

dispensing, but be able to tell the many women who come for medicine of the Great Physician.

Weather has been beautiful since our arrival. No snow as yet. We ask for the prayers of all the ladies at home. We need them.

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## MISSION STUDIES.

(FIFTH PAPER).

### Missionary Work in the Islands of the Pacific Ocean.

BY MISS FERRIER, CALEDONIA.

BEFORE beginning the history of Mission work on the New Hebrides, I will give you a short description of the islands themselves, and of the people who inhabit them. The name Melanesia, implying the black complexion of the people, is applied to a vast number of islands lying north-east from Australia, including several large groups of which the New Hebrides is one. This group extends about 400 miles in length, and there are thirty islands, some of them quite large. They are of volcanic origin; there are three volcanoes on the group, and they are subject to earthquakes. The islands are mostly very mountainous, and some of them are surrounded by coral reefs. The climate is delightful, and the soil generally very fertile, so that almost every tropical plant can be grown to perfection. Two valuable roots, the yam and the taro, are extensively cultivated, and together with cocoanuts, breadfruit and bananas form the principal food of the people, who belong to the Papuan race, and are of a dark colour, but not black. In their savage state the men wore no clothes, the women merely a girdle of leaves made soft by chewing and then woven together. Their homes were miserable grass huts, with a small opening at one end for a door, but they took great pains to enclose the land they cultivated with neat and strong fences of woven reeds. The moral condition of these people was as low as possible. They were degraded savages, fierce, blood-thirsty cannibals. Wars and quarrels were constant even on the same small island, and