

THE SOUTH SEA ISLANDS— As they are at present.

BY REV. JOHN INGLIS, MISSIONARY TO THE
NEW HEBRIDES.

The Bishop of New Zealand, acting both in his own name, and as the agent of the Australasian Episcopal Board of Missions, deserves special notice for his missionary efforts in Melanesia. During the last thirteen years he has in general made one or two voyages of two, three, or four months' duration among the thoroughly heathen islands of the New Hebrides, Banks' Islands, the Santa Cruz Archipelago, the Solomon Group, the Loyalty Islands, and New Caledonia. He has landed, and held communication with the natives, on about eighty islands. He has not hitherto established any permanent mission on any island. His plan has been to obtain promising natives, take them for a period of six months, or thereabouts, to his native college near Auckland, instruct them there, chiefly through the medium of the English language, and then return with them to their own islands. He has had about 150 natives under his tuition. Whatever opinion may be formed of Bishop Selwyn's plan of missionary action—and different opinions are entertained respecting his mode of procedure—there is but one opinion respecting his high qualifications for such an undertaking; his moral courage, his indomitable energy, his self-denial, his command of native dialects, his benevolence, and his enthusiasm in behalf of the native races.—He navigates his own ship, steers her if need be, swims ashore if a boat cannot land, lives on the same fare as his seamen, so that no one can grumble; and we have known him for weeks lie on the floor of his cabin, that a poor sick native, a young chief from the Loyalty Islands, whose life was trembling in the balance, might have the use of his bed. In this case he had the satisfaction of seeing the youth fully recover, and of restoring him to his friends in full health. As may be easily understood, he has acquired unbounded influence over the natives. He has been doing in Melanesia very much the same kind of work that Dr. Livingstone has done in Central Africa. A few years ago Bishop Selwyn was joined by the Rev. J. C. Pat-

teson, son of the late Right Honourable Sir John Patteson, one of the Judges in the Court of Queen's Bench, a man of kindred spirit, and who has lately been appointed and ordained bishop of Melanesia—an appointment to which most of the clergy would *ex animo* have said, *Nolo Episcopari*. They would not as a form but most heartily have expressed their unwillingness to exercise the Episcopate in such a diocese. "Every man," said the ancients, "is not rich enough to go to Corinth," and every minister in these days is not courageous enough to tread in the steps of Selwyn, and become at once "a sailor bishop," and "a missionary bishop." It is a hopeful sign of the times, however,—it augurs well for Melanesia and the South Seas,—when some of the flower of England's chivalry, who from their talents, acquirements, and family influence could easily secure the highest dignities in the English Church, voluntarily relinquish wealth, and power, and learned honours, and spend weeks, and months, and years in exploring the darkest and most degraded regions of heathendom.

There is a strong feeling abroad, both in the church and the world, that to send promising young men away to these islands is really just to bury them alive. Some years ago a young minister of popular talents arrived in one of the Australian colonies. Some of the missionaries were in the colony at the time of his arrival, and strongly urged him to join their mission in the islands, as they were in great need of help. His young wife, who had been joyfully inhaling the incense of applause which the hopeful appearances of her husband had called forth, was shocked and almost horrified at the proposal, and said to a friend, she wondered what the missionaries could mean by urging her husband to go with them. He, who had studied divinity under the great Dr. So-and-so, and who was so well qualified to preach to intelligent and polite audiences,—to ask him to go away and bury himself alive among savages! When this lady's remark was repeated in the islands, it caused a slight sensation among the missionaries' wives, who instinctively felt a little jealousy for the honour of their own husbands, who had studied divinity, as they thought, under doctors as famous as the one named, and