

Melanesian islands to become missionaries to their own people.

We cannot occupy these numberless islands with English clergymen. Where are they to come from in such numbers as to carry on the work in two or three islands? We cannot employ natives of other countries, for the climate is too unhealthy. We must look to natives of each island for doing the work in the island, or (it may be) in islands similar to their own in climate.

This, then, is our plan. When we have succeeded in obtaining any persons from any given island to come with us to New Zealand, and when we have learned the language fairly well, then we go and live for three or four months in the winter on the island. Even then the Mission vessel ought to call in upon us at intervals of three or four weeks; for we may at once be attacked with fever and ague, or we may find the people less friendly than we had expected.

The result of our living a short time on the island is, that we win the goodwill of some of the people, and carry on continuously, the teaching of the lads who have been with us in New Zealand.

In two or three years, by a repetition of this process—spending always the winter on the island, and returning always with our old scholars to New Zealand for the summer—we may hope to find great changes for the better taking place.

I have described at length what *has* taken place, thank God! at Mota.

Now all this time the English missionary, during the time that he is on the island, is trying to prepare the way for the native missionary, who is eventually to be placed permanently upon it. But the most important part of his work is done in New Zealand. It is here that the future missionaries must be trained for their task. It is in the quiet regularity of our college life, and not amidst the distractions of a heathen island, that we must seek by God's grace to qualify these young men for their future work.

If this plan were not rendered necessary by the reasons I have assigned, I still believe it would be by far the best plan for the real permanent work of building up these native churches. I am fully persuaded that no abiding work would be done by hastily placing imperfectly-educated men on heathen islands. The quickest way to occupy the islands of Melanesia is to secure *from these islands* a supply of really competent and earnest men, speaking their own languages, accustomed to the climate, conversant with the habits and modes of thought of the islanders. You may depend upon it, that the true nursery of missionaries for the islands is the Central School at Kohimarama.

I am quite satisfied that these young men could not have been trained on their own

islands to be what they are. For I am not speaking only of their religious feelings and good emotions, but of the steady methodical habits which they have acquired. Yesterday, e. g., I was writing part of this letter in our hall. I am pretty well accustomed to think of Melanesians; but yet I did just lift up my head from my paper at 4.30 P. M., when I saw Padhea and Mai, two lads from Florida and Ysabel, islands more than 2000 miles away, bringing in the plates and pannikins for tea, and arranging them in order, counting them once or twice to see that all were rightly placed. It is only on this last voyage that the Mission vessel ever reached their islands; and they have been with us only two months, and a half. The head cook for the week, a Mota lad who himself, three years ago, had never worn a stitch of clothing in his life, had taught them by signs, three days before, what they were to do. The sun was their only time-piece, but they understood very well that it was time now to get the tea-things ready, so they left the party on the beach eating shell-fish, and quietly went about their work. It was nothing to do, in one sense, but it was the orderly, business-like way of doing it that I liked to see. Two other lads, meanwhile, were on their way to the dairy to fetch the milk, while the loaves of bread were being cut up into portions of half a pound in weight for each Melanesian, and the tea poured out into pannikins, and our table (the clergyman's table), furnished with plates, &c. One more lad, the guardian of the knives and spoons, did his share of the work, and then the first bell was rung to summon us all to our meal.

All this kind of thing goes on three times a day, and in the course of nine weeks every person in the school has taken his turn at it. We can supply nine youths, intelligent and honest, and punctual enough to be our head cooks; and it really is rather a surprising thing that in a few months' time they should have acquired such orderly habits. In an establishment where sixty-one persons have to be fed three times a day, there is a good deal to be done, and it is done here by five lads, of whom the most intelligent has been from two to four years with us, and the rest are perhaps here for the first, or, at most the second time. During the last three weeks we have been as punctual as clock-work; breakfast at 6 A. M., dinner at 12.30, and tea at 6 P. M.

I don't mean to say that this could all be done, unless we had amongst us one or more persons able and willing to give directions, and see that they are carried out. Mr. Pritt is kindly doing all this; I hope that very soon he will have no further occasion to do so; the lads are learning all the mysteries of the kitchen—not very abstruse mysteries in our case—as quickly as they can be learnt.

Now transfer yourself in thought to a Melanesian island. Think what it is to us to land at Mota, e. g., with the certainty of be-