

K O E

TALAHAU NIUE

ENGLISH SUPPLEMENT.

Nineteen Years in Polynesia

BY GEORGE TURNER, LL.D.

VII.

OUR FLIGHT.

ALL looked dark. It was night, and our staunch old friend Kuanuan had not made his appearance. We afterwards heard he was busy bundling up his little property, and removing his pigs to another village, as it seemed certain his own settlement would be the first to go next day. What was now to be done? Never did we feel more at a loss to know the Divine will. The only visible hope of safety on the coming day seemed to be to fire on the enemy. What were we to do? Were we to remain and either be killed ourselves, or be the means of killing others, or should we commit ourselves to the waves, and try to make some other island?

We retired together to pray and wrestle with God for guidance, and sent our Samoans to their house to do the same. For a time we felt overpowered, and could scarcely give utterance to our desires. But the Lord appeared, and enabled us freely to pour out our souls before him. Still however, our Father's countenance seemed hidden. We could not see where He pointed, or what He wished us to do. Our hearts revolted at the thought of firing on the people. We felt willing to meet death in any form rather than do that. The question was, remain or go to sea? It occurred to us to cast lots, but although the difficulties in both cases seemed equal, we thought we had better calmly consider and decide. We prayed again, and again deliberated. As it had been squally the most of the day, there was much to forbid our going to sea. But the wind had shifted a few points, and we thought that if we could only get out of the bay, and round the east point of land, we might hoist our sail and fetch Aneiteum, an island about forty miles off. This we all thought would be the right course, and so we determined to be off to sea by midnight. This we thought would put an end to the fighting, save us

from all temptation to use violence in our extremity; and we felt, too, that even if we did perish at sea, it would be better thus to enter heaven, than through the medium of savage hands. We now called our Samoan servants and teachers. They too, with one exception, had come to the conclusion that we should be off at once, and not risk the fighting of the day close at hand.

It was now eight o'clock, and we made all haste to gather together some few necessaries we had been preparing. It was still squally—thundering and blowing hard occasionally during the evening. Now and then we trembled as we thought of exposure to the billows in a small open boat, badly manned, and scarcely knowing where we were going. But the case was desperate. Our minds were made up. We must go on, and as often as a doubt arose, we seemed to hear a voice from heaven, saying, "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not nor be afraid of them; for the Lord thy God, He it is that will go with thee, He will not fail thee nor forsake thee."

By and by we had all ready, and were only waiting the rise of the moon. This was a solemn hour. Death and eternity seemed near. This, we thought, might be to some, or to all of us, the last opportunity on earth for deliberate reflection. The parting message was thought of, and given with the calm heroism of a female martyr—"My dear, if I die, and your life should be saved, tell mamma and uncle that I never regretted having come in the service of Christ." Yes; this thought was uppermost in our minds amid the greatest trials. The cause of our Redeemer, we felt, was worthy, not only of one, but of ten thousand lives if we had had them to bestow.

But these solemn parting thoughts were soon interrupted by the stern realities of our midnight flight. About eleven o'clock, our servants came in to say that they thought the time was favourable. The moon had just risen; the wind was moderate. It rained, but that we thought was an advantage, as we wished to get quietly off without being seen by the natives, lest they should raise the hue and

cry, and prevent us; they seldom go about in the rain.

Before stepping into our boat, we shut the door, and committed ourselves once more to God. The lines of Newton suggested themselves as touchingly appropriate to our circumstances, and we sang:

“Though troubles assail, and dangers affright,
Though friends should all fail, and foes all unite;
Yet one thing secures us, whatever betide,
The Scripture assures us the Lord will provide.”

“His call we obey, like Abr’ham of old,
Not knowing our way, but faith makes us bold;
For, though we are strangers, we have a sure guide,
And trust in all dangers the Lord will provide.”

We read the 46th Psalm, and bowed the knee in prayer for the Divine direction and protection, and preparation of soul for whatever might that night be before us. We rose from our knees and went down to the boat. Before leaving, we suspended a letter by a string from one of the rafters, to intimate to the captain of any vessel which might anchor at the place, and be in search of us, that we had not been killed by the natives, but had fled from the island, intending, if possible, to reach Aneiteum, and to beg that any one into whose hands the letter might fall, would follow us there and afford the friendly help we might need. I took a farewell look round the room, blew out the light, and hurried after the party to the boat. I turned back from the garden-gate to pluck two water-melons, which had just ripened; and presently we were all seated, and pushed off from the beach.

There were nineteen of us in all, including four children. We divided so as to have ten in the boat and nine in our large canoe, and arranged to do all we could to keep company: our boat was a strong thirty feet long whale-boat. Just as we were leaving the beach, a squall came on with heavy rain, but we pulled off, wishing to get out without being seen by the natives. Our dear wives wrapped up as well as they could, but as Mr. Nisbet and I had to pull for our lives like the rest, there was no alternative but to give ourselves up to a thorough drenching.

“Port Resolution” is in the form of a horse-shoe; as we approached the opening between the heads our difficulties commenced: a heavy swell was setting in, the wind was right ahead and freshening up into another squall; down came the rain again in torrents. We still headed out, and our boat went over the billows without shipping much water. As the squall cleared off, we found from the look of the land that we had been driven back a

bit. The wind was now light, and we stuck to our paddles again. We saw the cocoa-nut trees passing behind us, and were cheered as we found that we were making way notwithstanding the swell. But it gets black ahead again, the wind freshens, the rollers increase, and down comes another squall upon us; we struggle on amidst wind and rain and sea, trying at least to hold our ground. Again it is clear: we see the land. “Where are we?” Driven back, but further on than we were at the close of the last squall. “That’s good, let us keep at it.” I had my eye on a cocoa-nut tree on the north-west side of the entrance; only abreast of that, I thought, and then we will hoist the sail, and rest.

We cut into one of the melons, felt refreshed, and again pulled ahead. But the sea was rough, and those great rolling waves right against us made it terrible work. Still we hoped to get out, and kept at it. Again, however, the wind rose, and another squall came tearing along right in our teeth; torrents of rain, and for a long time we could see nothing. As it cleared off we missed the canoe: we thought she had probably shot ahead, cleared the point, and was off before us. This made us more anxious than ever to get out, and again we drove away at our paddles. Now we found that there was a current taking us nearer the lee reef than we wished to be, but still we hoped to clear it. We pulled and pulled, and thought we were making head-way, but presently one of our men shouted out that we were close upon the breakers, and going smash on to the reef; we instantly headed round, and stood across the bay a bit.

Here we held on, and consulted as to what we should do. Our Samoans said they thought it now seemed impossible to get out; we thought the same; we looked all about but could see nothing of the canoe; we thought they must have got out, were anxious not to break faith with them, and encouraged each other to try once more. Again we struggled to effect our object, but it was all in vain—we were close upon the breakers on the lee reef again, the case was perfectly hopeless; but dark and dismal as the prospect seemed to be to go back to the shore, we had no alternative. God’s will was now unmistakable; had He wished us to go to sea, He would not have thrown such difficulties in our way. We felt concerned about the canoe; however, we could do no more, and, heading round pulled slowly back to our deserted dwelling.

As we approached the beach we saw something black. “What is that ahead? The canoe, is it? Yes to be sure it is!” and presently we were on shore, and talking with those who were in it. They too had struggled hard, but gave up in despair.

They were afraid also of the heavy sea which seemed to be on outside; they thought the boat might stand it, but that they were likely to be swamped, and so they returned and were waiting on anxiously to see whether we had to do the same. It was a great relief to us to meet again our companions in flight, and we felt all the more convinced that God was still leading us, however mysterious the way seemed to be.

We anchored our boat and canoe, so as to be ready at a moment's warning; got a light, and were again in our house without having been observed by a single native. It was now about three o'clock A.M., and we were all faint and sick, and reeling, after such a struggle against wind and rain and sea; we heaped our dripping clothes in a corner, and threw ourselves on our beds for an hour's rest, to prepare us for the fearful day just at hand.

After a few snatches of confused sleep, we were roused at dawn by the shouts of the natives mustering for battle. Presently our inclosure round the house was filled with them. They were now becoming lawless; hitherto they respected our fence, but now they talked about being *our* "soldiers," and thought they might do what they pleased. On going into the sitting-room I found it filled with some twenty of the leading chiefs of the district. I felt so faint that I could hardly stand or speak. Mr. Nisbet was not much better, but it was a council of war, and we must hear what they had to say.

It was the old subject: "We are few, the enemy is numerous; we are unable to keep them back; with the gun we think we could drive them off, and therefore we wish you to join us." We had but one reply: "We have not come here to fight, we cannot join you, we cannot let you have the gun." We told them to wait a minute, went into the store-room, brought out a lot of hatchets, and put one into the hands of the principal men all round the room. "Now," we said, "this is our plan: go with these to the ground where you expect to meet the enemy, hold them up, shout out that they are a present from us to them—a proof that we have no unkind feeling towards them, and implore them to receive *our* expression of regard, and give up the contest.

A number of them smacked their lips, and made their usual *click click* with the mouth shut, in admiration of the fine new hatchets, and seemed pleased with the proposal; but up got old blind-eyed Iaru, the orator and warrior of the district, and harangued them for a few minutes. The substance of his speech was, that they all lay down the hatchets, leave them under our care, first try again and fight for it, and, in the event of conquering, get all those fine hatchets for themselves. Iaru swept

all before him; every one laid down his hatchet on the table, and all were immediately on their feet following the old man out at the door and off to the war. We went with them to the end of the fence, entreating them to do all they could to try and settle affairs without further bloodshed; they, on the other hand, kept urging us to let them have the gun, and went off grumbling dissatisfaction.

After breakfast we all united in prayer; Mr. Nisbet read and prayed, and I did the same. I had just said *Amen*, when the back-door burst open, and in rushed the servants, breathless and excited, calling out, "The war has come! the war has come!" I looked out at the front-door, and saw the natives coming running along the beach; their savage yells and everything else seemed to say that destruction was near. This was an awful moment; but God was at hand too, and nerved us with presence of mind to act.

As the natives came near, we saw that the most of them were our friends. Lahi and some others were foremost—all breathless, and imploring us to be off to our boat, or along the beach to the point at the entrance to the harbour; they said the enemy was right down upon them, and that they had no hope of being able to keep them back. We tumbled our boxes again into the boat, and hurried it off to the point, telling the Samoan women and children to be off there too. A number of the Tanna women and school-girls of Mrs. Nisbet and Mrs. Turner came rushing in at the heels of Lahi, crying and seizing the hands of the ladies, to lead them off to the point where the women and children of the district were all running ready to put to sea; we let them go, we felt confidence in the native women who had come for them, and the Samoan women and children went with them. Mr. Nisbet and I determined to wait on a little till the enemy came up, to see whether anything could be done at the last to conciliate.

(To be continued.)

The Backward Races in the World-Commonwealth

BY W. N. LAWRENCE

1

THE conviction everywhere is becoming more definite that we are witnessing the dawn of a better and a brighter day for the peoples of the world. There is a growing determination that the terrible sacrifices and

tense sufferings which we have endured shall not have been in vain, that war, which, even under the most humane regulations, is always brutal, must cease for ever from the earth, and that some more rational and enlightened means for the settlement of national differences must be found.

The "League of Nations" may do much to preserve the peace of the world, and help to ameliorate the condition of the peoples. There are great possibilities for good in such a league, and all Christian people ought to welcome its formation as a step towards the realisation of the higher and nobler idea of the brotherhood of man and the Kingdom of God on the earth.

The League of Nations, being formal and political in its nature, can be more easily realised than the Kingdom of God, which is spiritual and can only be realised by union under the Kingship of our Lord. To bring this union into being is the essential work of the Church, through the transformation of all races of men by the regeneration of the individual man. This work the Church has been and is doing with much success through its evangelistic and missionary agencies. Among such agencies our own London Missionary Society holds an honoured and foremost place on account of its historic and present contributions to the establishment of the world-union of races under the Kingship of God. What that contribution has been among the backward races may be aptly illustrated by its work in the South Seas and New Guinea.

II

The great interest in the South Sea Islands aroused by the publication of Captain Cook's narratives probably led the Directors of the London Missionary Society to decide on opening a mission in the South Seas. On March 5, 1817, the *Duff* under Captain Wilson arrived in Matavai Bay, Tahiti, having on board a mission party of thirty souls. Eighteen of them settled in Tahiti, ten went to the Tongan Group, while the other two decided to settle in the Marquesas, and it was hoped that the people of those islands would speedily be won for Christ, a hope that was soon to be almost quenched by a fuller knowledge of the real conditions, and of the degraded and barbarous nature of the people.

Captain Cook had not hesitated to say that any measure for the evangelisation and civilisation of the islanders would never be undertaken, but for reasons that had no weight what ever for the gallant band, who, inspired by faith in God and love for man, made the attempt. The beginning of the mission was unpropitious. The privations and terrible hardships which the party on Tahiti had to endure led one after another to withdraw for a time from the work, until only the devoted Nott and Hayward were left. Of those on Tongatabu three were murdered by the people, and the others had to flee in order to escape a similar fate. In the Marquesas the effort was equally unfortunate and fruitless.

For sixteen long years the "Night of Toil" lasted, with little to encourage the faithful workers to believe that their prayers, their labour of love, and patient endurance of hardships were having any influence on the hearts and minds of the people. Tribal wars, infanticide, human sacrifice, and all the cruel customs of superstitious barbarism went on as before. The missionaries, however, had laboured better than they knew, for the dayspring was at hand. In 1812, Pomare, the king of Tahiti, became a Christian, and by 1815 idolatry with all its attendant evils had ceased to exist in the island. Many of those who had had to abandon the work were then able to return and help in consolidating and extending the mission. The foundation having been well and truly laid, the work grew and prospered.

III

John Williams joined the mission in 1817, and the influence of his personality very soon made itself felt. He was a man whose great faith, abounding zeal, energy, and resourcefulness made him the ideal pioneer; a man too big to settle down within "the narrow limits of a single reef" while other groups and islands were yet in heathen darkness. Williams was just the man who was needed to guide and control the missionary zeal of the infant Church. Under his leadership flourishing missions were established in the Austral Group, the Cook Group, and Samoa, before he met his death on the beach of Dillon's Bay, Erromanga. The pioneer had fallen, but his spirit continued to live in the Churches he had founded. So the work was carried forward and missions were opened on Niue, in the Loyalty Islands, Tokelau Islands, Ellice Islands, and the Gilbert Islands. In the meantime other societies had joined in the good work, and had successfully occupied the other groups and islands of the Pacific. The London Missionary Society, therefore, was left free to begin its advance on the great island of New Guinea in 1871. By the labours of McFarlane, Murray, Lawes, Chalmers, Pearse, and others, ably assisted by a great number of devoted men and women from the older missions of the Society in the Pacific, great progress has been made in evangelising the peoples of the south-eastern portion of the Island now named Papua.

IV

I do not wish to create the impression that missions have done all that can or needs to be done for the South Sea Islanders, but it would be difficult to over-estimate the results, both negative and positive, of missionary effort. The people have been delivered from the paralysing fear which is common to all forms of idolatry; human sacrifice, infanticide, tribal war, cannibalism, and all other forms of barbarous cruelty have been swept away in hundreds of islands, and the people now rejoice in a happy life of freedom.

The marriage relation and family life have been purified; the people have been gathered into communities, the centre of the village life being the church and school; faith in God and love to men are daily becoming more evident in the lives of the people; while the liberality of their contributions in service and money to missions, and other good causes, are very generous. Habits of industry are being formed, and trade now flourishes where, previous to missionary effort, there was little or none. Such are a few of the positive results, of mission work.

South Sea Islanders have taken their part both in the fighting line and in the labour battalions during this war. And in New Guinea, where the people are still in the early stages, and too raw to take such a share in the fight for freedom, many of the people have contributed liberally to our Red Cross effort. In one district, where not many years ago a number of L.M.S. teachers, with their wives and children, were cruelly murdered, the people raised £92 for Red Cross purposes in 1916.

The island peoples ought to have their place in the coming League: they need protection and care, and to be defended from the evils and vices of our civilisation. We ought to provide for them opportunity to develop the best that is in them, that they too may make their contribution, small though it may be, to the world-commonwealth of man.