

PRESBYTERIAN MISSIONS IN THE NEW HEBRIDES.

THE New Hebrides lie several hundred miles to the west of the course followed by steamers running between Australia, Hawaii, and San Francisco. They are about 1,200 miles north-east of Australia, and 200 miles east of the large island of New Caledonia.

Dr. Paton likens them to "a range of mountains bursting up out of the sea clothed with forest and severed from one another by deep valleys through which the tides now flow." Very few of the New Hebrides are as large as the island of Montreal, and many of them are several thousand feet above the sea level. From the top of the volcano, Lopevi, Captain Cook counted seventeen of these islands rising out of the purple waters, their fringes of coral sand glistening under the brilliant rays of the tropical Sun.

These islands are of coral formation and all show signs of volcanic action. Owing no doubt to this fact, many are not encircled by the customary reef. There are three active volcanoes in this group; that on Tanna being the largest in the South Seas. Here also are hot springs in which the natives boil their food. Volcanic action has enriched the soil but made the atmosphere somewhat unwholesome.

One cannot live on the beach without suffering from malaria.

Owing to this fact all the native huts are to be found amongst the trees on the high ground, over which the trade winds sweep.

Indigenous flowering and food plants of many kinds grow in great luxuriance, besides various foreign species introduced by missionaries. The yam, taro and cocoanut are the chief food products. Pork is the only kind of meat procurable. The sea teems with fish, it is true, but they are more beautiful than palatable. Some are poisonous at certain seasons, others are so all the year round. A fish dinner is often used by a dusky Lucretia Borgia as a convenient means of dispatching undesirable acquaintances. Whale fishing is one of the native industries. Numerous turtles are found.

The natives of these "Summer Isles of Eden," as Steele calls them, are the most degraded savages of the South Seas. They are composed of two races. The Papuan, who came from Africa—a descendant of Ham, the Malay, who came from Asia—a descendant of Shem. The former is akin to the negro, though smaller and not always woolly haired. The latter is a much finer type of manhood, being tall and comparatively fair.

The Melanese are found chiefly in the more northern of the 30 islands, and here an improvement in hut