

just referred to, is a chief of considerable influence, and as I shall have to mention his name occasionally, it will be as well to say two or three words concerning him. Three years ago his village was fired into by Commodore Wiseman, and ever since, whatever he was before, he has taken the part of the Missionaries. His half-brother, *Niowan*, who died of the epidemic last year, was a decided Christian, and no doubt had good influence on the chief. He is a middle-aged man, has three wives, and is much respected by a number of other chiefs, so that, if he is spared, I think something may be made of him as an instrument in forwarding the Gospel on this island. He is the only chief of influence who may be said to be favourable to Christianity, yet I cannot say that he is a Christian.

PLANS OF WINNING.

But it is possibly now high time I should say a few words in regard to some of our plans in order, if possible, to reach the hearts of the Erromangans, as my conceptions of the intellectual capabilities of this people are not very high. You will not be surprised that I find the ordinary technical phrases used in conducting argumentations scarcely applicable to this case. The *a priori* and *a posteriori* are far beyond their reach. I am, therefore, obliged to coin a term which, with your pleasure, I shall call the *ab inferiori* argument. This argument, as you may easily guess, has special reference to the abdominal regions. A certain thoughtful writer said that he believed more heresies in religion were to be traced to the stomach than either to the head or heart. At all events, I believe it is possible to reach the affections of the Erromangans through the former, while you may fail to do so by a mere appeal to the latter. What we have specially to contend with are their intense and inveterate prejudices and superstitions, which bind and grind them to the dust of death. To get these their enemies destroyed, and their confidence gained, must be one of our first objects, and in order to that end I propose to have recourse to the *ab inferiori* argument, or rather, I should say, I have had recourse to it already. But perhaps an illustration or two will make the point more clear:—On the 10th December last Wawace Rangari called with a party of Unimpang people, who, however, remained at a short distance in case a closer contact with the Missionaries would make them sick. Wawace was candid enough to tell me that they were angry with me, as many of their people died during the epidemic. I asked Wawace to stay and take dinner with me, which he gladly did. I was not then aware that a chief of Unimpang was on the Mission grounds, but having learned this be-

fore tea time, I invited both chiefs to take tea with me. They readily complied, although the Unimpang man was evidently timid. He carried his hatchet to the door, and would have taken it to table with him had not a young man interfered and persuaded him to leave it at the door. When they got seated at table Wawace whispered to his friend that he would hear prayer immediately. The prayer, for more reasons than one, was rather short. Wawace was respectably dressed, having on a shirt, but the other was in *puris naturalibus*, with the addition of more than a sufficient quantity of black pigment applied to his skin, as well as other superfluous appendages which it will be more elegant to suppress than mention; otherwise he is not a bad looking man, well made, of the middle size, and between thirty and forty years of age, and withal a *cannibal*. They did not taste until I showed them the example, but when they did commence, they did so with considerable energy. I gave them some honey on their plates, but the knives were not employed, and, in consequence, the fingers of our *puris naturalibus* friend got sadly besmeared with the honey. They were not slow, either in word or in deed, to testify their appreciation of the tea and its accompaniments,—and may we not hope our cannibal friend especially went away with more favourable notions of the *Misi*. On another occasion the chief *Okorilo*, and father of the lad who has lately joined the school, called. I treated him in a similar manner, and when inviting him not to spare the good things placed before him, he declared that he was filled to *that*, (putting his hand on his epigastrium.) On a third occasion I did likewise, when my guest assured me—pointing to his *trachea*—that he was filled even to that. Such instances will give you an idea of what I mean by the application of the *ab inferiori* argument. But the application or carrying out of this argument to any considerable extent may seem expensive, yet I believe £10 worth of rice and pork annually will go a great way,—at least, it may be worth a fair trial. Of course this argument is intended as a stepping-stone to those higher and nobler principles in human nature which we have in view to reach. Still, it is well to begin sufficiently low and simple with a people who may be emphatically denominated an *unthinking* race.

MISSION BOAT.

But in order further to carry out this argument, a good Mission boat is requisite—a kind of half-decked or a small fore-and-aft schooner, in which natives and *Misi* could sleep somewhat comfortably at night, and where they might be obliged to spend two or three weeks at a time.