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The Career of John G. Paton.

(By Geo. T. B. Davis.)

John G. Paton, the most remarkable missionary of the day, has landed on islands inhabited by savage cannibals and, after years of hair-breadth escapes from death, lived to see the man-eaters transformed into God-fearing men and women. He well merits the title of 'The modern St. Paul,' and also that epithet given by Spurgeon, who called him 'The King of the Cannibals.'

Forty years ago when Dr. Paton went to the New Hebrides, the islanders were supposed to be irredeemable savages. Darwin predicted it would be impossible to convert them. Many missionaries had landed there, only to be driven away or killed in a short time. Then, alone, yet trusting in God, Dr. Paton was put ashore. Years pass. Which will win in this thrilling contest of light against darkness?

To-day the venerable missionary is able to say: 'Twenty-two of the islands are now practically under Christian influence, our missions have 18,000 converts in a total population of 40,000, and there are upwards of 3,000 regular church members. The Scriptures have been translated into twenty-one different languages. We have 300 native preachers and teachers, to which number there are continual additions.'

Dr. Paton was born in Scotland seventy-five years ago. For many years before entering on his work in the South Sea Islands he was a zealous worker in Glasgow. His experiences in that great city, indeed, were hardly less thrilling than those through which he has since passed in less happy climes, and he still recalls how he and his gallant little band were pursued by a Glasgow mob, how the publicans disturbed his meetings, and how he was publicly cursed by Roman Catholic priests. But his real career began when, in 1858, he determined to give his life for the salvation of the New Hebrides.

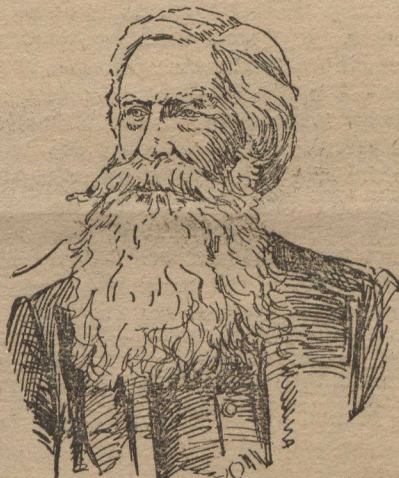
It was characteristic of him that when one of his friends, a deacon, tried to dissuade him from his intention by warning him that he would be eaten by cannibals, he should reply: 'Mr. —, you are advanced in years now and your own prospect is soon to be laid in the grave, there to be eaten by worms. I confess to you that if I can but live and die serving and honoring Jesus it will make no difference to me whether I am eaten by cannibals or by worms; and in the great day of judgment my body will rise as fair as yours.' Nobody attempted to dissuade him after that, and on Nov. 5, 1858, he landed, with his young wife, at Tanna.

From that time his life has been one of thrilling interest, though often he has been almost crushed by sorrow and despair. Three months after their arrival in Tanna his heart was gladdened by the birth of a child; but sudden joy became sudden grief, when, a month later, both wife and child were laid in the grave. With his own hands he dug the grave in which the bodies lie on that lonely island, and in the long nights that followed the poor Tannese wondered to see the white man bent in tears over the little grass mound beneath the trees.

The story of his hair-breadth escapes from

the cannibals reads like fiction rather than truth. Over and over again he was within an inch of death at the hands of the savages. 'A wild chief followed me about for hours with his loaded musket,' he says, 'and though often directed at me, God restrained his hand. I spoke kindly to him and went on with my work as if he had not been there.'

Cruel superstition, disease and treachery were some of the forces against which Dr. Paton had to contend at Tanna. On one occasion he was called to a dying chief. 'Come near me and talk with me, Missi,' said the chief when the doctor entered the room. Here is what followed, told in Dr. Paton's own words: 'While I was speaking to him he lay lost in a swoon of silent meditation. Suddenly he drew from the sugar cane leaf thatch close to his bed a large butcher-like knife, and instantly feeling the edge of it with his other hand, he pointed it to within a few inches of my heart and held it quivering there all a-tremble with excitement. I durst neither move nor speak. Then passed a few moments of awful suspense. My sight went and came. Not a



JOHN G. PATON,
The Paul of the New Hebrides.

word had been spoken except to Jesus; and then Ian wheeled the knife round, thrust it into the sugar cane leaf, and cried to me, "Go, go quickly!" I understood then that it had been agreed that Ian was to kill me, so that when the man-of-war came to inquire about me he would be dead, and no punishment would overtake the murderer.'

At other times they attacked his house, calling him to the window in a friendly manner and then raising their hatchets to strike him, but on seeing his revolver they fell back. Yet these men attended the services and listened to what the preacher had to say. But they never came unarmed. All through the service their bows and arrows, spears, tomahawks, clubs and muskets were ready for action.

At last, after eight years, it became impossible to remain in Tanna. In the dead of night the natives set fire to the church near the mission house. The doctor awoke and went out, and there were loud cries of 'Kill him.' They raised their clubs, but suddenly there came upon the island a mighty tornado of wind and rain, driving the flames away from the house in which the missionary's friends were sleeping. Had it

come the other way no power on earth could have saved the lives of the little party. The natives were panic-stricken and fled crying, 'That is Jehovah's rain. Their Jehovah God is fighting for them.' Next morning a ship passed the island, and with a breaking heart Dr. Paton bade farewell to Tanna and its people, yielding to the urgent persuasions of the supporters of the mission in Australia. He is the only one left to tell the story of those pioneer years among the Tannese cannibals, and those who have heard him on his visits to this country are not likely ever to forget the earnestness and impressiveness of his manner, or the kindly way in which he always speaks of the natives who tried so often to take his life.

For fifteen years after leaving Tanna Dr. Paton devoted himself to Aniwa, another of the islands, where he met with great success. The story of how, when he sunk a well and obtained a good supply of fresh water, the natives rallied round him and declared that Jehovah had sent them rain from below, is a singular illustration of the way in which the heathen are brought to a knowledge of the truth. 'Wonderful is the work of your Jehovah God; no God of Aniwa ever helped us in this way,' they cried; and they made a fire of their idols and threw over symbols of their heathenism into the sea.

Then Dr. Paton went back to Tanna, and with the help of his wife (for he had married again) and of other zealous workers, it was also won for the cross. Thus one after another, island after island, was captured for Christ until twenty-two had been turned from gods of stone to the God of love. Meanwhile Dr. Paton's scholarship had kept pace with his heroism. He had learned twenty-one native dialects and had translated, printed and distributed part or all of the Scriptures on each island! And to-day, at seventy-five years of age, after labors that would have broken down a dozen ordinary men, Dr. Paton is as clear-eyed, sprightly of step and vigorous as a young man of thirty.

And one of the most interesting features of this real life romance remains yet to be told. Dr. Paton's father was a weaver. It was the dream of his life to go as a missionary. However, to pay honest debts, he heroically stuck to his loom—but consecrated his son to the holy task. He had his reward for his faithfulness in seeing his son become the greatest missionary of the time, and in addition—the debts having been paid—himself became an enthusiastic colporteur among the poor of Scotland.—'Standard.'

The Progress of Temperance in Manitoba and the North-West.

(By the Rev. J. M. Harrison.)

The word 'Temperance' is coming to mean just what the Scriptural term implies, 'The moderate use of all things lawful, and the total abstinence from all things unlawful,' or, as applied to the traffic in strong drink, 'Total abstinence for the individual and prohibition for the State, for beverage purposes.' A review of this question as relating to Manitoba and the North-West Terri-