

ing ourselves to Jesus, went inland and conducted Worship at seven villages, listened to by about one hundred people in all. Nearly all appeared friendly. The people of one village had been incited to kill us on our return; but God guided us to return by another way, and so we escaped.

During the day, on 3rd February, a company of Miaki's men came to the Mission House, and forced Mrs. Mathieson to show them through the premises. Providentially, I had bolted myself that morning into a closet room, and was engrossed with writing. They went through every room in the house and did not see me, concluding I had gone inland. They discharged a musket into our Teacher's house, but afterwards left quietly, greatly disappointed at not finding me. My heart still rose in praise to God for another such deliverance, neither by man nor of man's planning!

CHAPTER XLI

THE LAST AWFUL NIGHT

WORN out with long watching and many fatigues, I lay down that night early, and fell into a deep sleep. About ten o'clock the Savages again surrounded the Mission House. My faithful dog Clutha, clinging still to me amid the wreck of all else on Earth, sprang quietly upon me, pulled at my clothes, and awoke me, showing danger in her eye glancing at me through the shadows. I silently awoke Mr. and Mrs. Mathieson, who had also fallen asleep. We committed ourselves in hushed prayer to God and watched them, knowing that they could not see us. Immediately a glare of light fell into the room! Men passed with flaming torches; and first they set fire to the Church all round, and then to a reed fence connecting the Church and the dwelling-house. In a few minutes the house, too, would be in flames, and armed Savages waiting to kill us on attempting an escape!

Taking my harmless revolver in the left hand and a little American tomahawk in the right, I pled with Mr. Mathieson to let me out and instantly again to lock the door on himself and wife. He very reluctantly did so, holding me back and

saying, "Stop here and let us die together! You will never return!"

I said, "Be quick! Leave that to God. In a few minutes our house will be in flames, and then nothing can save us."

He did let me out, and locked the door again quickly from the inside; and, while his wife and he prayed and watched for me from within, I ran to the burning reed fence, cut it from top to bottom, and tore it up and threw it back into the flames, so that the fire could not by it be carried to our dwelling-house. I saw on the ground shadows, as if something were falling around me, and started back. Seven or eight Savages had surrounded me, and raised their great clubs in air. I heard a shout—"Kill him! kill him!" One Savage tried to seize hold of me, but, leaping from his clutch, I drew the revolver from my pocket and levelled it as for use, my heart going up in prayer to my God. I said, "Dare to strike me, and my Jehovah God will punish you. He protects us, and will punish you for burning His Church, for hatred to His Worship and people, and for all your bad conduct. We love you all; and for doing you good only you want to kill us. But our God is here now to protect us and to punish you."

They yelled in rage, and urged each other to strike the first blow, but the Invisible One restrained them. I stood invulnerable beneath His invisible shield, and succeeded in rolling back the tide of flame from our dwelling-house.

At this dread moment occurred an incident, which my readers may explain as they like, but which I trace directly to the interposition of my God. A rushing and roaring sound came from the South, like the noise of a mighty engine or of muttering thunder. Every head was instinctively turned in that direction, and they knew, from previous hard experience, that it was one of their awful tornadoes of wind and rain. Now, mark, the wind bore the flames *away* from our dwelling-house; had it come in the opposite direction, no power on Earth could have saved us from being all consumed! It made the work of destroying the Church only that of a few minutes; but it brought with it a heavy and murky cloud, which poured out a perfect torrent of tropical rain. Now, mark again, the flames of the burning Church were thereby cut off from extending to and seizing upon the reeds and the bush; and, besides, it had become almost impossible now to

set fire to our dwelling-house. The stars in their courses were fighting against Sisera!

The mighty roaring of the wind, the black cloud pouring down unceasing torrents, and the whole surroundings, awed those Savages into silence. Some began to withdraw from the scene, all lowered their weapons of war, and several, terror-struck, exclaimed, "That is Jehovah's rain! Truly their Jehovah God is fighting for them and helping them. Let us away!"

A panic seized upon them; they threw away their remaining torches; in a few moments they had all disappeared in the bush; and I was left alone, praising God for His marvellous works. "O taste and see that God is good! Blessed is the man that trusteth in Him!"

Returning to the door of the Mission House, I cried, "Open and let me in. I am now all alone."

Mr. Mathieson let me in, and exclaimed, "If ever, in time of need, God sent help and protection to His servants in answer to prayer, He has done so to-night! Blessed be His holy Name!"

In fear and in joy we united our praises. Truly our Jesus has all power, not less in the elements of Nature than in the savage hearts of the Tannese. Precious Jesus! Often since have I wept over His love and mercy in that deliverance, and prayed that every moment of my remaining life may be consecrated to the service of my precious Friend and Saviour!

CHAPTER XLII

"SAIL O! SAIL O!"

ALL through the remainder of that night I lay wide awake keeping watch, my noble little dog lying near me with ears alert. Early in the morning friends came weeping around us. Our enemies were loudly rejoicing. It had been finally resolved to kill us at once, to plunder our house and then to burn it. The noise of the shouting was distinctly heard as they neared the Mission premises, and our weeping, friendly Natives looked terror-struck, and seemed anxious to flee for



"Suddenly Ian drew a large butcher-like knife, and pointed it to within a few inches of my heart."

the bush. But just when the excitement rose to the highest pitch, we heard, or dreamed that we heard, a cry higher still, "Sail O!"

We were by this time beginning to distrust almost our very senses; but again and again that cry came rolling up from the shore, and was repeated from crowd to crowd all along the beach, "Sail O! Sail O!"

The shouts of those approaching us gradually ceased, and the whole multitude seemed to have melted away from our view. I feared some cruel deception, and at first peered out very cautiously to spy the land. But yonder in very truth a vessel came sailing into view. It was the *Blue Bell*, Captain Hastings. I set fire to the reeds on the side of the hill to attract his attention. I put a black shawl as a flag on one end of the Mission House and a white sheet on the other.

This was one of the vessels that had been to Port Resolution, and had sailed past to Aneityum some time ago. I afterwards saw the mate and some of the men wearing my shirts, which they had bought from the Tannese on their former visit. At the earnest request of Messrs. Geddie and Copeland, Mr. Underwood, the owner, had sent Captain Hastings to Tanna to rescue us if yet alive. For this purpose he had brought twenty armed men from Aneityum, who came on shore in two boats in charge of the mate, the notorious Ross Lewin. He returned to the ship with a boat-load of Mr. Mathieson's things, leaving ten of the Natives to help us to pack more and carry them down to the beach, especially what the Missionary thought most valuable.

The two boats were now loaded and ready to start. It was about two o'clock in the afternoon when a strange and painful trial befell us. Poor dear Mr. Mathieson, apparently unhinged, locked himself all alone into what had been his study, telling Mrs. Mathieson and me to go, for he had resolved to remain and die on Tanna. We tried to show him the inconsistency of praying to God to protect us or grant us means of escape, and then refuse to accept a rescue sent to us in our last extremity. We argued that it was surely better to live and work for Jesus than to die as a self-made martyr, who, in God's sight, was guilty of self-murder. His wife wept aloud and pled with him, but all in vain! He refused to leave or to unlock his door. I then said, "It is now getting dark.

Your wife must go with the vessel, but I will not leave you alone. I shall send a note explaining why I am forced to remain; and as it is certain that we shall be murdered whenever the vessel leaves, I tell you God will charge you with the guilt of our murder." At this he relented, unlocked the door, and accompanied us to the boats, in which we all immediately left.

Meantime, having lost several hours, the vessel had drifted leeward; darkness suddenly settled upon us, and when we were out at sea we lost sight of her and she of us. After tumbling about for some hours in a heavy sea, and unable to find her, those in charge of the boats came near for consultation, and, if possible, to save the lives of all. We advised that they should steer for Port Resolution by the flame of the Volcano—a never-failing lighthouse, seen fifty miles away—and there await the vessel. The boats were to keep within hearing of each other by constant calling; but this was soon lost to the ear, though on arriving in the bay we found they had got to anchor before us. There we sat in the boats and waited for the coming day.

As the light appeared, we anchored as far out as possible, beyond the reach of musket shots; and there without water or food we sat under a tropical sun till mid-day came, and still there was no sign of the vessel. The mate at last put all the passengers and the poorest seamen into one boat and left her to swing at anchor, while, with a strong crew in the other, he started off in search of the vessel.

In the afternoon, Nowar and Miaki came off in a canoe to visit us. Nowar had on a shirt, but Miaki was naked and frowning. He urged me to go and see the Mission House, but as we had seen a body of men near it I refused to go. Miaki declared that everything remained as I had left it, but we knew that he lied. Old Abraham and a party had slipped on shore in a canoe, and had found the windows smashed and everything gone except my books, which were scattered about and torn in pieces. They learned that Miaki had sold everything that he could sell to the Traders. The mate and men of the *Blue Bell* had on my very clothes. They boasted that they had bought them for a few figs of tobacco and for powder, caps, and balls. But they would not return a single shirt to me, though I was without a change! We had all been with-

out food since the morning before, so Nowar brought us off a cocoa-nut each, and two very small roasted yams for the ladies. Those, however, only seemed to make our thirst the more severe, and we spent a trying day in that boat under a burning sun.

Nowar informed me that only a few nights before this, Miaki and his followers went inland to a village where last year they had killed ten men. Having secretly placed a Savage at the door of every house, at a given signal they yelled, and when the terrified inmates tried to escape, they killed almost every man, woman, and child. Some fled into the bush, others rushed to the shore. A number of men got into a canoe to escape, but hearing women and children crying after them they returned, and taking those they could with them, they killed the rest, lest they should fall alive into Miaki's hands. These are surely "they who through fear of death are all their lifetime subject to bondage." The Chief and nearly his whole village were cut off in one night! The dark places of the Earth are "full of the habitations of horrid cruelty." To have actually lived amongst the Heathen and seen their life gives a man a new appreciation of the power and blessings of the Gospel, even where its influence is only very imperfectly allowed to guide and restrain the passions of men. Oh, what it will be when all men in all nations love and serve the glorious Redeemer!

CHAPTER XLIII

FAREWELL TO TANNA

ABOUT five o'clock in the evening the vessel hove in sight. Before dark we were all on board, and were sailing for Aneityum. Though both Mr. and Mrs. Mathieson had become very weak, they stood the voyage wonderfully. Next day we were safely landed. We had offered Captain Hastings £20 to take us to Aneityum, but he declined any fare. However, we divided it amongst the mate and crew, for they had every one shown great kindness to us on the voyage.

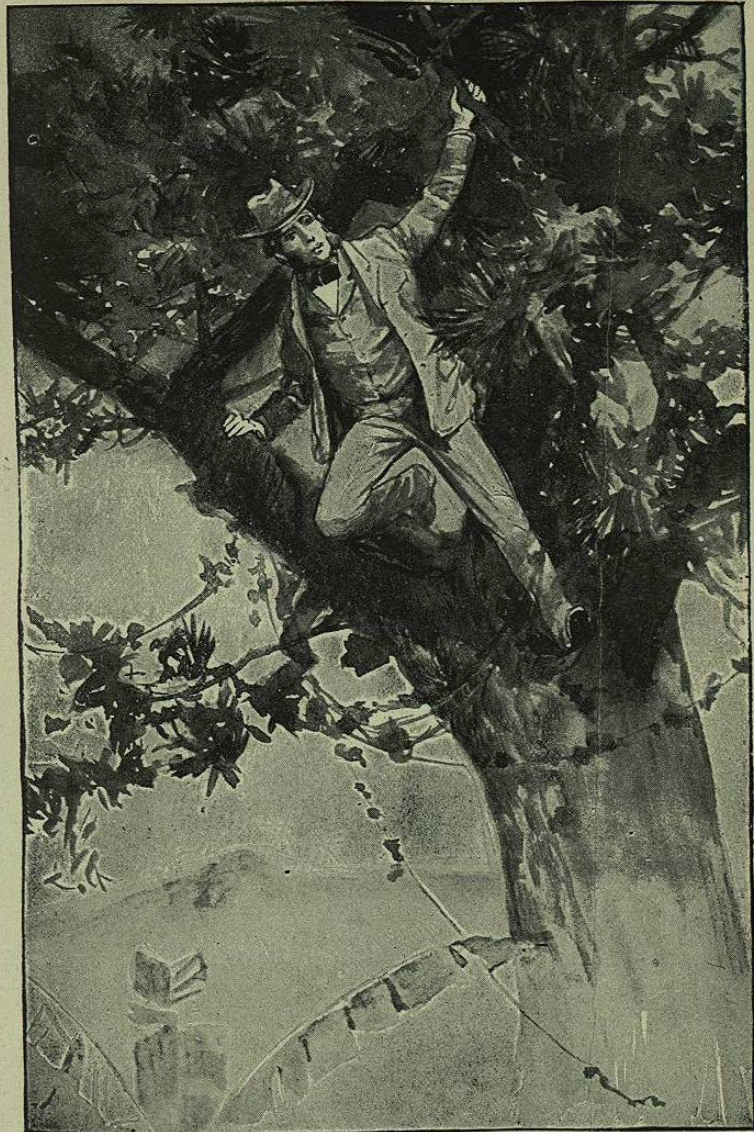
After arriving on Aneityum, Mrs. Mathieson gradually sank

under consumption, and fell asleep in Jesus on 11th March 1862, and was interred there in the full assurance of a glorious resurrection. Mr. Mathieson, becoming more and more depressed after her death, went over to Mr. Creagh's Station, on Maré, and there died on 14th June 1862, still trusting in Jesus, and assured that he would soon be with Him in Glory.

After their death I was the only one left alive, in all the New Hebrides Mission north of Aneityum, to tell the story of those pioneer years, during which were sown the seeds of what is now fast becoming a glorious harvest. Twenty-five years ago, all these dear brethren and sisters who were associated with me in the work of the Mission were called home to Glory, to cast their crowns at the feet of Jesus and enjoy the bliss of the redeemed; while I am privileged still to toil and pray for the salvation of the poor Islanders, and plead the cause of the Mission both in the Colonies and at home, in which work the Lord has graciously given me undreamt-of success. My constant desire and prayer are that I may be spared to see at least one Missionary on every island of the group, or trained Native Teachers under the superintendence of a Missionary, to unfold the riches of redeeming love and to lead the poor Islanders to Jesus for salvation.

What could be taken in three boats was saved out of the wreck of Mr. Mathieson's property; but my earthly all perished, except the Bible and the translations into Tannese. Along with the goods pertaining to the Mission, the property which I had to leave behind would be under-estimated at £600, besides the value of the Mission House, etc. Often since have I thought that the Lord stripped me thus bare of all these interests that I might with undistracted mind devote my entire energy to the special work soon to be carved out for me, and of which at this moment neither I nor any one had ever dreamed. At any rate, the loss of my little Earthly All, though doubtless costing me several pangs, was not an abiding sorrow like that which sprang from the thought that the Lord's work was now broken up at both Stations, and that the Gospel was for the time driven from Tanna.

In the darkest moment I never doubted that ultimately the victory there, as elsewhere, would be on the side of Jesus, believing that the whole Earth would yet be filled with the glory of the Lord. But I sometimes sorely feared that I might



"I climbed into the tree, and was left there alone in the bush."

never live to see or hear of that happy day! By the goodness of the Ever-merciful One I have lived to see and hear of a Gospel Church on Tanna, and to read about my dear fellow-Missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. Watt, celebrating the Holy Supper to a Native Congregation of Tannese, amid the very scenes and people where the seeds of faith and hope were planted not only in tears, but tears of blood,—“in deaths oft.”

My own intention was to remain on Aneityum, go on with my work of translating the Gospels, and watch the earliest opportunity, as God opened up my way, to return to Tanna. I had, however, got very weak and thin; my health was undoubtedly much shaken by the continued trials and dangers through which we had passed; and therefore, as Dr. and Mrs. Inglis were at home carrying the New Testament through the press in the language of Aneityum, and as Tanna was closed for a season—Dr. Geddie, the Rev. Joseph Copeland, and Mr. Mathieson all urged me to go to Australia by a vessel then in the Harbour and leaving in a few days. My commission was to awaken an interest among the Presbyterian Churches of our Colonies in this New Hebrides Mission which lay at their doors, up till this time sustained by Scotland and Nova Scotia alone. And further, and very specially, to raise money there, if possible, to purchase a new Mission Ship for the work of God in the New Hebrides,—a clamant necessity, which would save all future Missionaries some of the more terrible of the privations and risk of which a few examples have in these pages already been recorded.

With regrets, and yet with unquenchable hope for these Islands, I embarked for Australia. But I had only spoken to one man in Sydney; all the doors to influence had therefore to be unlocked; and I had no helper, no leader, but the Spirit of my Lord.

Oftentimes, while passing through the perils and defeats of my first four years in the Mission field on Tanna, I wondered, and perhaps the reader hereof has wondered, why God permitted such things. But on looking back now, I already clearly perceive, and the reader of my future pages will, I think, perceive, that the Lord was thereby preparing me for doing, and providing me materials wherewith to accomplish, the best work of all my life, namely, the kindling of the heart of Australian Presbyterianism with a living affection for these

Islanders of their own Southern Seas—the binding of all their children into a happy league of shareholders, first in one Mission Ship, and finally in a larger and more commodious Steam-Auxiliary; and, last of all, in being the instrument under God of sending out Missionary after Missionary to the New Hebrides, to claim another island and still another for Jesus. That work, and all that may spring from it in Time and Eternity, never could have been accomplished by me, but for first the sufferings and then the story of my Tanna days!

Never for one moment have I had occasion to regret the step then taken. The Lord has so used me, during the five-and-twenty years that have passed over me since my farewell to Tanna, as to stamp the event with His own most gracious approval. Oh, to see a Missionary, and Christian Teachers, planted on every island of the New Hebrides! For this I labour, and wait, and pray. To help on the fulfilment thereof is the sacred work of my life, under God. When I see that accomplished, or in a fair way of being so, through the organisation that will provide the money and call forth the men, I can lay down my head as peacefully and gratefully as ever warrior did, with the shout of victory in his ears—"Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace!"

(For "Good News from Tanna," see *Supplementary Chapter by the Editor*, p. 393.)

CHAPTER XLIV

THE FLOATING OF THE "DAYSRING"

RESCUED from Tanna by the *Blue Bell* in the Spring of 1862, I was landed on Aneityum, leaving behind me all that I owned on Earth, save the clothes upon my back, my precious Bible, and a few translations that I had made from it into the Tannese language. The Missionaries on Aneityum united in urging me to go to Australia in the interests of our Mission. A Mission Ship was sorely needed—was absolutely required—to prevent the needless sacrifice of devoted lives. More Missionaries were called for, and must somehow be brought

into the field, unless the hope of claiming these fair Islands for Jesus was to be for ever abandoned.

With unaffected reluctance, I at last felt constrained to undertake this unwelcome but apparently inevitable task. It meant the leaving of my dear Islanders for a season; but it embraced within it the hope of returning to them again, with perhaps every power of blessing amongst them tenfold increased.

A *Sandal-wooder*, then lying at Aneityum, was to sail in a few days direct for Sydney. My passage was secured for £10. And, as if to make me realise how bare the Lord had stripped me in my late trials, the first thing that occupied me on board was the making with my own hands, from a piece of cloth obtained on Aneityum, another shirt for the voyage, to change with that which I wore—the only one that had been left to me.

The Captain proved to be a profane and brutal fellow. And how my heart bled for some poor Islanders whom he had on board! They knew not a word of English, and no one in the vessel knew a sound of their language. They were made to work, and to understand what was expected of them, only by hard knocks and blows, being pushed and pulled hither and thither. They were kept quite naked on the voyage up; but, when nearing Sydney, each received two yards of calico to be twisted as a kilt around his loins. A most pathetic spectacle it was to watch these poor Natives,—when they had leisure to sit on deck,—gazing, gazing, intently and imploringly, upon the face of the Sun! This they did every day, and at all hours, and I wept much to look on them, and not be able to tell them of the Son of God, the Light of the world, for I knew no word of their language. Perhaps they were worshippers of the Sun; and perhaps, amid all their misery, oh, *perhaps*, some ray of truth from the great Father of Lights may have streamed into those darkened souls!

When we arrived at Sydney the Inspecting Officer of the Government, coming on board, asked how these Islanders came to be there. The Captain impudently replied that they were "passengers." No further question was put. No other evidence was sought. Yet all who knew anything of our South-Sea Island Traders were perfectly aware that the moral

certainly was that these Natives were there practically as Slaves. They would be privately disposed of by the Captain to the highest bidder; and that, forsooth, is to be called the *Labour Traffic*,—*Free Labour*! I will, to my dying breath, denounce and curse this *Kanaka Traffic* as the worst of Slavery.

As we came to anchorage, about midnight, in Sydney Harbour, I anxiously paced the deck, gazing towards the gas-lighted city, and pleading with God to open up my way, and give success in the work before me, on which the salvation of thousands of the Heathen might depend. Still I saw them perishing, still heard their wailing cry on the Islands behind me. At the same time, I knew not a soul in that great city; though I had a note of introduction to one person, which, as experience proved, I would have been better without.

That friend, however, did his best. He kindly called with me on a number of Ministers and others. They heard my story, sympathised with me, shook hands, and wished me success; but, strangely enough, something "very special" prevented every one of them from giving me access to his pulpit or Sabbath School. At length I felt so disappointed, so miserable, that I wished I had been in my grave with my dear departed, and my brethren on the Islands, who had fallen around me, in order that the work on which so much now appeared to depend might have been entrusted to some one better fitted to accomplish it. The heart seemed to keep repeating, "All these things are against thee."

Finding out at last the Rev. A. Buzacott, then retired, but formerly the successful and honoured representative of the London Missionary Society on Rarotonga, considerable light was let in upon the mystery of my last week's experiences. He informed me that the highly-esteemed friend, who had kindly been introducing me all round, was at that moment immersed in a keen Newspaper war with Presbyterians and Independents. This made it painfully manifest that, in order to succeed, I must strike out a new course for myself, and one clear from all local entanglement.

Paying a fortnight in advance, I withdrew even from the lodging I had taken, and turned to the Lord more absolutely for guidance. He brought me into contact with good and generous-souled servants of His, the open-hearted Mr. and

Mrs. Foss. Though entire strangers, they kindly invited me to be their guest while in Sydney, assuring me that I would meet with many Ministers and other Christians at their house who could help me in my work. God had opened the door; I entered with a grateful heart; they will not miss their recompense.

A letter and appeal had been already printed on behalf of our Mission. I now re-cast and reprinted it, adding a post-script, and appending my own name and new address. This was widely circulated among Ministers and others engaged in Christian work; and by this means, and by letters in the Newspapers, I did everything in my power to make our Mission known. But one week had passed, and no response came. One Lord's Day had gone by, and no pulpit had been opened to me. I was perplexed beyond measure how to get access to Congregations and Sabbath Schools; though a Something deep in my soul assured me, that if once my lips were opened, the Word of the Lord would not return void.

On my second Sabbath in Sydney I wandered out with a great yearning at heart to get telling my message to any soul that would listen. It was the afternoon; and children were flocking into a Church that I passed. I followed them—that yearning growing stronger every moment. My God so ordered it that I was guided thus to the Chalmers Presbyterian Church. The Minister, the Rev. Mr. M'Skimming, addressed the children. At the close I went up and pleaded with him to allow me ten minutes to speak to them. After a little hesitation, and having consulted together, they gave me fifteen minutes. Becoming deeply interested, the good man invited me to preach to his Congregation in the evening. This was duly intimated in the Sabbath School; and thus my little boat was at last launched—surely by the hand of the dear Lord, with the help of His little children.