

are mown down before even a mild form of epidemic. Before this influenza and the measles came, there was much sickness and many deaths, but since their coming many strong men and women and young people have been cut off.

The measles were carried to Tanna and Erromanga by the "Sydney Belle," a Queensland labour vessel. No matter what care may be taken at the Queensland end to see that no one likely suffering from such epidemics is allowed to leave any port for the Islands, it will be vain to hope for freedom from the consequences that must follow, so long as there is no government at this end to make and enforce regulations to prevent the introduction of diseases, when vessels, wherever from, or however employed, arrive in the group. I need not point out to readers how absurd it would be to allow any ship arriving, say from London or New York, to go right up to a dock at Halifax before she had been passed by the health officer of the latter port, no matter how good the bill of health given at London or New York may have been at the time of departure of the vessel.

#### The Labor Traffic.

The labor traffic can never be and never has been "regulated," and our one hope now is, in its utter suppression, when confederation of all the Australian colonies becomes a fact, as happily it is in Canada. But thank God Canada has never had the disgrace of a so-called "labour" traffic, as unfortunately Queensland has had for years. Had Queensland, of her own accord, given up forever this infamous traffic it would always continue to be a great honour to her, and would have, in some considerable measure, wiped out her stain; but if she is only compelled to it by a confederation there will be small thanks to her. She had the chance a few years ago, but she lost it when she renewed the traffic. It do most earnestly pray for confederation for this reason and for the greater reason, namely, the progress and success and increase of Australia herself.

Personally, to ourselves as a family, those in the labour vessels are most kind and obliging, and are often men of education and refinement, but the whole traffic is destructive to our work at all times and is the most potent factor in the extermination of the natives, an extermination now rapid.

While writing about this labour traffic, a subject and actual fact always painful to me, I must mention that a large number of our young men and boys under special training at our principal station, as well as many of those under the care of the teachers at the outstations, left for Queensland during the year, but more especially during the months of midwinter, when the traffic was represented by a number of vessels in the islands. This was a sore blow to me in my work among themselves for their future education and good, and most discouraging to my daughters, who had been spending so much time in teaching them.

Whole schools of promising youths were thinned out: If the indolent and those of bad character and bad influence only had gone, we would let them go, with all our heart, but they unfortunately seem to have a strong influence over the good youths and boys and are vigorous in using that influence, as bad people do not like to be alone in anything adverse to prosperity and the higher good of the greater number.

#### Death of Yomot.

And now before I change to facts and hopes that are cheering and bright let me tell you of one event that took place in September last, only ten days after we left our station to come here to Sydney. But that event, though of deep sorrow to my family and myself, has a very bright side, yes stretching away back for forty-two years and inseparable from the history of the Erromangan mission. We heard by letters from the teachers, as well as from the missionaries who came to Sydney by the steamer in November last, that Yomot, our first elder and the ablest and bravest friend the mission at Erromanga ever has had, died on Sept. 20th. Though grieved to learn that he had died, we were not much surprised, for he had been falling in health for a number of years, and under God his life was, I believe, prolonged by our attention to him, and by nourishing food and by relieving him of all work which might expose him to wet or cold, by sea or by land. Though not retired we allowed him to be very much his own master and only to teach, preach and visit as he felt inclined and able to do, but I paid him his full salary up to the last, and well I might, for he had been of immense service to the Erromangan mission.

I would like to tell the Committee more about our departed friend Yomot and what a help and protection he ever was to us in the earlier years of our labours and dangers, but I must not make my report much longer. However, I intend to write a short sketch about this once strong and even "iron man," and I feel I would be wanting in my duty to our church, represented in Erromanga for nearly forty-three years, if I failed to do so.

Owing to age and failing health and the peculiarities which I fear all of us take on as we grow older, for few of us "grow old gracefully," Yomot was not so helpful to the work in latter years as he would otherwise have been, and his strong force of character, and his acknowledged power as a leader among his countrymen, made it hard for him to adopt mild measures sometimes, which I have always found not only the most enlightened, but which succeed best and prove of the most permanent good to the natives themselves, for if the bow be bent overmuch it is almost sure to break. But Yomot throughout all his forty odd years as a firm friend of the mission had a clean record, and a stainless life.

A few days after Yomot died, Molis, another teacher and elder, died.