

as this is known to ourselves. These islanders must be trained to rule themselves, and if missionaries withhold the necessary information where shall they look for it? It is our wish to have as little to do with civil matters as possible, and I am glad to say that every year makes our chiefs more self-reliant and independent of us. [Mr. Geddie's report regarding neighbouring islands will be given in our next.]

LETTER FROM MR. CREAGH.

NENGONE, or MARE, South Seas, }
Oct. 22, 1862.. }

Dear Sir,—

I feel that it becomes me to address you a few lines as the Secretary of your Board of Foreign Missions. My object in writing is to communicate the painful intelligence of the death of one of your missionaries—Mr. Matheson. You are doubtless aware that he has been in a precarious state of health for some considerable time. He came to my house about four months ago and staid with me during the absence of the *John Williams* to Sydney. He intended to return again to Aneiteum on the arrival of the vessel. But by the time the vessel came to this place, to go on to Aneiteum he was in a very weak condition; he intended, however, to go; but on my persuading him to remain where he was, he consented. On the return of the vessel from Aneiteum, he was dead. He sweetly fell asleep in Jesus, his precious Saviour, on the 14th instant, at 45 minutes past 12 A. M., our time; 12 or 14 hours before your time.

On his arrival here it was evident to all that saw him that he would not be long in this world. While here he was diligently and constantly employed in translating the gospels into the Tannese language, and that notwithstanding the shattered state of his health. Such was his close application that it was not before he had augmented his weakness, that I could persuade him to study less. He was buoyant with the hope that Mr. Paton would return from the Colonies in the *John Williams*, and that he and himself would together revise his translations, and then print them at Aneiteum, for the benefit of the poor Tannese. Whilst here, he wrote out a school book in Tannese; and the week before the *John Williams* arrived, he proposed to me to print it. I readily consented, and only regretted he had not mentioned the subject earlier, as I feared the vessel would come before it was possible for the work to be done. I began the book and was at work in the printing office about it when the arrival of the *John Williams* was announced to me. This put an end to the work. Mr. Matheson only lived a fortnight after the arrival of the vessel at our island.

His descent to the grave was not marked by anything singular. His mind was calm, and peaceful, and happy; humbly hoping in Jesus "his precious Saviour," and patiently waiting the will of "his Father." Had his death occurred a fortnight earlier I should have been all alone with him, but a kind Providence had so arranged that not only should my wife be present, but also a brother minister and others, all of whom manifested their deep sympathy with our suffering brother. The burning ardour of his soul was sadly damped by his frail and shattered tabernacle of clay. Often has he shed tears over the wretchedness and wickedness of dark Tanna; though in perils often by the heathen of that island, and driven from those shores through fear of death, and though the end of his dear wife was unquestionably hastened by exposure in the boat on the night they fled, yet Tanna was as precious to his heart as if he had received nothing but excessive kindness at the hands of the people. He had sanguine hopes that the good seed sown there would yet spring up and bear fruit. May his hopes be realized! When he arrived at Nengone his voice was very low, scarcely above a hoarse whisper. At one time his voice improved a very little. This produced great joy in him. He appeared like a captive with his chains unloosened, and began to exercise his voice by reading aloud. I however, advised him not to try it too much as he might throw himself back again. His joy was but of short duration. His throat became worse and swallowing anything was most difficult. Boiled batter pudding was what he managed best. This I made for him every day. (My wife was away in Sydney and I had to be cook.) He was with me three and a half months, but he could not conduct family worship once during that whole time. In this very weak state and when his throat was at its worst he commenced preparing Psalms for singing. And it was my intention, if possible, to print the Psalms he prepared with the school book. He told me that he took cold on board ship. After his wife's death he took a passage in a vessel which was going to Tanna from Aneiteum. He hoped to ascertain the state of matters on Tanna, and to keep up communication with the people. He did not reach the Island as the vessel returned to Aneiteum without going there; it was on board that vessel he caught his cold.

I consider that you have lost a most devoted and pious missionary. Had he enjoyed his health and possessed a vigorous frame I think he would be equalled by few and surpassed by none. Your church has been sadly tried of late years. The trials which have befallen your missions on Tanna and Erromanga may be permitted or sent to try your faith. Scarcely has any Mission of