

been constantly before us. The versions most commonly consulted are the English and Samoan Bibles, the latter of which is doubtless the most correct translation which has been made in the dialects of the South Sea Islands. We have availed ourselves of all the aids within our reach for a correct understanding of the meaning of Scriptures, among which we may mention Calvin's Commentaries, Poole's Annotations, Boothroyds' Bible, and a variety of the most approved Critical Commentaries on particular books. Our translation is neither literal nor free. It is a translation of the sense rather than the words of the original; we have studied to ascertain the meaning of Scripture, and then render it in the way most intelligible to the natives.

#### EXPLORATORY VOYAGE.

I have recently returned from a voyage among the heathen islands. This is the most extensive voyage which the *Dayspring* has yet made. I refer you to my report of the voyage for details. During our voyage we visited most of the islands of the group, but a few were passed by for want of time. The visitation of the heathen islands is more perilous now than formerly, in consequence of the slave trade. So many natives have been stolen, or enticed from their homes under false pretences that there is a general feeling of irritation against white men. We are therefore in danger until our character is known, and when this is the case we have comparatively little to fear. The natives do not gather around a missionary vessel as in former years, but we must go to them, and it is sometimes difficult to open friendly intercourse with them. The plan which we usually pursue is as follows: The vessel anchors or more commonly heaves too near the island to be visited. A boat is lowered and usually manned by one white man and a native crew. The shore is now approached at some eligible landing place. When the boat is within gunshot of the land the boat's crew rest on their oars until the natives begin to make their appearance. All the dialects that we can command are now called into requisition, and it usually happens that some one of our number is understood, and failing this, recourse must be had to the language of signs in which natives excel. The natives are always armed with their clubs or spears or bows and arrows, and this being their custom is no certain indication of hostile intentions. The presence of women and children is a good sign, for when evil is intended they are usually sent out of the way. If the natives wish intercourse, they make signals for us to land, and wave green branches as emblems of peace. If signs are favorable, the boat pulls in without much delay, until the

water shoals to three or four feet, and then I leave her to be pulled out again to a safe distance before the natives can crowd round her. I always consult the natives who accompany me on the propriety of landing, and without strong reasons would not act against their opinion, which is usually the correct one. In most cases, one of the crew accompanies me on shore, and we no sooner land than we are surrounded by a good natured crowd, who have nothing to fear from us, and all of whom are eager to gratify their curiosity. If we can converse with them our work is comparatively easy; and if not, we can only give them some presents, and leave the people wondering at the generosity of strangers, and telling us, as best they can, they will count the moons until we return to visit them. I always make it a rule to keep the boat afloat, and beyond the power of the natives. In this way there is little temptation to their cupidity, the risk of disaster is diminished, and in case of danger there is a chance of retreat. After conversing with the chief and people about the special object of our visit, which is to prepare the way for the gospel among them, our intercourse sometimes takes a more secular turn. The boat's crew are permitted to land by turns, and trade a little with the natives. A short time is spent in buying spears, clubs, baskets, mats, &c., for which the natives receive knives, fish hooks, red cotton, beads, &c. No trading, however, is allowed until the special object of our mission is ended. I would gladly dispense with it, but it seems to please the natives, and makes our visits more welcome. The visiting of new island is oppressive as well as perilous work; for there is much bodily exposure, and the constant anxiety is a great strain on the mind. I seldom landed during our voyage without being wet, and this with the great heat brought on intermittent fever, from which I suffered a little. My native boat's crew were also tired of the work by the time that our voyage was up. I trust that these visits may be repeated year after year, and followed up by the settlement of teachers and missionaries, until every island of this group shall become a part of the Redeemer's inheritance and possession.

#### PROSPECTS ENCOURAGING.

Our Mission at the present time is in a hopeful state. The work is being consolidated on the six islands where missionaries now labour, and we are extending our efforts to the regions beyond. It is true that we occupy a field of labour beset with some difficulties, but it is no less true that we enjoy some compensating advantages. The Missionaries of the London Society consider themselves privileged if they can