

## A STORY FROM THE NEW HEBRIDES.

In the early days of our mission work on Tanna, Mr. and Mrs. Johnston from Nova Scotia, and Mr. and Mrs. Paton from Scotland were settled on Tanna, among a very cruel and savage people. Now there is a christian church and a worshipping people there, but then it was very different.

Mr. Paton in giving an account of his life tells the following thrilling story of what happened one night in Tanna :

"The first of January, 1861, was a New Year's Day ever to be remembered. Mr. and Mrs. Johnston, Abraham, (a native teacher from Anceityum) and I, had spent nearly the whole time in a kind of solemn yet happy festival. Anew, in a holy covenant before God, we gave our lives and our all to the Lord Jesus for the conversion of the heathen in the New Hebrides.

After evening family worship, Mr. and Mrs. Johnston left my room to go to their own house, only some ten feet distant; but he returned to inform me that there were two men at the window having black painted faces and armed with huge clubs.

Going out to them I asked what they wanted.

"Medicine for a sick boy". With difficulty I persuaded them to come in and get it. At once it flashed upon me, from their agitation, and their disguise of paint, that they had come to murder us. Mr. Johnston had again come into the house with us.

Keeping my eye upon them I prepared the medicine and offered it. They refused to receive it and each man grasped his killing stone. I faced them firmly and said,

"You see that Mr. Johnston is leaving and you two must leave the room to-night. To-morrow you can bring the boy or come for the medicine."

Seizing their clubs, as if for action, they seemed unwilling to go out, but I walked

forward and made as if to push them out, when both turned and began to leave.

Mr. Johnston had gone in front of them and was safely out. But he bent down to lift a little kitten that had escaped at the open door; and at that moment one of the savages aimed a blow with his huge club, in avoiding which Mr. Johnston fell with a scream to the ground. Both men sprung towards him but our faithful dogs fiercely leaped to their feet and saved his life. Rushing out I saw Mr. Johnston trying to raise himself and heard him cry,--

"Take care, these men have tried to kill me, and they will kill you."

Facing them I sternly asked,--

"What is it that you want? He does not understand your language. What do you want? Speak with me

Both men then raised their clubs and made to strike me, but quick as lightning our dogs sprang at their faces and bit their blows. One dog was badly bruised and the ground received the other blow that would have launched me into Eternity.

Seeing how matters stood I now hounded both dogs furiously upon them and the two savages fled, I shouted after them

"Remember, Jehovah God sees you and will punish you for trying to murder his servants."

In their flight a large number of men who had come eight or ten miles to assist in the murder and plunder, came slipping here and there from the bush and joined them fleeing too. Verily "The wicked flee when no man pursueth".

I was now used to such scenes in Tanna, and retired to rest and slept soundly; but my dear fellow laborer, as I afterwards learned could not sleep. His pallor and excitement continued for several days; and after that, though he was naturally lively and cheerful, I never saw him smile again."

Three weeks afterward Mr. Johnston died, and not long after Mr. Paton had to flee for his life and the mission in Tanna was broken up. Some time after it was taken up again, and it is now in a sense a christian island.