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The Story of a New Guinea Idol.

A LETTER FROM HIRO TO THE MEN OF RAROTONGA.

(Translated by the Rev. J. Chalmers, in 'Missionary Chronicle.')

Sirs, the men of Rarotonga, be ye blessed, —'Tis I, Hiro, who writes this letter to you that you may know something of the work in our district here. I write of what I know.

It was May of last year that Tamate said to me that I was to go to the East and look about. It was the 2nd of June when I began to make my preparations. The people of Saguane tried to prevent my going, as they said it was a district of bad people and murderers. Two old men came and told me they were a very bad lot, that long ago they went with a large and friendly party,

We were by this time near the shore. The Ipesia man sprang into the boat and told the crew not to be afraid, as it was all right. The crew pulled still further along quite fearlessly until we got near the village. The chief, Miri, then waded out to us and came on board.

The mud was very bad, so the people got a canoe and dragged it to the boat. I got into the canoe and was taken safely and cleanly ashore. I knew then that all was well. I was then led to their large house, which is called the Darimo, where no women sleep. I asked the chief and the Ipesia man to come near and tell me where the people were. They replied:—'They have all run away.' I told them why I had come—to bring them words of peace, and that fighting should cease. 'Now,' said I, 'bring the people back and let them come here that I may speak to all.' They then went out and called the people, who soon returned and assembled. I said: 'Let us for ever be at

small presents, and we left for other villages. We entered the Bamu river and pulled up it till we arrived at a village called Damerageromo. We landed, but there was no one in the village; all had fled. After a while a few returned. I went to the Darimo, and from there to another house, where we all gathered, and I held a service.

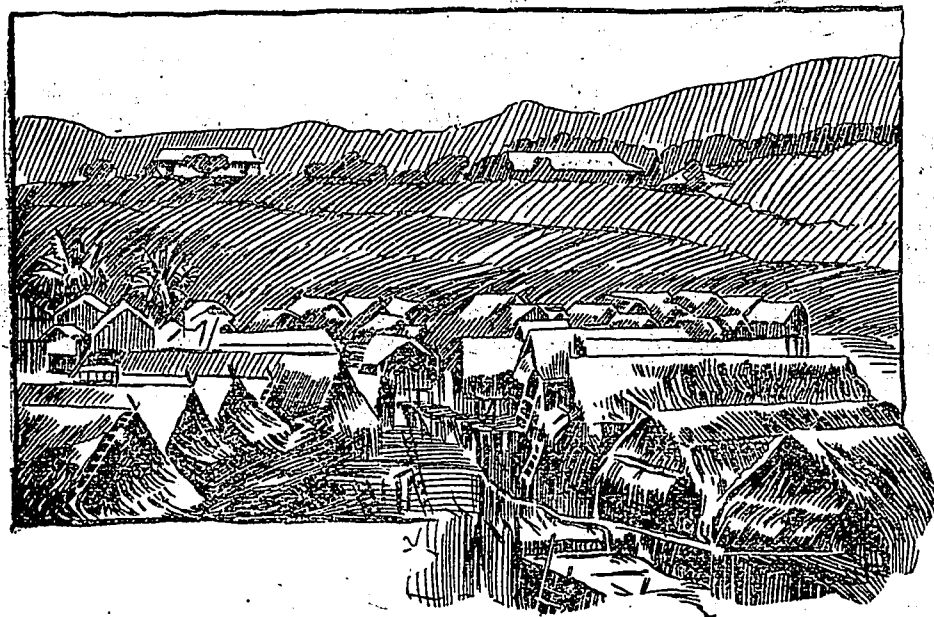
After the service I was looking about and saw a carved piece of wood which looked like an idol. I asked them to give it to me, which they did, when I found it was not an idol, but a thing to hang skulls on. The boat's captain drew near to me and said:—'There is a real idol over yonder.' It was in another house. I went with him and saw that it was an idol. As there was no one in the house, I went to fetch the owner or owners of the house. When they came I offered them a tomahawk for it; but they said: 'No, we cannot part with that which is the life of our land and gives us our food.' I told them of the true God that he alone was good and merciful and gave us all things. I told them of Jesus who died for us.

We had a service, and afterwards I again asked for the idol, and offered a tomahawk and a few small things. But they said if they parted with it it would only be for a very big price. So I gave them one tomahawk, some calico, tobacco, and beads, and they let me take it. I told them it was a big price, seeing it was not a pig which we could eat, but only a piece of wood.

Evening had now come, so we decided to remain. I had all the people brought together in one place and spoke to them of the one great Peace in Jesus, and asked them to receive his Peace. We slept that night in the house from which we had got the idol. Early in the morning I went to the large house, where we had a crowded service. I told them, amongst other things, that it was now peace between us for ever, and they said: 'It is so.' They had no chief, their late one having been killed by the people of a neighboring village.

I wanted to visit many more villages, but as the wind was increasing daily I thought it safer to return. Hence my forced return. We got into the boat with the idol, but we could see the people were very unsettled about our taking it away. I ordered all to the oars, and we made a quick departure. When we got outside we hoisted sail and stood across for Waboda, where we slept that night. The following morning we stood right over to Abaura, and then over to Kiwal. We had travelled, and only goodness had attended us; and now we had returned in safety, only goodness was ours.

The name of the idol is Keberedubu. It is the name of one of their ancestors, who, in his old age, took a piece of wood, carved it, and called it a god, naming it after himself. When he died they say his spirit entered into the idol, so that Keberedubu was their real forefather, that they come from him, and that he made all things. I told them that it was not so, but that the true God made everything and us also. I told them that their idol was only a piece of wood, that it could neither make land, nor cause food to grow, nor anything else. They said that all their best food was given to



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but all were murdered except themselves. I listened and got ready.

On the day of leaving, the Saguane people all came on to the beach, crying bitterly. They said that their children had never before been where we were going. I took one church member from here and we went to Ipesia to get Waragi, a chief, who had been all over the parts we were going to when he was young. He is now a church member.

Getting him on board, we continued our course to Waboda, where we landed to try the language. I found I was understood. I got an old man to accompany us, and we continued our voyage to the other side of the Waboda Islands until dark, when we anchored and slept. Early next morning we continued to the mainland until we arrived off the islands named Debiri, and near to the village called Maipani. We pulled in nearer, and were within speaking distance, when the Waboda man stood up in the boat and asked: 'Shall we be killed if we land?' An Ipesia man, who had been many years at Maipani, answered: 'No, it is all right; the people are very frightened, and have gone to the bush. Land, and I will look after you.'

peace.' They answered: 'Be it so.' I then divided a piece of tobacco, which we smoked. I also took a cocoanut and planted it, and called it 'Miro'—i. e., peace. They answered: 'May it be a true peace for ever, and may no one come here afterwards with guns and shoot us.' They then brought us cooked sago and a bamboo pipe—a real sign on their part of true peace.

That night we slept in the village, and the following morning went to another village called Wariogirio. We landed there, followed by many Maipani. I went to the large house, but there was no one in it. All had fled to the bush. The Ipesia man had also followed us, so I sent him to try and get the people back. He went out, calling as he went along, and soon many people came. He interpreted for me, and I spoke words of peace. He then told them what I had been telling the people at Maipani, about Jesus and his Peace. The people answered: 'It is good, and we rejoice to hear it.' We then had a service.

After the service was finished I went over their house. The posts were carved with figures. They had no chief. He had died a short time before. I gave them some