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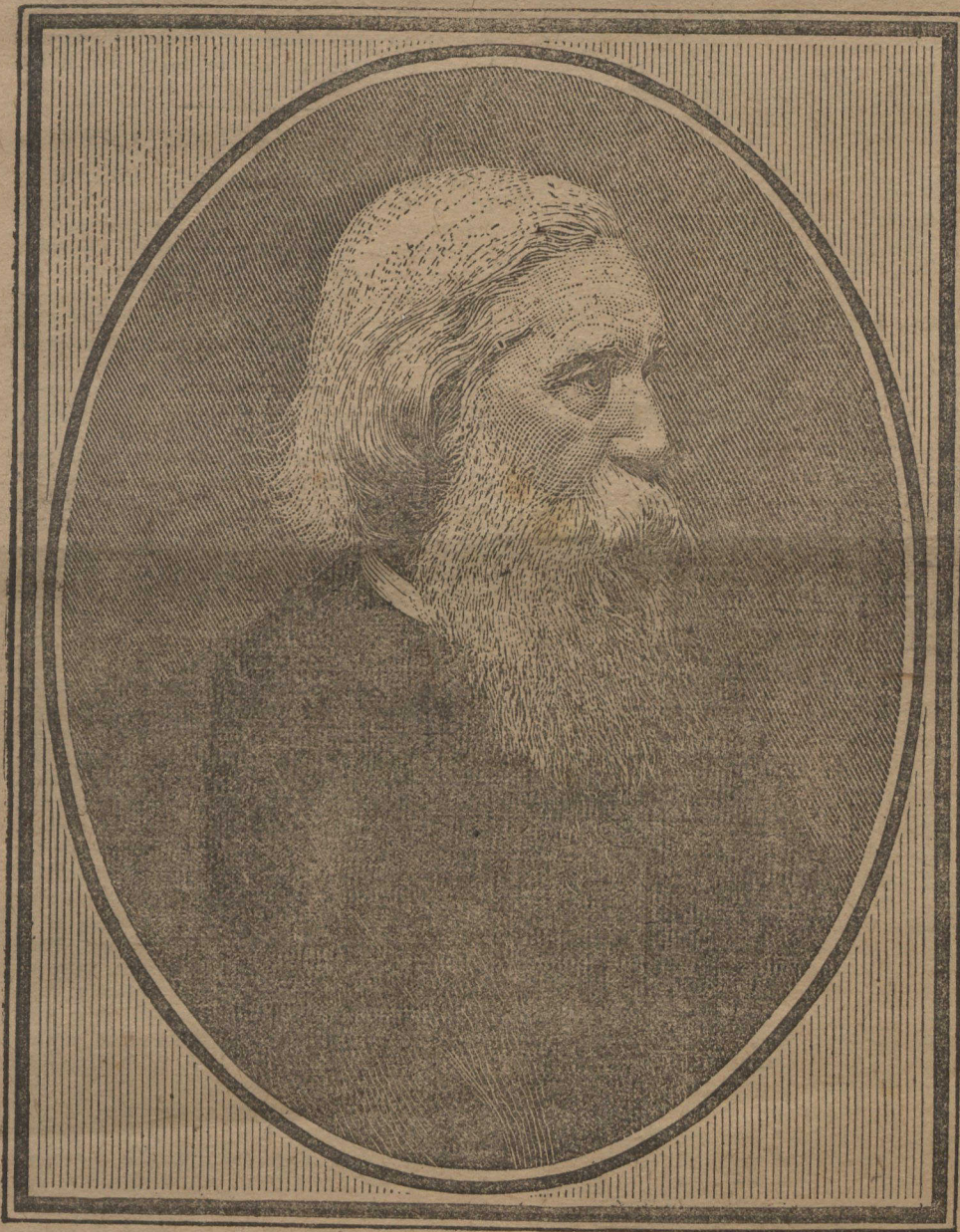
The Late Dr. J. G. Paton,

The Heroic Missionary of the New Hebrides.

The story of the life of the late Dr. Paton is a story of supreme heroism, and it deserves to be told at length. He was in his eighty-third year when he died; but during his long life he had many times looked death in the face, and never once did his dauntless courage fail him. The autobiography of Dr. Paton is perhaps the most fascinating work in the whole library of missionary literature. It was published as long ago as 1889, but it is still

day he heard that missionaries were required in the New Hebrides. He at once applied for permission to go out. Did he know that the work was of great personal danger? That the natives were cannibals, with murder and treachery in their hearts towards the white intruders? Yes, he knew, and that is why he wanted to go. There was no denying a request made in this spirit, and so in 1858 John Paton began his life's work. In the spring of that year he landed with his wife on the island of Tanna, a land sunk in heathen darkness. Former missionaries had been clubbed

er. One, so he tells, Ian, the great inland chief, who was lying sick to death, had been deputed by the others to kill him. 'Come near me, and sit by my bedside and talk with me,' whispered Ian, and as Dr. Paton sat by him, Ian swiftly drew a long knife which had been hidden by his bed, and held it quivering within an inch of the missionary's heart. After a few moments of awful suspense, 'during which my sight went and came,' Ian flung the knife away, and implored Dr. Paton to escape. This was after the brutal murder of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon in 1861, and the chiefs thirsted daily for Dr. Paton's death. During the first twenty years of his stay seven of his fellow missionaries were martyred and eaten, and perhaps the bitterest blow of all was the death of Mrs. Paton and her new-born child from fever shortly after his arrival. Undaunted, undismayed, and seemingly superhuman in his capacity for bearing with tribulations and trials that would shatter the average man, Dr. Paton worked, taught himself the various dialects, and instilled Christianity into the brutish souls of the islanders. He set up with his own hands and printed a book in Tannese, with type and a hand-press which had been sent from Glasgow, and the converted natives themselves toiled for fifteen years planting and preparing arrowroot for sale abroad to obtain the funds for the printing of the Bible in Aneityumese. The Scriptures have now been translated, under Dr. Paton's direction, into twenty-two native dialects. To-day there are 18,000 converts on eight of the Christianized islands of the New Hebrides. There are eighteen organized churches, and about 300 buildings which are used as places of worship and schools; there are hospitals, training institutions, and all the other paraphernalia of successful resident missions. On these islands the trader may land in safety; but on the remaining uncivilized and un-Christianized islands—representing a population of nearly 80,000—cannibalism and all the barbarous practices of the savage exist; heathenism is unconquered, and inter-tribal warfare, with the eating of the slain, continues unchecked. Dr. Paton greatly helped his work by his visit to England in 1863, when the greatest enthusiasm was aroused. Again in 1901 he came home and thrilled large audiences with accounts of his labors. On this last occasion he said: 'I wish I could take you down to my own island, the second island where the Gospel was received by the whole population. I landed there amid many dangers. Frequently have I held up the Bible in one hand and held out the other, pleading with the savages, I always felt that no club could strike without the Lord's permission. Had I not believed so, I could never have been a missionary. Whatever terrors have threatened me, I have remembered that Christ is supreme, and that all is under His control and all coming to pass under His purpose and permission. To-day, in that island, every individual except one old man about seventy years of age is a member of the church, in full communion. I do not think you would get any Christian community in this country where such has been the case.' The strength of the man was his unswerving faith,



THE LATE DR. J. G. PATON.

one of the most delightful books to spend an hour with. John Gibson Paton was born at Kirkmahoe, near Dumfries, and was educated at Dumfries and at Glasgow University. It may be said of him that he was born a missionary. His parents were poor, God-fearing folk, with a large family to provide for; but young John Paton, like many another Scotch lad of humble birth, earned a college education by hard work and constant self-denial. Then for ten years he labored as a city missionary in Glasgow, working with the utmost enthusiasm and never sparing himself. One

to death and eaten, or else forced to abandon the work by hideous persecution. The natives were savages of a cruel and degraded type, cannibals from whom he had many narrow escapes. During the time he labored in the islands forty attempts were made on his life, and six missionaries who helped him in his work were murdered. He has related in his autobiography his escapes from death, and as one reads one is thrilled and fascinated by his wonderful courage, though he himself declares, with his simple faith, that each time the hand of God stayed the blow the murder-