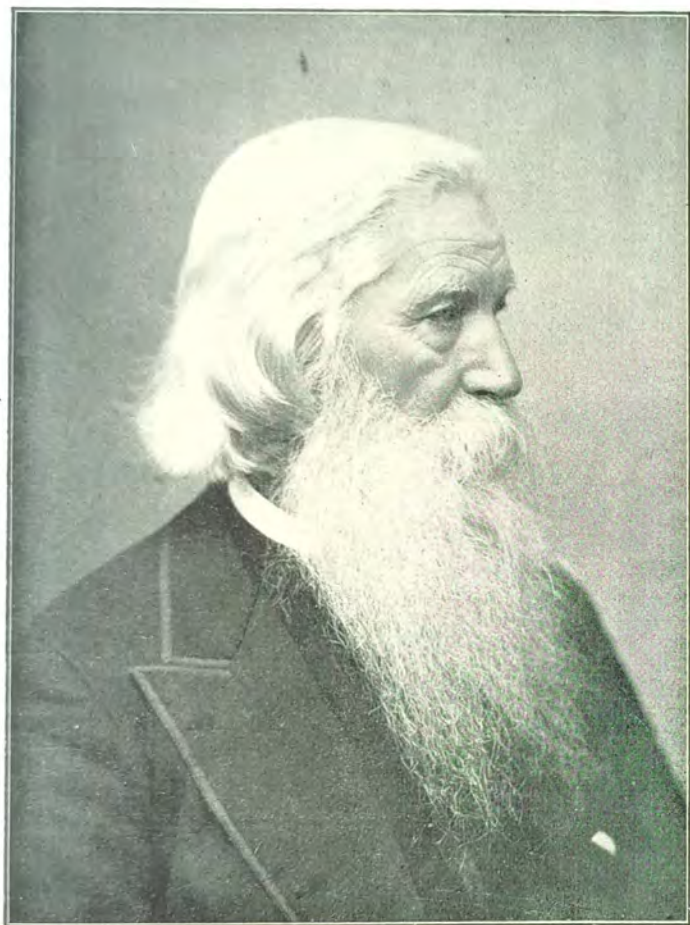




DR. JOHN GIBSON PATON.

JOHN GIBSON PATON, D.D.

THE MISSIONARY HERO
OF THE NEW HEBRIDES.

BY
CHARLES D. MICHAEL,

KILMARNOCK, SCOTLAND:
JOHN RITCHIE, PUBLISHER OF CHRISTIAN LITERATURE
And through all Booksellers.

Made in Great Britain

PREFACE.

ONE of the most inspiring stories in the annals of missionary endeavour and achievement is that which is outlined in the following pages. Dedicated from his infancy to the service of God, trained from his earliest years in all ways of godly living, and imbued with an earnest desire to bring others to a knowledge of that truth which was to him precious beyond all price, Dr. Paton stands out as a striking example of what one man can accomplish when he consecrates his whole life to a noble purpose.

With no initial advantages, he set out to attain a definite end. His aim was to go forth as an ambassador of Christ, and preach the Gospel. How his purpose was to be accomplished he knew not ; in the face of the difficulties that confronted him at the outset his ambition seemed altogether impossible of fulfilment. But his purpose was firm ; his resolution never wavered ; and in the end his faith was justified.

No one who reads even the brief and necessarily imperfect record which the following pages contain can doubt that Dr. Paton was called and chosen of God for the work to which he devoted his life ; and those who find in the reading of his story an inspiration and a help, no less than

those who, in lands afar, have been led through his self-sacrificing ministry out of the darkness of heathenism into the glorious light and liberty of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, have reason to arise and call him blessed.

Dr. Paton was a true hero, a son of heroic Christian parentage, trained under the influence of a theology which had a remarkable capacity for forming men of robust principle. He was possessed with a Christlike passion for saving souls; and the pursuit of the great aim on which his heart was set, under difficulties which might have daunted the bravest, gives a romantic interest to the story of his life.

For the full and complete story of that life the reader is referred to "John G. Paton, Missionary to the New Hebrides; An Autobiography," edited by his Brother, from which many of the facts contained in the following pages have been gleaned; and to "John G. Paton, D.D., Later Years and Farewell," by A. K. Langridge and Frank H. L. Paton.

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JOHN GIBSON PATON, D.D.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY DAYS.

A YOUNG Scottish stocking maker, of a devout and studious frame of mind, was in the habit of repairing to a wood near his home for meditation and study. His retreat was quiet and secluded, and he imagined that it was known to none save himself. But the bright eyes of a girl living in a village near by had observed him one day as he disappeared, book in hand, amidst the shady recesses of the wood. The next day and the next she noticed him, and by and by, with a curiosity natural and pardonable, she began to wonder whither he went, and why.

At length, determined to find out the meaning of the young man's daily wanderings in that gloomy place, the maiden warily followed him; and, herself unseen, crept after him till presently, sheltering behind an ample tree trunk, she solved the mystery. She heard him first reciting from his book. No words reached her ears, and not till long afterwards did she learn that the volume he found so engrossing was Ralph Erskine's "Gospel Sonnets," which he studied to such purpose that sixty years later he was able to say the whole of it as he lay on his bed, waiting for the call of God to the life beyond.

After a while, his study finished, the watching girl, to her amazement, saw him remove his Scotch bonnet and kneel in prayer, ere he left the wood to return to his home.

This, then, was the explanation of the daily retreat to the wood—just a devout youth's endeavour to secure a quiet, uninterrupted interval each day for study and meditation and communion with God.

The whole proceeding made such an impression upon the unseen watcher that she followed the young man on many a subsequent occasion, remaining always an unsuspected witness of his doings. But there came a day when the spirit of mischief possessed her. Choosing a moment when the youth seemed more than ordinarily absorbed in his devotion, she crept noiselessly behind him, picked up his bonnet, hung it on a branch close at hand, and then tip-toed back to her hiding place to await developments.

The perplexity, the search and the final look of bewilderment on the young man's face when at length he found his headgear in a place where he had certainly never put it, gave huge enjoyment to the girl hiding behind the tree trunk. So much did her prankish act delight her that the next day she repeated it. But the joke seemed to lose its savour with repetition, and she began to feel some compunction for the dismay she had caused.

When the young student next went to his temple in the wood, he found, pinned to a tree close by, a very penitent note of explanation and apology, in which the writer admitted shame for what she had done, and asked the young man to pray for her, that she might become as good a Christian as he was himself.

The note was almost as perplexing as the incident which it explained, until suddenly a snatch of song reached his ear, and looking up he saw a girl walking along a lane near by, swinging a milk pail in her hand, and singing as she went. Instinctively he felt that this was the girl from whom the apology had come. He knew her well, though he had never yet spoken to her—"Wee Jen," a bright, bonnie lassie for whom everyone had a good word. For the theft of his bonnet she had asked his pardon most handsomely. But she stole more than that; and for the theft of his heart she never once asked forgiveness in all the forty years and more of ideally happy married life that God vouchsafed to them.

The devout student was James Paton, and, as soon as circumstances permitted, he and his Wee Jen—Janet Jardine Rogerson, to give her her full and proper name—set up house together in a tiny cottage in the parish of Kirkmahoe, not far from Dumfries; and there, on May 24th, 1824, the first of their family of eleven children, and the subject of this biography—John Gibson Paton—was born.

"John," they named him, for he was indeed to them the gracious gift of God; and "Gibson" as showing their appreciation of the kindly feeling which existed between them and the gentleman farmer of Braehead, on whose estate their cottage was built.

For six years the family continued to live in that cottage, and then they removed to Torthorwald, an ancient village about four miles north of Dumfries, on the old coach road to Lockerbie. There for forty years was the home of the Patons. There the children were reared in the nurture

and admonition of the Lord. It was a humble dwelling, but it was beautiful without with flowers which the mother tended, and as sweet and clean within as the constant care of her loving, busy hands could make it; while above all it was pervaded with an atmosphere of godliness and holy living which made it in very truth a sanctuary to those whose high privilege it was to call it home.

James Paton was a member of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and it had long been his desire to become a minister of the Gospel. This, however, was for him an unattainable ambition, for he had inherited a cruel debt, which compelled him to stick to his loom. When he found that circumstances rendered a ministerial career quite out of the question for himself, he made a solemn vow that if God gave him sons he would consecrate them to His service and have them trained for the sacred calling he had himself so longed to enter, if this should be possible. God accepted the vow and permitted His servant to live to see three of his sons occupying ministerial positions—John, the eldest, Walter, and James, the youngest of the family.

The home life of the Patons was exceedingly happy. The parents were deeply imbued with the religious spirit, and sought to train their children in all godly ways. Much has been said and written of the austerity of the home life of Scottish people in past days, and of the distaste for religion which their children often acquired through the harsh and unlovely presentment of it which was forced upon them. Perhaps here and there, in extreme cases, this may have been so; but James Paton's children were not so trained. It was the beauty of holiness which

appealed most strongly to him, and through him to his children ; and this made the duty of holiness a joy and a delight to all who dwelt in that cottage home at Torthorwald.

From his home to the church in Dumfries which James Paton attended, was a walk of four miles ; but such was his sense of religious duty that only three times in forty years was he absent from public worship. Once he was compelled by a snowstorm to return ; once he was baffled by roads so slippery with ice that after many grievous falls he was forced to turn back and crawl home on his hands and knees ; and once during a terrible outbreak of cholera in Dumfries he yielded to the plea of his neighbours that he would remain at home lest he should bring back the dreaded scourge with him.

The distance and the cares of home made it impossible for the mother to get to church except on rare occasions ; but to the children it was a joy to accompany their father ; and John Paton bears his testimony to the fact that religion was presented to him and his brothers and sisters with a great deal of intellectual freshness ; and that so far from repelling them it kindled their interest in spiritual things.

Special Bible readings, too, were a feature of the home life on Sabbath days, with questions and answers on the shorter catechism. " It has been an amazing thing to me," says Dr. Paton, " occasionally to meet with men who blamed this ' catechising ' for giving them a distaste for religion. Everyone in all our circle thinks and feels exactly the opposite. It laid the solid rock-foundation of our religious life. After years have given to these questions and their answers a deeper or a modified meaning, but none of us

has ever once dreamed of wishing that we had been otherwise trained. Of course, if the parents are not devout, sincere and affectionate—if the whole affair on both sides is taskwork or worse, hypocritical and false—results must be very different indeed. . . . Others must write and say what they will and as they feel ; but so must I. There were eleven of us brought up in a home like that ; and never one of the eleven, boy or girl, man or woman, has been heard, or ever will be heard, saying that Sabbath was dull or wearisome for us, or suggesting that we have heard of or seen any way more likely than that for making the day of the Lord bright and blessed alike for parents and for children. But God help the home where these things are done by force and not by love.”

Small wonder is it that children trained in such a home and amid such surroundings and influences should grow to a God-fearing manhood and womanhood. It was given to godly James Paton and his tenderly loved “Wee Jen” to see their boys and girls grow up to justify the daily prayers that had gone up to God continually for them ; and in the eloquent tribute which their eldest born has left on record, he has given to the world a memorial worthy alike of them and of him.

CHAPTER II

TOIL AND TRIAL

It will be obvious that a man in a small way of business as a stocking manufacturer would not be able to afford his children any exceptional advantages in the way of education ; but Torthorwald possessed an excellent Parish School, of the type common in Scotland, where the village schoolmaster gives his lads a training that enables them to go straight from his care to one of the Scottish Universities.

The master in John Paton's day was a man of more than ordinary scholastic attainments, and under him the boy made rapid progress in his studies. He was a strange compound of the martinet and the kind-hearted friend. Dr. Paton says of him that he punished severely, even savagely, the faults of his scholars ; yet on one occasion he surreptitiously provided a new suit of clothes when the state of the home finances had compelled John to wear garments not quite so presentable as those of some of his better dowered companions.

But, as in the case of many another man of talent, the ungovernable temper of this pedagogue predominated over all else and spoilt a character that otherwise had much to commend it. Young Paton was flogged by him one day unmercifully and unjustly. The boy ran away, and his mother

had great difficulty in inducing him to return. When he did so, the infuriated man brutally attacked him again ; and this time John left the school for good. When his passion had subsided the master came to the Patons' house full of apologies, and begged the boy to go back ; but this time the pleading was all in vain. John had had enough of tyranny and injustice, and his parents supported him in his resolve to return no more to the village school.

But in the busy hive of the home there was no room for an idler—and the newly emancipated schoolboy had no inclination to laziness. He was still under twelve years of age, but at once he set to work to learn his father's trade. His working day was one of sixteen hours—from six in the morning until ten at night, with a break of one hour for dinner and half an hour each for breakfast and tea.

He worked hard at his trade, and made surprising progress in it ; but already he had made up his mind that the weaving of stockings was not to be his life work. It was only to serve as a means to an end, and that end was a career as a missionary of the Cross or a minister of the Gospel. With this object always before him he contrived to find time to continue his studies ; and every spare moment he could snatch from his meal hours or from his task at the stocking frame was devoted to his books. In this way he taught himself the rudiments of Latin and Greek.

By slow and patient saving he contrived to accumulate a fund sufficient to defray his expenses for six weeks at Dumfries Academy ; and he returned from this brief experience of scholastic life with his desire for study so greatly increased that he resolved to give up his trade

at the earliest opportunity and turn to something that would afford him more time and better facilities for continuing his education.

He found what he sought in the offer of an engagement with the sappers and miners, who were then mapping and measuring the county of Dumfries in connection with the Ordnance Survey of Scotland. His hours in this new employment were from nine in the morning until four in the afternoon, and he had a walk of four miles to and from his work ; " but," he says, " I found much spare time for private study, both on the way to and from my work and after hours."

Not only so ; but when his colleagues, during the mid-day rest hour, spent their time at football or other games, John Paton stole away by himself, and in some quiet nook on the banks of the Nith pored over his books. This was observed by the lieutenant in charge of the party, and one day he called the young student into his office and began to question him as to his studies. The replies he received convinced him that the youth would be valuable as a permanent addition to his staff ; and the outcome of the conference was an offer of promotion in the service, and a course of special training at Woolwich at the expense of the Government, if Paton would sign an engagement for seven years.

The offer was a tempting one, but the lad regarded it simply as a further means towards the attainment of the goal he had ever before him, and seven years seemed to him too long a time to bind himself to work which he could only consider as of a temporary nature. So he expressed his grateful thanks for the offer, but said he could not consent to be bound for longer than three years.

In spite of all the lieutenant's persuasions John Paton would not be induced to give way. He declared that his life had been dedicated to another Master, and that therefore he could not engage himself for the period required. The lieutenant demanded to know whose service had such an attraction for this obstinate young village lad that it led him to decline an offer which many gentlemen's sons would gladly have accepted, and Paton answered frankly that he was pledged to serve the Lord Jesus Christ, and that it was his earnest desire to prepare himself as soon as possible for his future service as a minister of the Gospel.

The lieutenant, now thoroughly angry, declared that Paton must accept his offer, or consider himself dismissed there and then. Without a moment's hesitation the lad chose the latter alternative.

News of this unfortunate incident reached Mr. Maxwell, the Rector of Dumfries Academy ; and his opinion of the young student who had spent six weeks with him was such that he at once offered to allow him to attend all the classes there as long as he cared to do so, free of charge. But this would have imposed the burden of his maintenance upon his father ; and therefore, tempting though the offer was, the independent young Scot declined it. His desire was rather to ease the pressure upon the slender home resources by contributing towards the cost of educating his younger brothers and sisters, than to increase it ; and so, putting temptation behind him, he shouldered his bundle, made his way to what was known as the Lamb Fair at Lockerbie, and there hired himself out to a farmer for the harvest.

He soon adapted himself to his new work, and got on so well that when he left it the farmer

gave him a handsome present in addition to his fee !

Before engaging himself as a harvester, John had heard of a situation in Glasgow which was so exactly suited to his taste that he applied for it, though he had small hope that his application would be successful. The situation was advertised by the West Campbell Street Reformed Presbyterian Congregation, who offered £50 per annum for a young man to act as district visitor and tract distributor. A special privilege attaching to the office, which made it particularly desirable in the eyes of young Paton, was a year's free training at the Free Church Normal Seminary. This would enable him to qualify himself as a teacher, and thus assist him considerably in his efforts to enter the ministry.

To his intense surprise, when his harvest work was completed he received an intimation that he was one of two selected candidates for the coveted post, and he was requested to appear in Glasgow on a specified date to compete with his rival for the appointment.

Two days later he set out from home on a walk of forty miles from Torthorwald to Kilmarnock—the nearest railway station. His father accompanied him for six miles along the road ; and then commending him to the care of God, and invoking the divine blessing upon the boy who was now leaving him to make his own way in the world, left him to continue his journey alone.

It took the young traveller three days to reach Glasgow. Having secured a humble lodging, for which he had to pay eighteenpence per week, he presented himself, with the other candidate, before the examiners at the appointed hour. The young men acquitted themselves so well

that the examiners found it impossible to choose between them, and ultimately a compromise was arrived at. Both were accepted on the understanding that they were to share the work and the emoluments, the congregation agreeing to supply them with books, and to help them in various other necessary ways.

The arrangement worked admirably, except that the two newcomers to the Normal Seminary found their fellow-students so far beyond them in their education that they worked too hard in order to make rapid progress, with the result that their health gave way.

Paton's fellow student never fully recovered ; but Paton himself, being perhaps of hardier stock, soon regained his strength amid home surroundings, and it was not long before he resumed work, this time as teacher in a small school at Girvan.

As soon as he had saved a few pounds by teaching, he returned to Glasgow and was enrolled as a student at the College. With all his care, however, he was unable to make his money last until the end of the term—he had lent some to a poor student who failed to repay it—and he was reduced to such straits that he seriously contemplated pawning some of his books. But, as so often proves the case in human affairs, man's extremity was God's opportunity. On his way to the pawn shop he saw in a window a notice, "Teacher wanted, Maryhill Free Church School. Apply at the Manse." He applied as directed, got the appointment, and next morning began his new duties.

Very difficult and trying those duties proved to be—chiefly through the unruliness of certain young men and women from neighbouring mills and coal pits who attended evening classes held in

connection with the school, apparently for no purpose but to create disturbance and disorder. This the new "dominie" subdued by administering a severe thrashing to one young man who appeared to be the ringleader in the mischief, at the same time explaining that such punishment was much against his own desire; that he would far rather rule by love than fear; but that at all cost he intended to be master. He had very little further trouble, and eventually made the school such a success that the Committee under whom he worked rather meanly repudiated the agreement which they had made with him and which ensured that his salary should be commensurate with his success. So he was forced to resign and look for some other means of earning his living.

This he quickly found in an appointment which he secured as an agent of the Glasgow City Mission. The district allotted to him was one of the most degraded in the whole city. For a year he worked hard in it; but at the end of that time the results of his labour were so small that the directors decided that the inhabitants of the district were not amenable to ordinary Christian influences, and proposed to remove their young missionary to another part of the city. He pleaded, however, for another six months' trial, which was granted, and then he explained to the few converts he had gathered round him that unless their numbers increased he would be taken away. This roused them to action, attendance at the meetings was at once doubled; and so began a great awakening to spiritual life amongst people who had hitherto resisted all efforts to Christianize them.

Eventually John Paton's mission was transferred to a vacant church in Green Street, and

henceforth it was known as the Green Street Mission. Here, availing himself of the increased facilities now at his disposal, he entirely re-organized his work. Every day in the week he was busy over the varied activities of the mission. His week's duty began at six o'clock each Sunday morning, when he started out to rouse the members of his Bible Class, which met an hour later and consisted of about one hundred of the very poorest young women and lads of the district. And from then onwards each day and all day he laboured, the week's work ending with a Total Abstinence meeting on Saturday evening.

John Paton's classes and meetings came at length to be recognised as amongst the largest and most successful ever known in the history of the Glasgow City Mission. As their circumstances improved, his humble friends were constantly leaving the poor part of the city in which he worked, to settle in better neighbourhoods, and it was his custom to follow them in their new surroundings until he found that they were interested in some church near where they had gone to live. Thus, in course of time, he had friends in all parts of Glasgow; and one result of this was a source of special pleasure to him in later life. "On my return," he says, "many years after, from the Foreign Mission Field, there was scarcely a congregation in any part of the city where some one did not warmly salute me with the cry 'Don't you remember me?' And then, after greetings, came the well remembered name of one or other member of my old Bible Class."

His arduous work in the slums of Glasgow left Mr. Paton scant opportunity for private study, but all the time he could spare he still devoted to self improvement, and always with a view to

missionary work. For ten years he toiled in Glasgow, studying also all the while, first at the University of the city and later at the Reformed Presbyterian Divinity Hall. He also took a course of medical classes at the Andersonian College. He owns that the work was hard and exacting ; but through it all one hope sustained him—the hope that ultimately God might use him as a means of bringing the heathen to a knowledge of Himself.

How arduous was his struggle may be imagined when it is stated that his salary as a city missionary never exceeded £45 per annum ; and that on this sum he managed not only to live, but to help his parents, who were unable to give him any monetary assistance during all the years he spent as a student and missionary in the slums of Glasgow. “ Self-educated thus,” he says, “ and without the help of one shilling from any other source, readers will easily imagine that I had many a staggering difficulty to overcome in my long curriculum in Arts, Divinity and Medicine ; but God so guided me, and blessed all my little arrangements, that I never incurred one farthing of personal debt.”

CHAPTER III

MISSIONARY TO THE NEW HEBRIDES

THOSE who knew John Paton in the busiest of the busy, happy years he spent in ministering to the poor and degraded of Glasgow, might well have imagined that here he had found the work of his life. But always within him was the longing that he might be God's instrument to carry the "good tidings of great joy" to those in heathen lands, who had never heard the name of the Saviour who died to redeem them. No word concerning his desire did he speak; but it was ever uppermost in his thoughts; it was the subject of his daily prayers; it was the one ambition which shaped all his studies.

His keen interest in foreign missions caused him to take special note of that department of the work of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, in which he had been brought up. For two years the Heathen Missions Committee of that Church had been vainly trying to secure a Missionary to join the Rev. John Inglis, who was working in the New Hebrides; and John Paton, now thirty-two years of age, felt strongly moved to offer himself for this particular field of service.

Yet so mistrustful of self was he, and so fearful lest personal inclination and desire should be permitted to take the place of Divine leading, that he allowed the first impulse to pass. But

further reflection and careful deliberation convinced him that God was indeed calling him; and so ultimately he decided to volunteer for the post which the authorities of the Church had so long and vainly tried to fill.

When his decision became known it gave rise to a storm of opposition from all except his parents, who, having most solemnly dedicated him to God in his infancy, felt they had no right to place any obstacle in the way of his following what he felt to be the leading of his Master. Dr. Bates, too, as convener of the Heathen Missions Committee, rejoiced at his resolve; and Mr. Joseph Copeland, a fellow student, as soon as he heard of Mr. Paton's resolve, declared that he, also, would offer himself for the same service.

Nothing moved him from his determination. Naturally the appeal that came from the people of his beloved Green Street Mission was hardest to resist; but he pointed out that they had free access to the Bible and to the means of grace; whereas the heathen to whom he wished to minister were perishing, with no one to tell them of the mercy and the love of God. To every argument against his resolve he listened patiently—from that of one of his professors in divinity who urged that he was leaving a useful work in which God had blessed him, for an uncertain field in which he might fail to be useful, to that of a dear old Christian who warned him in all seriousness that most probably the cannibals would eat him. But through it all he remained steadfast to his purpose.

His chief anxiety was connected with the future of the Green Street Mission; but that, to his great joy, was satisfactorily settled by the appointment of his brother Walter as his imme-

diatc successor. Under his care the work continued to flourish, and for years the people connected with it were amongst John Paton's staunchest supporters, giving gladly and freely of their little to help their friend and former missionary in his efforts to extend the Kingdom of God.

Having passed their final examinations, John Paton and his friend Joseph Copeland were "licensed" on December 1st, 1857, as preachers of the Gospel. Following this, some time was spent in visiting and addressing congregations of the Church in various parts of Scotland, in order that the people might know them and so be led to take a personal interest in their work. On the 23rd of the following March they were ordained as ministers of the Gospel, and set apart as missionaries to the New Hebrides; and on April 16th, 1858, they set sail from Greenock in the *Clutha* for the foreign mission field.

In those days a voyage to the Antipodes was not the luxurious and enjoyable trip that it is to-day. It was a long, tedious ordeal, trying to the nerves and wearying to the patience. But, fortunately, the commander of the *Clutha*, Captain Broadfoot, was a kindly Christian man. He did all he could for the comfort of his passengers, and, to the great delight of the young missionary, took a practical interest in the conduct of public worship on the vessel by leading the singing. Moreover, Mr. Paton had a way of his own of relieving the monotony of the long voyage, for he organized Bible classes for crew and passengers, and, as may be imagined, these were a great joy to him. He records with obvious pleasure that thirty years after, during one of his visits to the home land, a stranger, a well set up, prosperous

man—claimed acquaintance with him on the ground that he had been his precentor in the Bible Class on board the *Clutha*.

But all things come to an end, even a voyage in a sailing vessel from Greenock to Melbourne; and at last this long stage of the journey was over. Mr. Paton and his young wife were kindly received by friends from Geelong, and they spent a few days very happily with them while their fellow voyager, Mr. Copeland, remained on board the *Clutha*, in charge of the belongings of the party, and on the look out for some means of conveyance to the islands which were to be the scene of their future labours. This he found at last in an American vessel, the *Francis P. Sage*, which was sailing from Melbourne to Penang. The captain was interviewed, and agreed to take the missionaries with him and land them at Aneityum, New Hebrides, with their two boats and fifty boxes, for £100.

The voyage lasted twelve days, and it proved to be stormy and uncomfortable in more ways than one. The weather was exceedingly rough, and so was the captain; and the missionaries were by no means sorry when Aneityum was sighted. But even then their troubles were not at an end, for the captain refused them the use of his boats for landing purposes—possibly fearing that if he did so the members of his crew who rowed them ashore might decline to return to the ill-treatment to which he subjected them. So the travellers had to remain on the ship till a trader's boat came out to see what was wanted. By this boat a message was sent to Dr. Geddie, one of the missionaries on the island, and the next morning he arrived in his boat, with other friends in the small mission schooner the *John*

Knox, and a large mission boat manned with a crew of natives.

The fifty boxes belonging to the missionaries were quickly transferred to the boats and the schooner ; but the latter, in sheering off from the *Francis P. Sage*, was badly damaged, her mainmast breaking off by the deck. Fortunately the mission party escaped personal injury ; but the little craft was entirely disabled, and the captain of the *Francis P. Sage* heartlessly sailed away and left his former passengers to drift about, ten miles from land, helpless in an overloaded and disabled vessel.

Dr. Geddie's boat took the *John Knox* in tow ; but in spite of every effort it drifted steadily in the direction of Tanna, an island inhabited by cannibals of a particularly ferocious type, who would certainly have killed and eaten the whole party if they could have laid hands on them.

But mercifully Dr. Inglis, who had heard of their expected arrival, was cruising about in his boat, on the look out for them. As soon as he caught sight of them he knew that something was amiss. He quickly secured help ; and after many hours of hard pulling under the rays of a scorching sun, they were safely drawn into harbour at Aneityum. The actual date of their arrival was August 30th, and the voyage from Greenock to the scene of their future labours had occupied four months and fourteen days.

The new arrivals were heartily welcomed by the devoted little band of workers already established in this forlorn corner of heathendom. Mr. and Mrs. Geddie, Mr. and Mrs. Mathieson—recent recruits from Nova Scotia—and Mr. and Mrs. Inglis, with a few of the natives who had already been converted, had comprised the Christian com-

munity hitherto ; and the addition of the three newcomers to their ranks was a cause of much rejoicing.

The first matter to be decided was necessarily the place of settlement for Mr. Paton and his party ; and after much anxious thought it was agreed that Mr. and Mrs. Mathieson should locate themselves on the south side of Tanna, at Kwamera, and Mr. and Mrs. Paton on the same island, at Port Resolution, while Mr. Copeland, for a time at least, should divide his time between the two settlements.

The island on which the newcomers were to establish themselves is by no means devoid of natural beauty. Tanna is about forty or fifty miles distant from Aneityum, and has a somewhat narrow anchorage, called Port Resolution Bay. There is a large and unusually active volcano on the west side of this bay, and a peculiar feature of it is that it is in eruption at regular intervals of about five, seven or ten minutes, night and day, all the year round. This peculiarity is supposed to be due to the inflowing of water from a lake at its base.

The island is almost in the form of a circle, some thirty-five or forty miles in diameter. It has many lofty hills, and the earth is bright with verdure. The natives are of middle stature, and their skin is by nature the colour of copper ; but vanity inclines them to a darker hue, and they make themselves almost black by the use of dyes. Their taste inclines also to gaudiness, and they produce a hideous effect by daubing their bodies with red paint. They have never learnt the art of tattooing, and their clothing is of the scantiest, the women wearing only a girdle, made of the dried fibre of banana skins, and the men a waistcloth of matting. Their methods of

hairdressing are fantastic, the men frizzing their locks, and the women wearing the hair short, but laid out in a forest of little erect curls about an inch-and-a-half long.

The men are a war-like race and sleep with their weapons beside them. A traveller, Dr. Turner, who lived for some months on the island, says the tribes were "incessantly at war with each other. We were never able to extend our journey above four miles from our dwelling at Port Resolution. At such distances we came to boundaries which were never passed, and beyond which the people spoke a different dialect. At one of these boundaries, actual war would be going on ; at another kidnapping and cooking each other ; and at another all might be peace, but by mutual consent they had no dealings with each other. When visiting the volcano one day the natives told us about a battle in which one party which was pursued ran right into the crater, and there fought for a while on the downward slope inside the cup ! "

There is no doubt that the island is of volcanic origin, and on this account the soil is very fertile. The climate is damp for four months of the year, and during this period fever and ague are rife ; but for the remaining eight months the climatic conditions are pleasant enough. The average temperature is about eighty-six degrees.

Sites for the two houses for the missionaries were secured and paid for, building materials also were purchased from the natives ; and for all the help they gave in erecting the houses they were remunerated at a price previously agreed upon. The missionaries regarded it as essential for the natives to know that in all things the word of a Christian is his bond, and they took advantage

of every opportunity afforded in connection with the building of their houses to emphasize this fact.

The missionaries had very early to suffer through their lack of knowledge of the local conditions prevailing in the unknown island of Tanna; for they discovered, just when after infinite labour and much expense their houses were completed, that they had built them too near the shore. To their dismay they found that by building where they did they exposed themselves to miasma—an unwholesome climatic condition which induces the fever and ague already referred to—the most dreaded scourge of all Europeans who make their home in that part of the world.

Nor was this the only cause for depression. The natives themselves were unprepossessing in the extreme—savages of the most primitive kind, unclothed, given over to cannibalism and all sorts of unnameable vices, without even the rudiments of a literature, and with no religion except the worship of ancestors and a childish fear of evil spirits whom they tried to propitiate by fetishism of the most debased kind.

Their women they treated with grossest cruelty, regarding them merely as slaves and burden-bearers, beating them and abusing them at will. If, as sometimes happened, a woman died under the chastisement inflicted upon her by her husband very little notice was taken of the matter, and when a man died it was quite a common thing for his widow to be put to death, in order that she might accompany him to the other world, there to be his servant and slave, as she had been in this.

Mr. Paton did his best in the most practical way to show how wrong and how cruel was the treatment meted out to the Tannese

women. With his native teachers and their wives he would go a considerable distance inland to gather firewood. Then, giving to each man a heavy load, and taking a similar burden himself, he would give each woman a tiny bundle of sticks, and thus equipped, all would start for home. This strange inversion of the usual order of things with regard to burden bearing was a source of astonishment to every man they met on the way ; and Mr. Paton was careful to improve the occasion by explaining that this was how Christians treated their wives and sisters—helping them and loving them, so that their lives were happy, and teaching them thus by example that man, and not woman, ought to be the burden-bearer.

But alas ! his teaching, except here and there, for a long time had apparently little effect. One chief whom he implored to help him in his efforts to put an end to the wife-beating and wife-strangling so prevalent on the island flatly refused. Said he, " If we did not beat our women, they would never work ; they would not fear and obey us ; but when we have beaten and killed and feasted on two or three, the rest are all very quiet and good for a long time to come."

The birth of a daughter in a Tannese home was regarded as a calamity, and infanticide was in consequence commonly practised. But children, whether girls or boys, were little cared for, and Mr. Paton often marvelled that they ever survived the neglect and ill treatment which was their common lot. The boys were educated after the manner common amongst savages—that is, they were taught the use of the bow and spear, the club and the tomahawk, in order that they might become expert fighters, and were early initiated into all the native vices and bestialities. It was

not considered possible for a boy to develop into a man unless he acquired a knowledge of and a liking for all the horrible customs of his race.

Respect for the aged, or even common care for them, was unknown, and frequently old people were openly put to death in order to get rid of them.

In a word, in Tanna Mr. Paton found humanity at its lowest and worst ; and closer acquaintance with the people only convinced him that in their native state they had not a single redeeming quality. Long before he went amongst them these tribes of savage cannibals had driven away the agents of the London Missionary Society. Was it possible for this newcomer to succeed where they had failed? What wonder that when he reviewed his position, and contrasted his happy and successful work amongst the people of Glasgow with the stupendous problem that now faced him, his courage almost forsook him !

Almost, but never quite. For the brave heart was conscious always of the power of God ; and although sometimes he was cast down and tempted to despair, he knew that God was with him, and that somehow, somewhere, the heathen darkness that seemed so black and impenetrable would be pierced and illumined by the light of love Divine.

Promise of this was evident in the encouraging results which Dr. Inglis and Dr. Geddie had already obtained through their work amongst the natives of Aneityum. In a comparatively short time they had succeeded in Christianizing and civilizing the people to a wonderful degree ; and—so said John Paton—what had been done on Aneityum could, through the grace of God, be done also on Tanna.

The attitude of native races towards pioneer missionaries is usually one of suspicion and

mistrust, if not of actual hostility ; but Mr. Paton was agreeably surprised to find that, so far from resenting his presence amongst them, the chiefs and their people welcomed the strangers, and were disposed to be friendly towards them. The sites for their houses were sold quite willingly, labour was freely offered, and those who were not called upon to help in the building would crowd round to watch the operations—hugely interested and evidently much amazed at the work being done.

But the missionaries soon found that the native protestations of friendship did not, after all, amount to very much. The chiefs in the immediate neighbourhood might be personally friendly, but they were careful not to promise protection from attack at the hands of chiefs living at a distance ; and they did not consider they had violated any pledge of friendship if, when occasion demanded, they hired others to persecute those whom they had promised not to molest. Such is the subtlety and cunning of the savage mind !

Wars and rumours of wars amongst the hostile tribes of the islands were frequent ; and the fightings, followed by horrible feastings of the conquerors upon the conquered, were a source of unspeakable sorrow to those who had come to teach these untutored savages concerning the things of God. But while as yet they knew scarcely even a word of the language of the people, they could do nothing to restrain them. All that was possible was prayer unceasing on their behalf, and daily toil to fit themselves to combat the deadly evils surrounding them. Only by labour and prayer and faith could they hope to solve the problem presented to them in this land of unrelieved savagedom.

CHAPTER IV

LIFE AMONGST THE TANNESE

OF the many difficulties that confront the missionary in the foreign field who is new to his work, that of speech is by no means the least. And the difficulty is greatly intensified when, as in the case of John Paton, he suddenly finds himself placed in the midst of a people who have no written language. Until he can speak to them in their own tongue he is quite helpless, and how is he to acquire the knowledge necessary to enable him to do this? The method which Mr. Paton adopted was as simple as it was satisfactory. The natives were naturally curious about the missionaries' possessions, and—without in the least intending any discourtesy—freely handled any articles that happened to be within their reach. The missionary was far too wise to resent this openly. Indeed, seeing in this natural curiosity a means whereby he might be enabled to make a beginning in the study of the language, he rather encouraged it. One day he noticed a native pick up an article, and heard him say to a companion, "Nungsi nari enu?" Instantly he concluded the man was saying in his own tongue "What is this?" and lifting a piece of wood, he in his turn repeated the same words.

With that childish delight which savages always exhibit in anything unexpected that pleases them,

the men smiled and conversed together for a moment, and Mr. Paton gathered that they were expressing their pleasure at his having acquired a phrase of their language. They answered his question, and thus he learned quite easily a most useful phrase, and also the native word for wood. Then he pointed to various other things, always asking the same question, "Nungsi nari enu?" and carefully writing down the answers phonetically. By this means he gathered together in a very short time quite a useful vocabulary, and it was not long before he was able to converse with comparative ease with the natives.

Most interesting is it to find that although the Tannese had, when Mr. Paton landed amongst them, no religion save the fetish worship to which reference has already been made, yet they had a vague idea of an invisible world; and this idea was at once seized upon by the missionary as a base upon which might be built up gradually a conception of heaven and of that faith which, for the Christian, is centred in the kingdom of God. So by slow but steadily progressive stages the natives were induced to grasp the idea of man's sinfulness, of God's Fatherhood, of Christ's compassion; until at last the main facts of the Christian religion, in all their beauty and comprehensiveness, were revealed to them, and, in many cases, to the great joy of the missionary, accepted by them. It was a work of much toil, a work that needed infinite patience and a resolute disregard of repeated failures and heart-breaking disappointments; but the reward was sure, and it was sweet beyond all telling; for it meant that in at least one hitherto dark corner of the earth the Gospel light was shining, and that the

message of salvation had been heard and received by men and women who had hitherto known nothing of the wonderful words of life.

For this reward the man with the true missionary spirit will dare and do and suffer anything, even unto death—and indeed there are few amongst those who give themselves to service in the foreign mission field who are not called upon to suffer, either in themselves or in the person of those who are dear to them, for the work's sake.

Mr. Paton was no exception. Scarcely three months after his first landing on Tanna, his young wife was taken from him, and a week later her baby son, born on the island, also died. This double bereavement, at the very outset of his missionary career, was a crushing blow; and it made it none the easier to bear to know that it was probably due to the fact that, in his ignorance, he had chosen such an unhealthy location for his mission house. Not long before his wife's death, one of the chiefs had warned him of the danger of remaining on the low-lying ground near the sea shore, and he had resolved to remove as soon as he could do so. But alas! before he could carry his resolve into effect the deadly miasma surrounding his dwelling had done its evil work, and he found himself suddenly widowed and childless, desolate and alone. Such a grief under such circumstances is too awful and too sacred for the stranger to dwell upon. The bereaved missionary's own comment is all that is needed: "Let those who have ever passed through any similar darkness as of midnight feel for me; as for all others, it would be more than vain to try to paint my sorrows. . . But for Jesus, and the fellowship He vouchsafed me there,

I must have gone mad and died beside that lonely grave."

Bishop Selwyn, accompanied by the Rev. J. C. Patteson—afterwards the martyr-bishop of Melanesia—called at the island in the *Southern Cross* soon after Mrs. Paton's death, and the three stood beside the carefully guarded grave in tears. "The godly Bishop Selwyn," says Mr. Paton, "poured out his heart to God amidst sobs and tears, during which he laid his hands on my head and invoked heaven's richest consolations and blessings on me and my trying labours. The virtue of that kind of episcopal consecration I did and do most warmly appreciate."

Years afterwards, at a great meeting in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, he caused a mild flutter of surprise amongst a number of prominent Churchmen present by a reference to this incident. It was in the ante-room of the hall, and Canon Hicks was introducing him to a number of clergymen who had gathered to meet him, when, during a lull in the conversation, he was heard to say, "Yes, sir, I have been ordained by a bishop." At once there was a general chorus of eager questions: "When, Dr. Paton, and where?" "Who ordained you?" And the missionary said, "Bishop Selwyn laid his hands on my head at my dear wife's grave, in the midst of my loneliness on Tanna, and solemnly consecrated me to God. I therefore feel I am entitled to say that I have been ordained by a Bishop of your Church to the service of God."

Both of his visitors begged him to come with them, at least for a time, in order to regain health and nerve; but he believed it his duty to keep a door open for Christ on Tanna. Later, when the danger had become more acute, a man-of-war

called and its captain pressed him to take the opportunity of retiring from a position which, to everyone but himself, seemed untenable ; and when Bishop Selwyn heard he had declined, he said, " And I like him all the better for doing so. Talk of bravery ! Talk of heroism ! The man who leads a forlorn hope is a coward in comparison with him who, on Tanna thus alone, without a sustaining look or cheering word from one of his own race, regards it as his duty to hold on in the face of such dangers. He might with honour have sought a temporary asylum in Auckland, where he would have been heartily received ; but he was moved by higher considerations. He chose to remain, and God knows whether at this moment he is in the land of the living."

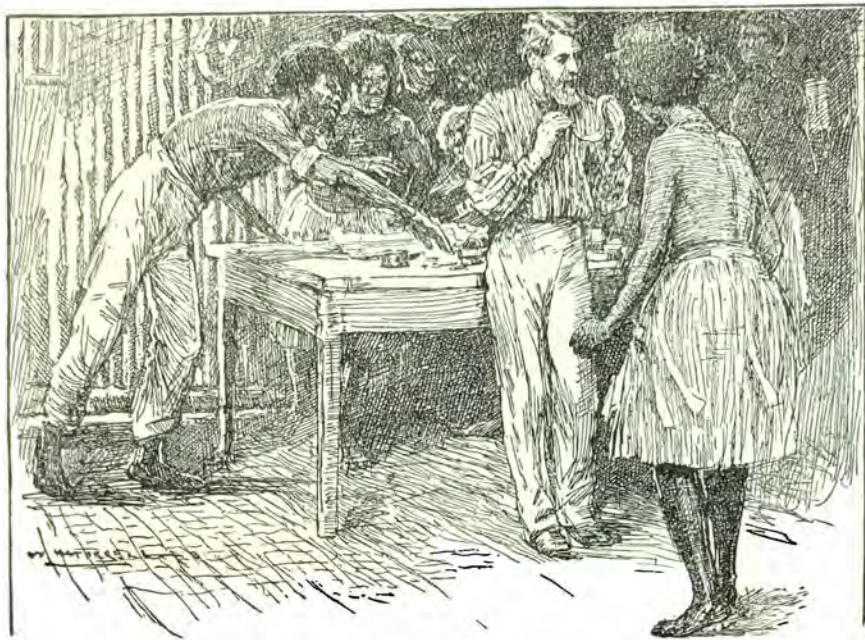
In reference to this incident, Mr. Paton made this characteristic comment : " For my part I feel quite confident that in like circumstances, that noble Bishop of God would have done the same. I, born in the bosom of the Scottish covenant, descended from those who suffered persecution for Christ's honour, would have been unworthy of them and of my Lord had I deserted my post for danger only. Yet not to me, but to the Lord who sustained me, be all the praise and the glory."

Although for a time the natives appeared—superficially at any rate—friendly and desirous of helping the missionaries, it soon became apparent that little reliance could be placed upon their good will. So long as the presence of the white men amongst them was a novelty, their behaviour left nothing to be desired ; but as soon as they became used to the " Missi " and his people, they allowed their native cupidity and

deceitfulness full play. While still maintaining an outward show of friendliness, they developed a surprising smartness as thieves and robbers. Three times over, for instance, they demanded and obtained payment for the land which had been bought from them for the Mission Station. It may be said that it was bad policy on the part of the missionaries to yield to the extortionate and unjust demands of the natives. So, in a sense, it was ; but it must be remembered that in the early days of the mission it was only by conciliation that the pioneers of the Gospel could hope to establish themselves on a friendly footing amongst the savages whom they had come to teach. The least show of resistance would probably have meant death for them ; and it was necessary therefore to yield to dishonest demands which under other circumstances would have been stoutly resisted.

The lives of the missionaries were, at this time, indeed, full of trial and anxiety. For every misfortune that befell the natives they were blamed. When dry weather set in and interfered with the growth of their yams and bananas, a great assembly was summoned. The chiefs decided that the drought was due to the missionaries and their Jehovah God ; and unless rain fell speedily they must be killed. When the rain came the chiefs concluded that it was vouchsafed in direct answer to the prayers of the white men, and graciously decided that they should be permitted to live and to remain on the island ; but when the rain-storm increased to a hurricane and destroyed their trees the missionaries were blamed again !

It can easily be imagined that life amongst such people was exceedingly difficult and trying.



THE NATIVES STOLE PERPETUALLY.

The missionaries were almost daily menaced with death through the passions and prejudices of the natives. The constant anxiety told upon them severely ; and one of their number—Mr. Mathieson—became seriously ill. The natives demanded the reason of this, and of the death of a native teacher which occurred about this time. When they refused to accept Mr. Paton's explanation he cleverly turned their superstitious prejudice to his own advantage by inquiring why so much trouble had come upon him and his people since they had been on the island.

This to the native mind was a new and disconcerting aspect of the matter ; and after many meetings and much discussion he was gravely informed that the evil Spirit on Tanna was causing all the trouble, because he resented the efforts of the missionaries to turn the allegiance of the people from himself to Jehovah !

However this may have been, certain it is that the spirit of all evil inspired the Tannese to deeds of dishonesty. They stole perpetually. Their methods, too, were so ingenious that detection was at times very difficult. If, for instance, a native noticed any small article on the floor, and desired to annex it, he would cover it with his foot and, grasping it with his toes—which are as flexible as his fingers—walk off with it. Or with equal ease the thing coveted would be concealed in the chief's armpit, or in the plaits of his hair. And the worst of it was that if he were caught in the act his grief was not because he had done wrong but because he had done it so clumsily as to be found out !

The natives' thieving propensities, however, received an amusing check on one occasion, when H.M.S. *Cordelia* visited the island. The Com-

mander, Captain Vernon, having heard rumours that Mr. Paton and his friends were in danger from the natives, steamed towards the island to offer assistance. The savages had never in their lives seen such a vessel and ran to the Missi in great terror, demanding to know the nature of this great thing that was coming towards them on the water, breathing smoke and fire.

The missionary informed them that it was probably one of Queen Victoria's warships coming to see how they had been behaving themselves, and whether they had been stealing his goods !

Panic seized them at once. Away they went, almost tumbling over each other in their eagerness to bring back all the things they had appropriated, and begging Mr. Paton to come out and see that all his goods had been restored.

The arrival of the Captain—a tall, handsome man—in his splendid uniform, made a great impression on the natives ; and conscience, that makes cowards of us all, caused them to view his approach with considerable alarm. A word from Mr. Paton explained the position of affairs to Captain Vernon, who spent about an hour in the mission house with twenty of the chiefs, giving them good counsel and impressing upon them especially the necessity of good behaviour towards strangers.

Before he left he was on excellent terms with them all. He invited them on board his vessel ; and the sight of the big guns, and a practical illustration of their power, convinced them that Missi had some friends who would be able, if the need arose, to avenge an injury very thoroughly !

But the good impression was only fleeting after all. The opposition of the natives soon broke out afresh, and it reached its culminating point when an old chief from Aneityum, well known and greatly respected by the Tannese, became ill and died after a visit to Tanna. This misfortune was at once ascribed to the missionaries and their worship. A council was held, at which it was decided that the property and buildings of the mission must be burnt, and that Mr. Paton and his party must all be killed unless they left the island. A brother of the dead chief who was friendly with the missionaries came from Aneityum to plead for them, but unfortunately he too became ill, almost as soon as he arrived on the island. This still further incensed the angry natives, and the death of the whole of the mission party seemed inevitable.

But just when the outlook was darkest God sent deliverance in a wonderful way. An assembly of frenzied natives was discussing in detail the plans for killing the missionaries, when one of the warrior chiefs, suddenly swinging his club aloft, declared that whoever would lay hands on any of the missionaries must first kill him and his people. Another chief expressed a similar determination, and—so easily were the natives swayed by any sudden impulse—the assembly at once broke up in confusion, and, for the time being at any rate, the mission was saved. The deliverance was the more remarkable from the fact that the chiefs who were instrumental in bringing it about lived some miles inland, and were, moreover, known as Sacred Men, with a certain repute amongst the natives as disease makers. They might therefore naturally have been supposed to regard the mission with extreme dis-

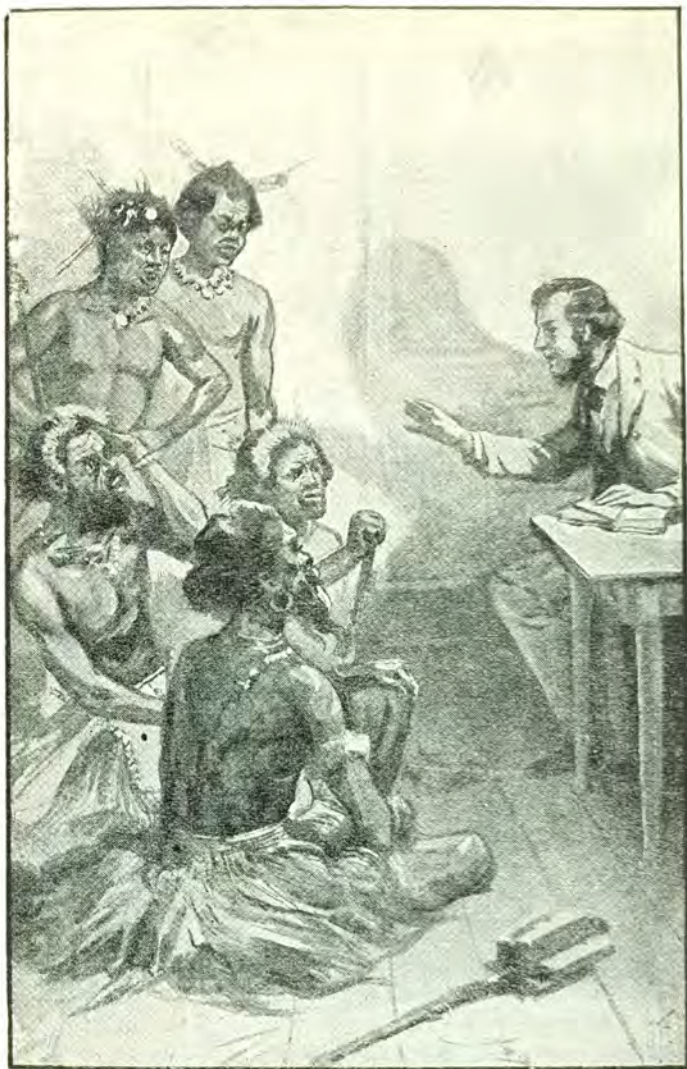
favour, since if it succeeded it must necessarily discredit them in the eyes of those who had hitherto looked upon them as being possessed of supernatural powers. Certainly Mr. Paton had once been of service to the brother of one of the chiefs, but gratitude was not a conspicuous virtue amongst the Tannese, and he was convinced that the deliverance of the mission was the direct result of Divine intervention.

CHAPTER V

PIONEER WORK ON TANNA

THE work of the pioneer missionary must always be to some extent discouraging and disappointing, and it has already been made clear that the labours of Mr. Paton and his devoted little band of fellow-workers in the New Hebrides met with very little success at first. The missionaries had not only to contend against native suspicion and distrust, but they found that the minds of the people had been poisoned against all white men by the cruelties and injustices practised upon them by the unprincipled and lawless traders who visited the islands for sandal wood.

When this particular trade was exhausted the natives were exploited shamelessly in connection with what was known as the Kanaka labour-traffic to the colonies. This horrible traffic, the purpose of which was to supply native labour for the sugar plantations in Queensland and elsewhere, was responsible for the death of thousands of these poor savages, who were lured from their homes by false promises, and then done to death by cruel taskmasters; and it cannot be wondered at that the survivors looked askance even at the white men whose mission amongst them was so entirely peaceful and beneficent, since they came solely to bring to these poor benighted heathen the good tidings of great joy.



A NIGHT CLASS OF NATIVE CONVERTS.

Yet the missionaries were not without evidence that the Gospel light was beginning to penetrate the darkness amidst which they dwelt ; and Mr. Paton tells of many men who, unwilling to risk the ridicule or possibly the persecution of their fellows if they had been seen frequenting the mission house, went there secretly by night ; and behind shut doors and carefully drawn blinds listened eagerly to the missionary's teaching, and gladdened his heart by questions which proved that they were taking an intelligent interest in the Gospel he had come so far and risked so much to proclaim.

Amongst the missionary's most loyal adherents were a native teacher from Aneityum—a man named Abraham—and his wife Nafatu. To these two devoted and faithful souls Mr. Paton owed his life, when, prostrate with illness, he was compelled without further delay to act upon the advice given him long before by some of the Tannese chiefs, and remove his dwelling from the low-lying, unhealthy spot he had first chosen to higher ground further inland.

Fourteen times he had been laid low with fever and ague, and these repeated attacks had seriously sapped his vitality ; so that when he was again stricken he became so weak that he felt he could never recover. But Abraham induced him to make an effort to crawl up the hill. More dead than alive he managed, with the help of his two friends, to reach the top ; and there, with a heap of cocoanut leaves for his bed, and nothing but a screen of leaves to protect him from sun and wind, he lay, nursed assiduously by Abraham and Nafatu, until by slow degrees consciousness and strength returned to him, and he was able to begin to think about the building of his new house.

It was not a palatial abode that the missionary planned—merely an erection of two rooms; a bedroom, with a small room for stores adjoining it. The materials for them he already possessed, having bought some time previously from a trader the deck planks of a wrecked vessel. Then, as opportunity offered, he intended to remove the old house and rebuild it as an addition to his new home on the hill. The undertaking was a considerable one for a man weakened by illness, but he realized that the sooner his couch and screen of leaves were replaced by something more substantial the sooner he would have a chance of getting well. Indeed unless he could soon provide for himself some adequate protection against the weather there was a strong probability that he would never get well at all.

Too ill to do any of the actual work himself, he had to rely entirely upon the faithful Aneityumese teacher and his wife. And nobly they responded to his demand upon their love and devotion. The planks of the wreck, and all the other necessary materials, they carried to the site of the new house; and under the missionary's direction, the task was at last accomplished, and he was safely housed in his little home on the hill.

The improvement in Mr. Paton's health from the change of residence was at once apparent, and he suffered very little subsequently from the terrible ague and fever that had so often prostrated him in the past. Yet there were not wanting critics at home who severely condemned him for making the move. They accused him of transferring his home to the fighting ground of the natives, and of courting persecution and plunder by deliberately locating himself where the

natives could most easily attack him! As a matter of fact he did nothing of the kind, and those who thus criticised him were entirely ignorant of the truth of the matter. He did not needlessly expose himself to the hostility of unfriendly natives. The move he made was absolutely necessary for the preservation of his life; and, as he said, "Life is God's great gift, to be preserved for His use, not thrown away."

The new house had not long been in occupation when one of the all too frequent wars was threatened between the inland chiefs and the people of the harbour. Without telling the latter of his intention, Mr. Paton started off early on the next morning after the news had reached him, attended only by Abraham and one other Aneityumese, to try to make peace. The missionary relates the incident as though it were quite an ordinary occurrence; but there are probably not many men who would have so regarded this expedition to a crowd of savages not one of whom knew him, and all of whom were inflamed with the lust of blood. For some miles Mr. Paton and his two attendants walked, passing many deserted villages and plantations by the way. Abraham and his brother native were obviously growing frightened and nervous, but Missi felt no fear and did his best to cheer and encourage his fellow adventurers in this desperate enterprise.

At last they came in sight of the men they sought. They found them, a host of warriors, holding a great feast. As soon as the savages caught sight of them they laid hold of their weapons; and at this sinister indication a less determined man than Mr. Paton might have considered discretion the better part of valour, and made haste to get out of the way.

But it was not for an ignominious retreat at the crucial moment that the daring missionary had braved all the perils of this excursion into an unknown country. While his two companions looked on in terror he rushed, unarmed as he was, into the midst of the astonished warriors, and shouted to them in their own language: "My love to you, men of Tanna! Fear not; I am your friend. I love you everyone, and am come to tell you about Jehovah God, and good conduct such as pleases Him."

The savages hardly knew what to make of this sudden invasion into the privacy of their council of war. Some of them, terrified at the startling apparition with the strange message, ran precipitately into the bush. Others began to dance with delight, striking the ground with their clubs, and shouting: "Missi is come!" It was an anxious time for Missi, for it was impossible to tell whether these excited warriors would decide to receive him as the friend he claimed to be, or whether they would conclude that this interrupter of their deliberations had better be rewarded for his temerity by a blow from a club or a thrust from a spear.

Great must have been the power of persuasiveness that Mr. Paton possessed, for the natives agreed, after an hour's palaver, in the course of which all manner of questions were asked and answered, to give up the war; and they even permitted him to conduct worship amongst them. An exchange of gifts followed, the missionary receiving cocoa-nuts, sugar cane and fowls, in return for a red shirt presented to the chief and a number of fish hooks and pieces of red calico for the rest of the community. Then followed a very friendly leave-taking, with a request that

the Missi would visit them again, and a promise that they would in no way molest him or any one connected with his Mission.

Probably the missionary himself was somewhat surprised at the complete success of his errand, but his surprise was as nothing compared with that of the harbour people, who, on learning where he had gone, had given him and his companions up for dead, and had concluded that all three would undoubtedly be killed and eaten by their inland enemies. When they saw the adventurers return, not only alive and well, but laden with gifts, and when they heard what had transpired at the meeting with the warriors, their amazement was unbounded, and there is no doubt the incident added considerably to the missionary's prestige amongst them.

CHAPTER VI

IN DANGER OF DEATH

DANGER to life is one of the trials that a missionary amongst savages has to face every day ; but, however often he may be in imminent peril, the risk is one concerning which it can never be said that familiarity breeds contempt. For the man who regards his life as a sacred trust, contempt of serious danger is never possible ; and the missionary especially who has deliberately placed himself in a position of personal danger in the service of his Lord and Master, must feel that it is his duty to guard himself by every means in his power, while at the same time he never shrinks from any necessary risk.

Probably no man who devoted himself to evangelistic work amongst heathen and savage people ever ran greater risks, and certainly no man ever faced danger more bravely, than John Paton. It is no exaggeration to say that his life was threatened almost every day on the island of Tanna. But this fact never made him afraid. He was convinced that God was caring for him very specially, and his faith gave him courage many a time to face his savage enemies with a boldness and fearlessness that astounded them. Indeed, many of them believed that he possessed a charmed life, and he never attempted to persuade them to think otherwise.

To rush unarmed into the midst of a mob of howling savages whose only quarrel is as to how the Missi shall be killed, may seem a reckless thing to do. Yet brave John Paton did it more than once. If he had kept out of the way his enemies would probably have ended their quarrel by killing each other ; and his desire was always to prevent bloodshed, at whatever risk to himself.

But that his undoubted bravery never degenerated into mere reckless bravado is proved by the fact that on one occasion, when some friendly natives warned him of danger, he barricaded himself in his house and refused to appear until the enemy had departed. The danger was certainly exceptional. Some of the tribes on the island had been at war ; and by way of effecting a grand reconciliation, several men had been killed for a great feast. Their bodies were placed under guard near the missionary's house ; and the information was brought to him that he and his teachers were also to be sacrificed for the same feast. When a band of armed men, evidently told off as killers, was seen approaching the house, Mr. Paton, more for the sake of his teachers and their wives than out of regard for his own safety, ordered everyone into the mission house. There for the greater part of a long and anxious day they remained, cut off from all possibility of human help, and hearing no sound save the tramping and whispering of the armed savages outside, waiting and watching for an opportunity to enter and effect their dread purpose. Towards evening their foes went away and left the mission party in peace ; but it must have been a nerve-trying ordeal, and one in which no reader of these lines would care to have had a share.

Mr. Paton was never tired of trying to induce the islanders to give up the tribal wars that were such a sad feature of life amongst them, and his efforts in this direction sometimes led him into danger from which many men would have shrunk appalled. It happened once that an old quarrel between the inland tribes and the people of the harbour, the original cause of which no one could remember, had been renewed with great fierceness and bitterness. As usual, Mr. Paton was very active in trying to put a stop to the warfare, but his efforts this time seemed of little avail. His principal opposers in this matter were three so-called Sacred Men, whom the natives regarded with a certain amount of superstitious awe, believing them to have the power of life and death through a kind of sorcery or witchcraft which they called Nahak.

By means of this sorcery they were supposed to be able to compass the death of any one if only they could obtain a portion of any food that had been eaten. As may be imagined, the natives were particularly careful never to leave any fragments of food about; and the Sacred Men waxed fat upon the terror of Nahak with which they were able to inspire their credulous fellows.

Mr. Paton determined to make a supreme effort once for all to break the power of these Sacred Men. They had been present when the missionary was pleading with the natives to give up their warfare and live peaceably; and at the end of the discourse they got up and declared they did not believe in the Missi's God, nor did they need His help; for they were all-powerful themselves; they could give rain, or cause drought; they could make war or peace; and through Nahak

they could cause the death of any person whenever they pleased.

This declaration was exactly the opportunity for which Mr. Paton had been waiting. A woman was standing near with a basket of native fruit, and he begged for a little, which was freely given. He then bit a portion, ate it, and gave some of the remainder to each of the three Sacred Men, bidding the people standing by observe what he had done. He invited the men to kill him by their sorcery if they could, and defied them to their faces, while the people looked on, terrified.

The Sacred Men went through their pitiful mummerly and foolish incantations, the missionary standing near and encouraging them to increase their efforts. It was a splendid chance for him to discredit them in the eyes of their dupes and victims, and he was anxious to make the most of it.

When in spite of their most strenuous exertions Mr. Paton remained obstinately in life and health they said they must call a gathering of all their Sacred Men, promising faithfully that the Missi should be dead by the following Sunday. The natives loudly bewailed the missionary's impending fate, for they were convinced now that nothing could save him; but for a doomed man he remained surprisingly cheerful; and he promised his friends that if the Sacred Men kept their word, and refrained from using club or spear or any other weapon against him, relying solely upon Nahak to bring about his death, he would undertake to appear amongst them on the Sunday. "So," he said, "you will know that the Sacred Men have no power, and that Nahak cannot harm you."

It all sounded very brave and bold; but people



AN ATTEMPT TO KILL THE MISSIONARY BY SORCERY.

who have been brought up to believe in a certain evil superstition are not easily persuaded that it is powerless to harm them ; and these poor deluded natives sorrowfully watched the Missi depart, never doubting but that he would be dead by the power of the dreaded Nahak before many more suns had set. Little parties of them came to his house at intervals with anxious inquiries as to his health, and their excitement and dread increased as the day of doom drew nearer.

Sunday dawned at last ; and Mr. Paton, in excellent health and spirits, made his way to the village that had been the scene of his encounter with the Sacred Men. The natives, on seeing him approach, could hardly believe the evidence of their own eyes ; but they could not doubt his identity, and the Sacred Men were compelled to admit that their infallible Nahak was powerless to harm him. But they were instantly ready with a reason for their failure. With clever subtlety they declared that Missi was a Sacred Man like themselves, and that his God, being stronger than theirs, had been able to protect him !

They could not have played into his hands more completely if they had tried. Quick to seize the opportunity they had given him, he at once admitted that his God was indeed more powerful than theirs ; that it was to Jehovah and none other that he owed his life ; and that Jehovah was ready to help them, too, and protect them from Nahak and all other evil.

To most of the natives who heard him his argument appealed so forcibly that they at once ranged themselves on his side. Two of the Sacred Men, moreover, admitted their defeat,

and showed no resentment at his exposure of their trickery; but the third, a man of great physical strength, had taken himself off in a rage, and presently reappeared, flourishing an immense spear with which he threatened to kill Missi there and then.

Without showing any sign of fear, Mr. Paton pointed out to the people that he had never questioned the power of their Sacred Men to kill him by any ordinary means; and that if the man who was now aiming the spear at him were to throw it he was quite helpless to protect himself from injury. But, he said, that would prove nothing, and Nahak would still remain the fraud he had already proved it to be.

The reasonableness of this argument was clear enough, and the natives rallied round the man who had so boldly and successfully defied the superstition that had wrought so much misery amongst them. The enraged Sacred Man had to depart, leaving the triumphant Missi unharmed; but for weeks afterwards he haunted the neighbourhood of Mr. Paton's house, and would rush out at him from all sorts of unexpected places, with his murderous spear poised, ready to strike. Yet it never did strike, and this fact was to the missionary a wonderful sign of the protecting power of God, who, in the midst of danger from which there seemed no way of escape, kept His servant in safety.

The story of the missionary's successful defiance of the Sacred Men soon spread to distant parts of the island, and it greatly increased his influence amongst the natives. This was a cause of devout thankfulness to him, for it enabled him to move about freely, even amongst the hostile

tribes, who listened to him much more readily now that he had such a strong claim upon their respect. Their regard for him was such that they would even permit him to come amongst them in the midst of their fighting, and would suspend hostilities while he harangued them on the evils of war, and conducted worship. His joy was very great when, on one occasion, as the direct outcome of his pleading with them, war was ended, at least for a time.

It was not to be wondered at that these poor ignorant heathen, steeped as they were in superstition, should believe that the Missi who could go fearless and unharmed through dangers which they would have been afraid to face, possessed a charmed life. The Nahak incident alone would have been sufficient to establish his reputation permanently amongst them as a man of exceptional power. But that was only one of many stories which Mr. Paton had to tell of Divine protection in times of grave peril.

Reference has already been made in these pages to two of Mr. Paton's fellow workers, Mr. and Mrs. Mathieson. They were established on the south-west side of Tanna. Visits between the two mission stations were not frequent, for travel overland was often impossible owing to warfare amongst hostile tribes, and at certain seasons of the year tempestuous weather made the journey by boat also impracticable.

This infrequency of communication with his friends was a great trouble to Mr. Paton, partly because intercourse with fellow Christians would have been such a joy to him, but chiefly because they were both in indifferent health and he chafed under his disability to help them.

One day his friends sent him word that they were ill and in need of European food, and they begged him to send them a little flour, if possible. The message could not have come at a more inopportune time. War amongst the natives was just then unusually bitter and desperate, and to attempt to journey across the island would have been to court death. And travel by water seemed equally perilous, for the weather was stormy, and the high seas made it impossible to launch the missionary's boat. But the thought of his friends suffering and in want was unbearable, and he determined he would make an effort to reach them by canoe. It was a desperate venture, and so the natives told him. Stronger testimony of their regard for him there could not be than is evidenced by the fact that notwithstanding the risk, of which they probably knew far more than he did, some of the leading men agreed to lend him one of their best canoes and accompany him on his daring expedition. Amongst them was Manuman—one of the Sacred Men whom he had defeated in the matter of Nahak!

A large, flat-bottomed pot with a close-fitting lid was filled with the precious flour and secured in the centre of the canoe. Other provisions and comforts for the sick friends the voyagers tied to their persons, and then the dangerous journey began. The missionary's bravery is the more apparent when it is known that he could not swim; and the strongest swimmer of them all was placed behind him; so that if the canoe were overturned, as they all expected it would be, the swimmer could seize him and try to struggle with him to the shore.

Drenched with surf, and many times almost swamped and overturned by the great breakers.

the natives bravely kept to their task until they were within two miles of the Mathiesons' mission house. Then, to Mr. Paton's dismay, they ceased paddling, turned the canoe towards the shore and declared they could go no further. Expostulation and entreaty were alike useless. They waited for a favourable opportunity, and then, on a wave that seemed less huge than the rest, they rode shorewards. When the wave broke the occupants of the canoe were thrown into the sea ; but by great good fortune—or was it not rather the special providence of God?—they all managed to scramble to land, with the precious pot of flour uninjured and its contents dry. The natives had landed at a spot where the people were friendly, and they decided to remain there until wind and tide offered them a favourable opportunity to return ; while Mr. Paton, hiring a man to carry his things, set out to walk to the mission house, where he arrived safely to the great joy of his friends.

His stay with them was only a matter of a few hours, and then he had to face the problem of the return journey. This he decided to attempt by land, alone ; and, as a precaution against molestation by unfriendly natives, by night ; for he had learnt the islanders were terribly afraid to be out in the dark. The difficulties of the way can hardly be imagined, but he overcame them all—including one which involved dropping in pitch darkness over a rock of unknown height to the shore below—and eventually reached his home in safety.

The natives were amazed when they heard how he had travelled alone, and so many miles over unknown country in the dark ; and they said more truly than they knew when they ex-

claimed : " Your Jehovah God alone thus protects you and brings you safely home."

That was indeed the whole secret of the intrepid missionary's immunity from harm in the many and varied dangers through which he passed. It has been shown that the perils he was called upon to face were of no ordinary kind ; but amidst them all he knew no fear. He waited only to be assured that the path before him was the path of duty. Once convinced as to that, no danger ever dismayed him. Conscious that God was with him, and persuaded that the Everlasting Arms would sustain him, he went straight on, without doubt and without hesitation, with just this one thought in his heart : " I will trust, and not be afraid."

CHAPTER VII.

"PERPLEXED, BUT NOT IN DESPAIR."

ONE of the greatest difficulties against which Mr. Paton had to contend was the vacillating nature of the natives. At one time profuse in their protestations of affection for himself and regard for the religion he had brought to them, at another they seemed consumed with hatred of him and all his works. It required considerable courage to remain practically alone amongst savages whose temper was so uncertain that they could never be relied upon to maintain the same attitude for two days together, and who placed so little value upon human life that they would kill without the least compunction any who in the most trifling way offended them.

Mr. Paton knew what it was to retire at night at peace with all the world, so far as he was aware, and to be wakened at daybreak by a crowd of armed men who had surrounded his house, headed by a chief who announced that he and his followers had come to take the Missi's life. And be it remembered that this was no idle threat, nor any mere display of force arranged for the purpose of extorting tribute. The men had probably been roused to a frenzy of excitement by the chief, who for reasons of his own wished to get rid of the missionary, and they seriously meant to kill him. Defenceless and helpless, what

could he do? With a prayer to God for help, he began to reason with them, reminding them of the fact that he had tried to do them good and not evil ever since he had first come amongst them, and demanding to know why they sought to injure him.

Some of them were so impressed by his words that at once they admitted themselves in the wrong, and declared they would fight for the missionary and kill all who hated him! But he desired this as little as he wished that he himself should be killed, and so he had to plead with them until they promised that no one should suffer at their hands on his account. The incident is only one of many of the same kind that occurred while Mr. Paton was on Tanna; but it serves to show the mercurial temperament of the natives and the exceeding difficulty of dealing with them.

The reason behind all this opposition was really a tribute to the missionary's work, for it was due to a stirring of conscience amongst these poor benighted savages. They admitted the goodness of the religion that the missionary came to teach them, but they hated it because it made them afraid to do the evil deeds that hitherto they had done with impunity. To Mr. Paton as a man they had no objection whatever; indeed they were shrewd enough to see that his presence amongst them, apart from the "worship," was a distinct gain to them, for he was able to teach them many things that it was to their advantage to know.

They told him as much when a deputation waited on him and urged him to give up the worship of Jehovah and remain amongst them merely as a trader instead of a missionary. And

they nearly broke his heart when some of them who had travelled as far as Sydney reminded him that the people there, who were his own fellow countrymen, professing the same religion that he was trying to teach them, did all sorts of things that he condemned. He met their arguments as best he could, explaining that it was only the godless and careless among his countrymen who lived evil lives; and he told them how impossible it was for him to remain with them except as a teacher of the religion of Jesus Christ.

They accepted the position, and Mr. Paton continued his work; but it was a work in which danger menaced him at every step. It is a literal fact that not for a single hour was his life safe. On one occasion a chief followed him about for four hours with a loaded musket; another day a man suddenly, and for no apparent reason, rushed at him with an axe, and was only prevented from striking him by another native who gallantly defended him from a blow which would probably have meant instant death; and another time he was roused in the night by a chief and his men who were trying to force their way into his house to kill him. They were kept at bay by a retriever dog that had often protected him.

These repeated abortive attempts had, at least, one good effect, for they all helped to confirm the native idea that the Missi had a charmed life. And indeed so he had. It was reported that those who had tried to harm him were "smitten weak with fear"; and that surely was only the unconscious tribute of these savages to the indisputable fact that God's protecting care was over His faithful servant, preserving



WAKENED AT DAYBREAK BY A CROWD OF ARMED FOES.

him from the terror of the night and the peril of the noon-day.

Perhaps the most remarkable proof of this occurred when one day, as the missionary was at work near his house, a party of armed men surrounded him, and, at a given signal, every man's musket was levelled at his head. With a courage that could only have been inspired with a consciousness of the presence of God, Mr. Paton calmly went on with his work as though no one was near. The muskets were lowered, and the would-be murderers retired to a little distance, where they seemed to be discussing amongst themselves as to who should fire the first shot; but nothing happened, and after a while the whole party disappeared.

These, and such as these, were the dangers to which Mr. Paton was daily exposed. He never minimised them, nor did he ever neglect to take every possible precaution against attack; for he had a rooted conviction that only when human help was out of the question could God's protective intervention be expected. Sometimes, indeed, for days together he never dared to move outside the mission house. But when, through no neglect or imprudence of his own, he found himself in dire peril, then God's care was made manifest, and he was delivered.

But difficult as Mr. Paton's position was, owing to the uncertain temper of the natives, it was rendered even more trying through the action of the traders who came to the islands for sandalwood. These men, surely the most abandoned of their kind, treated the natives with utmost cruelty. They did not hesitate to say that their ultimate object was the extermination of the native races of the New Hebrides, in order that

white men might take their places ; and one of the methods by which they tried to attain this end was as fiendish as the mind of man could imagine. The captains of some of the trading vessels which had cast anchor off Port Resolution called on Mr. Paton, and one of them told him that they had devised a plan which would quickly bring about the end they had in view. They intended, so this human fiend declared, to infect the natives with measles ; and they hoped by this means so to decimate them that their conquest would be an easy matter.

It is hardly conceivable that men could be so brutal as thus deliberately to plan the death of their fellow creatures, but the fact remains that these abandoned wretches actually carried out their vile scheme. By the promise of a present which was never given, they induced a young chief named Kepuku to go on board one of their vessels. They placed him in the hold, where some natives were already lying ill with measles, and there they kept him, without food, for twenty-four hours. Then they put him ashore, at a point far distant from his home, and left him to make his way back to his friends as best he could. He reached his own tribe ill and terrified, and brought with him a disease which proved a veritable scourge amongst the people.

The ravages wrought amongst the natives were appalling. Men, women and children were stricken. The epidemic invaded the mission house, and thirteen of Mr. Paton's native teachers died. The rest, with the exception of faithful old Abraham, forsook him at the earliest opportunity, and went back in the mission schooner *John Knox* to Aneityum.

With the help of Mr. and Mrs. Johnston, Mr. Paton did his utmost for the stricken people,

carrying food and medicine to all whom he could reach and telling them what to do to alleviate their sufferings. But in many cases the poor creatures, driven frantic by this new and mysterious sickness, would not listen to him, and adopted forms of treatment of their own with disastrous results. A favourite—and generally fatal—palliative was to jump into the sea. Some sought to cool their fevered bodies by digging holes in the earth and lying in them; and often enough they died where they lay, and the holes in which they had sought relief became their graves.

And, from the missionary point of view, the worst feature of the whole sad business was that all this trouble and suffering had been brought upon the natives by white men. It was too much to expect them to differentiate between trader and missionary—the race to which the Missi belonged was the race which had brought death and destruction and unparalleled misery to the islands; and henceforth all white men would be regarded by them with bitter hatred. The result was that all the missionary had gained of respect and confidence was swept away; his influence over the people was gone; and what had, even at the best, been little better than passive tolerance of his presence and his teaching, became active and bitter resentment.

This resentment showed itself in many ways. One of its earliest manifestations was an attack upon Mr. Johnston which, although he was saved from actual injury at the time, led to an illness which ultimately caused his death.

The traders, not content with the mischief they had already wrought (Mr. Paton estimated that the terrible epidemic introduced by them

had swept away a third of the entire population of Tanna), tried to stir up the feelings of the natives against the missionaries by suggesting that all the sickness was caused by them, and by the worship of Jehovah, and that they ought to be killed. They further hinted that they would be willing to trade with the natives for tobacco and pipes, powder, caps, balls and muskets—the things they most coveted; but that before doing so the Missi must either be murdered or driven from the island. Thus by every means possible to unscrupulous men the minds of the natives were inflamed against Mr. Paton.

Then, just when the feeling against the missionary was at its height, by a most unhappy coincidence the islands were devastated by a terrible hurricane. The traders assured the credulous natives that this was a visitation of their gods, who thus showed their displeasure at having been forsaken in favour of the "Jehovah worship."

The natives, infuriated by what they believed to be a convincing proof that the presence of Mr. Paton was a source of danger, made one more attempt on his life. He heard one day an unusual commotion amongst his goats; and on going to the goat house to investigate the cause, found himself suddenly surrounded by a band of armed men who had adopted this ruse in order to get him into their power.

It was a moment of terrible danger. Every man's weapon was upraised to strike the one defenceless man standing in their midst, and a single blow from any one of their murderous clubs would have killed him. But with sublime, God-inspired courage he faced them and began calmly to point out the sin of what they proposed

to do. He assured them that he was not afraid to die—that death only meant for him a sudden transition to joy and happiness greater than any he had ever known on earth; but that so long as they wished it he was still willing to remain amongst them to minister to their well being. Then he began to pray aloud for God's blessing upon them, and as he prayed, one by one they went away till he was left alone, once again to thank God for His protecting love.

It was at this time—in May, 1861—that two devoted missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon, suffered martyrdom on Erromanga—victims of as pitiful a tragedy as is recorded in all missionary history. A sandal-wood trader took advantage of this tragedy to bring a party of Erromangans one night to Tanna, their sole object being to incite the natives to follow their example and kill Mr. Paton and his friends as a preliminary to ridding the whole of the New Hebrides of all who professed the Christian religion. They did not succeed in their endeavour, but the visit was not without its effect, and it brought appreciably nearer the final catastrophe which was already almost within sight.

It was at this point that Mr. Paton began seriously to consider whether it would not be wise to abandon altogether his brave attempt to Christianize this savage people. Most men would have felt that the limit of human endurance had been reached long before; but so loth was he to give up the struggle that even when, as now, it seemed almost hopeless to continue, he resolved to hold on and try yet a little longer to win the Tannese for God.

A man of war under the command of Commodore Seymour visited the islands at this juncture.



" EVERY MAN'S WEAPON WAS UPRAISED TO STRIKE."

The Commodore strongly urged Mr. Paton to leave with him, and offered to take him to Auckland or any other place he cared to choose ; but the missionary spirit proved too strong. Broken though he was in health, wearied with constant anxiety and worn out with continual watching against his enemies—for a long time he had scarcely ever dared to take his clothes off at night—he declined the kindly offer, and decided to remain on the island. He put aside all thought of his own safety, and only remembered that his removal would mean the entire break-up of the mission. All the property he had accumulated through the generosity of friends at home for the purpose of carrying on his work would be lost ; the mission premises would be destroyed ; the good effect already produced at such pains upon the natives would die out ; and those who had been faithful to the Missi would be subject to bitter persecution. So, as long as life was possible for him on Tanna, at whatever cost of privation and suffering to himself, he resolved that he would not leave the place to which he believed God had called him.

Everything that mortal man could do to win the goodwill of the natives was done by Mr. Paton ; but instead of improving, matters grew steadily worse. The whole of Tanna was soon seething with war ; and the unhappy Missi found that he was in a great measure the innocent cause of it—to his intense sorrow. One faction, headed by a powerful inland chief named Ian, took the part of the missionary and his fellow workers, urging them to remain on the island and promising them help and protection. The other faction, under the leadership of two chiefs named Miaki and Nouka, declared they would not have the

Missi and the worship any longer in the harbour ; and if Ian wished him to remain on the island he must take him away to his own territory, far inland. To this Ian replied that the land in the harbour on which the church and the mission house had been built had originally belonged to his tribe, from whom it had been obtained by trickery ; and that therefore he had the right to allow the Missi to remain on it if he wished to do so.

Here were all the elements for war ; and the peace-loving missionary speedily found himself the centre of a conflict which he would have given anything to avoid. For a time Ian kept the upper hand. His large following of well-armed men held the enemies of the Missi at bay. One day he prevailed on Mr. Paton to accompany him to the village square, one half of which was occupied by Ian's men, armed and ready for battle. Facing them were the men of the other camp, obviously in a state of alarm.

Ina proudly pointed out that he held the stronger position ; and with a good deal of native eloquence he urged Mr. Paton to agree to an immediate onslaught on the foe. He promised literally to sweep out of existence all opposition to the worship of Jehovah then and there ; but at the same time he pointed out that if permission to fight were withheld their foe would know that thereafter they might work their wicked will with impunity, and the inevitable end of the matter would be the death of the missionary and the destruction of his mission.

The position was truly a terrible one, but the brave Missi never wavered. He declared without hesitation that whatever happened he would never allow the natives to fight on his account.

Ian, grieved and disappointed, told him his decision would mean not only his own death, but the death of all who had accepted his teaching. Miaki and Nouka, however, in their relief at the turn events had taken, protested that they would not again molest the missionary, and that he and all his converts should remain in peace. A ceremonious interchange of gifts concluded the conference; but everyone knew that the truce was only temporary, and that sooner or later hostilities would be renewed.

Shortly after these events Ian fell sick and died. His enemies had declared they would kill him by Nahak. As a matter of fact he died from poison; but the superstitious natives were ready enough to believe that the sorcery of their Sacred Men had killed him. The inland people came down to the harbour to avenge his death. Mr. Paton did his utmost to prevent war, but without avail. Both parties sent word that if the Missi and Abraham remained in the mission house they would not be harmed. How far the word of the other side was to be relied upon may be gathered from the fact that Miaki, who had all along protested his friendliness, actually persuaded his enemies to make common cause with him against the missionary, and seek to bring about his death.

So the opposing parties combined forces, and made a united attack upon the mission premises. The store room was rifled, Abraham's house was pillaged, and many of Mr. Paton's books were torn and thrown away. On the morning after this attack the enemy returned in greater force than ever. After making a most heroic effort to save his home and the mission property, Mr. Paton was forced to fly for his life. Everything

he possessed on Tanna was lost except the clothes he was actually wearing, his Bible, some translations of the Scriptures into Tannese, and a pair of blankets. The monetary value of all that was sacrificed to savage greed and cruelty that day was probably not less than six hundred pounds.

Mr. Paton was now homeless and destitute, surrounded by a horde of savages thirsting for his life. That night he spent hidden in the branches of a large chestnut tree, to which he had been guided by the son of a friendly chief. To most men it would have been a terrifying experience thus to spend hour after hour in the darkness, with the yells of the savages and the ominous discharge of their muskets making night hideous. Yet he says, "I sat there among the branches, as safe in the arms of Jesus. Never, in all my sorrows, did my Lord draw nearer to me, and speak more soothingly in my soul than when the moonlight flickered amongst those chestnut leaves, and the night air played on my throbbing brow, as I told all my heart to Jesus. If it be to glorify my God I will not grudge to spend many nights alone in such a tree, to feel again my Saviour's spiritual presence, to enjoy His consoling fellowship."

Mr. Paton's only hope of safety now lay in being able to reach Mr. Mathieson—and this involved a dangerous journey overland or an equally hazardous journey by sea. The latter alternative was in the end decided upon, and the missionary, with Abraham and the few others who still remained faithful to him, set out in a canoe, which, after infinite trouble, had been obtained from the natives, Mr. Paton's own canoe having been stolen along with his other property.

When the little craft got away from the shelter of the harbour and encountered the full force of the heavy sea, it soon became apparent to the voyagers that they had undertaken an impossible task. They could make no headway against the huge waves that threatened every moment to engulf them—nor could they regain the shore. Their position was rendered the more difficult and dangerous from the fact that, in order to escape the notice of the natives, they had been obliged to make their venture by night. In the darkness, at the mercy of wind and wave, they tossed about for five hours, expecting every moment to be their last. Then, just as dawn was breaking, they managed to reach the shore, at the point from which they had started. Thus all their toil and danger had gone for nothing; and they were compelled to face the risk of a journey overland, during every moment of which they would be at the mercy of savages who were eager for their death.

After many delays the little party started on their perilous tramp across the island. Time after time they were assailed, and always, in circumstances that can only be described as miraculous, they escaped. Sometimes a group of natives would surround them with levelled muskets, threatening to shoot, but not a shot was ever fired. Why? There is no possible answer to that question save that God prevented the tragedy that seemed imminent. Once the branch of a tree deflected a killing stone flung with deadly aim at Mr. Paton's head by a native concealed in the bush; again and again, a spear poised ready in the hand of a savage, a club held threateningly over the missionary's head, would be lowered for no reason whatever save that the

power or the wish to kill was suddenly taken away.

How Mr. Paton withstood the strain, and was able to struggle on is best explained by his own description of one of the many terrible experiences through which he passed at this time. He was fleeing from his cruel pursuers when they overtook him, and encircling him in a deadly ring, urged one another to strike the first blow or fire the first shot. "My heart," he says, "rose up to the Lord Jesus. I saw Him watching all the scene. My peace came back to me like a wave from God. I realized that I was immortal till my Master's work was done."

At last, after having passed through perils innumerable, and having endured such hunger and fatigue as few men could have survived, Mr. Paton and his followers safely reached the Mathiesons. Mr. Paton found his friends weak and ill and in great distress, having recently buried their only child. But they were overjoyed to see him, and the united party agreed that, whatever happened, they would keep together to the end.

The danger had not in the least diminished, and the distressed missionaries lived in perpetual fear; yet amidst it all their faith remained as strong as ever, and they maintained their efforts to convert those whose hatred was so bitter, by preaching the Gospel wherever and whenever they had opportunity.

They fully realized the hopelessness of attempting to remain on Tanna, and agreed that at the first opportunity they would leave the island. But such an opportunity was not easy to find. Before leaving his own station at Port Resolution Mr. Paton had entrusted to one of the native

chiefs letters to be given to the captains of any vessels that might call there, explaining his danger and promising a handsome reward for their rescue. He learned afterwards that vessels did call; but beyond taking the missionary's stolen property from the natives in exchange for arms and ammunition the heartless captains did nothing.

Mr. Paton's old enemy, Miaki, had followed him with a number of his men to Mr. Mathieson's, and many more attempts were made to kill him; but again and again it was proved that "the hosts of God encamp around the dwellings of the just"; and at last these persecuted but never despairing servants of God heard the welcome shout "Sail O!" The vessel proved to be the *Blue Bell*, under command of Captain Hastings, who had been sent by the owner, at the earnest request of Doctors Geddie and Inglis, to rescue the missionaries.

Even now disaster seemed to follow them; for owing to various unavoidable delays night descended before they were able finally to get away in the boats, with the result that they lost sight of the vessel, and drifted about for hours in the darkness. It was towards the evening of the following day when at last they sighted the vessel and thankfully got on board. Captain Hastings set sail at once for Aneityum, where the rescued party were safely landed the next day.

Though the work on Tanna was, for the time being, suspended, Mr. Paton never intended that it should be entirely abandoned; and in spite of all he had suffered there it was his hope and intention to return whenever an opportunity presented itself. But in the meantime he had a story to tell which was to thrill all who heard

it, and to be the means of awakening in the hearts of Christian people at home and abroad a hitherto unrealized sense of their responsibility for those who were dwelling in those dark places of the earth which, until the Gospel light dispelled the gloom, must continue to be "full of the habitations of cruelty."

CHAPTER VIII

TO AUSTRALIA AND THE HOME LAND

THE painful experiences of those who had tried so heroically and at such terrible cost to Christianize the natives of the New Hebrides had conclusively proved that two essentials must be provided before the work could be resumed with any prospect of success. One of these was a mission ship—a vessel that should be devoted exclusively to the service of the mission. The other was an increased number of men, willing to give themselves wholly to the work of teaching the people.

In order to secure these very necessary means to the end in view a considerable sum of money would have to be raised. The money needed could only be provided by getting people interested in the matter. Mr. Paton never doubted that once the need was realized the money required would speedily be forthcoming; and he yielded to the wishes of his friends on Aneityum, and agreed to undertake, not a begging tour, but an informative and explanatory expedition to the people of Australia. He has emphasized over and over again that he never asked for money; he simply told his story, and left his hearers to do whatever they felt disposed; and the result showed overwhelmingly how God puts it into the hearts of His own people to meet the necessities of those who are doing His work.

Mr. Paton lost no time in carrying out the task that had been assigned to him. There happened to be just then a vessel lying at Aneityum—one of many engaged in the sandal wood trade. This vessel was about to sail direct to Sydney, and Mr. Paton arranged with the captain to take him as a passenger for ten pounds. The voyage was made wretchedly uncomfortable by the captain, who, like most of those engaged in the trade in which he was employed, proved to be brutal and tyrannical. The distance between Aneityum and Sydney is nearly fourteen hundred miles ; and during the whole of the voyage the missionary never once had his clothes off. Most of the time he spent on deck, and when stress of weather compelled him to seek cover, his only shelter was a place where the sandal wood was stored.

The lights of Sydney as the vessel came to anchor at midnight in the harbour were indeed welcome ; but the heart of the missionary was heavy with anxiety as he remembered that not a soul in all the city knew him ; that he would land in a few hours, a stranger amongst strangers, to plead for a new cause.

His only credential was a letter of introduction given to him by one of his brother missionaries. This he presented without delay, and the friend to whom it was addressed lost no time in introducing him to the ministers of many of the churches in the city. To his dismay these ministers, though exceedingly kind and cordial, one and all found it quite impossible to allow him the use of their pulpits, or even to address the children in their Sunday Schools. He was almost in despair ; for without publicity he could do nothing ; and, except through the medium of the

churches, he knew not how to make his mission known.

In his distress he was led to call upon a retired missionary—the Rev. A. Buzacott—who had formerly represented the London Missionary Society on Raratonga, and he was able to explain the hitherto inexplicable attitude of his ministerial brethren. It seems that the friend who had introduced Mr. Paton to them was just then engaged in a bitter newspaper controversy, in which he had challenged the doctrine of the ministers and accused them of heterodoxy! No wonder, then, that they viewed Mr. Paton with suspicion and closed their pulpits against him!

The only course possible to Mr. Paton was to seek to make friends for himself on independent lines. This he proceeded to do; and the Divine leading in which he so implicitly trusted brought him into contact with good Christian folk through whose influence he hoped to get a hearing amongst the people of Sydney. But when a week went by and no opportunity had offered he began to despair. Then, on the following Sunday afternoon, he was led to enter the Sunday School of a church that he was passing. He found the minister addressing the children. At the close of the address Mr. Paton asked that he might be permitted to speak. After some demur the minister consented; and in the course of a ten minutes' talk he had so interested the minister as well as the children that the former invited him to preach in his Church that evening. So at last the work was begun—a work whose far-reaching influence is felt to this day in all parts of the civilized world.

Through the kindly interest of this friendly minister Mr. Paton gained an entrance to nearly

every Congregational and Presbyterian Church in Sydney. At his request an Honorary Committee of Advice was formed, and an Honorary Treasurer appointed, to take charge of subscriptions which were now coming in freely.

From Sydney Mr. Paton went to Victoria. News of his good work had preceded him, and he found none of the difficulty that he had had to contend with in the early days of his work at Sydney. Hospitality—that delightful feature of colonial life—was offered him almost everywhere he went, so that his personal expenses were small ; and nearly all the money he gathered in connection with his mission was therefore available for the fund that was now rapidly accumulating for the mission ship which he so ardently longed to provide.

At this time—and indeed throughout his missionary life—the question of personal expenditure was a trouble to him. Every penny subscribed for his beloved mission was regarded by him as a sacred trust from God ; and it was difficult sometimes to induce him to sanction even necessary expenditure in connection with his work. He could seldom, for instance, be persuaded to incur the cost of a telegram, however urgent the message to be sent. “ Wouldn’t a postcard do ? ” he would ask. “ It would save the mission money.” And when he was quite an old man—long past three score and ten—a friend reported having met him on a tramp of five miles to a township where he had to address a meeting, to save the expense of driving.

His travels in the Australian bush were full of incident. He found himself on one occasion floundering in a swamp, in the darkness of night, and there he must have perished miserably if

men passing at a little distance had not heard his cries for assistance and rushed to his rescue. The roads between the townships fifty years ago were usually the merest tracks, and sometimes scarcely that ; and as many of his journeys were made quite alone it was often difficult for him to avoid losing his way. To do this in a country where it was possible to travel a score of miles without passing a single house or meeting a solitary human being was no small calamity, especially when, as was usually the case, he was pressed for time, and had as much as he could do to get to his next halting-place by the hour appointed for a meeting.

Frequently it happened that the settlers were willing to drive him from one settlement to another ; but sometimes when they were unable to do this, and the distance was too great for him to walk with the heavy baggage he was obliged to carry, he had to hire a conveyance. Once when he did this his driver badly deceived him. The journey before him was long and exceedingly rough, but the man assured him that the horses were quite fresh and equal to their task. They started off in fine style, but after travelling a few miles the poor beasts seemed distressed ; and ultimately the driver was obliged to confess that they could go no further. They had already travelled over forty miles that day ; but, tempted by the price which Mr. Paton had offered, he had decided to try to make the poor beasts accomplish this further task. He had, however, come prepared for eventualities ; for when it became clear that the night must be spent in the open, he produced the necessaries for an impromptu camp ! Setting fire to a fallen tree near by, he proceeded to make tea in the fashion

approved of the Australian squatter, and Mr. Paton philosophically partook of the rough and ready meal that was presently prepared, and then settled down for the night.

Sleep, however, was out of the question. The wild creatures of the bush kept up an incessant noise, and myriads of mosquitos tormented the poor missionary without mercy. After a time Mr. Paton noticed a light in the far distance. Rousing his companion, who was undeservedly sleeping the sleep of the just, he enquired what it could be. The man thought it was probably from the bush-shed of a sheep farmer who had been tempted to settle in the neighbourhood by the luxuriant grass growing on the swampy land. He said he could easily, by the leading of the light, find his way to the shed, and Mr. Paton agreed to let him try. So, leaving their goods beside the burning tree, they started off. The driver was right in his conjecture. They reached the shed in safety; and, despite the very unconventional hour of their call, they received a hearty welcome from the farmer and his family, who listened with interest to all Mr. Paton had to tell them of his mission and joined with him in worship. Then, after a hearty meal, they went back to their camp, guided thither by the still burning fire, and next morning set off again on their interrupted journey, reaching their destination without further mishap.

On another occasion, for a journey, unaccompanied, of some twenty-two miles through the bush, a generous hearted lady offered him the loan of a horse. Mr. Paton had had little experience as a rider, and that little had left with him an unpleasant memory of physical discomfort, which made him very dubious about accepting the offer! However, he finally agreed to the

ride, albeit with much misgiving. His mount had been bred as a race-horse, but the lady assured him that it was a perfectly safe animal ; and at last, outwardly very grateful, but inwardly much perturbed as to the probable outcome of the rash undertaking, he set off.

So unaccustomed was he to the saddle that, with an eye to his own comfort, he proceeded at a very slow pace, keeping his steed well in hand. He had not got far on the road when he was overtaken by three gentlemen riding in his direction. Seeing that he was a novice they gave him some useful hints, and invited him to remain in their company so long as they were travelling the same road. But he explained that he was obliged to go so slowly that he would prove a serious hindrance to them ; so, with mutual good wishes, they rode on, and soon left him in the rear.

But the sight of those other horses forging on ahead proved too much for the racing instincts of Mr. Paton's mount, and suddenly setting back his ears he set off at a smart pace to overtake the others. This he very quickly did, his rider meantime making frantic but quite ineffectual attempts to hold him in. The riders in front, looking back and seeing what had happened, made a clear space for the runaway to pass ; and then closing in, tried to overtake him. But the sound of the padding hoofs behind him only served to make the race-horse increase his speed, and he tore along, his rider having all he could do to hold on.

To add to the difficulty, the rumble of an approaching storm began to make itself heard, and presently down came the rain in a deluge, with an accompaniment of thunder and lightning which frightened the horse to a frenzy. Mr. Paton was soon soaked to the skin, and his hat,

which he had jammed hard on his head at an early stage of the mad ride, was reduced to a pulp.

The horse tore on, now entirely beyond the control of his rider, but steering himself cleverly past all the dangers of projecting tree trunks and other obstacles, until he reached a clearing, at the far end of which was a farmhouse. The house was evidently his objective. He made straight for it, and his helpless rider was conscious of a conviction that he would be dashed to pieces when the animal ended his headlong career by a collision with a stone wall.

The approach of the runaway had been seen from the house, and one of the men rushing out was in time to throw open a gate and make a dash for the bridle, which he seized as the horse sped past him. His efforts, added to those of Mr. Paton, brought the animal to a standstill.

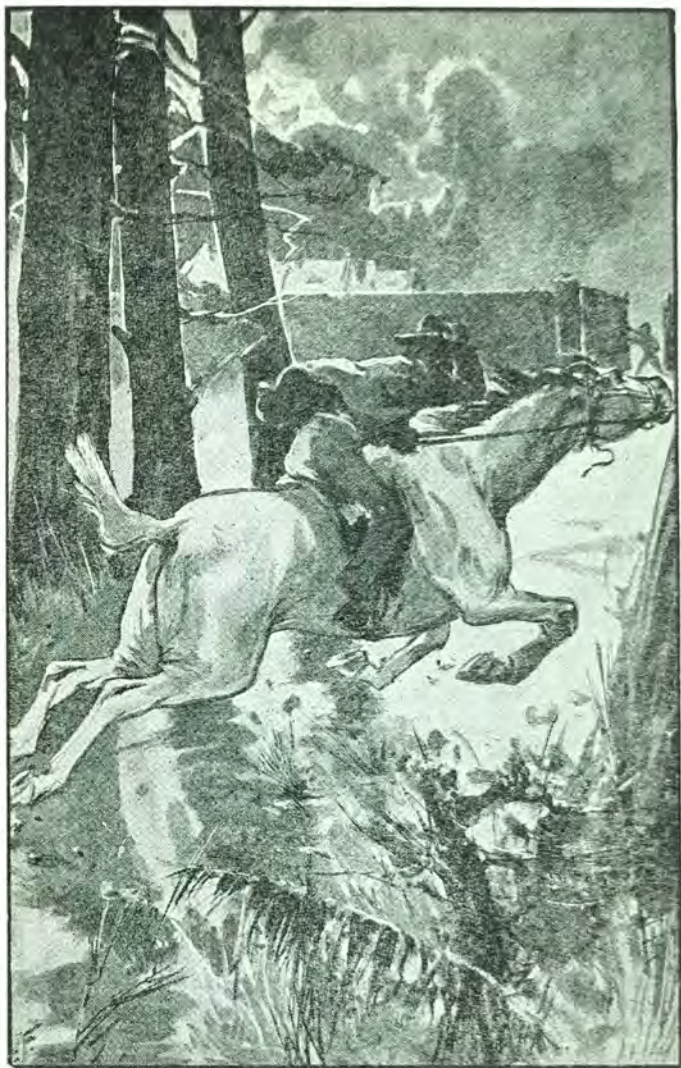
The man's comment on what he regarded as the reckless escapade either of a drunkard or a madman was more forcible than polite. The poor rider's deplorable condition—drenched with rain, bespattered with mud, and almost speechless from the nervous strain of his terrifying experience—tended to confirm the stableman's suspicion as to his soberness or his sanity; and when, on being lifted from the saddle, Mr. Paton's limbs refused to support him and he fell helpless in the mud, the evidence was complete. In the stableman's opinion he was obviously intoxicated. By this time the members of the family had arrived. They were shocked beyond measure; but common humanity demanded that the poor victim of a sad failing should receive hospitality; so he was taken into the house, supplied with a suit of dry clothes many sizes too large for him, and warmed and fed.

As soon as he was sufficiently restored the stranger was able to prove that he was both sane and sober, all evidence to the contrary notwithstanding; and when the story of his mad ride was told he was overwhelmed with sympathy and with apologies. The meeting which had had such a painful prelude was duly held, and produced an excellent impression, and next day he left the farmhouse with a hearty invitation to come again. Twice afterwards he visited the house, and its inmates were amongst the staunchest friends and supporters of him and his mission.

Opposition he met with in plenty during his travels, and it was quite wonderful how he overcame it, and turned foes into friends. A rough, swearing Colonial, who at first turned him from his door, recalled his words, received him as a guest, and gave him, when he left, a cheque for fifty pounds. And this case was typical of many.

One of Mr. Paton's happiest inspirations in connection with his projected mission ship was a plan for making children shareholders in it. The price of each share in what he called the "Great Shipping Company for Jesus" was sixpence; and every child subscriber received a printed acknowledgment of the number of shares he owned. The idea became amazingly popular. Thousands of shares were subscribed for, and the share "certificates" were highly prized.

In the midst of his work Mr. Paton was saddened by hearing of the death of Mr. and Mrs. Mathieson, whose health had been thoroughly undermined by their terrible experiences on Tanna. The members of the Mission were now reduced to four, and Mr. Paton realized that the people to whom



A RIDE ON A RUNAWAY STEED IN A STORM.

he was appealing might reasonably urge that for so small a number it was scarcely worth while to incur the expense of a mission ship. It was quite characteristic of him that his way of meeting this objection was not to abandon the idea of the ship but to get more missionaries !

With five thousand pounds in hand he completed his tour. When he returned to Melbourne and later to Sydney to report the success he had achieved, his friends in both places confirmed his own view that the work had the manifest approval of God, and he was urged to go home to Scotland and plead there for men to accompany him to the New Hebrides as missionaries.

Accordingly, on May 16th, 1863, he sailed for London. The voyage occupied three months and ten days, and was without incident save that during a terrific thunderstorm the ship was struck by lightning, which flung the sailors to the deck, and twisted and melted the copper on the bulwarks. The vessel cast anchor in the London East India Dock on August 26th, at 5.30 in the evening ; and less than four hours later Mr. Paton was in the train on his way to Scotland. He had never been in the metropolis before, and no doubt the temptation to linger, if only for a day, to see some of the sights of the city, was great ; but now, as ever, duty was paramount, and he hastened on his journey without losing a moment.

The next morning he was in Castle Douglas, arranging with the Convener of the Foreign Missions Committee of the Reformed Presbyterian Church for a meeting. The Committee met shortly afterwards, and expressed warmest approval of all he had done, and of all the plans for future work that he had laid before them. Arrangements were made for him to address every

Sunday School connected with the Church, and everything possible was done to help him.

The Church made him Moderator of their Supreme Court—the highest honour in their power to bestow—and passed the following resolution :—

“ It is with feelings of no ordinary pleasure that we behold present at this meeting one of our most devoted missionaries. The result of Mr. Paton's appeals in Australia has been unprecedented in the history of this mission. It appears in the shape of £4,500 added to the funds of the New Hebrides Mission, besides over £300 for native teachers, to be paid yearly in £5 contributions, and all expenses met. The Spirit of God must have been poured out upon the inhabitants of the colonies in leading them to make such a noble offering as this to the cause of missions, and in making our missionary the honoured instrument God employed in drawing forth the sympathy and liberality of the colonies. Now by the good hand of God upon him, he holds the most honoured position of Moderator of the Church.”

The tour of the churches arranged for Mr. Paton took place under conditions of considerable physical discomfort. He was naturally anxious to lose no time ; and although winter had set in before he had finished, he would not permit stress of weather to deter him. The winter was a severe one, and he found himself obliged to travel from Wick to Thurso as an outside passenger on the mail coach. So intense was the cold on this journey that one of his feet was frost bitten. At Thurso he was weather-bound for a week, and during that time his foot remained numb from the effect of the frost.

When the weather moderated he started by steamer for Stromness; but hardly had the vessel put to sea when the gale renewed its fury. Every one on board was ordered below, and the hatches were fastened down; but Mr. Paton found his fellow passengers such undesirable company that he persuaded the captain to let him come up on deck; and there, lashed to the mast, and with a tarpaulin fastened over him to protect him from the worst of the storm, he crouched for the remainder of the voyage.

At Stromness he managed to conduct two meetings, though his foot was now causing him acute agony; but other meetings that he had hoped to hold at Dingwall and elsewhere had to be abandoned, the snow being so deep that it was impossible to get farther north. The injury to his foot was so severe that for two months he was incapacitated, and it was at one time feared that amputation would be necessary; but ultimately the trouble yielded to treatment, although for long afterwards he felt the effects of it.

In spite of this grievous interruption the tour was a great success. The "share" system which had proved such a help in the colonies in securing funds for the mission ship was adopted even more enthusiastically by the Scottish children, and was eventually established on such a firm basis that it yielded a steady yearly income of £250. And—a cause for even greater thankfulness to the devoted man who had been so earnestly pleading for help—four new missionaries offered themselves for service from Scotland, and three from Nova Scotia.

Further cause for joy and gratitude was found in the fact that during this visit to the homeland God led him to one who was ready to give herself

to him as his helpmeet in all the arduous work that awaited him. In Miss Margaret Whitecross he found an ideal sharer of every hope and aspiration. They were married before he left Scotland in 1864, and so began a long and happy wedded life, greatly blessed of God.

As soon as his mission at home was accomplished Mr. Paton was eager to return to the work that awaited him in the far distant New Hebrides, and arrangements for leaving Scotland were made with the least possible delay. He felt acutely the parting from his father and mother, for he knew that he could hardly hope to meet them again in this life ; but the farewells, painful and affecting as they were bound to be, were over at last ; and he and Mrs. Paton found themselves on board the *Crest of The Wave*, bound for Australia. The voyage occupied ninety-five days, and they landed safely at Sydney on January 17th, 1865.

During the year and eight months of Mr. Paton's absence, matters connected with his mission had progressed rapidly in Australia ; and the mission ship, for which he had worked so hard—christened the *Dayspring*—had not only been launched, but had done some very useful work. He was naturally anxious to see the vessel, representative as it was to him of so much prayer and thought and labour. He found her, he says, " a beautiful two-masted brig, with a deck-house (added when she first arrived at Melbourne), and in every way suitable for our necessities ; a thing of beauty, a white-winged angel set a-floating by the pennies of the children to bear the Gospel to the sin-darkened, but sun-lit, Southern Isles. To me she became a sort of living thing, the impersonation of a living, throbbing love in the hearts of thousands of 'shareholders' ; and I said, with

a deep, indestructible faith, 'The Lord *has* provided—the Lord *will* provide.' "

Mr. Paton had, indeed, need of a strong faith ; for almost before he had set foot upon Australian soil he was confronted with a difficulty that to a man of less courageous spirit would have seemed overwhelming. The captain of the *Dayspring*, which had arrived three days previously in Sydney harbour, called to tell him that he was entirely without funds for current expenses, and that the crew had not received the wages due to them. What was he to do ? To borrow was impossible without mortgaging the ship ; and unless money to the extent of some hundreds of pounds could be raised at once, he could see nothing for it but to sell her !

Mr. Paton did not take such a gloomy view of the position as this very pessimistic captain, though he fully realized the gravity of the crisis. He advanced fifty pounds from his private purse to meet the most pressing demands, and obtained a day or two's grace in which to try to make some arrangement for tiding over the difficulty that had so unexpectedly arisen. And it was no slight difficulty. In all, something like fourteen hundred pounds would be needed to free the ship from debt and provide for the expenses of her next trip to the New Hebrides.

It is hardly believable, yet it is the painful truth, that his appeal for help met at first with a very feeble response. He even found it necessary to explain that the poor missionaries, out of their meagre salaries, were quite unable to pay for the upkeep of the vessel ; and the first subscription he received came not from any friend of former days, but from a stranger—the captain of a ship lying in the harbour, who, having heard Mr.

Paton's appeal to the congregation of a little mission church, came to the vestry afterwards and gave him a cheque for fifty pounds.

Mr. Paton told the story of that cheque to the next congregation he addressed, with the result that its members, touched by the example thus shown them by a stranger, gave generously in sums varying from ten pounds downwards. Once the people began to give they continued to do so ; and in less than a week over four hundred and fifty pounds were subscribed. With this sum in hand Mr. Paton sailed in the *Dayspring* for Tasmania, and thence to Adelaide, where he found many new and generous friends ready to help him. At that place he left the ship, which returned direct to Sydney, while he himself went on by steamer to Melbourne. There the deficiency still remaining was made up ; and when he got back to Sydney he was able to report that during his tour he had raised over seventeen hundred pounds, so that the *Dayspring* was able to resume her work free of debt.

It was a sordid matter, and one that ought never to have been permitted to harass the man who had accomplished so grand a work in bringing the mission-ship into being ; but it had its good side, after all ; for it proved anew what faith can do, and showed convincingly how completely God justifies those who put their whole trust in Him. From that time onwards there was no difficulty about funds for the *Dayspring*. The Presbyterian Church and Sunday Schools of Australia made the matter their care, and Mr. Paton suffered no further anxiety with regard to the financial responsibility for this part of his work. His own view of the matter was that it materially helped forward the cause of his mission ;

for it roused people in all parts of Australia to a hitherto unrealized sense of their duty, by bringing home to them the claims of those to whom, if the *Dayspring* had not been available, the Gospel of salvation might never have been carried.

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CHAPTER IX

BACK TO THE NEW HEBRIDES

MR. PATON found the trials and troubles incidental to the establishment of his mission many and various. Like other pioneers in the mission field, he and his fellow-workers were misunderstood by some, and maligned by others. More than one baseless and cruel charge was brought against him, and one in particular caused him much grief. The circumstances that led up to it occurred during his first visit to the New Hebrides after his return to Australia. H.M.S. *Curacoa* had been on a punitive expedition to the Islands, the Commodore, Sir William Wiseman, having considered it necessary to punish the natives, who had robbed and murdered traders and other visitors to their shores.

That the savages had received provocation was probable enough; but they took their revenge without discrimination; and it was necessary to teach them that treachery towards all and sundry was not an allowable retaliation for particular injustices. Of course all this had nothing whatever to do with the missionaries—except in so far as the action of the Commodore was likely to make their position on the islands safer and more tolerable than it had previously been. They had no power either to cause or to prevent the presence of the man of war, and they were

not in any way responsible for what was done. Imagine then the indignation and dismay of Mr. Paton when on his return to Sydney he found the whole city in a ferment over the publication of some illustrated articles—emanating apparently from one of the officers on board the warship—which described with much wealth of circumstantial detail a horrible “massacre of the innocents,” the shore of the islands being depicted as strewn with the bodies of dead and dying natives, while the *Dayspring* sheltered behind the *Curacoa*, which was pouring shot and shell amongst the helpless natives, under the direction of the missionaries !

So far as it concerned itself with the men who had gone to the island and remained there at the risk of their lives to proclaim the Gospel of peace, the whole story was so wildly improbable that it is difficult to imagine how reasonable men and women could have brought themselves to believe it. But the fact remains that this base product of a lively imagination was accepted without question ; and the story gained credence so rapidly that by the time Mr. Paton reached Sydney he found himself probably one of the best hated men who had ever set foot in that city.

Mr. Paton at once flung back the slanderous lie in the faces of those who had uttered it, and obtained an apology from the editor of the paper who had been so shamelessly deceived ; but he was too late to prevent the stupid story from being cabled to other countries, and for a time the New Hebrides Mission suffered severely. The author of the mischief was never discovered, although the Commodore did his best to find him. The Mission Synod reported officially on the matter as follows :

" When the New Hebrides Missionaries were assembled at their annual meeting on Aneityum, H.M.S. *Curacoa*, Sir William Wiseman, Bart., C.B., arrived in the harbour to investigate many grievances of white men and trading vessels among the islands. A petition having been previously presented to the Governor in Sydney, as drawn out by the Revs. Messrs. Geddie and Copeland, after the murder of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon on Erromanga, requesting an investigation into the sad event, and the removal of a sandal-wood trader, a British subject, who had excited the natives to it, the missionaries gave the Commodore a memorandum on the loss of life and property that had been sustained by the mission on Tanna, Erromanga and Efaté. He requested the missionaries to supply him with interpreters, and requested the *Dayspring* to accompany him with them. The request was at once acceded to. Mr. Paton was appointed to act as interpreter for Tanna, Mr. Gordon for Erromanga, and Mr. Morrison for Efaté.

" At each of these islands the Commodore summoned the principal chiefs near the harbours to appear before him, and explained to them that his visit was to inquire into the complaints British subjects had made against them, and to see if they had any against British subjects ; and when he had found out the truth he would punish those who had done the wrong, and protect those who had suffered wrong. The Queen did not send him to compel them to become Christians, nor to punish them for not becoming Christians. She left them to do as they liked in this matter ; but she was very angry at them because they had encouraged her subjects to live amongst them, sold their land and promised

to protect them, and afterwards murdered some of them and attempted to murder others, and stolen and destroyed their property; that the inhabitants of these islands were talked of over the whole world for their treachery, cruelty and murders, and that the Queen would no longer allow them to murder or injure her subjects, who were living peaceably among them, either as missionaries or traders. She would send a ship of war every year to inquire into their conduct, and if any white man injured any native they were to tell the captain of the man-of-war, and the white man would be punished as fast as the black man."

The Commodore tried by every peaceable means to induce the Tannese to give up their guilty fellows; but in vain. The islanders obstinately refused to point out the wrongdoers. There was therefore no alternative but to resort to force. Having first seen that the women and children were transferred to a place of safety, and that the men had an opportunity of getting away from the area of danger, the Commodore proceeded to shell one or two of their villages. His object was not to kill, but to give these obstinate savages some idea of the terrible force that could, if occasion demanded, be let loose among them. As a matter of fact, not a single man was killed, and only one man—on Erromanga—was wounded; though three afterwards lost their lives through the bursting of a shell which they were stripping of its lead covering.

Mr. Paton has left it on record that the Commodore spared no pains to avoid the extreme measure that he was finally compelled to adopt. For three days he argued and pleaded with the chiefs on Tanna, with Mr. Paton as his interpreter,

warning the men of what would happen if they persisted in hiding the guilty parties. When all his pleading failed he was compelled to take the course he did ; for if his warning of punishment had proved to be in the end merely an idle threat, no white man's life would have been worth an hour's purchase after the man of war had left the islands.

To any unbiassed mind it must have been perfectly clear that the missionaries had no share at all in this unfortunate episode ; and Mr. Paton was able to prove conclusively that he had nothing whatever to do with it beyond acting as interpreter, and doing everything in his power to bring the trouble to an end by peaceable means ; yet it cost him more than one valued friendship, and the misunderstanding was a cause of serious loss to the mission as a whole. But he knew he was entirely free from blame, and so he was able to let the matter pass, and go on with his work, confident that even this must be amongst the "all things" that would work together for ultimate good.

During his stay in Australia Mr. Paton raised over £2,500 in donations for his mission, besides promises of yearly subscriptions amounting to more than £200 for the support of native teachers. This in itself was a huge task, and some idea of the amount of labour involved may be gathered from the fact that he addressed 265 meetings in 250 days, in Victoria alone. He was entirely unaided in his task, and the whole of the correspondence involved in the arrangement of these meetings was the work of his own hands. But he had his reward in the wave of enthusiasm for his mission that passed over the whole of Australia as the result of his tour.

In 1866 Mr. Paton was transferred from the Church in Scotland to the Presbyterian Churches of Australia, and was adopted as their first missionary to the New Hebrides. The Rev. James Cosh, M.A., then on his way out from Scotland, was engaged to work with Mr. Paton; and it was hoped that these two would be able to re-open the mission work on Tanna. Mr. Cosh, however, decided to go to Pango, on Efatè, where the opposition to Christian teaching was not so strong; and as it was not considered safe for only one European at that time to settle on Tanna, the Church of Victoria decided to send Mr. Paton to the smaller and less savage, though not less heathen, island of Aniwa.

This decision was a great disappointment to Mr. Paton. He had all along hoped and expected that he would return to the scene of his former labours. In spite of—nay, perhaps because of—all he had endured there in the past, Tanna was nearest to his heart, and the Tannese were the people for whom he had the keenest sympathy; and although he loyally accepted the decision of his Church, there was always within him the hope and the prayer that ultimately he might be permitted to continue the work on Tanna.

It was on August 8th, 1866, that he left Sydney, with his wife and child, and accompanied by the Revs. Copeland, Cosh and McNair, with their wives, for the New Hebrides, to resume the work that had so long been interrupted. The new missionaries were left at the stations to which they had been appointed, and everywhere they were received in the most friendly spirit. The fact that apparently made the greatest impression on the natives was that notwithstanding the cruelty which the missionaries had

experienced in the past, they were coming back, and bringing others with them—not for their own gain, but solely that they might proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Even to the untutored minds of the poor savages, this plain proof of an unselfish desire to benefit them made its appeal. If, they argued, the religion of Jehovah can cause men to act thus, there must be good in it; so they, too, resolved to worship the God of the missionaries.

Thus the way was opened for those who longed to lift the veil of heathen darkness that lay over the hearts and minds of the natives of the New Hebrides; and thus even the suffering and the apparently useless toil of God's servants in the past proved not to have been in vain. In view of the hopeful prospect of future conquest of the islands for the King of kings, Mr. Paton might well exclaim: "I long to see a teacher for every tribe and a missionary for every island of the New Hebrides. The hope still burns that I may witness it, and then I could gladly rest."

Before proceeding with Mr. Paton to Aniwa, the *Dayspring* called at Tanna, and was storm-bound for a few days in Port Resolution. Nowar, an old chief whose vacillating friendship had been by turns a joy and a trial to the missionary in past days, was greatly distressed when he found that this visit to his island was merely a call in passing. He seemed to think that Tanna had a prescriptive right to Mr. Paton, and it is more than probable that the Missi shared his opinion. But the instructions from the Victorian Church were explicit.

Nowar, however, had ways of his own of evading instructions that he did not wish to carry out. First he tried to induce the captain of the

Dayspring to convey the missionary's luggage ashore. That conscientious officer informed him, however, that his orders were to land Mr. Paton's boxes at Aniwa and nowhere else. But, argued Nowar, the captain would not be asked to land anything at all. If he would kindly throw the goods overboard, Nowar's men would catch every article before it reached the water and convey it ashore!

When Nowar found that this wily expedient did not commend itself to the captain his distress and disappointment were great; but his resourceful mind soon evolved another plan. He induced the Missi and Mrs. Paton to go ashore on the pretext of showing them his plantations; and then, with Mr. Paton acting as interpreter, he appealed to the lady! Was she afraid for herself or her husband if they stayed on treacherous Tanna? He pointed to his warriors and declared that they would protect them from all harm. Did she fear there might be lack of food? All he possessed was at her disposal—and he had abundance. His eagerness was pathetic; his grief when none of his pleas availed was very real; and Mrs. Paton's assurance that she and her husband would return to live and labour on Tanna at some future time if possible seemed to give little consolation. Was it because some foreknowledge was given to poor Nowar that Mr. Paton's hope and wish were never to be gratified? For such proved to be the case. The desire, so near to his heart, that he might return to the people of Tanna and prove by loving ministry the completeness of his forgiveness for all that had happened in the past, was never fulfilled. To others was given the joy of awakening amongst the Tannese a realization

of the mercy and the goodness of God, while he laboured amongst the people of Aniwa to the same end.

It was in November, 1866, that Mr. and Mrs. Paton established themselves on Aniwa. The island is small, measuring only about nine miles by three and a half, and, like the others of the group, is of volcanic origin. The climate is humid—a merciful compensation for the lack of rain, which falls seldom, since the island possesses no hills to attract the clouds. The moist, hot atmosphere and the heavy dews, however, suffice to keep the vegetation in vigorous life, and the trees indigenous to the soil flourish amain.

When Mr. and Mrs. Paton landed on the island, they found the natives friendly and ready to welcome them. They were escorted to a house which had been prepared for their reception. It was not a palatial residence, being neither more nor less than a large native hut; and as it possessed neither doors nor windows it was somewhat difficult to secure any sort of privacy. However, Mr. Paton screened off a portion of his one-roomed residence to serve as a sleeping place and a depository for his personal belongings, and the rest of it had to serve for the time being as living room, church, school and public hall. The natives from the first interested themselves greatly in the domestic life of the missionaries; and Mrs. Paton at least must have found it somewhat embarrassing to have to prepare and partake of every meal in the presence of an admiring audience of savages; but no discourtesy could be imputed where none was intended.

Fortunately Mrs. Paton was blessed with a sense of humour, which enabled her to see the ludicrous side of much that would have caused

acute distress to a mind less happily constituted. In a letter written to one of her sisters shortly after her settlement on Aniwa, there occurs, for instance, the following:—

“ The trial to my ‘ risibles ’ I found it hardest to bear was that which befell me especially on Sabbaths. The first of these days, in particular, presented a ludicrous scene in the way of dress ; and it was only by a most desperate effort that I could manage to keep a long face while watching the natives coming into the church. We had arrived on the Tuesday ; a number of garments had been distributed among the people, and from twenty to thirty turned out to the worship. One man, I remember, came prancing in looking so delighted with himself in a snow-white vest—absolutely nothing else ! Another came stalking majestically, with a woman’s skirt pinned round his throat and the tips of his fingers appearing at the bottom of it. A third had a native bag done up so as to represent a hat, which he took off with quite the air of a gentleman as he entered the door. One man had on a nice little jacket I had presented to his wife ; and indeed everyone who wore any clothing at all did so in the absurdest fashion.

“ The effort at self-control was fast becoming unendurable, when the worthy Missi unintentionally provided ‘ the last straw.’ His face was a picture of adoring thankfulness, and his prophetic soul—unconscious of anything grotesque—saw them already on the way to glory. He whispered, ‘ Oh, Maggie, shouldn’t we be grateful to God to see them all coming out to church so *nicely dressed*.’ He was adding something about ‘ jewels and trophies ’ but I was already half way out of the church under cover of a

convenient fit of violent coughing, and just managed to slip round a corner before going into prolonged convulsions! Pray forgive me; I loved them none the less; but that phrase—*so nicely dressed*—was rather more than my woman's soul could withstand."

The most pressing necessity, now that the missionaries were actually located on the island, was a suitable place of residence. The one-roomed hut could never be made a home; it was merely a shelter and nothing more. Profiting by his past terrible experience on Tanna in the matter of house-building, Mr. Paton determined that he would choose as high a location as possible, in order to be out of reach of the fever and ague-breeding miasma of the low-lying land. No great elevation could be had, for the highest point on all Aniwa is not more than about three hundred feet above sea level; but at last a spot was chosen, a mound not far from the sea shore.

As always, Mr. Paton was careful to pay for the site—and in this instance he found the owners unusually willing to sell. The reason he did not discover until long afterwards, and it was one that reflected no credit on the natives concerned. When the work of levelling the top of the mound was begun it was found to be nothing but a huge cairn of human bones—the remains of the horrible feasts of past generations of cannibal Aniwans. The superstitious natives had been warned by their Sacred Men that if they interfered with the mound in any way they would be killed; and they were wickedly delighted at the idea that their gods would certainly kill those who were innocently digging amongst ghastly remnants that none save their Sacred Men were allowed to touch.

But even this unwitting offence was to have its good effect. Day after day the work of excavating and levelling and preparing generally for the foundations went on ; and hour by hour the natives sat stolidly by, expecting every moment that the vengeance of their gods would fall upon Mr. Paton and the Aneityumese whom he had hired to help him with the unskilled part of the labour. But time passed and nothing happened ; and at last the men of Aniwa were constrained to admit that their gods had no power over the stranger who had come into their midst to teach them a new religion. Therefore, they argued, the Jehovah whom the Missi worshipped must be stronger than their own gods. So at the very outset a good impression was made upon these superstitious people, whose credulity had been cruelly exploited by their Sacred Men for their own advantage.

On just one point concerning the building of his house Mr. Paton hesitated, and his hesitation gave yet another proof of his intense longing for an opportunity to resume his work amidst the scenes of so much past sorrow and suffering. He debated with himself whether it would not suffice if he built a temporary home on Aniwa, since it might be possible before long for him to go back to his beloved Tanna. But he dismissed the thought as unworthy. The building of this house was, after all, he reflected, God's work. Even if, in the Divine Providence, he was not destined long to occupy it himself, yet it would be needed for his successor ; so he put into it all the thought and care and labour he could ; and the result was a house well-built, commodious and comfortable—in which, as it proved, many years of his own life were to be spent.

The trials and tribulations that usually befall the man who attempts to build his own house were multiplied tenfold in Mr. Paton's case. Labour was almost unobtainable from the natives. They would do no more than carry a beam or remove a load of earth for some specific payment. To settle down to a day's work was altogether beneath their dignity; they told him quite frankly that their custom was to make their women work while they looked on!

On one occasion he injured his ankle severely with an adze while cutting some timber. He was hurt so badly that he could not walk home, and he had to appeal to some natives near to carry him. Even in his extremity they bargained with him, and decided to divide the labour and the profits. One would carry him a few yards, and then put him down and demand a few fish-hooks for his trouble. Having received his payment he would make way for another bearer, who would repeat the performance. And so, by these uneasy stages the poor injured missionary reached his house at last. What would have happened if the supply of fish-hooks had given out by the way is a contingency too dreadful to contemplate!

The superstition of the natives, too, was a cause of great trouble. Some of the young men were engaged one day in carrying boxes from the old home to the new, when two of them began to vomit blood. One of them died, and the missionary was blamed. The father of the other vowed that if his son also died everyone connected with the mission should be killed. Mercifully the young man recovered. The outcome of this occurrence was the construction of a wheelbarrow. How it was made Mr. Paton has not told; but

that it could be made at all is a testimony to the all-round capability of its maker as a handy man.

Mr. Paton has declared that in his own estimation the most difficult problem he had to solve in connection with his work as a builder was the making of lime. The raw material was a particular kind of coral, which was only to be found in the sea at a point about three miles distant from the mission station. The only way to obtain it was to row out to the coral bed in a boat with a few natives, who would then, armed with hammer and crowbar, dive into the sea, break off pieces of the coral and bring them up until the boat was loaded. Then, having thus secured some twenty or thirty loads, it was left on the shore to bleach and blister in the sun for two or three weeks. After this it had to be carried the three miles to the building, where it was placed on the top of a huge pile of wood which had been put ready in a pit dug for the purpose. This was fired and left to burn for about ten days; and the product of the primitive kiln was a very serviceable lime, which answered its purpose excellently. But it was a toilsome, wearisome process—and it was merely one detail amongst countless others all presenting their own special difficulties which were only overcome by rare ingenuity and dogged perseverance.

Mr. Paton thus describes his own work; and when it is remembered that it was accomplished under so many disadvantages and difficulties, his pride in it is pardonable. "The mission house," he says, "as ultimately finished, had six rooms, three on each side of the lobby, and measured ninety feet in length, surrounded by a verandah one hundred feet by five, which kept everything shaded and cool. Underneath two

rooms a cellar was dug, eight feet deep, and shelved all round for a store. In more than one terrific hurricane that cellar saved our lives—all crushing into it when trees and houses were being tossed like feathers on the wings of the wind. Altogether the house at Aniwa has proved one of the healthiest and most commodious of any that have been planted by Christian hands on the New Hebrides. In selecting site and in building, 'the good hand of our God was upon us for good.'"

CHAPTER X.

WORK AND PROGRESS.

ALTHOUGH the Aniwan and the Tannese are geographically neighbours, Mr. Paton found a marked difference in their habits and customs and in their language. True, the men of Aniwa did not steal so openly as the people of Tanna; but the distinction between taking another's property without permission, and asking for it with a tomahawk raised threateningly to give force to the request is so slight as to be hardly worthy of consideration! Mr. Paton had therefore to submit to the loss of much property—and he had to suffer in silence; for any show of resentment would have destroyed for ever all hope of gaining the goodwill of the people. The only way to keep the possessions he valued was to take care that the Aniwan never saw them!

The learning of the language was a trial of patience, and a less sweet-tempered man might have thought it also a hardship, in view of the fact that within a few miles were a people whose language he had already acquired, and to whom he was anxious to return. But without murmuring Mr. Paton set to work, and by following the same plan that he had found so successful on Tanna, he was soon able to converse with the natives in their own tongue.

In connection with this part of his work Mr. Paton tells a story of peculiar interest. While he was busy with the building of his house, he had occasion one day to send a message to Mrs. Paton at their temporary home, asking for some articles that he required. He took up a piece of wood, wrote his message on it, and gave it to a native standing by, bidding him take it to Mrs. Paton. The native at first refused. How, he argued, could the Missi's wife possibly know what was wanted merely by looking at that piece of wood? But the Missi insisted; and at last, though very reluctantly, the native set off on what he doubtless thought a fool's errand.

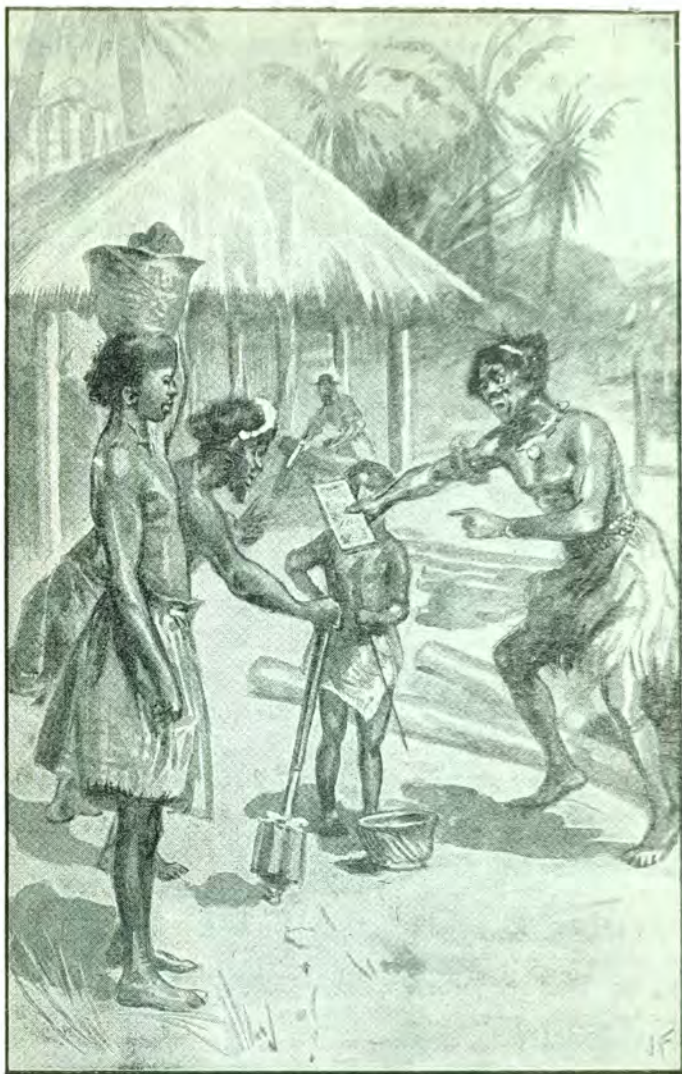
When Mrs. Paton received the piece of wood she at once got together the things her husband had asked for and gave them to the man to take back. His amazement at the whole proceeding knew no bounds, and he regarded the Missi as a magician of wonderful power. He went about shouting: "He can make wood talk! He can make wood talk!"

Always ready to seize every opportunity to further the cause to which his life was given, Mr. Paton soon explained the mystery to the astonished natives, telling them at the same time that by similar means he hoped some day, when they had learnt to read, to put into their hands God's own Book, through which God Himself would speak to them, just as he had spoken to Mrs. Paton through the piece of wood.

So he implanted in the hearts of these poor savages a longing to possess the word of the Lord in their own language—a longing which increased as time went on, and which led them to such lengths of labour and sacrifice as may well put more highly favoured Christians to shame.

One of the earliest ambitions of the first native converts was to pay for their own version of the Gospel, and the efforts they made to attain this end showed how intensely real was their love for the "Jehovah Worship." Amongst the principal crops of the New Hebrides is arrowroot of a particularly fine quality, and readily marketable. Mr. Paton suggested that by setting aside a certain proportion of arrowroot for the purpose, a sum sufficient to pay for the Gospel in Aniwan might be raised. The idea was eagerly adopted by the new converts; and the cultivation and preparation of arrowroot in order that the Gospel might be theirs in their own tongue at their own cost became eventually quite the most popular industry on the island. An interesting reference to this special activity on the part of the natives occurs in one of Mrs. Paton's delightful letters. She says:

"The natives have been as busy as bees, making arrowroot to pay for their own Gospels being printed in Melbourne, and are trying which village will make the most. We have already six hundred pounds put up, mostly in ten-pound bags; and as there is a good deal of work in connection with it, I hope it will realize at least 1s. 6d. per lb. The natives are still making more, and the demands upon me for calico have been endless. After ransacking every inch that could be got to dry it upon and to make bags, I had to sacrifice all my common sheets and table cloths; and while trying to bear up under this calamity with Christian fortitude, John roused all the old Adam in me by coolly bidding me be quick and get out my *linen* ones and best table cloths, as it was a splendid day for drying! I emphatically declared that my few best things



"HE CAN MAKE WOOD TALK."

should remain untouched, though the natives should never get their books; and by a little management in making the others do, I have kept to my *wicked* vow. . . .

"This is the first donation from our natives in money; and John thinks that in a very few years the mission may be self-supporting. For my part I think that our natives have done pretty well so far, it never having cost the Church one penny either for the erection or up-keep of church and school buildings, which is more than can be said of most missions. But it will be grand if this little island, with its limited resources and inhabitants, can learn to support its own missionary. . . ."

The Aniwa's, like the Tannese, had no literature of any kind; and one of the most toilsome tasks Mr. Paton had to undertake was to reduce their language to writing. Each of their words as he learnt it had to be written down phonetically, and the building up of a written language by this means was necessarily a slow and tiresome process; but at length it was accomplished, and then Mr. Paton had to set about the further business of printing.

When he was compelled to fly for his life from Tanna, his cherished printing press was amongst the treasures he had to leave behind to be destroyed by the savages. He had been at considerable pains to learn how to use it, and he has told how great was his joy when, after much labour, he at last succeeded in producing printed pages in the Tannese tongue. What he then acquired of the printer's art he had not forgotten, and he now proceeded to put his knowledge to practical use for the benefit of the people of Aniwa.

From Aneityum he obtained a battered and imperfect press that had belonged to Mr. Gordon, the missionary martyr of Erromanga. Certain essential parts of the machine were missing, and these he had to replace with makeshift substitutes prepared from odd bits of iron and wood. Many of the letters were also missing; and the supply of some was so inadequate that he could print only four pages at a time. But a missionary, beyond most men, has reason to know that "where there's a will there's a way;" and after endless trouble the four pages of type were set, and the machine was in working order.

One of his earliest converts was an old chief named Namakei; and this old man was keenly interested in the printing of the first book that had ever been produced in his own language. "Will it speak, Missi? Will it speak?" was his oft-repeated question; and his eagerness to see the book that was to speak in the tongue of Aniwa was most pathetic.

At last the book was ready; and the old chief, with the unrestrained impatience of a little child, cried, "Make it speak, Missi! Make the book speak to me in my own words!"

The four pages consisted of short and simple passages of Scripture, such as the missionary thought would be most helpful to him in his efforts to teach the natives of the love of God; and as he repeated these to the wondering Namakei from the freshly-printed page, the old man's delight knew no bounds.

After a while he begged that he might be allowed to hold the precious book in his hands. Long and earnestly he looked at it, examining with care the strange and wonderful symbols on each page; but at last he gave it back with a

ugh. "I cannot make it speak, Missi," he said. "It will never speak to me."

This was the missionary's opportunity. Patiently he explained to the old man that first he must learn to read; and that when he had mastered the difficulties of reading, the book would speak to him quite plainly. There and then Namakei demanded and received his first lesson; and so apt and eager a pupil was he that he quickly mastered the whole alphabet. From that it was but a step to spelling simple words; and so by the same stages that we have all followed in our time, but with infinitely more enthusiasm, this old man, not long since a heathen and a cannibal, was taught to read. Not only so; but he was most anxious that others should acquire the same accomplishment; and he was never tired of urging them to try to learn, so that they, too, might read from Missi's book about God's love for them.

For all his pride in the power he now possessed to make the book speak to him, Mr. Paton noticed that Namakei had to peer very closely at the pages; and, suspecting the reason, he persuaded the old man one day to let him fit him with spectacles. He had all a native's dread of the unknown, and it was a matter of great difficulty to induce him to place the glasses in position; but once he had looked through them his delight was unbounded. "My new eyes!" he shouted. "Oh, my new eyes! I can see now just as when I was a little child!"

Being an affectionate and dutiful husband, Namakei was anxious that his aged wife Yauwaki should share his good fortune; but her eyesight was even worse than his, and spectacles were necessary before she could begin to learn to read;

so one day the old chief brought her to the Missi, requesting that she, too, might be fitted with a pair of new glass eyes. She was at first even more terrified of these strange aids to vision than her husband had been ; but once she had been coaxed to put them on she was delighted.



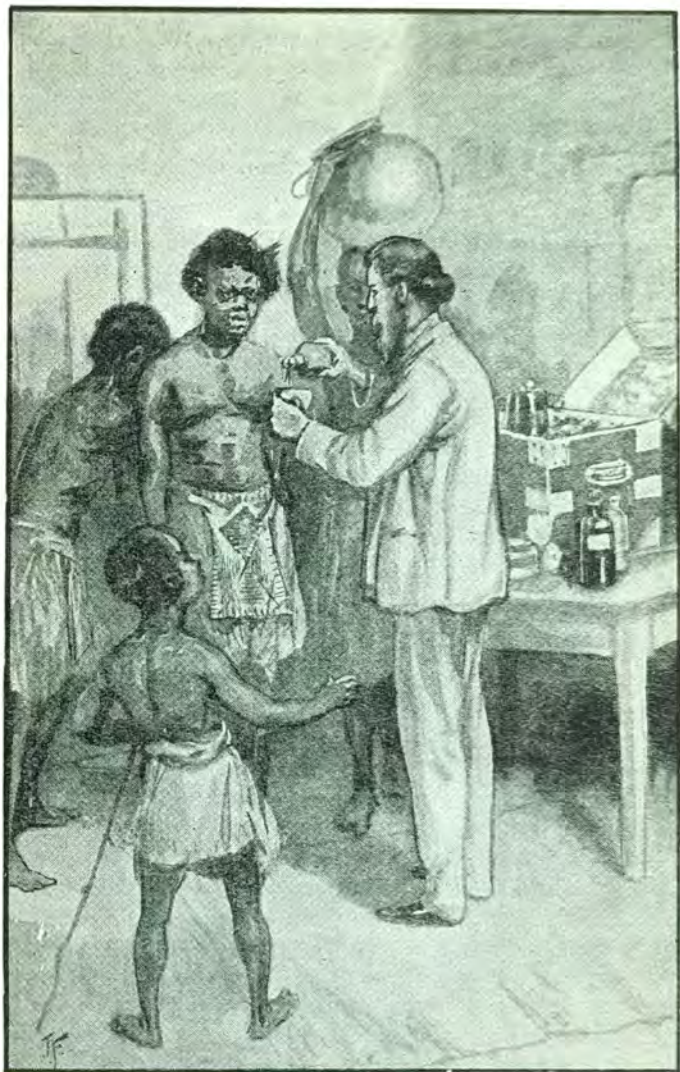
“NEW EYES” FOR NEAR-SIGHTED NATIVES.

These two old people did much to break down the opposition Mr. Paton met with in the early days of his mission on Aniwa, and were of the greatest help to him in various ways.

The attitude of the natives before they learnt to love and trust the Missi in later days was

curiously contradictory. Although, for instance, they looked upon him generally with great mistrust and suspicion, they came to him quite freely for medicine, and they expected to be cured with the first dose! If they did not feel better as soon as the physic was swallowed they considered themselves greatly injured. Sometimes they insisted that he should taste the medicine before they swallowed it; and if it happened to be at all nauseous they often refused to take more than one dose. Then, although they were willing to give the Missi credit for curing their diseases, they were equally ready to blame him for their sickness when they became ill. Their Sacred Men not only cured but caused disease. Why not also the Missi? This very elementary logic sometimes had rather embarrassing consequences, as may be imagined! And the poor Missi, as a rule, was only appealed to as a forlorn hope; for they rarely came to him for medicine until their Sacred Men had exhausted all their arts in vain.

But Mr. Paton never allowed himself to be disheartened. Every day at a certain hour a bell was rung at the mission house, this being the signal that all who cared to do so might come to the Missi for free medicine and treatment. Many responded to the invitation; but some, even though in desperate need, would run away and hide at the sound of the bell, believing that the Missi was the cause of their sickness. All who came were offered tea and bread, as well as the medicine they needed; and as he ministered to their poor, diseased bodies, the devoted Missi did not forget the far greater need of their souls. As soon as he knew sufficient of their language he spoke to them on the one theme that



THE MISSIONARY AS A MEDICINE MAN.

was always nearest to his heart, and so gave them their first knowledge of that wonderful story of Divine love and sacrifice that sooner or later always wins its way to the human heart, even though the body that enshrines it be that of the fiercest savage.

The natives of Aniwa, like most other savages, were wonderfully susceptible to the power of music, and his knowledge of this fact enabled Mr. Paton to attract many who might otherwise have been exceedingly hard to win. The equipment of the mission included a harmonium, and the people would come from far and near "to hear the 'bokis' (box) sing." Mr. Paton confesses that he possessed no musical ability whatever; but Mrs. Paton was a gifted musician, and by song and harmony many and many a hard heathen heart on Aniwa was won for God.

In this connection it is interesting to recall that during one of his visits to the home land Mr. Paton spent a little time in Ireland; and at Londonderry he happened to be present at a meeting when what he called the "Organ and Hymn" question gave rise to a debate so lively that at one time it threatened to degenerate into a wrangle. In commenting on this he said: "A trip to the South Seas and a revelation of how God used the harmonium and the hymn as wings on which the Gospel was borne into the hearts and homes of cannibals would have opened the eyes of many dear fathers and brethren as it had opened mine. No one was once more opposed to instrumental music in the worship of God than I had been; but the Lord who made us, and who knows the nature He has given us, had long ago taught me otherwise."

Although, of course, absolutely heathen, the Aniwans were not without a religion of their own, and their belief had at least in one point a curious, though very dim and distant, resemblance to that of western races. They attributed all their sorrows and troubles to an evil spirit which they believed to take the form of a serpent. This serpent they worshipped under the name of Matshiktshiki; and they regarded him as the creator of their island, which he was supposed to have dragged up out of the sea. Most fantastic was their belief that the great spirit of evil desired to join their land to Fotuna, another island thirty-six miles away. He stood on Aniwa and threw his fishing line round Fotuna to draw the two islands together; but the line broke and he fell into the sea!

Like many other heathen nations, they had, too, their own version of the story of the Flood. "There was a time, long, long ago," they said, "when heavy rain fell for a great many days; and the sea rose so high that all were drowned except those who climbed the big volcano mountain which is now on Tanna, but which at that time was on Aniwa. There was a small volcano at the southern end of Aniwa, but the big waves had already washed it out; and Matshiktshiki, fearful that the sea would put out the fire in the big mountain also, split it off from Aniwa, with a great piece of the island, and sailed it on the flood over to Tanna. There he lifted it on to the top of Tanna's highest mountain, intending to take it back to Aniwa when the flood was over; but he was never able to do this, so it still remains on Tanna, and Aniwa has had no volcano mountain since that time."

There was a time also, the natives declared, when Aniwa had a beautiful fresh water river; but the people living then offended the mighty Matshiktshiki, and to punish them he split off from the island all the richer part of it, including the river, and the spring whence it flowed, and sailed away with it to Aneityum, where it still remains; and the river on that island has been called ever since "the waters of Aniwa."

Mr. and Mrs. Paton suffered much from the absence of fresh water on the island, for none was obtainable except what could be collected during the rare and scanty rainfalls; and even this they were not allowed to gather in such quantities as they desired. Mr. Paton made two large storage casks; but the natives forbade the use of these, fearing that if they were filled there would not be sufficient water left to fill their own cocoanut bottles.

The natives themselves are accustomed to the scarcity of fresh water, and make up for it by using, for drinking purposes, the fluid from the cocoanut—a very passable substitute, not unlike lemonade in colour and taste. They also assuage their thirst by chewing the sugar cane, which is cultivated extensively. For bathing purposes, of course, the sea suffices; and—at least in Mr. Paton's day, as he humorously observes—for laundry purposes they needed no water, since clothing was very much at a discount.

But to the mission party the lack of a sufficiency of fresh water was, as may be imagined, a cause of acute discomfort. Mr. Paton had not long been on the island before he resolved to meet this difficulty; and he set about it in a way which excited merely derision in some, who saw in the new development only something to laugh at,

though others regarded the missionary with sympathy and pity, thinking he had suddenly gone mad. For he began digging down into the earth for water, declaring quite seriously that his God would give him fresh, sweet water by bringing it up for him out of the ground ! What a mad idea ! Why, everybody on Aniwa knew that the water came *down*, out of the skies ! How could it possibly come *up*, out of the earth ? Besides, the only people who could cause rain to come down from the skies on Aniwa were the Sacred Men, and they demanded presents for their work. But the Missi never went near the Sacred Men, he never offered them a gift, and yet he expected to get rain, and—crowning folly of all—to get it out of a hole in the ground. Oh, it was madness !

So the natives said amongst themselves ; but Mr. Paton meanwhile kept steadily on with his task. He had chosen a spot near the mission station and close to the public path, so that his well when finished might be used by all. With pick and spade and bucket he toiled ; and old Namakei, with tender solicitude, arranged relays of men to watch the Missi at his mad task, lest his derangement of mind should lead him to take his own life.

Mr. Paton found the work harder than he anticipated, and he was obliged to engage men to help him. One fish-hook for removing three buckets of earth from the hole was the bribe he offered, and on these terms he soon had all the assistance he could pay for.

The work was proceeding apace when a mishap occurred which threatened to bring the whole enterprise to an end. The hole had been dug out to a depth of about twelve feet when the sides

caved in, and rendered useless all the toil hitherto expended upon it. But the indomitable spirit of the missionary enabled him to conquer even such a misfortune as this. He rigged up a windlass and started again, making the sides of the hole at such an angle that it was impossible for them to fall in. But not a man could he induce to enter the hole! All the excavating he had to do unaided. When he had filled a bucket he rang a bell, and the men above would then pull away at the rope till the bucket was raised, whereupon a teacher would swing it aside, empty it, and lower it to the missionary working away below.

The work went steadily on until a depth of thirty feet was reached, and then, to the Missi's unspeakable joy, water appeared. He had told the people he expected to get the water that day, and they were waiting for its appearance almost as anxiously as he. His belief had to some extent infected them, and they had begun to wonder whether after all his faith might be justified. The water first obtained was muddy, and slightly brackish, but it *was* water, and fresh enough for use. Having tasted it, and assured himself of its quality, Mr. Paton came up from the well bringing with him a jug full of the precious fluid, which he offered to Namakei. The old chief, even with the brimming jug in his hand, was still sceptical. First he shook it, to see if it would spill. Then he touched it; and finally, summoning all his courage, he tasted it. That was proof final and incontestable. "Yes! It is water!" he cried. "Rain water! And the Missi has brought it out of the ground, as he said!"

This was a miracle entirely beyond the comprehension of these simple savages; and, like all other things they could not understand, they



THE MIRACLE OF WATER FROM THE WELL.

regarded it with fear. Mr. Paton invited the old chief and the men who were with him to look down the well, and see for themselves the water springing up from below. But eager though they were to see this strange thing, not one of them dared peer into that dark, mysterious hole at the bottom of which one of the few laws of nature within their limited knowledge was turned topsy turvy.

Still, they longed to penetrate the mystery; and after a good deal of talk amongst themselves they found a way out of the difficulty. They formed themselves into a long chain; and the foremost man, securely held by the others, crept cautiously forward and peered into the well. Having seen the water, he retired to the far end of the chain, and the next man looked down, retiring in his turn to make way for the next; and so on, until all had seen the wonder which the Missi had brought about.

The Missi? Ah, no! It was the Missi's God, the mighty Jehovah, who had wrought this great and wonderful thing on Aniwa. God it was who had given to the people of Aniwa, through His servant the Missi, this boon of a never-failing supply of beautiful, sweet water, sufficient for the needs of them all. This was the fact that Mr. Paton impressed upon the people. Under the blessing of God, this sinking of the well on Aniwa proved to be the beginning of the end of all opposition to the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ on the island; and Mr. Paton dated the commencement of the real work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of these poor degraded savages from the day when God gave him water from the well.

The men who had before derided him were now more than willing to help, pressing their

service upon him, and begging to be allowed to assist. There was still much to be done to make the well secure—work that he could scarcely have accomplished unaided; and he gratefully accepted their help in lining the well with substantial blocks of coral; and under Mr. Paton's direction a very workman-like job was completed. The well was thirty-four feet deep, eight feet wide at the top and six at the bottom. Mr. Paton himself fixed the wooden floor over the top, and placed the windlass and bucket in position, and so finished one of the most remarkable and fruitful enterprises ever undertaken in connection with missionary endeavour.

CHAPTER XI

HOME AGAIN

MARVELLOUS was the change that came over the people after the sinking of the well on Aniwa. This proof of the greatness of Jehovah, to whom their Missi ascribed the wonder of water from the earth, was irrefutable; and tribe after tribe came to the mission house to declare their allegiance to the Missi and his worship. With the eagerness of children they demanded to be taught the truths of the new religion; and as evidence of their sincerity they brought with them their gods to be destroyed.

Naturally when the people were so eager for instruction and so ready to worship the God in whom they had begun to believe, a church building soon became a necessity. Mr. Paton very wisely led them to see that this must be their own work, and they cheerfully accepted the responsibility. Every chief on the island save one favoured the idea; and soon men, women and children were all hard at work under the Missi's supervision. In a short time the building was completed, and very proud were the Aniwan's of their handiwork. The church was sixty-two feet by twenty-four, and the wall was twelve feet high—a good, serviceable, suitable building, which all hoped would last for many years.

But, alas ! before long a terrific hurricane swept the island, and the church was levelled to the ground. It was a heart-breaking calamity, and it must have tried the new-found faith of the natives to the utmost ; but they bravely set to work again without loss of time, and soon another building was raised, slightly smaller, but quite as well built, and destined to withstand the storms of many years. Every scrap of material and every hour of labour was the free gift of the natives, who evinced their love for the Missi and their enthusiasm for the " worship " by the eagerness with which they gave liberally all that they had to give in order that they might have a church of their own.

The progress of the natives in the understanding of the truths of Christ's religion was necessarily slow, but it was sure. Patiently, so patiently, and with many prayers, the Missi proceeded with his work, noting with keenest joy and thankfulness the advance of his converts. One infallible sign of conversion amongst them was the adoption of some article of clothing ; another was the saying of grace before and after meals ; another, the observance of family prayer, each morning and evening ; another, the cessation of all work every Sabbath day ; yet another, the establishment of settled law and order in the management of their own affairs. Mere outward and visible indications, truly ; but all of them signs of an inward and spiritual grace, and proofs that the power of the Lord Jesus was working in the hearts and consciences of these poor people.

At last came the day when Mr. Paton felt the time was ripe for the first Communion. Most earnestly he had prayed for this, but most careful was he that none should participate in the solemn

service save those who were fully aware of its significance, and who had shown by their daily conduct that they were in very truth followers of Him at whose table they were to be invited to assemble. And even for these there had been a long period of special preparation in the communicants' class which Mr. Paton had established.

But at last all was ready, and twelve converts were chosen. Having first baptized them, Mr. Paton formally constituted the Church of Christ on Aniwa, and then proceeded with the service of the Lord's Supper, using for the first time a silver Communion service, that, in anticipation of this occasion, had been presented to him long before by the South Melbourne Presbyterian Church.

Lest some may think that these poor natives may possibly have taken part unworthily in that most sacred service, it may be well to quote what Dr. Paton wrote more than thirty years later concerning the training and discipline which, even after that long interval of Christian influence, they had to undergo before they were permitted to approach the Lord's Table. The veteran missionary said: "The story of a good God of love and mercy, so loving our lost and ruined race as to send His Son into our world to die for men and give them eternal life, is that by which Divine grace enlightens the mind and moves the heart of the savage to love and serve God above all else. Hence they delight to attend school and church and prayer meetings in order to learn all possible about the Saviour and their privileges and duties to Him, whom they try to love and serve as their present abiding friend and eternal reward.

"All who attend our communicants' classes as catechumens must have a pretty correct general

knowledge of whatever portions of Scripture they have translated and printed in their own language; they must also know the church catechism or confession of faith which I prepared for them in Aniwa, and which has also been translated into other languages. Each man and woman must also have an unstained character, so far as man knows, for a year before they are allowed to attend the communicants' class. Then, according to their Christian knowledge and devotion, they attend the class from one to three years or longer before we baptize them and admit them to the membership of the church. Hence, by God's blessing on such careful preparation and training of them for Church membership, we have fewer of our members falling away, and far more intelligent consecrated Christian help from them in working for the salvation of others and in all God's work than we would have if we baptized them as some do on a confession of their faith and because they are able to answer a few simple questions.

"We believe that neither they nor we can really know, love and serve Jesus and feast upon real communion with Him at His table and in the joys of real salvation and service, without doing all we can to teach others to accept and enjoy the same blessings for time and eternity. They are thus taught and led by Divine grace to believe in all the evangelical doctrines of our common faith, and to try earnestly to live up to them, in all things serving Jesus Christ.

"Our converts and Church members begin and close every day in private and family prayer. They ask God's blessing on all meals of food. On Sabbath none of them are seen turning their backs on Sabbath School and Church services

and going away, as many do in these lands, on foot, on bicycles, in carriages, street cars, railways and steamboats, to spend God's day in pleasure and amusement, forgetting or disregarding the Divine command, 'Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.' Unless confined to a bed of sickness, or having to attend one so confined, all our Church members are in their seats on the Lord's Day in all weathers, and also at the week-day prayer meetings. And being accustomed to prayer with their families, no male member when requested ever declines to open or close publicly a Church service with prayer.

"Their education and knowledge is limited, and far from being like ours, and yet they can all read what of the Scriptures they possess, and show great zeal and exercise much self denial in trying to teach and bring the heathen to know and love and serve Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour. Some of them die, and others have been murdered when away as teachers, but others zealously volunteer to go and occupy their places, as lately when one died on Tanna, and the Aniwa sent five additional teachers in his place.

"Even now the change in the living and conduct of our converts is a wonderful work of Divine grace, and we hope that Jesus will be able to show the finished product among His Redeemed in the glory of Heaven."

For three or four years the work of Christianizing Aniwa went on steadily and without interruption. Then, in 1873, a double calamity befell the mission. The *Dayspring* was wrecked, and Mr. Paton became so seriously ill with rheumatic fever that his life was despaired of. Through the mercy of God he recovered, but the illness left him so weak that his friends strongly

urged him to leave his work for a time and seek in New Zealand the change of air, the rest, and the medical help that he sorely needed.

Had his own health been the only consideration it would have been exceedingly difficult to induce the devoted missionary to leave his work ; but it was really necessary that he should go to the mainland to try and raise funds for a successor to the lost *Dayspring*.

Temporarily the place of the mission ship had been taken by the *Paragon*, a vessel which, after the wreck of the *Dayspring*, had been chartered to take necessary supplies to the mission stations of the New Hebrides. The owners of this vessel, a new three-masted schooner, which proved in every way suitable for the work, offered to sell her to the Mission Committee for three thousand pounds if they could purchase her within a year. Mr. Paton was very anxious to secure her, if possible ; and it was the hope of being able to obtain the sum needed, far more than regard for his own health, that reconciled him to the prospect of leaving Aniwa for a time.

The insurance money on the wrecked *Dayspring* amounted to £2,000, but half of this sum had been spent in necessary expenses connected with the *Paragon*. This left the sum of £2,000 to be raised for the purchase of the vessel, besides a large amount which would be required for its adaptation and equipment for the needs of the mission. The task that faced Mr. Paton was therefore a serious one, and it must be remembered that he undertook it at a time when he was enfeebled through illness. But there was no hesitation. He sailed for Sydney so weak and crippled that he was scarcely able to walk without crutches ; but his heart was strong with deter-

mination, and big with a faith which was speedily justified.

On arriving in Sydney he at once called a private meeting of friends; and at that meeting two elders of the Presbyterian Church offered to advance the money needed to acquire the *Paragon*, which was purchased next day. Then a public meeting was arranged, at which a scheme was formulated on the lines which had proved so successful in connection with the raising of funds for the *Dayspring*. Having seen this scheme fairly started, Mr. Paton proceeded to Victoria, where he followed a similar plan. Then, and only then, when all had been done that was possible in this matter, he began to think of himself, and sailed for New Zealand in search of health.

The voyage benefited him greatly; but no sooner did he set foot on the shore of New Zealand than self was again completely forgotten; and he was once more the missionary, with no object for the time being save that of interesting people in the needs of the mission that was to him far more than life itself.

The total sum needed to repay the friends who had advanced the money to purchase the *Paragon* and to re-fit and furnish the vessel for her new purpose was £2,800; and into the task of collecting this huge sum Mr. Paton threw himself with all his accustomed ardour. Three meetings every Sunday and one on every other day were held during his stay in New Zealand, and he returned to Sydney greatly improved in health and with £1,700 towards the sum he needed. During his absence his friends in Australia had also been hard at work; and he found to his great joy that in all sufficient

money was now in hand to discharge every liability and to equip and provision the ship for a year.

Permission had been obtained to change the name of the vessel to *Dayspring*, and as soon as the final arrangements were completed she sailed for the New Hebrides; and Mr. Paton, restored in health and full of thankfulness that his task had been so speedily and successfully accomplished, went with her.

From this time the work of the mission went rapidly forward; but as the years passed it became apparent that the second *Dayspring* was not equal to the growing needs of the missionaries. A larger and more powerful vessel was required—one, if possible, possessing steam power, so that neither calms nor hurricanes would interfere with her work. But such a ship could not be provided for less than £6,000, and where was the money to come from?

Towards the end of 1883 Mr. Paton brought the matter, as an affair of urgency, before the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria; and that assembly commissioned him to go home to Great Britain in the following year, with authority to receive from Christian people whatever they might be disposed to give towards the sum necessary to provide a steam-auxiliary ship for the New Hebrides mission. He was also appointed delegate to the Pan-Presbyterian Council to be held that year at Belfast, and representative to the General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Churches of Great Britain and Ireland.

But an unfortunate misunderstanding with the *Dayspring* board at Sydney caused that body to write to the authorities of the Free Church of

Scotland, informing them that the Victorian Church had no right to commission Mr. Paton to receive funds for a new auxiliary steamship without consulting them, and stating that they objected to the authorities of the Free Church giving their sanction to the effort, or authorizing Mr. Paton in any way to raise money for such a purpose.

It was a most painful incident, and it grieved the missionary to the heart, although he was in no way responsible for it. Moreover, it was likely to have a disastrous effect upon his appeal; for it was from the people of the Free Church that he expected to receive the major portion of the contributions to his fund. One friend, who sympathized deeply with him, even went so far as to say that the action of the Sydney board had made the success of his mission home impossible. But he was not a man to be easily disheartened; and in the consciousness that he was doing God's work he went forward, full of faith and hope in the ultimate success of the task he had undertaken.

And a mighty task it was. Many times he was asked how he could possibly expect to raise the sum he wanted, unless he appealed to rich people individually for large subscriptions. Some eager friends, desiring to help him, offered to introduce him to wealthy men and women to whom he could plead for help. But this was entirely against his principles. His appeals were always public—never private. He never solicited an individual for a subscription in his life. He had always been content simply to tell his story, and leave it to his hearers to give or withhold their help as they felt disposed to do. When he was told that at least in this instance, bearing in mind the magnitude of the sum he had to raise,

this was an unreasonable attitude, his reply was always the same. "I will tell my story," he said; "I will not force the claims of the Lord Jesus on the people; I will expect the surplus collection, or a retiring collection, on Sabbaths; I will ask the whole collection, less expenses, at week-night meetings; I will issue collecting-cards for Sabbath scholars; I will make known my home address, to which everything may be forwarded, either from congregations or from private donors; and I will go on, to my utmost strength, in the faith that the Lord will send me the £6,000 required. If He does not so send it, then I shall expect that He will send me grace to be reconciled to the disappointment, and I shall go back to my work without the ship."

The greater portion of the money he received came to him by letters, in response to a booklet which he wrote, entitled "Statement and Appeal." The booklet contained precisely what its title indicates—an account of the work of the New Hebrides Mission and its results, with the reason which made the proposed auxiliary steamship a necessity, and an appeal to Christian people to help to provide it. Ten thousand copies of this booklet Mr. Paton circulated through the post and otherwise, and it proved to be of the greatest help. He received as many as seventy letters in one day, from people who had been led to offer help through having read the booklet. Every letter contained a subscription, and the amounts varied from the few stamps of the poorest or the few shillings of servant girls and working men, to donations from the wealthy of fifty or a hundred pounds.

As may be imagined, Mr. Paton's correspondence at this time was exceedingly heavy; and

had it not been for the help of his brother James, whose home in Glasgow was his headquarters, he could never have kept it from getting hopelessly in arrear. For in addition to endless letter writing he addressed a minimum of nine meetings every week. Sometimes in the privacy of his room intimate friends would discover him in an attitude of weariness, though he would never admit that he was tired, and it was at all times difficult to persuade him to take even necessary rest. "The time is so short, and I have so much to do," was always his plea when friends begged him, in consideration of his health, to relax his efforts even for a day.

It was rarely that he allowed any evidence of fatigue to manifest itself in public; but on one occasion the strain of constant effort made itself felt in a curiously embarrassing way. He had been addressing the annual Christian Conference at Dundee, and was asked to close the meeting with prayer and the benediction. He had concluded the prayer, and had pronounced the first few words of the benediction, "May the love of God the Father——" And then the tired brain suddenly failed to act. Not another word of the familiar phrases could he remember—except in Aniwani! He dared not continue the benediction in that unknown tongue, lest the sudden change should rouse in his great audience feelings of amusement in what ought to be a moment full of deepest solemnity; and so, shamed and humiliated, he left the benediction unfinished, and amid the wondering looks of the people resumed his seat.

During this visit to the homeland one of his friends arranged for him sixteen meetings for children in Glasgow. The attendance varied

from 800 to 2,000. To all these meetings he carried with him a huge, hideously painted idol, over three feet high. It was quietly slipped into the pulpit, and then at the right moment lifted up, to the audibly expressed surprise and delight of the children. At all these meetings a deep impression was produced, as could easily be seen from the faces of the audience.

Every address he gave was full of thrilling stories—so thrilling, indeed, that sceptical minds refused to accept some of them. At the close of one large public meeting a working lad was overheard to say to another: "Did you ever hear such a pack of lies in your life?" "Don't say that!" begged the other, "for oh, he tell't them well!"

Not only in Scotland, but also in Ireland and amongst the Presbyterians of England, Mr. Paton urged the claims of the New Hebrides Mission. In London he met at first with little success, owing to the fact that his visit took place at a time when the London Presbytery, on account of some special financial difficulty, had resolved to close its pulpits against all outside claims for a period of some months. But his visit led to an invitation to address one of the annual meetings of the Mildmay Conference on behalf of foreign missions. Through Mr. J. E. Mathieson, who gave the invitation, he obtained introductions to many influential London people, and by this means he gained considerably, not merely in money, but in valued and lasting personal friendships.

Returning to Scotland, he added to his other labours that of addressing Divinity students in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen, with a view to persuading two or three of them, if possible, to

return with him as missionaries to the New Hebrides. The task was not an easy one, for other and better known mission fields seemed to offer wider scope ; but eventually three men did offer themselves and were accepted. No sooner was this desire attained than the indefatigable missionary made arrangements to prolong his stay in Scotland for six weeks beyond the time originally fixed, in order that he might endeavour to raise a special fund of £500 so that the cost of the outfit and equipment of the three new recruits to his band of workers, their passage money, and that of their wives, might not be a charge upon the Australian Foreign Mission Committees.

The money for this special purpose came to him not in small amounts but in big donations ; and more than the sum he had asked for was speedily in his hands.

On October 25th, 1885, Mr. Paton sailed for Melbourne, his purpose in visiting the home country gloriously accomplished. He had set out to raise £6,000 ; and God had placed in his hands, through the instrumentality of the stewards of His riches, half as much again as the sum prayed for. Nine thousand pounds ! It was a splendid monetary result of his eighteen months' sojourn at home. But this was not all—perhaps indeed it was not the greater part of what he had accomplished, for he had made friends innumerable—friends whose sympathy with the aims and the needs of his work was destined to last and to bear rich fruit in years to come.

His welcome at Melbourne was most enthusiastic. The people of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria presented him with a testimonial, and later elected him Moderator of their Supreme

Court—the highest honour in their power to bestow.

Of the money he had collected, £6,000 was, as originally intended, set aside for the purchase or the building of a suitable mission ship ; and the remaining £3,000 formed the nucleus of a special fund for the training and equipment of additional missionaries.

The natives of Aniwa gave their beloved missionary a right royal welcome when he returned to the island. Writing of it afterwards he declared that his procession to the mission house was “ more like the triumphal march of a conqueror than that of a humble missionary ” ; and he was more than delighted to find that during his absence the work he had founded at such cost to himself had been not only maintained but strengthened and amplified. Only one ambition now remained to him, and that was to see a resident missionary established on every island of the New Hebrides. He longed for this and lived for it ; and it was his hope and prayer that God would grant him the fulfilment of his desire.

CHAPTER XII

A GREAT ACHIEVEMENT

FOR six years—from 1886 to 1892, Dr. Paton's time was spent between the New Hebrides and the churches of Australasia. It was a happy period of strenuous, useful work; but he found his efforts increasingly hindered by the unscrupulous methods of traders amongst the islanders who, by the sale of intoxicants, opium, firearms and ammunition were demoralising and debasing the people.

This state of affairs at length became so intolerable that Dr. Paton was urged to start on a tour round the world, in order that, by representing the evil in its true light to the Governments of the countries implicated, something might be done to mitigate, if not entirely to remove it. As soon as the injury resulting to the natives was realized, Great Britain prohibited all trade in the articles that had proved so harmful. America, however, hesitated, not on the question of morality, but of constitutional policy; and France would only agree to enforce prohibition if and when America did so. A newspaper controversy was begun but it had little effect; and ultimately Sir John Thurston, at that time High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, advised that a deputation be sent to America from the missions and churches interested. This led the General Assembly of Victoria to appoint Dr. Paton as one of its representatives at the Pan-Presbyterian

Council held at Toronto in September, 1892, with a special commission to use all legitimate influence with the Government of the United States "for the suppression of the trade in fire-arms, intoxicating liquors and opium in the New Hebrides Islands and other unannexed groups in the Western Pacific." He was further "authorized to procure two missionaries to serve in the New Hebrides Islands under this Church," and to receive on behalf of the Committee "any contributions offered for its Foreign Missions."

Thus at the age of sixty-eight—an age when most men look forward to an honourable retirement from the active pursuits of life—Dr. Paton set out on what he has himself described as the biggest of all his missionary journeys. Starting from Sydney on August 8th, 1892, and accompanied by his wife and daughter, he sailed for San Francisco, arriving there on September 2nd. From there he journeyed to Chicago, halting for a few hours by the way at Salt Lake City. He records an encounter there with an old lady who, he says, was fervent in her defence of polygamy. "But," he adds with sly humour, "I noted that, with the Mormons, as with the South Sea savages, a separate house had to be provided for each wife."

From Chicago he went to Buffalo, returning thence to Niagara, and then on to Toronto. There he found the city crowded with visitors to a great agricultural show; and until midnight he walked the streets in a vain quest for shelter, every hotel and boarding house being full. At last, happily, he came across the owner of a private house who, although he had already refused thirteen applicants, had not the heart to turn such an old man from his door! The only accommodation he could offer was an empty room; and

the only furniture he could provide for his guest was one chair! But Dr. Paton thankfully accepted the shelter offered; and flinging himself on the floor of the empty room, with nothing but his handbag for a pillow, was soon sound asleep. The man who had spent a night in a tree on Tanna, with savages round him howling for his life, could see no hardship in the bare—very bare!—hospitality of the Toronto householder.

The next morning Dr. Paton made his way to the offices of the Presbyterian Church, and soon he was in the full swing of the work he had set out to do. When the business of the Pan-Presbyterian Council was finished, he made a tour of the chief towns of Ontario—at the special request of many ministers whom he had met in Toronto—and then proceeded to New York and Washington. Throughout his tour—and especially in Washington—he strained every nerve to help forward the agreement amongst the Great Powers of the world which would bring to an end the iniquitous traffic that was ruining the bodies and souls of the natives of the New Hebrides; but to his bitter disappointment, after endless delays, it was found impossible to frame an agreement acceptable to all concerned, and the negotiations fell through.

The amount of work he was doing at this time would have exhausted most men less than half his age. Here, for instance, is an extract from an account given by a writer in an American missionary journal, of one week's toil during his visit to the United States. "The story," says the writer, "is not told by himself, but by a lady who was able to know something of his work during that length of time. It will perhaps help others to realize his tireless activity, despite his great age and feebleness.

" On a certain Sunday he spoke three times in the city of Brooklyn. On Monday he addressed a meeting of ministers which closed at twelve o'clock, and he took the one o'clock train, travelling one hundred and twenty-seven miles to Thompsonville, Conn., where he addressed a meeting that evening. The lady by whom he was entertained, noticing that he seemed very weary after the meeting, and learning that he was suffering from headache, from which he sometimes suffers for a week at a time, suggested that he should rest as long as possible the next morning. But between five and six o'clock in the morning, as she was attending to her household duties, she caught a glimpse through the open door of the doctor seated at his table busily writing. She said to him: ' You were so weary last night, could you not have taken a little rest this morning?' He replied: ' Dear madam, I am very glad to get up early in order to secure a little quiet to attend to my correspondence.'

" That morning he went to Springfield, Mass., addressed a large meeting in the Bible Normal College and immediately after another in the French Protestant College; and as there was no time for food he went directly to the railway station and took the train for Hartford, Conn., where in the afternoon he addressed a large gathering of theological students and others, and spoke the same evening in Dr. Kelsey's church, thus addressing four meetings in one day, and making two journeys without taking any food.

" On Wednesday he spoke in the First Church in Hartford. On Thursday he went to Middletown, Conn., and spoke there. On Friday he returned to Springfield, Mass., and addressed an evening meeting which closed at ten o'clock.

From that meeting he went direct to the railway station, and sat there alone until two o'clock in the morning in order to take the night train to New York city. On arriving in New York on Saturday he went to the house of Dr. Somerville, secured his accumulated letters, answered a few of the most pressing, and started the same day for Scranton, Pa., travelling three hundred miles in all that day. He spoke in Scranton the day following.

"Thus for two months he has been constantly addressing large audiences, making long journeys, meeting strange people, sleeping in strange beds, struggling to overtake his voluminous correspondence, receiving patiently and cheerfully numerous callers, and even autograph-hunters, to whom he never denies himself.

"The lady who entertained him at Thompsonville wrote to Dr. Somerville, begging him to induce Dr. Paton to come to her home for at least one week of rest during this summer, as she observed that he was looking much more feeble than some months ago. Dr. Somerville replied: 'I wish that Dr. Paton could be persuaded to do as you suggest, but the pressure of his work is so heavy that it will not allow him to rest.' When the lady pleaded with Dr. Paton to spare himself he replied: 'My dear Mrs. S——, I will just work till I drop.'"

When the time came for him to leave the United States he was overwhelmed with invitations to prolong his stay; but the call of Canada prevailed, and he spent the next two months in a tour of the Canadian towns. The strain of constant travelling was very great; and he has himself said that this period of his life was fuller of constant stir and excitement than any through which he had hitherto passed. "I do not think,"

he said, "it is any exaggeration to say that, on an average, during these months I must have addressed ten meetings on the ordinary days of the week and five every Sunday. I certainly know that, during many special weeks, the numbers far exceeded these." His work, moreover, was made more arduous than it would otherwise have been, owing to the fact that he steadfastly refused to use any cab, car, train or steamboat on the Lord's Day.

Having given to Canada every day that he could spare, Dr. Paton returned to New York, whence he sailed for Liverpool. He found on reaching the homeland that an amazing welcome awaited him. Since his previous visit, nine years before, his autobiography had been published; his name had become a household word; and from all quarters invitations and entreaties for visits poured in upon him. He was, as he deserved to be, the missionary hero of the time. Wherever he went he faced crowded audiences in the largest meeting-place of each locality, and overflow meetings were frequent. In twelve months no less a sum than £10,000 was poured into his hands for the work to which his life was given; and in addition, an extra £1,000 for the special purpose of meeting the increased yearly cost of the steam auxiliary mission ship, on which he had set his heart, was speedily forthcoming.

In the autumn of 1894, Dr. Paton returned to Australia to give an account of his stewardship; and at the close of an address before the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church at Melbourne he handed to the Moderator a cheque for £12,527 4s. 2d., with another cheque for £1,000, representing part of the profits of his book.

After long and careful deliberation, the Assembly decided, with practically the unanimous

approval of all the Churches and missionaries concerned, to expend the greater part of this money in building a new steam auxiliary *Dayspring* for the New Hebrides Mission. The vessel was built on the Clyde. Before she finally left for the Southern Seas she was exhibited to many thousands of interested and admiring friends at Glasgow, Ayr, Belfast, Douglas and Liverpool. The building of this missionary ship, said the man who was practically responsible for its being, "marked the beginning of a new era, it was hoped, in the conversion of the New Hebrides, and the little ship was borne away on the wings of prayer and praise."

The voyage to Melbourne was accomplished satisfactorily, and the *Dayspring* began at once her work in connection with the mission. Three voyages between the New Hebrides and the main land were accomplished with complete satisfaction, and the fourth was begun with confident hope of equal success. But alas! a danger unsuspected, and impossible to guard against, waited for the brave little ship. She was proceeding steadily on her way when suddenly, without warning, she struck on an uncharted reef. Her officers and crew worked manfully to save her, but all their efforts were vain; and ultimately, full of that reluctance and grief that sailors always feel when grim necessity compels them to abandon their ship, they took to the boats, and watched sadly until in a little while the high wind and heavy sea completed the work of destruction, and the *Dayspring*, outcome of so much prayer and hope and sacrifice, sank beneath the waves.

In the year 1900 Dr. Paton again visited Great Britain; and this, his last tour on behalf of the work he loved so well, was marked by scenes of enthusiasm which fully equalled, if indeed they

did not exceed, those of his previous visit. He had come to the homeland in ill health, and was warned by the doctors that he must cease all his work for a time. But this, after only a few days of idleness, he refused to do. "I will no longer be a loafer," he declared; and forthwith he plunged into a vortex of meetings. The doctors repeated their warning, and told him that at the first sign of the recurrence of a painful malady that had troubled him, he must give up all his plans and sail at once for Australia. He listened patiently to all they had to say, thanked them for their advice, and then cheerfully started on what proved to be a six months' tour of the British Isles, a tour, moreover, destined to be for ever memorable for the intense zeal and enthusiasm which it engendered amongst all classes, not only for his own mission, but for missions generally.

On June 6th, 1901, the veteran missionary bade a final farewell to Britain and commenced his journey back to Australia, arriving at Melbourne on July 31st. During his absence—a period of less than two years—he had travelled in trains and steamers 44,000 miles, and had addressed 820 meetings—a truly marvellous record for a man seventy-six years of age, and during the greater part of the time struggling against serious illness.

The financial result of the tour was the addition of the splendid sum of £13,014 to the funds of the New Hebrides Mission. The Victorian Foreign Missions Committee, to whom Dr. Paton handed a cheque for this sum, suggested to the Australian Churches that the splendid services of the devoted missionary should be recognised in some permanent form, and proposed that his portrait should be painted in oils and hung in the Assembly Hall. The suggestion was received

with acclamation, and the portrait in due time was placed in the position of honour it now occupies on the walls of the historic meeting place.

So ill was Dr. Paton on reaching Melbourne, that it was thought advisable to postpone the public welcome that the churches wished to accord him; and not until the following November had he sufficiently recovered his strength to receive the tribute his fellow Christians anxiously waited to give him. Five months later—in April 1902—nearly ten years after his first appeal against the trade in strong drink and firearms which was demoralising the natives of the New Hebrides—he had the joy of knowing that America had forbidden vessels flying her flag to engage in this unholy commerce; and in the same month the Mission Committee consented to his return to the islands.

With Mrs. Paton he spent a few hours on West Tanna, where his son Frank was stationed, and where evidence of the progress of Christianity was now very plainly discernible—and then on to Aniwa. The people there eagerly awaited the venerable man whom they now regarded lovingly as their own Missi; and the welcome they gave him was touching in its fervour.

But what pleased him even more than their welcome was the fact that during his absence the converts had maintained the standard of Christian living which they had learnt from him.

In the early part of 1903 Dr. Paton was obliged once again to bid farewell to the people of Aniwa, and return to Melbourne. The natives were loth to let him go. They realized—what he now for the first time most reluctantly admitted himself—that the infirmities of age were making themselves felt; and they dreaded lest they might never see him again.

There is something infinitely pathetic in the confession of bodily weakness on the part of the man whose indomitable will and burning zeal for the salvation of others had led him to endure so much. "I am not fit for continued exertion, as I used to be," he said. "I get more and more feeble, and sometimes my memory fails me." Yet even then the will of the spirit triumphed over the weakness of the flesh; for he added: "But I hope yet to be spared for the blessed work, if the Lord will."

It was not, however, for his own sake that he left Aniwa, but for Mrs. Paton, whose health was causing her husband and family serious anxiety. Were it not for her, the missionary said he "would risk all with Jesus and remain on Aniwa." But the need, for her sake, was imperative; and so, sadly and tearfully, the Aniwans bade their beloved Missi and the "Missi woman," as they affectionately termed Mrs. Paton, good-bye.

The health of the invalid did not permit Dr. Paton's return to the Islands for four months; but in the interval he had the joy of welcoming four new missionaries who had been sent out by the British Committee to work in the New Hebrides. During his stay in Melbourne, too, friends took advantage of the celebration of his eightieth birthday—May 24th, 1904—to honour him by a great Assembly at the Scots Church. It was a splendid meeting; and the fact that it was held almost on the eve of his departure for Aniwa gave it a special significance. There must have been something very touching, and very inspiring, in the sight of this truly grand old man of eighty, ready and eager once more to endure the fatigue and discomfort of an ocean voyage, willing to face yet again the many inconveniences inseparable from life on Aniwa,

solely that he might "tell it out among the heathen that the Lord is King."

Dr. Paton's committee found it necessary to watch, very lovingly, but very closely, that he did not overtax his strength. For himself and his own well-being he cared not at all. To the last he protested, as he had always done, against any suggestion that he should spare himself. He had been medically advised that he ought not to risk a visit to Aniwa at all, and that with rest and care he might prolong his life for a year or two. But "rest" was a prescription he simply refused to take, and "care" he was only induced to exercise through the loving guile of those whose privilege it was to seek to guard him against over exertion.

On June 1st he sailed for the Islands. "I hope," he said, "to be permitted to stay at least four months, and after assisting in settling the new missionaries, to spend the remainder of my time on Aniwa. I suffer a good deal through age, but I rejoice to go back."

The people of Aniwa were overjoyed to have him in their midst again; and it was very touching to see how their realization of his increasing weakness called forth their love and devotion in every possible way. "The natives," his son said, "simply fly to help my father up and down steps and over rough roads, and in nearly every way show their love for him." It is not easy to remember that these same natives who now showed such reverence and affection for their white-haired Missi, had, only a few years before, been savages of the most degraded type. A more conclusive proof of the transforming power of the Gospel it would indeed be difficult to find.

But alas! the joy of the Aniwans at Dr. Paton's return to their island was destined to be short-

lived. Instead of the four months he had hoped to spend with them, he remained barely two on Aniwa, when again duty called him back to Australia, and soon he was at work, arranging tours, undertaking tiring journeys, and addressing many meetings on behalf of his mission.

Amid his ceaseless activity he had much to bear of private grief and anxiety; but the one overwhelming sorrow at this time was Mrs. Paton's illness. For it was soon apparent that the brave, devoted woman, who had for so many years dared and endured so much in order that she might share her husband's toil for the Master's sake, was about to leave him. All that skill could accomplish and love suggest was done, but nothing availed to stay the progress of her malady; and after many long weeks of pain and weakness, borne with patient heroism, she passed peacefully to her rest on May 16th, 1905.

The friends of the aged missionary feared greatly for the effect of this bereavement upon him; but keenly though he felt it, he did not permit his sorrow to overwhelm him; and, with a bravery only possible to such a rarely selfless nature, he still continued his work. "The time is short and the heathen are perishing" was his only answer to those who begged him to rest, and he persisted in travelling long distances—often when in great pain—and cheerfully facing discomforts and incurring risks from which many a man in the prime of life would have shrunk.

So, doggedly resolved to work on to the very end, he continued his toil. Always there was in his heart the hope that yet once again he would be permitted to return to Aniwa; and to one of his most intimate friends he confided the desire that at the last he might be laid to rest on the island

and amongst the people for whom he had literally given his life. But this was not to be.

There came a day when his iron will was conquered by the bodily ill that he had fought so bravely and so long; yet even then he would not admit defeat. On December 28th, 1906, a specialist was called in for consultation; and the first question put to him by the missionary when the examination was over was this: "Do you think I shall be well enough to go to the New Hebrides in January, doctor?"

The journey he so longed for was not the one God had planned for him. Not to the New Hebrides, but to the Heaven of His glory God called the servant who had served Him as few have done. On January 27th, 1907, John Gibson Paton passed to his reward; and with his passing earth lost and heaven gained a soul whose life had been an inspiration, and whose memory will be honoured while honour remains amongst men.