

New Hebrides.

LETTER FROM REV. J. W. MAC-
KENZIE.

ERAKOR, EFATE, Sept. 8, '85.

My Dear Mr. Scott:

In my last note to you I mentioned that I intended taking a tour to the east side of the island. Up to the present I have not been able to do so.

Shortly after the *Duyspring* left we were visited by a severe influenza. Indeed some of my young men were ill when the boat came ashore for our mail. The disease was brought from Noumea. One of the first who took it on this island, a European, died. His, however, was the only case that proved fatal. It went over this village and several others.

Mrs. Mackenzie and the children had it but so far I have escaped. Blood oozed out of the ears of many who had it, and the pain was very severe. For this, sweet oil dropped into the ear acted like a charm. Our eldest boy was very ill, and for a time we felt anxious about him lest the cough he had should settle on his lungs. A change to a village some little distance inland, however, has quite cured him. We went there last Thursday and returned yesterday.

This is the village formed by natives from the mountains, Tankaro. They had built us a small grass house, gratis, and this was the first time we occupied it. They seemed very much pleased that we visited them. About forty natives accompanied us, some of them of their own accord, others to carry such things as we required. We took a few joists and pieces of flooring of the old house which the ants had not destroyed. This, although perhaps not much softer, was more healthy than sleeping on the ground.

The village now numbers about fifty natives, and the little church, built by the first ten or dozen who moved there, is too small for them. Need you be surprised if it was with moist eyes I stood up before them on Sabbath morning to give out the hymn. Less than two years ago there was nothing but the unbroken forest, but the "solitary place has been made glad." Years ago had you filled their huts with gold you could not have persuaded them to move away from their own villages, and

renounce the customs of their forefathers. But the gospel has silently influenced their hearts, and so of their own accord they have come to trust under the wings of the Lord God of Israel. What a proof of the power of the gospel! I wonder what an unbeliever could say if he were to see this for himself.

While we were there word came from the mountains that five men and some women wished to join them, heathen of course. Right glad we were as you may imagine, to hear this, and we made arrangements that some Erakor and Fila natives should go to Tankaro next Monday and be ready to make an early start for the mountains next morning in order to bring them and what little property they have.

It was not all of a cheering nature, however. There was one serious obstacle in the way. One of these five men was under sentence of death for having, some time ago, caused by witchcraft, the death of another native with whom he was at enmity. There was an alternative, however, viz., that he should pay ninety hogs, so high did the blood avenger value the life of his friend. The poor Tankaro people were in great distress to know what to do. They were afraid to bring the men to their village lest the brother of the deceased should murder one of themselves, and they could not refuse to go for the poor doomed man. I told them I would go and see the brother myself and have a talk with him, and should he refuse to listen to me I would go and bring the man myself, so that I alone would be responsible for his coming. I went accordingly and found him in his plantation. I told him I had come to speak to him about Marik Leliak (the man on whom he wished to avenge his brother's death) and about his wishing to join the Christians. He said "Marik Leliak must stay where he is until he has given me eighty pigs." It is not always best, however, to give in to them, so I said firmly, "No, your word is crooked, Marik Leliak did not cause your brother's illness. It is only Jehovah who can send sickness on anyone." After a time he said, "Well, if he give me ten pigs the matter will be ended." So the likelihood is that he will get ten pigs. What I was afraid of was that he might enlist the sympathies of the Meli people on his behalf, and that bloodthirsty people are al-