, the *Circe* and the *Consul*, flying past before the wind, their sails rending and blowing away as they rushed along in the pitiless sea. They had found Ranon bay unsafe, and were trying to reach a land-locked harbour in Malekula before nightfall.

The *Consul* was a large boat, rigged as a cutter, belonging to the priests. The Roman Church had honoured us during our stay on the island by clapping down four priests around us to nullify our efforts. It was an act almost unprecedented in the Group. The result was a game of check and countercheck, in which we seemed always to hold the winning pawns; for their nationality was against them, and medicine is a powerful weapon. They decried our work, tried to lead our teachers away from us, and to take our converts; and, not content with that, endeavoured to convert ourselves. When remonstrated with, they replied, "It is our duty."

On one occasion two of them came into conflict

with one of the teachers at a distant village. The chief and his people were divided as to whom to follow. In a small way the battle of Whitby was fought over again. As on that occasion in England's history, so here, they asserted their superiority—

“We hold the keys, and your Church is no Church at all.”

We had tried to instil into our boys the truth—that faith is the key, and that he who is possessed of Peter's faith, holds a duplicate for himself and others. But the teacher was not to be outdone.

“Choose,” he said to the people—“choose whom you will follow. But let me remind you that Mary is French, and that Jesus Christ is English!”

That was enough, an argument better than any number of “keys.” The story is true, for the priests themselves told it.¹ It was a flash of native wit; but it was also the lad's experience of French and English teaching in Queensland and the Islands.

We fight over our creeds as though they were in themselves the ends of existence, whereas they are but the means, or scaffoldings, for the building up of character; and the noblest creed is the one that brings us nearest to God. But truth is truth, and for what seems to us the truth we must be willing not only to fight, but to die.

Though we did not like the methods of our rivals, we did admire their sincerity. We were fairly good friends, and there was work enough for all. They had small salaries, and few comforts, and by a life of self-denial were candidates for the “holy apostolate” and the noble army of martyrs. To which may they surely

¹ And told it with indignation, “Christ an Englishman forsooth! and Mary a French woman!”

attain! For to come from a life of solitude and fever among cannibals is assuredly to "come out of great tribulation."

For the coming of the priests we blamed Rocco. He had snapped up the first site we had inspected, so that on our return we found a "Père" settled there. However, Rocco atoned for it afterwards by giving us a site for a church beside his own station, and right in the village of Ranon.

We had grave doubts if the *Circe* and her companion had reached a haven of safety. Two days later our doubts were confirmed. One of the crew, the second mate, carrying an oar on his shoulder, came along the beach from the other side. According to his account he was the only one saved. He told us that the *Circe* was lost in trying to save the *Consul*. Rocco had put his best man, the first mate, aboard her at Ranon, and instead of hastening to a place of safety, had lingered to shadow the smaller craft, and if necessary rescue her crew. When they reached the open space between Ambrym and Malekula, he saw there was no hope of reaching or entering the haven, Port Sandwich. He shouted to the mate to return to Ambrym and beach the cutter. It was then dusk. They never saw the *Consul* again. She probably went down in the black sands off Dip Point.

For himself, Rocco decided to ride out the storm in the open. He did so successfully. His seamanship was wonderful. All that night and all the next day he never left the tiller. His crew, sheltering in odd corners about the deck, might doze for a few minutes occasionally, but for himself there was never a moment of rest. Towards evening, when the wind had moderated, he gave the command to the mate, bidding him

keep her head to the big seas, and went below. For a short time all went well. Then a sea struck the *Circe* on one bow. She broached to, and in another moment was on her side. The stone ballast shifted and she sank. Rocco reached the deck just in time. He secured a part of the hatch. The crew, escaping the swirl and suction, recovered the floating oars. Each succeeding sea threatened to engulf them, but they maintained their hold, and were swept along by the current towards Ambrym.

By nightfall they were approaching nearer and nearer to their own island, and their hopes rose. They were on the lee side and might effect a landing. But the tide turned, and they were being carried away again, to the west and into the darkness.

Through the long hours of the night, despite the fierceness of the sea, they kept together—Rocco lashed to the hatch, the boys astride their oars. They were under a skilful captain; and the arm and the voice they so dreaded on land (for he had a temper like the sea around them) was now their stay. Towards morning they were carried past a projecting point, or reef, on the coast of Malekula. Here the natives, thinking they could reach the shore, declared their intention of striking out for it.

“You will be drowned for certain.”

“No, master; suppose we no try now we lose [be lost].”

They gave their oars to one lad who decided to remain by Rocco and the mate. These kept together and waited a better chance. Whether the others reached land or not, the mate could not tell. He thought not.

At daybreak the tide turned, and again they were

swept away from the land and towards Ambrym, in the face of wind and wave. The buffeting must have been terrible. The island steamer was due in these waters, and they held on in hope. So fierce was the sea that, though she passed them twice, they saw nothing of her nor she of them, and when she reached Ambrym she could not make the land. All that Monday they were washed to and fro, and as evening approached were again brought nearer and nearer to the southern angle of Ambrym. At this point the mate grew desperate, and suddenly struck out for the land. He was swept ashore with his oar somewhere to the south of Craig's Cove.

He had found shelter in one of the villages, and now, having so far recovered, was hastening to Ranon with the evil tidings.

But Rocco's son refused to give up hope, and promised a large reward to the native who should be first to bring news of his father's safety.

About a week had passed. Breakfast was over. We were all busy putting iron on the new roof. An exclamation caused me to look round. There were two men and a little boy coming up the path from the beach. We could hardly believe our eyes. It was Rocco, our old friend Morin, and the latter's little son.

Rocco was almost crying; his feelings overcame him. He was gazing in astonishment at the change around. I well remember his first words, as he exclaimed in pigeon English—

“Epi, he green!”

The islands to the south had escaped, and Epi was still green; Ambrym was bare and black.

“Have you had breakfast?”

“No; but that does not matter.”

“Come along!”

In a short time they were set down to a breakfast of curried rice and fritters in the big hut.

I sat near the door, and we listened to their story.

The mate's account was substantially correct, but Rocco resented the way he had suddenly deserted him and the boy. After he left them they had been swept along the south coast of the island, always too far off to risk an attempt to get ashore. Again the tide turned, and they were being carried back towards Malekula. The boy was losing heart. At length, as the darkness deepened, he cried out—

“Master, me finish. No good you stop look-out me.”

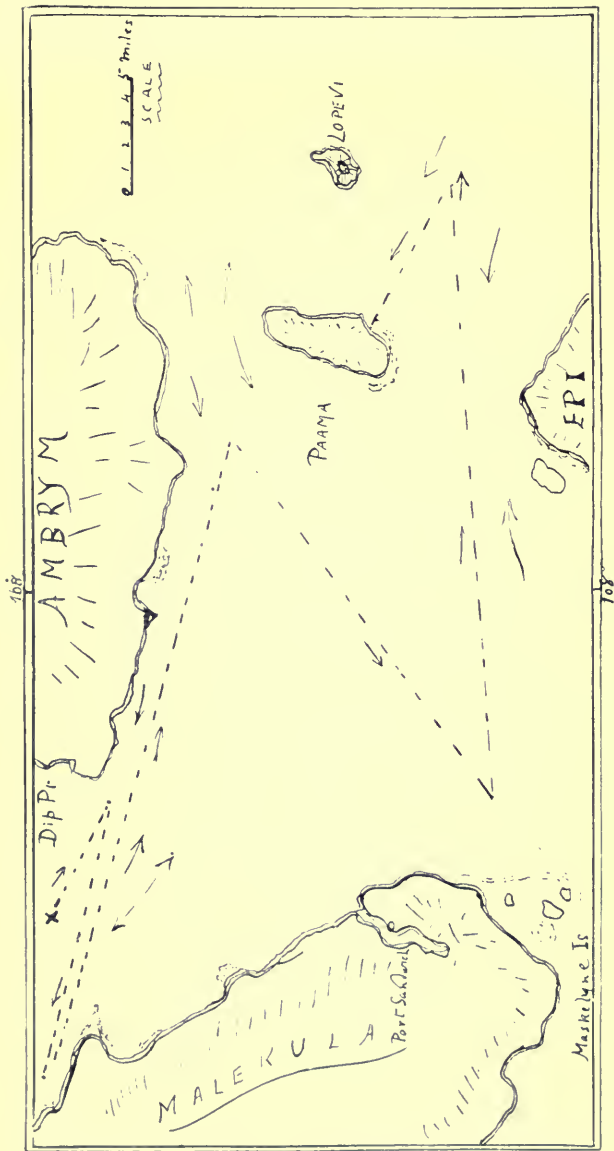
“Hold on, Piti. I'm coming.” He drew near to him.

“Here, you take the hatch and give me your oars.”

“No, master. No good you do that. Then we both die.”

But Rocco, as we afterwards learned from another source, shoved the hatch under him, and, loosening the boy's loin-cloth, took a turn with it round his chest below the arms, and through the iron ring, so that he could not slip off. Then, with his own leather belt—his clothes had long since been cast off—he secured himself to the oars; and, with the boy's strap, attached the oars to the hatch. Should they fall asleep or become unconscious, they would not lose their supports nor become separated in the darkness. It was a pitchy night, and they were far from land.

Their lot was symbolic of the two races they represented—breasting the billows of Time in the struggle for existence. Suffering had revealed to them their kinship and the secret of survival. United, they would



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win ; divided, perish. This act of self-denial and sympathy had nerved them to fresh effort—

“And hearts were brave again, and arms were strong.”

How they lived through the long night Rocco could not tell. They were numbed, body and mind. Somewhere near the dawn they seemed to float in smooth water, and their feet touched the sand. Hope revived what life was left in them, and they waded ashore. They were too stiff and weak to stand, and lay on the beach at the water's edge. Scooping a hole with their hands in the sand, they slaked their thirst with the brackish water, and at once fell asleep. Not till the sun's rays began to scorch did they wake—to find the sun high in the heavens. Above them the land sloped upwards, green and steep. Behind them lay the open ocean. Not sure of their whereabouts, and fearful of being discovered by savages, Rocco crept weakly along the shore, hiding behind the rocks, and trying to discover what island they were on. Suddenly he gave a start. There was a savage on the high ground, sitting on a rock, with a gun across his knees. The native sat perfectly still, as if petrified. Probably he took the naked white man for an apparition. Seeing this, Rocco became reassured and called to him. The man came down slowly and deliberately.

“Hullo, master ; what name [why] you walk about all same ?”

“Ah, you one good fellow ? You been along Queensland ?” Even the French adopt pigeon English as a means of communication.

“Yes.”

“Salt water he kaikai [eat] calico belong me ; boat all same.”

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“Eh!” said the man in surprise; then, grasping the situation, he added, with a smile, “Plenty calico stop along me. Very good you come, master?”

Rocco demurred. This was not the garden of Eden, and he hardly felt like facing a whole village in that guise. So the man gave him his gun to defend himself, and went off to get the articles of clothing he still kept in his box. As he skipped up the slope a voice called after him—

“Hai! We two fellow plenty hungry.”

“A’ right!”

In a short time he was back again with food and clothing.

“They treated us right royally,” said Rocco, “made us welcome, and feasted us with pork and fowls and oranges. It was Paama we were on. The tide had carried us right out into the open ocean, but—by the mercy of God—we were borne back again far enough to touch the land! Three days later, Morin’s boat came along trading. And here we were. Good fellow, Morin!”

After breakfast he asked me to have a look at his back. It was covered with sun and salt-water blisters from the nape of his neck down to the back of his knees. I was astonished at his physique. He was as stout and muscular as a young bullock. He calculated that they had been drifting about for thirty-six hours. Doubtless it was his great strength and the warmth of the sea-water that enabled him to sustain the boy and to survive.

He did not stay long, but hastened homewards. He rather feared the people in our neighbourhood, and was feared in return. Once he camped in our boat-house, and I noticed that himself and his men were armed to



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the teeth. It was easily explained. There was a skull with holes through it hanging in one of the "mels" on the mountain-side. It swung there before the eyes of the men of Melbongan, and the gaping holes showed the track of one of Rocco's bullets. The bushmen would not forget!

A few weeks later starvation stared us in the face. We took our old boat and went to Ranon, on the way to Pentecost, seeking food. When Rocco understood, he said—

"Don't. You will never come back. I can lend you rice—if that will do?"

"How much?"

"Twelve bags."

"Thanks!" And he sent us home with the boat filled with rice and yams.

Two years passed by, full of strange events, and we were again in the heart of the cool season. At day-break a sail was descried a few miles away, and a boat could be seen approaching. It was Rocco's new schooner. All this time he had been a good friend to us, and his door was ever open. But his end had come! The mate, a half-caste, with pale drawn face, poured out his tale of sorrow. They had been anchored near the bay on N.E. Santo, described in an earlier chapter. The two wives of a Santo chief had quarrelled, and at nightfall one of them joined the recruits on board. In the morning some two hundred people gathered on the beach, and Rocco put off for more recruits. While he chattered with the people, a man stepped forward and offered him some sugar-cane. He accepted it, and as he leaned over the stern to take it, another man shot him through the chest at close quarters. Rocco fell back into the boat. The bullet

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which passed through him found lodgment in Piti's knee. The people then fired on the crew with shot and ball, wounding another man severely. They were brought to us for help.

As for Rocco, his wound was fatal. He was taken to the mission-station of the priests, and laid in their best bed. In vain they supported his failing strength with sips of wine, and strove to stanch the bleeding. The wounded man was restless and full of wrath.

"D—n that scoundrel!" he hissed, clenching his fists. "Could I but get a grip of him——!" The blood rose in his throat and cut the sentence short.

"Brother, speak not so. Death is here!" urged the senior priest solemnly, as he applied another clean towel.

For a brief space there was silence in the room, broken only by the ticking of the clock on the wall and the heavy breathing of the sufferer. Meanwhile the Brothers in turn went out to put on their cassocks and bring in lighted candles. As the strong man saw these preparations for his end, he broke down completely, and the tears began to course down his cheeks—

"God have mercy! God have mercy!" he sobbed.

"Son!" said the priest commandingly, holding up the crucifix before him, "behold thy Saviour! Thy sins are forgiven thee!"

In the afternoon he breathed his last, and was buried beside the native church. A French man-o'-war punished the people and arrested the offender. He was found working in the mission-house, hoping to be screened thereby. Hostility was aroused. The priests had to flee. When, after the lapse of some months,

Rocco's son came with a heavy tombstone to cover the grave, he was too late. The heathen had wreaked vengeance on the dead. The body had been quartered among the villages, the bones ground into arrow-points, and the skull, set on a pole, subjected to the utmost indignity.

Such was Rocco's end. Report had said he could be cruel and vengeful, and this retribution may have been his due. But for us the law of kindness was ever in his mouth. He had always the cup of cold water to offer, and much more that was grateful, because he deemed "these little ones" true disciples. If such were his motive, "he shall in no wise lose his reward," and that weak germ of faith shall yet find sustenance unto life. Even if, as some may think, he deserved and obtained the harder lot, may the "eternal punishment"¹ prove, as in the softer words of the original, but an "age-long pruning," and the "fire," as in the Gehenna of Jerusalem, a purifying flame.

"According to thy faith be it unto thee. Fare thee well!"

¹ See Trench's 'N. T. Synonyms,' pp. 24, 25, and the remarks thereon by Dr Cox in 'Salvator Mundi,' p. 140. Also Liddell and Scott's Lexicon.

CHAPTER VI.

The First Operation.

WE had not been long on the island when I was called upon for an exhibition of medical skill.

We were sitting at breakfast in the camp on the beach. A number of men and lads came along in a state of excitement. The Mal of Puluwuwa had sent a message. A youth had died overnight, and Mal wished me to come. Not knowing how much they might mean by the word "dead," I went down to see. Yes, the youth was dead, stark and cold. The chief, Mal-Melun, was standing by, a look of puzzled wisdom on his face, and a bunch of fuzzy roots in his hand. I looked at him. He responded.

"I want you to diagnose the poisoner."

"Ah!" Here was a chance of striking a blow at their heathenism. The youth was beyond help, but I might save the life of some innocent victim of their superstitions. Mal held out the bunch of roots, and intimated that in these the poisoner had brought the death-dealing spirit. He had found them beside his "war-war" at daybreak.

I knelt down beside the body, and with all due gravity examined the eyes and mouth, and tapped out the chest.

"No man or spirit killed him, Mal. He died of pneumonia."

"How? What is that?"

I explained. He had been over-heated in paddling a canoe, and had probably caught a chill. They were satisfied. There was no shooting.

My next patient was a pig—also dead. (A canny people these!) I examined its throat. It had died of a disease resembling diphtheria.

Thereafter I was called in to see Mal-Melun's daughter—a fair and pretty girl with a Jewish cast of features. A chief's daughter, she knew it, and had determined to lead her young husband a dance before finally submitting to his authority. Her trouble was soon diagnosed—hysteria of the naughty-child type. She helped in the diagnosis by spitting out two doses of medicine and spilling two pannikins of water,—and they had to be brought a distance. As she was about to repeat the performance, I doused her sharply with the water, face and neck, and prescribed a good whipping. The remedy was effectual (it was enough to mention it), and left no ill-will. Hers was the first and last case of that kind.

One Sunday afternoon a clean witty fellow, called Charlie, came along.

"Doctor, my nose he no good. He all same bad pipe; he no draw."

"You've got a cold, Charlie."

"I tink so. You got medicine belong smell?"

I bethought me of the ammonia-bottle, and went for it.

"Now, Charlie, take a good smell,—gently!"

I was too late. He had applied his nose, and taken a sniff like the snort of a horse. The effect was

magical. With an exclamation that made me feel a sinner, he leaped into the air and dropped off the gangway into the sand.

“Strong medicine, Charlie?”

“My word!”

But it was I who got the greater shock. I had no idea they were so like their European brethren!

These were comical trifles, but I found it best to take them all gravely. In each case a yam was courteously presented as a kind of fee. It was the same here as with medical men in civilisation. One got more credit by trifles than by the hardest and most skilful achievements of one's life. But the trifles led the way to more serious work. We were summoned to Naubu, the centre of heathenism at this end of the island, and brought back with us, on a bush-made stretcher adown the tracks, and round the coast in the boat, a young man with a large empyæma. In the presence of three of the bush chiefs it was aspirated, and a quantity of thick fluid abstracted. Operation by lamp-light followed, with good results. The amount of discharge that escaped from the wound was astonishing. It must have half-filled his chest.

He did well. Within forty-eight hours he was able to rise and walk about. For safety we transferred him from the big hut, which was now used as a hospital, to a cleaner place. But at nightfall he forced his way out past his guards to sit in the chill evening breeze; and when he was discovered, was colder than if he had been dipped in the sea. Next morning his condition was so serious that his brother, who had come with him for company, was sent to tell his relations. He, instead of bringing help, fled to the hills, to hide with fear among friends in the woods. However, we met

the patient's old father, and his uncle, a tall gaunt savage, at the top of the valley. At their entreaty, and to prevent mischief, which was already brewing, the boat was soon on its way homeward with its dying freight.

Rounding Dip Point we were caught in a fierce squall of wind and blinding rain. The boat was run ashore; but the yellow water poured down upon us from the cliffs overhead, and a sea was rising. We were all drenched to the skin. For the sake of the living, we had to turn back. But Manto, the patient, protected by sail and umbrella, seemed better.

Towards evening a troop of young savages came down the valley to carry him home. They were most anxious that he should not die on this side of the range, as they feared that shooting might follow. Hoping to revive the flickering spark of life, we put them off till morning. Through the long night we nursed him as he lay on the white lime floor of our temporary dining-room, screened from the draught and warmed by the fire of a tinker's can. During the midnight watches those two weird-looking savages, his father and uncle, remained at his side, observing every movement and commenting on—to them—the strange objects around.

The morning (a Sunday) dawned and brought no additional hope. Fain would I have kept him, but the bearers had come again. Wrapped in blanket and quilt and covered by an umbrella, the dying youth was once more borne on mat and stretcher, by a band of his fellows, up the steep acclivities and through the damp woods to his home.

Monday morning came, and with it a presentiment of danger. The only safe way among these people

is to take the bull quickly and boldly by the horns. One pause, and all is lost. We must follow after Manto and prevent bloodshed. But, when I called for volunteers, only two lads were brave enough to respond. These were Willie Bai, a seasoned Queenslander, and Saksar, a green youth from Wakon by the sea. Mr Mansfield had to remain in charge.

As we stepped over the stile a vision of blue eyes met mine, and a voice whispered, "I, too, would come with you, if I weren't sure you would return safe."

In those days faith was young and sure!

Our path lay over the range and through a circuit of eight villages on the plateau, all alarmed and all armed. At the first village on the far side of the ridge we heard that Manto was dead. I asked for a guide. One young man, shamed out of his cowardice, stepped forward. At a warning word from an elder, he drew back again.

"Don't take him," said Willie. "Suppose we die, there will be no fighting; nobody will need to avenge us."

Farther on, the branch of a tree had been felled across the track, blocking the way. It was another warning; and as we advanced beyond it I noticed that the lips of both lads were quivering. Though dark-skinned, both were pale, with a paleness like the bloom on a black grape or a damson plum. To advance thus would lead to disaster. So a halt was called. For a few minutes we stood together on the path and looked upward, to Him whose eye is everywhere. Thereafter, to use their own phrase—*Lo mifar yah*—"their hearts stood strong."

The fourth village was Manto's, and there, on a tree

before the door of the village "mel," hung the frame of his stretcher, where it probably remains to this day. Close by sat the brother, looking grave, with a musket across his knees. We had a short talk. He was quite communicative.

"I hope they are not talking poison?"

"Yes. They say you killed him. The chiefs saw you put the tube in his side."

This was not reassuring. Moreover, Naubu, the largest bush centre, whence the patient had in the first place come, was now close at hand, and through the woods the wind brought a voluminous sound of wailing.

Our steps turned thither; and at length we emerged suddenly from a thicket upon a woman, who, with tears and wild cries, was crouched upon the ground, casting dirt above her head. She was his mother. I took her hand, and whispered a few words to her about a brighter hope and a greater love, and bade her seek to join him by-and-by. The tears for a moment ceased to flow, and she was silent. But at the assurance that her boy had been loved and cared for by the hands of another as tender as her own, her heart was touched again; and, if I must confess it, so were ours, so real was her grief. She was the chief mourner.

Turning round, we saw behind us, to the right, the body of Manto. It was set up on a high bier—the roof of his hut. The hair and body were decorated, and the face powdered with red ochre. In the open space before it was a crowd of wailing savages, the women in front kneeling, the men behind stooping or erect. As a rule the chief mourners are whitewashed from head to foot, and at a distance appear to be wearing

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suits of grey. For a few moments the wailing ceased, while, guided by the father, we came to the domicile of Mal-Kon, the chief. He was closeted with another chief. I insisted on the point that the death was not due to poison; the cause was a natural one, and they had seen with their own eyes some of the vile fluid that escaped. There should be no shooting. Manto's father took up the same plea, and after a brief debate this was agreed to.

Once clear of the village, we sped homeward at a smart pace. It was already past noon, and as we came to a fallen tree I said to Willie—

“Let us sit down now, and take our lunch.”

“No, no, master; it is better we should get home: quick!”

At the next village the chief was hastily erecting a stockade. At the next again, there was no sign of life. I whistled and cooeyed, but elicited no response. Yet there was a pudding cooking over a fire. At another village again all was still. Standing beside the “mel” I called the name of the old chief. There was an unexpected response from a dark corner within. He and another old soul like himself were in hiding; the young men were all out, in arms. They were in a state of alarm and fear, none knowing who were to be the victims. At Lonamin, the last village of the circuit, the men marvelled to see us alive, and relieved their feelings by whistling. From them I gathered that there had been really some danger.

But the day's work was not yet done. At the station we received a warm welcome, for they, too, had a story to tell.

Shortly after our departure a band of six young men, of Manto's age and rank, armed with muskets, took up

a position at the stile above the sea. Somehow our eyes were blind to the dangers around us. Perhaps it was as well, for trust disarms suspicion. A Fanting woman gave the necessary warning.

“Mr Mansfield, those men have come to shoot!”

“What, Lizzie? Where?” She pointed to the stile. He went down the path and spoke to them, bidding them go home. They laughed in a half-hearted way, and one of them said—

“Mun-bwe!” (by-and-by).

He thought there must be some mistake, and turned back, leaving them there. But our own boys realised the danger, and kept under cover. These youths had really come to shoot one or more of them. They were fired, partly with a desire for glory, partly with patriotism for the old heathen ways, and, in any case, would save a whole skin for themselves. Keeping an eye on them, Mansfield saw them kneel down behind the hedge and wait a chance of firing together.

He went down a second time, and again bade them go. They never budged. Then he looked over the hedge, and taking a steady look at each one in turn, and nodding as he recorded each mental note, he said—

“Now I know each one of you. I’ll report you. Just stay where you are a bit longer, and you will be in trouble!”

That was enough. They rose and fled, and were followed by the jeers and cries of our own lads.

After a brief rest and some lunch, we prepared to go after them, armed with pen, ink, and paper. Happily, before we were quite ready the chief of their village was found on the premises, speering for news. He was at once pounced upon and brought into the house. Our whole staff was then assembled.

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“Now, Melun, we want the names of these boys!” •

Melun hesitated. But a voice from this corner and from that refreshed his memory. He saw that nothing was to be gained by simulating ignorance, and in a few minutes we had the whole affair down in writing, and the names attached. Then we proceeded up the valley.

As we went along, taking the chief with us, we met three men on the track. I gave them a sharp message to their chief, Warwar-Mal, to present himself at the station without fail in the morning, adding, as a sop to fetch him, “We understand he is our friend.” The chief had recently been summoned to Fanting at midnight to carry home a dying child. We had heard him open the gate; and as he crossed the grounds the little one expired in his arms. Therefore, he reasoned, as the child died on the mission grounds, the mission folk were to blame. Next day he reappeared with three men armed with muskets, and mixed with the others about the place. But we trusted them so utterly, and, I may say, boldly, that they lost heart, and excused themselves by saying that they could not get a shot at our boys without endangering the life of one of their friends.

At dusk we had the six offenders in a dell at the head of the valley beside the village. They were seated in a circle at the feet of the chiefs; and one by one they rose and put their mark—opposite their names—to the confession of guilt and promise of amendment, the chiefs becoming answerable for its fulfilment. On more than one occasion afterwards these lads wished to join the staff, but our numbers were already too large.

Next morning Warwar-Mal duly appeared with an

escort. The three offenders were sent for, two of whom came, the third was sick. A similar process was gone through as on the previous day. A written confession and retractation was solemnly signed in the presence of all, being witnessed this time by two of the local traders who had just arrived by boat.

And why these documents? They were a prompt and peaceful way of asserting our authority, and of bringing offenders under the thumb of law and right. Besides, at the back of all there was the man-o'-war, *their* friend and ours—as much a providential gift, and to be used, as the sunshine and fresh air, and the cocoa-nuts ripening yellow over our heads.

The people rejoiced in the process, too, and made their little jokes.

“Hai!” cried Shilling-Pineapple (a nickname,—he had once on a time demanded the Brisbane price, and we had to tell him to “Go to Brisbane!”), “come down out of that!” This to a man who was on the carpenter’s platform, innocently examining the tools.

“What now?”

“Come down,” with a twinkle in his eye, “or they’ll ‘paper’ you too!”

This was said within hearing for our benefit.

The people were wrapped about with pallid fear as with a shroud; and they welcomed every new-made rent in its ghostly folds.

Time and again there was to have been revenge with bloodshed, and they seized their muskets in true swash-buckler style. But their wrath ended in vapourings, and the threats expired with the bland and soothing explanation, “We said, *if the missionary were not here.*” Times were changing.

Three weeks later our hearts were made right glad.

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Manto's father and mother, wife, and friends had come with loads of food and bright smiles, returning the blanket, quilt, and umbrella. They wanted to see and thank those who had been kind to their dead boy.

· But from that date onward muskets were tabooed on the station grounds, on pain of confiscation.

CHAPTER VII.

Tatu: A Floweret of the Kingdom.

THE men-o'-war were to serve us in a way we had not even dreamed. A strange agent to use in promulgating the Gospel of the Kingdom! But in the providence of God a strong navy is the bulwark of liberty and the power that makes for peace. Its protecting arm is thrown around the British missionary in all parts of the globe, whether he cares to admit it or not. To-day it is one of the powers ordained of God; and as such we were permitted to use it, and need make no apology for so doing.

There was commotion at the mission-gate. A party of bushmen from the plateau had brought a sick man down the valley for operation. The patient's village was too far away to be visited daily, and much persuasion had been required to induce them to come. At length, guided by Meri-Naim, a quiet little man from Lonamin, they braved the danger. At the gate they learned that a chief at the head of the valley had just died. Instantly they turned and fled homeward by the bushmen's track; but they were too late.

The dying chief had called his four brothers round him: taking a gun rivet of brass from the lobe of his ear, he handed it to the eldest, and said—

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“Mok-mok, the young chief of Lonamin, has robbed me in our dealings, as you know, of a pig. Now, by this charm, he robs me of my life. It is enough. You know what to do.”

At a point above the defile, where the rocks rise high and the ferns almost meet overhead, the four young men lay in ambush. Meri-Naim was the first to pass, hurrying silently and stealthily homeward. A man of Lonamin, too! Suddenly from out the green wall the four guns discharged their contents. Part of his left shoulder was blown away; and, with the blood streaming and his arm dangling, the poor fellow flew up the perpendicular steep towards his home.

The bushmen repaired to their village in great wrath, armed themselves to the teeth, and, with muskets at full cock, came down to the station in a body. They had sufficient self-control to pass the offending village without attacking it, until they had confronted the missionary, which they did with these words—

“Doctor, your word is bad! You assured us that the road was safe. We came. Now look! these people shoot. Suppose you bring a man-o’-war and punish them, good! If not, we fight.”

“Ah!” I said with some disgust, “the heart of man-Ambrym is hard, hard as these stones, and black, very black. We have not come here to punish and to fight, but to teach you to put away your muskets, and forgive your enemies, and live in peace.”

“No, master,” was the reply, “that talk no good belong man-Ambrym; all same water. Suppose you no punish them, we fight. Meantime we watch.”

With that they disappeared into the woods again.

A hush fell on the valley. The road was closed. Men went about stealthily, and the more exposed

tracks were avoided. The chiefs were to assemble to discuss the outrage and to prevent a repetition, but when the appointed time came they remained in their villages.

Mr Mansfield went up and brought Meri-Naim down. He was a good patient, and progressed well. But, fearing poison and hearing whispered threats, he fled home at dead of night. He was brought down a second time, and some friends with him for company. One of these was Tatu.

Word was sent to the offenders to come with their chiefs to the station on the following Monday morning, in order to arrange an amicable settlement. I had no intention of calling in the services of a man-o'-war, for, as a rule, commanders do not interpose in affairs that are intertribal. However, when the Monday morning came, H.M.S. *Tauranga* steamed round the point and dropped anchor in the fairway. A few minutes later we were seated in the captain's cabin listening to his request.

"We are giving you but a brief call this time," he said; "only half an hour. In truth, we are seeking a supply of fowls and vegetables."

I was sorry we could not oblige him. The fact was, the vegetables of civilisation had refused to take kindly to the volcanic ash, and the attempt to grow them ended in failure.¹ Fowls, too, were few and scarce.

We had something good to offer—kids; but at that time we had not ourselves learned to appreciate them as an article of diet. After explaining matters, I said—

"We, too, have a request to make, Captain."

"Yes! What do you want?"

¹ This applies only to Ambrym; they grow well on most of the islands.

“A detachment of marines.”

He looked up with a smile of astonishment.

The case was explained to him.

“But you know we do not interfere in purely tribal affairs.”

“This is more than a tribal affair. It threatens to close the road to the interior, may lead to bloodshed, and may endanger the mission.”

“Well, is there any danger of my men being involved in a fight?”

“None. By helping us you will, in fact, check all fighting.”

He was quiet for a few minutes, and then said quietly—

“Very well.”

Within half an hour the mission boat was leading the way through the reef shorewards, followed by two boats flying the white ensign and manned by the sailors, or marines, in white uniforms. One of our party went on ahead to gather the people together, and to prepare them for what was to follow. Half an hour later Mr Mansfield guided Captain Lang and the lieutenant with the body of seamen up the valley to the rendezvous. The captain took his seat on a big log in the centre of the village; the men stood to arms with bayonets fixed; and the one-eyed chief with the offenders sat on the ground in the midst. A senior teacher (Willie Bai) interpreted. The captain spoke very quietly, bidding them listen to the new teaching, cease from fighting, and make some reparation to the people whom they had injured. As Captain Lang has since lost his life in the China seas, I may freely quote this sentence from the diary describing him,—

“A very affable man, with most courteous and win-

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ning manner, but with all the firmness and dignity of a commander."

Thus, indeed, we found all the commanders of our British warships whom it was our good fortune to meet in these islands.

The sly old chief evidently thought so too. After we had gone, he hastened to construct a letter of the twigs and coloured leaves proper to his rank, expressive of his respect and containing a promise of obedience. He was down on the beach close upon our heels, and, as the captain stepped into his boat, presented it in person. It was received, and kept as a memento.

Two days later the chiefs of the two villages met; pigs were exchanged, likewise green leaves, and a paper was signed by representatives of both sides, ending the strife and promising to do all in their power to preserve peace.

But this was only part of our gain. The other and better part was Tatu. I have been tempted to linger over his story—and not merely because of its pathos. His effort and its fate are typical of the lot of many among the rank and file of native teachers, whose record is too often forgotten, if not despised.

He was a shy, gentle lad, with very dark eyes and shining white teeth. After Meri-Naim had recovered from his wound, and was able to return home, Tatu continued with us. He had lost his fear of poison, and had found a new affection.

One evening, after tea, we were examining the results of the day's efforts. This time it was the newly erected posts and wall-plates (rough enough to be sure, and of poles) of the native church. Tatu was keenly interested, and in an interval of silence ventured to make some remarks which arrested my attention. His eyes

were sparkling, and there was a brightness in his face that of itself made one look and listen.

“What is that Tatu is saying?”

“He says he is going to build a church in Lonamin and become the teacher, and visit all the villages round.”

Such in truth was the lad's newly-formed purpose (he was only about sixteen), and he set about it with all the energy of which he was capable. The purpose became an all-absorbing passion.

Thereupon Tatu took his place with the other lads in training. We were working on industrial lines, and the amount of manual labour to be got through was great. They were engaged to work, and were housed, fed, clothed, and paid a fair wage. We hoped that while they were learning to handle spade and oar, saw and brace, the paint-brush and the level, they would also be influenced by teaching and example, and, developing a love for higher things, would become teachers and evangelists to their fellow-islanders. They were learning also to nurse, to dress wounds, to watch at the bedside, to teach the lower classes in school, and to take a minor part in the services. All through our history we had classes in English at noon, and in the native tongues by lamp-light. Again and again school work was organised and set on foot, half the day being devoted to it, only to be rudely upset by a fresh disaster. The pen had to be laid aside once more, and the hammer and saw taken up again.

Tatu was a slow scholar: not that he lacked intelligence and grip,—indeed he grasped ideas more rapidly than his fellows,—but being used to the free, natural life of the woods, he found it almost impossible to harness

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the faculties down to the routine of school work. Yet he quickly mastered the hymns, prayers, and passages in his primer, absorbing the ideas to impart them again to his young companions and fellow villagers.

So shy and demure was he that the other lads were inclined to make a butt of him. Yet, when he did make a retort, in mother wit he surpassed them all. For the Gospel does not destroy the spirit of fun, even in black boys. He was pure-hearted, and as sensitive to evil as the mimosa to the touch of a rude finger. During our absence for a year in England and the Colonies, Tatu remained on the station with the other lads, in charge of the senior teachers. But not for long. He was soon gone back to his beloved Lonamin. We thought at first it had been due to fear of poison. Long afterwards we found that he had disapproved of some things the boys had been doing, and felt more at peace alone.

Every Sunday morning he was away early, accompanied by one or two of the older ones and carrying a picture roll, to hold a service among his people. After his baptism he could not rest till he had permission to build a church. He had chosen Peter as his baptismal name; and truly, it suited him. For with a whole heart he had left all to follow the track of Him whose "blessed feet were nailed, for our advantage, on the bitter cross."

Doubtless as he passed through the woods or explored in the bush, he had already chosen and selected the poles and saplings that were suitable for posts and rafters. He had also picked a good site beside the track at the entrance to the village, and had got permission from the owner, a sympathiser, to build on it. But this energy and enthusiasm began to evoke opposi-

tion. The chiefs here, as elsewhere, were strongly conservative. They were not disposed to be converted in a body and at the instance of this girlish and crack-brained youth. For so they regarded him. They liked the missionaries, and were glad of the open road to the sea, and of the tribal peace and freedom from fear; but they liked mission and missionary best at a distance. Religious toleration was a new-fangled notion, and they would none of it.

It was at this point we had always to step in and exercise firmness. And we did so once and again for Peter-Tatu and on behalf of his young followers. Tatu I still prefer to call him.

So, one hot afternoon, a small party of us might have been seen slowly climbing the mountain wall, shaded by the clinging growth from the glare of the sun. We were going up to the plateau to buy the land on which the church was built. Our light load consisted of calico and tobacco. Should these fail we would tempt the chiefs with gold. As we ascended I overheard the boys joking in their own tongue at Tatu's expense.

"Ha! ha!" laughed one of them, "did you note Peter's collar?"

"Ay, did I; why does he not invest in some soap?"

"Why? Because water and bushmen are not related."

It was quite true. The bushmen do not often venture down to the sea, and a bath was possibly the last thing they would think of when there. But the salt-water folk had nothing to boast of. They might swim and dive for clams and turtle, but not for the pleasure of a wash. Towels are matters of training and of luxury, and without them a salt-water bath under the

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tropical sun is a very sticky affair. It left the skin in a sore condition, and in a short time blacker than ever. So they, like the bushmen, prefer to rub themselves down with a bunch of green leaves, or to cleanse and polish the skin with cocoa-nut oil.

Tatu could stand, and perhaps deserved, a little chaffing. The writer of "Pacific Tales" might make copy out of such a rough diamond, but we who knew him knew also the light that burned and sparkled unseen. The polish would come, from the Master's own hand.

He and his companions were already exposed to a mild degree of persecution. So far it was the only footing we had as yet secured upon the plateau; and from it we had hoped to throw a chain of stations across the island. Hence our visit that afternoon to secure both church and land. We called the chiefs together; they were slow to come, and had evidently agreed to oppose us. However, by gentle yet firm insistence we got them to sell the site and the gardens around.

It was a general rule with us to encourage the people to give the land and provide the framework. On that condition we paid for the plaited thatch and the labour of thatching, in coloured prints and tobacco. Even the most hostile could not resist the chance of a good smoke. So Tatu's bitterest enemies helped to plait, if not to sew on, the thatch. One old scoundrel brought in and threw down his bundles, in the heart of which it was well known there was a lot of bad leaf. As he turned to go, he muttered villainously, so that Tatu should hear of it—

"If he gives me away, I'll shut his eye and burn him out."

But Tatu was not to be intimidated, and quietly reported the matter. He would be faithful at all cost. So every man had to open his bundles and count out the contents, and was treated with strict impartiality, though in a kindly way so as to spare the lad any avoidable ill-will.

But though one of Tatu's gentle nature shrank from the hostile looks and abuse of the men, he braved all threats, and went forward to his purpose quietly and brightly, with love for them in his heart and a conviction that he was doing the right.

Some of the men had watched the building go up with jealous eyes. Should it interfere with their heathen practices they had a sure remedy. They had only to shake the head and mutter the word "aple" (poison, magic). It was an ominous threat, and equivalent to "He will be poisoned!"

It struck terror into the heart of the uninitiated and fearful, and made the flesh of all but the strongest creep. For the chiefs took care that their "poison" should work, if not by poisoning the food or through nervous shock, then by secret violence—a species of thuggism.

Those who were nervous or superstitious collapsed at once. A Christian native returned from Queensland with his wife and family. He was one such fearsome fellow, and was found at nightfall throwing stones into the bush to frighten away the evil spirits. Mal quickly read Jimmy's character, and tried his hand on him in the dusk by spitting on him, or by throwing some small object and striking him. Jimmy, believing that he was "poisoned," dashed off to the sea and plunged in, clothes and all, to wash off the evil effects of the charm. But he felt worse, and no wonder.

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For the cold water made him shiver the more. Then he rushed up to the house, his teeth chattering, and himself half-demented.

“What did Mal throw at you?”

“I don’t know; but he poisoned me!”

“Nonsense! Mal hasn’t the power. Don’t be silly.”

He was taken to the kitchen fire, rubbed, put into warm clothing, and a hot stimulating drink administered, with the words, “There, Jimmy, that has cured you!”

Forthwith he was better, and his life saved. Confidence begot confidence. Otherwise he would have been dead before morning.

Mal excused his own failure by saying that those who had been to Queensland had become immune.

Tatu was built of tougher metal. They might procure a hair from his head, a shred of his clothing, or a scrap of the food he had been eating, and roll these up in leaves, and hang the tiny, mysterious parcels to their “makis,” where they dangled in the wind before the eyes of all. They might place their death-dealing stones where, as he passed, his shadow would fall on them, and might expect the spirits of the stones to cause him to wither and die. He feared not their evil machinations, and by an act of sheer faith he defied their “aple.” Sitting on his doorstep in the evening light, he spelled the words on his favourite page—

“The Lord is my shepherd”—

or, as it reads in his own tongue,

“Jehovah keeps looking, to protect me.”

“This Yafu (Master),” he said to himself, “is greater than Mok-mok, or Salsal-Melun, or any Mal on Ambrym.”

Again, when the darkness had settled close around their dwellings, instead of attending the “sing-sing” in the village and joining in the songs and refrains, which were not all of them too clean, he might have been found with two or three younger companions, seated round the fire in his own hut, teaching them and singing with them such words as these—

“Jesus says to us, ‘Shine your reddest light
Like a glowing firestick in the blackest night.’
Dark is every village, therefore we must shine,
You in your hut’s corner, and I in mine.”

One Sunday morning we had occasion to pass through his village early, and entered the church unexpectedly as he was in the midst of his address. Here verily was a prophet, writhing and twisting in his seat with the violence of his delivery, as he unfolded to his little congregation the meaning of a large Scripture picture. There was a small gathering of about twenty souls, youths (his companions), little boys, and two or three women, including his mother. But what most impressed one was Tatu’s intensity. When we rose to sing the last hymn, he was choir and organ in one, and swept the others along by the force and rush of his own voice. They were singing the chorus—

“Yes, Jesus loves me ;
Yes, Jesus loves me.”

As we listened, I heard a voice far back through the centuries saying—

“What went ye out for to see? A reed shaken

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with the wind? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet—my messenger!”

Such he truly was, and had got the length of visiting the villages around and speaking with the young folk, and such older ones as would listen.

The last note of the hymn had died away, and Tatu, standing at the desk, raised his arms to pronounce the benediction, but before he had reached the Amen, one's medical ears detected a rift in the lute, or shall I say, a rent in the bellows. Although he knew it not, the dreaded “aple” was already at work.

There was a hoarseness of voice and a shortness of breath that indicated a loss of lung power, and possibly incipient disease. The strain was telling. To display calmness and utter fearlessness in the face of known hostility and danger, as Tatu was doing, costs an heroic expenditure of nervous energy. And he had been doing this for many months.

It was in vain that he was urged, even commanded, to remain at the head station where he might be better fed and free from care. After a day or two, he was back to his charge again.

At length he was found to be ill. The dread bacillus had found a lodgment in his weakened frame. In this hothouse climate, once the disease gets a hold it makes short work of its victim. A year is about the limit. For three months Tatu had the cosiest corner in the hospital; but rapid improvement was followed by steady decline. It was the hot season; the air was loaded with moisture; the best remedies were powerless to combat the climate. At Lonamin opposition was keen. As soon as the fatal nature of his illness was known, his enemies began to glory. They

took the credit to themselves, and their "aple" became the more dreadworthy.

Suddenly the young man who occupied Tatu's hut, and took care of the church and garden, became ill and died. In panic the young congregation dispersed and fled. Why? It was whispered from one to the other—

"Gulgul-Naim has poisoned him!"

So probably he and his followers had, in a way we shall have occasion to describe. Fear became acute, and their young hearts were filled with terror.

But this was Tatu's opportunity. He would return to his post; and one day, unobserved, he quietly left the hospital and went home. Looking upon his wan face and wasted limbs, his friends saw but ample proof of the "aple" of their foes. His mother wept and pleaded with him.

"O my Tatu, come back to the village; perhaps they will cease to poison you."

"Mother, they cannot poison me. It is Jehovah's will."

"I cannot understand your Jehovah!" she replied, through her tears.

"It will all come right, mother. He loves us."

He essayed to go, as before, from village to village, carrying a large umbrella, which he had procured from Sydney, to protect him from the sickening heat of the sun. By degrees his strength failed him, and his visits ceased.

His companions had deserted him through fear, and he lived alone, a solitary, dying youth, but still at his post. Would that we knew more of his thoughts. Brave to the last, his faith must have been rewarded at some point in his brief career with a clear vision



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and an undoubted call. Otherwise he could not have endured.

Now and again a known voice would summon him to the gate, where he would find a few cocoa-nuts or plantains dropped inside the stile. Or his mother came with a slice of baked pudding, or the end of a roast yam. Some Sundays he was cheered by a visit from the station, when his little store of necessaries would be replenished. But often during those dark, eerie nights, and many they were, his only company was the swish of the wind through the palms, or the glow of a dying ember.

His church long since fell into decay. Its site is now probably hidden by a fast-growing thicket of cotton scrub, the haunt of the snake and the midnight bat. Yet, if the will be taken for the deed, his life cannot be judged a failure.

“The daisy, by the shadow that it casts,
Protects the lingering dew-drop from the sun.”

And Tatu, too, carried a heart of gold, and wore a crown of white innocence. He was but a floweret of the kingdom crushed at dawn beneath the iron hoof of circumstance.

CHAPTER VIII.

A Fresh Disaster.

“SOME dice?”

“You should say ‘please.’”

“Some dice, please, Mister McDowl?”

And the two tiny brown hands were held up again, one of them empty, the other holding a little posy of wild flowers gathered in the bush. The hands belonged to a mite of a maid about two feet high, but old enough to wear a short fringe about the waist. She was appealing to Mr McDowall at the door of the storeroom. He twisted a square of paper into the old-fashioned shape of an extinguisher, filled it with rice, and clapped a biscuit on top, sending the wee, wan face away wreathed in smiles. Then a little boy moved forward and presented a cocoa-nut shell filled with such treasures of the beach—tiny sea-shells—as he could gather. This time the plea was for “biskit.”

The people had not yet recovered from their losses by the hurricane. They were not exactly starving, for the bush yielded various substitutes to live upon. We found them making puddings of fern leaves and hard green berries. Such famine diet lacked in nutriment, especially for the children. They were the

principal sufferers, and showed their want by their languid movements, thin bodies, and sunken eyes. They were not likely to die of starvation, but their weak state made them liable to disease.

A host of friends in the Colonies had risen to our assistance and had sent an abundant supply of biscuit and rice. But those who could had to bring or do something in return for the food. We wished them to value what they received. And there was to be no waste.

But there was another hungry horde in the bush, rapidly becoming foodless—the rats, black and brown. They also discovered that “there was corn in Egypt,” and down they, too, came to get “some dice,” expecting to profit by this unwonted display of generosity. The traps were kept going; but the rats were our undoing. They discovered a stray match.

Thirteen months to an hour had passed since the cyclone, when, in the darkest, deadest hour of the night, we were awakened by the sound of crackling, the smell of smoke, and a glare on the wall. A moment's glance showed that the store and dispensary were on fire, a broad sheet of flame extending from floor to roof. The alarm was given, and the cry of “Fire! Fire!” rang round the station. With naked, bruised feet, in part dress and in undress, the whole staff flew to the rescue, some to the tanks and some to the rooms—to check the flames, and to save all that was possible. The tanks were soon surrounded by fire, and the flames mocked our efforts to stay their progress. Within half an hour the whole place was a pyramid of flame. So intense was the heat that metal fittings fused like glass and the tree-tops

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were set alight. Within an hour the year's labour, the weary toil of so many months, had gone up in smoke.

When the morning dawned there remained but a few ashes and charred posts, and a heap of blackened curled up iron. Not a biscuit was left, not a grain of rice, not a particle of food except a few burnt bananas; and not a dish but the dog's at the back door, and that had again to do honourable service. The whole premises, and with them the medical, hospital, surgical, trade, clothing, and household equipments, were gone. Our beds and a few books and sticks of furniture had been saved; and with these we took refuge in the unfinished church, and in the big hut again.

For a short time we were thrown upon the generosity and gratitude of the traders and natives for the means of subsistence; and right willingly did they come to our aid. Learning the truth, Mal came hurrying across the grounds with a bunch of plantains and a yam. Cromarty returned the biscuits and tea we had given him the previous evening. The traders opened a fund to help to replace the surgical appliances. Two stout mission-houses had arrived, but the greater part of the paints, ironmongery, and glass had perished in the flames.

It was a "sair dunt,"—enough to make one reel. But before day broke our plans were formed anew. We had neither the strength nor the means to begin right away. We must return home, face the Committee, reassure them and our supporters, and return with a new staff of helpers and with materials to lay an adequate foundation. Should success attend our way, the fire had been a godsend.

But how were we to leave our boys in safety? It took us a full fortnight to plan, and to secure everything, that nothing should miscarry in our absence. It was well that this was done, and done thoroughly, for we could not have dreamed of all that was destined to happen.

Albert, whom we had met on board the *May*, had been head teacher for about a year. He was a sterling fellow, wise in word and deed, and among the boys was as "an apple of gold in a basket of silver." The praise is not too lavish. But he was so kind-hearted and trustful that we feared lest he might be overborne by the craftiness of some of the people. So he, seconded by brave Willie-Bai, was placed in charge of one part only—the boys and the work. From the Company's steamer we had secured a fresh supply of trade goods and tobacco. For in the early stages of the Mission it was necessary to keep a case of the "weed." In return for food the heathen will accept for pay nothing else in reason.

These with the cash-box were given to Taffie, a teacher from the island of Nguna. Now Taffie, though not a Welshman, had about him all the wit and romance of a Celt. Kind, and honest to the marrow, he was liked by all, but could be as "slim" as any Boer. He was the last man to "buy a pig in a poke," and, as a proof of this feature of his character, had secured as his wife one of the handsomest lasses in the islands.

Such men as these are the basis of success in all Missions.

The boys would find plenty to keep them occupied, in gathering coral and firewood to burn lime for foundations, in keeping the grounds in order, tending the

goats and live-stock, foraging for food, and in learning and teaching.

The fortnight was about up, and the steamer due, when a fortunate incident occurred. About sunset some canoes arrived from Ranon and beyond. In the tool-house the burned knives, hoes, and axes were being distributed. The teachers could make and fit handles for themselves, and would find the tools useful. We were interrupted by a shout from the bank, above the sea, and a boy rushed up breathless with excitement. A canoe had been stolen by men from a village at some distance along the shore. The Mal of this place had placed a taboo on the beach and on the sea. He had sent me a letter in leaf and twig, demanding payment because some of our girls had walked along the beach to a service at his village. We had let all the heathen know that such a claim was an absurdity. No chief, be he ever so great, could taboo the roads or common tracks. The theft meant that he was going to enforce a toll from the canoes passing at sea. Doubtless he had come to the conclusion that such calamities as had happened could only befall those whose gods were weak, and their power waning.

As we strode along the sand towards the village in the gathering dusk, I must confess to feeling somewhat perturbed. This high-handed theft boded ill to our boys when left to themselves. We could see no sign of the canoe; and as we climbed up to the village above, our indignation fairly blazed up, even to recklessness. Thank heaven that it did so, for it proved our most effective weapon. We demanded to know where Mal was, and at the same moment caught a glimpse of his figure disappearing among the huts. Pursuing him from point to point, we at last came up

to him seated in the darkness of the "mel" among the men. Gripped by the shoulders and shaken, he became frightened. In response to the question—"What have you done this for? Where is the canoe? You'll taboo the sun next!"—he apologised and promised reparation, and called to his men to deliver up the canoe. He was warned that if he dared to interfere with the boys in our absence, a man-o'-war would be at his heels. That was enough. With all due humility—be it said to his praise—he sent several youths to take the canoe back to the station at once. They had smashed up the outrigger and had removed the paddles. Next morning a number of the older men came along in sober mood, bringing the requisite materials. Conversing in undertones, they quietly repaired the canoe, and left it in first-class order.

Thus, not without some misgivings, we had to leave our little flock, and commended them to the care of the Chief Shepherd. They had friends not a few, but were surrounded by some who were as wolves, as time quickly proved. Nor could they be induced, by black or by white, to depart from their instructions.

One day a missionary arrived in his boat to borrow some solder for house-building. The boys thought that he did not look like a missionary. Why, I never learned. And it was some time before Albert could be induced to comply. At length the solder was reluctantly weighed out and a receipt exacted.

On the beach at Aneityum we met Mr Mansfield. He had returned in the mail steamer. Feeling thoroughly fit, and aware of our dire need of help, he had come back at his own risk. He had given himself, body and soul, to the work, and could not remain at home. He afterwards lost the sight in one eye, while

chipping some cast steel, and so carries in the flesh to-day his credentials of service. But he had to go back with us to the Colonies. We needed him to tour among the churches, and make known the wants of the Mission, a task he ably fulfilled.

Meanwhile the boys on Ambrym were passing through the fire. They took greater care of the Mission property than if it had been their own. Day after day they plied their tasks, so as to have something to show for their labour. The months passed rapidly. The steamer at each visit brought them a fresh supply of stores, and occasionally a letter. When the supply ran short and funds were low, they clubbed together and purchased necessaries out of their private savings. Albert indeed spent his all.

This must have been due to native food becoming scarce. They were too scrupulously honest to kill a kid or eat a fowl. The natives are intensely fond of fish, but are poor fishermen. On moonlight nights when the tide is low, the whole village, young and old, will be down on the reef with flaring torches, attracting and catching fish of various kinds.

On such a night the little band lost one of the strongest and brightest of their number, Tekon, a lad of splendid physique. In one of the pools he saw a mottled brown shell moving. The fish was trying to escape, and, to secure the prey, Tekon plunged in his hand and grasped it. The shell-fish, one of the *Conus* family about four inches long, retaliated, stinging him on the point of the big finger of the left hand. He took little notice of the prick at first; but as the tingling increased, he began to suck it. Then he turned giddy.

“Bong! Bong! Come. I’m sick.”



"ONE OF THE . . . BRIGHTEST."

Bong-Naim called Willie, and the three of them went shorewards. Before they reached the top of the bank, Tekon's legs were paralysed. The last few steps he had to be carried. Albert, who was keeping his eye upon the place, went out to meet them. They carried the helpless lad indoors and laid him on a mat beside the fire. Learning the cause of his strange illness, Albert emptied the basket and examined the shell and the fish inside. By this time Tekon's hands and arms had lost all power. Then it dawned upon his anxious comrades that he was going to die. They knelt around him, and each in turn prayed all that he knew. And from one after the other the cry went up—

“God, save our brother!”

But there was no answer—no improvement that they could see—and the paralysis was already creeping upon the dying lad's throat. Then it occurred to Willie that Tekon had not confessed, and possibly this was a judgment for some offence. Taking upon himself the responsibility of confessor, he asked—

“Tekon, tell us, have you been doing anything bad?”

“No! no!” came the faint reply; “God loves me, is calling me!”

This, then, was the answer.

It is a beautiful word, the native word for love, the one he used. Literally translated, it means, “God's heart keeps calling, calling for me.” And “the love of God” in the native is “the heart-callings of God.” Another most picturesque phrase is locked up in their word for “Good-bye.” It is literally, “Fire in the sky again to you,” that is to say “Another dawn,” and is equivalent to our Old English “Good-morrow!”

Those were Tekon's last words, for he had already passed into the "eternal morrow." He had breathed his last within an hour, and was gone before some of his companions knew him to be ill.

The news spread like wildfire. For a short time fear and consternation reigned. Then Albert and Willie realised their responsibility. Chow, the Chinaman, at request, came to their assistance. We had made coffins for our own Christian lads and for the traders to give them a decent burial, and now were repaid. Chow turned to at once and made the coffin for his lesser brother—and refused payment.

With sunrise the heathen began to gather; and when the time came for the burial, the crowd, angry and armed, was so great—to use their own words—as to darken the grounds and hide the grass.

The chief bade the women wail, but Albert at once forbade it.

"Tekon was a Christian. You must not cry for him. This ground belongs to the Missionary, and we can't let you wail here."

Then threats were made, and Albert and Willie were warned to be off—flee to their own side of the Island. Said Willie—

"No! We stop here. We are responsible to our master for everything here. We'll die first. Then, perhaps, you may carry us home!"

By this time Albert had opened his book.

"Let us sing!" And on quavering voices the strains arose, of—

"There is a happy land
Far, far away!"¹

¹ Translated by Rev. Wm. or Chas. Murray.

Before the brief service had ceased, the wrath of the heathen had subsided. When the coffin was lifted they all quietly followed it to the sea-shore. Each one as they filed past dropped a croton leaf or a white flower into the open grave, their silent farewell, and the gathering dispersed.

But night after night the senior lads kept guard as sentries to prevent a possible surprise; and so they continued till our return.

CHAPTER IX.

The Volcano Awakes.

THOUGH so far removed in time and space from classic Greece, once and again a fact would occur to link our thoughts with the distant and cultured past.

To the imagination of the Greeks, wherever a volcano was found, there Vulcan had his forge. To the mind of these natives, the hidden fires were being stirred by the spirit of some great chief, one of the only gods, or demi-gods, they knew. For seven years past Vulcan's anvil here had been silent and his workshop closed. We could have imagined the giant was dead, had not occasional shocks warned us that he was but turning in his sleep. At length he raised his head.

Would he, too, object to our presence on Ambrym? We were not long kept in doubt.

Towards midnight on the 15th October 1894 the shocks began in rapid succession, being repeated every two minutes. The whole island trembled and plunged like a frightened horse. So severe were they that once the inter-island steamer, upwards of thirty miles away, seemed to come to a stand-still. The huts and trees rocked like a ship at sea. The people in terror rushed into the densest scrub, and hid themselves in the dark-

ness. In Taffie's own expressive words—"Ambrym, he dance!"

In the little village of Foluk, far up among the hills, the people in trepidation tumbled out of their huts. To their amazement explosions were taking place right around them. Masses of glowing metal were being hurled up the hillsides and flying through the bush in all directions, as they described it, "all the same as pigeons." Then they saw a river of fire, fifty feet high, rolling towards them. It was a flow of molten lava that had burst up through the ground. The reports were deafening. The villagers fled. Two women with two little children rushed to the nearest great tree and hid in its folds. They were buried in the flood, which rushed onward towards the sea. The dust began to fall. A great black cloud rose up in the centre of the island and spread till at length it had blotted out the rising sun, and had wrapped all in darkness again.

That same evening the officers of H.M.S. *Dart*, the most useful and best known little warship in Pacific waters, had finally completed their soundings and surveys of the coast. They found the island to be twenty-four miles long from east to west, and seventeen wide. The centre is occupied by a circle of mountains whose summits range from 2000 feet to nearly 4000 feet in height. The irregular slopes, carved into a multitude of hills, ridges, and valleys, are densely wooded, and green to the water's edge. Within the circle of mountains there remained a large space still to be accounted for. From one side of this unknown space there rose the lip of a great crater, which, viewed from the north-west, stood up against the bright sky as an enormous grey dome.

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The *Dart* had anchored for the night at Dip Point.

About midnight the watch observed the heavy clouds rising above the crater and spreading over the island, and then, beneath them, a faint red glow.

At dawn the ship proceeded eastward along the shore. The sun just risen was showing red as through a fog. Another lava stream, its course traceable by rising columns of dense black smoke, was seen to be coming down to the sea, and the ship was stopped to watch its progress. "It wound through the hills like a great fiery serpent. Presently," writes the Commander, "the head of the stream appeared, a red-hot, rapidly moving, molten mass, some 20 or 30 yards wide, with lumps of slag tossing about on the surface." Where the "serpent" of fire glided into the sea, a dense pillar of steam rose straight up to a height 4000 feet. Enormous bubbles lifted the water to 50 and 100 feet, and burst violently outward like the explosions of heavy submarine mines. For safety the warship had to "move on." She picked up several canoes and towed them clear of danger towards Dip Point. The natives wanted to come aboard and stay. They were fast learning to appreciate the friendship of the man-o'-war. After much persuasion they consented to paddle away to the Mission station.

"You come back, Captain?"

"I'll come again to-night."

"No gammon?"

"No gammon!"

The labour ship *Lochiel* was there. Her boats at once pulled shorewards to gain recruits.

"Come along, boys!" shouted the decoy. "Come



"WHERE THE 'SERPENT' OF FIRE GLIDED INTO THE SEA."

along Queensland. Missionary, he go. Hell fire he catch you now!"

"No fear!" was the reply. "We fellow got man-o'-war."

Already they were confident, and proud of the new relationship. And, though matters grew worse all day, the dust and obscurity increasing, the noise of explosions and burning continuous and alarming, landslips occurring, and the ground in a constant state of tremor and shifting under their feet, the boats pulled up and down shore and the decoy called in vain. They won two recruits only. Our boys, indeed, must have played their parts bravely—as bravely, perhaps, as the sentry at the gate of Pompeii.

At 3 P.M., just as the flames began to show over the gap at the head of the valley, the *Dart* reappeared. She found the natives assembled in groups on the beach in a condition of terror, the women and children crying and huddled up together. The boats were sent in, and over 80 embarked with their boxes and belongings. Doubtless the whole population would have come, but that they feared "poison" more than fire. If they remained where they were, they might be roasted, but they would not be eaten. Under the wing of the war-ship no such fate could befall them. But the memory of recent events on the south coast was too fresh; so the villagers remained, chained by fear each to their own few acres.

The others, most of whom were from Fanting and our own station, were landed at Ranon and housed in the school. Four days later they were returned to the station, and, as the dangers were subsiding, the officers proceeded to explore.

Two points are of special interest. They found

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that there is a fissure in the earth's crust extending the whole length of the island. Placed upon the line of this fissure are the lava springs and the craters, living and dead. Again, on climbing over a gap in the coastal range formed by the circle of mountains, they found themselves to be looking down on a plain of ashes—the hitherto unknown space—five to six miles in width, “probably the remains of an enormous crater, and the basal wreck of a mountain which must have been some 10,000 feet high.” Possibly its wreckage forms a large part of the ashen soil of the rest of the island. At the western edge of the plain two more recent craters have formed, Marum and Benbow. Each is a mile wide, and the walls fall sheer down from 800 to over 2000 feet to the floors inside.

Over the hills and hillocks of loose ashes and cinders the officers climbed and stumbled,—at times sinking up to the waist in bogs of cinder slush,—to reach Benbow, the crater that was now active. Having at last reached the lip, on the lower side, “a narrow knife-edge of ash,” they looked right down on the floor of the crater. In it there were two holes or fissures, from one of which issued white ash and steam, from the other black dust and smoke, the latter rising to great heights in the sky, even to 15,000 and 26,000 feet. From far below could be heard a roaring like a heavy surf breaking on the shore. Volleys of stones shot through the smoke and kept up a roll as of musketry. The molten lava had welled up as high as the floor of the crater, over 2000 feet above the level of the sea. Then the great weight of the column had ruptured the earth miles away among the hills outside and below. Hence the springs of lava at Foluk and elsewhere.

The stream from Foluk had flowed to the west and formed a burning lake a mile wide. Thus the crater had been relieved of its contents, and fiercer destruction averted.

Dust fell almost continuously till the trees drooped with its weight. The western end of the island became of a uniform light-slate colour. The white-wash survey marks on the rocks along the coast disappeared in the general greyness. Viewed from the west, the sides of Marum and Benbow appeared in the sunshine to be snow-clad, and the cliffs of Dip Point showed perfectly white.¹

At the end of six weeks the *Dart* steamed away to Sydney to avoid the hurricane season. The crater was still belching forth its contents with undiminished activity.

On the beach the captain said good-bye to the natives, who stood around with quiet, sad faces. Krong, the principal guide, was almost dissolved to tears.

“Captain, what is your name?”

“Cust. Why?”

“I will keep it. I will never forget you! My name is Krong. Will you take it and keep it?”

“I will.”

“You won’t forget?”

“I won’t. Good-bye.”

“Taking them all round,” writes the captain, “the natives of Ambrym were about the most friendly we have come across.”

Questioned as to the cause of this trouble—the

¹ For the substance and much of the wording of this chapter I am indebted to the report prepared by Commander H. E. Purey-Cust, R.N., of H.M.S. *Dart*, and published by the Admiralty.

eruption—the native philosophers, like their cousins in more favoured lands, found a woman at the bottom. A chief had stolen the wife of his neighbour on the opposite side of the island. The fire was set agoing by the injured man in retaliation. Frightened at the result of his own act, the latter threw some small pigs into the blow-holes of the lava springs. These were spat out again. The native Vulcan would accept nothing less than tuskers, and with these he was satisfied.

A native wag gave a better reason. He had seen dynamite explode, and knew, evidently, what a rocket could effect, and a compliment also. So he volunteered an explanation, doubtless with a roguish twinkle, keeping his eye on the captain the while—

“Captain man-o’-war put mashes [matches] along ground!” The people saw the flash of wit, and laughed, and the story spread. They were pleased to do the captain honour, for the compliment was well deserved.

CHAPTER X.

The Wisdom and Morals of the Savage.

IN Edinburgh the news was flashed to us that our island had become a smoking cinder-heap.

“From here,” wrote Will, “Ambrym, when we can see it, is like what Abraham saw when he looked towards Sodom. It seems like a great basin, the whole of which is belching out smoke—black murky clouds, and blue-black dust and ashes.”

The physical comparison with Sodom may suggest also a measure of moral depravity which some have been all too ready to attribute to the warm-blooded inhabitants of these islands.

It is true that the moral disease of those Cities of the Plain escaped the destruction of fire and brimstone that was rained upon them, and travelled westward, even to England. We have yet to learn that it found its way to these virgin islands of the Pacific—unless recently imported in the diseased imagination and depraved manners of some stray European or Asiatic.

To look upon these people in their natural state, one could easily imagine their inward thoughts to correspond with their outward appearance. The commander of the *Dart* reported that although the lava was still hot beneath their feet, and the ashes over

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two feet deep around them, the natives, coated and beclouded with the black dust, were already rebuilding their huts, and seemed not the least put out by their hideous surroundings. I have seen the photograph of a group of these men in a rocky dell o'erhung by trees. As the sun's rays smote upon them in the gloom, they resembled that "troop of wandering souls" whom Dante met on the floor of hell; who upon the stranger—

"They their eyebrows bent
As tailor old at needle's eye doth frown,"—

part of those "herds of naked spirits" suffering on the burning sands for sins against nature. But there the likeness ended. Such sins, despite appearances, are, we have reason to believe, unknown to them.

Their morals are truly a hothouse growth. Even as children they have the passions of men and women without the self-control. Under a domestic system which allows the chiefs a monopoly of wives of all ages, and the youths and lads none, illicit commerce is the natural outcome. Their own laws are strict. The guilty one, if caught, would be summarily shot, the whole village turning out with rifles to hunt him. As a rule he escapes and hides till their wrath has cooled. Then his friends mediate, and a fine is paid.

With no check but the natural law which is dimly written upon their untrained consciences, and thrown together in the woods and under the moonlight shadows, in scant raiment clad, they may, and often do, offend and fall.

But "where there is no law there is no sin," and the depravity, though real, is of a lighter degree. To the higher teaching their natures readily respond; and under its dew-like influences their virtues may blossom

in such degree as it is the pleasant design of these pages to record.

The whole world lay between us, and months must elapse before we could reach them, yet were we not long in completing the necessary preparations, and in posting back over land and sea to those who were so eagerly looking for our return.

About nine o'clock on a Saturday night, with silent whistle, we steamed quietly and swiftly round Dip Point, hoping to give them a surprise. We were not due for another two weeks. As the night was dark, the steamer made a wide circle round the Point, and by the light of the stars glided softly up to the anchorage. But our measures were vain! They were all on the beach, with fires alight. As the boat drew near and voices were recognised, the dogs barked, and the little crowd, with a joyful shout, rushed to the water's edge.

Even in the darkness we could discern how well the grounds had been cared for, and noted the straight-trimmed paths and well-stocked garden. The grass was luxurious; but, with their usual over-carefulness, the poor goats were kept outside, eyeing it longingly, to be consoled by the explanation, "Master must see it first!"

The live-stock had greatly increased. The four tanks, standing solitary, were nevertheless full of water which had been caught bucket by bucket. The houses, milk-white within, were as fresh and dry as the air without, and scrupulously clean. Themselves were likewise. In short, everything was in capital order, even to the rickety fences.

This was the best of all welcomes. Truly they had tried their utmost to please,—as they did on a later occasion, when every detail was found in place:

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“Even the door-handles had an extra shine; the little ornaments were filled with flowers; kettle boiling; milk in the pantry; and the almanac arranged to month, day, and date,—but they were a day ahead!”¹

Such faithfulness deserved recognition; nor did we return to them empty-handed. A bale of red blankets and several cases of clothing were among the many presents we had brought for them. As Christianity is introduced, and commerce opens up the islands to the daylight of civilisation, clothing becomes an absolute necessity—garments, simple and coloured, that will neither rob the native of his natural grace nor transform him into a guy. Unfortunately, in the matter of dress, the islanders are inordinately prone to imitate the white man. Among the gifts which came to hand were two scarlet military jackets that had belonged to some disbanded corps. They were new, and too good to burn, and might prove useful on a chill night. As red is a colour dear to the native’s heart, we presented them to Mal and his brother. Alas, the chiefs, obedient to the dictates of vanity, proceeded to display their new regalia elsewhere than in the firelight.

There was a sad side to it all. Sitting on the stile in the dark, listening for the splash of the oars as the boat returned with its successive loads, we heard the story of the volcano’s activity and of Tekon’s death. But the dust had ceased to fall. When morning dawned we found that wind and rain had swept away the ashes, and left all as bright and beautiful as ever. The evidences remained in a thin layer of cement on ridge and roof, and in a new stratum of grey soil. We climbed over the gap in the hills behind, and penetrated to the farthest point we had been before. We crossed the lake of lava twice, and had a peep at the crater.

¹ Letter from Mrs Mansfield.

The lava, still hot, looked like streams and fields of piled up masses of coke. We could trace its course by the silvery clouds lying low among the hills. The people were living on the banks and actually in the forks of the lava-streams, and their faces broadened into smiles as they saw and welcomed us. On the Sabbath we had good gatherings at the main station, and the reports from the out-stations were very encouraging. The work had not gone back in our absence. To us all Ambrym scenes and Ambrym faces, despite the drawbacks, were as cordials. God seemed to be calling us back to the old site,—central, healthy, ready, the immediate dangers past,—and to bid our Churches not abandon these sheep to the wolf and the wilderness, but to lead them now into His fold.

Once and again since the eruption, the volcano has flamed and roared, and the fall of ashes has been likened to a "black snowstorm."¹ So dense was it as to shut out sea and sky, and veil the sun. Like thick darkness, it came in at every crack and crevice, and the lamps had to be lighted in the forenoon. But in a few hours the wind may change, and all is bright again.

Observing the care that had been taken of everything in our absence, a keen-eyed matron exclaimed with surprise—"The faithfulness of these boys and girls is astonishing!"

It surprised ourselves, and led us to seek to know what mental and moral equipment they have in their natural state and to determine the foundations on which the native character is built.

So one day I said to Saran (afterwards my pundit, David)—

"Saran, who does man-Ambrym say made the world?"

¹ Letter from Mrs Mansfield.

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“Parakulkul, an old man who lived long ago.”

To them the whole world is limited to the visible horizon, and their own island is, of course, the hub of the universe. All over Ambrym they attribute the creation of the world and its people to this ancient patriarch.

“And who sends the rain and the fruitful seasons?”

“Man-Ambrym can do that. He has that power in himself.”

Such was their rooted belief. The simplicity of the uninitiated is perfect. Storms, fires, and droughts were with them a matter of practical politics. One day we heard the sound of voices and speechifying in the woods. On going to see the cause, we found, in an open space, a gathering of the chiefs and leading men. In the centre was a paddle stuck upright in the ground, probably representing water, and a branch of the blood-tree to represent the yam season, for which rain was so much needed. To the paddle was tied a withering frond of the cocoa-nut palm, while beside it, on the ground, lay two or three small green nuts which had fallen unripe. These and the frond were significant of the severe drought through which we were passing. Mal had convened the chiefs to discover who was causing it. One by one the old men went up to the paddle, laid hold of the palm leaf, and spoke, disavowing any participation in the cause. It was amusing to listen to some of the more timid souls—one old man in particular.

“My father had that power,” he said with quavering voice, “but he never showed me.”

At length a young fellow, Baikon of Lolima, walked boldly up to the paddle and took hold of the leaf. I knew him to be a born liar.

"I have caused the drought," he said, "and I can bring the rain!"

It was a bold stroke for prestige and gain. He was handed the shrivelled nuts, and told to go and make rain at once. If he succeeded, he would demand fees in pigs from all around. If he failed, he would excuse himself on the ground that they had not paid him fees sufficient in advance. In any case he was a man to be feared.

I thought it was time for the missionary to "chip in." I had taken the measure of Baikon, and denounced him straightway as a liar and a fraud; and the meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer, beseeching the Father to send us rain and fruitful seasons, and to "give us each day our daily bread."

As for Baikon, he was gone into the secrecy of the woods to try his hand.

In many of the islands the chiefs possess strangely shaped stones to which they attribute remarkable powers—of making the yams grow large, the coconuts to flourish, and the pigs to multiply. To some they ascribe destructive powers. A spirit, sometimes a ghost, is supposed to exercise its powers in connection with the stone; and the possessors of such stones have great *mana* which they will employ on behalf of others in return for fees.

Codrington tells us that, speaking generally, the religion of the Solomon Islands is concerned with ghosts, that of the Banks Islands and New Hebrides with spirits (an order of invisible beings). A man lights upon a stone shaped like a bread-fruit. From its shape he assumes there must be a spirit associated with it. If, on laying it at the root of one of his trees, a good crop follows, that proves to his mind its con-

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nection with a spirit that can influence the trees for good. Thereupon it becomes a source of wealth, and in return for payment he will let the stones belonging to other men be near his to receive some of its *mana*.

This belief in, and commerce with, spirits and ghosts will be found to comprise whatever religion is to be found among these islanders. There are no orders of priests, magicians, or medicine-men. Possibly every chief professes to know how to approach some ghost or spirit, and in return for payment made to the spirit, but in reality to himself, will invoke the services of the spirit. The spirit does not dwell in the stone possessed by the chief, but is associated with it and may be near at hand. In these beliefs and occult practices some of the chiefs are apparently quite sincere; others again are consciously employing deceit.

The number of such stones and spirits is legion. The stone figured on the opposite page belonged to Mal-Yafu, the brother of Mal-Pangkumu, and was obtained by Mr Mansfield through the chief's son. It is hard and brittle, apparently of volcanic origin, yet it is very heavy, and unlike the pumice seen on Ambrym. The natives are thought by ethnologists to have been in these islands since about 1200 A.D., and as the stone has been handed down from generation to generation, it may possibly have been brought hither by those who came first. Its supposed powers were remarkable. If carried in the hand it would jump when danger is near, although nothing could be seen. At night it would whistle to give warning. If its owner lost his way, and held it in both hands, it would turn over in the direction he was to go. It had power to get hot or cold, and to shine as if



A SPIRIT STONE.

"WE DID NOT KNOW ABOUT GOD."—PAGE 215.

aglow with light, and to cause and cure sickness. The man who first found the stone must have observed its weirdly human appearance, and by a little polishing and carving increased the likeness.

Albert had been commissioned to procure information about the native ideas and beliefs. One day he followed me up the steps to the mission-house rather excitedly.

“Doctor, I have a lesson for you!”

“A lesson? What has gone wrong?”

He laughed, and explained. He had been fulfilling his commission. Indeed, he had a whole walletful of “lessons.” So I sat down beside him to receive instruction, and will share it with the reader.

Lesson I. Of God.

“We did not know about God before the white men came and taught us. Nor did we know of the existence of the Devil till some of the boys returned from Queensland and told us. But we always believed in the existence of two great spirits, whom we call Vyu (or Vi). There is Vyu-Yotab, the Spirit of Light, who lives and rules ‘on top’ [above], and Vyu-Bungbung, the Spirit of Darkness, who rules on earth. Everything up ‘on top’ is called ‘vyu’ [super-human, divine]. White men are called ‘vyu’ too, because our fathers thought they were spirits, and that they had come down from the sky.”

Lesson II. The Warring of the Two Spirits.

“What do Yotab and Bungbung do?”

“They concern themselves with the affairs of men.

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Vyu-Yotab wanted to let men walk on leaves over the sea; but Vyu-Bungbung said 'No; I will teach them how to make a canoe.' Vyu-Yotab says that men found fire in the soft wood of the *yanyano* tree. Vyu-Bungbung says 'Not at all; they could only get it by rubbing two pieces of wood together.' Then Vyu-Yotab wanted men when they die to live again in this world; to die—'shuffle off this mortal coil'—like the snake, which, having lost his old skin, lives again, and renews his life. But Vyu-Bungbung says 'No; I teach them when they die to make a hole in the ground and be buried; and not live again.'

Lesson III. Of Creation.

"What David told you about Parakukul is right. We believed that all over Ambrym. He is not a *Vyu*; he is the spirit of a great chief, a dead ancestor."

Lesson IV. Of Evolution, and the Fall.

"Where did the first men come from?"

"Vyu-Yotab says that originally all men were four-footed animals, and walked on all-fours. One of these tried to build a house, but he slipped, and made a hole in the roof, and his legs fell through. So Vyu-Yotab said he would not do.

"Then he told another animal to try—an animal like a pig, but with a face like a man's. He succeeded; so Vyu-Yotab bade him thereafter walk upright.

"But Vyu-Bungbung says, 'That was not the case at all. All men walked upright from the beginning. And the lazy ones, who would not work, came to walk

on all-fours, and degenerated into animals—like pigs and cows and goats—and got faces like them.”¹

Lesson V. Of Incorruption.

“There is an old woman in the sky to keep watch and prevent even a fly from going up and pitching there.”²

“Suppose a fly (the blue-bottle) did go up and alight there, what then?”

“If a fly pitched there, bringing corruption, everything ‘on top’—earth and stones and trees—would fall on men and kill them.”

It is usual for the older women in turn to keep watch thus, beside the dead and dying. They provide themselves with a bunch of dry rushes or rustling twigs, with which they keep ward and beat off the noxious intruder until the burial.

Lesson VI. Of Immortality.

“When men die they go down to the world of spirits. When a chief dies he goes down with all his bravery of ornament; but it is only the shadow or appearance of these things that are on him. The

¹ Compare Milton, following classic lore, and the belief of the ancients—

“Circe,
The daughter of the Sun, whose charmed cup
Whoever tasted lost his upright shape,
And downward fell into a grovelling swine.
. . . Their human count'nance
The express resemblance of the gods, is changed
Into some brutish form of wolf or bear,
Or ounce or tiger, hog, or bearded goat.”

² May we not find here a germ of the saying of St John?—“And there shall in no wise enter into it” (the Holy City) “anything that defileth” (Rev. xxi. 27).

world below is like this world, only it is shadowy and ghostly. There the spirits of men live always.”¹

Lesson VII. Of Worship and Sacrifice.

“Don’t your people pray to the ghosts?”

“No; we don’t worship, nor do we pray to anything. When a man is in trouble he calls on the spirit of his father or friend, and that spirit may come from the lower world to help him. At the feast for the dead, his ‘nenna’ [image or ‘maki’] may be painted afresh, and pigs killed before it, out of respect to his memory and to show that we are not forgetting him. But we don’t worship, or sacrifice to anything.”

“But who sends the rain, and the sunshine, and makes the yam grow well?”

“Man-Ambrym has that power in himself. Suppose the ground is dry and the fruit-trees wither, the chiefs

¹ Dr Codrington’s account of the beliefs in the islands sounds very Dantesque:—

“The ghosts below hear the news from new-coming ghosts. When a ghost first descends to the lower world, he waits outside the ghostly village to recover strength. There, according to one account, they congregate at the entrance, some at play, some weeping at having just become aware of their condition. Descents of the living are not uncommon. To deceive the ghosts who are on guard, the living man makes his body smell of death by rubbing it with a rank-smelling solution. A man wished to visit his dead wife, and went to a medium. The latter made the man smell like the dead, and then as a ghost went down with him as guide. (Compare Dante with Virgil’s ghost.) The ghosts detected the smell of the upper world, and tried them with dead men’s bones—to see if they could rattle them as ghosts do, by one, by two, by three. They passed the test; and found the woman. The husband tried to drag her away, but her hand came off.

“So disguised, a woman went down to find her brother, and found him. He cautioned her not to eat anything there, and she returned. This story resembles that of the Greek goddess, Proserpine, who, because she had plucked and tasted a pomegranate in the Elysian fields, could not return to earth again. Jupiter afterwards modified the sentence.”

See ‘Melanesians: Anthropology and Folklore,’ to chap. xv. of which I am indebted for the latter part of Lesson VIII.

talk among themselves and they find out what man or woman has the power to make rain. Then they pay him (or her) pigs, and he takes the grass or leaf and disappears with it in secret and is not seen. Suppose the pay is too small, the rain will not come. They must pay him more pigs."

"But what do the chiefs do with these stones? Do they not pray to them and give offerings?"

"No; they do not think them gods. They all the same as when you look at the glass (barometer), and you speak, 'Wind, it will blow,' and 'Rain, it is coming.' You think that glass all the same as God? No!"

According to Albert and to the other boys around us, each stone would "speak true" to the chief who owned it, and was as an obedient instrument in helping him in his special power. Apparently they had not been initiated into the mysteries of the *vyn* or minor spirits who were supposed by the chiefs to be associated with the stones.

"But what about these offerings or payments?"

"They are kept by the chiefs for themselves."

"Then do your people never pray to the spirits and ghosts?"

"Some men can call up the spirits of the dead; and when a strong man dies, or is poisoned, and goes into the volcano and stirs it up, the people pay him pigs to quiet him by throwing them into the crater. But they do not worship, nor do they sacrifice to ghosts or spirits."

Thus the natives whilst they admit these beliefs and superstitious practices, deny to them the terms worship and sacrifice. Yet such practices are surely primary steps in that direction.

Lesson VIII. Of Rewards and Punishments.

“Now, Albert, which virtue is of highest count among your people?”

“Generosity. If a man is liberal towards his friends during life; if, when he gets a child, for instance, he gives pigs to his relations and friends—on the mother’s side of the house as well as on his own—he will go to the good place and be saved. But the pigs and feasts a man gives in order to get a big name and rise in rank don’t count. There is no merit in doing that.”

“Then you believe in a good place and a bad place?”

“Oh, yes! A man may never reach the good place at all. If he has been mean, or has committed adultery, or been a thief, or has killed any one by poison, or without due cause, but specially if he has been mean, there will be evil spirits waiting for his soul on the track; and they will catch him with hooks and long poles, and pull him back, and thrust him down into the bad place. In that dark region he has to grub like an outcast pig for the coarsest food, and eat wind, and live on refuse and worse. Miserable, restless, and malignant, his ghost may wander back to earth and haunt the graves and the woods, to do evil to men.

“In the region of the blessed, there are gardens and plenty of good food, and a chief is a chief still, and the souls dance and feast and sing together. But no man wants to die, for the life is dim and shadowy.”

“What comes of those who die young?”

“On islands away to the north¹ people say there

¹ Mota, for instance.

is a special place for those who die simple and harmless. And when the young die, who have not lived to see and rejoice in the flower of their age, they go to the pleasantest place of all—where flowers abound, and red-leaved shrubs, and scented plants, and scarlet blooms; and the village is bright, and there is day and night, and throngs are dancing and singing. But no one longs to die, for the life is hollow and unreal.”

“Who told you all this?”

“The women most say this, and the mothers most of all. They grieve, and they think much of those who die young, and they esteem most of all those who are shot for them, who pay the price of death and die on their account.

“For none would choose to die!”

CHAPTER XI.

“Red Hearts.”

“RATHER slim, but not a badly-made savage.”

Such was the result of a swift mental survey. He was standing on the track in the shadow cast by the bush, and was facing us in an attitude of easy dignity. His hands played with a small bow and some blunt-headed arrows, one of which was stretched across the string to shoot a pigeon for the evening meal.

“It’s George!” exclaimed one of the boys behind.

That seemed doubtful. He was dressed as a pure savage would be, an armlet of plaited leaf above the left elbow, and a broad belt (about eight inches wide) of polished bark round the waist. With a skin almost black, frizzly hair that rose straight up from the brow, and a fair sprinkling of pock-marks that disfigured his plain but attractive face, he stood quite still till we were close up to him.

“Are you George?”

“Yes, master,” with a quick pleasant smile.

We shook hands. He was a man who had “hazarded his life” for the cause, and would do so again.

“How is this, George?” I asked, glancing swiftly, almost imperceptibly, at him from his knees to his crown.

He understood, and with a faint blush which did not spoil his easy manner, he said—

“Me ’shamed, master. My clothes—he close up finish. Only one shirt and trousers stop now; me keep him along Sunday.”

Sufficient reason surely. When one came to know him better, no doubt remained but that he had shared his clothes with others, as he did all else he possessed.

“That’s all right, George. We are greatly pleased to meet you. Come along and show us your house.”

He led us, not to his own little hut, but to the “mel” in the centre of the village, where the chiefs and upper ranks of men assemble. Evidently he was on good terms with the leading men. Indeed, it was hard to see how any one could cherish any ill-will towards such a gentle, sweet-natured soul.

In the “mel” some men had been painting a mammoth lizard, with a long lithe tail; possibly it was meant for a crocodile, some of which have been seen in the Banks Islands, though none are found in the New Hebrides. It was compounded of wood and matting, or palm spathes, and coated on the outside with a composition. Clay there is none. The young boys will climb trees, and chase and catch snakes (by the throat or nape) as long as themselves, as they are not poisonous; but a lizard is something abhorrent, and they will fly from contact with it. In response to questions they told us that this one was to be used at a “sing-sing” to frighten the women and young folks.

In a short time George returned clothed—in his “one shirt and trousers.” He then conducted us out of the village to a secluded clearing on the hillside overlooking the sea, where we saw a grass hut with

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upright walls and gables. It was his "chapel." One could hardly give it another name, for it had a preacher's desk at one end, and was duly seated. The doors were securely padlocked, and the "boys" by their demeanour on entering made it quite apparent that they considered themselves "in church."

Here I heard his brief history. He had been to Queensland, and, working there on a sugar plantation, had come under the influence of the young lady mentioned in a previous chapter. In the course of time he was converted and baptised; and as soon as his period of service was completed, he returned to Ambrym, determined at all costs to proclaim the good news in his island home.

George was doubtless listened to readily at first by old and young, for they would be eager to hear his experiences and learn anything new. But as soon as the chiefs grasped the nature of the truths he taught, and understood what might follow—of loss to themselves in prestige and authority—they frowned upon him and forbade his teaching. But the young people clung to him; and as for George, he proceeded to build a church. Then the chiefs became angry—with an anger that never slept: in their own figurative words, their "hearts were red all the time." Their rank and influence had been attained by the thrift and scheming of a lifetime, and they would not lightly suffer their ghostly secrets to be exposed and their mysteries profaned. On islands away to the north, after the introduction of Christianity, the old men have been known to sit down together and weep over the profanation and their loss of power and privilege.

As the church-building grew each day to be a more living fact, the young people became more and more

fearful and perplexed. One young man was already fondly attached to his teacher, and shadowed him from day to day. At last he spoke out.

“George,” he said, “you must not build this place!”

“Why?”

“They,” indicating the chiefs, “say they will poison us if we listen, and kill you if you build.”

“But,” said George, in his low, distinct voice which it was hard to resist, “our Master says we must not fear what men can do unto us.”

The youth was puzzled, and his head drooped. He turned on his heel and walked away.

At night he returned to the attack.

“George,” he pleaded, “how can these things be true if they work such ill?”

George was silent.

“The chiefs say your book is not true—for them. They say that white men are white, and black men black. We are not all the same. Our food is not the same; our tongue is not the same; our skin is different. Your book may be good for white men, it is not good for us.”

Still George spoke not; he was gazing into the fire.

“How can that book be good? It brings so much pain and strife! Before, we were happy and at peace; now, we are distressed and full of fear. Our fathers are angry. Their hearts are red!”

George continued to hold his peace while the young man was exhausting his arguments.

“If you will build this place, they will kill you. Then who will be our friend? We shall lose you altogether, and who will tell us good things? What shall we do? O George, speak!”

George placed his hand on the youth’s shoulder and

pressed it firmly. "Go to bed," he said huskily, "and sleep to-night. To-morrow I will tell you."

There was not much sleep for either of them that night. The youth did sleep, but he could not rest. To follow George meant death—to himself or to one or more of his younger companions. In his dreams he saw the angry faces of the chiefs; he heard the wailing of the women—they were weeping over a lifeless form. He drew near to look—it was the disfigured body of his friend. Between him and the setting sun a crimson croton hung over the coral wall of the chief's war-war, every leaf a heart aglow with fire. Seized with terror, he rushed down towards the sea, and hid in the long grass.

Such, we know, was the dread the chiefs inspired; and such we can imagine in these young souls was the nightmare it gave rise to. As for George, he lay still in prayer, praying again and yet again for light. And at length light was given—and peace. He had found a plan.

Next morning the two men met beside the half-built church.

We always found George as humble as he was gentle. And he may have thought within himself that he was here alone and only one, and it was hardly fair to sacrifice these young souls and they still beset with doubt. So when the young man drew near, he said to him—

"I shall stop the building."

"Ah, I am glad. I thought you would."

"But on one condition. Go you to Queensland and prove my words. If they be false, I shall not ask you to believe. If they be true, you must return and help me."

"I shall."

And this was done. George insisted that his young friend should go to the same plantation, Fairy-mead, and attend the class of the same fair teacher that had led him to Christ. On the first labour ship that came along (the *Para* if I remember aright), he was booked, with others, for Fairy-mead, and faithfully kept the compact. Three to four years later he returned in the *May*, the brightest of a band of fourteen.

That youth was Albert.

In the cane-fields and at the desk the spirit of his teacher had shadowed his own. And on his return he found George's first love still burning, ready to commingle with his and give a brighter light.

The grass-thatched chapel in which we sat was their first combined effort. As we have seen, it was built out of sight of the village, that the frown of the chiefs might not be a continual menace to their scholars. But afterwards we made friends with the head chief, Mal Tongtong, a tall powerful man with a pleasant smile. Thereupon the boys grew bolder: they bought a piece of ground between the village and the sea; put up a larger building, and with help furnished it with windows and doors. When the Sunday morning arrived for the opening ceremony, we were slowly creeping along the coast in the boat, under a hot sun, with a strange burden. It was a long brown “box” of stained wood, a red cross on the top. As the boat drew near we could see the clean copper figures of the men and boys, wearing red loin-cloths, moving about outside, and shining in the dapple shade of the trees. It was the first young church on the island, and at the sight our hearts gave a jump.

“ Hai, doctor, what have you there ? ”

It was George who spoke.

“ Frank! Died last night. We’re taking him home. Can’t stay for the service, George. And we want a fresh crew.”

The crew was quickly forthcoming, and we pushed on. There was a long pull before us in the face of wind and wave. Away down the coast, that bright button, Moses, whom we met on the *May*, had built a small church on a cliff above the sea, and by his tactfulness and cheery manner had gathered the young people round him. Frank, a comrade from the same village, and now a member of the Salvation Army, had returned to help him. He landed in his uniform, in great spirit, waving the flag above his head.

Some white sinner in the foc’sle was tempted to make fun of this new brand of soldier, and had contrived that the grog-bottle should accompany the flag. There was but one way to do it. At the last moment the bottle, filled with kerosene (an acceptable gift), was thrust into Frank’s hand, and he leaped from the prow, to fall, tripped, bottle and flag, into the foaming surf and soft black sand. The eclipse was but temporary. He rose with a laugh; and at nightfall the oil was used to the last drop in lighting the sacred page and guiding darkened souls towards the Kingdom.

But Frank’s vitality was already sapped by the dread bacillus, and within a few months the oil of life was exhausted; his lamp had flickered and ceased to burn.

But to return to George. The congregation increased. Men came from the bush to hear the Word. At times as many as one, and even two, hundred

gathered within and around its walls. The “sing-sings” were at a stand-still; and the women, too, began to attend.

For a time the chiefs did not know what course to follow, and swung alternately from friendship to hate. Mal threatened to leave the village and go elsewhere. Once and again we had to go round and mediate, and soothe their ruffled feelings. During the service they brought loaded muskets to the church fence to intimidate, and finally shot at a woman. Two of the young men had to flee to Queensland.

Thus their hearts grew “red” again, and openly the threat was made that they would “close for ever the eyes of those who went to school.” Our absence gave them the opportunity so much desired.

There was at Baiap an old man, Matok, with his little boy, Bwerri, whom he used to lead to school. The two went about hand in hand everywhere, fearing to be separated. Their garden was at some distance from the village. On the way thither one morning, Bwerri stopped and said—

“Father, I’d like a swim this morning. Let me go with the other boys.”

Matok looked at him with some misgiving.

“You won’t stay long?”

“No; I shall come to you directly.”

Two hours passed, and Matok was still gardening alone. His anxiety became overpowering. He rose from the ground, and hurried back along the track. After searching for hours he found Bwerri lying in their hut. His neck was swollen and his breathing difficult. There was a lump above each eye.

“What is the matter, Bwerri?”

There was no answer. The little fellow could not

speak. His larynx had been crushed, and his face was turned to the left. His neck had been twisted. In the night he died.

Next morning Matok rolled the body in a mat and carried his grievous burden down to George.

"There, take him," he said; "that is because of your work!"

Even fear is soon forgotten. The young people grew bold again, and the church was found too small. For the third time it was enlarged, and finally it was built of concrete. This new development was not unobserved by the chiefs, and they muttered significantly.

By this time we had returned to the island, and were busy rebuilding the station. Every Monday, George, with a band of fellow-teachers, walked over from the south coast to help us, returning on the Saturday with picture rolls, and minds stored with new truths for the people on Sunday. George's mother, Tesa, and an adopted orphan boy about twelve years old, named Bongnaim, took care of the garden and his hut during the days he was away. Christmas was close at hand, and our carpenters would soon be leaving us.

It was mid-week in Baiap. One afternoon Malkon had come down from Naubu to visit his brother chief. Bongnaim was up one of the trees gathering bread-fruit, and an uncle sat on a log smoking. Otherwise the village seemed empty. Suddenly the uncle was startled by a suppressed voice calling—

"Sarakon! Come. Mal wants you."

He rose and followed the stout man who had called him, and met the two Mals and three Meluns making for the bread-fruit trees.

“Bong! Come. We’re going to gather some nuts, and you must climb.”

It was Mal-Tongtong who spoke. Bong slid rapidly down the tree, and, leaving his bread-fruit in the fork of the stem, followed them readily. He soon caught up and was in their midst as they filed into a dense part of the bush. He heard a peculiar cheep which appeared to come from the branches overhead, and looked up. As he did so his throat was tightly grasped from behind, and he was thrown violently on his face. The poisoner, Melun-Lubu,—no ghost this time,—was on his back, pinning him to the earth. For a few moments he struggled hard, while his throat was being gripped as by a wild beast, and his mouth forced into the dust, but quickly subsided into unconsciousness. With haste the murderer completed his diabolical work, and then glanced up at Mal.

“Enough!” said he.

They watched the still form in silence, till they saw the right knee being drawn up. A moment later they had vanished in different directions.

Slowly Bongnaim came to, and at nightfall was able to crawl home to his hut. In the morning, speechless, he rose from his mat and attempted to walk. He managed to creep out of the hut, stumbled a few steps, and fell, bleeding. The exertion was fatal.

Next day two messengers came for George. He was gone ten days. A faithful shepherd, he had remained by his flock till their fears were calmed. Then he returned. In the evening, after school, he and Albert, with another youth, came into the house and sat down on the matting beneath the lamp, to pour out their tale. Word for word it was put in writing. George recounted the names of the murderers.

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“How do you know these are the men?”

“Sarakon told me. I met him on the path at night after the burial, and he said right out—

“O George, I am so sorry. I dared not speak, or they would have killed me too.”

At the conclusion of his story George looked up, his eyes wide open with anxiety.

“O master, what shall we do?”

“I don't know, George. But we can ask Him who has promised to give wisdom liberally.”

A few minutes later we had separated and retired for the night. Before the clock had struck twelve our plans were formed, and the whole station was buried in sleep.



MELUN-LUBU.

"NO GHOST THIS TIME."

CHAPTER XII.

The Arrest.

EARLY in the morning we all rose, launched the life-boat, and sailed away for the south coast. With Mr Mansfield and myself came the two carpenters and twelve strong boys, including George and Albert. Mansfield was provided with a camera, myself with a sheet of paper on which was written the whole story; and the boys were armed with spades and shovels. Most of them wore blue uniforms with red stripes, the gift of a well-wisher, and resembled island policemen.

It might have been considered a mild display of force; but force we would never use, and never found it necessary.

At Craig's Cove we drew two teeth for the French trader there, and sent a messenger up to Naubu for Malkon, a good reward being promised if he induced the chief to come down and meet us at Baiap. At the Cove, too, Willie Bai had built a church of concrete, and had formed a station, neat and orderly, of which no white man need have felt ashamed.

Farther on we came to Cromarty's out-station. When the carpenters saw the mode of life of the beach-combers and copra-makers, the pistols under

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the pillow and hanging at the bed's head, they shrugged their shoulders. They had been months at the mission-station and till now had not smelt danger.

Arrived at Baiap we all took a turn at beating the village drums. While the people were assembling we had time to look round, and in a grove of papaws and pine-apples near the church, saw the two new mounds covered with white coral, and neatly railed in. Getting Matok into the church by himself, we asked him about Bwerri.

"He was killed."

"How do you know?"

"Because that is the way they kill on Ambrym."

"But why should they kill him?"

"Ah!" he exclaimed beneath his breath, for he was afraid of being overheard, "we know they killed him for coming to school; they had threatened to do so."

By this time a crowd had gathered. Malkon and three of the murderers had come. Mr Mansfield and myself moved about amongst the people taking snapshots and quietly securing photographs of the murderers. Malkon, wandering around, caught sight of the shovels beside the grave. Getting scent of what was coming, he suddenly exclaimed—

"Ha! is that your game?"

In a moment he was gone. He was quickly overtaken and led back docilely by the arm.

"You are going away too soon; we have something to show you."

To this he made no answer.

Then we gathered round the coral mounds. The murderers, with one or two others as "blinds," were made to sit quite close to the grave. Soon the shovels were at work. The roll of matting was brought up,

laid on the ground and opened, and the body rapidly examined. It was that of a well-grown lad.

"Look you, Malkon," we said to him and the murderers, "this is what we wanted to show you. This is your work."

They made no response.

Then they were photographed together; led into the church and seated at the table; and, before the congregation, were charged with the deed. They seemed to have lost their speech, and maintained a stolid silence. To loosen their tongues we led them outside and closely questioned them, singly and together. It was of little avail. Even Sarakon seemed as deaf and dumb as a stone wall. At last he opened his mouth—

"The plot was arranged nine days before, during the crying at a funeral."

Not another word of importance could we get from him.

Brought face to face they stoutly denied the charge. They were then led inside again and warned before all, that if by the following Sunday they were not prepared to admit their guilt, and pledge their word to prevent such deeds, word would be sent to Sydney.

On the Sunday a crowd filled and surrounded the church. The whole six were present. Not to attend would argue guilt. In the meantime they had been trying to discover who it was that had betrayed them. Suspicion fell upon Sarakon, but he skilfully shuffled from under it. A neighbouring chief came to his rescue.

"O yes," said he, "Sarakon did say he thought Malkon and Mal-Tongtong had done it. 'For,' he said, 'they are such powerful chiefs, and their *mana* is so strong, that other men melt away from before them!'"

But the chiefs were not satisfied. Our knowledge of the details was exact. Some eyewitness must have given the information. A public meeting was held, and two women whose tongues had been clattering were put on trial. But the women cleared themselves. That it was a murder no one disputed.

At the service on Sunday they were again warned. We were their friends; but unless they signed the paper and gave their promise, a report would be sent to the Admiral, and they would have to take the consequences. After the service they were taken together into a hut and again examined. Sarakon was perhaps the most frightened of the six, and fairly squirmed, fearing momentarily that they would find him out. We made no difference between him and the others, lest we should be the means of giving him away, when his life would not have been worth a straw. They were thirsting for his blood.

They all denied and evaded the charge. Each of the chiefs indignantly struck an attitude, telescope-wise, with their hands, and, gazing at the ground, said—

“Let the man who saw it with his eye stand forth!”

But “the man who saw it with his eye” had more “savvy.”

So a report was sent to the Admiral at Sydney with the request that he would “direct a warship to call and warn the offenders not to repeat such a deed.” We could not stand by and see our young people diabolically murdered in this wise.

We got a surprise in the first week of the New Year. A request came from Naubu to build a church there. Though the motive was fairly transparent, the message boded good.

At this same Christmas we had our first baptismal

and communion service. There was a congregation of three hundred. Eleven requests had been sent to us from different points to come and build. They would have to wait, for our hands were already more than full. But we sent back the answer—"You build, and we shall come."

In many instances they did so. In others, the cry, though repeated, became fainter and fainter, and at length died away altogether, and was heard no more. We could not respond to all.

Slowly the hurricane season wore past. Three months had gone and no warship appeared. The chiefs were inclined to snicker. They were met with the retort—

"You look: the sun is strong yet, and the big wind no finish. You wait a bit."

But the cool season came on; two months more had gone; and again the chiefs began to smile. They rallied George. His answer was ready.

"The missionary's word is good; it has never failed."

"Never promise unless you intend to perform" is apparently a good fulcrum to depend on in savagedom as in civilisation.

At the end of five full months a warship came. On a Sunday afternoon H.M.S. *Royalist* steamed up to Dip Point and dropped anchor. The Commander was for surrounding the villages in the grey dawn, and capturing the murderers in their beds. But we had thought of a better plan—a peaceful arrest.

"Do you mean to say these fellows will follow you out of their woods to the deck of a man-o'-war?"

"We are not sure, Captain. But we think they may. Let us try!"

“As you will.”

The captain was most courteous and willing to accede to our wishes. We wanted to cow these men, but to win them also. Force and bloodshed would totally ruin our influence for good. The ideal—to be masterful and yet absolutely gentle—we found most difficult of attainment. Meek and gentle souls are apt to be taken for fools and treated as such, and not by savages only.

The morning dawned with heavy showers. These would suit our purpose, and keep the chiefs from wandering early. With Albert and two other lads we set out, equipped with umbrella and mackintosh only. By the time we reached Naubu the sun was shining brightly. Halting in front of Malkon's hut, we called to him across the low stone wall. He came out.

“The man-o'-war has come, Malkon; the captain wants you.”

He visibly paled, but never moved a muscle nor an eyelash.

“How?”

“Tell him, Albert, the sailors were coming last night to catch him in his bed; but we said that was not good; Malkon is a chief, and will come himself. Say he must come, for we have promised for him. The man-o'-war is on the way now to Baiap to meet us.”

Albert told him. He was quite quiet.

“Tell him that we will be his friend if he comes at once. He had better bring a present for the captain.”

He appealed to Albert.

“What shall I bring?”

“A club, spear, arrow,—something like that, but good.”

“Very well!”

We went on some distance. There was no sign of the chief following us.

“Do you think he will come, Albert?”

“I think so. He said he would.”

At Baiap we found Mal-Tongtong at home. He was all smiles, and apparently in great good-humour. Messengers were despatched in different directions to bring up the other four. I sat down to rest, and to wait for them and for the *Royalist*. Sitting on the ground in front of me, toying with his club, Mal was most friendly and talkative.

“Tell me all about it.”

I told him.

“Whew! that was good!” and he pawed my knee with his black hand. He seemed really grateful. Possibly he was thinking of a surprise visit Baiap had received a few years previously for clubbing the captain of some small craft. The men of the village finding themselves surrounded took to the trees, and tried to defend themselves, when many of them were shot among the branches.

Half an hour later the *Royalist* appeared, bowling round the point in full sail. Mr Mansfield was on board to point out the locality. The boat passage was half a mile away from the village. As we went towards it along the shore, preceded and followed by a trailing crowd, we had some difficulty in sighting any of our prisoners. Would they come? They were handcuffed with moral suasion only, but it proved sufficient. We found them all, gathered in the rocky dell beside the landing. Up to this time they had kept a fairly bold face; but, as the big boat drew nearer and nearer with its double bank of white uniforms, the

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smiles faded away. Each click of the oars in the rowlocks was a thud to their quaking hearts. For a moment Malkon lost heart altogether, and hid in the crowd. But when called, he came forward, and they all bravely took their places in the stern, each with his hands full of weapons. As the boat drew off, a wail arose from those on shore. The people thought they should see their chiefs no more. As we climbed up the gangway we heard the order sharply given—

“Quartermaster, don’t let those weapons aboard!”

It was the captain’s voice—to the officer at the gangway.

“They are a present for you, captain.”

“I’m judge to-day, doctor, and can’t take presents!”

“May they give them to the sailors?”

Permission was given, and the chiefs with their weapons came aboard. As we stepped on to the deck there was a twinkle observable in the eyes of the “handy” men around. In fact, the good old oaken ship was quivering with suppressed laughter in every plank. And the reason was not far to seek. Following the direction of the sailors’ eyes, we saw pacing the quarter-deck overhead, with all the dignity of royalty on command, the figures of Mal-Pangkumu and his brother, Mal-Yafu. They were the guests of the navy for the day, and, to honour the occasion, had elected to wear the scarlet coats. It was their only article of clothing, worn unbuttoned, and barely reaching the hips behind. Conscious only of their own dignity and importance, they strutted about the high deck and leaned over the rail without the trace of a smile. Their spines had caught the military curve. For once the army was upsides with the navy. It was the choicest bit of pantomime we had seen in the islands.

A kind of court-martial was held in the captain's saloon beside the stern-chasers as the vessel (she was an auxiliary) steamed back to Dip Point. The chiefs were warned that deportation would follow a repetition of the offence. Promises of good conduct having been exacted, they were put ashore at the station at sunset, to walk home overland and tell their tale by the way.

Our own chiefs had enjoyed the day. As Mal, his upper half still arrayed in scarlet, stepped out of the boat, he exclaimed to some of his admiring subjects—

“The fighting men aboard—they are as many as these pebbles on the beach!”

He had seen the morning parade too; had listened to the prayers; and was greatly impressed with the fact that “the fighting men” all went to school, and considered it a good thing. The Mission had gained greatly by the day's proceedings. There was no sore feeling; no ill-will; persecution (of that kind) ceased; the chiefs generally, and the scarlet coats particularly, were seen more often at church. They had advanced another stage in learning the best of all lessons for men of rank—

“'Tis only noble to be good.”

CHAPTER XIII.

Casting the Net.

“Love demands a threefold cord : to be, to utter, and to do.”

IT will be readily understood that on all the islands the native churches are in the first instance mere huts of reeds and thatch. There is no other material to hand. As the years pass, these give place to larger and more substantial buildings. At Dip Point we were still in the early stage; but the generosity of many friends, touched in heart and pocket by the storm and the fire, was rapidly giving us a station worthy of the work.

As a rule each missionary, if he will, may be his own architect. And it is surprising to note the difference in appearance the mere twist of a board makes, provided one knows how to give it the twist.

We might take a lesson from the cultured heathen. The Greeks studied nature. So firmly did they believe that the gods are, and that they love the beautiful, that they strove to make the abodes and temples of earth worthy of the celestial visitors. And if the priests and monks of the Middle Ages failed in many things, they at least have left us glorious monuments of the building art, whereby we may appraise their faith and marvel at their enthusiasm.

Will believed in simple cottage style for the mission-



COTTAGE.

HOSPITAL.

MISSION HOUSE.

NATIVE CHURCH.

THE STATION.

*From a Photograph by
Rev. William Watt, Tanna.*

field, and at first was almost puritanic in his tastes. One could sympathise, and sigh for the simplicity of a lime-washed cottage, a sanded floor, a few fresh flowers, some books, and a corner pallet. What more is necessary? Such might do for the celibate and devotee, in a clean cold climate where nature is tamed and order reigns.

Here it is not enough. Life is a battle, complex and continuous, with foes of all degree, from the microbe to the savage; in which the elements, too, may take an adverse hand. Celibacy is a failure. Marriage brings serious responsibilities. We have here, side by side, the two modes of life. Anglicans and Catholics have tried the one, and the former have accomplished much. But the full-orbed family life holds the vantage. To the celibate many doors are barred and many avenues closed to the homes and hearts of the people. Wondering, and perhaps suspicious, eyes are turned upon the man who is neither husband nor father.

And if a woman must be asked to share the toils and privations of a life amid such surroundings, her house should be her home, and not a market-place. She should have a corner she may call her own, sacred to the family altar, beautiful as love can make it, separate and restful, reminiscent of home and the home-land. Moreover, if it be true that—

“Birds in their little nests agree,”

the little birds will tell you from every bough that they can best reach their sweetest notes when each little family has a nest of its own. And the saints are not superior to the birds. Young enthusiasm may show its scorn at this. But youth is evanescent.

Time will have his say; and Wisdom knows what best endures in lands like these.

As for the people, it is all as you begin with them. Take them the right way, and you will find them not only capable of appreciating the finer feelings, but pleased to find you have them too! Therewith respect deepens. Nor is it necessary to live as do the people. Here, indeed, custom and climate make it impossible. Rather should one respect and stoutly maintain one's own individuality and nationality. For instance, it is better surely to be a genuine Englishman than seem a counterfeit Chinaman. And the sweeter and more refined the home, the better the results on those around. Pride, not envy, is awakened, where hauteur, or selfishness, does not lift its ugly head. The missionary is not a bird of passage, a prophet come to exhort, to scold, and to pass on. He is theirs—come to live with and for them, and possibly to lay his own and his children's dust with theirs. The seed takes root. Liking is followed by love. Before they are aware, first the blade, and then the ear, have formed. Consciousness—of changed relations—at length awakes. The fruit has come. His affections and ideals are theirs. Some souls are won and take a stand. The numbers grow. And now—

“Come the four corners of the world in arms,
They'll shock them,”

or die for and with their friend.

It is thus work, true and lasting, takes root and spreads, to fill the land. To evangelise the world may require but one generation: so to win it, many.

The home, the first strand in the cordage of the mission-net, usually precedes the building of a church,

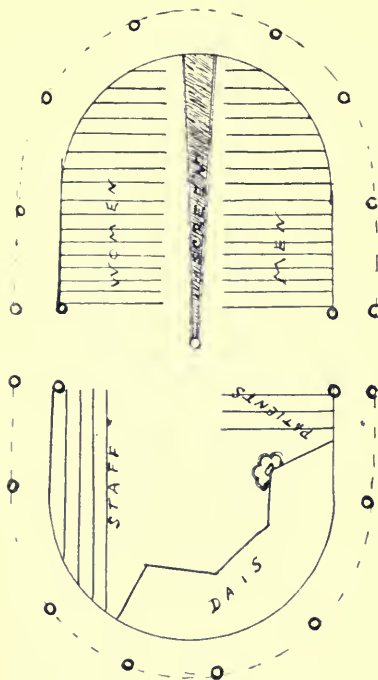
the latter forming the second. For the man must live, and health comes first. Moreover, it is the rule, in these days of marine facilities, for the missionary to imitate the hermit-crab and carry his house with him. To build a church of equal quality at once would be an error. The fisher must proceed warily. So the heathen people are themselves employed to do the work: the women to clean the reeds and plait the thatch; the men to dig the holes, and to cut and carry posts, and bamboo poles, and slabs of sago-palm. This is so much piecework. Then, when the material has been gathered, the frame goes up; the men sew on the thatch, the women gather sand and coral. The building is theirs, made with their own hands; and all have taken part. So, when the Sabbath comes, instead of none daring to enter, they gather freely within its walls. They have been led naturally up to God's altar. The shadows of superstition have fled, and with eye and ear and open mouth they are drinking in the story of the Cross.

Such was our present building, a structure of reeds and thatch, about sixty feet long and twenty wide. At the eastern end was a dais of white concrete, raised a few inches above the sanded floor, with chairs for the missionaries and visitors. At one corner stood the pulpit-desk with its crimson cloth and some palms and ferns. Immediately below sat the convalescent patients in grey flannel shirts; and right opposite was the native staff of "boys" and "girls" of all ages, with clean shining faces and bright garments. The lower half of the church was divided by a screen of reeds, which separated the men from the women, as in the ancient synagogues. These people were still in their savage dress, but clothing was becoming the

fashion, and the area of colour—of red and white, of yellow and blue in many shades—was surely spreading, and threatening to engulf the brown. The chiefs in their scarlet coats sat on the front bench, in a sense protecting the phalanx of dusky figures behind, and yet preparing the way for their absorption. Mal-Bongnaun in a silk dust-coat occupied the corner next the screen.

The screen itself was a concession to native etiquette. A remarkable cleft, or we may liken it to a dividing wall, runs right through native society over nearly the whole of Melanesia. It has to do with blood and marriage relationships. Among those, on the same side of the divided chasm, all intermarriage is forbidden. It would be regarded as an abomination, to be severely punished. They are considered as being all members of one family. The girl seeks her husband, and the youth his wife, from those on the other side.

It is undoubtedly a good thing, and we have to be careful lest we destroy with a rude hand what has, to them, all the sanctity of a moral law. An outward sign of this law is seen in the fact that a woman will not face and pass her son-in-law; they avoid each other. She may have to turn aside and leave the track, burying her face in the bushes till he has passed. Some women, again, must not walk past a chief if he is sitting down. On account of this, they congregate at the church-door, afraid to enter; or they creep past on hands and knees. Although they are coming in by the door on the opposite side, the chiefs may have to rise and look the other way to let them enter. Such disturbance interferes with the decorum of worship. Hence the screen.



THE NATIVE CHURCH.

(GROUND PLAN.)

Within the church at least three dialects, distinct as languages, were represented, while many, including the visitors, understood English, or simple English only.

The service had to be so adapted that the hearts and minds of all should be fed. Two of the hymns were sung in native, and could be followed in the English books; other two in English, being prefaced by a brief explanation in native. Prayers, lessons, and sermons were likewise given in both tongues, so that all could follow more or less closely, and attention was kept throughout. It was our constant aim that both white and black should catch successive glimpses of the world's Redeemer, and be irresistibly drawn to His feet. Nor were we always disappointed.

And the service was not a sombre one. The pot-plants and the many colours, the intent faces and the streaming sunshine, the bright picture-rolls on the walls around, left no room for anything lugubrious or sad. We had no organ, but the hymns were accompanied by the twitter of the birds in the woods, and the prayers, single or many-voiced, by the solemn undertones of the waves on the reef.

Moreover, there was seldom wanting some humorous incident to relieve even the seriousness. This morning there was one such. On the front seat, on the women's side, waiting to be admired, sat Batika, of middle age, one of the characters of the village. One could not fail to observe that her get-up was unusually smart,—pink sleeves, pink collar, pink flounce, and a white overall. A passing mental note had to suffice, as the service was beginning. The mystery was solved later on. For the new fashion—of wearing clothing—the mission ladies were largely responsible. Twice a-week they had sewing

classes for the girls and women. Already there were eighty scholars who were more than eager to possess "nee-dil an' tread." The cutting-out and basting required for so many gave no little work; and often the stitches had to be ripped up to be sewn again, just to keep them going. For regular attendance and neat work the dress itself was the reward. Some of the more advanced scholars, of which Batika was one, had completed not only a dress but an under-garment; and at length had been allowed to carry them away in triumph. Batika's reappearance on Sunday will not be readily forgotten. Why such a pretty garment should be completely covered from sight was beyond her simple understanding. She would not be a party to anything so stupid. It did not occur to her that she could copy her civilised sisters, who lift their skirts to display, below, the hidden beauty of silk or lace. So she put on the pink dress first, and wore the chemise on top.

From the church we passed over to the hospital. Thither from amongst the congregation some twenty to thirty out-patients had preceded us. The mission boys came too. It was their duty, under the assistant's supervision, to wash and dress the many sores, while doctor and matron were going round the wards. It was the happiest, brightest hour of the week; for the helpful words of psalm and hymn were forthwith being translated into deeds, and their music was yet with us.

"Thy touch has still its ancient power;
No word from Thee can fruitless fall."

In the female ward, to which we first came, there



"THY TOUGH HAS STILL ITS ANCIENT POWER."

were three or four women—shy gentle creatures whom their French master had with kindness brought from a plantation on a neighbouring island.

“What is the matter, Guido?”

“It is not with them as it should be; and they are ‘lazy’ [*i.e.*, too weak to work].”

And no wonder. Their lungs were semi-solid. The bacillus again. There was no hope for them of recovery, and as wrecks they must be taken back to their own island, to linger a while, and to die.

In the male ward there was something of more than usual interest. Three tall wild fellows had come in from the bush, with enormous ulcers of the leg. The raw surfaces had been cleansed and prepared, and skin-grafts planted all over them. It reminded them of the yam-planting, but it was gardening of a new sort. During the process of scraping and transplanting, they had covered their faces with the bed-quilts. Not that they were afraid of chloroform, but covering the face helped them bravely to do without. One lad, indeed, when lying on the table awaiting amputation of his arm, clapped the chloroform mask—the half shell of a cocoa-nut lined with lint—over his nose and mouth, and held it there firmly himself, till his hand fell nerveless at his side.

It was now time to examine the grafts, and curious eyes looked on. For the most part they had done well; and the wild men from the woods chuckled and smiled, and felt they were heroes indeed.

Already our patients were coming from nearly every island in the Group. “Despair” was one of the first to enter the hospital doors. He, poor lad, came seeking help for his “elephant” leg. One limb in its size was nearly equal to his whole body. He

The Conflict

was a waif, and could speak English of a sort. But there was no need of speech, the look in his face was enough.

Lastly, before reaching the surgery, we had to pass through what was known as the "white ward," a ward more daintily furnished for white patients. Here, before the service, we had left two men resting comfortably in their beds. One, a stout engineer, had arrived the previous night. The other, beneath the mosquito tent, was none other than our old acquaintance, Jean Pasquin.

As we entered the door, a sight met our eyes enough to shock even the toughest. The transformation was complete. The ward we had left two hours before, so sunny, clean, and peaceful, was full of sound and fury. Not from the patients. They were quiet enough, too quiet in fact. But a swarm of "blue jays" had taken possession. It is a curious natural fact worth thinking about, that when a party of bushmen go on expedition, these creatures accompany them. Such a party had come to the church this morning.

The engineer had been ill, and now lay apparently unconscious, his face and beard buried under a white mass which resembled handfuls of snow.

As for Jean, he was cowering beneath the quilt. The "jays" were now giving him full attention, angrily buzzing, and plunging furiously at the tent, rebounding and plunging again, as if determined to devour both it and him. The engineer was hastily removed to another ward. Jean was slow to gather up courage to leave the tent. At length we routed him out of his bed; and, wrapping his head in a towel, he rushed into the open. Then, with some difficulty, the intruders were expelled, with a spray of strong



“‘DESPAIR’ . . . CAME SEEKING HELP.”

lotion from a watering-can, and by the smoke and fumes of camphor from a dish of burning leaves. Thereupon they invaded the other wards. They even sought out the keyholes of the linen-chests, of which there was one to each cot. Where they could not gain entrance themselves, they left their progeny, and pointed them onward to their destructive work. And thus they ruined every good blanket in the institution. The traces of their evil visit remained for many a day.

There was no doubt that absinthe had been smuggled into the ward, and hence the engineer's condition. But a swift and terrible Nemesis had been keeping watch.

It seemed impossible to do Jean Pasquin good, physically or otherwise. Daily the battery was applied, of kindly offices. If these shocks failed to awaken and stimulate his better nature, words would be of no avail.

It was our function, by faith rather than by meddling, to seek the gold amid the clay of his nature and strive to recover it. For good there is in every soul the most abandoned. It is a strange comment on our spirituality, that a dog may discover that good, and cling to it, and follow on, when men have failed.

And we did fail. Possibly our methods were clumsy, or our insight dim. Day after day his ways became more objectionable. For the sake of others discipline would have to be enforced. And this Sunday morning the climax had been reached. He must go.

At noon the French steamer was sighted; and at two o'clock we were discussing his case with the captain in the surgery.

"I could bear with and nurse him myself, Captain, but cannot ask a lady to do it. The other sufferers, too, must be considered."

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“I know his tongue is very vile.”

“It is not that. We cannot allow the hospital to be wilfully made a sty.”

“But he is dying!”

“No. He is a long way yet from that. We could bear with a dying man.”

So, with a stock of medicine to last some weeks, he was carried, a living death, pick-a-back down to the boat. The old captain's prophecy was coming true. Already these dread foes had attacked the keyholes of his senses. He was relieved of his sufferings, and taught how to ward them off. But on his return to his own island the fight would begin again. The same foes, or their progeny, would reissue from their leafy haunts to attack the living master as they had his dead victim. And there was no doubt which would win.

The battle lasted three months.

As the steamer vanished round the point, we could not help thinking of him regretfully. Here was one whom we had sought to win in vain. Yet his delicate carving, in black-edged pearl, of “Moonlight in the Tropics”—a village on the mountain-side—remains with me a constant witness that somewhere in his nature the love of the beautiful still held its throne.

Some fish refuse to be caught; and some tear and rend the net, and can only be taken with a hook in the jaws. Happily there is a Fisher who has time, and patience, and skill, to capture them all.

CHAPTER XIV.

Our Boys.

“ And so the word had breath, and wrought
 With human hands the creed of creeds
 In loveliness of perfect deeds,
 More strong than all poetic thought :

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
 Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
 And those wild eyes that watch the wave
 In roarings round the coral reef.”

“ FIE, fie, Lili ! Can't you do better than that ? ”

There must have been a tinge of sharpness in the tone, though I was not conscious of it. For the little cripple dropped his shovel where he was standing, and, turning his back on us, walked away.

We were putting in the foundation-blocks for the hospital ; and big blocks they were. In the bush at the back, hardwood trees were selected and felled ; the boles were sawn into requisite lengths ; and each length was then rolled to the site, raised by block and tackle, and lowered on to a base of lime-concrete. Having been brought to the right level to receive the wall-plates, it was surrounded with a casing of concrete banked up with earth. For we wanted to keep out the ants and to get a good grip of the ground. This building must be able to withstand a hurricane and be proof against fire.

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As the carpenters were cutting out the frame, and the assistant was hurriedly lining and roofing his house, this portion of the work fell to myself and a gang of our "boys." Lili was one of those who were shovelling the earth up: he had missed his aim, and had sent a shovelful of the black soil in amongst the concrete.

"Lili's gone away, Doctor."

"Never mind him, Willie. Let him be; he'll come round."

But the afternoon passed, and he did not come back to his work. Still we left him to himself. He was not a new boy; we have met him in a previous chapter. If he had been, admonition or dismissal would follow, for the discipline had to be strict. But Lili had remained with us and been faithful all through, and some incidents in his career are worth relating.

As a child he had come in contact with fire and had burned his right leg. Contraction of the muscles and sinews followed; and when he first came to us he was able only to crawl on the ground in a sitting posture, propelling himself along by means of his right hand and left foot. At first surgical work was out of the question—there was too much else to do. But one Sunday evening a message was brought with an empty bottle to the tea-table. Outside, the little fellow was found perched up on a stump, covering his face. Our servant-woman was laughing.

"What does this mean, Lipas?"

"Lili wants some of the strong medicine that will make him sleep while his legs are jerked straight."

We got him on to crutches, and gradually the crooked joints began to unfold and the muscles to stretch. He had reached this stage at the time of the hurricane.

I have already referred to the difficulty we had in reaching the steamer on the Tuesday following the great storm. The sea was still high, and the waves were thundering in volume over the reef. After two days of cruising under the lee of the island, the captain managed to bring his ship opposite the opening in the reef, and to hold her there for a short time by keeping the wheels revolving. It was too rough to land any of the much-needed cargo, and Mr Mansfield with the one boy who could speak English was left on board to land with it at Craig's Cove. A couple of cases had been hastily dropped into the boat when the captain called out—

“Now, Doctor, the reef is getting too close. If you don't get away at once, we'll tow you out to sea. You won't like that!”

I pushed off with the crew of raw and naked islanders. There were still some directions to be given, and these had to be shouted. In doing so I leaned on the steering-oar and gave a shove. The mate raised his hands with a cry of warning—

“You've pulled the wrong way!”

So I had. A glance over the shoulder showed us there was no room to turn. The reef was close ahead—an ugly brown wall, rising up and again disappearing as the seas swept over it. To turn meant death. We should be swamped and buried in the wild sea. There was no time to think, and barely time for the quick resolve to keep her straight on. This we did.

“Pull hard, boys!—hard!”

All at once the blade of the steering-oar bent, and sprang from the water skywards, nearly taking me with it. And from the stern where I was standing

The Conflict

I looked down into a gulf of yellow foam below the reef wall. I see it yet. For a moment all was uncertain. We were on the crest of a great wave. The boat was pitched headlong, and fell—not to be dashed in pieces as we expected, but as if on a feather pillow. We were dropped, softly, fair on top of the wall. Our place on the wave was surely providentially timed. Had we been the boat's length farther ahead, we should have been crushed against the wall and borne down by the oncoming wave. A similar distance astern, and the boat would have been broken in two on the edge of the reef, or have slipped back into the boiling sea. As it was, we were right on the crest, and the planks and keel of the boat, being old and springy, had yielded like rubber to the blow.

When I turned round there was not a soul in the boat: the natives must have made a leap for life, and were now up to their waists in the water, holding to the gunnels. Each succeeding wave again lifted the boat and threw us all forward towards the shore. We held on to her, wading at her side and guiding her onward.

The whole incident had taken but a few seconds. One's brain seemed to be in a whirl. Yet I had noticed an anxious little figure, of some one on the beach, limping along in great haste. As he came opposite us, he threw aside his supports and plunged into the lagoon. Like a faithful Newfoundland dog, he swam towards us, his black eyes staring from their white-rimmed sockets. It was Lili! He had come on his crutches, and was devoting his mite of strength to our salvation. But when he came, what could he do? We put him into the boat, for she was full, and set him a-bailing.

All through our troubles—fire, eruption, sickness, and threats of violence from the heathen—he had remained by us. How could one be angry with such a good little soul, even though he did lose his temper for a brief afternoon? And now he was so improved physically that he had cast aside all supports, and could handle axe or shovel like a man.

Next morning, after breakfast, there came a tapping at the front door of our shanty. For we were still living among the cases and barrels on top of the timber, covered temporarily with iron. I opened the door and stepped down on to the grass. There stood Lili, his small misshapen frame twitching with nervousness.

“Master, suppose you no want me, very good you send me away.”

His eyes, the lids half drooping, were fixed on the lower panels of the door.

“What is the matter, Lili?”

“Suppose you no want me any more, very good you send me, me go,” he stammered.

The lids had fallen lower, and he saw only the grass at his feet. The little mouth worked nervously.

“Why should I do that? What has gone wrong?”

“Master, you look,” and now the tears were dropping fast, “me get cross yesterday. Me no good any more. Suppose you say me go, me go.” The words were punctuated with sobs.

“No, no. We want your help. There is much to do, and we all get cross sometimes. Run away and get your shovel.”

The bell had rung, and he limped away after the other boys, wiping his eyes on the back of his hands.

I gazed after him, and wondered what kind of a night that tender little conscience had come through.

A few months later some of these lads were baptised, including Lili, Tatu, and Saranlibu. They were allowed to choose their own Christian names, and were henceforth known as Moses, Peter, and David. One Friday evening after school, we were surprised by a request from the little cripple to be allowed to "make school" on Sunday at Vadli, the home of his mother's people, a long, weary, coastal climb. David joined him. And thus this insignificant child of four years previously, who trailed his body in the dust, began to minister to a large church and congregation, large for Ambrym. He was an eloquent speaker, and had plenty of soul. Indeed, his gait and his fervour reminded us of a famous Edinburgh preacher. But in a thirsty land flowers that are not watered must perforce wither. And so it came to pass with Lili. It was not possible for us to give him the help and attention he required and deserved. Events were against him. The last time I saw him, he came along the main path on the station followed by Krong and a band of clean, brightly dressed lads who had gathered round him at Vadli. In response to a warm greeting he said in the best of English—

"I am very well, thank you!"

Next day, Sunday, as we were on the way to some villages, he was asked—

"What about the new book? Can you read it?"

"Some of the words are too strong for me."

This, although we had used up all the hyphens in a large printing-house in the endeavour to separate the syllables and break the words up small.

My faith in him is undiminished, though his name

is no longer on the list of teachers. Lili, now married, still lives beside the Mission ground at Vadli, and doubtless thinks and dreams, with both pleasure and pain, of the days that are gone.

Ever and anon the desire swept over the younger ones to go and see the world; and they were attracted towards distant lands as are moths to the fatal flame. Some returned the better for their experience. Others perished in following their ambition.

Once and again some of the most promising of our boys and girls stumbled and fell, and had to be sternly put away for a season. The people, too, were jealous for the reputation of the Mission staff, and when they found a shady character in our midst, were quick to warn us that one scabby sheep would infect the whole flock. They objected to sit and listen to Scripture or decalogue from the lips of any who were known to be impure or dishonest.

No, our boys were not perfect. There was, for instance, the matter of washing. Tatu never took kindly to water. The other lads, as we have seen, made a jest at Tatu's expenditure in the matter of soap. But how could we expect otherwise of him? He came from a region that was completely shut off from access to the sea, unless some of the bolder spirits ventured by stealth along the mountain ridges, or made the expedition thither by dead of night. His circle of villages, though they were strong enough to defend themselves, was surrounded by foes who at times thirsted for blood. The people had to be content with a dry toilet. Of water inland there was none.

And so men ignorant of their nature, it may be in the guise of a gold-laced uniform, or of a silk hat

and a white tie, come casually by, and looking on the dusty brown skins of our people, or observing the obeisance shown by certain of the women, rank them as "low down" and "among the most degraded in the South Seas." Even Captain Cook viewed them with aversion, and called them "an ape-like nation." Yet has bitter experience proved it possible for the white skin, even of the civilised and the educated, to cover at times more real savagery than do the brown skins and befeathered hair of these so-called "repulsive" children of nature. So the worshippers of the Nile despised the dusky sons of Jacob and whipped them into servitude. But the clean-skinned slave-drivers were swept away by the rising tide, while the unwashed dwellers in tents were honoured as the custodians of divine truth for the nations of the world.

We need to know these people before we can judge of them. Nature, for the most part, conceals her beauties within her breast. They have to be sought for in hidden recesses, and are not to be seen from the windows of the rushing train or the deck of a passing steamer. To the eye of the wearied traveller these mountains¹ are clad with nought but gum-trees, grey, monotonous, sombre. That is but Nature's overall. Stay a while and make friends with her. She will fill the vast chasms with Heaven's own dyes of amethyst and blue, and lead you by mysterious paths to caves and waterfalls, to nymph-haunted dells and fairy bowers, that fill Australian hearts with pride.

So among these people a true search for the good and the beautiful in character will not go unrewarded. The Bishop of North Queensland ventures the state-

¹ The Blue Mountains of New South Wales.

ment that the South Sea Islanders met with in his diocese manifest "a perfect genius for religion." This is in part explained by the fact that they have been under Mission influence before they reached Australia. It certainly takes a considerable time and often much "hard graft" to discover the "genius for religion" in the original islanders. And the "genius" is not always accompanied by clarity of ideas in those that return. Johnnie, for instance, had just returned from the plantations. A fine specimen of copper-coloured manhood, he had been baptised, and could pray in English. We were gathered for the evening meeting, and it was our usual plan to call on the lads in turn to engage in prayer. We were all hushed and solemn, with heads bent in earnest expectation.

"Johnnie!"

There was a pause while Johnnie drew his breath. Then—he had a powerful voice—

"O Grandfather——"

Happily our boys were too thick-headed to see the humour o't; but surely the angels, if any such were employed to transmit the message, must have smiled as they passed it on.

Yet in a measure I do agree with the Bishop. These islanders, where their interests are not already, like the chiefs', vested in heathenism, are docile and teachable, emotional and responsive. Otherwise this book had not been written. Johnnie was not so far wrong after all. The natives, as heathen, call upon their dead fathers and grandfathers. He was a good fellow and sufficiently in earnest, but his ideas required a little sifting. He went away down the south coast to Lalinda, his own village, built a large native church, and filled it with listeners.

Following Johnnie homewards, came one James Taltasso, a broad-shouldered man of short stature, with a black beard and a smiling face. He was full of the desire to tell out the good news. When he found there was a church and teacher already in his own village (Lalinda), he decided to break fresh ground farther east. In his own simple words—

“They no hear about God yet; me want to go and tell them.”

He was warned by his own friends and by other villages that he would be killed and eaten. His noble answer was—

“If God wants me to preach the Gospel to these people, He will take care of me.”

So away he tramped along the beach, and disappeared from our sight. His faith and courage were rewarded. A long way down the coast, on the south-east of the island, he found a village willing to receive him. Here he built a church, of course of poles and thatch. Soon another village asked him to come and teach them too, and built for him again. Gradually the two increased to five, and James expended his energies in travelling from one to the other, teaching and preaching and doing the work of a friar. But one day he found to his surprise that two other men were engaged farther down, trying in feebler mode to do similar work. These he found in what he always regarded as the dark cannibal country. With these he pushed on, a sore tramp, visiting the villages, till they reached the farthest outstation on the north-east coast. Thence, by canoe, they paddled and sailed, till he had landed his prizes at Dip Point. Thus, by means of these Queensland lads, the Mission had, for the first time, circled the island.

At the time of which I am writing, the work had spread till there were some twenty stations with gatherings that fluctuated from a mere handful up to three hundred souls. But the most that can be said of the work is, that the conquest was well begun. It was in its most delicate stage. For the natives were like hermit-crabs being wooed out of their shells by low sweet music, the music of love. A discordant note, a rough breath, a lumbering tread—and they are gone; there is nought to be seen but worn and lifeless shells, dead as the pebbles on the shore.

Souls are not to be driven but drawn. They are to be wooed and won and led confidently into the fold, as were the sheep of Christ's own day on the far-away hills of Galilee. And for results in this delicate work we were largely dependent on our boys. To change the figure, while we may be the white floats, it is to the brown invisible net we owe success. They were not clever; their mental calibre is small. Food, climate, history, want of training are all against them. But to moral and spiritual influences they are alive and sensitive. For this work some of them had given up salaries of nearly £40 a-year, with keep, to receive instead a half-crown a-week and find for themselves. With the example of Christ's own love and self-sacrifice before them, they could be thoroughly unselfish, devoted, altruistic. And by quiet goodness, by gifts of speech and zeal, they led the way.

For not only were they our builders, gardeners, boats' crews, and travelling staff; they were our windows through which we looked out upon the people, and the people looked into the innermost chambers of our lives. Above all, they were the channels

through which the water of life descended to innumerable mouths. Their ardour was contagious. Some had caught the fire in Queensland, some on Ambrym, and gave themselves, whether to live or die, to telling unto others what they had found. But all had not the courage of a Tatu or a Lili.

Saturday was devoted largely to preparation for the work of the following day. One such morning as we came out of the female ward and down the steps, we became aware of the presence of one of the boys in a corner, face to the wall, sobbing. Stepping across the grass to him, I laid my hand on his shoulder.

“What’s the matter, Harry?”

Some seconds passed, and the question had to be repeated before the answer was forthcoming.

“I—can’t—preach.”

He was a shy youth, and a vision of early days swept across my memory.

“Never mind, lad! Who goes with you?”

“David, Joseph, and Benjamin.”

These were his companions, and like himself were baptised and had chosen their own names.

“So it is your turn? Well, we can get David to do the speaking.”

They were to go on the morrow afternoon to one of the villages.

If Harry was too shy as yet to preach, he could shine. And he did, in his silent, diffident way. Many a hard day’s work he put in at founding the Mission, with shovel, oar, and saw; and many a long hour he patiently sat at my side helping to translate.

He never became a preacher, but shone by quiet goodness alone. His death, for he barely reached

manhood, was the most radiant on our record. As he lay dying, a voice whispered in his ear—

“Harry, is it Jesus?”

“Yes, yes!”

“And raising his hand heavenwards, he held it there, moving the fingers as though calling or beckoning some one. He then closed his eyes, and we thought he was gone. But no. Up went the arm again. He had a clear vision, for his face brightened with it; and the smile remained.”¹

By faith, apparently, he saw his comrades across the stream, and beckoned to them. A message, sent for the occasion, had just been read to him, in which their names were mentioned, and he was bidden to be not afraid, as he was going to meet them all again.

Possibly it has not occurred to us to remember that in the “glorious company” of the Apostles, Prophets, and Martyrs, there will be many a black face, perhaps a majority. No page of the Church’s history is more beautiful than that which tells of the simple faith and childlike obedience of these guileless men and boys of the South Seas, who, without fame and reward, have laid down their lives in fulfilling the last command. To them also and to their devotedness may be applied in its higher sense, and without extravagance, the similitude of the poet—

“Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with
might :

Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, passed in music out of
sight.”

Indeed, when working among them, we believed at times that some of their young souls were as beauti-

¹ Quoted from Mr Mansfield’s letter.

The Conflict

ful blooms growing up in the shadow of the Mission, by-and-by to unfold and astonish their countrymen.

Five of our young band we know have died, all at their posts, and all confessing Christ, declaring plainly that they sought a "better country." Others are rising up to take their place, and the work of dispersing the darker shadows of heathenism goes forward.

Thus our expectations have in a measure been realised. Storms have beaten on the young plants since; some have perished, and some have become blighted and scattered. But we expect to find them all at the end of the days, and see them take root again, and burst afresh into fairer blooms, on a broader plain where storms are not.

BOOK IV.

VALETE, FRATRES!

CHAPTER I.

Farewell, my Comrades !

WOUNDED !

We were sitting on the verandah steps, David and I, with our feet on the grass. It was early afternoon, and together we were translating a hymn. A slight cough—a crimson mouthful—then another—and the task was laid aside for the day. There was no mistaking its meaning. To David himself it was not a new thing. He lay down finally a few months later, and sleeps in the sand behind the reef, the same which at birth sang him his first lullaby.

A dogged fight with malaria, such as we were having,—twenty-three attacks in fourteen months,—was destined to end in some such way. Yet to leave our post again so soon was flatly impossible. A wag rallied us thus :—

“Very pleased to get your last letter. I always hear that you are both well, or both got fever, but not much more. You will finish off as fever specialists at the rate you are going on. Every fortnight or three weeks I hear ‘A.’s letter came to-day; she seems cheerful and well. B. has fever again.’ The next month it is reversed—the ‘cheerful’ remaining constant. Do you take them (the attacks) for a change?—anything to break the monotony?”

Valete, Fratres!

The fever itself was getting monotonous, and at length the medicines failed to down it. The sick had, nevertheless, to be nursed and tended, often in the low and miserable village huts, where one must inhale the odours and breathe the dust of contagion. Hence it is that medical men live the shortest of lives, for they are always in the firing line.

So, after the brief conflict of less than four years, one had to submit, so to speak, to being carried off the field, and to give place to another. But no true soldier will complain of his wounds.

But how one lives over again the stirring scenes! In the soldier's memory the blood still flows red and the field is ever green. The guns still boom, and the smoke hangs low, a dense grey wall. He can see only the few comrades around him. But thereby the scene is more vividly depicted on the intensely active brain, and lives again on canvas or in story.

Thus in the pages that remain I shall try to recall some of the final scenes of that brief period, and to portray those with whom we were more closely associated. For we were all comrades, though in different degrees, fighting a common foe.

Only some five years have passed since we came away, and they are all, save one, dead and gone—the old chiefs who ruled along the shore and up the valley. There were seven of them, grand old fellows in their day and generation. Mal-Bongnaun was the last to go, the tallest of them all, and the stoutest, if we except big, merry, mischievous Pungpung-Melun, of Henyal. Mal was also the best of them all, a wise counsellor and a good. Joint chief of Fanting with Mal-Pangkumu, he seemed not to care a whit about ruling; and for that very reason he was possibly the

greater chief. He was pointed out as the man who had saved the lives of enemies by pleading for them. Recognised as the doctor until he had all but poisoned one of our men with a bolus for incurable asthma, he showed no resentment at the waning of his power. Absolutely blind, he usually gave the end of his long staff to one of the young boys to lead him about; and proud they were of the distinction. His eyes were too far gone for operation, and the volcanic ash was irritating. He came at times to get his poor globes washed, and would pillow his head on the grass and wait patiently for the dropping of the cooling lotion and the healing oil.

Once and again, even in the early days, he was led to our door, and the little guide cried his name—

“Doctor, Doctor, . . . Mal-Bongnaun!”

Then with beaming face, the smile shining even in his white and sightless balls, he would declare that he was glad he had heard the good news, and was going to be a true man and live the good life. He would then add a promise to attend service on the morrow—

“I am coming: see, I have washed already.”

Having then concluded his greeting, the gentle, dignified old fellow was led on his way.

But there was one chief who never once attended church—Werwer-Melun, of Melbongan—the most dreaded man in all the valley. Once on a time, during a feud, he had coolly walked into Fanting, shot his man, and coolly walked out again. He and his people lived far up under the cliffs at the farthest corner. Even Mal-Bongnaun shook his head when he heard that we were going thither. At our first visit on a Sabbath morning, a black head appeared over the stockade cursing us for our temerity. Our guide’s

father had to pay a fine for him for intruding, and to ward off the dreaded "aple." At our second, no one was to be seen. At length a man—we might call him a devil, for such he looked—crept out of the woods above us and came stealthily towards us, bearing a loaded musket and girt with a belt of cartridges. His hair was trimmed devil-wise, as represented in some pictures,—a ridge above the brow, and again above each ear—the badge of a murderer proud to be able to name and count his victims. As he glided towards us in snake-like fashion, with a look as malevolent as he could make it, our boys were about to show him their heels. But we all stood our ground and invited him to come and talk. Sulkily he laid aside his musket and came nearer. Some more out of the woods joined him, and we all sat down together. Having explained our mission and sung our message, we had some lively conversation, and parted good friends. It was the beginning of many happy visits.

Melbongan was destined to give us a surprise. One Saturday morning a bright new yellow strap was put on our black retriever to serve as a collar. Within an hour it had disappeared. We were concerned about the apparent theft, for we never allowed an offence of this kind, however small, to pass unchecked. In the afternoon we were arranging to make inquiries after the service on the morrow, when a little man appeared at the stile bending under a huge bunch of bananas. These he laid at my feet.

"Master, will you sell me the dog's strap?"

"Why? Did you take it?"

"Yes. My little boy saw the dog on the beach this morning, and he cried for the strap so much I could not refuse him. I am too fond of him."

“But that was like stealing!”

“No, master. Me no steal.” And his eyes fell. “Suppose you say so, I will bring it back.”

“No, no. You may have it. That,” pointing to the bananas, “will make it right.”

Thus to our surprise we found the jewel honesty sparkling in the darkest corner of the valley. He had been worrying about the strap all day, and had hastened to his garden above the cliffs to get the wherewithal to pay for it.

The chief himself came down to us on two occasions only. The first of these was to welcome back and escort up the valley a youth who had returned from Queensland. In fact, at his request we had written for the young man, Nakon, to return. He landed at the station with some other lads; nevertheless his hereditary foes gathered round him like wolves. In mortal fear he was handing out the contents of his chest, trying to satisfy their rapacity. Seeing this, I closed down the lid with a snap, and sent for Wer-wer. He soon arrived with some armed followers, who, according to rule, left their muskets outside the gate. We seized the opportunity, and made Mal and his greatest foe shake hands.

Now Nakon had a “fish” eye, by which is meant that one of his eyes was opaque and white like the eye of a boiled fish. The natives regarded such an eye as indicative of a bad character, and Nakon helped to give colour to the opinion. We soon found him to be shifty, unreliable, and false. His constant presence on the station was undesirable, and we declined to engage him. Wanting to show his contempt, he one day found a loaded musket in the bush close by, left there for a few minutes by its owner,

a youth from another village. Nakon shouldered it, and therewith strutted across the grounds under our very noses.

“Now where are your regulations?” Such was the defiance expressed in every strut.

In a moment we were after him, hot foot, and seized the musket. A wrestling-match followed, in which Mr Mansfield also soon bore a hand. Nakon was no match for two, but he still held on.

“You leeb 'im [leave it, let go]! You leeb 'im! He no belong me!”

“Whose is it, then?”

“His,” pointing with his foot to the young man who was quietly sitting on the ground close by.

“Is this your gun?”

“Yes!”

“Come and take it then, and put it inside the Mission house.” He obeyed.

A few days later Nakon came down with a body of men to demand the musket, and if need were to wrest it from us by force. But they had more common-sense than he, and listened to reason. We would give the musket to none but their chiefs; and the chiefs must pledge us their assistance in keeping order.

“Now, go you, Nakon, and bring them down.”

Nakon was not game, and slunk off into the bush, ridiculed by his companions, and threatening to do great things.

The assistants were both concerned about the matter, and thought there might be some danger in withholding the weapon. However, towards evening about ten days afterwards we saw H.M.S. *Dart* coming up to the anchorage. We always managed, if

possible, to have all differences settled before a war-ship came. So two of us hurried up the valley after the chiefs. Wer-wer came down, followed by a number of men from both villages in single file. As we wrote out the pledge under the lamp for him to sign, a curious sight presented itself. It was the anniversary of the French Republic, and as the night deepened, Lifu-John began to fire off his musket in honour of the day.

Bang!

Down went the dreaded chief on his palms till his forehead all but touched the lime floor.

“I won’t fight any more; I only walk about [*i.e.*, on business or pleasure bent].”

Bang!

Down he went again.

“I won’t fight any more; I only walk about.”

And thus with each shot the action was repeated till the paper was signed and they were free to go; which they did, disappearing into the woods like a flash, and being escorted to a safe distance.

The doctor had come ashore in uniform and signed the document as a witness, his presence adding not a little to the dignity of the procedure.

In such a way we tried to win these wild men and keep them under hand, and in some measure were successful.

As for Wer-wer-Melun, he showed his appreciation of the message of love and goodwill by patient listening, and by sending us away each time loaded with presents of food. Finally, he gathered up all the sick in the village and either brought them down or sent them down in a body for treatment.

Of one of the seven, Toktok-Mal, we saw but little.

He rarely even passed through the Mission grounds—a tall, thin, white-haired old heathen, always accompanied by two or three of his chief men and carrying a large white umbrella. Always hasting, full of importance, with staccato speech and stilted walk, to us he was never more than a passing shadow.

Another, who might have been bracketed with him for age, was Vir-Mal, the chief of the village nearest to the Point. He was in his dotage, a pleasant old soul, with a pate always nodding, as bald and round as a cricket ball, and, like it, often bearing evidence of contact with the ground. His voice was like a melancholy, not displeasing, echo from the far-away past. Whether it was that he was an adept at fencing questions, or that he wished to be polite and to discuss only a subject worthy of chiefs, his talk was of pigs, and of pigs only.

“Good-day, Mal. How are you to-day?”

He looked up, his black beady eyes set round with a smile.

“What do you think of our pigs? They are grand.”

He never gave one a foot-hold. Another time it was—

“Well, Mal, what would you like to-day?”

“Mashes [matches].” As soon as his hands closed over the box he went on—

“I once had a little black pig . . .”

Again, the day was raw and chilly, and I wondered that his unprotected body was not shivering.

“No fire, Mal?”

“Well, mashes are good—and so are pigs——”

“Do your boys never tell you what we talk about in school, Mal?”

He looked at me.

“ My father once had a pig . . . ”

We wondered when we should get behind the barrier and reach his affections. The day at length arrived.

There was in the village a fair-skinned little fellow, the Benjamin of the chief's family, and dear to the old man's heart. He astonished us all, and his own people not the least, by forsaking the village and coming to live at the station. Though only about twelve years old, he was considered to have reached man's estate, and no attempt was made to oppose his will. In response to all enquiries as to why he did this, he looked up with frank open eyes and gave the one clear answer—

“ I want to know God ! ”

It gave Mal a new and deeper subject to think about. Instead of opposing the lad, he came with feeble steps the whole way to the station,—the first and only time he was there,—reasoned quietly with him for a while, and then took a long, subdued, and affectionate farewell.

To reach Vir-Mal's village along the shore, we had to pass Mala-Melun's. Him we saw often, yet knew but little. His tall, thin, yellow body was surmounted by the queerest headpiece to be seen on the island: a flat face, all wrinkles; small quizzing eyes; mouth like that of a fish; and a fringe of short black curls like corkscrews dangling singly all around his head. Taciturn to a degree, he answered more by his grim laconic smile than by words. He seemed seriously to doubt if the new teaching would have a favourable effect in preventing the dwindling away of his people; yet he was always ready to seek our assistance in preventing strife. But if a man's first duty is to mind his own business, Mal-Melun did not fail as a man.

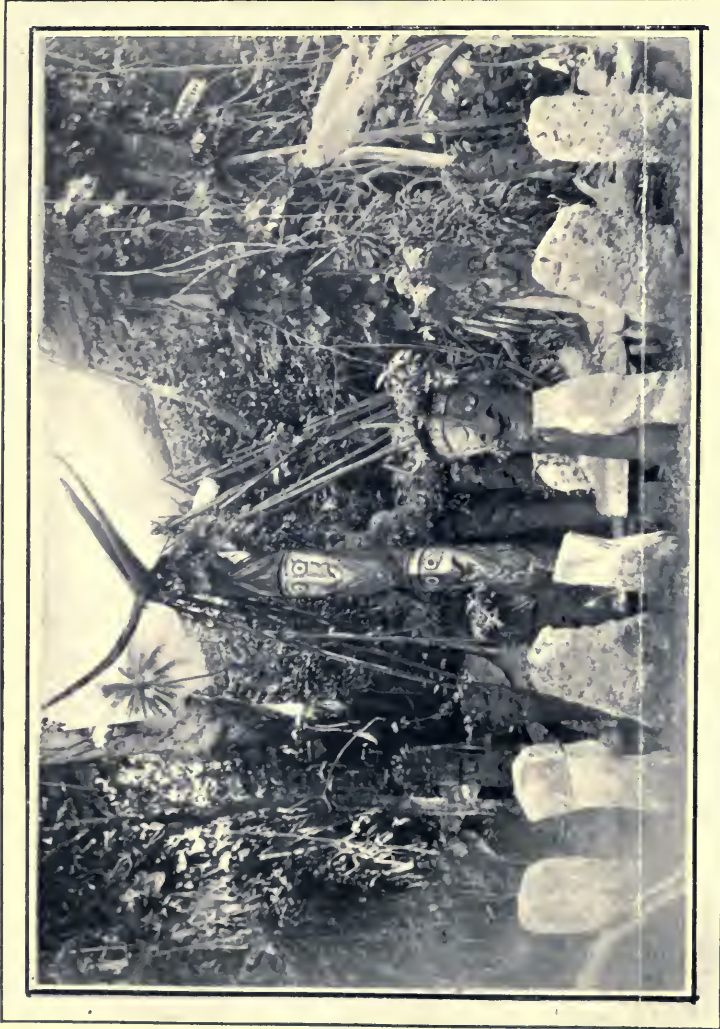
For he ever gave one the impression, by his quiet, reserved manner, that he was able to mind his own affairs and expected you to do the same.

Despite his cold, flinty manner, he had a tender heart. I once found him alone, leaning over a wall to hide his grief, and sobbing to himself like a child. For Death was laying a cold hand on another of Mal's young men. A short distance away the youth, painted and decorated, was lying on the chill, wet earth, waiting, nay striving, to depart. We sang him a song in his own tongue whereon he might rest his soul, and went quietly on our way.

For the natives, like ourselves, sought to strengthen and steel their souls for the last, lone walk. To them it was not, as with us, so much a walk through the "valley of shadow," as a lonely passing along a track through dark woods frequented by evil spirits. These, the ghosts of evil men, restless and unresting, armed with snares and long poles with hooks, lie in ambush. They grapple conscience-stricken souls as these haste fearfully along, seizing them from behind, dragging them into darkness, and thrusting them down to hell.

Hence, when a man feels that he is about to die, he is painted and ornamented with all the insignia of the rank he may have attained. He wishes to die thus, that the spirits may recognise his rank as he passes by. So it sometimes happens that a man is carried out and laid on the ground, and wailed and wept over day after day, he each day lying and writhing and trying to die, and starving himself to hasten the end.

But rank alone will not protect. A clean life is necessary. And there is, as we have already noted, one supreme virtue whose merit is most powerful—



From a Photograph taken on Malakula by John Marden, I.L.D.

THE SYMBOL OF IMMORTALITY.

generosity. Thus, when a chief dies, he gives away all his property, principally yams and pigs, to be feasted upon. For nearly a year before his death Mal-Pangkumu had been prepared. He was now known as Mal-Mato, "the patriarch Mal." He had reached the zenith of his ambition, and possibly regarded himself as the highest chief of all.

When, during the struggle for supremacy, we had definitely decided to pay Mal for the land in his own coin, we prepared to do it handsomely, and sought far and wide for a respectable tusker, the best that his money could buy. And when at length he was offered his choice, he turned round with a smile and said—

"We two are friends. I am a great chief. A chief does not take payment from his friend."

The tusker had to be sent back, and the five sovereigns were ultimately dropped into the industrial fund.

Preparations were now being made for his last feast and his final "maki." For days he went about with his arms covered with tusks. At the feast he reviewed his past life, recounting the steps by which he had climbed, the cost of rank, and the power attained. Thereupon he discharged his debts in full. Henceforth let no man trouble him. His work was done.

What now remained? What but flight? And so a great bird was carved with outstretched wings and placed above the "maki." It was the symbol of farewell, and of immortality.

And Mal, feeling that the time of departure was near, had actually provided himself with a card of introduction to Heaven—*i.e.*, Paradise. The finest tusker he ever possessed had been donated for this

purpose. He hoped that by bearing the tusks in his hand at death he would prove his generosity, and would pass along the track safely.

But as the time drew on his conscience was not satisfied. He would make doubly sure. We had gone away for a year in the vain hope of recovery. Again and again he sent for Mr Mansfield.

“When will my friend be back? Write to him to come quick!”

The weeks passed, and he could wait no longer; he must tell out his burden.

“I want you to bury me in a box [coffin].”

“But, Mal, here we do that only for Christians.” It was done as a mark of respect to our faithful teachers.

“I know; pray Jesus to help me, and bury me so.”

This was done, and according to his own wish the heathen ceremonies and wailings were dispensed with that he might be buried so. Not yet content, the coffin must be made ready and brought to his side. This was done. Thus, with his hands clasping what to him were symbols not of death but of immortality, he went his way. After death the tusks were to be taken out of his hand and kept for “his friend.” They are my best-valued curio. Let us hope that he passed along the spirit track safely, and found an “abundant entrance” at the end of his journey.

The curtain has fallen swiftly upon these men, and with them many of the old customs and usages have passed and are passing away. None of the chiefs were baptised. The time for that had not yet come. Nevertheless of some of them may we not say, “These died, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar.” And



MAL'S CARD OF INTRODUCTION TO HEAVEN.

we anticipate that the acquaintanceship so rudely interrupted here will be resumed under fairer conditions in some part of Hades,—if not in Paradise, in its environs.

When our eyes last rested on Ambrym in farewell, a black cloud of ashes from the volcano was travelling slowly westward. It trailed its skirts across the island, fertilising and besmirching what has been described as “perhaps the most beautiful of Melanesian landscapes,” its finer particles floating away into the upper strata, to gather mists and bring down fruitful showers, here and far away.

So cometh the Angel of Sorrow in her black disguise, blasting all our present hopes, yet bringing within her hidden folds a richer blessing, a deeper faith.



MAL'S SYMBOL OF FAREWELL.

“WHAT NOW REMAINED? WHAT, BUT FLIGHT?”

CHAPTER II.

The Old Mal of Naubu.

It was two o'clock on Sunday afternoon, and the bell had just rung for school, when Lieutenant Fullman, Will, and I, with Albert, stepped over the stile and turned up the valley. Fullman was the navigating lieutenant of H.M.S. *Turnagain*, which lay at anchor in the roadstead. He was one of the best built men I have ever met, well-proportioned, and slightly under six feet. A man of weight in trunk and limb, whom no light gust could shift from his path. Withal, he was youthful and agile; hair dark, eyes dark blue, face ruddy and as full of fresh life as the sun and sea air could make it. A perpetual pleasantness, almost amounting to a smile, hovered over his well-formed features. Physically, and possibly in other senses too, he was one of the few who deserve the term, "God's Englishman."

During the week he had been generously assisting Mr Mansfield by blasting and removing some coral rocks that blocked the boat passage. Will, too, must be lending a hand. He had come over in the warship on a brief visit. And we had arranged to-day to walk together to Naubu, to see the old Mal, who was reported to be dying.

We chatted pleasantly as we walked along, single file, and took notice of the big nettle tree at the corner of the Mission ground, where, some three years before our arrival, the last cannibalism occurred at this end of the island. A returned labourer from Queensland, said to be a convert, was there treacherously shot in the back by those who had volunteered to escort him home; and his body was divided and distributed among the salt-water villages to be eaten.

But to return to the old Mal. As we went along I told Will and Fullman how I had come to know him. Some two years previously, Malkon, the virile reigning chief of Naubu, had sent for me to attend his favourite wife. She was very ill, in fact far gone with consumption of the throat. He had washed her face and sponged her chest, and had her sitting in state on a mat outside her hut, awaiting my coming. Evidently he was very fond of her, and attended to her wants himself, waiting on her as if she were, as in fact she was, his princess. When news came of her death I feared the result, knowing that fighting and bloodshed would follow.

So one morning at dawn we manned the boat and proceeded to the south coast, determined to interview Malkon and check the strife. Fighting had already begun. In the villages we passed through the people were all armed, and afraid to stir. Even our own boys were not quite fearless. Indeed, as we drew the boat up on a bank of broken coral, and turned to enter the thick bush, George—good, gentle George—armed himself with a blue cobblestone as large as his hand could grasp. But before we had gone far along the track a feeling of shame awoke. None of the others had picked up a stone. Soon the feel-

ing travelled down to those finger-tips; they relaxed their hold, and, without a word, the cobblestone was hurled into the shadows among the myrtles and ferns.

To be unarmed was ever our best armour. So we then found. At one moment we came face to face with an ambush of rifle-barrels and poisoned arrows. They discovered their mistake in time, and, with a burst of laughter to cover their discomfiture, they hid the weapons among the tall grasses with lightning speed. Again, on stepping into Naubu, the sentries, in black and white, fled with a shout, paint and all. The Old Mal and Malkon came out of their huts, surprised. Malkon was very cross. Had he not threatened to shoot us if we interfered? But a threat was always an intimation that we were needed. His dignity as a great chief was hanging in the balance; and how could he ever lift up his face again unless he shot somebody for the death of his wife? Though we sat a long time on the fallen drum beside his "war-war," pleading and reasoning with him, and even uttering a warning, our mission seemed in vain.

In the meantime George was busy with the Old Mal. As we turned homewards I remarked—

"You were having a pleasant chat with Mal, George?"

"Yes," he replied, "and what do you think he told me? That every night as the sun sets over those distant hills [of Malekula], he comes to the door of his hut, looks up to the sky, and prays the great Father to take care of him."

"But," said Fullman with surprise, "is he not what you would call a cannibal chief?"

"Yes, and Naubu is a stronghold of heathenism!"

As, to-day, we went along to see the Old Mal again, I pointed out the grey stone cliff split into three pillars, which project conspicuously from the mountain-side behind the station. To the people on the sea-shore the gaps between the pillars are the gates of heaven and hell, through which the souls of the dead pass to their destinies. We climbed the mountain-side in silence, as the effort requires all one's breath. Having reached the dividing ridge, we had a good look at Mount Marum, the volcano. To the people on the plateau the burning crater is the mouth of Hades and the path of departing souls. This difference in belief emphasises the fact that, from the time successive tribes arrived and gained a foothold on the island, each has been cribbed and confined by fighting and fear within very narrow limits.

In crossing the plateau we observed the gaping cracks in the soil caused by recent earthquakes, and came upon the lava stream where it had stopped in its course. Near by was a hillock, part of which had been washed away, revealing the strata. During the destruction of the central mountain, there must have been a rain of stones the size of walnuts for a considerable period. During a later period the stones were the size of filberts; and over all was a layer of ashes about a foot deep. Volcanic activity had been intense.

We came to a clear space on the track as if the latter had suddenly expanded to a width of three or four yards. The dust, too, had been carefully smoothed over. Fullman stopped.

"What does this mean?" he asked.

"That is where some chiefs have met and had a talk. They sit down to exchange news and discuss

their views. Before doing so, they clear the ground and make sure there are no poisoned arrow-heads hidden there. Moreover, when the conference is past, each man carefully smooths over, with the soles of his feet, the spot where he was sitting, so that not a hair shall remain for an enemy to pick up. They fear witchcraft and poisoning."

At length we reached Naubu, and were directed to the Old Mal. Shrivelled up and thickly begrimed with the black dust, he appeared a picture of heathen neglect. The roof of his little hut, old as his Mal-ship, and tarred and shining with the smoke of many years, was dropping through and full of holes. Packing myself and my white flannels into as small a compass as possible, with Albert to help in translating, we squeezed through the small door and crept into the "bul," or hole, in which he half lay, half sat, on the damp earth.

"They say you are going to leave us, Mal?"

"Yes. I think I am dying."

"Do you know anything about the place whither you are going?"

"I do," came the surprising answer; "I have been there before."

Then he explained to us in his low voice that he was going to the place he once saw in a dream. His spirit had descended through the fires of the volcano to the world of spirits. Nearing that strange region, he met a chief, and, chief-like, they cleared a space and sat down on the clean track to talk. This man told him of various regions in the far country,—of an ocean of fire, of a place of waters, where men are washed and purified. As we listened we were reminded once more of the thoughts of

Greece and Rome—of Acheron and Phlegethon, the rivers in Tartarus.¹

Mal's heart was filled with the desire to see more of that wonderful world; but the man said—

“No! When you die you shall come hither again. I shall meet you, and guide you then to these mysteries.”

So Mal was dying in the hope of meeting his guide again after death.

“Once,” he continued, “I was nearly dead; but the old men and my many friends caught me by the hands and drew me back; and the people wept and wailed, and would not let me go.”

“Who was the chief that guided you, Mal?”

“I know not; but of this I am persuaded: He is true, and I shall meet him there again.”

¹ Compare Socrates in the ‘Phædo’ :—

“The third river rises between these two, and near its source falls into a vast and fiery region, and forms a lake. . . . Those whose lives seem to have been neither very good nor very bad . . . proceed to the lake. There they dwell, and are punished for the crimes which they have committed, and are purified and absolved.”—F. J. Church.

Compare also Anchises in the ‘Æneid’ (Bk. vi.) :—

“And when the mortal life is ended, yet are not men quit of all the evils of the body, seeing these must needs be put away in many marvellous ways. For some are hung up to the winds, and with some, their wickedness is washed out by water, or burnt out with fire. But a ghostly pain we all endure.”—A. J. Church.

CHAPTER III.

Will's last Climb.

IT was a hot night. I was lying on the cane couch in the sitting-room. Doors, windows, and ventilators were thrown wide to welcome the evening breeze. Another attack of fever. The usual remedies had been applied; perspiration was coming freely, and the temperature falling. As a rule, we don't think much of the fever, but have to be on our guard.

The report of a gun aroused us all, and a light was seen outside the reef. In less than half an hour a note was brought in. It was written in pencil, apparently by a trembling hand, and read as follows:—

THE HEIGHTS, FOAM BAY.

Please, Doctor, come at once if you can. Will seems dangerously ill. I am little better. Fever, we think; but the remedies seem powerless. Please come. Dick will bring you in his cutter.

MADGE GODDARD.

Friday afternoon.

The cutter had been six hours in coming, the wind being fair. If we could get away at once, Dick hoped to reach our destination sometime during the next forenoon, provided wind and sea, which were right

in our teeth, did not get worse. Mansfield rapidly gathered the bags and such things as might be required. After a little hasty refreshment, the fever having fallen to 101° , we hurried down to the beach, and pushed off. In a few minutes the cutter was under way, and, driven along by occasional strong puffs of wind which came rushing down the mountain sides, she quickly rounded Dip Point and reached the open. There the wind and sea, as Dick had feared, were right in our teeth. A miserable night was before us, a night of pitching and tacking, and of futilely thrashing the sea. The white-topped rollers swept past us, now breaking on this bow, now on that. Anon she staggered under the blows, and again charged ahead right gallantly. There was no fun in getting drenched; so I dropped into the hold and lay on the ballast of cobble-stones, to sleep off the fever and to be better fitted next day for the grim fight with Death.

And what of Will? It happened on a Friday evening, just a week past. He was filling up his stock bottles with cough, salts, and quinine mixtures. A native lad, in great excitement, bounded on to the verandah and called for the "missionary." He brought word that a young man in his village, while shooting fish with dynamite, had been too slow in throwing the cartridge into the water. The fuse was short, and the charge had exploded in his hand, blowing away his arm. He was bleeding to death. "Would the missionary come quick!"

Will would not wait to take his tea, but, putting his pocket-case and a few items into a hand-bag, hurried away. His preparations were few, for he expected to be back soon after dark. Catching up

a couple of biscuits to eat by the way, one of which, of course, he afterwards gave to the boy, he was soon lost to sight down the track. They had to cross a number of gullies, down the steep sides of which, in times of storm, the water rushed to the sea, bearing on its bosom, and trailing in its depths, branches and huge boulders, to be piled up in great heaps on the flat below. The village was about four miles away, and was finally reached, after a stiff climb, at the top of a slippery ridge overlooking the sea. The soil was a soapy clay, black and yellow, and the footing treacherous,—very unlike the ashes of Ambrym, which the rain binds together, firm, clean, and elastic, so that to walk is a pleasure. Here it was a pain.

Lying on the ground outside one of the huts, Will found his patient. The poor fellow was only half conscious, and lay with his shattered limb in a bucket of water. The chief, who with some of his men was standing near trying to encourage the sufferer, explained how the accident had happened, and pointed to the trail of blood which led down to the beach. Will lifted the arm gently out of the bucket. The forearm was not blown off as he had been led to expect, but the hand and wrist could not be distinguished, and in their place was a tangle of ribbons. At the sight the chief grew pale, and turned away. He was about to swoon, when Will, not wanting a second patient, quick as thought hit him a sharp slap on the shoulder that nearly sent him on his face.

The chief, stung to wrath by what seemed an insult, swung round, club in hand, to find his assailant. He was met by the bucketful of blood and water which Will sent flying over the open ground. Then, facing

the chief with a smile, and holding forward the bucket, he said—

“More water, Massing!”

“Hawan!” [Yes!] said he, grasping both the bucket and the situation, and hurrying off to fill it himself at the spring. Thankful that he had not been allowed to show his weakness, he came back, with the water, in a gracious frame of mind.

“All right, Massing?” asked Will.

The chief smiled and responded with a glance of his eyes. Then, dropping on the ground on the opposite side of the injured youth, he became a willing assistant.

In a short time the limb was trimmed, dressed, and bandaged; and the youth was lifted into the hut and attended by some of his companions. The boat would come for him next day.

As for Will, he was wet through with perspiration, and shivering. The wind had risen, and the rain was pelting down. It was the hot season, and a storm was brewing. The night had closed in rapidly, and there was no hope of getting home through the pitchy darkness. To make matters worse, he had forgotten to bring a change of clothing: to carry such was his usual custom, even in fine weather. In this climate perspiration is so free, and evaporation so rapid, that one may get a chill while resting in the shade of a tree. And to be exposed in a wet shirt to a draught, or to a fresh breeze in dull, rainy weather, is to risk an attack of “blue shivers,” followed with high fever. So was it with Will. He made his way to the chief's hut, a draughty, leaky little hole, with a wretched fire consisting of a few wet smoking embers. Here he had to spend the

night, unable, for want of space, to stand up or walk,—weak, hungry, and perishing with cold. The conditions were too miserable even for conversation, and the noise of the storm made it impossible. At last, after singing with them some hymns, he coiled himself up on a few plaited cocoa-nut leaves laid on the ground, and tried to sleep. But the mosquitoes, as keen-eyed as sharks for a white skin, began their torture, and kept it up till the day broke and the storm had ceased.

Stiff and weary, Will dragged himself homeward through the still dripping woods. He was hot enough now without the sickening beams of the morning sun, which soon overtook him on the track, and pursued him mercilessly. He arrived at the boat-house utterly exhausted. How he was to reach the mission-house he knew not, and, but for his loved ones, scarcely cared. If there are advantages there are also disadvantages in building on a hill, and many of the stations are thus built. At this juncture his faithful little pony, "Boy," came to his aid. "Boy" was a chestnut, and had been brought to the Islands when little more than a foal. Sighting his master through the trees, he trotted up with joyful neighings, and, as if diagnosing trouble, began to lick his hands. He, too, knew what sickness meant, and carried a big scar on the near fore-leg. He had been attacked by a shark in wading round a point.

Too weak to climb on to his back, Will threw his right arm over the pony's neck and gripped the mane. With a "Come, Boy!" the wise creature slowly moved forward, and supported him up the steep and winding path.

We sometimes admit sympathy in animals; yet if

we watch we may find it where we least expect. Cattle, for instance, are supposed to be the stupidest, most unfeeling of living creatures. Even in them we may be agreeably surprised. We once had occasion, on Ambrym, to throw the bull in order to put a ring through his nose. He resisted violently, and the operation was somewhat painful. After he had been sent back through the sliprails, the cows came up to him and began to sympathise, licking his face and still bleeding nose. The bull began to weep; the cows did likewise; and even the calves came up and joined in, the great tears rolling down their cheeks and dropping into the sand. Who dare deny after this that even a cow has some of the "finer feeling"?

Will was soon rolled in blankets, and, under the influence of quinine and hot drinks, perspiring freely. Next day he was able to attend the service, and take the first prayer, the head teacher doing the rest. On Monday he prescribed for a few patients in the dispensary; on Tuesday likewise. Wednesday and the following days he felt weaker, and any who required to see him had to go to the bed-side.

The truth was, he was getting worse. The fever was of the remittent type. Each day he had a violent attack with intense pain in the spine and limbs. Large doses of quinine, up to thirty grains of the bisulphate three times a-day, did not arrest the disease. During the remissions the temperature failed to touch the normal line, and in fact each day got farther away from it. Owing to his weakness and mental prostration, when the drug should have been pushed, or the hypodermic used, efforts were relaxed. His lips became blue, eyes sunken, and skin sodden with perspiration. His hands were numb and white, as if

seethed in a wash-tub. For hours each day, during the height of the attack, he tossed in wild delirium.

To make matters worse, the mosquitoes were busy, and quickly inoculated wife and child with the same poison. Anxiety and heart-ache, the long night watches, and the multifarious calls and duties of the station, told rapidly on her small reserve of strength. Towards the end of the week she began herself to succumb. By Friday morning she was thoroughly alarmed, and an opportunity presenting itself, sent to Ambrym, as we have already seen. Friday evening Will was markedly worse, and a message was sent in haste across the water to the nearest station. The boat could not re-cross the strait that night on account of the weather, but in the early morning, at the risk of his own life, the young missionary set sail, and, after a perilous time, succeeded in crossing.

Slowly and wearily Saturday morning at last dawned on the mission household. They were thankful for the wind, rough though it was, as it promised some relief from the burning heat. That morning Will could take but little nourishment, and quickly dozed off. As soon as possible, Madge lay down again—and slept. How long she could not tell; it seemed but a few minutes. She woke with a start; there was no sound from the next room where her husband lay.

All was so still she became alarmed. Possibly the very stillness had wakened her. Rising softly not to awaken little Douglas, upon whose face the beads had gathered, and supporting her weak limbs by steadying herself against the wall, she glided slowly into Will's room. Amazement struck her as her own pallor was momentarily revealed in passing the glass. But anxiety for her husband obliterated the impression as

by a flash; nor did she remember it again till weeks afterwards.

Will's eyes were open, and were filled with a puzzled, anxious look.

"O God, how can I?" he said appealingly. Then gazing at his open upraised hands, he murmured, "Unclean! Unclean!"

He was perspiring freely, too freely. She laid her hand on his hot, wet brow, and said—

"What is it, Will? I sponged your hands but half an hour since."

He looked into her eyes, and the light of recognition came slowly back.

"Madge! Ah, it's you."

"What was the matter, Will?"

"I must have been dreaming," he answered slowly. "I saw a hill, oh so green! like Eden in spring-time. Lilies were blooming everywhere; no other flower. On the crown of the hill were seraphim, covering hands and feet with their wings. Beyond was a great city. . . ." (He paused to recover breath.)

"Up the hill there wound a path. It was thronged . . . with young and old, robed in white. All were noble or beautiful. Some had faces I thought I knew. They were chanting. It sounded like 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates.' . . ."

"Nought else could I see; only white doves and the whiter lilies. The whole air was tremulous with the rustle of wings and the sound of harps. . . ."

"Just then two little boys, one dark, the other fair, left the throng and ran to the slope of the hill nearest me. They shone like stars. Somewhere they have crossed my path; I can't remember. . . . They beckoned and cried—'Ascend!'"

“But my hands were stained, and my feet soiled, and my heart smote me within. . . .

“They saw my trouble, and pointed to the brook which flowed between us at my feet. I had not seen it before. It came gushing from a spring near by an ancient cross far up the hill. The water rippled and sang among the brown stones as it rushed along, a widening stream. . . .

“It was then you woke me.”

His wife was seated on the edge of the bed, leaning over him, the tears running down her cheeks and falling on their clasped hands, as he slowly whispered his story.

“My angel husband, how can you? Never were your hands soiled with one mean deed. Never! My own pure-hearted man!”

“Don’t, Madge, don’t. Don’t say that. You know I have not been so good as I ought. All my goodness is His, and—and yours.”

“Oh, Will, don’t. You know I am not good!”

“Better Madge, far better than I,” he whispered hoarsely. “You have helped me so much—and helped me to be a better man. And I have given you such a hard life!”

As he finished the sentence his eyes filled, and, weakened by the effort, his head sank back on the pillow.

“But, Will,” she remonstrated, “I chose it.” She remembered how, in their first days together, he had playfully woven her a ring of holly, in anticipation of a better, and had placed it on her finger with a little speech of warning which he scarcely believed in himself—for youth and love are both blind. It was her first engagement ring—a ring of thorns; and the

symbol had foreshown a painful reality. But those were days of sweetness and pure happiness, and there had been many such since. The bond had grown in strength with the years, and domestic sorrow had proved a forcing-bed to the affections.

The recollection of those days had brought back a smile and a flush to her wan and troubled face. She was silent a-while. Then she stooped and pressed a long long kiss on his brow, her gleaming tresses falling about his face and neck.

Again he opened his lips to speak; and as she bent to catch the words, he whispered faintly—

“I did so want to serve Him a little longer, I have done so little. And there is so much to do.”

“You are not dying, Will?” she said, alarmed.

“I can't say, dear. For your sake and the boy's, I——”

He was off again.

Then taking in with a rapid survey his sinking condition, she noted the change in his face and lips. Slipping her hand inside the fold of his jacket, she pressed it firmly over his heart. There was but a flicker. In alarm she crossed to the window once again.

Yes! the boat was in the offing.

“Will, the doctor's come!”

But wind and sea had prevailed. The boat touched the beach too late.

Will had begun the ascent.

CHAPTER IV.

The Gravediggers.

CHOW the Chinaman, and "Hell-fire Bill," happened to be aboard the cutter. They both knew and, in their rough way, loved the dead man. So they came up to the house with the request that they might be allowed to dig the grave. Bill, indeed, had once been nursed back to health on Will's station; and when he came off his bed and was about to leave, he was disturbed in mind because his pockets were empty, and there was no way open to him to give a donation to the medicine fund, and thus show his gratitude. Going up to Will, he took off his hat and held out his hand.

"Good-bye, sir. I'll never forget your kindness. You're doin' a grand work. Truth is, sir, we chaps 'ud like to see you made Guv'ner o' the islands."

It was the only shot he had in his locker; but, from such an one, it was a more graceful tribute than any gilt-edged fee.

Chow we have met before; but where Bill had dropped from, Heaven only knows! He was a tall, broad, flabby, loose-jointed fellow, with a flat nose, and a straggly brown beard, the hairs of which could be counted with ease, each seeming to adver-

tise that it had no connection with any neighbour. His talk flowed on incessantly; anything in his neighbourhood with the semblance of ears was sufficient to set him on. He had a remedy or gospel for all the ills of life; and to condemn his gospel was to afford him grounds for antipathy, if not hostility. He could not string half-a-dozen words together grammatically; but what was lacking in grammar was made up in pungency. He was also a capital mimic, and his nationality no one could tell.

But Bill, like the rest of his class, could restrain himself when the keg ran dry, and could, and did, behave like a gentleman when occasion demanded. He might be found on any of the islands, and in the wilder parts too. As cannibalism was coming to an end, his carcase was in no danger; and, being an inoffensive creature, he escaped "pig-sticking" or clubbing.

"Here, Chow, guess it's your turn now," he said, handing the Chinaman the shovel, and throwing himself down on the grass. "Think I'll have a smoke," pulling out his pipe and fingering the bowl,—"I believe in baccy. Strikes me there's more Kerstianity in it than in half them prayers and sermons. Roun's off the angels [angles], ye know, an' takes the sting out o' the pricks."

He puffed away quietly for a few minutes as the black earth dropped beside him, and then continued—

"So our Dr Will's gone. Seems to me as 'ow we've lost our best missionary. Leastways, so I think. One as made you feel as 'ow we was all brothers. Always welcomed you to a seat in 'is

boat, an' a plate at 'is table, an' made no distinctions.

"Some on 'em now 'ud build a yacht for 'em-selves, an' travel selec'. Our tub ain't good enough.

"'Cap'n,' ses I one day, 'Cap'n 'ave you got those pens ready? I'm comin' aboard.'

"'What pens?' ses he.

"'Wal,' ses I, 'I heerd as 'ow you was dividin' up the ship for the sheep an' the goats.'

"'Did you?' ses he, laughin'. 'Come aboard then,' ses he. 'We knows where to put you, anyway.'

The only answer from Chow, beyond a smile, was made by the patter of the earth. So Bill went on—

"One night I was havin' a quiet pipe on the cobra bags aft. Two o' the young fellers were there from John o' Groats, an' were discussin' things. Ses the younger—he was a doctor—ses he,

"'Somebody's been a humbuggin' us. What place is this to bring so many doctors to? There's nearly a dozen down 'ere o' one sort an' another; all wi' streamers to their names, too,' ses he. 'But they're a trampin' on one another's toes, an' the whole Group's a smellin' o' lotions an' powders.'

"'Indeed,' ses the other feller—he was a big chap, an' was smokin', he was—'ave you only just found that out? I can go one more'n that. You're as green as a young nut,' ses he. 'You shouldn't a dropped till you were ripe. Even a tater's got eyes, an' knows where to strike.'

"'Well,' ses the other feller, 'it's not fair crowdin' so many fellers in sich a tight place. Where's those sixty thousand cannibals? I've been a huntin' all

round an' can't find 'em. Seems as how the claim's about worked out. It's a shame,' ses he. 'If fellers were eddicated different they wouldn't come.' He got quite 'ot over it.

"'Not so fast, young chap,' ses the other. 'There's more'n you'll convert, anyway. The parties as sent you down 'ere wouldn't mislead anybody. It's zeal as has eaten 'em up, common-sense an' all. You'd need to eddicate them first.'"

"You se-peak true," said Chow, pausing to wipe the sweat from his brow.

"Ye see, mate," said Bill, "that big quiet chap smoked. He believed in the baccy. As I said afore, there's a lot o' Kerstianity in the pipe. It makes a feller think, an' think well o' 'is neighbours. Where 'ud yer gospel be widout the quid? It's that keeps these black fellers from fightin', an' makes 'em smoke the pipe o' peace. S'pose that young feller 'ad bin fond o' the pipe now, he'd 'ave been a wiser man. After reflectin' a bit, p'raps he'd 'ave gone to China, or the Indies, an' got a big field, and an 'orspital, an' not a bin buryin' 'is talent down 'ere."

"You se-peak true," said Chow again. He was getting puffed. So Bill took a turn at the spade. Chow could "se-peak" a little English, but it was such jabber as few could understand; yet one somehow absorbed his meaning.

When Bill was seated again, and, fanning himself with his hat, was cooled down a bit, his talk flowed on—

"Can't stand some o' they parsons. I once planted my 'umpy down aside one on 'em. He was a great warrior, he was; an' the most darin'

devil as ever comed into these parts, or sailed a boat on sea, an' bossed the niggers on land. Done the most work o' any man in the islands, an' least said about it. Goes into the bush preachin' an' teachin', an' givin' 'em 'ealth lectures, an' livin' on rice an' tea till they calls 'im 'a skinfu' o' banes.' But he was no sound on the baccy. In consequence he was always fightin'; an' my mates can't see as 'ow he was a Kerstian."

Chow paused, took a breath, and smiled. Bill also paused—for exactly two seconds.

"Ye see, he wouldn't let his niggers smoke. Ses they can't love the weed an' be Kerstians. Now that's all da-da-dashed fine nonsense. Beg pardin'," he said, as if to the heap of earth, "I forgot meself.

"Yes, it's da-da-dashed rot. It just keeps 'em all a spyin' one on t'other. A feller has to get to the top o' a tree to get a smoke in peace, unobsarved like.

"But ye darn't say a word agin 'im to those sheep o' his or they'd all turn buckin' goats, an' ye'd 'ave to clear in no time.

"Ses I to 'im one day—

"'Reverend sir,' ses I, 'ye've a grand plant 'ere for makin' 'ipocrites.'

"'How so?' ses he.

"'This way,' ses I. 'Ye're makin' 'em two-faced; an' by-an'-by ye'll 'ave 'em all a-smokin!'

"'How?' ses he.

"'In a hotter place,' ses I.

"He laughed. Ses he, 'You mind your own business. Yes; mind yerself!' ses he."

"You se-peak true," said Chow, who was getting too low down to note where the speech had got to.

Bill looked at the head bobbing up and down, suspiciously, and picked up a lump of earth. Satisfied by the stolid innocence of the Chinaman, he dropped it.

“Now, Chinkee,” he said, “don’t you be too ’ard on a feller. S’pose I said as ’ow I was a saint, that tarned face o’ yourn ’ud pretty soon begin to grin. An’ s’pose I was to say as ’ow I’m no good, my ticker ’ere”—placing his hand over his heart—“would say ‘Stuff!’ Guess I’d better strike a mean, like the old maid I once heard ’em tell about. She was a dyin’, an’ they told her as ’ow it was the custom to lay out the maids in white an’ the married ’uns in purple. ‘Which would she ’ave?’ ‘Oh,’ says she, ‘just dress me in white.’ But after thinkin’ it out a bit, ses she, ‘You might pick it out ’ere an’ there with ’eliotrope.’

“Yes, I guess I’m summat like the old maid. I’m not a dog, an’ I’m not a hangel. No more was that parson, an’ all ’is kind. ’Deed, I’m feared some on ’em is past savin’. They’s so good you can’t teach ’em anythin’.

“Ay, an’ there’s that good fellow Faithful, grown white an’ totterin’ wi’ fever, a shepherdin’ those ‘pet-lambs’ o’ his. An’ he won’t hear no bad on ’em. Lets ’em smoke an’ do pretty much as they likes. But they’s black lambs for all that, some on ’em; an’ they do frisk ahint ’im. If he’d just look over ’is shoulder an’ catch ’em (but that ’ud be spyin’ he’d say), he’d take collaps an’ break ’is ’eart, like hancient Eli. He’s a good ’un for sure. Pity he warn’t less o’ a saint an’ more o’ a man, an’ ’ud take a whiff ’imself, an’ he’d know ’em better. But there’s a scale on ’is eye.

“Now Dr Will here”—Chow stopped work at the name, and straightened himself to listen—“Dr Will was no ’umbug. Guess he’ll ’ave a front seat by-an’-

by, an' be somewhere near the big drum. He was no horator; leastways, so they say. Couldn't net the bawbees; an' as fur turnin' on the waterworks, he left that to the wimmen. But he was a terrible feller in close grips."

The Chinaman nodded affirmatively.

"No, our Dr Will couldn't spout, but that's not everythin'. I've 'eard 'em all, big guns an' little guns, an' ses I, 'Spoutin's not everythin'.' Ses I to one on 'em after a gran' sermon—

"'Sir,' ses I, 'wot you is drums in my ears so loud, I can't hear wot you ses.'"

"'How so?' ses he.

"'Ses I, 'We're a bad lot down 'ere, no doubt, black an' white, but you makes us out wuss [worse] than we are.'"

"'Impossible!' ses he.

"'Ses I—lightin' me pipe quick to keep me bile from risin'—ses I, 'I've heard tell o' a place, a burnin' lake, where they chucks all liars.'"

"'Yes,' ses he, 'an' their smoke'll go up for ever an' ever!'"

"'Wal,' ses I, 'that's a good place to keep out of!'"

"'It is,' ses he.

"'Wal,' ses I agin, 'ye'd better try my medicine. Yer own don't seem to have done ye much good.'"

"'What's that?' ses he.

"'The pipe,' ses I. 'It'll 'mprove yer sight, an' make ye feel more charitable towards yer neighbours.'"

"'Don't you know,' ses he, 'that tobacco is said to be "the worst natural curse o' modern civilisation"?'"

"'How so?' ses I.

"'It's spoilin' the youth o' Europe by keepin' 'em 'appy in idleness.'"

“‘Wal,’ ses I, ‘this place ain’t civilised yet; and,’ ses I, ‘I believe in the baccy. It keeps savages ’appy widout fightin’. An’ p’raps it’ll do the same for the saints; so give it a try.’ Guess I had ’im there.

“‘But no. Ses he, ‘We depend on grace to do that.’

“‘Wal,’ ses I, ‘let me see grace a-doin’ it, an’ I’ll sell me pipe.’”

Bill’s hand shook, and he laughed a bitter little laugh.

“It’s no’ the baccy,” he muttered drily; “it’s ’im an’ ’is as is spilin’ the niggers, makin’ ’em so as they won’t work [? slave]. An’ they’s fit for nuthin’ but singin’ psalms, an’ haxin’ the minimhum wage, cuss ’em.

“Some on ’em won’t give us poor devils a chance o’ livin’ in this world, nor in the next neither. Now Dr Will was not o’ that sort. Ses he, ‘You can come an’ build yer shanty aside me here; only,’ ses he, ‘see that you give three feet fur a yard, an’ a bob’s worth fur a shillin’.’”

A few pulls at the pipe, or it may have been memories of his dead friend, calmed his nerves; and again the current of his thoughts flowed on.

“Now, Dr Will didn’t smoke neither; but he didn’t objeck to the pipe, nor to the smell o’t. An’ he’d light a feller’s pipe fur ’im when he was sick an’ incompetent. Ses I to ’im one day, ses I—

“‘Doctor, is too much smokin’ bad fur a man?’

“‘Yes,’ ses he, ‘an’ so is too much porridge.’

“‘Wal,’ ses I, not to be beat, ‘is much smokin’ bad?’

“‘Ay,’ ses he, ‘an’ so is much beef, or much water.’

“‘Wal then,’ ses I, ‘’ow much d’ye recommend?’

“‘Just so much,’ ses he, ‘as will keep your temper sweet.’

“‘Wal, doctor,’ ses I, ‘it takes a lot fur me!’ An’ he went away laughin’.

“‘Ses I to him one day—

“‘Doctor,’ ses I, ‘this is a God-forsaken ’ole for you to be in!’

“‘Bill,’ ses he, ‘you mustn’t say that. I asked the Almighty to make the best possible use of my life—and here I am. It’s no use praying if you don’t believe. I hope,’ ses he, ‘I’ve done nothing to thwart Him.’

“‘Wal,’ ses I, ‘I don’t know nuthin’ about prayin’; an’ I must have me say. It’s a tarnation place for you to come to.’”

Bill was silent for a few minutes and fingered his pipe reflectively.

“‘Can’t understan’ Providence. Sometimes don’t think He’s about—leastways, not ’ere. What’s He want to take away our doctor ’ere, an’ leave wuthless cusses like you an’ me? I’d like to be somethin’ a trifle better. He’s the only man as could ’ave eddicated us.’”

Chow buried himself in the grave, trimming its sides and levelling the floor. At length it was finished, and he rejoined his companion.

“‘It don’t matter, mate,’ said Bill, eyeing his pipe pathetically, “we introdooced the baccy. It’s a good thing, as the missionaries ’ave found out, for they’s supplyin’ it themselves now, cuss ’em. But we introdooced it, an’ p’raps that’ll count,—some, anyway.’”

CHAPTER V.

Was it Worth?

THUS Bill poured the vitriol of criticism over the characters of the most outstanding men in the mission; and, like all such criticism to-day, it is losing its power to bite. Some of us he apparently passed by as being unworthy of notice. His is a fair sample of the talk that may frequently be heard, not in this Group only, but in any mission-field, sometimes more appreciative, sometimes more sarcastic and pungent.

For, granting they deserve all the praise that has been showered upon them, we must of ourselves admit that missionaries are like other men, the same compound of limitations, inconsistencies, and good intentions. And, like other men, they resemble Nebuchadnezzar's image: though composed of gold and silver, and of the finest and strongest of metals, there is clay somewhere, if only in the feet. To a certain class of admirers this truth may be distasteful; but it can be so only to those whose standards are artificial, and by whom all missionaries are viewed through rose spectacles. If these shallow souls had been entrusted with the writing of the New Testament, we should never have known that Judas stole, that Peter swore, and that Paul could equivocate.¹ Yet we do not think

¹ Farrar's St Paul, ii. 326.

less of Peter and Paul; nor yet of Mark, Luke, and John, for telling us. We are more than glad they were so human, and love them the better for their faults; yet not for their faults, but because, having such faults, they triumphed over them, became saints, and attained the highest niches of character and achievement.

Of a truth every soul of man is like a cloud floating onward through the infinite. Be it never so white, it must carry something of shadow. From below men may see only the murky side, and forthwith grieve or gird at it. But, from above, the charity of God, like the sun, seeks and knows only its whiteness. In His shining the murkiest cloud shall become pure as the driven snow. We, too, must seek the sunward aspect.

The truth about ourselves may be unpalatable, but, like a good medicine, it discharges from our system those poisons of the blood that warp the judgment and blur the vision. For this reason Bill's speech finds a place in these pages. To probe the faults of others is inglorious; to study and correct our own is wholesome. Having seen ourselves as others see us and noted the facts, we may meditate thereon, and arrive at sane conclusions. For, though we may not intend it, the damn of the broadcloth may be more venomous and far-reaching than that of the dungaree, pursuing a man even to the grave—and beyond. Even a Mission Synod is not always gifted with a sense of justice or with judicial insight. When we can recognise the motes in our own eyes, we may thereafter, with loving hands and chastened spirit, be better fitted to remove the beam from our neighbour's.

That there is truth in Bill's criticism we cannot deny. But even to him the best friend he had in the world was a missionary. It is said that "if a missionary is to be tactless, he might almost as well be bad." Well, we often are tactless, and may even seem to have left home before cutting our teeth. We are not so wise as we could wish, nor so good as we would fain be. Our generalship may be bad, and our knowledge of tactics not even elemental.¹ Nevertheless, by sincerity and sheer doggedness of character, the work tells and the worth of the men comes to be recognised. No other investment yields such a glorious return. We are told that "Missionary agency in India exceeds in importance all that has been done by the British Government in India since its commencement."² And, again, "The missionaries have done more lasting good in Japan than all

¹ The New Hebrides furnish perhaps the best instance of this. To a population numbering about 50,000, there are the following missionaries: Presbyterians (at last Christmas), 28 ordained men, 5 laymen, and 32 ladies. The staff included 5 Doctors of Divinity, 7 Physicians and Surgeons (fully qualified), and 2 with M.A. degrees. Anglicans were 3: Priests (R.C.), 13. Total, 81. And there is plenty of work for all. The contrast with the fewness of the workers in other fields is painful. In Australia itself (northern and western portions) there are 145,000 aboriginals, some of them superior to South Sea Islanders, with a total staff (omitting Catholics) of only 3 ordained, 8 lay, and 7 lady missionaries. In New Guinea three women, without medical assistance, have been nobly trying—in vain—to run a hospital. In India there is only one missionary (male or female) to every 100,000 of the people. The disproportion is crushing. But, with the new century, a great wave is rising. There are 4,000,000 Christian Endeavourers, and thousands of University students organising for service. And, already, one in every three of the world's population is professedly Christian.

"And I saw that there was an Ocean of Darkness and Death; but an Infinite Ocean of Light and Love flowed over the Ocean of Darkness."

² Sir W. Mackworth Young, K.C.S.I., late Lieut.-Governor of the Punjab.

other agencies combined.”¹ Such praise may seem lavish. I do not know. But, so far as my own experience goes, it appears true of the Pacific.

The world may turn its searchlight on missions. It will find a handful of sincere men and women trying, by ways and methods weak and maybe faulty, but trying honestly, to obey their marching orders and to fulfil the Last Command.

Ruskin asserts that “There is always a considerable quantity of pride, to begin with, in what is called ‘giving one’s self to God.’ As if one had ever belonged to anybody else!” Yet it is the first duty and highest privilege of every one who is conscious of possessing a free will. So Gladstone thought when pleading with his father to allow him to become a preacher of the Gospel. “There can be no claim so solemn and imperative as that which even now seems to call to us with the voice of God from Heaven, and to say, ‘I have given mine own Son, . . . will you not bear to fellow-creatures sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, the tidings of this universal and incomprehensible love?’”

As self-love makes hell, so the first and deepest stone underlying the foundation of all true culture is self-renunciation. It may be a beautiful thing to see young men and women rise and leave all to go forth to the ends of the earth, taking their lives in their hands. It is even more beautiful to see them stay in obedience to filial duty, and, without plaudits or romance, spend the best years of their life tending

¹ The late Colonel Buck, Minister in Japan for the United States. In ‘The New Far East’ Arthur Diósy writes thus: “This humanity in war has not always distinguished the Japanese. It is one of the best fruits of the new spirit infused into the nation . . . ever since the adaptation of Western civilisation commenced” (p. 117).

an aged parent or suffering sister. And it may possibly be that the woman who, with all the ambition and fitness to shine in life, is of necessity chained to the household tub, and who bravely and resignedly goes through with it, leaving no spot, and praising God for the scant glimpses she may get of His goodness, will, at the finish, be found "farthest ben." Such women are made of the same stuff as God's best angels.

But to return to our story and to those who felt themselves qualified to criticise. Chow, alas, finally received his quietus in a squabble over a native woman. As for Bill, when last we heard of him he was still a wandering star in the black firmament.

Bill's was not the only tribute paid to the dead man's memory. Will was a favourite with the men-o'-war. The sailors admired a man who could handle a boat as well as, or better than, one of themselves. So they carved for him a memorial lectern in oak—an eagle bearing on its outspread wings the "Æonian gospel,"—the pedestal being rimmed with brass engraved with the inscription—

"WHO GAVE HIS LIFE FOR THE REGENERATION
OF THESE ISLANDERS."

Moreover, here was a man who could go unarmed where they dare not set foot unguarded by cutlass and musket. In the early 'Nineties Will had landed among a crowd of warriors starkly nude, all armed, most with rifles, cocked. Others with bows and sheaves of poisoned arrows. Now, gazing on the islands around from the quarter-deck, wherever the eye rested there was peace. Castaways, instead of being speared, roasted, and eaten, were sure of a

welcome to shelter, land, and food. He had done his part to make the islets of that summer sea re-echo the angels' song.

But Will's influence was more than local. He was an enthusiast for the adoption of more modern methods,—for leaving the old ruts and getting on to the broad highway of progress. And within four years he saw all his plans adopted and put into operation. From the first he had agitated for the founding of a Training Institute for native evangelists and teachers; and he had lived to see it established, with a scholar at its head. He was eager for advance, and actively co-operated in getting English adopted as a medium of instruction. His sympathies were strong for the founding of a central Hospital for the Group, now admitted to be "an untold boon to black and white." And though he hesitated at first, he soon dipped in his oar and pulled hard for the establishment of a frequent commercial steam service, doing away with the old system (which had served its day, and served it well), of a special ship for the Mission. Thus French annexation was effectively opposed, and traders and missionaries brought together that they might better know and help each other. Who dare say that his brief work was not commensurate with his long training?

His path, though short, was, like Heber's, a track of light. But his example, though meteoric in its brightness, is of longer duration. For a time at least, it will resemble here the pale, steady glow of one of the planets. Hereafter, according to the transcendent promise of Scripture, it is to shine for the countless souls that still need guidance, as one of the stars "for ever and ever."

On the afternoon of the following day we carried forth all that was left of our friend. It was Sunday. Gathered round the grave was a circle of white, amid a sea of black, tear-bedimmed faces. The sky was clouded, and the pale rays of the sun fell aslant the mournful crowd. The storm had passed, and the waves were stilled. In the bay the cutter, with flag half-mast, rocked gently to and fro on the ocean swell. No requiem was sung, for hearts were breaking. The service for the dead, even the hymn, was read amid silence, save for the southing of the winds through the woods, and the sobbing of the sea.

“He died that we might be forgiven,
He died to make us good,
That we might go at last to heaven,
Saved by His precious blood.”

And now Will, too, had laid down his life for his people,—reluctantly be it confessed, for he longed to do greater service. On the edge of the cliff, between time and eternity, he sleeps beneath fern-trees and island palms, the music of the ocean reef beating in his ears, like that “voice of many waters and of mighty thunders” that breaks on the eternal shores.

“O true and brave,
O brave and true!
No narrow grave
Containeth you!

O true and brave!
Thou liv'st again
To lead and save
The souls of men.”

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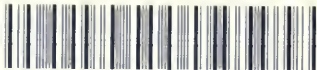
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