

"wings of a dove" that I might peep in at you all, and see you just as you are—but I feel quite contented and happy at the post of duty—only it is a great trial to be separated from you all. Were it not for the hope of meeting in a better world, how could we bear it? . . . Oh! if friends only knew how we value a few words of encouragement! I expected many letters from home by Mr. Johnson and was sadly disappointed. Why do my friends wait for me to write? It is more difficult for me than for them. Any home news is interesting. Give my love to all my friends. I expect Mrs. Johnson daily to visit me, she is at Port Resolution. Both Mr. and Mrs. J. are well.

With much love,

Ever my dearest mamma, your devoted,

MARY.

LETTER FROM REV. MR. MATHESON.

TANNA, August 14th, 1860.

REV. P. G. MCGREGOR,—

Rev and Dear Brother.—Your long and very interesting letter of November 14th, 1859, I received with much pleasure July 16th. I cannot tell you how highly we prize letters in this distant isle of the sea, or how much their perusal tends to strengthen our hands and to encourage our hearts. Would the Fathers and Brethren in our Church devote even one hour annually (which is but a small portion of time) to corresponding with those whom they have sent to occupy the high places of the field—how much more distinctly would we feel in our perils among the heathen that we have still a place in their affections—that we are not forgotten by them in their seasons of communion with God—and that the arduous work in which we are engaged is one in which they are deeply interested. The external prospects of the mission upon this island are apparently beginning to brighten, but none have as yet given any decided evidence of their having embraced the gospel. Some two or three profess to have renounced some of the worst and most disgusting abominations of heathenism—one of whom is the young child of the district in which we reside. He has been living in the yard during the last six weeks, and his conduct has been most exemplary. He says he is anxious to know the word of God, and embraces every opportunity of communicating to others what little knowledge he has himself acquired. His wife died shortly after he came to live with us, and he consented to have her buried. Their usual practice is to throw their dead into the sea, and then some of the usual heathenish ceremonies are performed—such as kindling a fire and keeping it burning several hours for the purpose of keeping the Devil from stealing her spirit. After the fire has been burning sufficiently long in their estimation to cause the Devil to give up all hope of being successful and to go and seek his prey in some other quarter, they destroy all the property formerly belonging to the deceased;—the live stock, which consists principally of pigs and fowls, is given to the nearest relations to be immediately killed to furnish food for a feast—the number of guests being in proportion to the quantity of food. According to Tanna etiquette the young chief was the person by whom the fire should have been kindled, the property distributed, the feast made and the guests invited, but he took no part in any of the proceedings and countenanced them only by his presence.

Yaresi and Namaka are still friendly. The former has long been a nominal friend of the missionary, and; though the desire of obtaining foreign property is the highest motive by which he is as yet actuated, we hope he may some day value the gospel from nobler motives. The latter says he is friendly, but I would not object to see some more substantial evidence of his friendship before placing much confidence in his profession. He attends Church occasionally, but has not renounced any of his heathenish practices. His youngest son is at present very ill, apparently dying. I heard of his illness last week, and also that his father had suspected a certain young man as the cause of his son's trouble. This youth he intended to kill if the child should not recover. I spoke very plainly to the old man about the sinfulness of such conduct—told him that God only had the power of inflicting disease—that we must all die very soon, &c. He seemed willing enough to admit the probability of our dying some time, but he did not feel satis-