

months. It is enough to say that the unsuspecting natives were never brought to this island, but were carried off to the Fijis, and will be compelled, no doubt, by bribes or threats to sign agreements binding them to servitude for a term of years. The man who seduced them exhibits a gem to the Tanese, which he says was given him as the reward of his services. The slaver had no name painted on her, but she is said to be the "Maria Douglas." A few natives who have recently been brought home from Queensland are also doing much injury to the cause on Futuna. They are endeavoring to persuade their fellow-countrymen that missionaries have come to gain possession of their land, and in due time disinherit them. Such is a specimen of Queensland teaching. I have only known a solitary instance in which heathen natives have returned from the latter colony with impressions favourable to Christianity, and these impressions are traceable to a native of the Loyalty Islands. It is different with those who go to the Fiji Islands. If they should happen to fall among the Christian natives, they wish the gospel on their own islands; and the Consul, who is evidently a Christian man, makes commendable efforts for the moral improvement of the natives. It was on Futuna where a white man from the Fijis endeavoured last year to instigate the natives to murder the missionary, by telling them what the Erromangans had done to the Gordons, and what the Fijians had done to Baker, and holding up these savages as models for imitation. May God protect His own work amidst the opposition which surrounds it.

#### TANA.

The mission families on this island had suffered from sickness during the hot and rainy season. The missionary work, under Messrs. Neilson and Watt, makes encouraging progress. The Tanese manifest more readiness to receive Christian instruction than in former years, and the missionaries are permitted to prosecute their labours without serious molestation. The whole island appears to be fast opening for the gospel.

At the time of our arrival at Port Resolution there were no less than four vessels in search of natives. The missionaries estimate that about 1200 have been taken from the Island to Queensland and the Fijis. The most of these are married and able-bodied men. The usual desolations of slavery are very visible on this productive island. The eye meets in every quarter with abandoned homes, neglected plantations, and a great scarcity of food. A few years ago, Tana supplied nearly all the trading vessels on this group with their yams and pigs; but on our late voyage, it was

impossible to purchase food of any kind. Famine brings pestilence in its train, and the mortality is greater than in former years. Society is in a completely disorganized state at the present time, by the removal of so many natives from their own island. More sad still, many of these poor slaves will see their homes no more. It is reported that some of the Tanese have stolen boats on the Fijis, and put to sea in them, vainly hoping to reach their own island; but, as they have in no case succeeded, they have no doubt met with a watery grave.

A few days before our arrival at Tana, the "Spunkie" called to bury a man who had been mortally wounded by a poisoned arrow on another island, and the captain of the same vessel was severely wounded on the head by a blow from a club. We met at this place also the "Margaret Chesel," which lost her mate at Apee during the previous voyage, being killed by the natives. Since these events happened, the "Donald McLean" has buried a man likewise, who died from the effect of a spear wound, inflicted, it is said, by the natives of Mallicolo.

The natives on the west side of Tana have sold much of their land to white men. Efforts are being made to cultivate it, but the climate has proved hitherto unhealthy. It is very doubtful if these land transactions are properly understood by the natives, and they will at no distant time be a fruitful source of trouble.

We have just heard of a very sad event on this island. Two respectable young men from Melbourne are reported to have been killed by the natives. Their names are Messrs. Bell and Ross. They had only been about three months on the island, and could have known but little of the savage disposition and customs of the natives. All that is known of their death as yet is, that they were travelling to a neighbouring station, mistook their way, and were shot down by hostile natives. As these deeds are seldom done, even on these islands, without a reason, there was no doubt a cause, real or imaginary. It often happens, however, that the innocent suffer for the guilty. It is sad to think of the death of two young men under such circumstances. Those who value their lives and property will find no safety in the New Hebrides, except in those parts under Christian influence. "The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty."

Since this letter was commenced, the mission at Port Resolution has met with a severe trial. A severe and fatal epidemic broke out among the natives, from which many of the natives died, and, among others, Nauka, the principal chief. He has been for many years the warm friend of the