

## Correspondence.

## New Hebrides Mission.

Editor PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW:

Sir,—It has never been my privilege to witness a more spontaneous and hearty tribute of respect and admiration than that with which the members of Assembly greeted Dr. Paton when he appeared before it in Brantford last June. That tribute was the prelude to the eager competition of ministers and congregations throughout the Church to secure a visit from the venerable missionary who has won so warm a place in the affection of the Christian public. He was able during his three months with us to respond only to a limited number of the urgent calls addressed to him by those who were eager to hear his voice and aid in forwarding the grand design to which he is devoting his life, the complete evangelization of the New Hebrides. So great was the eagerness to hear his story of the work of God among these naked cannibals and to aid in the completion of the work which by comity of Protestant Missionary Societies is left to Presbyterians that from one to five meetings daily were pressed upon him. He was everywhere welcomed by unusual audiences and the homes in which he was entertained are yet, and will for many years, be fragrant with the memory of their saintly visitor.

It deeply pained many hearts to have the happy memories of this visit marred and Dr. Paton's laborious efforts to meet our wishes and his aid in relieving the embarrassments of our Foreign Mission Fund (E. D.) repaid by the disparaging and misreading comments on his work contained in the February number of the Record. To this Mr. Scott has added the refusal of the simple justice of permitting Dr. Paton to be heard in his defense—a refusal that stands out in glaring contrast with the demand which he has made on your space in his own behalf.

In the absence of Dr. P. permit me space for reply. Mr. Scott assigns as his reason for intervening in the matter his desire to correct wrong impressions regarding Dr. P. and his work that in some way had gone abroad, and to enlighten contributors who have been giving under misapprehension.

It fell to me as secretary of the committee appointed to arrange meetings for Dr. P. to conduct the greater part of the correspondence arising out of his visits to our congregations in Ontario. From the means employed to give explicit information and from the tenor of the letters received from all parts of the province, I can assure your readers that no general misapprehension such as Mr. Scott imagines ever existed. Not one communication among the hundreds that passed under my eye indicated the slightest misapprehension regarding the relation of Dr. P. to the mission work in the New Hebrides or the destination of the contributions put into his hands.

It is upwards of 36 years since Dr. P. was set apart for mission work in the New Hebrides. Ever since, in one capacity or another he has untiringly devoted his life to the grand work of rescuing the naked savages of that group from their degradation. His perils and sufferings on Tanna, his successes on Aniwa, his vital services to the mission as a whole in connection with the procuring of the Dayspring, the interest that he was instrumental in awakening in the evangelization of the New Hebrides throughout Australia, his powerful advocacy in Britain and on this Continent, the wide dissemination of his autobiography and the response which its appeals have roused in Christian hearts wherever the English language is spoken, have combined to identify the name of Dr. P. with the New Hebrides Mission. It is only human that the public estimate of his services and the prominence of his name should have provoked jealousy and prompted detraction.

His work as missionary agent of the Victorian Church, for the past 13 years has been of the first importance to the work on the group. He has accomplished vastly more than any one man labouring on the group was in a position to do. In the spirit of apostolic devotion he has given the large profits of his books (sufficient to make a very comfortable provision for himself and family in his old

age) to the mission, and he, if I be not misinformed, is at this moment personally maintaining more than one missionary there. The interest awakened by his autobiography in Britain was so great that it led to the inauguration of an independent movement to forward the work which Dr. P. has so much at heart. Some 18 months or two years ago a number of gentlemen launched a scheme which they designated "the John G. Paton Mission Fund," the object of which was "to evangelize the non-evangelized portions of the New Hebrides." It has become a vigorous organization with branches in England, Ireland and Scotland. It has a considerable and rapidly increasing income and publishes an official organ with the title of "Quarterly Jottings." The funds of this organization are put at the personal disposal of Dr. P. for the purpose stated.

Mr. Scott's method of telling all this to the readers of the Record is "Dr. Paton, at present, cannot be said to have any special mission." He thinks that he sufficiently defends himself against Dr. P.'s just indignation and the charge of misleading his readers when he states that he gave his information "without a discourteous" word.

It is well known that all interested in the work on the group have not been of the same mind as to the value of a steam auxiliary vessel for the service. Mr. Scott, true to his New Hebridean antecedents, takes the antagonistic view with those whom he names. On the other side is the fact, that the missionaries themselves long since called for a steamship; the Victorian church commissioned Dr. P. years ago to appeal to the Christian public of Britain for the means, and all the other large societies, Congregational, Methodist and Episcopalian, engaged in similar work among the islands of the Pacific have found it necessary to substitute steamships for their original sailing vessels. In response to Dr. P.'s appeal on his former visit to Britain the sum of £6,000 was put into his hands to purchase or build such a vessel. Within a few days that sum has been supplemented by an additional gift of £1,000 to secure a better steamship.

The barrier of the additional cost of maintenance is rapidly melting away. Careful estimates have been made of the annual outlay on a steam auxiliary necessary. While the sailing Dayspring cost about \$10,000 per annum for maintenance and working expenses a steamship such as contemplated would cost about \$15,000. These are the figures of the friends of the movement. Those furnished by Mr. Scott are the exaggerated estimate of those who have opposed and are still seeking to thwart the project. Mr. Scott appeals to those whose interest in the completion of the work in the New Hebrides was awakened by Dr. P.'s visit to send their contributions to our own Foreign Mission Fund (E.D.) out of which three missionaries are supported there. He appeals to their sympathies on the ground that that fund is embarrassed by debt. Those appealed to should know that their money will not be applied to the extension of mission work there if they follow his directions. He himself is authority for saying that "our church decided some time since to leave further advance to the Australian churches." The debt of which he speaks was not incurred in the New Hebrides nor is it due to any falling off in contributions to the fund, but to the extension of our mission work among the Coolies of Trinidad and specially by building operations there, \$5,000 being expended on schoolhouses in 1891. If they wish their money devoted to the liquidation of a debt contracted in connection with that flourishing and successful mission, good and well, but if they desire to devote a portion of their giving to extension in the New Hebrides they will require to accompany their gifts with special directions as to their destination.

Mr. Scott has thought it seemly to associate the word "comfort" with the self-denying and labourious work in which Dr. P. has been engaged without rest for 13 years. Let me give your reader a little insight into that "comfort." He is now upwards of 70 years of age. While he was among us he was suffering almost continuously from attacks of island fever, a legacy from Tanna and Aniwa, yet during the sweltering weather of July and August, with scarcely a day's intermission he

addressed from one to five meetings—never refusing one more if place and time could be found for it, early or late—travelling in the intervals long distances by train and road. His work during these two months was a surprising feat of zeal and endurance, yet he came to us from the midst of eight months such work in the United States and he has added six months more just such labour in Britain since he left us.

Editors, even more youthful than Mr. Scott, think it necessary to rest from their arduous arm-chair labours and recuperate their exhausted energies in some cool and shady retreat during the heated term.

But he is able to dispatch the manifestation of this wonderful endurance and quenchless zeal on the part of this aged missionary through these long labourious years with the light comment, that he has all this time been enjoying "the peace and safety and comfort of a Christian land."

The church through her highest court has in her own way shown her appreciation of his services and sacrifices. Let us hope that the feelings that prompted such ungenerous comments on the part of Mr. Scott will remain all his own.

With thanks for your space, I come to a close.

J. W. MITCHELL.

THOROLD, May 25th.

## Niagara Falls.

JOHN IMRIE, TORONTO, CAN.

Oh, Niagara! as at thy brink I stand,

My soul is filled with wonder and delight,  
To trace in thee that wender-working Hand,  
Whose hollow holds the seas in balance  
light!

Worthy art thou to be a nation's pride,—

A patriot's boast—a world's unceasing wonder;  
Like some bold monarch calling to thy side  
Subjects from every clime in tones of  
thunder!

Deep on my soul thy grandeur is impress'd,  
Thy awful majesty—thy mighty power—  
Thy ceaseless tumult and thy great unrest,  
Like nations warring in dread conflict's  
hour!

Rainbows of glory sparkle round thy shrine,  
Cresting thy waters with effulgence bright;  
And in thy foaming currents interwine  
Rare coruscations of commingl'd light!

Like roar of battle, or like thunder's call,  
Thy deep-toned echoes roll with solemn  
sound;  
Like pillar'd clouds thy vapours rise, and fall  
Like sparkling pearls upon the thirsty  
ground!

Rush on! rush on! in thy unchecked career,  
With avalanche power thy course pursue;  
While rounding rocks quake as with mortal  
fear,  
And stand in awe to let thy torrents  
through!

Naught but the hand of God could stay thy  
course,  
Or drive thee back to Erie's peaceful keep;  
Then onward press with thy gigantic force,  
Till in Ontario's bosom lul'd to sleep!

Emblem of Freedom! who would dare essay  
To bar thy noisy progress to the sea!  
Then onward press! while bord'ring nations  
pray  
For strength and wisdom to be great and  
free!

The above verses are from the Third Edition of JOHN IMRIE'S POEMS containing about 400 pages, neatly bound in cloth and gold, and will be sent, post free, on receipt of one dollar. IMRIE, GRAHAM & Co., 31 Church Street, Toronto, Canada.