

NEW HEBRIDES MISSION.

LETTER FROM REV. MR. ROBERTSON.

DEAR DR. MCGREGOR,—I beg to enclose herewith my eighth annual report from Erromanga, but have little time to write you now as the "Dayspring" is just sailing this morning, and I have been so pressed (what with getting 2000 lbs. of arrowroot made for payment for the Bible, the cutting of the road between Traitors Head and Dillon's Bay, etc.) I have no letters ready this time to send by the "Dayspring" to Sydney. . . . Kindly convey to the Board my hearty thanks for the addition of £25 sig. to our salary. . . . I know not, with our large and expensive mission station, which is really two-thirds of the island, what we would have done if the Church had not granted this addition. We find it quite impossible to carry on the work as it must be carried on, if we are to advance at all, without a considerable outlay, none of which goes to our own personal use.

If the Church could only send us another missionary for the S.E. side of this island to conduct the work on that half of the island then we could make ends meet with much greater ease. We must be constantly among the teachers and people or the work will suffer, and we cannot do so without keeping up a station at Cook's Bay or Portina Bay, and basing, native assistance on the two premises, and much wear and tear of property, and a heavy tax on our salary and strength.

We have just got down scantling for a cottage of two rooms for Traitors Head, rough and not framed, so as to save in every way possible. I have got the lumber at cost prices in Sydney as you will see by this invoice which I am enclosing, not of course in order that you get the Church to pay for it—they did not pay for premises at Dillon's Bay yet, only half of it—but that you may see how difficult it is to keep within my salary and do the whole work of an evangelist for Erromanga.

I must try and get some private friends to pay for this Sydney lumber, and I am happy to say that one white gentleman gave me £7 towards it already; and a coloured gentleman, a good Christian man I hope, has just given me £5 towards this mission cot age for the windward side of the island, out of his savings as one of my servants for eight years! That was five-sixths of his wages for one year.

We think of going overland in about three weeks hence to begin framing the cottage; Mrs. Robertson and the children will go with me and we will live in a native hut until I can get the house up.

The Christian natives, notwithstanding their seven weeks at the road on the mountains, have just begun to carry sugar-cane leaf and the women to sew it for the roof of our cottage; and they are putting up a boat house for which I am paying them; as also for the land for mission premises. I have already paid £7 for the land but then I get it out and out, not in the native style of selling and getting payment and still taking all the fruit of the trees and planting where they please on it, and taking it back should the missionary leave, as they tried to do at Portina Bay after killing Mr. Gordon, and as they tried to do here after I came to this bay.

Only last week I obtained a sad memorial of the work of Christian missions to Erromanga. I got the axe with which the godly James Gordon was killed.

"He fell like a soldier
He died at his post."

For eight years I have been trying to get this axe, but until now the murderer would not part with it any price. After he died his daughter took the axe and would not give it up, until last week I got it by giving a new American tomahawk and some calico. The axe is an American tomahawk. May the Lord grant that the blood of the martyrs on Erromanga may prove the seed of the Church.

I desire to thank all the kind friends in Nova Scotia and P. E. Island, who so liberally contributed to the filling of the invaluable mission boxes sent out last year and this year. The goods came at a time when we much needed them for natives. I have no doubt but that God's people at home will continue these contributions in missionary goods and in money for the payment of teachers, and aiding generally in the work.

Mr. and Mrs. Mackenzie and Norman are with us on their way to Sydney and hence to Nova Scotia unless Mr. Mackenzie's health meantime improves. He is better than when I saw him in September at Erakor, but he is far from strong yet. . . .
HUGH A. ROBERTSON.

Erromanga, Dec. 15th, 1880.

ONE WAY TO LEARN A LANGUAGE.

I applied myself with extraordinary diligence to the study of English. Necessity taught me a method which greatly facilitates the study of a language. This method consists in reading a great deal aloud without making a translation, taking a lesson every day, constantly writing essays upon subjects of interest, correcting them under the supervision of a teacher, learning them by heart, and repeating in the next lesson what was corrected on the previous day. My memory was bad; since from my childhood it had not been exercised upon any object; but I made use of every moment, and even stole time for study. In order to acquire a good pronunciation quickly, I went twice every Sunday to the English church, and repeated to myself in a low voice every word of the clergyman's sermon. I never went on my errands, even in the rain, without having my book in my hand and learning something by heart; and I never waited at the post office without reading. By such methods I gradually strengthened my memory, and in three months' time found no difficulty in reciting from memory to my teacher, Mr. Taylor, in each day's lesson, word by word, twenty printed pages, after having read them over three times attentively. In this way I committed to memory the whole of Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield" and Sir Walter Scott's "Ivanhoe." From over excitement I slept but little, and employed my sleepless hours at night in going over in my mind what I had read on the preceding evening. The memory being always more concentrated at

night than in the daytime, I found these repetitions at night of permanent use. Thus I succeeded in acquiring in half a year a thorough knowledge of the English language.

I then applied the same method to the study of French, the difficulties of which I overcame likewise in another six months. Of French authors, I learned by heart the whole of Fénelon's "Adventures de Telemachus," and Bernardin de Saint Pierre's "Paul et Virginie." This unremitting study had in the course of a single year strengthened my memory to such a degree that the study of Dutch, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese appeared very easy, and it did not take me more than six weeks to write and speak each of these languages fluently.—Dr. Schlieman.

OUR BABY.

This poem was written by Phoebe Cary. It has comforted some weeping ones. There may be many other mothers to whom its sweet and tender words may bring the comfort and hope they need.

When the morning, half in shadow,
Ran along the hill and meadow,
And with milk-white fingers parted
Crimson roses, golden-hearted;
Opening over ruins hoary
Every purple morning glory,
And out-shaking from the bushes
Singing larks and merry thrushes;
That's the time our little baby,
Strayed from Paradise, it may be,
Came with eyes like heaven above her,
Oh, we could not choose but love her!

Not enough of earth for sinning,
Always gentle, always winning,
Never needing our reproving,
Ever lively, every loving;
Starry eyes, and sunset tresses,
White arms, made for white caresses,
Lips that knew no word of doubting,
Often kissing, never pouting;
Beauty even in completeness,
Overflow of childish sweetness;
That's the way our little baby,
Far too pure for earth, it may be,
Seemed to us, who, while about her,
Deemed we could not do without her.

When the morning, half in shadow,
Ran along the hill and meadow,
And with milk-white fingers parted
Crimson roses, golden-hearted;
Opening over ruins hoary
Every purple morning-glory,
And out-shaking from the bushes
Singing larks and merry thrushes;
That's the time our little baby,
Pining here for heaven, it may be,
Turning from our bitter weeping,
Closed her eyes as when in sleeping,
And her white hands on her bosom
Folded like a summer blossom.

Now the litter she doth lie on,
Strewed with roses, bear to Zion;
Go, as past a pleasant meadow,
Through the valley of the shadow,
Take her softly, holy angels,
Past the ranks of God's evangelists,
Past the saints and martyrs holy,
To the earth-born, meek and lowly.
We would have our precious blossom
Softly laid in Jesus' bosom.

A HOME FOR MOTHER.

It is delightful to turn from the too frequently sad example of dime novel bitten runaway boys bringing themselves and their parents to grief, to a pure picture of filial love and duty like this. Says a letter written from a western city:

Business called me to the United States Land Office. While there, a lad, apparently sixteen or seventeen years of age, came in and presented a certificate for forty acres of land.

I was struck with the countenance and general appearance of the boy, and inquired of him for whom he was purchasing the land.

"For myself, sir."

I then inquired where he got the money. He answered, "I earned it."

Feeling then an increased desire for knowing something more about the boy, I asked him about himself and his parents. He took a seat and gave the following narrative:

"I am the oldest of five children. Father is a drinking man, and often would return home drunk. Finding that father would not abstain from liquor, I resolved to make an effort in some way to help my mother, brothers and sisters. I got an axe and went into a new part of the country to work, clearing land, and I have saved money enough to buy forty acres of land there."

"Well, my good boy, what are you going to do with the land?"

"I will work on it, build a log house, and when all is ready, will bring father, mother, brothers and sisters to live with me. The land I want for mother, it will secure her from want in her old age."

"And what will you do with your father if he continues to drink?"

"Oh, sir, when we get him on the farm he will feel at home and be happy, and, I hope, become a sober man."

"Young man, may God's blessing attend your efforts to help and honour your father and mother."

By this time the receiver handed him his receipt for his forty acres of land. As he was leaving the office he said:

"At last I have a home for my mother."

BRITISH AND FOREIGN ITEMS.

A DECREE has been signed, granting M. de Lesseps a concession to cut a canal through the Isthmus of Corinth. Work will probably commence in 1882, and be completed in five years.

THE National Bank of Greece is negotiating with the Government in the name of M. de Lesseps, with a view to constructing a ship canal through the Isthmus of Corinth, to connect the Gulf of Corinth with the Aegean Sea.

THE Fortune Bay affair has been settled, the British Government, through Sir Edward Thornton, Minister at Washington, agreeing to pay £15,000 sterling, alleged damages to the American fishermen. The Americans had claimed \$103,000.

A SERIOUS explosion of Danforth's fluid occurred at St. Joseph, Mo., on the 23d ult. Several were burned to death and many seriously injured. The fluid had been stored in a cellar under a saloon. The concussion shook buildings several blocks distant.

A BOOK EXCHANGE IN JAPAN.—It has lately been decided that any books published in Japan on political matters are in future to be exchanged for books of a similar class, with all the treaty powers; and that, therefore, a book exchange will shortly be opened in the Foreign Department.

A PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS IN CYPRUS.—The island is overrun with locusts, which are making fearful ravages among the wheat crop. Great indignation is felt by the inhabitants at the ineffectual measures taken by the authorities for their destruction. The barley crop is bad through blight.

THE silver coin found lately in the Hurlford Bowling Green, Scotland, and supposed to be one of the early Stuarts, turns out to be a silver penny of the reign of Edward I. or II. of England. The word "Robertus" is that of the moneyer, Robertus de Hadlie, a well-known, though rare obverse.

A MOVEMENT is being made in Boston for a world's fair in that city in 1885. It is proposed to use as a nucleus the grounds and buildings now being prepared for minor exhibitions this fall, thus saving an important item of expense. A rough estimate has been made, showing that the total cost of the enterprise would not exceed \$3,000,000.

TRADE IN JAPAN.—The "Akebono Shinbun" states that the manufacture of sulphuric acid in the Osaka mint improves yearly more and more, and that the export trade of this article to China has also greatly increased. The paper we quote says that formerly China obtained all her supplies from Germany, but now she imports it solely from this country, owing to the greater cheapness of the Japanese market.

It is rumoured that a fresh outrage has been perpetrated at St. Petersburg, and taking the new Czar's life has been attempted by the Nihilists. There is evidence that the leaders of the Jewish persecution in Russia are now directing the agitation against the owners of landed property and the wealthier classes generally. The Czar has started on a tour through the Provinces. He is cordially received, but the inhabitants manifest a disposition to insist upon a continuance of their present rights.

A BAILIFF went lately to serve writs on the property of Hutchins, near Mallow, county Cork. Some women seized him, destroyed the writs, stripped him naked, and threw him into the river. They caught him as he came out and thrashed him with furze. The man, more dead than alive, was then tarred, feathered, and hunted out of the county. A large party of police went from Mallow to rescue him, but was unable to find him. Elaborate preparations are being made to renew the attempt to carry out New Pallas evictions.

THE death of a man of extraordinary executive ability is announced. We refer to Col. Thomas A. Scott, who was one of the greatest railway kings of the United States. The depression of railway stocks, at one time, nearly upset him, but the recent increase in the value of that species of property added enormously to his vast wealth. Col. Scott is reported as having said that he would give all he was worth to recover his health; but there was no originality in the remark. The peculiarity of it is that few have had so many millions to offer to bribe death with.

THE following item is a very striking comment on the changes tragic enough and comic enough that have marked French history: "An historical heroine died last week in the Batignolles quarter of Paris. Mademoiselle Corinne Verly was an acknowledged beauty during the era of the Reign of Terror, and was chosen for a model for the Goddess of Reason in processions, and by painters and sculptors. Nearly a century ago she was the possessor of a competence, and surrounded by a large circle of admiring friends. But one by one the latter died, and she was left as one alone and forgotten by succeeding generations. Her worldly means became less and less; and she died in her ninety-ninth year, having earned a meagre subsistence during her last years of life as a rag-picker."

LORD BEACONSFIELD'S SCHOOL DAYS.—"Senex" writes to the "Daily News": "So much interest appears to be attached to the earliest days of this great statesman that an anecdote connected with them may be acceptable to your readers. I was his schoolfellow at the school of Mr. Potticary, a retired Unitarian minister, at Elliott Place, Blackheath, from the year 1813 to 1817. I cannot say that Benjamin Disraeli, at this period of his life exhibited any unusual zeal for classical studies, and I doubt whether his attainments in this direction at the age of thirteen, when he left this school for Mr. Cogan's, at Walthamstow, reached higher than the usual grind in Livy and Cicero. But I well remember that he was the compiler and editor of a weekly school newspaper, which made its appearance on Saturdays, when the gingerbread seller was also to be seen, and that the right of perusal was estimated at the cost of a sheet of gingerbread, the money value of which was in those days the third of a penny. I have no doubt that the date of his birth, which seems to be questioned, was December, 1804."