

## MISSION FIELD.

## Letters and Sketches from the New Hebrides.

(Continued.)

*We give this week a few more extracts from this charming book.*

## NATIVE EXHORTERS.

"They cling to their old prejudices and superstitions. I believe that to many of them it is like taking a great leap into the dark to risk the anger of their gods by coming to the worship. For what proof have they at first that we are leading them into the right way? Mr. Paton possessed a great advantage in being able to address them from the first in Tannese, which some of them speak freely; hence the double hope of training them as helpers for Tanna. You would be surprised to see with what propriety the services are conducted. The native teachers—two devoted men from Aneityum—who have been here for years try to give short speeches. Then Mr. Paton usually invites one or other of the enlightened of the Aniwas to speak which he does by invariably pitching into his brethren in the most energetic terms, comparing them to pigs, dogs, serpents, etc.—the speaker not generally including himself—and asking how long they mean to continue their black-hearted conduct!

## THE GIFT OF TONGUES.

She had a large sewing class of which she says, "I feel the sewing however to be only a stepping stone to something far more important. It brings me into contact with them so as to learn their language, I so long to be able to talk freely with them, but it is slow work with me. How the apostles must have appreciated the gift of tongues in the day of Pentecost! I wonder if it was accorded to their wives as well! It is so provoking when you think you have mastered enough to venture on a little conversation with them to see them looking at each other wonderingly. Some time ago, in talking to a girl, I plunged a little deeper than usual, thinking to astonish her with my wisdom, but she looked up innocently and told me she *did not savvy talk Biritania*."

## FIRST CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE.

"Kahi the Hindi was one of my scholars, a pretty young widow of about seventeen; and Ropu was such a nice fellow too, a great favorite of Mr. Paton's. They seemed really attached, but Kahi's father-in-law demurred about giving her away, as he considered her still his property, having given a high price (present?) for her when he bought her for his deceased son. One morning however, Ropu appeared with such a number of fat pigs that they quite took the old man's heart by storm, and he declared that he might have her that day, if the Mission thought it was right. The mission did not object, but advised them to get married in church; and I determined to give Kahi a nice present, in order to tempt her young companions to follow her Christian example. We made the event as public as the time would permit, and there was quite a little gathering to witness the ceremony. There was a little trouble with them in church as they would not come near enough to join hands till they were pushed; and then the poor girl got her marriage vows repeated to her in the deafest side of her head; for being too bashful, or something of the sort to give the response, it seemed to be the public opinion that Mr. Paton was letting her off too easily; and the men, taking up the question, thundered it in such a manner as to elicit a pretty quick reply."

## THE DAYSPRING.

"The visits of the mission vessel are bright days in our lonely existence, which we think and talk about afterwards as you do regarding holiday pleasures after you return to school. But if the Dayspring has been prized by the missionaries when things went well with them, oh how their hearts have gone out in gratitude to God when the little white-winged Messenger of Mercy has been seen approaching at a time of sickness or danger! I know of at least two mothers in this mission who have gone to the shores of their lonely islands day after day with aching hearts and eyes stretched to catch the least little speck of hope on the horizon, for their babies were lying so sick that they feared they might die ere the Dayspring came to carry them away to see the doctor. Further, last year when the vessel was to long in leaving Australia, our dear missionary, Mr. McNair, used to pace the shores of Erromanga, looking for her in vain! He was greatly reduced and weakened by the fever and ague of the climate; and the natives having been unusually sick also, the store of medicine was exhausted; so that their only hope was in the return of the vessel, with the medicines

they so much needed. Sometimes after returning from the beach, he would throw himself in the chair and say, 'I think I shall be in my grave before the Dayspring comes!' And he did die as you have heard—one of the most godly and devoted missionaries that ever came to tell the heathen about Jesus—not however before the vessel arrived with all fresh supplies, but then it was too late to do any real good."

## A MISHAP.

"I had inadvertently partaken of a very poisonous fish which dear old Nanakai, the chief, had inadvertently brought to us, (and didn't he have to stand a storm of abuse from his heathen brethren! They had not taken the *teorship*, but then they did not try to kill *missi's wife*.) The poison got a terrible hold on my system. The two natives that partook of the same fish after it left our supper table (what a merciful Providence that John took no supper, and that the bairns were in bed!) both got sick, immediately came out in a rash and were quite better in a few days. I was almost dead before the emetic took effect, indeed I have never properly rallied."

## THE LITTLE WOMAN OF ANIWA.

There was a little daughter born to them, which fact Mr. Paton announced to the congregation with instructions that no visitors were to be received. Whilst he was in his study on guard, two native elderly women crept on hands and knees, determined to get to her by fair means or foul, in order to console her in her supposed misery because a girl was born. "They seized my hand sympathetically and said 'Missi, Missi, you are young and will live to forget this day. You must not fret about having *only a girl* this time; you know you have had two *sons* already and will have many more before you die. We have all had to bear the same disappointment. We cannot always have *sons*.' That same little woman of Aniwa, has done more to reconcile these poor unfortunates here, who have obtained only daughters, than a hundred sermons could have done. They see what a treasured pet she is, as God's precious gift, and our actions speak louder than words. All little girls in Aniwa will be more lovingly treated in the days to come for the love we showed to this little woman of Aniwa."

## UNMARRIED MISSIONARIES.

Fools who have had no experience of the many sided influences of Christianity in saving and in Christianizing the heathen may chatter against missionaries marrying, and shake their heads about the distractions of a family, we who are in the thick of the work and know all sides of the question feel overwhelmingly thankful that God has given us these children, not only for our own happiness but even for our work's sake."

## THE BEST MEN NEEDED.

"We have got to believe that the Lord meant what He said when He commanded that the Gospel should be given 'to every creature;' and I can understand now why Paul the great Apostle was not kept as a sort of splendid figure-head at Jerusalem, but sent 'far hence' among the Gentiles to assault the strongholds of Satan. The Lord showed that He thought of the importance of Foreign Missions by sending His best man to be the best missionary to the heathen; but I think He gets precious few of His own followers to agree with Him in this."

## THE QUALIFICATIONS OF A MISSIONARY.

"All that tends to make a good and true man anywhere tends to make a good missionary for the foreign field; and *ditto*, with double emphasis for the missionary's wife! Sanctified common-sense and high culture are means of grace among savages as among others, when they are laid upon the Altar of God. Though they have not such gifts themselves they are capable of detecting the want of them in others. But highest reason of all is this: 'No missionary can have too many resources within himself or accomplishments to bear up against the down-dragging influences of heathen surroundings.'"

## NATIVES ABROAD.

Mrs. Paton had to come to Australia on account of the sickness of a child, and took with her *Litsi* the nurse, "When we arrived at Adelaide and she saw the royal welcome I got from my own mother and sister, and all the dear ones there, it struck her in a peculiar way which she could never get over. I was of course wild with delight and flew from room to room all talking merrily, as we were being shown over the pretty new manse and the cousins making friends with each other. When at last I went up stairs to my room, there I found *Litsi* sitting on the floor and sobbing like to break her heart! As I anxiously enquired the cause,