

from where I had started; here I left the sea path and promised some young men a gift of fish-hooks to guide me the nearest way through the bush to my Mission Station, which they gladly and heartily did. I ran a narrow risk in approaching them; they thought me an enemy, and I arrested their muskets only by a loud cry—

"I am Missi! Don't shoot; my love to you, my friends!"

Praising God for His preserving care, I reached home, and had a long refreshing sleep. The natives, on hearing next day how I had come all the way in the dark, exclaimed—

"Surely any of us would have been killed! Your Jehovah God alone thus protects you and brings you safely home."

With all my heart, I said, "Yes! and He will be your protector and helper too, if only you will obey and trust in Him."

Certainly that night put my faith to the test. Had it not been the assurance that I was engaged in His service, and that in every path of duty He would carry me through or dispose of me therein for His glory, I could never have undertaken either journey. St. Paul's words are true to-day and for ever—"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE PLAGUE OF MEASLES

ABOUT this time I had a never-to-be-forgotten illustration of the infernal spirit that possessed some of the Traders towards these poor Natives. One morning, three or four vessels entered our Harbour and cast anchor in Port Resolution. The captains called on me; and one of them, with manifest delight, exclaimed, "We know how to bring down your proud Tannese now! We'll humble them before you!"

I answered, "Surely you don't mean to attack and destroy these poor people?"

He replied, not abashed but rejoicing, "We have sent the

measles to humble them! That kills them by the score! Four young men have been landed at different ports, ill with measles, and these will soon thin their ranks."

Shocked above measure, I protested solemnly and denounced their conduct and spirit; but my remonstrances only called forth the shameless declaration, "Our watchword is,—Sweep these creatures away and let white men occupy the soil!"

Their malice was further illustrated thus: they induced Kapuku, a young Chief, to go off to one of their vessels, promising him a present. He was the friend and chief supporter of Mr. Mathieson and of his work. Having got him on board, they confined him in the hold amongst natives lying ill with measles. They gave him no food for about four-and-twenty hours; and then, without the promised present, they put him ashore far from his own home. Though weak and excited, he scrambled back to his Tribe in great exhaustion and terror. He informed the Missionary that they had put him down amongst sick people, red and hot with fever, and that he feared their sickness was upon him. I am ashamed to say that these Sandal-wood and other Traders were our own degraded countrymen; and that they deliberately gloried in thus destroying the poor Heathen. A more fiendish spirit could scarcely be imagined; but most of them were horrible drunkards, and their traffic of every kind amongst these Islands was, generally speaking, steeped in human blood.

The measles, thus introduced, became amongst our Islanders the most deadly plague. It spread fearfully, and was accompanied by sore throat and diarrhoea. In some villages, man, woman, and child were stricken, and none could give food or water to the rest. The misery, suffering, and terror were unexampled, the living being afraid sometimes even to bury the dead. Thirteen of my own Mission party died of this disease; and, so terror-stricken were the few who survived, that when the little Mission schooner *John Knox* returned to Tanna, they all packed up and left for their own Aneityum, except my own dear old Abraham.

At first, thinking that all were on the wing, he also had packed his chattels, and was standing beside the others ready to leave with them. I drew near to him, and said, "Abraham,



they are all going ; are you also going to leave me here alone on Tanna, to fight the battles of the Lord ?”

He asked, “Missi, will you remain ?”

I replied, “Yes ; but, Abraham, the danger to life is now so great that I dare not plead with you to remain, for we may both be slain. Still, I cannot leave the Lord’s work now.”

The noble old Chief looked at the box and his bundles, and, musing, said, “Missi, our danger is very great now.”

I answered, “Yes ; I once thought you would not leave me alone to it ; but, as the vessel is going to your own land, I cannot ask you to remain and face it with me !”

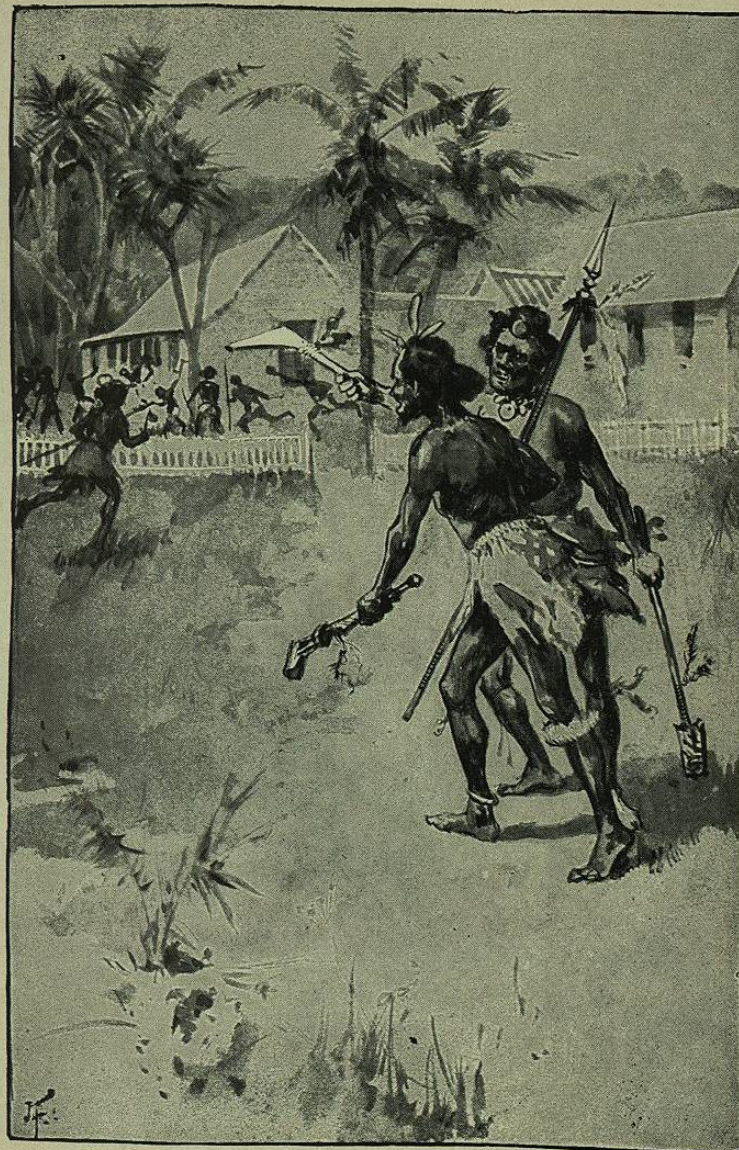
He again said, “Missi, would you like me to remain alone with you, seeing my wife is dead and in her grave here ?”

I replied, “Yes, I would like you to remain ; but, considering the circumstances in which we will be left alone, I cannot plead with you to do so.”

He answered, “Then, Missi, I remain with you of my own free choice, and with all my heart. We will live and die together in the work of the Lord. I will never leave you while you are spared on Tanna.”

So saying, and with a light that gave the fore-gleam of a Martyr’s glory to his dark face, he shouldered his box and bundles back to his own house ; and thereafter, Abraham was my dear companion and constant friend, and my fellow-sufferer in all that remains still to be related of our Mission life on Tanna.

Before this plague of measles was brought amongst us I had sailed round in the *John Knox* to Black Beach on the opposite side of Tanna, and prepared the way for settling Teachers. And they were placed soon after by Mr. Copeland and myself with encouraging hopes of success, and with the prospect of erecting there a Station for Mr. and Mrs. Johnston, the newly arrived Missionaries from Nova Scotia. But this dreadful imported epidemic blasted all our dreams. They devoted themselves from the very first, and assisted me in every way to alleviate the dread sufferings of the Natives. We carried medicine, food, and even water, to the surrounding villages every day, few of themselves being able to render us much assistance. Nearly all who took our medicine and followed instructions as to food, etc., recovered ; but vast numbers of them would listen to no counsels, and rushed into



THE ATTACK ON THE MISSION.



experiments which made the attack fatal all around. When the trouble was at its height, for instance, they would plunge into the sea, and seek relief; they found it in almost instant death. Others would dig a hole into the earth, the length of the body and about two feet deep; therein they laid themselves down, the cold earth feeling agreeable to their fevered skins; and when the earth around them grew heated, they got friends to dig a few inches deeper, again and again, seeking a cooler and cooler couch. In this ghastly effort many of them died, literally in their own graves, and were buried where they lay! It need not be surprising, though we did everything in our power to relieve and save them, that the Natives associated us with the white men who had so dreadfully afflicted them, and that their blind thirst for revenge did not draw fine distinctions between the Traders and the Missionaries. Both were whites—that was enough.

Before leaving this terrible plague of measles, I may record my belief that it swept away, with the accompanying sore throat and diarrhoea, a third of the entire population of Tanna; nay, in certain localities more than a third perished. The living declared themselves unable to bury the dead, and great want and suffering ensued. The Teacher and his wife and child, placed by us at Black Beach, were also taken away; and his companion, the other Teacher there, embraced the first opportunity to leave along with his wife for his own island, else his life would have been taken in revenge. Yet, from all accounts afterwards received, I do not think the measles were more fatal on Tanna than on the other Islands of the group. They appear to have carried off even a larger proportion on Aniwa—the future scene of many sorrows but of greater triumphs.

## CHAPTER XXIX

## ATTACKED WITH CLUBS

THE 1st January 1861 was a New Year's Day ever to be remembered. Mr. and Mrs. Johnston, Abraham, and I, had spent nearly the whole time in a kind of solemn yet happy



festival. Anew in a holy covenant before God, we unitedly consecrated our lives and our all to the Lord Jesus, giving ourselves away to His blessed service for the conversion of the Heathen on the New Hebrides. After evening Family Worship, Mr. and Mrs. Johnston left my room to go to their own house, only some ten feet distant; but he returned to inform me that there were two men at the window, armed with huge clubs, and having black painted faces. Going out to them and asking them what they wanted, they replied, "Medicine for a sick boy."

With difficulty I persuaded them to come in and get it. At once, it flashed upon me, from their agitation and their disguise of paint, that they had come to murder us. Mr. Johnston had also accompanied us into the house. Keeping my eye constantly fixed on them, I prepared the medicine and offered it. They refused to receive it, and each man grasped his killing-stone. I faced them firmly and said, "You see that Mr. Johnston is now leaving, and you too must leave this room for to-night. To-morrow, you can bring the boy or come for the medicine."

Seizing their clubs, as if for action, they showed unwillingness to withdraw, but I walked deliberately forward and made as if to push them out, when both turned and began to leave.

Mr. Johnston had gone in front of them and was safely out. But he bent down to lift a little kitten that had escaped at the open door; and at that moment one of the Savages, jerking in behind, aimed a blow with his huge club, in avoiding which Mr. Johnston fell with a scream to the ground. Both men sprang towards him, but our two faithful dogs ferociously leapt in their faces and saved his life. Rushing out, but not fully aware of what had occurred, I saw Mr. Johnston trying to raise himself, and heard him cry, "Take care! these men have tried to kill me, and they will kill you!"

Facing them sternly I demanded, "What is it that you want? He does not understand your language. What do you want? Speak with me."

Both men, thereon, raised their great clubs and made to strike me; but quick as lightning these two dogs sprang at their faces and baffled their blows. One dog was badly bruised, and the ground received the other blow, that would

have launched me into Eternity. The best dog was a little cross-bred retriever, with terrier's blood in him, splendid for warning us of approaching dangers, and which had already been the means of saving my life several times. Seeing how matters stood, I now hounded both dogs furiously upon them, and the two Savages fled. I shouted after them, "Remember, Jehovah God sees you and will punish you for trying to murder His servants!"

In their flight, a large body of men, who had come eight or ten miles to assist in the murder and plunder, came slipping here and there from the bush and joined them, fleeing too. Verily, "the wicked flee, when no man pursueth." David's experience and assurance came home to us, that evening, as very real:—"God is our refuge and our strength . . . therefore we will not fear."

I, now accustomed to such scenes on Tanna, retired to rest and slept soundly; but my dear fellow-labourer, as I afterwards learned, could not sleep for one moment. His pallor and excitement continued next day, indeed for several days; and after that, though he was naturally lively and cheerful, I never saw him smile again.

For that morning, 1st January 1861, the following entry was found in his Journal: "To-day, with a heavy heart and a feeling of dread, I know not why, I set out on my accustomed wanderings amongst the sick. I hastened back to get the Teacher and carry Mr. Paton to the scene of distress. I carried a bucket of water in one hand and medicine in the other; and so we spent a portion of this day endeavouring to alleviate their sufferings, and our work had a happy effect also on the minds of others." In another entry, on 22nd December, he wrote: "Measles are making fearful havoc amongst the poor Tannese. As we pass through the villages, mournful scenes meet the eye; young and old prostrated on the ground, showing all these painful symptoms which accompany loathsome and malignant diseases. In some villages few are left able to prepare food, or to carry drink to the suffering and dying. How pitiful to see the sufferers destitute of every comfort, attention, and remedy that would ameliorate their suffering or remove their disease! As I think of the tender manner in which we are nursed in sickness, the many remedies employed to give relief, with the comforts and attention



bestowed upon us, my heart sickens, and I say, Oh my ingratitude and the ingratitude of Christian people!"

Having, as above recorded, consecrated our lives anew to God on the first day of January, I was, up till the 16th of the month, accompanied by Mr. Johnston and sometimes also by Mrs. Johnston on my rounds in the villages amongst the sick, and they greatly helped me. But by an unhappy accident I was laid aside when most sorely needed. When adzing a tree for house-building I observed that Mahanan, the war Chief's brother, had been keeping too near me, and that he carried a tomahawk in his hand; and, in trying both to do my work and to keep an eye on him, I struck my ankle severely with the adze. He moved off quickly, saying, "I did not do that," but doubtless rejoicing at what had happened. The bone was badly hurt, and several of the blood-vessels cut. Dressing it as well as I could, and keeping it constantly soaked in cold water, I had to exercise the greatest care. In this condition, amidst great sufferings, I was sometimes carried to the villages to administer medicine to the sick, and to plead and pray with the dying.

On such occasions, in this mode of transit even, the conversations that I had with dear Mr. Johnston were most solemn and greatly refreshing. He had, however, scarcely ever slept since the 1st of January, and during the night of the 16th he sent for my bottle of laudanum. Being severely attacked with ague and fever, I could not go to him, but sent the bottle, specifying the proper quantity for a dose, but that he quite understood already. He took a dose for himself, and gave one also to his wife, as she too suffered from sleeplessness. This he repeated three nights in succession, and both of them obtained a long, sound, and refreshing sleep. He came to my bedside, where I lay in the ague-fever, and said with great animation, amongst other things, "I have had such a blessed sleep, and feel so refreshed! What kindness in God to provide such remedies for suffering man!"

At mid-day his dear wife came to me crying, "Mr. Johnston has fallen asleep, so deep that I cannot awake him."

My fever had reached the worst stage, but I struggled to my feet, got to his bedside, and found him in a state of coma, with his teeth fixed in tetanus. With great difficulty we succeeded in slightly rousing him: with a knife, spoon, and

pieces of wood, we forced his teeth open, so as to administer an emetic with good effects, and also other needful medicines. For twelve hours, we had to keep him awake by repeated cold dash in the face, by ammonia, and by vigorously moving him about. He then began to speak freely; and next day he rose and walked about a little. For the two following days, he was sometimes better and sometimes worse; but we managed to keep him up till the morning of the 21st, when he again fell into a state of coma, from which we failed to rouse him. At two o'clock in the afternoon he fell asleep—another Martyr for the testimony of Jesus in those dark and trying Isles, leaving his young wife in indescribable sorrow, which she strove to bear with Christian resignation. Having made his coffin and dug his grave, we two alone at sunset laid him to rest beside my own dear wife and child, close by the Mission House.

## CHAPTER XXX

### KOWIA

ANOTHER tragedy followed, with, however, much of the light of Heaven amid its blackness, in the story of Kowia, a Tannese Chief of the highest rank. Going to Ancityum in youth, he had there become a true Christian. He married an Ancityumese Christian woman, with whom he lived very happily and had two beautiful children. Some time before the measles reached our island he returned to live with me as a Teacher and to help forward our work on Tanna. He proved himself to be a decided Christian; he was a real Chief amongst them, dignified in his whole conduct, and every way a valuable helper to me. Everything was tried by his own people to induce him to leave me and to renounce the Worship, offering him every honour and bribe in their power. Failing these, they threatened to take away all his lands, and to deprive him of Chieftainship, but he answered, "Take all! I shall still stand by Missi and the Worship of Jehovah."

From threats they passed to galling insults, all which he bore patiently for Jesu's sake. But one day a party of his



people came and sold some fowls, and an impudent fellow lifted them after they had been bought and offered to sell them again to me. Kowia shouted, "Don't purchase these, Missi; I have just bought them for you, and paid for them!"

Thereon the fellow began to mock at him. Kowia, gazing round on all present, and then on me, rose like a lion awaking out of sleep, and with flashing eyes exclaimed, "Missi, they think that because I am now a Christian I have become a coward! a woman! to bear every abuse and insult they can heap upon me. But I will show them for once that I am no coward, that I am still their Chief, and that Christianity does not take away but gives us courage and nerve."

Springing at one man, he wrenched in a moment the mighty club from his hands, and swinging it in air above his head like a toy, he cried, "Come any of you, come all against your Chief! My Jehovah God makes my heart and arms strong. He will help me in this battle as He helps me in other things, for He inspires me to show you that Christians are no cowards, though they are men of peace. Come on, and you will yet know that I am Kowia your Chief."

All fled as he approached them; and he cried, "Where are the cowards now?" and handed back to the warrior his club. After this they left him at peace.

He lived at the Mission House, with his wife and children, and was a great help and comfort to Abraham and myself. He was allowed to go more freely and fearlessly amongst the people than any of the rest of our Mission staff. The ague and fever on me at Mr. Johnston's death so increased and reduced me to such weakness that I had become insensible, while Abraham and Kowia alone attended to me. On returning to consciousness I heard as in a dream Kowia lamenting over me, and pleading that I might recover, so as to hear and speak with him before he died. Opening my eyes and looking at him, I heard him say, "Missi, all our Aneityumese are sick. Missi Johnston is dead. You are very sick, and I am weak and dying. Alas, when I too am dead, who will climb the trees and get you a cocoa-nut to drink? And who will bathe your lips and brow?"

Here he broke down into deep and long weeping, and then resumed, "Missi, the Tanna-men hate us all on account of the Worship of Jehovah; and I now fear He is going to take away



THE DEFENCE.



all His servants from this land, and leave my people to the Evil One and his service!"

I was too weak to speak, so he went on, bursting into a soliloquy of prayer: "O Lord Jesus, Missi Johnston is dead; Thou hast taken him away from this land. Missi Johnston the woman and Missi Paton are very ill; I am sick, and Thy servants the Aneityumese are all sick and dying. O Lord, our Father in Heaven, art Thou going to take away all Thy servants, and Thy Worship from this dark land? What meanest Thou to do, O Lord? The Tannese hate Thee and Thy Worship and Thy servants; but surely, O Lord, Thou canst not forsake Tanna and leave our people to die in the darkness! Oh, make the hearts of this people soft to Thy Word and sweet to Thy Worship; teach them to fear and love Jesus; and oh, restore and spare Missi, dear Missi Paton, that Tanna may be saved!"

Touched to the very fountains of my life by such prayers, from a man once a Cannibal, I began under the breath of God's blessing to revive.

A few days thereafter, Kowia came again to me, and rousing me out of sleep, cried, "Missi, I am very weak; I am dying. I come to bid you farewell, and go away to die. I am nearing death now, and I will soon see Jesus."

I spoke what words of consolation and cheer I could muster, but he answered, "Missi, since you became ill my dear wife and children are dead and buried. Most of our Aneityumese are dead, and I am dying. If I remain on the hill, and die here at the Mission House, there are none left to help Abraham to carry me down to the grave where my wife and children are laid. I wish to lie beside them, that we may rise together in the Great Day when Jesus comes. I am happy, looking unto Jesus! One thing only deeply grieves me now; I fear God is taking us all away from Tanna, and will leave my poor people dark and benighted as before, for they hate Jesus and the Worship of Jehovah. O Missi, pray for them, and pray for me once more before I go!"

He knelt down at my side, and we prayed for each other and for Tanna. I then urged him to remain at the Mission House, but he replied, "O Missi, you do not know how near to death I am! I am just going, and will soon be with Jesus, and see my wife and children now. While a little strength is



left, I will lean on Abraham's arm, and go down to the graves of my dear ones and fall asleep there, and Abraham will dig a quiet bed and lay me beside them. Farewell, Missi, I am very near death now; we will meet again in Jesus and with Jesus!"

With many tears he dragged himself away; and my heart-strings seemed all tied round that noble simple soul, and felt like breaking one by one as he left me there on my bed of fever all alone. Abraham sustained him, tottering to the place of graves; there he lay down, and immediately gave up the ghost and slept in Jesus; and there the faithful Abraham buried him beside his wife and children. Thus died a man who had been a cannibal Chief, but by the grace of God and the love of Jesus changed, transfigured into a character of light and beauty. I lost, in losing him, one of my best friends and most courageous helpers; but I knew that day, and I know now, that there is one soul at least from Tanna to sing the glories of Jesus in Heaven—and, oh, the rapture when I meet him there!

## CHAPTER XXXI

### THE MARTYRDOM OF THE GORDONS

MAY 1861 brought with it a sorrowful and tragic event, which fell as the very shadow of doom across our path; I mean the martyrdom of the Gordons on Erromanga. Rev. G. N. Gordon was a native of Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and was born in 1822. He was educated at the Free Church College, Halifax, and placed as Missionary on Erromanga in June 1857. Much troubled and opposed by the Sandal-wooders, he had yet acquired the language and was making progress by inroads on Heathenism. A considerable number of young men and women embraced the Christian Faith, lived at the Mission House, and devotedly helped him and his excellent wife in all their work. But the hurricanes and the measles, already referred to, caused great mortality in Erromanga also; and the degraded Traders, who had introduced the plague, in order to save themselves from revenge, stimulated the super-

stitutions of the Heathen, and charged the Missionaries there too with causing sickness and all other calamities. The Sandal-wooders hated him for fearlessly denouncing and exposing their hideous atrocities.

When Mr. Copeland and I placed the Native Teachers at Black Beach, Tanna, we ran across to Erromanga in the *John Knox*, taking a harmonium to Mrs. Gordon, just come by their order from Sydney. When it was opened out at the Mission House, and Mrs. Gordon began playing on it and singing sweet hymns, the native women were in ecstasies. They at once proposed to go off to the bush and cut each a burden of long grass, to thatch the printing-office which Mr. Gordon was building in order to print the Scriptures in their own tongue, if only Mrs. Gordon would play to them at night and teach them to sing God's praises. They joyfully did so, and then spent a happy evening singing those hymns. Next day being Sabbath, we had a delightful season there, about thirty attending Church and listening eagerly. The young men and women living at the Mission House were being trained to become Teachers; they were reading a small book in their own language, telling them the story of Joseph; and the work every way seemed most hopeful. The Mission House had been removed a mile or so up a hill, partly for Mrs. Gordon's health, and partly to escape the annoying and contaminating influence of the Sandal-wooders on the Christian Natives.

On the 20th May 1861 he was still working at the roofing of the printing-office, and had sent his lads to bring each a load of the long grass to finish the thatching. Meantime a party of Erromangans from a district called Bunk-Hill, under a Chief named Lovu, had been watching him. They had been to the Mission House inquiring, and they had seen him send away his Christian lads. They then hid in the bush and sent two of their men to the Missionary to ask for calico. On a piece of wood he wrote a note to Mrs. Gordon to give them two yards each. They asked him to go with them to the Mission House, as they needed medicine for a sick boy, and Lovu their Chief wanted to see him. He tied up in a napkin a meal of food, which had been brought to him but not eaten, and started to go with them. He requested the native Narubulet to go on before with his companion but they