

Written for the LADIES' PICTORIAL WEEKLY.

"All's Well, Lights Burning Brightly!"

The vessel lay like a lifeless thing,
Moored fast with cords tied tightly.
The Watchman alone, paced to and fro,
And cried as his lamp swung high and low,
"All's well, lights burning brightly!"
The scene was changed when the sun rose high,
The vessel bounded lightly.
And o'er the billows she ploughed her way,
And proudly the Captain turned to say,
"All's well, lights burning brightly!"
Safe into port, thro' calm and storm,
Rode the vessel mighty,
Bearing her crew to far off lands,
With this good motto in their hands,
"All's well, lights burning brightly!"
So will we try, each one and all,
To live our lives arightly,
So when we hear the Master's call,
Friends left may say, tho' tear-drops fall,
"All's well, lights burning brightly!"

F. M. Riley.

Written for the LADIES' PICTORIAL WEEKLY.

Reminiscences of the New Hebrides.

BY ONE WHO RESIDED THERE SOME YEARS.



THE portrait shown on this page of Nasanahi, a native of Aneityum, the most southerly island of the New Hebrides group, situated in the South Pacific Ocean. Her short, crisp, frizzled hair and skin of a coffee and milk color, show that she is, like most of the natives of these islands, unmistakably of African origin. When we first knew her, three years before this picture was taken, she was quite a little girl, but very

smart for her age, being able to read any part of the New Testament with ease and fluency. In the Sabbath-school also, she excelled most of the children in repeating the portions of Scripture learned through the week. These may seem small attainments to those in civilized lands, but when one considers the ignorant and degraded sections of humanity from which these children sprung, the great revolution effected among them by the introduction of God's Word, is indeed remarkable. The grandfathers, nay, even the fathers of our domestics, who waited upon us with such fidelity and devotion, would have been only too glad, in the heathen days, not so very far remote either, to make a meal of us, could they but have found an opportunity to do so.

In the heathen times, the natives believed in a place called Uma-Atmas, the land of the spirits. It was divided into two regions, named the good land and the bad land. They believed that the sin which would be visited with the severest punishment there, was stinginess in giving away food, and the virtue that would receive the highest reward, was a generous hospitality and giving liberally at feasts.

Few things are more difficult to eradicate from the human mind than superstition, and though Christianity, of course, has entirely changed their ideas of Uma-Atmas, or the land of spirits, still, the belief in its being praiseworthy to make large feasts, and meritorious to be liberal in the distribution of food, will always form an important part of their creed. When it was arranged that we were to take charge, for a time of Anelicanhat, the harbor station on Aneityum, a missionary sister, who had great experience among the natives, and thoroughly understood their manners and customs, advised me, by way of ingratiating myself with them, to make a feast, and invite all who lived near enough to be present. She said, that if I would prepare a large plum cake, and allow it to be well circulated that I had made it with my own hands, on purpose for them, they would be much pleased. Accordingly, the table in the cook-house was placed before the window, and a great display of ingredients made. Raisins, treacle, flour, sugar, spice, etc., were spread out to make as much show as possible. It was not long before we had quite a crowd of children gathered, jostling each other in their eagerness to get close enough to see the wonderful performance.

Nasanahi and the rest soon spread the news that Misi was making a large cake with her own hands for the feast. It was an enormous cake and a great success. We had two very large American zinc washing tubs. One was filled with rice, prepared in the boiler, a keg of treacle poured over it, and the whole mass stirred with a large stick, till it was almost black. The other tub was filled with tea, not too strong, but make dark and sweet enough to please by a plentiful admixture of the favorite treacle. The rice, tea, cake and an abundance of ship biscuits were the foreign dainties. These were supplemented by any amount of goat, pork, and native food, such as taro, bananas, yams, breadfruit, fish, plaintains, etc. It was spread on forms in the school-house; all, with the exception of the chiefs, sitting on the floor. The latter had a table and chairs at one end of the room. We had an abundance of tin plates and pannikins, so it was not difficult to serve them all. I understood very little Aneityumese at that time, and my guests could speak no English, so there was not much conversation between them and their hostess. I felt rather awkward at first, but my missionary sister said:

"Just walk up and down among them between the rows of forms, look your pleasantest, and say, with as much expression as you can put into the words, 'Haig alupas, haig alupas!' which means 'eat plenty, eat plenty,' then they will think you are first-rate."

I followed her advice, though it seemed rather unnecessary, when they were putting down the food at such a rate. Large pieces of pork and goat with everything else in proportion disappeared like magic.

The women and girls on Aneityum have great taste in weaving flowers into the most beautiful wreaths and festoons, indeed, the graceful way in which their fingers twine them seems to be a special gift of God, which many of their white sisters might envy. For this feast our school-room was decorated with great care and profusion. The "nipjid," (orange tree) "nipjid acen," (lemon tree) naherumaig or mimosa, with many native plants all contributed their blossoms for this occasion.

When our guests had satisfied their appetites with the substantial, Nasanahi and five other little girls, dressed in new short gowns, over their "inlepis" or native skirts, with wreaths of oleander across from shoulder to waist, and chaplets of the same lovely blossoms on their heads, came in, in a procession, bearing trays of the wonderful plum-cake and biscuits. Then, after a little time spent in serving them, each guest went home, the delighted recipient of a generous supply of the above dainties. This feast made a good impression on the natives of our liberality, and inclined them to think favorably of us.

The missionaries have taught them to prepare beautiful lime by burning the live coral. They are very fond of whitewashing, indeed, when they first learned the art, and saw its effects, they whitewashed everything, even the faces of their children. Our cooking stove had become very rusty during the voyage from Sydney to Aneityum. A missionary who understood the language told me when we got it put up, just to point to it and the pipes,



NASANAHI.

and say to my cook "Aspi aick," which means "grease it," and he would understand, and rub it well with pork fat.

I did so, one morning after very early breakfast, and not being obliged to visit the cook-house through the day, was rather astonished at the sight which met my eyes in the evening. There was Narupoig, my cook, dressed as the native men generally are, with just a short kilt reaching from the waist to the knee, the perspiration pouring from his body, and the tears streaming down his cheeks. Beside him were two pails of lime wash, and he had been busy all day, putting coat upon coat of whitewash on the stove and pipes. He was usefully contemplating his work. When I came to understand the language, I found that he was crying because some of the black spots would show through, and he was afraid Misi would not be pleased to see them. His efforts at putting on the whitewash were far more successful than ours in getting it off, for at the end of three years, the remains of it were still there.

Our eldest daughter was born on Aneityum, and the influence of Christianity was strikingly visible in the way the natives of both sexes came to rejoice with me. Had it been a boy baby their congratulations would have caused no surprise, for even in the heathen times male children were highly prized, but female ones were seldom welcomed. Mr. Inglis a missionary for many years at Aname, a station on the other side of Aneityum, told us that shortly after he and his wife went there, a woman near them gave birth to a daughter, that being the third daughter she had borne in succession. When she learned that it was a daughter, and not a son, as she hoped for, she cried out to the women around her, "Oh, kill it, kill it!" Mrs. Inglis set to work to save the infant girls, and the first step she took was not to denounce the poor mothers, but to draw them into her plans. She told them she had a great love for the little girls, and that she would give a nice dress to every girl baby, whose mother would bring it to her as soon as possible after the child was born. Whenever a mother brought her an infant girl she dressed it in a nice garment, kissed it, praised its clear, bright, black eyes, spoke kindly to the mother, urged her importance of nursing the child carefully and keeping it clean, and asked her to bring it back often that she might see it. Some of our best

servants were girls who had been thrown out into the bush in infancy to perish, but were rescued by the missionaries' wives, and brought up on the mission premises. The day after our baby was born, Mrs. Inglis came round, bringing with her a young, married native woman to assist in nursing the infant and me. Her name was Thiginna, and oh, what a comfort she was with her clean tidy ways! We missed her very much, when at the end of a fortnight, she left to return home. If those who affect to despise foreign missions, could take a voyage round the New Hebrides Islands and see the genuine heathen, particularly the women, in their degradation and down-trodden state, then visit Aneityum and note the contrast between the women there and their heathen sisters, they would surely exclaim: "What hath God wrought?" And yet, when Dr. Geddie commenced his labors on Aneityum there was not one Christian native; when he left, there was not one heathen. Now, they have the whole Bible in their own language. Every person on the island, above childhood, reads the Scriptures daily, and hears them expounded every Sabbath. The effect of God's Word is strikingly visible. "The Sabbath is particularly well observed; churches and schools well attended; peace, quietness and contentment pervade the whole island. The same process has begun, and the same results are sure to follow in all the other islands. As Mr. Inglis says, "The leaven of God's Word is beginning—it may be slowly, but still steadily and surely—to leaven the whole mass of heathens in."

Soon after our little girl's birth, the chief sent me word through his wife Faigetto, that a great feast was in preparation for the child. For more than a week, it was almost impossible to get a messenger, or have an errand done. All the natives, young and old, were seeking food for the Missionary's daughter. Every thing was ready at last, and early one Thursday morning they gathered, and "made their oven." We heard them long before they came in sight. The present they valued most was a very large pig, the largest that could be procured on the island. They brought it in their usual way, that is, they tied its feet together, and slung it on a long pole, which was borne by several natives on their shoulders, the poor pig's feet being up and its back down. A great crowd followed, carrying the rest of the provisions. As they came along, one of their number led in a kind of prose chant, followed by a chorus, rather monotonous and without much meaning. It is a common one among them, just, "Lil le, lil la; lil la, lil la; lil le, lil le;" over and over again. It was singing with a "loud noise joyfully."

In addition to the live pig, there were several live fowls, and a great supply of uncooked food, such as yams, taro, bananas, coconuts, sugar-cane and pineapples. About five in the afternoon they opened their oven. All who had contributed to the feast shared in it, after it was cooked. First of all, our baby's portion was set aside. It was a very very large one. Mine came next, then my husband's, and some for our servants. Each article of food was wrapped up separately before it was put into the oven, which is just a deep hole dug out and filled with stones, then the fire is put in, and when well heated all the food is put in in layers, the whole being covered over with boughs, for several hours, till every thing is well cooked. None can prepare taro and native food as well as the natives themselves. We could partake of all they gave us, except the fish. That had been kept too long, and the cooks had not been careful in cleaning it. There was no waste however, for we had a house full of girls on one side of us, and a house full of boys on the other side, all in our nimmim or enclosure and presided over by native teachers. What we could not eat, our servants, teachers and scholars were very glad of. When all was ready, a native came to the house and announced it. I was not able to be out of bed, but my husband took the baby among the crowd, and thanked them all in her name, for their kindness and liberality. Baby had a great many nurses, and they were all very kind to her. When she was two years old, we went up to Sydney, New South Wales, and took Nasanahi with us. There was only one horse on Aneityum. It belonged to Dr. Geddie, and was named Bobbie. Of course, the natives had never seen a horse before, and it was a great wonder to them. For a long time whenever they met Dr. Geddie on horseback, they saluted him and the animal he rode, saying "How do you do, you two?" When we landed in Sydney, Nasanahi was more struck with the number of horses than anything else, and exclaimed, "Kahispin! (wonderful) How many Bobbies there are in this land!" She was greatly pleased with her photograph. The artist was a kind old German gentleman, and before taking it, he asked us to excuse him for a few minutes. He ran to the market, which was near, and bought the basket of oranges which is in her hand. When the picture was finished, he made her very happy by presenting the fruit to her.

On our return to Aneityum, she could generally be seen with a crowd gathered round her, listening to an account of the wonderful things she had seen.

The following is one of the native hymns. It is sung to the tune "Oh that will be joyful," etc. Any who would like to sing it, must pronounce the vowels as in Latin, and they will produce correctly the Aneityumese sounds:

Et alupas Thova,
Et idim upene aien.
Et ti nitai has iran.
Maiya, naaurineg,
Maiya, naaurineg,
Maiya, naaurineg,
Um, imiahpas Yin.

Is abrai Jesu aien,
Inhal o'un et ethi ache,
Pai imiatamaig caya.
Maiya, naaurineg,
Maiya, naaurineg,
Maiya, naaurineg,
Um imiahpas Yin.

Is mas a Jesu,
Nitai ahlap esjidid,
Vai nedo has asega.
Maiya, naaurineg,
Maiya, naaurineg,
Maiya, naaurineg,
Um imiahpas Yin.