

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

insisted upon his going in front. In crossing a streamlet, which I visited shortly afterwards, his foot slipped. A blow was aimed at him with a tomahawk, which he caught; the other man struck, but his weapon was also caught. One of the tomahawks was then wrenched out of his grasp. Next moment a blow on the spine laid the dear Missionary low, and a second on the neck almost severed the head from the body. The other Natives then rushed from their ambush, and began dancing round him with frantic shoutings. Mrs. Gordon hearing the noise, came out and stood in front of the Mission House, looking in the direction of her husband's working place, and wondering what had happened. Ouben, one of the party, who had run towards the Station the moment that Mr. Gordon fell, now approached her. A merciful clump of trees had hid from her eyes all that had occurred, and she said to Ouben, "What's the cause of that noise?"

He replied, "Oh, nothing! only the boys amusing themselves!"

Saying "Where are the boys?" she turned round. Ouben slipped stealthily behind her, sank his tomahawk into her back, and with another blow almost severed her head!

Such was the fate of those two devoted servants of the Lord; loving in their lives, and in their deaths not divided—their spirits, wearing the crown of martyrdom, entered Glory together, to be welcomed by Williams and Harris, whose blood was shed near the same now hallowed spot for the name and cause of Jesus. They had laboured four years on Erromanga, amidst trials and dangers manifold, and had not been without tokens of blessing in the Lord's work. Never more earnest or devoted Missionaries lived and died in the Heathen field.

CHAPTER XXXII

SHADOWS DEEPENING ON TANNA

IMMEDIATELY thereafter, a Sandal-wood Trader brought in his boat a party of Erromangans by night to Tanna. They assembled our Harbour Chiefs and people, and urged them to kill us and Mr. and Mrs. Mathieson and the Teachers, or

allow them to do so, as they had killed Mr. and Mrs. Gordon. Then they proposed to go to Aneityum and kill the Missionaries there, as the Aneityumese Natives had burned their Church, and thus they would sweep away the Worship and the servants of Jehovah from all the New Hebrides. Our Chiefs, however, refused, restrained by the Merciful One, and the Erromangans returned to their own island in a sulky mood.

Notwithstanding this refusal, as if they wished to reserve the murder and plunder for themselves, our Mission House was next day thronged with armed men, some from Inland, others from Mr. Mathieson's Station. They loudly praised the Erromangans! The leaders said again and again in my hearing, "The men of Erromanga killed Missi Williams long ago. We killed the Rarotongan and Samoan Teachers. We fought Missi Turner and Missi Nisbet, and drove them from our island. We killed the Aneityumese Teachers on Aniwa, and one of Missi Paton's Teachers too. We killed several white men, and no Man-of-war punished us. Let us talk over this, about killing Missi Paton and the Aneityumese, till we see if any Man-of-war comes to punish the Erromangans. If not, let us unite, let us kill these Missionaries, let us drive the Worship of Jehovah from our land!"

An Inland Chief said or rather shouted in my hearing, "My love to the Erromangans! They are strong and brave men, the Erromangans. They have killed their Missi and his wife, while we only talk about it. They have destroyed the Worship and driven away Jehovah!"

I stood amongst them and protested, "God will yet punish the Erromangans for such wicked deeds. God has heard all your bad talk, and will punish it in His own time and way."

But they shouted me down, amidst great excitement, with the cry, "Our love to the Erromangans! Our love to the Erromangans!"

After I left them, Abraham heard them say, "Miaki is lazy. Let us meet in every village, and talk with each other. Let us all agree to kill Missi and the Aneityumese for the first of our Chiefs that dies."

The night after the visit of the Erromangan boat, and the sad news of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon's death, the Tannese met on their village dancing-grounds and held high festival in

praise of the Erromangans. Our best friend, old Nowar the Chief, who had worn shirt and kilt for some time and had come regularly to the Worship, relapsed once more; he painted his face, threw off his clothing, resumed his bow and arrows, and his tomahawk, of which he boasted that it had killed very many men and at least one woman! On my shaming him for professing to worship Jehovah and yet uniting with the Heathen in rejoicing over the murder of His servants on Erromanga, he replied to this effect, "Truly, Missi, they have done well. If the people of Erromanga are severely punished for this by the Man-of-war, we will all hear of it; and our people will then fear to kill you and the other Missionaries, so as to destroy the Worship of Jehovah. Now, they say, the Erromangans killed Missi Williams and the Samoan, Rarotongan, and Aneityumese Teachers, besides other white men, and no Man-of-war has punished either them or us. If they are not punished for what has been done on Erromanga, nothing else can keep them here from killing you and me and all who worship at the Mission House!"

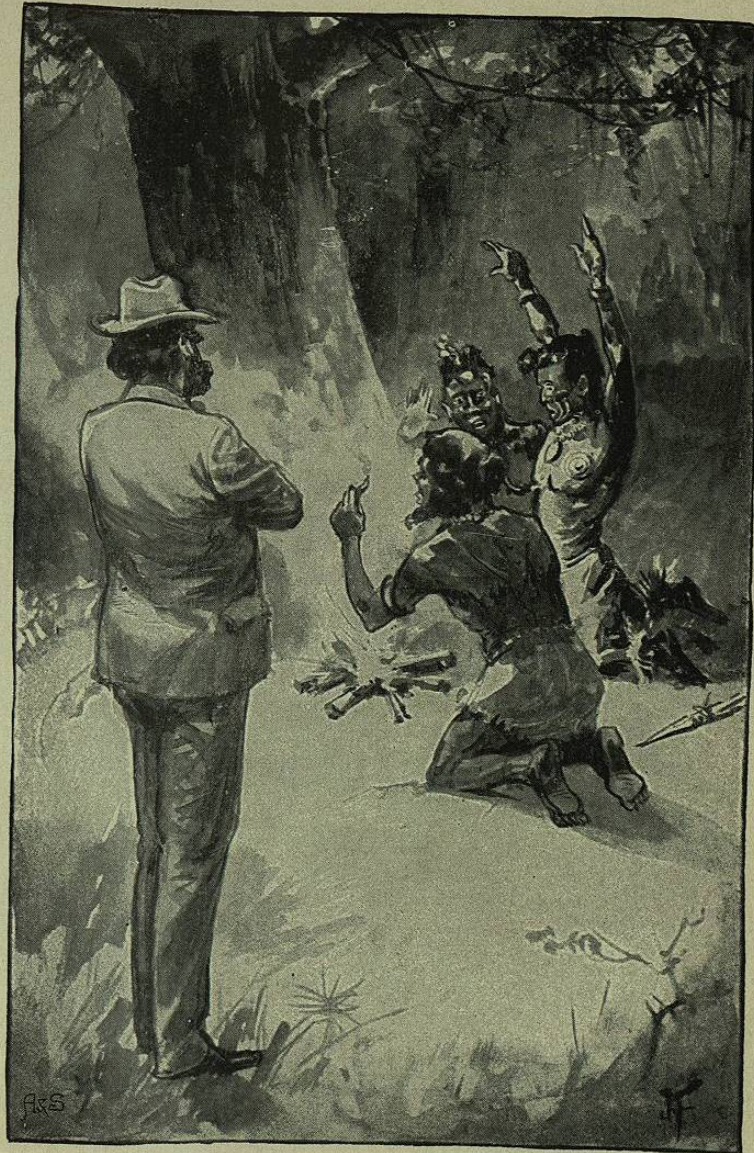
I answered, "Nowar, let us all be strong to love and serve Jehovah Jesus. If it be for our good and His glory, He will protect us; if not, He will take us to be with Himself. We will not be killed by their bad talk. Besides, what avails it to us, when dead and gone, if even a Man-of-war should come and punish our murderers?"

He shrugged his shoulders, answering, "Missi, by and by you will see. Mind, I tell you the truth. I know our Tannese people. How is it that Jehovah did not protect the Gordons and the Erromangan worshippers? If the Erromangans are not punished, neither will our Tannese be punished, though they murder all Jehovah's people!"

I felt for Nowar's struggling faith, just trembling on the verge of Cannibalism yet, and knowing so little of the true Jehovah.

Groups of Natives assembled suspiciously near us and sat whispering together. They urged old Abraham to return to Aneityum by the very first opportunity, as our lives were certain to be taken, but he replied, "I will not leave Missi."

Abraham and I were thrown much into each other's company, and he stood by me in every danger. We conducted Family Prayers alternately; and that evening he said during



KILLING MR. PATON BY SORCERY.

the prayer in Tannese, in which language alone we understood each other:—

“O Lord, our Heavenly Father, they have murdered Thy servants on Erromanga. They have banished the Aneityumese from dark Tanna. And now they want to kill Missi Paton and me! Our great King, protect us, and make their hearts soft and sweet to Thy Worship. Or, if they are permitted to kill us, do not Thou hate us, but wash us in the blood of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ. He came down to Earth and shed His blood for sinners; through Him forgive us our sins and take us to Heaven—that good place where Missi Gordon the man and Missi Gordon the woman and all Thy dear servants now are singing Thy praise and seeing Thy face. Our Lord, our hearts are pained just now, and we weep over the death of Thy dear servants; but make our hearts good and strong for Thy cause, and take Thou away all our fears. Make us two and all Thy servants strong for Thee and for Thy Worship; and if they kill us two, let us die together in Thy good work, like Thy servants Missi Gordon the man and Missi Gordon the woman.”

In this manner his great simple soul poured itself out to God; and my heart melted within me as it had never done under any prayer poured from the lips of cultured Christian men!

Under the strain of these events, Miaki came to our house, and attacked me in hearing of his men to this effect, “You and the Worship are the cause of all the sickness and death now taking place on Tanna! The Erromanga men killed Missi Gordon the man and also the woman, and they are all well long ago. The Worship is killing us all; and the Inland people will kill us for keeping you and the Worship here; for we love the conduct of Tanna, but we hate the Worship. We must kill you and it, and we shall all be well again.”

I tried to reason firmly and kindly with them, showing them that their own conduct was destroying them, and that our presence and the Worship could only be a blessing to them in every way, if only they would accept of it and give up their evil ways. I referred to a poor girl, whom Miaki and his men had stolen and abused—that they knew such conduct to be bad, and that God would certainly punish them for it.

He replied, “Such is the conduct of Tanna. Our fathers

loved and followed it, we love and follow it, and if the Worship condemns it, we will kill you and destroy the Worship."

I said, "The Word of the Holy God condemns all bad conduct, and I must obey my God in trying to lead you to give it up, and to love and serve His Son Jesus our Saviour. If I refuse to obey my God, He will punish me."

He declared that his heart was good, that his conduct was good, but that he hated the teaching of the Worship. He had a party of men staying with him from the other side of the island, and he sent back a present of four large fat hogs to their Chiefs, with a message as to the killing of the Mathiesons. If that were done, his hands would be strengthened in dealing with us.

To know what was best to be done, in such trying circumstances, was an abiding perplexity. To have left altogether, when so surrounded by perils and enemies, at first seemed the wisest course, and was the repeated advice of many friends. But again, I had acquired the language, and had gained a considerable influence amongst the Natives, and there were a number warmly attached both to myself and to the Worship. To have left would have been to lose all, which to me was heart-rending; therefore, risking all with Jesus, I held on while the hope of being spared longer had not absolutely and entirely vanished.

The following quotation from a letter of the late A. Clark, Esq., J.P., Auckland, New Zealand, will show what Bishop Selwyn thought of my standing fast on Tanna at the post of duty, and he knew what he was writing about. These are the words:—"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. We read of the soldier, found after the lapse of ages among the ruins of Herculaneum, who stood firm at his post amid the fiery rain destroying all around him, thus manifesting the rigidity of the discipline amongst those armies of ancient Rome which conquered the World. Mr. Paton was subjected to no such iron law. He might, with honour, when offered to him, 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! When the Bishop told us that he declined leaving Tanna by H.M.S. *Pelorus*, he added, 'And I like him all the better for so doing!'

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!

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE VISIT OF THE COMMODORE

AT that time, though my life was daily attempted, a dear lad, named Katasian, was coming six miles regularly to the Worship and to receive frequent instruction. One day, when engaged in teaching him, I caught a man stealing the blind from my window. On trying to prevent him, he aimed his great club at me, but I seized the heavy end of it with both my hands as it swung past my head, and held on with all my might. What a prayer went up from me to God at that dread moment! The man, astonished and abashed at my kind words and appeal, slunk away and left me in peace. God never took away from me the consciousness that it was still right for me to be kind and forgiving, and to hope that I might lead them to love and imitate Jesus.

For some time, Nouka and his wife and daughter—a handsome girl, his only child—and Miaki's principal wife and her two sons, and nine Chiefs attended Worship regularly at the Mission House, on Sabbaths and on the afternoon of every Wednesday. In all, about sixty persons somewhat regularly waited on our ministrations at this time; and amidst all perils I was encouraged, and my heart was full of hope. Yet one evening, when feeling more consoled and hopeful than ever before, a musket was discharged at my very door, and I was

constrained to realise that we were in the midst of death. Father, our times are in Thy hand!

In my Mission School, I offered as a prize a red shirt for the first Chief who knew the whole Alphabet without a mistake. It was won by an Inikahi Chief, who was once a terror to the whole community. Afterwards, when trying to teach the A B C to others, he proceeded in something like this graphic style: "A is a man's legs with the body cut off; B is like two eyes; C is a three-quarters moon; D is like one eye; E is a man with one club under his feet and another over his head; F is a man with a large club and a smaller one," etc. etc.; L was like a man's foot; Q was the talk of the dove, etc. Then he would say, "Remember these things; you will soon get hold of the letters and be able to read. I have taught my little child, who can scarcely walk, the names of them all. They are not hard to hold, but soft and easy. You will soon learn to read the book, if you try it with all your heart!"

But Miaki was still our evil genius, and every incident seemed to be used by him for one settled purpose of hate. A Kaserumini Chief, for instance, and seven men took away a young girl in a canoe to Aniwa, to be sold to friends there for tobacco leaf, which the Aniwas cultivated extensively. They also prepared to take revenge there for a child's death, killed in their belief by the sorcery of an Aniwan. When within sight of the shore, the canoes were upset and all were said to have been devoured by sharks, excepting only one canoe out of six. This one returned to Tanna and reported that there were two white Traders living on Aniwa, that they had plenty of ammunition and tobacco, but that they would not come to Tanna as long as a Missionary lived there. Under this fresh incitement, a party of Miaki's men came to my house, praising the Erromangans for the murder of their Missionaries and threatening me.

Even the friendly Nowar said, "Miaki will make a great wind and sink any Man-of-war that comes here. We will take the Man-of-war and kill all that are on board. If you and Abraham do not leave us we will kill you both, for we must have the Traders and the powder."

Just as they were assuming a threatening attitude, other Natives came running with the cry, "Missi, the *John Knox* is

coming into the Harbour, and two great ships of fire, *Men-of-war*, behind her, coming very fast!"

I retorted upon Nowar and the hostile company, "Now is your time! Make all possible haste! Let Miaki raise his great wind now; get all your men ready; I will tell them that you mean to fight, and you will find them always ready!"

Miaki's men fled away in unconcealed terror; but Nowar came to me and said "Missi, I know that my talk is all lies, but if I speak the truth, they will kill me!"

I answered, "Trust in Jehovah, the same God who sent these vessels now, to protect us from being murdered." But Nowar always wavered.

And now from all parts of the island those who were most friendly flocked to us. They were clamorous to have Miaki and some others of our enemies punished by the *Man-of-war* in presence of the Natives; and then they would be strong to speak in our defence and to lead the Tannese to worship Jehovah.

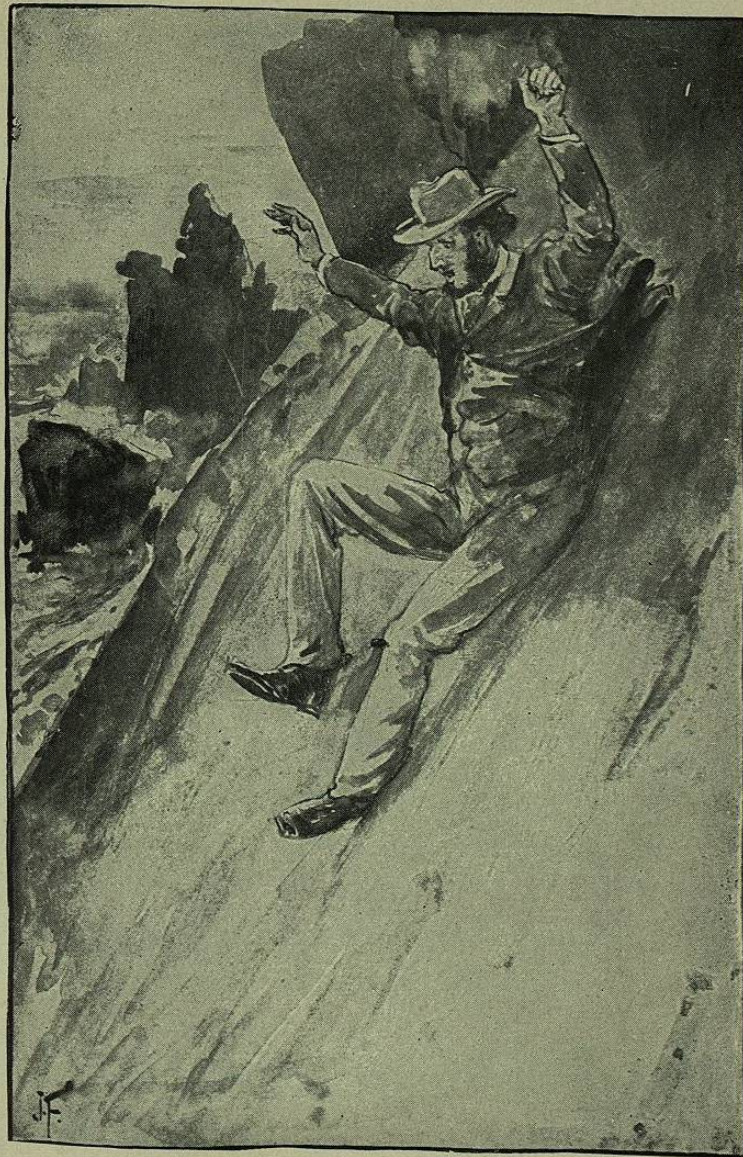
Commodore Seymour, Captain Hume, and Dr. Geddie came on shore. After inquiring into everything, the Commodore urged me to leave at once, and very kindly offered to remove me to Aneityum, or Auckland, or any place of safety that I preferred. Again, however, I hesitated to leave my dear benighted Tannese, knowing that both Stations would be instantly broken up, that all the influence gained would be thrown away, that the Church would lose all that had been expended, and above all, that those friendly to us would be left to persecution and destruction. For a long time I had seldom taken off my clothes at night, needing to be constantly on the alert to start at a moment's notice; yet, while hope burned within my soul I could not withdraw, so I resolved to risk all with my dear Lord Jesus, and remained at my post. At my request, however, they met and talked with all the leaders who could be assembled at the Mission House. The Natives declared frankly that they liked me, but did not like the *Worship*. The Commodore reminded them that they had invited me to land among them, and had pledged their word more than once to protect me; he argued with them that as they had no fault to find with me, but only with the *Worship*, which could do them only good, they must bind themselves to protect my life. Miaki and others promised, and gave him

their hands to do so. Lathella, an Aneityumese Chief, who was with Dr. Geddie, interpreted for him and them, Dr. Geddie explaining fully to Lathella in Aneityumese what the Commodore said in English, and Lathella explaining all to the Tannese in their own tongue.

At last old Nouka spoke out for all and said, "Captain Paddan and all the Traders tell us that the Worship causes all our sickness and death. They will not trade with us, nor sell us tobacco, pipes, powder, balls, caps, and muskets, till we kill our Missi like the Erromangans, but after that they will send a Trader to live among us and give us plenty of all these things. We love Missi. But when the Traders tell us that the Worship makes us sick, and when they bribe us with tobacco and powder to kill him or drive him away, some believe them and our hearts do bad conduct to Missi. Let Missi remain here, and we will try to do good conduct to Missi; but you must tell Queen Toria of her people's bad treatment of us, and that she must prevent her Traders from killing us with their measles, and from telling us lies to make us do bad conduct to Missi! If they come to us and talk as before, our hearts are very dark and may again lead us to bad conduct to Missi."

After this little parley, the Commodore invited us all on board, along with the Chiefs. They saw about three hundred brave marines ranked up on deck, and heard a great cannon discharged. For all such efforts to impress them and open their eyes, I felt profoundly grateful; but too clearly I knew and saw that only the grace of God could lastingly change them! They were soon back to their old arguments, and were heard saying to one another, "If no punishment is inflicted on the Erromangans for murdering the Missi there, we fear the bad conduct of the Tannese will continue."

No punishment was inflicted at Erromanga, and the Tannese were soon as bold and wicked as ever. For instance, while the Man-of-war lay in the Harbour, Nowar kept himself closely concealed; but no sooner had she sailed than the cowardly fellow came out, laughing at the others, and protesting that he was under no promise and was free to act as he pleased! Yet in the hour of danger he generally proved to be our friend; such was his vacillating character. Nor was Miaki very seriously impressed. Mr. Mathieson shortly thereafter



A SLIDE IN THE DARK.

sent his boat round to me, being again short of European food. On his crew leaving her to deliver their message to me, some of Miaki's men at once jumped into the boat and started off round the island in search of kava. I went to Miaki, to ask that the boat might be brought back soon, but on seeing me he ran for his club and aimed to strike me. I managed to seize it, and to hold on, pleading with God and talking with Miaki, till by interference of some friendly Natives his wrath was assuaged a little. Returning home, I sent food overland to keep the Mathiesons going till the boat returned, which she did in about eight days. Thus light and shadow pursued each other, the light brightening for a moment, but upon the whole the shadows deepening.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE WAR CHIEFS IN COUNCIL

A TIME of great excitement amongst the Natives now prevailed. War, war, nothing but war was spoken of! Preparations for war were being made in all the villages far and near. Fear sat on every face, and armed bands kept watching each other, as if uncertain where the war was to begin or by whom. All work was suspended, and that war spirit was let loose which rouses the worst passions of human nature. Again we found ourselves the centre of conflict, one party set for killing us or driving us away; the other wishing to retain us, while all old bitter grievances were also dragged into their speeches.

Miaki and Nouka said, "If you will keep Missi and his Worship, take him with you to your own land, for we will not have him to live at the Harbour."

Ian, the great Inland Chief, rose in wrath and said, "On whose land does the Missi live, yours or ours? Who fight against the Worship and all good, who are the thieves and murderers, who tell the lies, you or we? We wish peace, but you will have war. We like Missi and the Worship, but you hate them and say, 'Take him to your own land!' It is our land on which he now lives; it is his own land which he bought from you, but which our fathers sold Missi Turner