

condign punishment, which they so richly merit.

"Such are, briefly and imperfectly narrated, the facts of this dreadful affair; and I feel assured that many not personally acquainted with the worth of the deceased, will deeply mourn their fate."

There is nothing more of importance in the letter of Mr. Milne, but I will forward it to you. His statement of facts is corroborated by the testimony of the natives, whom I have examined. We are all under very deep obligation to Mr. Milne, for the respect which he has shown to our departed friends, and for the satisfactory manner in which he has discharged the unexpected and melancholy duties which have devolved on him. I may add that among other things he has sent me locks of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon's hair, and the wedding ring of the latter, spotted with blood, as he took it from her hand, which will be forwarded to their relatives in due time.

CAUSES OF THE MASSACRE.

But what led to the massacre of our dear friends? You are aware that measles and dysentery were brought to these islands at the close of last year. Their ravages were fearful, and for a time they seemed to threaten the depopulation of the islands. The disease was taken to Dillon's Bay by the "Blue Bell," Capt. Bruce, and soon spread over the whole island. About two thirds of the population of Erromanga died, according to Mr. Gordon's estimate. The natives as we may suppose were thrown into a state of excitement by so fearful a visitation. As the belief in disease-makers is universal on Erromanga, in common with other islands, suspicion fell on Mr. Gordon. The grounds on which he was charged as being the cause of the strange and alarming malady that made its appearance, are two fold; in the first place, he is said to have foretold divine judgments on the people, in the shape of temporal punishment for their idolatrous and wicked practices. This appears to be confirmed by an extract from his own journal, which I read in a Sydney paper, and which has called forth editorial remarks. The journal came into my possession a few days ago, and I find in it the statement alluded to. Speaking of the disease he

writes: "It was preceded by nearly an universal opposition to the Gospel, and much murder and idolatry. I felt sure that God would visit them in judgement, and warned them most solemnly but a few days before they were prostrated." As the warning was so soon followed by the disease, the natives not unreasonably concluded that he had some agency in bringing it on them. Much as we may admire the faithfulness and plain dealing of Mr. Gordon with the heathen, yet the propriety and prudence of denouncing temporal judgment is questionable. The prophets of old did so, but they had a special commission from heaven. The Gospel is a message of mercy and love, and should be addressed to the heathen in its most attractive form. The first missionary to the heathen said, "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

But in the next place, some of the traders told the Erromangans that Mr. Gordon was the cause of the disease, which proved so fatal to them. In a letter to myself written in January he says: "The 'Blue Bell' carried the measles to Dillon's Bay in November, and the results have been fearful and continue to be so. The natives are for the most part like mad tigers, having been stirred up to believe that we are the cause of their alarming distress." In looking over his journal, I also find the following statement written about the same time: "Many of them believe really or feignedly, that I am the cause of this singular disease, which is strange and alarming to all. They have been confirmed in this belief by some foreigners." There is no allusion to this important fact in the account sent to the Sydney papers. Among those who endeavoured to stir up the natives against Mr. Gordon was a man named Range, a native of India, and a British subject, I believe. He lived on this island formerly, and went to Erromanga about 8 or 10 years ago. He is a Mahometan and has several wives. He is well acquainted with the language and has acquired much influence on the island. If report is true he has killed some Erromangans. When Nivan the chief of Dillon's Bay died, who was one of the most influential men on the island, the said Range professed great anger against Mr. Gordon on account of his death,