

NEW HEBRIDES MISSION.

Ancientum, New Hebrides.
Dec. 12th 1883.

Dear Brother Scott:—

We had nothing whatever from New Glasgow in our last mail, and only one gentleman in all Canada favored us with a letter. Our credit must be nearly done in our native land, when after waiting six months for a mail we got only one or two letters. But "A prophet is not without honor &c," possibly that may be the case now. I hope that you will not think that we are flattering you when we say that we very much miss the MARITIME PRESBYTERIAN which did not come.

You used to be somewhat of a carpenter! Were you here now you might give me a lift with seat making for our church. This week I have been hard at work with planes saws and hammer. A native and I have turned out four settees ten feet long in three days. We have about 23 to make in all. The young men sawed the lumber for them by hand, cutting up eight logs in all. Our church will be much more comfortable when seated; and the appearance of the worshippers will be improved when they get on the seats. Hitherto they have squatted down on the mat floor.

This week has been a high time among the people on our side of the island. A great assembly has been convened for the trial and punishment of some offenders against law and order. Some three months ago a woman who was in custody for misbehavior made her escape from her guardian with hand-cuffs on. She was concealed for a fortnight or rather more and finally she and a young man were sold to a labor vessel as man and wife, (she being the wife of another man.) Another young man accompanied them. For the three, two guns, some calico, knives, tobacco and pipes were paid to a chap who had been away previously with traders, and knew the trade. The whole affair was done on the sly, communication was had with the vessel and the next morning at daylight a boat was sent in at an unfrequented place and received the three "labor" (man and wife and young man.) The whole affair leaked out. Bad weather detained the vessel off the island a couple of days and consequently it became known that the missing ones were on board but only when it was too late to defeat the scheme.

Yesterday it was proved that one of our elders, an under chief, was cognizant of the whole transaction, if not an

active participant. The young men who sold the "labor" to the trader was guilty of some other misdemeanor as well as the above and his punishment was more severe.

The sentences were as follows:—The elder was deprived of his chieftainship, and dispossessed of all his movable property and his growing food destroyed. Of course when our Session meets something of discipline will follow.

The acting scoundrel was fastened up to a tree, or rather locked to a tree with handcuffs, his back to the tree, for five hours and at the end of that time he got twenty lashes. In the meantime while he was in custody a party were sent off to bring all his movable property and what could not be removed was destroyed. They burnt his houses, destroyed all his food, bringing away his boxes, canoe, a pig and all of any value that they could find. They also burnt the house of some young men who were implicated in the crime. The gentleman gets a years imprisonment in addition to all the above. He had managed to conceal a part of his property in anticipation of what was coming.

Some other criminals of a less greivous stamp were also dealt with. Three were whipped and two sentenced to a years service to the chief. The meeting will no doubt have a very good influence. Popular opinion went heartily with the chiefs in the punishment given.

Ladella is doing very well now. His influence is now much greater than that of any other man on this island!

Mr. Lawrie has lately lost his principal chief "Nowanpakau." There is only one high chief on the other side of the island and he is a character without much influence for good. There is no heir to the vacant chieftainship at Aname; and when a man is raised to that position without a recognized right to the honor, he is not respected. We are not republicans here.

I have written a statement to the Board in which I speak of the great mortality on the island this year. It still continues. Two more deaths were reported from the other side yesterday and to-day.

Our work continues much as formerly. Not very much to complain about and yet not very much to cheer. Things are looking somewhat brighter just now than in the earlier months of the year.

We trust that this letter may find you well, as it leaves us enjoying health and comfort.

Yours truly,

J. ANNAND.