

the people lived in constant fear and distrust of one another. The sick and the aged were usually either put to death or left to perish, parents murdered their children and husbands their wives, and on many islands the widow was strangled as soon as her husband expired. In no part of the world was the condition of women more deplorable ; little girls were sold by their fathers for as many pigs as the purchaser was willing to pay for a wife, and were then treated as slaves by their husbands. No woman dared to eat even with her own husband or son, and if she met a man on a narrow pathway she had to step off and turn her back till he passed, and if it was a chief, she crouched down on hands and knees in token of subjection. Their religious beliefs or superstitions differed in almost every island. On An-neit-yum, of which we have the most particular account, they believed in *one god who made men, and who ruled over the whole island*. This god was so feared that they trembled if they spoke his name. But besides there was a great multitude of inferior gods whose power was limited, some being supposed to rule animals, plants, the sea, the wind, etc, and every thing they did was in some way connected with their religion. Thus if a man went to plant his ground, to fish, to travel, to fight or make a feast, a suitable offering must first be offered to the proper god. These offerings consisted either of pigs—almost the only animal found on these islands—fruit or vegetables of various kinds, and sometimes of human sacrifices. Then there were men who were regarded as having supernatural powers, of whose anger the poor people were in constant dread. Their whole worship was one of slavish fear, for they regarded their gods only as powerful to send evil, and made them offerings only to avert their wrath, and though they had a dim notion of a future state, they had none of a reward or punishment according to their deeds. It has been truly said that on the New Hebrides you could hear a perfect babel of tongues, for on each island a different language is spoken, and on the large ones, as Santo, several, and as they had no written language, the labour of making so many translations of the Scriptures and other necessary books has been very great. The history of Mission work in these islands is not only a wonderful proof of the power of divine