

LETTER FROM REV. H. A. ROBERTSON.

DILLON'S BAY, ERROMANGA.
January 9th, 1888.

REV. P. MORRISON :

Dear Brother :—A small cutter bound North to Malakula, came into this bay this afternoon, and the Captain is kindly remaining until the morning that I may get this note written to you.

I still hope that some stray vessel may call at this port before a great while, so that I may send a full report to my church, but I write this hurried note to-night that our good friends, and friends of the mission on this and all these islands may know that we are all well here, as a family, and that so far as known to us, and certainly by direct report and by our letters all the mission families were well when the "Dayspring" called here for our orders and our Bible arrowroot on the 12th of Dec., or less than a month ago.

To-day I had a note from Rev. Mr. Laurie, of Aneityum, in which he says they are well and busy on Aneityum, and Mrs. Laurie writes that Dr. and Mrs. Gunn, on Futuna, were well when the "Dayspring" called there three weeks ago; that Mr. and Mrs. Mackenzie and their children, and Mr. and Mrs. Gray and their children (the passengers by "Dayspring" to Sydney this trip) were well, and that the "Dayspring" took her departure from Aneityum for Sydney on the 23rd, with a fair wind.

She watered here and did not therefore require to at Aneityum.

Mr. and Mrs. Watt, on Tanna, are also well.

Count Rantzow, who owns and commands this cutter which takes my note, has told us to-day that the French authorities on New Caledonia have removed all the missionaries from the Loyalty Islands (Mare, Lifu, and Wea.) and have sent them to Sydney! We still trust this may not be true, for the other day in a newspaper we read that Rev. Mr. Jones (a missionary for 30 years or more) told in a public meeting in Australia that he had had an interview with the Governor of New Caledonia and that that gentleman had promised him religious liberty—but perhaps that was liberty to leave the islands.

You are aware that France has pro-

mised to withdraw her troops from the New Hebrides with the promise of the *Leeward Islands* from England. But France does not, in my humble opinion, appear to be in any hurry to do anything of the kind. But we shall see.

When the F. M. Board first (after you get this note) meets kindly give the members each specially my kind regards, and say to them for me that if I do not write to them every one separately it certainly is not from want of desire on my part but entirely on account of time. Really, the longer we are here and the older we grow the more do we seem to be obliged to do, and this year I have been simply overwhelmed with work of all kinds, first assisting at the settlement of Messrs. Landels and Annand, and since then on this island.

And if my work is trying on me, Mrs. Robertson's is much more so on her. I seem to get some rest after say 7 p. m., or after tea, but that is just the time sick and old natives come or send for medicine, and for tea and bread along with the medicine, and Mrs. Robertson must see about the tea and bread or our servants would soon get through with all our supplies.

Then she is trying just now to bring up on goat's milk two young native children whose mothers have died.

To add to this, for seven months past there has been, and still is, much sickness on this island, and the death rate, always high, has been higher far than for the last three years. Five have died in this village and the death wail, especially during the night, is, to us at least, most dismal. Perhaps since the beginning of June of last year, or during the last seven months, as many as 80 persons have died, and of these 3 were good faithful teachers and two of them died within the last few weeks and one indeed only a week ago.

But we have this comforting thought that the light of God's holy word has been shining in at least 30 villages for years, and we cling to the hope that at least some of those who have been called away from us received the truth and the love of it into their hearts.

We also have this other thought, that comforts us, that by medicines, nourishing food, personal care, cheering words, we have been the means of saving many lives. God has heard our prayers and has blessed our attentions and help.