

Our Foreign Missions.

From Santo, New Hebrides. Mr. Annand writes: "It is now two days beyond five years since we settled on this Island. We propose taking a furlough to Australia, beginning probably with November. Mrs. Annand is needing a change fully more than I am. The wear and tear of island life, its worry and weariness, fall heavier on the women than on the men. The debilitating effects of fever and a constant heat, in a damp climate, combined with association with natives, tell after a time upon the strongest constitutions."

From Mr. Robertson. Rev. H. A. Robertson of Erromanga, New Hebrides, writes, "Our children are suffering from fever and ague, and Mrs. Robertson is in very poor health and suffers from great weakness. I had a sharp attack of fever myself in the end of April, the first attack in twenty years in Erromanga. Since then my health has been simply splendid for a man who has been in this humid and weakening climate for more than 23 years. Our children are to be sent up to Sydney. The Lord continues to bless our work in Erromanga."

Mr. Robertson refers above to 28 years in Erromanga. His first visit was not as a missionary, but what he then saw of the heathen, led him to come home and study for the ministry with a view to giving his life to rescue them from their degradation and misery and sin.

New Hebrides Mission Work. In a note to the Secretary Mr. Annand refers incidentally to a phase of New Hebrides life and work that is not familiar to many. Referring to some of the difficulties of the work and the necessity for a large number of native teachers, he says: "In all these islands the population is distributed in small encampments of from ten, to two hundred, inhabitants in each. Very rarely does what is designated a "village" contain more than a hundred people in it, while the average will not be above half that number. If ever the people are to get the Gospel, each one of these encampments must have its own teacher or leader. They will not unite, even after they are Christianized, excepting to a very limited degree, and a teacher is needed for each village."

"Teacher" here does not imply the qualifications associated with that title in most other parts of the world. Some of them can scarcely write their own names, and as for arithmetic, if they can tell the number of the chapters and verses in the Gospel when they see them, they will pass.

You at home cannot possibly realize the true conditions of these natives. The difficulties in the way of raising them to a very moderate de-

gree of civilization are, very great. We see and know what is desirable, and we are doing our utmost to accomplish what is possible."

Dr Paton and His Book. Many of our readers have been thrilled by that fascinating book, Dr. Paton's autobiography, and later, by his autobiography for the young, noticed in another column. We would like to give a practical turn to that thrill by reminding them that our own church has three missionaries and their wives who have been in the New Hebrides group nearly as long as Dr. Paton was, and whose experiences, if they were recorded with the same vivid picturing of imagination, and pen, and pencil, would, in many respects, furnish companion books. Dr. Paton was a missionary there for twenty-three years, from 1853 to 1881. Since that time, about eleven years, he has been away from the Islands, and is now employed in Australia as Mission agent of the Federal Assembly of the Presbyterian churches there. Mr. and Mrs. McKenzie, and Robertson, and Annand, have been there about twenty years; the McKenzies, now among christian people who once threatened his life if he dared to come among them; the Robertsons, on blood stained Erromanga, landing shortly after the two Gordon's had been in succession murdered by the heathen; and the Annands, the last five years, on a new field where only last year a trader was killed by the natives. These dangers are largely in the past, but lonely and trying is the toil.

The three stages. The Missionary spirit that is wanted to-day is the spirit of giving. Not many years since, the great want was an "open door," and the burden of Missionary prayers was, that the world might be opened to the Gospel. One by one the doors began to open, and to day, from every land echoes the cry, "come over and help us." The next want was, men and women to enter these doors. "Whom shall we send and who will go for us," became the cry, and the prayer to the "Lord of the harvest," for laborers was oftener heard. In recent years this prayer has been remarkably answered. It is answered in the student volunteer movement, which shows us to-day a noble band of some thousands of devoted young men and women pledged to foreign service if the Lord will open the way. It is answered in the many others that are offering themselves to this work.

The third great want, the one that now presses, is money to send them. This should now be the burden of Missionary prayers. And it too will be answered. Men cannot pray that prayer for long, without trying to do more to answer it. Get the church praying along this line, and the stream of Christian liberality will flow larger and deeper and stronger. The waiting messengers will be speeded on their way. The Spirit who is waiting to bless will work mightily. In the wilderness shall waters break forth and streams in the desert. The Lord shall make bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.