

ing alone I took two or three of our party to walk inland with me; and off we started, Mr. Dudley and Wadrokai being left sitting in the boat, which was, as usual, a short distance from the beach. We had walked about half a mile, before I noticed something unusual in the manner of the people, and I overheard them talking in a way that made me suspect that something had happened, which they did not want me to know. Petere had not made his appearance, though in general the first to greet us, and on my making inquiries for him, I was told that he was not well. Not long afterwards I overheard a man say that Petere was dead, and taking again some opportunity that offered itself for asking about him, was told he had died of dysentery. I was grieved to hear this, because I liked him personally, and had expected help from him when the time came for commencing a Mission station on the island. The distance from the beach to the village where Petere lived is about a mile and a half, and a large party had assembled before we reached it.—There was a great lamentation and crying on our arrival, during which I sat down on a large log of a tree. Then came a pause, and I spoke to the people, telling them how sorry I was to hear of Petere's death. There was something strange still about their manner, which I could not quite make out; and one of our party who was not used to the kind of thing did not like the looks of the people, and the clubs and spears. At last one of them, an old scholar of ours, came forward and said, "The men here do not wish to deceive you; they know that you loved Petere, and they will not hide the truth; Petere was killed by a man in a ship, a white man, who shot him in the forehead." Of course I made minute inquiries as to the ship, the number of masts, how many people they saw, whether there was anything remarkable about the appearance of any person on board, &c. The men standing round us were a good deal excited, but the same story was told by them all.

After a while I walked back to the beach, no intimation having been made of unfriendliness; but I had not gone more than a quarter of a mile when three men rushed past me from behind, and ran on to the beach.—Meanwhile, Mr. Dudley and Wadrokai in the boat were rather uneasy at the manner of the people standing near them on the reef; and they too suspected that something unusual had occurred. Presently they saw these three men rush out of the bush on to the beach, and distribute "kava" among the people, who at once changed their manner, became quite friendly, and soon dispersed. It was quite evident that a discussion had taken place inshore as to the treatment we were to receive; and these men on the beach were awaiting the result of the discussion, prepared to act accordingly. There was scarcely any danger in our case of their deciding to injure

us, because they knew us well; but had we been strangers we should have been killed, of course; their practice being naturally enough to revenge the death of their countryman at the arrival of the next man who comes from what they suppose to be their enemies' country.

This story may show you that caution is necessary long after the time that a real friendship has commenced and been carried on. We never can tell what may have taken place during the intervals of our visits. I returned to the village with Mr. Kerr and Mr. Dudley, and slept ashore, thinking it right to restore mutual confidence at once; and there was not the slightest risk in doing so.

Now let me tell you about an island called Ambrym, lying to the south of Aurora and Pentecost, the two northernmost islands of the New Hebrides group.

Ambrym is a grand island, with a fine active volcano, so active on this last occasion of our visiting it, that we were covered and half blinded by the ashes; the deck was thickly covered with them, and the sea for miles strewn with floating cinders. We have repeatedly landed in different parts of the island, but this time we visited an entirely new place. There was a considerable surf on the beach, and I did not like the boat to go near the shore, partly on that account, but chiefly because our rule is not to let the boat approach too near the beach, lest it should be hauled up on shore by the people, and our retreat to the schooner cut off. So I beckoned to some men in a canoe (for I could not speak a word of the language), who paddled up to us, and took me ashore.

As I was wading to the beach, an elderly man came forward from the crowd to the water's edge, where he stood holding both his arms uplifted over his head. Directly that I reached him, he took my hand and put it round his neck, and turned to walk up the beach. As I walked along with him through the throng of men, more than 300 in number, my arm all the while round his neck, I overheard a few words, which gave me some slight cue as to the character of their language, and a very few words go a long way on such occasions. We went inland some short distance, passing through part of a large village, till we came to a house with figures, idols or not I hardly know, placed at some height above the door.

They pointed to these figures, and repeated a name frequently, not unlike the name of one of the gods of some of the islands farther north: then they struck the hollow tree, which is their native drum, and thronged close round me, while I gave away a few fish-hooks, pieces of red braid, &c. I asked the names of some of the people and of objects about me, trees, birds, &c. I was particularly struck with two boys who kept close to me. After some time I made signs that I would return