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The Missionary Organ of the **THE** Methodist Church of N.Z.

OPEN DOOR



Rev. & Mrs. Tom Dent



REV. J. F. GOLDIE,
Founder of the Solomon Islands Mission.



Idols, Roviana.



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MARCH 10, 1927.

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY.

Editorial.

1902-1927.

The years that lie between 1902 and 1927 have meant much for the people of the Western Solomons. In the earlier year a dense pall of heathen darkness lay across all those islands. The story of the conditions existing in those days is well told in the present number by the pioneer missionaries. Then there was a people degraded, superstitious, ignorant and cruel. The name of Christ had never been heard unless upon the lips of a trader profanely taken. Against this dark background of 1902 place the conditions existing to-day, when, after only twenty-five years of Christian effort, thousands of these dark-skinned people are members of the Church, members who love the class meeting; ten thousand and more are reverent worshippers every Lord's day; thousands of scholars are found in the Mission schools, hungry for knowledge; while scores of them filled with the missionary spirit are at work in the villages of their own land as teachers, pastors and evangelists. Looking back over those twenty-five years we can only say: "It is the Lord's doings and it is marvellous in our eyes." The day of miracles is not past while such wonders of divine grace are witnessed. Few men have so much to show for a quarter of a century's work as that distinguished pioneer missionary, the Rev. J. F. Goldie.

Since the Church in the Dominion became responsible for the work in the Solomons much has been accomplished. The missionary staff has been doubled. Then there were four missionaries on the field, to-day there are eight and two lay missionaries; then there were four missionary Sisters, to-day there is a staff of nine Sisters, five of whom are nurses. Two doctors have been accepted for medical service. In addition to all this, chiefly through the liberality of the Missionary treasurer, the Mission Field is in possession of an electric lighting plant, a wireless sending and receiving plant, and a saw-mill, while a sufficient sum has been set aside for the purchase of a printing outfit. This is a record of which we have no reason to be ashamed.

The Missionary Organ of
the Methodist Church of
New Zealand.

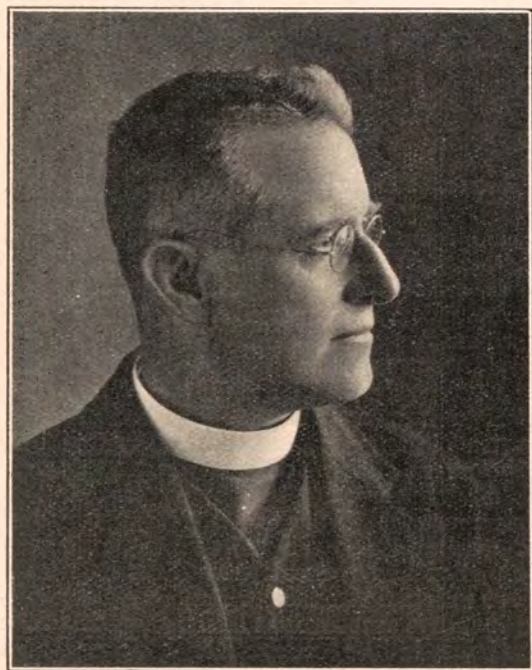
But while much has been accomplished, much, very much, remains to be done. There are still many thousands unreached by the gospel message and plunged in the darkness of spiritual night. More workers are required. A heavy house building programme must be faced. Five of our missionaries are living in semi-native houses, and the equipment of their stations is poor in the extreme. Some of our workers have to travel long distances in native canoes, exposed to discomfort and dangers; additional launches are required. More attention must be given to educational work. The schools for the most part are poorly furnished and the native teachers are meagrely equipped for their tasks. Trained educationalists are required to prepare the native students in the college for their work as teachers in the villages.

A high school for native girls is urgently needed. The mistake must not be made of educating the boys and leaving the girls uneducated and unfitted to be the wives of the native teachers and preachers. Proposals are now being considered for the establishment of a school for native girls, in which they would receive not merely a good education, but in which they would be trained in domestic arts.

The medical work is only in its infancy. Excellent service in this department has been rendered, and is being rendered by the missionaries and their wives, missionary sisters and trained nurses, but much more is now about to be undertaken. The first doctor will be on the field this year, and a second next year. Suitable hospital buildings and equipment will be needed. Such a programme—educational and medical—will involve much expense, and the Church in New Zealand must not shrink from the task. Let us make this semi-jubilee year of the Mission a year of a record income at the home-base as an expression of our gratitude to God for twenty-five years of wonderfully successful work in the Solomon Islands.

A TRUMPET CALL FROM THE PRESIDENT.

Rev. H. RANSTON, M.A., Litt. D.



REV. DR. RANSTON.

This year we celebrate the semi-jubilee of our Mission in the Solomon Islands. The story of those twenty-five years is one of magnificent daring and marvellous achievements for Jesus Christ. In your name a number of Missionaries and Missionary Sisters are engaged in service of the most exacting and self-sacrificing kind. Soon two fully qualified medical men will be your representatives on the field. These are all giving their lives for the Master. What are we in the Homeland doing? Is it something worthy of either the wonderful Christian adventuring of those who have left home for Christ or of ourselves?

Remember that great areas in the Solomons have been solemnly entrusted to us. Child races, undeveloped peoples, a few of whom just emerging from savagery, the rest still steeped in it, are in our charge. Being human beings they may become immeasurably great if brought into close contact with Jesus. It depends upon us if God's grace is to quicken into radiant and noble living their buried faculties of aspiration and desire for goodness. To neglect our clear

duty is not only unchristian but positively criminal. It is unchristian because it ignores the Lord's plain command to preach the Gospel to every creature; it is in addition criminal and cowardly because it either leaves the natives in their pestiferous superstitions and cruel practices or permits them to be unresistingly beset by temptations to the vices and sins of corrupt and polluting forms of European and Asiatic contact. If these child-like peoples are to rise, there is no alternative to Christianity. Nothing else can provide the power. And these people want us; opportunities were never so many as to-day and responsiveness so eager.

Nor should we look upon the work as merely an irksome but necessary duty of pity; but as a joyful enterprise of producing Saints whose virtues will enrich the Kingdom of Christ and add to the regenerative vigour of the Church.

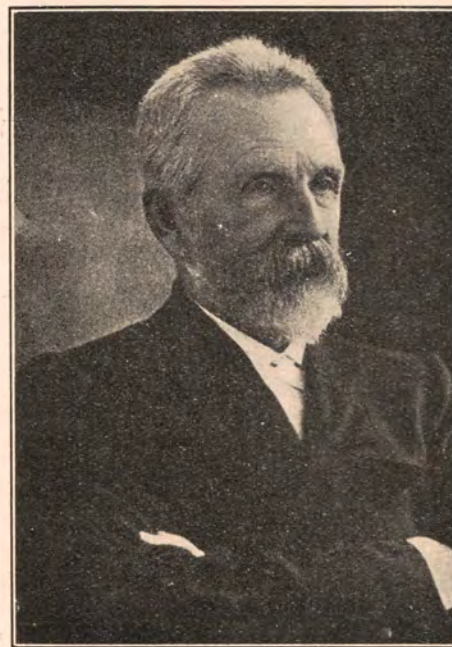
The Missionary task is our great business; and nothing else but the sacrificial gift of yourself to it will satisfy our Master. Let each young man and woman face the question whether his or her life's work as Divinely purposed does not lie in the Mission Field. The more gifted you are, the more imperative is the necessity for self-questioning; for God's bestowal of talents are never for the sole use and benefit of the recipient.

But if by reason of your age or other circumstances your duty lies at home, you can still give yourself to the work in the Solomons. What is money but coined and transferable energy? If your giving—be it in large or small sums—is to the point of self-denial, and redolent of the spirit of prayer and Christlike sympathy, then your money is really you. It is so much of you set free for service in the Islands.

It is unthinkable that the Missionary Soul of Methodism should wane. No station now occupied must be left vacant. No genuine opportunity for expansion should be missed by reason of inertia. I have faith to believe that the tide is rising and will verily become a surging flood of the love-spirit sweeping heathenism before it. Is this to be in our day? It depends upon ourselves. God is willing.

How The Mission Commenced.

Dr. George Brown tells the story in his "Autobiography" of the Commencement of the Mission.



REV. DR. GEORGE BROWN.

The necessity for this Mission was first brought under the consideration of the Board of Missions by the receipt from year to year of requests and petitions from a number of Solomon Islanders living in Fiji, many of whom had been converted under the ministry of the missionaries there, some of them being local preachers and officers of our Church, who earnestly desired to return to their own land, but refused to go unless a missionary or teacher went with them. The Board, whilst sympathising with their wishes, did not feel free to incur the responsibility of any mission at that time. In the year 1901, however, the matter was fully discussed by the General Conference, and it was resolved, "That in view of the whole facts, and the earnest call of the Solomon Islanders in Fiji, and in view also of the fact that the vast portion of the Solomon Islands is at present absolutely without Gospel teaching, the Conference directs the Board of Missions to start a mission in the Solomons in such parts as may seem most desirable and practicable, and at the earliest possible moment." In accordance with this resolution

I was directed by the Board to visit the group to make all possible enquiries, and to collect the information necessary to enable them to decide upon the best measures for carrying out the instructions of the General Conference.

I left Sydney with my daughter in the S.S. *Titus* on July 3rd., and encountered very heavy weather. We reached Roviana on the 26th., and found the people in a state of great excitement over a large feast which Ingava, the principal chief, was about to give to celebrate the opening of a new house. A few years before this, the house would not have been opened without a number of heads having been secured for the occasion. It was soon very clear to me that great caution would have to be exercised in dealing with the chief and people, as they were evidently strongly opposed to any mission being commenced. I talked with Ingava, without, however, speaking to him directly of our wishes. I gave a lantern lecture in the evening, and showed what the Gospel had done for other people like themselves. The views showed what the people of Fiji, New Guinea, and other places were before the introduction of Christianity and what they were afterwards.

At Simbo I had an interview with the principal chief, Belangana, a fine old man, with a most benevolent expression; and yet he was one of the greatest head hunters in New Georgia. It seemed hardly credible that such a quiet-looking old man had been a leader in so many sanguinary expeditions.

After communicating my report to the Board of Missions it was decided to begin the mission, and I was instructed to make the necessary preparations. The Islands, Districts of Fiji and Samoa were applied to for volunteers, and the appeal was nobly responded to. The Rev. J. F. Goldie, from Queensland, and the Rev. S. R. Rooney from South Australia, also volunteered.

We left in the S.S. *Titus* on Friday, May 2, and anchored at Roviana on May 23rd, 1902, a day which will be historical as that on which the Solomon Islands Mission was definitely commenced. Our reception by the people was just as I had expected. There was no active opposition from the chiefs or the people. They did

not receive us with any enthusiasm or cordiality, but on the other hand, they took no steps to prevent us landing.

On Sunday, May 25, I conducted the first service ashore in this mission. I pulled over to a trader's station early in the morning and we all assembled in the front of his house in the open air. I had to speak to the teachers in Fijian and Samoan, and this made it rather a mixed kind of service. I gave out the hymn "My Heart and Voice I Raise," in English. The Fijians and the Samoans sang the hymn to the same tune,

"Ascalon," whilst we sang in English. I was the only one who understood the three languages, but I have no doubt it sounded all right to people at a distance. Then I read the lesson alternately in Fijian and Samoan, and gave the address separately to each company of the teachers. I told them very carefully, that the greatest power in the world was that of love, and that we could only hope to win the people by proving in every way that we loved them, and that we had come to them because God loved them.

A Message from the Secretary of the Conference.

The Rev. A. N. Scotter, Secretary of the Conference has been appointed a member of the Deputation to visit the Solomon Islands this year.

"Jesus Calls Us."



REV. A. N. SCOTTER, B.A.,
Secretary of Conference.

WIRELESS telegraphy has made us very sensitive to the voices and calls that are circling this world and that can be heard and interpreted by means of that mysterious force of electricity. The Christian Church in the spiritual sphere has been conscious all

down the centuries of similar world calls. St. Paul heard them, so did Francis of Assisi and Raymond Lull; they sought to arouse other Christians to the yearning of benighted nations. Then the past century has been one of restlessness in the Church because men and women could not be deaf to the pleading, "Come over and help us." These years of giving to Missions, of defending the oppressed, of rescuing the degraded have been years that have enriched the Church. Now we are "tuned in" for the Solomons, and we must forget our poverty and our frailty to place all we can upon the altar. For light upon their yearnings, upon their social problems, upon their contact with civilisation, these dark skinned brethren are calling. We have the knowledge of that light in the face of Jesus Christ; let us not rob them of what can enrich them even as it has enriched us.

The Prince and Powers of Darkness are deeply entrenched in some of these islands. Satan's kingdom has to be attacked and the age-long servitude of the Solomon Islander has to be broken. In this attack we are represented by some of the best men and women of our Church who have taken up loneliness and danger and suffering for the Jesus we love and serve. How can we support them better? "Once more into the breach, dear friends!" Let us pray hopefully and give liberally that more may be done for the Garden Islands that sit in darkness! So shall we uplift our own lives, ennoble our national life and inspire the Church.

Early Days at Roviana.

By Rev. J. F. Goldie.

ROVIANA, 1902.

The old steamer "Titus" steamed slowly through the narrow entrance of the Roviana Lagoon, and the two young men looking over the rail were drinking in the beauty of the wonderful tropical scenery—the vari-coloured foliage of the tropical forests on either side reaching out and almost touching the sides of the vessel, the beautiful shades of the waters on the coral reefs, the canoes filled with curious yet timid natives. It was all a new experience to them, and they were thrilled with the idea of the new life in these wonderful islands—with the great adventure upon which they were now fairly entering.

The young Methodist Ministers—one of them just entering upon his term of probation, and the other just ordained to the work of the Ministry—had been appointed by the Conference of 1902 to "the Solomon Islands District." Their names were down on the list of "Stations" as John F. Goldie and S. Ray Rooney. With a few native volunteers from the older Mission Districts they had been sent to a portion of the Pacific where not only were there no Methodists, but where the people were still savages, and where the name of Christ had never been heard.

With sanctified audacity these two young men had set out to win the savage tribes of the Western Solomons for Christ.

The "Titus" was not exactly a floating palace. The cabins were small and very dirty, and one had to be content to share them with the rats and other vermin—friendly enough in their way, but rather inclined to take too much for granted. Dim smoky oil lamps were the only means of illumination at night, so that reading was out of the question. There was no ice or cooling chamber, and so a sheep was killed every morning for food—generally one whose life was already despaired of. For over three weeks this old iron tub had been "home," since their departure from Sydney. The voyage had been a rough one, and on their way up they had touched at Norfolk Island, and visited some of the Presbyterian Mission Stations in the New Hebrides, called at the Government Station in the Eastern Solomons, and now they were almost at their journey's end. To-morrow they expected to leave the "Titus," and land somewhere in New Georgia, and begin their work in real earnest.

"Sorry to leave the old Ark, Ray?" asked Goldie of his colleague, "or would you like to remain on this floating 'home, sweet home'?"

"Sweet enough, old chap," replied Rooney, "but I know when I've had enough of a good thing. For three weeks that pen of sheep has been

just outside my cabin door, and the crew have found it impossible to wash down owing to the deck load of timber and other cargo."

"Well, my nearest neighbours are the pigs," said Goldie, "and they certainly want the ship to themselves. However," he added, "Dr. Brown says that we shall be sleeping ashore to-morrow, and if we are successful in securing a site for our station we will soon be hard at work putting up our house."

As the little vessel dropped anchor in the Lagoon some of the canoes ventured a little nearer. Dr. Brown, who had visited the spot the previous year, and who had accompanied the party in order to assist his young colleagues to establish the first station in this wild region, was anxious to get into communication with some of these canoes, but they stood off at a respectful distance. "There are some of your parishioners, Goldie," he said.

"Yes, but they don't seem to recognise their Pastor, Doctor?" was the reply.

"Well, they have the reputation of being the worst natives in the Western Pacific, and no doubt they well deserve their reputation. Warships have stood off and shelled their villages, parties have been repeatedly landed to burn their houses, and to punish them for their head-hunting raids, but they are just as bad as ever. Now you will have a fine opportunity for work, and of seeing what the Gospel of Christ can do for them. I am not afraid of the result," added this fine old Missionary.

"Remember that Rooney and I are both young men, and without any experience of natives, Doctor," said Goldie. "We have no knowledge of their language, manners and customs. There is, however, the universal language of love, and I have no fear that the Gospel will fail. It has never failed yet, and I am confident that Christ lifted up before these dirty degraded savages will win them to Himself."

It had been a week of hard work for the two young pioneers. All the stores, timber, boats, and other equipment had been landed and stacked carefully. Dr. Brown had left in the Government vessel for a trip to Lua Nua. Tired, but happy in their work, and confident of the success of their mission, the two men visited the villages which dotted the shore line of the wonderful Roviana Lagoon. Their reception by the natives was certainly not gushing. The difficulties of communication were great. The dark-skinned sullen savages knew nothing of English, and looked with evident suspicion on the new arrivals. The white men knew nothing of Roviana language, of course,

and hand-shaking was not understood. The Lagoon was disturbed and the people excited about the killing of a man on the same day that the steamer arrived. The man may possibly have been guilty of some serious offence against tribal customs, and swift and sure vengeance had overtaken him. But his own tribe resented this, and they were preparing to make reprisals. One man, a tall well-built fellow, who spoke a little pidgin English and appeared to be very friendly to the Missionaries, was an interested spectator of all that went on. He turned out to be the chief of Kongu on the mainland of New Georgia, and Goldie managed to persuade him to accompany him in his search for a site for the head mission station. The native knew every inch of the country side, which they tramped over for several days, and had a story to tell about every part. Fights and raids, witches and evil spirits, and these came out, as they tramped along the shore, or sat for a spell on a fallen log in the forest. He always carried a battle axe or club, and his shield, and rarely laid these aside even for a moment or two while he joined his companion in having something to eat. When at last Kokeqolo was selected, he was of great assistance in negotiating for the purchase of the land. It turned out that this chief—Mia Bule—was one of the most notorious head-hunters in the district, and according to the Resident Commissioner, had actually dared to threaten the Captain of the H.M.S. "Royalist" on his own ship. To the young Missionary, however, there appeared nothing treacherous about him in spite of his unprepossessing appearance, and during long years of friendship following that search for a site for a mission station he never had to regret the confidence he placed in this old savage.

Dr. Brown, on his return from Lua Nua, was not enthusiastic about the site selected for the head station. "Too far from the shore, Goldie," he said. "You will never get the natives here. It will be nothing but a hole in the bush." The two sat on a little hill called Kokeqolo. A few trees had been cut down, but the dense tropical jungle met overhead. The old Missionary—doubtful about the wisdom of the choice, but with full confidence in his young colleague. The younger man, although not a visionary or dreamer, casting his mind forward, and calling up mental pictures of the years to come, and confident that by God's Grace those pictures would some day have a corresponding reality—a scene of missionary activity, the tropical forest cleared away, and beautiful coconut palms flourishing over the flat land from the hill on which they stood to the sea. Church and school and hospital and crowds of happy Christian people formed part of that picture. His faith in God made possible these things, made the future as real to him as the present.

As the two sat in the jungle discussing the difficulties that for the present faced the two young Ministers there was no thought of failure in their hearts—no room for such a thought. The language was strange and uncouth, and had never been reduced to writing. It would probably prove a very poor and inadequate medium for conveying to the untutored minds of these savages the sublime truths of Christ's message. The people were cruel, crafty and filthy, and driven by their superstitious fears to their grotesque and horrible practices of head-hunting, sorcery, and witchcraft. Not a man, woman, or child had even heard of the name of Christ. Not only this, but they did not want the Missionary. When fear did not sting them to active opposition they were absolutely indifferent. Humanly speaking the two young men with their few native assistants were attempting the impossible.

It is years ago since the two young Methodist Missionaries—Goldie and Rooney—with a faith in God that laughed at difficulties and scorned impossibilities, landed on New Georgia and literally started to cut down the virgin forest, years that brought no exemption from dangers, sickness, pain, trial, and disappointment for the little band. Some of that pioneer party were called upon to make the supreme sacrifice, and were laid to rest on that far off shore. Others were called upon to stand at the graveside of their loved one—wife, brother and child—but there were no hard or rebellious thoughts in their hearts. They had all come to this work knowing that this might be required of them, and so they dried their tears and turned again to their work.

It is years since the leader of that little band, under the shade of the tropical bush on the little hill named "Kokeqolo," had called up mental pictures of the future. But those drafts on the Bank of Faith have been all honoured, and the dream has been translated into a glorious reality.

On the very spot where in 1902 Dr. Brown sat with his young colleague—a spot sacred to hundreds who since that day have made surrender to Christ there—stands the headquarters of the Methodist Mission. Church, College, School, Hospital, Mission houses, workshops, and all the activities of a great Mission. There is only one of the original party of Europeans left, but the same young Minister—with streaks of grey in his hair now—looks out on the actual realisation of his dreams. From the spot on which he stands he looks over the beautiful waving palms of a fine plantation extending to the shores of the Lagoon which ripples in the sunlight nearly half a mile away. The crude language of these savage people has been reduced to writing, and greatly enriched by new and Christian ideas, and from every village on the shore

comes the sound of Christian song. The erstwhile cruel, crafty, filthy savages have lost their stolid indifference, and their bitter opposition has been overcome, and they are crowding the schools and churches—thirsting after God. The superstitious fear, born of their grotesque delusions that drove them to bloodshed and witchcraft—that made devils of men, and for little children turned the whole of life into a tense evasion of death, that turned wifehood into slavery, and made motherhood a thing to be dreaded and avoided—this soul-crushing fear has been replaced by a reverent love of God, and to the listening ear comes the sound of happy care-free laughter of the children wending their way to school.

It is Easter Sunday, and the same preacher who with Dr. Brown sat on this very spot nearly twenty-five years ago, and with a great confidence in God tried to visualise the future, is facing a great congregation of dark-skinned people. The "hole in the bush" is now a busy scene, for the people are gathering for the public worship of God. On the porch of the college the band, composed of the sons of the old head-hunters, are playing the "Gloria." The church is more than crowded, for many have to sit on the steps, and others sit under

the trees near by. As the preacher looks down on that crowd of dark faces his heart is strangely moved. He knows every one of his congregation, and marvels at the wonderful transformation that has taken place in their lives. On his right the college students and the men—the same men whom he met as naked painted savages years before. On his left the women—no longer down-trodden slaves of the men, but happy wives and mothers with clean bodies, and clean garments as well, and with smiling, happy faces they reverently and intelligently take their part in the great service. The college students follow the preacher with eagerness, and with notebook and pencil take written notes of his address. The singing is wonderful, and as the old Methodist tunes ring out one feels that they are singing with the spirit and with the understanding also. The choir with the music before them sing the "Hallelujah Chorus," and the preacher's heart is lifted up in praise to God as he realises that here before his very eyes the words they sing are being fulfilled, and the "Kingdoms of this world are becoming the Kingdoms of our God and of His Christ." A Church of the Living God has been called into being. By the transforming power of the Gospel of Christ a race is being born again.

Vella Lavellans and the Theological College.

A LOVE GIFT.

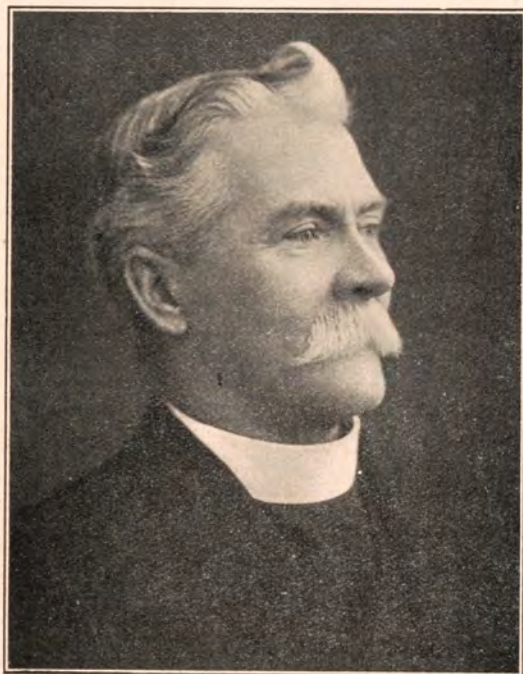
[The Rev. Dr. Laws received the following letter from the Rev. A. A. Bensley, missionary in charge at Vella Lavella, Solomon Islands.]

"I am forwarding to you the sum of £31 5s., the same being a donation from the natives of the Vella Lavella circuit toward the erection of the new Theological College. I mentioned the matter of the erection of the college to one or two of our leading teachers and I told them that this was a work in which they might fittingly join. Some of the men trained in the college will be coming out here to take up work in the Solomons, so I told them it is to be *our* college. They became very interested and I told them that if they wished, there would be some opportunity made whereby they could help. It was eventually arranged that a retiring collection be made after the Christmas service in the afternoon. I had cautioned the teachers against making any great effort as their

annual contribution on behalf of the work of God had just been concluded, and it was a very fine collection. In view of the fact that the annual contribution had just been made, I told them that if they did not feel they could fairly give again they were not to do so. I suggested that not more than one or two bags of copra be made in each village, and the proceeds from the sale of this produce be given. In all I thought the collection might result in £10. It affords me great pleasure to pass on to you the fine sum above mentioned. It is a thank offering of the people of this part of the infant Church in the Solomons, and has been given gladly and with much love.

I hope it will be an encouragement to you and to all who are interested in the New College scheme. This would not be regarded as a large donation if it came from some well-to-do laymen, but its value is increased when we remember that it comes from men who were living in disgusting heathenism a quarter of a century ago. I trust it may move some of our laymen to double their donations both to the new college building fund and to the Foreign Mission fund."

Early Days on Choiseul.



REV. S. RAY ROONEY.
Pioneer Missionary in the Solomons.

Upon the recommendation of the Solomon Islands District Synod of 1904, the New South Wales Conference of 1905 constituted the Island of Choiseul a separate Circuit, and appointed the writer its first Superintendent.

At the end of 1904 the Rev. John F. Goldie (Chairman of the District) succeeded in stationing a Fijian teacher at Warese, on the north coast of Choiseul. And in May of the following year Mr. Goldie and I journeyed together in the Mission lugger "Bondai," bound for Bambatana, on the south coast, where we purposed establishing a station. Being at the mercy of winds and waves and treacherous currents, it took us ten days to cover 100 miles—the distance between Roviana Head Station and Bambatana.

After waiting in vain for three hours for permission from the head chief to land, I, with a Choiseul boy (non-Christian) from Roviana who volunteered to accompany me to Bambatana, jumped into the dinghy and made for the shore, where were standing scores of sullen, angry-looking men, who obviously resented my presence. My native companion, who was keen on meeting his relatives and friends, whom he had not seen for years, soon made himself scarce, and

By the Rev. S. Ray Rooney.

for days I didn't see him again. As a helper he was practically useless, and the less said about him the better. As my colleague and friend, the Chairman, was anxious to get back to important work which urgently required attention at Head Station, whence he had been absent for ten days, and as neither of us anticipated any serious trouble from the natives, we bade one another "farewell." Shortly afterwards, with sails set to a freshening breeze, the "Bondai" was lost to sight round a point, the name of which I cannot now recall.

As I stood alone on the beach, and yet not alone (for the One who had said, "Lo, I am with you always," was there too), I quickly learned by intuition that trouble was brewing amongst those hostile people.

One does not wish in an article of this kind to take up much space writing about hair-breadth escapes from the hands of cruel and bloodthirsty head-hunters. Suffice it to say, that the Missionary was "in perils oft" by day and by night. The writer cannot forget how, after landing at Bambatana, he might have easily lost his life, but for the Providence of God, at the hands of ferocious and angry savages who were opposed to his landing. That first night spent alone in a filthy, stifling hut, in which were five native ovens, which had been in use during the day, is unforgettable, especially when one recollects that men were prowling around the place in search of the Missionary's head. The frequent blowing of the conch shell, which more often than not spoke of death, gave one an uncanny feeling. Needless to say, sleep was out of the question. But let it be said that, through that unforgettable night, the Missionary had a deep sense of the presence of Him who had said, "Fear not, for I am with thee." With the dawn of the new day there was a lifting of the heart to God in thanksgiving and praise. How the heart was thrilled and the spirit cheered when the writer found a few boys who were not only amicably inclined towards, but ready to help, the Missionary. Those same boys were prevailed upon to go into the bush for material to build a house, and a day or two later were hard at work building. At the end of the tenth day the house—measuring 16 feet by 12 feet—made of saplings and thatched with the leaf of the sago palm, was ready for occupation. Oh, what joy to get into such a house—clean, bright, airy and commodious—after being cooped up in a dirty, vile-smelling hovel for ten days!

While the house was in course of erection the

Missionary had a remarkable experience. To show how near God is to His children, and how He keeps in time of danger and delivers from death, perhaps I may be permitted to relate the following personal experience. It happened about the fifth day after my arrival at Bambatana. I was taking an early morning walk alone on one of the narrow, well-beaten paths for which the Islands are noted, when all of a sudden I was startled by seeing a wild man prancing about and brandishing a long-handled battle-axe near a big tree. Had he hidden properly behind the tree (which was big enough to conceal three men) and kept perfectly quiet, I certainly should not be here to-day to tell the tale. My first thought on seeing the man was to go straight ahead and show no sign of fear, for I had not forgotten the words of my dear old father (Rev. Isaac Rooney, F.R.G.S., himself a Missionary of long experience in the early days of Fiji and New Britain), who said, on the eve of my departure for the Solomons, "My son, never let a native think you are afraid of him." When I was almost abreast of the tree, the man, who by this time was jumping about frantically, sprang forward and made a slash at me, but fortunately, owing to the great goodness of God, the blow of the axe missed its mark by a few inches. Whereupon I, in turn, sprang into the air and yelled my hardest, with the result that my assailant and would-be murderer, terror-stricken, dropped his axe and took to his heels into the bush, and I have never seen him since. Whether the fellow ever came near the Mission Station again or not I cannot say. I only hope he did, and trust that he, like many of the people on Choiseul, gave his heart and life to the Lord Jesus Christ before I closed my ministry there.

It may interest my readers to know that during the first three months of my stay at Bambatana, the Head Station on Choiseul, several attempts were made on my life, but on each occasion, through Divine intervention and the grace of God, the plan of the enemy was frustrated and my life was spared.

After so many miraculous escapes I could not but be assured that the Lord had some work for His humble servant to do amongst the thousands of savages and head-hunters on the great island of Choiseul. Some of the results of that work will be recorded later.

A great event in the history of the Mission during its first year was the building of the European Mission House. And then the coming of Mrs. Rooney and our baby boy Gordon was an event of no mean order in the eyes of the people of that land, where a white woman and baby had never before been seen. Imagine the excitement, and the frenzy; and the joy of the dark-skinned

women and girls when, after stroking and pinching these two new arrivals as they stood on the beach, they exclaimed, "The only difference between them and ourselves is in the colour of the skin." So great was the crowd that gathered to welcome Mrs. Rooney that it was with difficulty she made her way to the house which had been opened to receive her as its mistress, for what we hoped would be a long and happy term. Quickly did Mrs. Rooney settle down to the new order of things. The experience gained during two years on Nusa Songa in the Roviana Lagoon, where we were associated with the Rev. J. F. Goldie and Mrs. Goldie in the work of the Head Station, stood her in good stead in her new sphere at Bambatana. Her work was the work peculiar to every white Missionary's station. She took charge of the day school whenever her husband was away on circuit, or had to pay a business visit to Gizo—the Government Station and port of call for steamers visiting the Western Solomons. She also had a special class for training women and girls in the art of needlework, and, in addition, gave much time to medical work. The constant demands made upon her time and energy and patience were many and various. And frequently, despite the fact that the spirit was willing, through weakness of the flesh she was forced to take a rest. When at length, after repeated attacks of malarial fever, which had been the cause of greatly reducing her vitality, she was compelled, by the doctor's orders, to retire from the work and seek a more congenial clime, she had the satisfaction and joy of knowing that the eleven years given to the service of the Master in the Solomon Islands had not been spent in vain.

Of many nerve-racking experiences which fell to her lot, one might be cited. About the hour of twelve one night, when everything was as still as death and when she and the baby were alone in the house at Bambatana (her husband at that time being away on circuit), she was suddenly startled by the yells of about forty men and boys, who excitedly stamped up the front steps and made their way along the verandah to her bedroom door. Her first thought was that a party of hostile savages from the mountains had come to kill her and the baby in her husband's absence. Inaudibly crying to God for help and deliverance, she sprang out of bed and made her way to the door, which she slightly opened. The first person she caught sight of in the moonlight was our own cook-boy. Upon inquiring from him the reason for such an uproar, she was quietly told that one of the station boys, who had suddenly gone mad, was chasing them and wanted to kill them, and they had decided that the safest place for them was as near as they could possibly get to the white lady.

A fine demonstration of their confidence in the Missionary's wife, no doubt. But think of the awful shock to her nervous system.

The early days on Choiseul were not free from trials and sorrows and disappointment. It was to be expected that, on a new station in unexplored territory and amongst a strange people who at first were not at all amicably disposed, there would be many a set-back. Before the Mission was twelve months old Mr. Herbert Pye (of Auburn, N.S.W.), the carpenter who came to build the Mission House at Bambatana, sickened and died. His body was laid to rest in the little cemetery at Kokengolo, Roviana. Frequent sickness among the native teachers on the out-stations, which necessitated their removal to the Head Station at Bambatana, where they would be nursed back to health after a few weeks' sojourn, caused the work to be badly dislocated and handicapped. The way was indeed dark for me personally when, only a few weeks after their coming to me, Mrs. Rooney and our baby lay so seriously ill that I despaired of their lives. In my extremity, with a heart well-nigh overwhelmed, I called upon God. He heard my cry, delivered me from all my fears, restored my dear ones, and then, as well as many times since, He proved Himself to be our refuge and strength and present help in the time of trouble. From that time right on to the day of our leaving the district, notwithstanding the many disabilities and difficulties peculiar to the Island work, and notwithstanding the tremendous responsibility involved in "the care of souls" among the child races of the Pacific, with an unwavering faith in Him Who long ago said, "Work while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work," and, encouraged by the heartening words of the Great Apostle Paul—"Be not weary in well-doing; for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not"—we carried on, year in and year out for nine years, in the belief that the victorious Christ would one day bring the dirty, lazy, cruel, superstitious and sinful people of Choiseul in submission to His feet.

During my term on Choiseul it was my pleasure to see six out-stations established, with a native teacher in charge of each place. Five of the teachers were Tongans and Fijians. The other one was a boy from our Bambatana school and Teacher-Training Class. I refer to Stephen Gade-peta, whom I stationed at Lologae. Too much cannot be said of the loyalty to God and devotion to duty of those splendid men and women from Tonga and Fiji. The Christian Church owes them a debt of gratitude for their conspicuous service under trying, and in some cases painful, conditions in a strange land. I hope I may never fail to give thanks to God for the self-sacrificing labours of those heroic people at a critical time in the history of the Mission.

Did space allow, much could be written about our successful efforts at peace-making between various tribes, and between individuals, about our day and Sunday schools, teacher-training class, the industrial work, large and inter-

ested congregations, the Thursday afternoon Class Meeting at which Church members gathered by the score and were glad to unite in prayer, and praise, and testimony. Volumes could be written telling the story of wonderful cases of conversion. It was my privilege and joy to see Christ come into the lives of many of the people of Bambatana and transform and revolutionise them by the touch of His Power through the preaching of the Gospel. I saw a man who had been a helpless cripple for three years restored to perfect health and strength and made a new creature in Christ Jesus. I saw a woman who was a martyr to epileptic fits (the natives said she was tormented by evil spirits) made whole, as she came under the spell of the Christ, and, as far as I know, she is still sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in her right mind. I saw young men yield themselves to Christ in response to my appeal and dedicate their lives to His service. And to-day they are working successfully as Christian teachers, village pastors, local preachers, and are doing their utmost to extend the Kingdom of God in the earth. One day I was called to the bedside of a dying man. No sooner had I entered the door of his hut than he raised his hand for me to grip it. He smiled faintly and said, "My chief, I am so glad you came. I wanted to tell you that I am dying, and that I am not afraid to die. There was a time when I was afraid of death, but not so now, since you have told us about and prepared us for that beautiful home which Jesus has made ready for all those who love Him and are trusting in Him. Good-bye, Missionary, I am going up there to be with Jesus (he pointed heavenward), and I'll wait there, sir, until you come." So saying he fell asleep, and his face was radiant with the glow from the farther shore. Just another incident before I close to prove that the great and glorious work of evangelising the heathen world is worth while. Some little while ago I was fortunate to come across the copy of a letter which had been sent to a friend of the Rev. V. C. Le Binet (one of my successors at Bambatana), living in a country town in the State of West Australia. The letter was written by Stephen Gade-peta—my first house and cook-boy on Choiseul, and my first convert—and was translated by Mr. Binet. Here is the letter:—

My dear Friend,—

I write this paper to you just now. We are all well just at present.

Another thing which has made us very glad is that we have seen again our Minister, his wife, and also their little child, who have come again to us. This has made us all very happy.

On the 6th day of July the Minister told us about the country of West Australia, (part of) which was desert, but some of the people began to talk together, and they said: Let us lay down pipes that will go as far as the place where there is no water, where there is no rain. The people heard and laughed; for they knew that the task

was a very difficult one, and they thought the thing was impossible. But afterwards everything went well, the pipes were laid, and living water ran, and things grew, and gardens are there now.

We know that our country of Choiseul, a wicked country, was as a desert. Not one thing was good, but many things were evil.

But now it is not so, because the Ministers have brought the Gospel to us, and channels of living water reached out to us. Now things are beginning to go better. But formerly some people thought that perhaps it was impossible for us to be benefited—so they thought.

Now the people see how all things are well, and they are happy.

But of former things I would tell you now. Our fathers did not see white men, but we have seen them. In days past war was here; now school is here. Formerly we lived in the bush, now we live on the beach. We used to carry shield and axe, now we take slate and pencil. We made fire with two sticks rubbed hard together, now we possess matches. Lamps made with the resin of a tree were once ours, but now we have kerosene.

Many things have made us happy. Channels of living water have reached this country.

Finished are my words to you, my friend.

I. STEPHEN GADEPETA.



SISTER GRACE McDONALD.



NURSE EDNA WHITE.

TWO SISTERS WHO ARE LEAVING SHORTLY FOR THE SOLOMONS.

Early Days on Vella Lavella.

By Rev. R. C. Nicholson.



REV. R. C. NICHOLSON

I write this article concerning my experiences on Vella Lavella during the "early days" of our Solomon Islands Mission, in response to the request of the Editor of "The Open Door."

It is almost 20 years since I first landed in the Solomons. I left Sydney for my appointment by the S.S. "Malaita," in the month of May, 1907—exactly five years after the commencement of our Mission by Rev. J. F. Goldie (Chairman) and Rev. S. Ray Rooney. On arrival at Gizo, Mr. Goldie extended to me a most hearty welcome, and made me feel at once that I was a brother and a colleague. After a happy week at the Head Station, the Chairman took me to Vella Lavella, to which island I had been appointed, as its first white Missionary.

Prior to my appointment a number of Fijian teachers had been placed on the island to prepare the people for my arrival. Consequently a great crowd of curious natives met us on the beach.

At this time, the Solomons Group was regarded as the most completely heathenish spot in the Pacific, and Vella Lavella, like other islands in the Group, was the home of crafty, cruel, blood-thirsty head-hunters. Head-hunting had, for the natives, a deep religious significance. They believed that the more heads they secured, the greater would be

their prestige in the spirit world. There were no half measures with them. They were not satisfied with killing their victims with a single blow or spear-thrust. They indulged in brutal butchering. Treachery was an outstanding characteristic. No man trusted his neighbour. A trader would live on friendly terms with a tribe, and then suddenly, without any apparent reason, there would be an uprising, and the trader would be killed.

On one occasion I had to bury several bodies after a head-hunting raid. The memory of these ghastly remains haunts me to this day. On another occasion I had to bury the body of my nearest white neighbour. I saw him one afternoon, the centre of a crowd of cringing natives who were rushing about to do his bidding; the next morning he was a horrible corpse.

In those days, the mere whim of a Chief, an angry word, a bad bargain, a superstitious fear, any of these seemingly small things would be the cause of an uprising, and would mean the death of someone. It was said of a trader that he held his life in one hand, and his gun in the other. And that was the state of affairs in the Solomons when our Methodist Church sent us to plant the standard of the Cross.

My first night on Vella Lavella was spent in the small leaf hut of the young unmarried Fijian teacher. Two other teachers, with their wives and families, were on a visit to him at the time. The "house" was one small room, and there were nine of us to occupy it! The teacher insisted that I should occupy half the floor space which he had covered with new mats for my use. I felt that I was an intruder, especially so when the other guests found my struggles to get into pyjamas in double quick time, a matter of absorbing interest. They, themselves, were mixed up all night like chocolates in a box.

That first night was the last under such embarrassing conditions. (The conditions were embarrassing only because I was not used to them. I have been through many similar experiences since then, but my peace of mind has not been disturbed for one moment. It is wonderful what one can get used to!) But my sense of the fitness of things in these days must have been fairly acute, for I remember that I lost no time next morning in building, with the help of a few natives, a temporary shelter in the form of a leaf hut. It took a day to construct, and was tied together with creepers which were at hand in wild profusion. This little hut, a few feet above high water, acted as the headquarters of the Methodist Missionary for three

whole weeks. At the end of these three weeks we were able to build a bigger hut—30ft. x 15ft.—and this was "home, sweet home" for 11 months.

As a dwelling it was nothing to get conceited about either. It soon became infested with crabs, bush mice, centipedes (some as big as a dinner knife), snakes, cockroaches, spiders, scorpions, and other vermin too numerous to mention.

During my stay in this hut I had all sorts of weird experiences. I remember one night I awakened with an uncanny feeling that someone was near me. (I did without doors in those days to convince the people that I trusted them, and wanted them to trust me). From across the hut there came the noise of crockery. Thinking some native had coveted my cups and saucers, and was doing his best to appropriate them without waking the owner, I yelled "Get out of it," and bounded out of my bunk. On lighting a match no one could be seen, so I "turned in" again. I was just slipping into slumber when the noise amongst the crockery again awakened me. This time I quietly got out of the tangle of mosquito netting, and sprang up with a blood-curdling yell. Result? Same as before! Not a native was to be seen or heard anywhere. I knew someone must have been at the crockery, for it surely could not shake itself together. (On mentioning this aspect of the matter to a trader, he remarked that it depended on the brand!) The outcome of the whole affair was that I went over to the only shelf in the hut to inspect, and found nothing but a large crab, with a huge shell on its back, quietly nestled in an enamelled soup plate. Considering that the natives had a bad reputation, I do not mind admitting that the experience for me was not quite a humorous one.

My experiences in this hut were not all of so harmless a nature. Malaria fever knocked me over again and again. On one occasion I had been ill for about a fortnight, and practically without nourishment, owing to my inability to retain food of any kind. A serious change came. My temperature went to 105.4. I had only natives to attend me. Afterwards I learned that I became violently delirious, and that it was necessary to hold me down by force. When I became sensible again my hut was crowded with curious natives. It was black night. A hurricane lantern was dimly flickering on my little home-made table. On asking the crowd what they wanted one native explained that I was expected to die very soon and that they had gathered to watch the event. Rather cheering—was it not? I was too ill at the time to take much notice of the remark, but found later that the boy had spoken the truth. The natives actually crowded into my hut to see the white man die!

These days were full and exhausting. A track had to be made through the dense jungle to the site we had chosen for the Mission House. This was a hill half a mile away, and it had to be cleared. Scores of piles had to be procured from a mangrove swamp and hauled to the chosen hill—and the house itself had to be built.

For one straight from college this work was fairly strenuous. Some days I would have a dozen or more helpers; other days I would find that the few friendly natives who had been helping me had gone off on a fishing expedition, and I would be left alone with my huge task, and needing all the courage and inspiration of a life purpose to carry on. However, after many trying delays (during which even the scaffolding took root and sent out its green shoots in mute protest at so long a delay) with the help of the Rev. S. R. Rooney and a trader-carpenter, the Mission House was built. During these heavy months of toil I did all that was possible to establish a friendly relationship with the natives, for I knew that this was the primary requisite for successful work amongst them. One's life was constantly threatened. Almost every week reports would reach us that the outlaw Chief Sito had instructed his followers to get the Missionary's head.

Some of our experiences in dealing with the natives were nothing less than thrilling, and no less thrilling were our adventures on the sea.

Once a trader and myself left the steamer's port of call at the same time, in our respective whale boats. We were both homeward bound. When crossing Gizo Straits, and when only about half a mile apart, a sudden and terrific squall struck us. Down went the trader's boat, and he was drowned almost before my eyes. On another occasion we were miles away from land, and were having a bit of a doze, for we had been becalmed for hours under a cruel stabbing sun. Suddenly a black squall struck us. The boys were just in time in letting go the main sheet. Ten seconds later would have been too late. Gallons of water poured over the gunwale of the boat, and it was half full before she righted.

On still another occasion we were a mile off the Vella Lavellan coast in a large canoe when bad weather overtook us. Great waves broke into our frail craft again and again until we could keep it afloat no longer. Just as it was foundering the crew jumped out as one man and held the canoe awash with the waves, and swam with it in that condition to calmer waters. These are just a few of many such experiences. Only those who have been confined to open boats and native canoes for transit in tropic waters can appreciate the danger of so travelling.

But adventures on land and sea are part of the life of a pioneer Missionary. He expects them. He glories in the fact that he is up against a big proposition. He enjoys hardship, rather than suffers it.

One has to admit, however, that the pioneer days in the Solomons were made doubly difficult for our Mission because of the opposition we had to face from our own countrymen. We certainly expected difficulties—big and overwhelming—but we scarcely expected to find white men from our own country so intensely hostile to Missionary effort. I had to be constantly on the move on behalf of natives who were being ruthlessly exploited by unscrupulous traders.

I think it is right that our people should know something about these matters. It is right that you should know something of the real conditions under which your Missionaries had to pioneer the Solomons. Unfortunately we had a disreputable class of "whites" to deal with; but one must be careful not to make a wrong impression. The traders were not all unscrupulous in those days. There were many of them for whom I had a profound respect. I would not wish to meet finer fellows anywhere. Men of clean, honest, straight habits. I was glad to know them, and to call them my friends. They helped me again and again by carrying food supplies to Teachers at Out-Station, and they did all they possibly could to help us. But there was the other class, the disreputable class, which was not at all particular as to how it carried on its dealings with the natives.

These men did their utmost to break down the confidence which existed between the majority of the natives and ourselves. They were continually telling the natives that the talk of the Missionaries was one big "gammon"; that the people in Australia had nothing to do with the "Lotu"; that Goldie, Rooney, and Nicholson were in the Solomons because their own people did not want them. One trader stooped to telling the natives that Jesus Christ was a "Basa." Now "Basa" was the lowest meanest type of sorcerer on Vella Lavella. He was the sneak of the village. No one respected him. And yet this was the name applied by a white man to our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. You may be sure that a man who would go back on his Redeemer in this fashion was not of much account socially, morally, or any other way.

Men of this class would tell natives that the Missionaries had ulterior methods; that they were in the Islands to make money. This was the sort of thing we had to fight and we did fight. And what is more, we won. We won because the natives were not idiots. They knew that Chris-

tian teaching turned out a straighter man—hence it appeared to them.

It would have been an easy thing to have gained the absolute goodwill of the disreputable trader. We could have done it by merely shutting our eyes to his base cruelty and his rank injustice, but this we were not prepared to do. We did not believe in peace at any price. Peace can be too expensive. There ought never to be sacrifice of principle under any circumstances whatever. A man is under a moral obligation to see that justice is done in the community in which he lives, and your Missionaries are not the type of men to allow tyranny and injustice to go by unchallenged.

It was because of the natives' complete distrust of the white man in those early days that it took many years to break down prejudice and win goodwill. The most trying and most distressing condition of my own work at that time was a lack of confidence in me because I was a white man. It was a case of getting the people to believe in me personally before they would believe in my message. This attitude on the part of the people made me, at times, unspeakably lonely. I had been on Vella Lavella about three years, and I had made apparently no impression on the mass of corruption there. Dirty savages were my constant companions.

Then came an outstanding visit to Roviana. I had been there before, but this was a special occasion, and I went at the special invitation of the Chairman of the District. I have never forgotten the gracious influence of that visit. Only a few short years before, the natives at Roviana were in the same condition as the natives on Vella Lavella. They were vicious head-hunters and were steeped in the vilest of superstition. And yet it was my privilege to see these same natives as happy, honest, Christian men and Christian women. They were gathered together at our Head Station, but not to plot bloodshed and death as in former days, but to attend the Christian fellowship meetings, where they might testify to the saving grace of God.

This visit acted as a spiritual tonic. It put new life into me. I had been up against stolid indifference. For three long years I had travelled by native canoe around the dangerous coast of Vella Lavella, striving to win the confidence and goodwill of the natives, by relieving their pain and healing their wounds. Ugly gashes on arms and legs were stitched. Fractures were set. Callous ulcers were treated. This sort of work went on day after day, month after month, and year after year, with apparently no gratitude. Despondency had begun to grip me. I felt the human inability of ever lifting the people. And then, when I had got

to my extremity, there came this special visit to the Head Station, where the work had had five years start, and where the power of God was being daily demonstrated. The thrill of that visit is with me to-day. I went back to my own work on Vella Lavella with hope renewed, and with a fixed determination to win out. And thank God we did win out.

The following year Mrs. Nicholson joined me in the work. Up to that time practically nothing had been done for the women. Their filth, ignorance, and utter degradation were revolting. They were in the saddest state imaginable; so low and so degraded that one would scarcely believe it possible

for them to rise in the scale of being. They were the beasts of burden. A wife was purchased for a pig and a few arm rings. Girls of twelve years were sold by their fathers to the highest bidder. If a girl didn't like the man to whom she was sold she strangled herself. The hardest and cruellest lot on Vella Lavella in those days was to be a girl. Such was the state of affairs when Mrs. Nicholson began her work amongst them. Nothing but the Love of God demonstrated in daily devotion could have lifted them. How different to-day! Old things have passed away. Behold! All things have become new. Vella Lavella has capitulated to the conquering banner of Jesus Christ.



BELSHAZZAR GINA.

SIMONI TAVA EKE.

SILASI MOALA FOTU.

The admission of two boys from the Solomons to Wesley College, Paerata, marks a new stage in the development of the Mission. Gina, the first Solomon Islander to receive a secondary school education, is a boy of forceful personality and considerable ability. By his charm of manner and musical genius he won large numbers of friends on his previous visit to the Dominion, and he has had ever since a lengthy list of correspondents in New Zealand. It is hoped that he may be the first Solomon Islander to become an ordained Minister of the Church.

Silasi is the son of the Rev. Napitāli Fotu, our Tongan minister, who is rendering such splendid service at Simbo. Silasi also intends to devote himself to work in our Mission field on the completion of his education at Wesley College.

Memories of a Pioneer Missionary's Wife.

By Mrs. J. F. Goldie.

How I wish you could have seen the wonderful passage which led into the Roviana Lagoon twenty years ago, before the white man planted his coco-nut areas and ruthlessly demolished the extraordinary beauty of both sides of the channel. The trees met overhead and were ablaze with colour—crotons, orchids and bird life. The steamer *Titus* almost touched the sides as she slowly wound her way through those miles of ravishing beauty. Imagine the bluest sea you ever saw, the sky all purple and gold, gem-like islands everywhere, and you will see Roviana as it was when we anchored.

Presently the captain pointed out the Mission whaleboat in the distance. How I wish you could have shared my pride in that first boat's crew! It was composed of magnificent specimens of manhood from Fiji and Samoa, all dressed in stiff white shirts and white loin cloths, and with something shining in their eyes which fascinated the white girl and filled her with confidence.

The First Dinner.

When leaving the *Titus* I thoughtlessly invited two fellow passengers to dine on shore. You should have seen poor Ray Rooney's face! He knew that there was only one small tin of cheap boiled mutton on shore. Have you ever tasted tinned boiled mutton? Not Hellaby's. "Dog," we call it. The only other food was a tin of carrots. I suggested making some sauce for the latter, but there again I was met with a bewildered look and "Make sauce! What with?" So our only sauce was laughter and apology, and the visitors were glad to return even to the *Titus* to get something to eat.

A few days before had been Ray Rooney's birthday, and he had gone out shooting pigeons to make soup for his own feast. He prepared the birds and took a lot of trouble fixing up that soup, and he assured me it felt deliciously appetising. At night Mr. Goldie and the carpenter returned from a log-cutting expedition, tired and hungry after slaving all day in the bush, and sat down on the boxes they were using for seats, and waited for this aggra-

vating smell to eventuate in something more satisfying. Mr. Rooney, who was given the easier work of preparing the feast because it was his birthday, called to the head boy "bring in the soup." He called to the second cook, "Paleke mai na supu," and he passed the order on to the third cook, who came running in with something. They drew in their seats and prepared to enjoy the feast, but alas! he had thrown away the soup and brought in the bones. Poor men and poor wasted soup!

The First Service.

The first services were rather weird. A favourite hymn was "O For a Thousand Tongues." We would sing it altogether—Fijians in their tongue, Samoans in their, and we in ours. I often wondered what would happen if our wish for a thousand tongues were granted. The whole congregation excepting the teachers, were alarmed. In fact, it was many years before the natives would walk even through the Mission station without their axes and spears and shields.

The First Teachers.

Our first South Sea Island teachers were beautiful characters, especially Risiyate, the most lovable of men: but he invariably preached a detailed sermon on Hell, and with not one horror left out. The other Fijians would shiver and my hair would really stand on end. I developed a deep affection for Risiyate, and a profound admiration for his life of love, although he had a very one-sided religion. I had a burning desire to blot out all this talk of judgment and eternal damnation, and give our people a gospel of love, for it seemed to me they surely suffered enough torture here and now.

The First to Make the Supreme Sacrifice.

"Risiyate," one of the greatest friends of my life, was one of the first to make the supreme sacrifice for our people. Feeling that something was wrong, I went out into the night and found him staggering across the hill. I tried to support him as he fell, but he was big and I was a skeleton in those days. He passed out with shining

face, trying to sing "Precious Name, O How Sweet." His influence is still with us and he is only one of many who gave gladly all they had to give.

Some Strange Dresses.

You would have seen some strangely-garbed men at those first services, for all garments were alike to them. "Veto," one of our chiefs, came to Church one Sunday feeling very grand. He had either borrowed or bought from a trader a coat trimmed with braid and brass buttons, which he wore next to his skin, with a singlet on top of that, and a waistcoat on top of the singlet, and minus pants of any description. As he walked up the hill with me after Church I asked him why he wore the singlet and vest outside. He looked at me in amazement and said, "Who would see them if I wore them underneath." That trader in our lagoon was responsible for a lot. He would sell nightgowns or anything to the men who would wear all to Church.

That period was one long night of struggle—struggle with fever and delirium, and with repeated epidemics of terrible tropical dysentery which swept through the land, taking many of our people, and some of our bravest and dearest. We are glad we can't live through that again.

Our first Church and school-house were built on the beach, a neutral spot, where these men might meet without killing each other. Mr. Goldie was busy when at home, teaching, translating lessons, portions of scripture, etc., house building and book-keeping, with a few other things thrown in. Ray Rooney was now on Choiseul, making his station, getting a school together, translating, and doctoring the sick. They often drank the liniments and nearly died, and rubbed tonics—meant to be taken internally—into their bodies by the hour. However, faith is a great factor.

While Mr. Rooney was able to concentrate on his station, Mr. Goldie and his native crew—some of the grandest of boys—spent a large portion of their time buffeted about by gales of wind, weather-bound, or floating on an oily sea with the fierce sun beating down upon them, bringing out the latent malaria. Pioneering! We at home had, at least, some little personal comfort, but for years he and those boys hadn't anywhere decent, even to sleep.

Missionary Table Talk.

Sister Grace McDonald and Nurse Edna White, who were dedicated at Conference and received for work on the foreign field, will be leaving about the beginning of June for the Solomons.

Dr. Sayers has succeeded in gaining the Diploma of Tropical Medicine of the London School. On returning to the Dominion he will spend some weeks in visiting the Young Men's Bible Classes.

Sister Elizabeth Common left Sydney for the Solomons on March 16, after spending a happy furlough in New Zealand.

Miss Harford, of Richmond, Nelson, and Miss Dorothy Ferguson, of Palmerston North, have been accepted for teaching work in Tonga. Miss Harford leaves by the March trip of the "Tofua," and Miss Ferguson will leave in April. We are pleased in this way to be able to assist the Church in Tonga.

The story of the Solomon Islands Mission is being written by the Rev. J. F. Goldie. It is hoped that the book may be published by the end of the present year.

The Rev. and Mrs. C. E. Dent, of the South African Wesleyan Conference, have left for home after spending several months in Auckland. Mr. Dent was connected with the Free Methodist Church in the Dominion before leaving for South Africa, and Mrs. Dent is a daughter of the late Samuel Parker, of Auckland.

Other welcome visitors to Auckland from the Mission Field are the Rev. and Mrs. M. K. Gilmour. They have given twenty-six years of most valuable and distinguished service to Papua. Mr. Gilmour is slowly improving in health, and there is every hope that a prolonged rest will fit him for many more years of work among the people he loves.

The Rev. A. H. Cropp is due for furlough this year. He is expected to arrive in New Zealand about the beginning of June, the urgent claims of his work making an earlier arrival impossible. He will act as missionary deputation in the North Island.

The Rev. and Mrs. J. F. Goldie.

Honoured by the Conference.

The presence of the Rev. J. F. Goldie—founder of the Solomon Islands Methodist Mission—at the Conference for the first time afforded the opportunity to extend to him the welcome which his quarter of a century of successful and distinguished service on the Mission Field so thoroughly merited. Words of welcome and appreciation were spoken by Dr. Ranston, President of the Conference. On the motion of the General Secretary the following resolution was carried with great enthusiasm.

That the heartiest congratulations of the Conference be tendered to the Rev. J. F. Goldie on the occasion of his completion of twenty-five years' missionary work in the Solomon Islands, this being co-incidental with the celebration of the semi-jubilee of the Mission.

The Conference records its profound appreciation of the distinguished service rendered by Mr. Goldie as pioneer missionary and as Chairman of the District during the whole time since the founding of the Mission. He has ever proved himself a faithful friend of the natives and a valiant defender of their rights. He has been privileged to see a remarkable spiritual work and the establishment of a strong native Church.

The Conference assures him of its determination to support him loyally in the great task of the evangelisation of the people of the Solomons.

It also acknowledges the unique and self-sacrificing work of Mrs. Goldie. As missionary's wife, teacher, nurse, translator of hymns and very particularly in the moral and spiritual uplift of the native women and girls she has played an important part in the establishment and development of the Mission.

The Conference trusts that Mr. and Mrs. Goldie may long be spared to continue their work for the people of the Solomon Islands, and prays that the blessing of God in very abundant measure may rest upon them through all the days.

An upstanding welcome was given by the members of the Conference, the applause continuing for a considerable time. The determination of the Conference to honour

Mr. Goldie was revealed in the large vote which he received for the Presidency of the Conference. Here surely coming events cast their shadows before. In replying, Mr. Goldie spoke of the small beginnings of the work and the extent to which it had grown. Nothing could effect such a marvellous transformation in the lives and characters of the people, such as had taken place, but the power of the gospel of Christ. He thanked the Conference for its warm welcome.

Mr. Goldie was entertained at lunch at Prior's Restaurant on Missionary Day, there being an attendance of over two hundred members of the Conference. The President and Vice-president of the Conference and the General Secretary paid tribute to the noble record and the notable achievements of their guest during his twenty-five years' toil in the Solomons. The absence of Mrs. Goldie was much regretted as the Conference would have delighted to do honour to such a brave woman and faithful worker.

We have tried in vain to obtain a photograph of Mrs. Goldie. She shuns publicity, but the great work which she did, especially in the early days of the Mission, must never be forgotten by the Home Church. Honour is to be paid to her by naming our first hospital in the Solomons the "Helena Goldie Hospital."

Mr. and Mrs. Goldie as they return to the Mission field to continue a second quarter of a century of happy service, will carry with them the best wishes and prayers of the whole Church in this land.

The Canterbury Auxiliary has been enjoying a feast of good things lately. Sister Elizabeth Common is back in Christchurch for a few days before leaving again for the Solomons, and at the last monthly meeting she spoke a few words of farewell. It is a matter for deep thankfulness that all our Sisters are keen to get back to their work at the end of their furlough.

Then Mrs. Eggleston, of Melbourne, gave an intensely interesting talk about the recent Jubilee celebrations in Tonga, at which she, as a link with the early days, was a most welcome visitor in the name of her illustrious grandfather, Rev. Nathaniel Turner.

WOMEN'S PAGES

M.W.M.U.

Methodist Women's
Missionary Union of
New Zealand.



MRS. H. E. PACEY,
President N.Z. Methodist Women's Missionary
Union.

OUR PRESIDENT'S LETTER.

Dear Friends,

Our Church is about to commemorate the semi-jubilee of its work in the Solomon Islands. It is almost twenty-five years since the first missionary party landed there and commenced its assault upon the powers of darkness. It was a party small in numbers but big in faith, and its achievements have added lustre to the pioneer missionary work of the Pacific.

Others will tell of the part played by the Rev. J. F. Goldie, Rev. and Mrs. R. Rooney and others, but I particularly wish to pay tribute to the work of Helena Goldie, wife of the Rev. J. F. Goldie (Chairman of our Missionary District) sharer of his pioneering dangers, helper in his early difficulties, and throughout the years bearer

with him of the ever-increasing responsibility of a growing work.

Mrs. Goldie is a frail woman, with a radiant courageous spirit, a big heart which throbs with a great desire to save and help the women of the Solomons, and to bring them to Christ. She found that the conditions and sufferings of these women were indescribable. They were the burden-bearers, slaves of the men, and haunted by fears and superstitions.

Undaunted by difficulties and discouragements, Helena Goldie determined to bring to these women happiness, deliverance and freedom from their fears, and to-day many rise to call her blessed, for she "loved them into the Kingdom."

We rejoice with her in changed lives, happy homes and happy children.

We remember, too, that this devoted woman was the pioneer of our medical work. Picture her, amputating fingers, extracting teeth and treating dreadful ulcers and other tropical maladies.

Our Church will shortly have the privilege of establishing a Hospital in the Solomons to perpetuate the memory of this heroic lady, which shall be known as the "Helena Goldie Hospital."

What about us, the Methodist women of New Zealand?

There are to-day still thousands of women in the Solomons in the same sad condition; their very hopelessness is making strong appeal to us for help and deliverance; it is *our responsibility*, and we must face it.

Let us catch the self-sacrificing spirit of Helena Goldie, and by our love, service, gifts and by constant prayer, let us faithfully do our part, remembering the words of our Master, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these ye have done it unto Me."

Yours sincerely,
M. W. PACEY,

Palmerston North,
March, 1927.

Our President—An Appreciation.

MRS. H. E. PACEY.

Converted while in her teens, Maggie McKenzie spent her youth as a worker in the Helping Hand Mission, Freeman's Bay, Auckland. She there became a student of human nature in its highest and lowest forms, and helped in the work of making and mending many pieces of broken earth-ware.

At Christian Endeavour meetings, at Cottage meetings, out with the Band in the Open Air Service, and in Evangelistic meetings in the Hall, she served her apprenticeship in public speaking and prayer.

Shortly before her marriage, when leaving her place of business, one of the heads of the firm placed in her hand an envelope, saying: "Here, Maggie, is a reference that will take you to the very gate of heaven. It depends on yourself whether you will get any further."

But marriage did not end her usefulness as a worker in all good causes. She took a lively interest in the orphanage work of the Methodist Church, was a member of its Board of Management and Selection Committee; was an ardent worker in the local Y.W.C.A., and when she left Auckland for Palmerston North had to resign the Presidency of the Association.

The British and Foreign Bible Society also numbered her amongst its members and missed her counsel and help when she left Auckland.

The Prohibition Party showed their appreciation of her worth and excellence by electing her to the position of President of the Dominion Women's Crusade, which worked so successfully a few years ago in purging the electoral rolls before one of our Local Option polls.

Last, but by no means least of her activities was the Methodist Women's Auxiliary. At its inception in Auckland Mrs. Pacey was elected its first President, which position she filled for fourteen years, and only when she left the Queen City for her present home did the mantle fall from her shoulders. Hence it is a graceful and fitting thing that now the M.W.M.U. requires a president to lead and guide their councils, this lady should be the chosen one.

Mrs. Pacey has proved the truth of the poet's words:

"Inspiration is good, but with it alone,
Life's battles will never be won,
Perseverance you'll need, if you would suc-
ceed,
And get the world's work well done."
A.E.S.

Extracts from "Letters from the Front."Bambatana, Choiseul,
28/8/26.

"I hasten to send a few words of thanks for the box which arrived safely last week. . . . Everything was very much appreciated. . . . I am always glad to get material, as I have fifteen girls in the Home and I like them to cut out their dresses and make them up. We are also very glad of as many made garments as we can get for the out-stations. We hope that in time those girls also will know how to sew. . . . I was glad, too, of the soap and medicine. . . . A beautiful cake also came as a great surprise. Some friends who were only married a fortnight ago, brought the box, so I opened the cake in their honour and we all enjoyed it so much. It was indeed kind of the Canterbury ladies to send it, and I wish them to accept my heartfelt thanks. It is almost three months since I returned from furlough. I had the pleasure of travelling with Rev. and Mrs. Voyce, Mr. Chivers and Miss Crespín; I was also present at Miss Crespín's wedding; she looked so sweet, and, of course, they both looked very happy."

"I spent three weeks on the Bilua station with Sister May Barnett and Sister Lily White. . . . The Bilua people are old friends. I was stationed there for thirteen months when I first arrived in 1914; then later I relieved Rev. Mr. Bycroft for ten months, so it was quite pleasant meeting the people again. Mr. Goldie brought Sister Lily White and me across to Choiseul in the *Tandanya* last month, and I feel it good to be back again. Sister Lily was a great help while she was here; she is now stationed at Senga. Most of our people went down with the 'flu' soon after Mr. and Mrs. Metcalfe left, and quite a number along the coast died. It is still bad in some of the villages, so our prayers are with the people. They have so little comfort when they are sick. I made cough mixture till I ran out of golden syrup. I must close with Christian love and greeting."

Yours in the bonds of love,
S. ETHEL McMILLAN."

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