

ACCIDENT TO THE JOHN WILLIAMS.

A serious accident happened to the *John Williams* when she was beating up to her anchorage, on the day of our arrival here. She struck on a sunken reef, which rises abruptly out of the deep water. She was sailing at the rate of about 8 miles an hour, and struck with much force. The accident did not excite much alarm at first, and it was expected that she would float off with the tide. It was soon ascertained, however, that there was much water in the hold, and that every effort would be required to keep the ship from sinking, as she was aground at the bow only. She hung on the reef for some days, and her stern rose and fell with the tide. It was a melancholy sight to see the beautiful *John Williams* in so perilous a condition. The damage sustained by the ship was found on examination to be very serious, though not extensive. A few feet of the keel was carried completely away, and some of the lower planks injured. It became necessary to discharge the cargo, and keep the pumps going day and night. The ship's cargo consisted of supplies for the missionaries of the London Society, and it has been safely stored on this island. After the ship was once more afloat, our next concern was what to do with her. She was not sea-worthy, and she could not be repaired here. We held a meeting for consultation, at which Captains Williams and Fraser and the missionaries were present. It was our united opinion that the *John Williams* should proceed without delay to Sydney for repairs, and as the risk was great, and a probability that she might be abandoned at sea, we agreed to send the *Dayspring* in company with her. We sent also twenty-two natives of this island to assist at the pumps. By the goodness of God the ship reached Sydney after a tedious voyage of three weeks. The *Dayspring*, which had accompanied her, remained in Sydney two days, and returned to this island after an absence of five weeks, bringing home the natives with her. The Aneiteumese are entitled to much credit for their efforts to save the ship. They worked at her unceasingly, as if she had been their personal property. They would not have worked as they did to save any other vessel. The insurance is much indebted to them for saving one of the finest ships on their lists. It seems a remarkable providence that such an accident should have befallen the new missionary ship at the very first island visited by her. A similar disaster, but not so severe, befell the old *John Williams* at the very first island visited by her in the South Seas, and yet her after career was perhaps more interesting than that of any other ship that ever floated on the sea. May we not cherish a

hope that a still more glorious future awaits this new messenger of mercy among these distant isles. The Revs. Messrs. Saville, Watson and Davis, and their wives, who were passengers in the *John Williams*, remained on this island during her absence in Sydney. I am glad to say that the missionary ship has recently returned, completely repaired, and is now ready for sea once more. The accident which befell her has caused a delay of about ten weeks, and will probably cost the Insurance about £1000 sterling. She leaves our island with many prayers for her safety and success, and I trust that she may long continue to bear the message of salvation to many who are still sitting in darkness and in the region and shadow of death.

SICKNESS AMONG THE NATIVES.

The first intelligence that we received on our arrival, was of the most painful kind. A most fatal disease had been raging for some months, and many had fallen victims to it. It was new to the natives, and they had no remembrance of any similar sickness. Many of the symptoms were like those of *diphtheria*, which has been so fatal in other countries. In some cases persons who were seized with it died within a few hours, and others lingered for days. The number who died was probably not less than three hundred. The sickness has now disappeared, and the island has seldom been more healthy than at present. These visitations of providence appear very mysterious to the natives as well as to ourselves. We may rest assured that God has wise ends in view in his dealings with us. When we cannot comprehend, let us stand still and adore. The generation which we found when we landed in the island have nearly passed away, and we now labor among their children. The population of this island has come down from 4,000 to 2,000 within the last twenty years. The chief causes of depopulation have been measles and diphtheria of late years. If these islanders could be preserved from foreign diseases, which are always fatal to them, we might then hope for the best. It is encouraging to know that on most of the islands where the gospel has been fairly established the population has begun to increase. Gelliness, we are assured, has the promise of this life, as well as of that which is to come. One of the most hopeful symptoms at the present time is the large number of children on the island. They are far more numerous than at any former period during our residence here. A healthy generation is rising up to take the place of their fathers before them.

LOCATION OF MISSIONARIES.

A general meeting of the mission was held on Aneiteum soon after our return to