

Heathenism made many desperate and some strange efforts to stamp out our Cause on Aniwa, but the Lord held the helm. One old Chief, formerly friendly, turned against us. He ostentatiously set himself to make a canoe, working at it very openly and defiantly on Sabbaths. He, becoming sick and dying, his brother started, on a Sabbath morning and in contempt of the Worship, with an armed company to provoke our people to war. They refused to fight; and one man, whom he struck with his club, said, "I will leave my revenge to Jehovah."

A few days thereafter, this brother also fell sick and suddenly died. The Heathen party made much of these incidents, and some clamoured for our death in revenge, but most feared to murder us; so they withdrew and lived apart from our friends, as far away as they could get. By and by, however, they set fire to a large district belonging to our supporters, burning cocoa-nut and breadfruit trees and plantations. Still our people refused to fight, and kept near to protect us. Then all the leading men assembled to talk it over. Most were for peace, but some insisted upon burning our house and driving us away or killing us, that they might be left to live as they had hitherto done. At last a Sacred Man, a Chief who had been on Tanna when the *Curacoa* punished the murderers and robbers but protected the villages of the friendly Natives there, stood up and spoke in our defence, and warned them what might happen; and other three, who had been under my instruction on Tanna, declared themselves to be the friends of Jehovah and of His Missionary. Finally, the Sacred Man rose again, and showed them rows of beautiful white shells strung round his left arm, saying—

"Nowar, the great Chief at Port Resolution on Tanna, when he saw that Missi and his wife could not be kept there, took me to his heart, and pledged me by these, the shells of his office as Chief, taken from his own arm and bound on mine, to protect them from all harm. He told me to declare to the men of Aniwa that if the Missi be injured or slain, he and his warriors will come from Tanna and take the full revenge in blood." This turned the scale. The meeting closed in our favour.

Close on the heels of this, another and a rather perplexing incident befell us. A party of Heathens assembled and made

a great display of fishing on the Lord's Day, in contempt of the practice of the men on Jehovah's side, threatening also to waylay the Teachers and myself in our village circuits. A meeting was held by the Christian party, at the close of the Sabbath Services. All who wished to serve Jehovah were to come to my house next morning, unarmed, and accompany me on a visit to our enemies, that we might talk and reason together with them. By daybreak, the Chiefs and nearly eighty men assembled at the Mission House, declaring that they were on Jehovah's side, and wished to go with me. But, alas! they refused to lay down their arms, or leave them behind; nor would they either refrain from going or suffer me to go alone. Pledging them to peace, I was reluctantly placed at their head, and we marched off to the village of the unfriendly party.

The villagers were greatly alarmed. The Chief's two sons came forth with every available man to meet us. That whole day was consumed in talking and speechifying, sometimes chanting their replies—the Natives are all inveterate talkers! To me the day was utterly wearisome; but it had one redeeming feature,—their rage found vent in hours of palaver, instead of blows and blood. It ended in peace. The Heathen were amazed at the number of Jehovah's friends; and they pledged themselves henceforth to leave the Worship alone, and that every one who pleased might come to it unmolested. For this, worn out and weary, we returned, praising the Lord.

CHAPTER LXVI

THE SINKING OF THE WELL

BUT I must here record the story of the Sinking of the Well, which broke the back of Heathenism on Aniwa. Being a flat coral island, with no hills to attract the clouds, rain is scarce there as compared with the adjoining mountainous islands; and even when it does fall heavily, with tropical profusion, it disappears, as said before, through the light soil and porous rock, and drains itself directly into the sea. The rainy season

is from December to April, and then the disease most characteristic of all these regions is apt to prevail, viz. fever and ague.

At certain seasons, the Natives drank very unwholesome water; and, indeed, the best water they had at any time for drinking purposes was from the precious cocoa-nut, a kind of Apple of Paradise for all these Southern Isles! They also cultivate the sugar-cane very extensively, and in great variety; and they chew it, when we would fly to water for thirst; so it is to them both food and drink. The black fellow carries with him to the field, when he goes off for a day's work, four or five sticks of sugar-cane, and puts in his time comfortably enough on these. Besides, the sea being their universal bathing-place, in which they swattle like fish, and little water, almost none, being required for cooking purposes, and none whatever for washing clothes (!), the lack of fresh-springing water was not the dreadful trial to them that it would be to us. Yet they appreciate and rejoice in it immensely too; though the water of the green cocoa-nut is refreshing, and in appearance, taste, and colour not unlike lemonade—one nut filling a tumbler; and though when mothers die they feed the babies on it and on the soft white pith, and they flourish on the same, yet the Natives themselves show their delight in preferring, when they can get it, the water from the well.

Aniwa, having therefore no permanent supply of fresh water, in spring or stream or lake, and my own household also suffering sadly for lack of the same, I resolved by the help of God to sink a well near the Mission Premises, hoping that a wisdom higher than my own would guide me to the source of some blessed spring. Of the scientific conditions of such an experiment I was comparatively ignorant; but I counted on having to dig through earth and coral above thirty feet, and my constant fear was, that owing to our environment, the water, if water I found, could only be salt water after all my toils! Still I resolved to sink that shaft in hope, and in faith that the Son of God would be glorified thereby.

One morning I said to the old Chief and his fellow-Chief, both now earnestly inquiring about the religion of Jehovah and of Jesus, "I am going to sink a deep well down into the earth, to see if our God will send us fresh water up from below."

They looked at me with astonishment, and said in a tone of sympathy approaching to pity, "O Missi! Wait till the rain comes down, and we will save all we possibly can for you."

I replied, "We may all die for lack of water. If no fresh water can be got, we may be forced to leave you."

The old Chief looked imploringly, and said, "O Missi! you must not leave us for that. Rain comes only from above. How could you expect our Island to send up showers of rain from below?"

I told him, "Fresh water does come up springing from the earth in my Land at home, and I hope to see it here also."

The old Chief grew more tender in his tones, and cried, "O Missi, your head is going wrong; you are losing something, or you would not talk wild like that! Don't let our people hear you talking about going down into the earth for rain, or they will never listen to your word or believe you again."

But I started upon my hazardous job, selecting a spot near the Mission Station and close to the public path, that my prospective well might be useful to all. I began to dig, with pick and spade and bucket at hand, an American axe for a hammer and crowbar, and a ladder for service by and bye. The good old Chief now told off his men in relays to watch me, lest I should attempt to take my own life, or do anything outrageous, saying, "Poor Missi! That's the way with all who go mad. There's no driving of a notion out of their heads. We must just watch him now. He will find it harder to work with pick and spade than with his pen, and when he's tired we'll persuade him to give it up."

I did get exhausted sooner than I expected, toiling under that tropical sun; but we never own before the Natives that we are beaten; so I went into the house and filled my vest pocket with large, beautiful English-made fish-hooks. These are very tempting to the young men, as compared with their own,—skilfully made though *they* be out of shell, and serving their purposes wonderfully. Holding up a large hook, I cried, "One of these to every man who fills and turns over three buckets out of this hole!"

A rush was made to get the first turn, and back again for another and another. I kept those on one side who had got a

turn, till all the rest in order had a chance, and bucket after bucket was filled and emptied rapidly. Still the shaft seemed to lower very slowly, while my fish-hooks were disappearing very quickly. I was constantly there, and took the heavy share of everything, and was thankful one evening to find that we had cleared more than twelve feet deep,—when lo! next morning, one side had rushed in, and our work was all undone.

The old Chief and his best men now came around me more earnestly than ever. He remonstrated with me very gravely. He assured me for the fiftieth time that rain would never be seen coming up through the earth on Aniwa!

"Now," said he, "had you been in that hole last night, you would have been buried, and a Man-of-war would have come from Queen 'Toria to ask for the Missi that lived here. We would have to say, 'He is down in that hole.' The Captain would ask, 'Who killed him and put him down there?' We would have to say, 'He went down there himself!' The Captain would answer, 'Nonsense! who ever heard of a white man going down into the earth to bury himself? You killed him, you put him there; don't hide your bad conduct with lies!' Then he would bring out his big guns and shoot us, and destroy our Island in revenge. You are making your own grave, Missi, and you will make ours too. Give up this mad freak, for no rain will be found by going downwards on Aniwa. Besides, all your fish-hooks cannot tempt my men again to enter that hole; they don't want to be buried with you. Will you not give it up now?"

I said all that I could to quiet his fears, explained to them that this falling in had happened by my neglect of precautions, and finally made known that by the help of my God, even without all other help, I meant to persevere.

Steeping my poor brains over the problem, I became an extemporised engineer. Two trees were searched for, with branches on opposite sides, capable of sustaining a cross tree betwixt them. I sank them on each side firmly into the ground, passed the beam across them over the centre of the shaft, fastened thereon a rude home-made pulley and block, passed a rope over the wheel, and swung my largest bucket to the end of it. Thus equipped, I began once more sinking away at the well, but at so great an angle that the sides might

not again fall in. Not a Native, however, would enter that hole, and I had to pick and dig away till I was utterly exhausted. But a Native Teacher, in whom I had confidence, took charge above, managing to hire them with axes, knives, etc., to seize the end of the rope and walk along the ground, pulling it till the bucket rose to the surface, and then he himself swung it aside, emptied it, and lowered it down again. I rang a little bell which I had with me, when the bucket was loaded, and that was the signal for my brave helpers to pull their rope. And thus I toiled on from day to day, my heart almost sinking sometimes with the sinking of the well, till we reached a depth of about thirty feet. And the phrase, "living water," "living water," kept chiming through my soul like music from God, as I dug and hammered away!

CHAPTER LXVII

RAIN FROM BELOW

At this depth the earth and coral began to be soaked with damp. I felt that we were nearing water. My soul had a faith that God would open a spring for us; but side by side with this faith was a strange terror that the water would be salt. So perplexing and mixed are even the highest experiences of the soul; the rose-flower of a perfect faith, set round and round with prickly thorns. One evening I said to the old Chief, "I think that Jehovah God will give us water to-morrow from that hole!"

The Chief said, "No, Missi; you will never see rain coming up from the earth on this Island. We wonder what is to be the end of this mad work of yours. We expect daily, if you reach water, to see you drop through into the sea, and the sharks will eat you! That will be the end of it; death to you, and danger to us all."

I still answered, "Come to-morrow. I hope and believe that Jehovah God will send you the rain water up through the earth."

At the moment I knew I was risking much, and probably incurring sorrowful consequences, had no water been given;

but I had faith that the Lord was leading me on, and I knew that I sought His glory, not my own.

Next morning, I went down again at daybreak and sank a narrow hole in the centre about two feet deep. The perspiration broke over me with uncontrollable excitement, and I trembled through every limb, when the water rushed up and began to fill the hole. Muddy though it was, I eagerly tasted it, lapping it with my trembling hand, and then I almost fell upon my knees in that muddy bottom as my heart burst up in praise to the Lord. It was water! It was fresh water! It was living water from Jehovah's well! True, it was a little brackish, but nothing to speak of; and no spring in the desert, cooling the parched lips of a fevered pilgrim, ever appeared more worthy of being called a Well of God than did that water to me!

The Chiefs had assembled with their men near by. They waited on in eager expectancy. It was a rehearsal, in a small way, of the Israelites coming round, while Moses struck the rock and called for water. By and bye, when I had praised the Lord, and my excitement was a little calmed, the mud being also greatly settled, I filled a jug, which I had taken down empty in the sight of them all, and ascending to the top called for them to come and see the rain which Jehovah God had given us through the well. They closed around me in haste, and gazed on it in superstitious fear. The old Chief shook it to see if it would spill, and then touched it to see if it felt like water. At last he tasted it, and rolling it in his mouth with joy for a moment, he swallowed it, and shouted, "Rain! Rain! Yes, it is Rain! But how did you get it?"

I repeated, "Jehovah my God gave it out of His own Earth in answer to our labours and prayers. Go and see it springing up for yourselves!"

Now, though every man there could climb the highest tree as swiftly and as fearlessly as a squirrel or an opossum, not one of them had courage to walk to the side and gaze down into that well. To them this was miraculous! But they were not without a resource that met the emergency. They agreed to take firm hold of each other by the hand, to place themselves in a long line, the foremost man to lean cautiously forward, gaze into the well, and then pass to the rear, and so on till all had seen "Jehovah's rain" far below. It was somewhat



"They agreed to take firm hold of each other by the hand."—Page 228.

comical, yet far more pathetic, to stand by and watch their faces, as man after man peered down into the mystery, and then looked up at me in blank bewilderment! When all had seen it with their own very eyes, and were "weak with wonder," the old Chief exclaimed—

"Missi, wonderful, wonderful is the work of your Jehovah God! No god of Aniwa ever helped us in this way. The world is turned upside down since Jehovah came to Aniwa! But, Missi," continued he, after a pause that looked like silent worship, "will it always rain up through the earth? or will it come and go like the rain from the clouds?"

I told them that I believed it would always continue there for our use, as a good gift from Jehovah.

"Well, but, Missi," replied the Chief, some glimmering of self-interest beginning to strike his brain, "will you or your family drink it all, or shall we also have some?"

"You and all your people," I answered, "and all the people of the Island, may come and drink and carry away as much of it as you wish. I believe there will always be plenty for us all, and the more of it we can use the fresher it will be. That is the way with many of our Jehovah's best gifts to men, and for it and for all we praise His Name!"

"Then, Missi," said the Chief, "it will be our water, and we may all use it as our very own."

"Yes," I answered, "whenever you wish it, and as much as you need, both here and at your own houses, as far as it can possibly be made to go."

The Chief looked at me eagerly, fully convinced at length that the well contained a treasure, and exclaimed, "Missi, what can we do to help you now?"

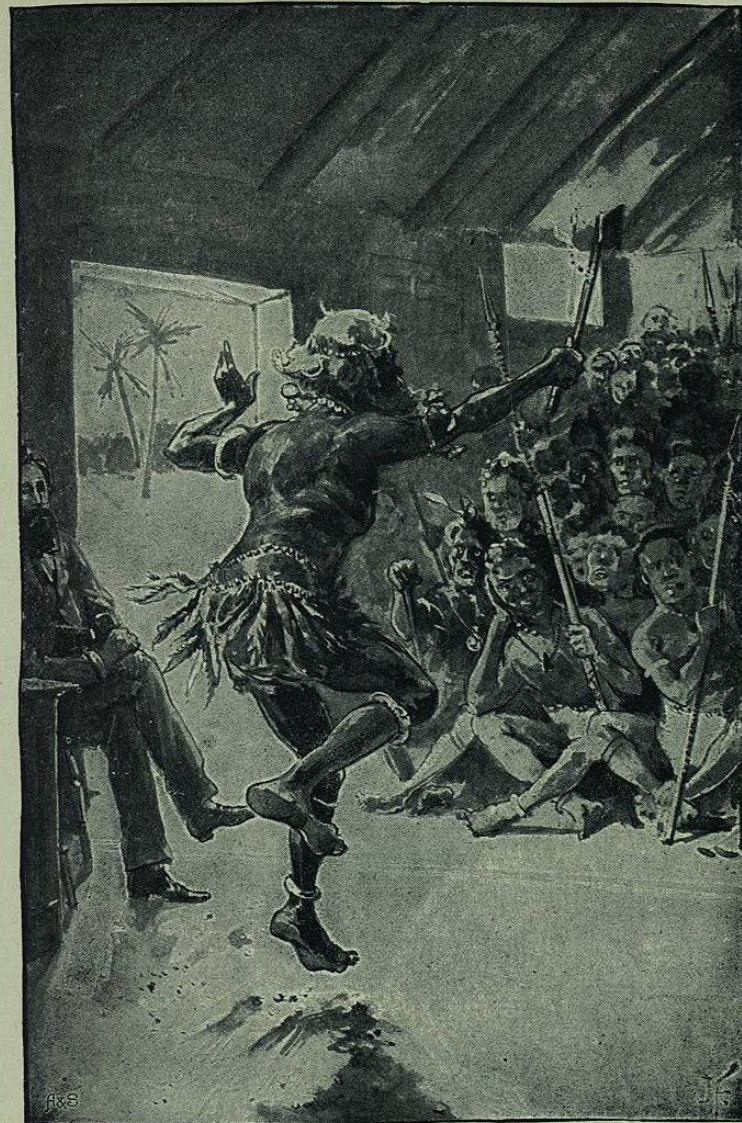
I was thankful, indeed, to accept of the Chief's assistance, now sorely needed, and I said, "You have seen it fall in once already. If it falls again, it will conceal the rain from below which our God has given us. In order to preserve it for us and for our children in all time, we must build it round and round with great coral blocks from the bottom to the very top. I will now clear it out, and prepare the foundation for this wall of coral. Let every man and woman carry from the shore the largest blocks they can bring. It is well worth all the toil thus to preserve our great Jehovah's gift!"

Scarcely were my words uttered, when they rushed to the

shore, with shoutings and songs of gladness; and soon every one was seen struggling under the biggest block of coral with which he dared to tackle. They lay like limestone rocks, broken up by the hurricanes, and rolled ashore in the arms of mighty billows; and in an incredibly short time scores of them were tumbled down for my use at the mouth of the well. Having prepared a foundation, I made ready a sort of bag-basket, into which every block was firmly tied and then let down to me by the pulley—a Native Teacher, a faithful fellow, cautiously guiding it. I received and placed each stone in its position, doing my poor best to wedge them one against the other, building circularly, and cutting them to the needed shape with my American axe. The wall is about three feet thick, and the masonry may be guaranteed to stand till the coral itself decays. I wrought incessantly, for fear of any further collapse, till I had it raised about twenty feet; and now, feeling secure, and my hands being dreadfully cut up, I intimated that I would rest a week or two, and finish the building then. But the Chief advanced and said—

“Missi, you have been strong to work. Your strength has fled. But rest here beside us; and just point out where each block is to be laid. We will lay them there, we will build them solidly behind like you. And no man will sleep till it is done.”

With all their will and heart they started on the job; some carrying, some cutting and squaring the blocks, till the wall rose like magic, and a row of the hugest rocks laid round the top, bound all together, and formed the mouth of the well. Women, boys, and all wished to have a hand in building it, and it remains to this day, a solid wall of masonry, the circle being thirty-four feet deep, eight feet wide at the top, and six at the bottom. I floored it over with wood above all, and fixed the windlass and bucket, and there it stands as one of the greatest material blessings which the Lord has given to Aniwa. It rises and falls with the tide, though a third of a mile distant from the sea; and when, after using it, we tasted the pure fresh water on board the *Dayspring*, the latter seemed so insipid that I had to slip a little salt into my tea along with the sugar before I could enjoy it! All visitors are taken to see the well, as one of the wonders of Aniwa; and an Elder of the Native Church said to me, on a recent visit, “But for that



NAMAKEI'S SERMON ON THE WELL.

water, during the last two years of drought, we would all have been dead!"

Very strangely, though the Natives themselves have since tried to sink six or seven wells in the most likely places near their different villages, they have either come to coral rock which they could not pierce, or found only water that was salt. And they say amongst themselves, "Missi not only used pick and spade, but he prayed and cried to his God. We have learned to dig, but not how to pray, and therefore Jehovah will not give us the rain from below!"

CHAPTER LXVIII

THE OLD CHIEF'S SERMON

THE well was now finished. The place was neatly fenced in. And the old Chief said, "Missi, I think I could help you next Sabbath. Will you let me preach a sermon on the well?"

"Yes," I at once replied, "if you will try to bring all the people to hear you."

"Missi, I will try," he eagerly promised. The news spread like wildfire that the Chief Namakei was to be Missionary on the next day for the Worship, and the people, under great expectancy, urged each other to come and hear what he had to say.

Sabbath came round. Aniwa assembled in what was for that island a great crowd. Namakei appeared dressed in shirt and kilt. He was so excited, and flourished his tomahawk about at such a rate, that it was rather lively work to be near him. I conducted short opening devotions, and then called upon Namakei. He rose at once, with eye flashing wildly, and his limbs twitching with emotion. He spoke to the following effect, swinging his tomahawk to enforce every eloquent gesticulation:—

"Friends of Namakei, men and women and children of Aniwa, listen to my words! Since Missi came here he has talked many strange things we could not understand—things