

THE Children's Presbyterian.

NEW HEBRIDES MISSION.

Letter from Rev. J. Annand.

My Dear Young Friends:—

Come let us go to the New Hebrides to-day and see what we can learn there! 'The New Hebrides! Why that is on the other side of the world, how can we go there? We have not money enough to pay our passage away out there; and besides how can we leave our parents, homes and school to go away so far?

Well, let us go away there in thought, and let us talk about them! There are many interesting things to be seen out there, and the people themselves are interesting.

The New Hebrides is the name given to a group or cluster of Islands in the South Pacific Ocean. There are about 30 inhabited islands in the group counting both large and small. They are very beautiful islands. There are high mountains and deep valleys between, where beautiful trees and ferns grow.

Several of the islands are five thousand feet high, which is nearly one mile. Santo is more than a mile high. Tanna is nearly a mile, and Aneityum is over half a mile high above the sea.

These islands are volcanic, that is they were once volcanoes, and were raised up out of the sea by volcanic action and earthquakes. Seven years ago a part of Tanna was raised up 33 feet one day by an earthquake. There are three active volcanoes still seen on the islands, one on Ambrim, one on Lopevi, and one on Tanna. As I have twice climbed the mountain on Tanna to see the volcano there, I will describe it to you.

We had to walk about eight miles to reach the top of the hill, or mountain, where the fire is. When we got near we felt the ground trembling under us where the eruptions took place. For a few minutes all was quiet, and then there was a terrible roaring sound so loud that it shook the hill, and a great quantity of red hot lava and fire were thrown out. On coming near and looking over the top

of the hill down into the hollow, which is called the 'crater' we saw a big pool of red hot melted metal called 'lava' surging about like iron in a smelting furnace. We noticed it swelling and raising up like water in a pot, and after a little it burst in the centre, and threw up a quantity of the red hot lava several hundred feet high, which fell all around the sides of the crater. This bursting and throwing out of the lava was what made the terrible noise.

We looked at it and wondered at the work of our Father in heaven. Bye and bye we saw the lava rising very high so we ran back from the edge of the crater, but we had only gone a short distance when there was an explosion which threw up a great lot of the lava, sending it high into the air, and far over our heads. When it fell we had to watch where it was coming and run from under it. We all escaped and immediately left lest we should get covered up in the red hot lava.

Our native guides were afraid to go near the crater, lest the spirit that they think throws up the fire should kill them. A number of years ago, we are told that a couple of young women who were compelled to marry two men that they hated went and cast themselves into this volcano, and were never seen again.

That day on which we visited the volcano, while going up the path to it, we met some savages who were returning from killing one of their enemies. They had carried the body off the path just before we went along, and were cooking it when we passed. Are they not awfully degraded, when they eat their fellow creatures?

They have many terrible cruel customs also, in all the heathen islands. Satan seems to rule there. Now should not we who live in this country be very thankful to God for all His goodness to us. He has given us the light of His word, and kind teachers and parents; plenty of good food and clothing. He enables us to get, so that we may be always happy and contented in serving Him.

In the missionary hymn 'From Greenlands icy Mountains' are these words—