

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

VOL. XIX.

TORONTO, SEPTEMBER 16, 1899.

No. 37.

Don't You Care?

They are dying by tens! Do you know it?

Dying without the light,
They know not Christ as their Saviour;
His cross is hid from their sight.

They are dying by hundreds! Oh, hear it!

In chains of ignorance bound!
They see not their need of a Saviour—
The Saviour whom you have found.

They are dying by thousands? Believe it!

Oh, what are you going to do?
Your Saviour cares for these lost ones,
And longs to bless them through you.

They are dying by millions! Yes, millions!

All over the world's wide lands;
In Africa, India, and China,
Can you sit with idle hands?

Dying while you are all sleeping,
Dying while you are at play,
Dying while you laugh and chatter,
Dying by night and by day.

JAMES CALVERT—FROM DARK TO DAWN IN FIJI.*

BY THE REV. JAMES COOKE SEYMOUR.

It is quite true that the most marvelous novel of all is real history. The last fifty years has produced no romance equal to Fiji; nor have the last five hundred years of Christian history produced anything that is more instructive, suggestive and inspiring.

Dotting the vast Pacific some seven-hundred miles north-east of Sydney, two hundred and twenty islands, more or less, form the Fijian group. Volcanic disturbance and the ceaseless activity of those wonderful workers of the sea—the coral insects—have reared this unique paradise in the vast deep. The still, blue waters of the lagoons contrast strangely with the purplish indigo of the outside ocean. The emerald green waters that reveal the variegated coral beneath, flash with all the colours of the rainbow. All the wondrous beauties of the South Seas are clustered here.

Sixty years ago, a race of the worst cannibals on earth lived in these islands. They were the terror of every ship-captain, of every trader, of all other nations, white or black. They were a superior race in physical size and form, in intelligence and in the knowledge of many ingenious arts. They could make excellent cloth and pottery, mats and sails, baskets and mosquito-nets, and splendid canoes. Their style of hair-dressing was the envy of all surrounding heathendom, and even a Parisian artiste might well covet some of its extraordinary achievements.

The Fijian was a warrior by birth. He ate his enemies partly through revenge, partly as a religious rite, and partly because he liked human flesh. It was considered a great distinction for a chief to have eaten a great many. Two chiefs gloried in the fact that they had, between them, eaten about nine hundred human beings! Men sometimes killed and ate their wives.

Sometimes when the post-holes were being dug for a chief's house, he would make an offering to "earth-spirits," in the

* "James Calvert; or, From Dark to Dawn in Fiji." By R. Vernon. James M. Robertson, Willard Tract Depository, Toronto. Price, 50 cents. A most fascinating missionary biography.



THAKOMBAW, LATE KING OF FIJI.

shape of a living man, in each hole with his arms around the post, and in that condition he was buried alive. War canoes were launched on living human bodies, as rollers. It was considered the honourable thing for a wife to be strangled when her husband died. Sometimes a dozen or more wives of a chief were thus put to death and buried with their husband.

One of the first triumphs of the missionary was in getting the life of one of the wives of a chief spared. When the order came that she should live, the holder of the strangling-rod indignantly exclaimed, "Then I suppose we are to die like nobody now!"

From immemorial ages, such had been the state of these savages. Must they remain so forever? So it seemed to human reason. But the Gospel is, indeed, the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth. It has made a man and a Christian of the brutal Fijian cannibal. It can save and en-

noble the vilest sort of humanity anywhere. The work God does, and the instruments He does it with, are often far out of the line of human calculation and choice.

In 1833, a Yorkshire lad had just completed his apprenticeship as a printer and bookbinder. He had no thought of any other position in life than that of a good tradesman. A short time previously he had been converted to God—a glorious change which has meant to many a man a career of usefulness little dreamed of by either himself or any one else. That boy did print and bind many books, and did it excellently well, but it was as a missionary of the Cross. It was James Calvert, the future triumphant missionary, the hero of Fiji.

HUNT AND CALVERT.

Hunt and Calvert, two very plain and unpretentious men indeed, were the by the Wesleyan Missionary Society for the foreign field in 1837. After pre-

paratory study in the Wesleyan Theological Institute, at Hoxton, he, with two others—Hunt and Jagger—started for Fiji in 1833. Calvert took with him one of the greatest blessings God ever gives to men, a thoroughly good and suitable wife. Through all his subsequent career in Fiji, she proved his equal in every element of Christian excellence.

The two landed, and began work at Lakemba. The landing of any other white man or woman would have almost certainly meant a bit of savoury fresh meat for the ferocious Tui Nayau—King of Lakemba. They would have been on their way to the "ovens" within an hour. How came it to pass that these two lived there unharmed for ten years, and some twenty years more in Fiji after that? The answer to that question has a human, as well as a divine, side. It was to the interest of these savages to let them live. The missionary's power to help the sick and to teach new arts has often been of inestimable service in heathen lands. The ability of the most degraded nations to perceive something of the religious objects of such a man's work, is often surprising. These cannibals knew at once what this man and woman came there for—to persuade them to "Lotu," as they called becoming Christians. King George, of Tonga—whom they respected because they feared him—had told them it was a good thing to "Lotu," and that they must not harm the missionary.

The extraordinary heroism of Calvert and his wife, certainly the highest of the high, impressed these savages. They never hesitated to reprove the mightiest and most brutal king of Fiji. It was done respectfully but unflinchingly. Many a lesson these savage monarchs learned of the supreme dignity and fearlessness of these defenceless strangers.

When King Tanoa was visited by a tribe bringing large offerings of spoil, one of his head men was sent out to capture enemies or friends for a cannibal feast. Some women were seen fishing. Fourteen were seized and brought to Bau. Mr. Calvert and Mr. Lyth, his associate at that time, were away. Mrs. Calvert and Mrs. Lyth started for the king's house. The sound of death drums and the firing of muskets told them that the butchery was going on. They rushed into the very presence of the king—where no woman was ever allowed to enter—and boldly made their request. Tanoa was stunned by their audacity, and ordered the murder to stop. Nine had already perished, but the remaining five were set at liberty. Nothing could exceed the consummate tact, the splendid discretion, and the unbounded labours, of these servants of God. But after all, it was not to these

they owed either their safety or their success. It was God who sent these missionaries to Fiji. His promise was over them. His blessing was upon their work.

A ROYAL CONVERT.

One great chief after another was converted, but the most remarkable of all was the conversion of Thakombaw, the most powerful monarch of Fiji.

Years of faithful effort and earnest prayer were at last crowned with success. In 1857 he was publicly baptized. He had been requested to address the assembly after his baptism. He did so. What a congregation he had! Husbands whose wives he had dishonoured, widows whose husbands he had slain, people whose relatives had been strangled by his orders. Those whose friends he had eaten; and children, the descendants of people he had murdered, and who



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