

had purchased from them for knives and calico; and they now stole them all away, dead or alive. Had I interfered, they would have gloried in the chance to club or shoot me in the dark, when no one could exactly say who had done the deed. Several of the few goats, which I had for milk, were also killed or driven away; indeed, all the injury that was possible was done to me, short of taking away my life, and that was now frequently attempted. Having no fires or fireplaces in my Mission House, such being not required there,—though sometimes a fire would have been invaluable for drying our bed-clothes in the Rainy Season,—we had a house near by in which all our food was cooked, and there, under lock and key, we secured all our cooking utensils, pots, dishes, etc. One night that too was broken into, and everything was stolen. In consternation, I appealed to the Chief, telling him what had been done. He also flew into a great rage, and vowed vengeance on the thieves, saying that he would compel them to return everything. But, of course, nothing was returned; the thief could not be found! I, unable to live without something in which to boil water, at length offered a blanket to any one that would bring back my kettle. Miaki himself, after much professed difficulty, returned it *minus* the lid,—that, he said, probably fishing for a higher bribe, could not be got at any price, being at the other side of the island in a tribe over which he had no control! In the circumstances, I was glad to get kettle *minus* lid—realising how life itself may depend on so small a luxury!

CHAPTER XVIII

THE VISIT OF H.M.S. "CORDELIA"

ONE morning, the Tannese, rushing towards me in great excitement, cried, "Missi, Missi, there is a God, or a ship on fire, or something of fear, coming over the sea! We see no flames, but it smokes like a volcano. Is it a Spirit, a God, or a ship on fire? What is it? what is it?"

One party after another followed in quick succession, shouting the same questions in great alarm, to which I replied, "I

cannot go at once; I must dress first in my best clothes; it will likely be one of Queen Victoria's Men-of-war, coming to ask of me if your conduct is good or bad, if you are stealing my property, or threatening my life, or how you are using me?"

They pled with me to go and see it; but I made much fuss about dressing, and getting ready to meet the great Chief on the vessel, and would not go with them. The two principal Chiefs now came running and asked, "Missi, will it be a ship of war?"

I called to them, "I think it will; but I have no time to speak to you now, I must get on my best clothes!"

They said, "Missi, only tell us, will he ask you if we have been stealing your things?"

I answered, "I expect he will."

They asked, "And will you tell him?"

I said, "I must tell him the truth; if he asks, I will tell him."

They then cried out, "Oh, Missi, tell him not! Everything shall be brought back to you at once, and no one will be allowed again to steal from you."

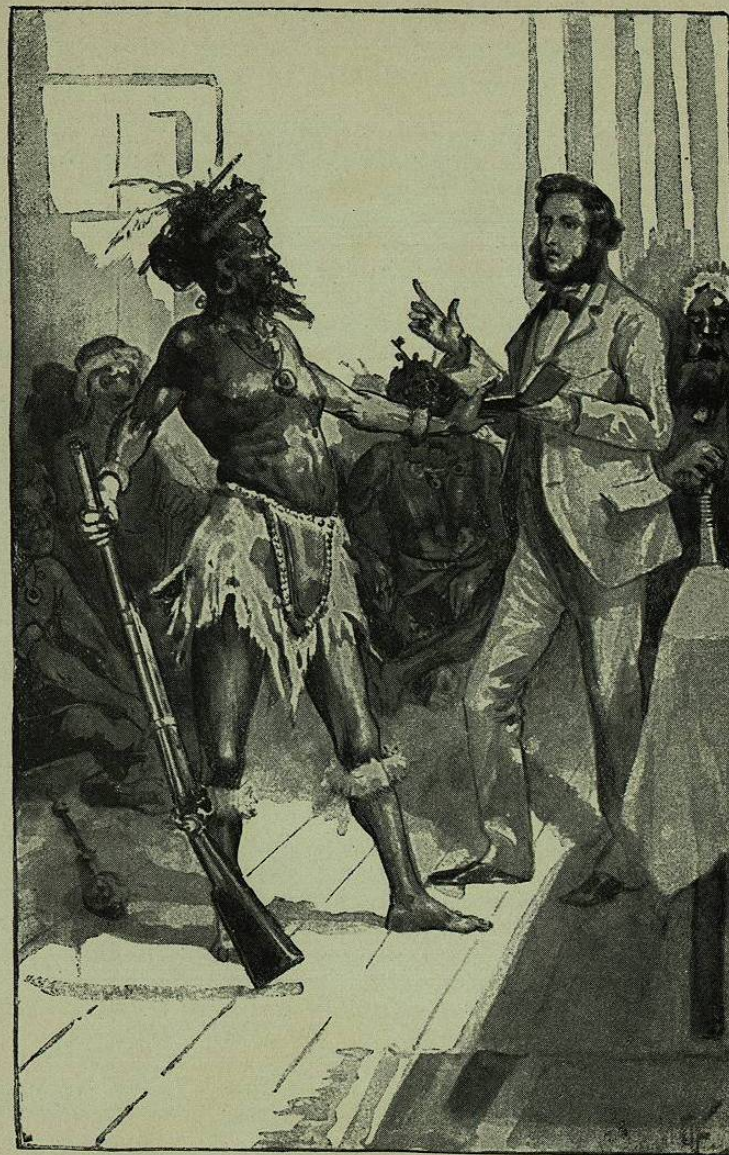
Then said I, "Be quick! Everything must be returned before he comes. Away, away! and let me get ready to meet the great Chief on the Man-of-war."

Hitherto, no thief could ever be found, and no Chief had power to cause anything to be restored to me; but now, in an incredibly brief space of time, one came running to the Mission House with a pot, another with a pan, another with a blanket, others with knives, forks, plates, and all sorts of stolen property. The Chiefs called me to receive these things, but I replied, "Lay them all down at the door, bring everything together quickly; I have no time to speak with you!"

I delayed my toilet, enjoying mischievously the magical effect of an approaching vessel that might bring penalty to thieves. At last the Chiefs, running in breathless haste, called out to me, "Missi, Missi, do tell us, is the stolen property all here?"

Of course I could not tell, but, running out, I looked on the promiscuous heap of my belongings, and said, "I don't see the lid of the kettle there yet!"

One Chief said, "No, Missi, for it is on the other side of



FOLLOWERS OF NICODEMUS.

the island; but tell him not, I have sent for it, and it will be here to-morrow."

I answered, "I am glad you have brought back so much; and now, if you three Chiefs, Nauka, Miaki, and Nowar, do not run away when he comes, he will not likely punish you; but, if you and your people run away, he will ask me why you are afraid, and I will be forced to tell him! Keep near me and you are all safe; only there must be no more stealing from me."

They said, "We are in black fear, but we will keep near you, and our bad conduct to you is done."

The charm and joy of that morning are fresh to me still, when H.M.S. *Cordelia*, Captain Vernon, steamed into our lovely Harbour. The Commander, having heard rumour of my dangers on Tanna, kindly came on shore as soon as the ship cast anchor, with two boats, and a number of his officers and men, so far armed. He was dressed in splendid uniform, being a tall and handsome man, and he and his attendants made a grand and imposing show. On seeing Captain Vernon's boat nearing the shore, and the men glittering in gold lace and arms, Miaki the Chief left my side on the beach and rushed towards his village. I concluded that he had run for it through terror, but he had other and more civilised intentions in his Heathen head! Having obtained, from some trader or visitor in previous days, a soldier's old red coat, he had resolved to rise to the occasion and appear in his best before the Captain and his men. As I was shaking hands with them and welcoming them to Tanna, Miaki returned with the short red coat on, buttoned tightly round his otherwise naked body; and, surmounted by his ugly painted face and long whipcords of twisted hair, it completely spoiled any appearance that he might otherwise have had of savage freedom, and made him look a dirty and insignificant creature.

The Captain was talking to me, his men stood in order near by—to my eyes, oh how charming a glimpse of Home life!—when Miaki marched up and took his place most consequentially at my side. He felt himself the most important personage in the scene, and with an attempt at haughty dignity he began to survey the visitors. All eyes were fixed on the impudent little man, and the Captain asked, "What sort of a character is this?"

I replied, "This is Miaki, our great war Chief"; and whispered to the Captain to be on his guard, as this man knew a little English, and might understand or misunderstand just enough to make it afterwards dangerous to me.

The Captain only muttered, "The contemptible creature!" But such words were far enough beyond Miaki's vocabulary, so he looked on and grinned complacently.

At last he said, "Missi, this great Chief whom Queen Victoria has sent to visit you in her Man-of-war, cannot go over the whole of this island so as to be seen by all our people; and I wish you to ask him if he will stand by a tree, and allow me to put a spear on the ground at his heel, and we will make a nick in it at the top of his head, and the spear will be sent round the island to let all the people see how tall this great man is!" They were delighted at the good Captain agreeing to their simple request; and that spear was exhibited to thousands, as the vessel, her Commander, officers, and men, were afterwards talked of round and round the island.

Captain Vernon was extremely kind, and offered to do anything in his power for me, thus left alone on the island amongst such Savages; but, as my main difficulties were connected with my spiritual work amongst them rousing up their cruel prejudices, I did not see how his kindness could effectually interpose. At his suggestion, however, I sent a general invitation to all the Chiefs within reach, to meet the Captain next morning at my house. True to their instincts of suspicion and fear, they despatched all their women and children to the beach on the opposite side of the island, beyond reach of danger, and next morning my house was crowded with armed men, manifestly much afraid. Punctually at the hour appointed, 10 A.M., the Captain came on shore; and soon thereafter twenty Chiefs were seated with him in my house. He very kindly spent about an hour, giving them wise counsels and warning them against outrages on strangers, all calculated to secure our safety and advance the interests of our Mission work. He then invited all the Chiefs to go on board and see his vessel. They were taken to see the Armoury, and the sight of the big guns running so easily on rails vastly astonished them. He then placed them round us on deck and showed them two shells discharged towards the Ocean, at which, as they burst and fell far off, splash—splash—



VISIT OF H.M.S. "CORDELIA."—Page 72.

ing into the water, the terror of the Natives visibly increased. But, when he sent a large ball crashing through a cocoa-nut grove, breaking the trees like straws and cutting its way clear and swift, they were quite dumbfounded and pled to be again set safely on shore. After receiving each some small gift, however, they were reconciled to the situation, and returned immensely interested in all that they had seen. Doubtless many a wild romance was spun by these savage heads, in trying to describe and hand down to others the wonders of the fire-god of the sea, and the Captain of the great white Queen. How easily it all lends itself to the service of poetry and myth!

CHAPTER XIX

"NOBLE OLD ABRAHAM"

FEVER and ague had now attacked me fourteen times severely, with slighter recurring attacks almost continuously after my first three months on the island, and I now felt the necessity of taking the hint of the Tannese Chief before referred to—"Sleep on the higher ground." Having also received medical counsel to the same effect, though indeed experience was painfully sufficient testimony, I resolved to remove my house, and began to look about for a suitable site. There rose behind my present site, a hill about two hundred feet high, surrounded on all sides by a valley, and swept by the breezes of the trade-winds, being only separated from the Ocean by a narrow neck of land. On this I had set my heart; there was room for a Mission House and a Church, for which indeed Nature seemed to have adapted it. I proceeded to buy up every claim by the Natives to any portion of the hill, paying each publicly and in turn, so that there might be no trouble afterwards. I then purchased from a Trader the deck planks of a shipwrecked vessel, with which to construct a house of two apartments, a bedroom and a small store-room adjoining it, to which I purposed to transfer and add the old house as soon as I was able.

Just at this juncture, the fever smote me again more severely than ever; my weakness after this attack was so great, that

I felt as if I never could rally again. With the help of my faithful Aneityumese Teacher, Abraham, and his wife, however, I made what appeared my last effort to creep—I could not climb—up the hill to get a breath of wholesome air. When about two-thirds up the hill, I became so faint that I concluded I was dying. Lying down on the ground, sloped against the root of a tree to keep me from rolling to the bottom, I took farewell of old Abraham, of my Mission work, and of every thing around! In this weak state I lay, watched over by my faithful companion, and fell into a quiet sleep. When consciousness returned, I felt a little stronger, and a faint gleam of hope and life came back to my soul.

Abraham and his devoted wife Nafatu lifted me and carried me to the top of the hill. There they laid me on cocoa-nut leaves on the ground, and erected over me a shade or screen of the same; and there the two faithful souls, inspired surely by something diviner even than mere human pity, gave me the cocoa-nut juice to drink and fed me with native food and kept me living—I know not for how long. Consciousness did, however, fully return. The trade-wind refreshed me day by day. The Tannese seemed to have given me up for dead; and providentially none of them looked near us for many days. Amazingly my strength returned, and I began planning about my new house on the hill. Afraid again to sleep at the old site, I slept under the tree, and sheltered by the cocoa-nut leaf screen, while preparing my new bedroom.

Here again, but for these faithful souls, the Aneityumese Teacher and his wife, I must have been baffled, and would have died in the effort. The planks of the wreck, and all other articles required, they fetched and carried; and it taxed my utmost strength to get them in some way planted together. But life depended on it. It was at length accomplished; and after that time I suffered comparatively little from anything like continuous attacks of fever and ague. That noble old soul, Abraham, stood by me as an angel of God in sickness and in danger; he went at my side wherever I had to go; he helped me willingly to the last inch of strength in all that I had to do; and it was perfectly manifest that he was doing all this not from mere human love, but for the sake of Jesus. That man had been a Cannibal in his Heathen days, but by the grace of God there he stood verily a new creature in Christ

Jesus. Any trust, however sacred or valuable, could be absolutely reposed in him; and in trial or danger I was often refreshed by that old Teacher's prayers, as I used to be by the prayers of my saintly father in my childhood's home. No white man could have been a more valuable helper to me in my perilous circumstances; and no person, white or black, could have shown more fearless and chivalrous devotion.

When I have read or heard the shallow objections of irreligious scribblers and talkers, hinting that there was no reality in conversions, and that Mission effort was but waste, oh, how my heart has yearned to plant them just one week on Tanna, with the "natural" man all around in the person of Cannibal and Heathen, and only the one "spiritual" man in the person of the converted Abraham, nursing them, feeding them, saving them "for the love of Jesus"—that I might just learn how many hours it took to convince them that Christ in man was a reality after all! All the scepticism of Europe would hide its head in foolish shame; and all its doubts would dissolve under one glance of the new light that Jesus, and Jesus alone, pours from the converted Cannibal's eye.

CHAPTER XX

A TYPICAL SOUTH SEA TRADER

THE prejudices and persecutions of Heathens were a sore enough trial, but sorer and more hopeless was the wicked and contaminating influence of, alas, my fellow-countrymen. One, for instance, a Captain Winchester, living with a native woman at the head of the bay as a Trader, a dissipated wretch, though a well-educated man, was angry forsooth at this state of peace! Apparently there was not the usual demand for barter for the fowls, pigs, etc., in which he traded. He developed at once a wonderful interest in their affairs, presented all the Chiefs around with powder, caps, and balls, and lent among them a number of flash-muskets. He urged them not to be afraid of war, as he would supply any amount of ammunition. I remonstrated, but he flatly told me that peace did not suit his purposes! Incited and encouraged thus, these poor Heathen

people were goaded into a most unjust war on neighbouring tribes. The Trader immediately demanded a high price for the weapons he had lent; the price of powder, caps, and balls rose exorbitantly with every fresh demand; his yards were crowded with poultry and pigs, which he readily disposed of to passing vessels; and he might have amassed great sums of money but for his vile dissipations. Captain Winchester, now glorying in the war, charged a large hog for a wine-glass full of powder, or three or four balls, or ten gun-caps; he was boastful of his "good luck" in getting rid of all his old muskets and filling his yards with pigs and fowls. Such is the infernal depth to which we can sink, when the misery and ruin of many are thought to be more than atoned for by the wealth and prosperity of a few who trade in their doom!

Miaki the war Chief had a young brother, Rarip by name, about eighteen years of age. When this war began he came to live with me at the Mission House. After it had raged some time, Miaki forced him to join the fighting men; but he escaped through the bush, and returned to me, saying, "Missi, I hate this fighting; it is not good to kill men; I will live with you!"

Again the war Chief came, and forced my dear young Rarip to join the hosts. Of course, I could only plead; I could not prevent him. This time, he placed him at his own side in the midst of his warriors. On coming in sight of the enemy, and hearing their first yells as they rushed from the bush, a bullet pierced young Rarip's breast, and he fell dead into the arms of Miaki. The body was carried home to his brother's village, with much wailing, and a messenger ran to tell me that Rarip was dead. On hastening thither, I found him quite dead, and the centre of a tragic ceremonial. Around him, some sitting, others lying on the ground, were assembled all the women and girls, tearing their hair, wounding themselves with split bamboos and broken bottles, dashing themselves headlong to the earth, painting all black their faces, breasts, and arms, and wailing with loud lamentations! Men were also there, knocking their heads against the trees, gashing their bodies with knives till they ran with streaks of blood, and indulging in every kind of savage symbol of grief and anguish. My heart broke to see them, and to think that they knew not to look to our dear Lord Jesus for consolation.



"Missi, Missi, come quick! Miaki's men are stealing your sheets and blankets!"

I returned to the Mission House, and brought a white sheet and some tape, in which the body of dear young Rarip was wrapped and prepared for the grave. The Natives appeared to be gratified at this mark of respect; and all agreed that Rarip should have under my direction a Christian burial. The men prepared the grave in a spot selected near to his own house; I read the Word of God, and offered prayer to Jehovah, with a psalm of praise, amidst a scene of weeping and lamentation never to be forgotten; and the thought burned through my very soul—oh, when, when will the Tannese realise what I am now thinking and praying about, the life and immortality brought to light through Jesus?

As the war still raged on, and many more were killed, vengeance threatened the miserable Trader. Miaki attacked him thus, "You led us into this war. You deceived us, and we began it. Rarip is dead, and many others. Your life shall yet go for his."

Captain Winchester, heartless as a dog so long as pigs and fowls came to the yard at whatever cost to others' lives, now trembled like a coward for himself. He implored me to let him and his Marè wife sleep at my house for safety; but I refused to allow my Mission to be in any way identified with his crimes. The Natives from other islands, whom he kept and wrought like slaves, he now armed with muskets for his defence; but, having no faith in them protecting or even warning him, he implored me to send one of my Teachers, to assist his wife in watching till he snatched a few hours of sleep every day, and, if awake, he would sell his life as dearly as he could by aid of musket and revolver. The Teachers were both afraid and disinclined to go; and I could not honestly ask them to do so. His peril and terror became so real that by night he slept in his boat anchored out in the centre of the bay, with his arms beside him, and a crew ready to start off at the approach of danger and lose everything; while by day he kept watch on shore, armed, and also ready to fly. Thus his miserable existence dragged on, keeping watch alternatively with his wife, till a trading vessel called and carried him off with all that he had rescued—for which deliverance we were unfeignedly thankful! The war, which he had wickedly instigated, lingered on for three months; and then, by a present given secretly to two leading Chiefs, I managed to

bring it to a close. But feelings of revenge for the slain burned fiercely in many breasts; and young men had old feuds handed on to them by the recital of their fathers' deeds of blood.

CHAPTER XXI

UNDER AXE AND MUSKET

ABOUT this time, our Sabbath audiences at the Mission numbered forty or so. Nowar and three or four more, and only they, seemed to love and serve Jesus. They were, however, changeable and doubtful, though they exerted a good influence on their villages, and were generally friendly to us and to the Worship.

One morning at daybreak I found my house surrounded by armed men, and a Chief intimated that they had assembled to take my life. Seeing that I was entirely in their hands, I knelt down and gave myself away body and soul to the Lord Jesus, for what seemed the last time on earth. Rising, I went out to them, and began calmly talking about their unkind treatment of me and contrasting it with all my conduct towards them. I also plainly showed them what would be the sad consequences, if they carried out their cruel purpose. At last some of the Chiefs, who had attended the Worship, rose and said, "Our conduct has been bad; but now we will fight for you, and kill all those who hate you."

Grasping hold of their leader, I held him fast till he promised never to kill any one on my account, for Jesus taught us to love our enemies and always to return good for evil! During this scene, many of the armed men slunk away into the bush, and those who remained entered into a bond to be friendly and to protect us. But again their Public Assembly resolved that we should be killed, because, as they said, they hated Jehovah and the Worship; for it made them afraid to do as they had always done. If I would give up visiting the villages, and praying and talking with them about Jehovah, they intimated that they would like me to stay and trade with them, as they liked the Traders but hated the Missionaries! I told them that the hope of being able to teach them the Worship

of Jehovah alone kept me living amongst them; that I was there, not for gain or pleasure, but because I loved them, and pitied their estate, and sought their good continually by leading them to know and serve the only true God.

But my enemies seldom slackened their hateful designs against my life, however calmed or baffled for the moment. Within a few days of the above events, when Natives in large numbers were assembled at my house, a man furiously rushed on me with his axe; but a Kaserumini Chief snatched a spade with which I had been working, and dexterously defended me from instant death. Life in such circumstances led me to cling very near to the Lord Jesus; I knew not, for one brief hour, when or how attack might be made; and yet, with my trembling hand clasped in the Hand once nailed on Calvary, and now swaying the sceptre of the Universe, calmness and peace and resignation abode in my soul.

Next day, a wild Chief followed me about for four hours with his loaded musket, and, though often directed towards me, God restrained his hand. I spoke kindly to him, and attended to my work as if he had not been there, fully persuaded that my God had placed me there, and would protect me till my allotted task was finished. Looking up in unceasing prayer to our dear Lord Jesus, I left all in His hands, and felt immortal till my work was done. Trials and hairbreadth escapes strengthened my faith, and seemed only to nerve me for more to follow; and they did tread swiftly upon each other's heels. Without that abiding consciousness of the presence and power of my dear Lord and Saviour, nothing else in all the world could have preserved me from losing my reason and perishing miserably. His words, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," became to me so real that it would not have startled me to behold Him, as Stephen did, gazing down upon the scene. I felt His supporting power, as did St. Paul, when he cried, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." It is the sober truth, and it comes back to me sweetly after twenty years, that I had my nearest and dearest glimpses of the face and smile of my blessed Lord in those dread moments when musket, club, or spear was being levelled at my life. Oh the bliss of living and enduring, as seeing "Him who is invisible"!

One evening, I awoke three times to hear a Chief and his