

Letter from Rev. W. McCullagh.

ANEITEUM, NEW HEBRIDES, }
August 27th, 1866. }

Mr. Editor,—I embrace this opportunity of writing a few lines by H.M.S. "Brisk," which will sail to-morrow for Auckland.

During the last two months this island has been visited with an epidemic, which has carried off at least 200 of the population. The symptoms in most cases were those of *diphtheria* followed by marsh fever. Many of the strongest and healthiest natives have been removed, while those more advanced in years have been spared. Little has been done during the prevalence of this disease but administering medicines and attending the sick. But in many cases all medicine was powerless, and the patient sank suddenly, into a premature grave. As many as thirty-two have died at Mr. Inglis's station in one week.

In every case almost at this station those who have lived near the mission premises and were promptly treated, recovered speedily, whilst those living at a distance either died or had a relapse which terminated fatally.

No doubt the intense heat of last summer followed by very cold weather, must have had an effect more or less severe. The throat was first attacked, and then suffocation ensued, or the body was prostrated, and from want of proper nourishment the patient died. The presence and skill of six or more physicians would have been in requisition hourly here for two months. Indeed the numerous daily applications for medicine, prevented me from visiting many at a distance. My attention was required at this station where several of my healthiest servants reside. Some of these were at the point of death, and were saved as by a miracle. The universal practice on this island is to bleed for any pain such as in the head, arm, neck, or legs. Often an artery is severed and difficulty is experienced in trying to staunch the wound. We applied the most approved remedies both internally and externally, and when taken in time generally the patient recovered. But many once useful men and women on Aneiteum are now no more. All human aid was vain.—

The two extremes of heat and cold this year have seriously affected the Aneiteumese.— I am glad to say that this sore epidemic has nearly passed away.

At first we were startled by intelligence of deaths occurring daily amongst those who were the most useful and most unlikely to be removed. But we felt that an overruling providence was near, and in his own time and way would check this sad affliction. We resorted to the mercy-seat, and that God who is the hearer and answerer of prayer heard us and granted our request. Such a season furnished many topics for exhortation and prayer, and we trust that not a few of the more unthinking have been seriously and powerfully impressed.— May the Lord sanctify to this people his dispensations, that they may feel more and more their dependence on Him for life, and breath, and all things.

VISIT OF H. M. S. "BRISK."

On Wednesday the 15th inst., the *Brisk* arrived here from Samoa. After remaining a few days to get a supply of water, vegetables, etc., she proceeds to Tanna, Erromanga, and Sandwich Islands. As captain Hope had received instructions to visit Tanna and Erromanga and report to the Commodore, it was necessary to furnish him with an interpreter. Accordingly Lathella went to speak in Tannese, and I also went to supplement in English and Aneiteumese. From his knowledge of Tannese the chief Lathella was able to converse with chiefs at Tanna. From my knowledge of Aneiteumese I could converse with Nowar, the christian chief, and of course my knowledge of the English language enabled me to put questions to Lathella from the captain, and answer the captain in like manner.

Accordingly we left Aneiteum on Monday morning, the 20th inst., and reached Taana in the afternoon. We anchored at Port Resolution, the scene of Mr. Paton's labours and trials, and where the *Curacoa* also anchored last year. As soon as a boat could be got ready, captain Hope, Lathella, and I went ashore to ascertain the state of matters. We learned that quietness prevailed, and no danger was to be appre-