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# PEARLS FROM THE PACIFIC

BY

FLORENCE S. H. YOUNG



"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it," Matt. xiii. 45, 46. "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ," 1 Peter i. 18, 19. "Who gave HIMSELF for us," Titus ii. 14.

*Yours in glad service  
Florence S. H. Young.*

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**RENNELL ISLAND, 1910.**

"A great door and effectual is opened . . . and there are many adversaries."

"Satan hindered."

"We wrestle . . . against powers . . ."

"God . . . giveth us the victory."

"There came down a storm of wind . . ."

Then he arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water."

Very literally do these words tell the experience of those who carry the Gospel to the Islands of the sea.

Again and again God has set before us an open door, and always it means conflict. A fight of faith, a laying hold of God to overcome the power of the enemy. And when at last we have gone forward, each time it has been to encounter tempestuous weather, which threatened to block the way. We have had to face our impotence, and cry again to God, and He has heard our cry.

So it was this time. Four times had Dr. Northcote Deck visited Rennell Island in the "Evangel." First one native, and then five, had been taken to Nongosila and to the school at One Pusu, too homesick to stay long, but long enough to become fast friends.

The Island had been explored and the people found to be friendly and intelligent, and apparently quite willing, indeed anxious to receive teachers.

And now the teachers had offered themselves, for God had called them, and they had responded to that call: "Here am I, send me."

Thomas Sandwich—from the New Hebrides had already been working as a missionary at Ai-io for four years—a tried and staid Christian leader.

Tommy Makira—from San Christoval had accompanied the Doctor on many of his journeys. He was a sturdy, hard-working, cheery fellow, a very earnest Christian, and a soul-winner.

Andrew Kanairara—was one of the elder scholars from One Pusu, who had yielded his life very fully to the Lord Jesus. He would, we hoped, pick up the language more quickly than the older men.

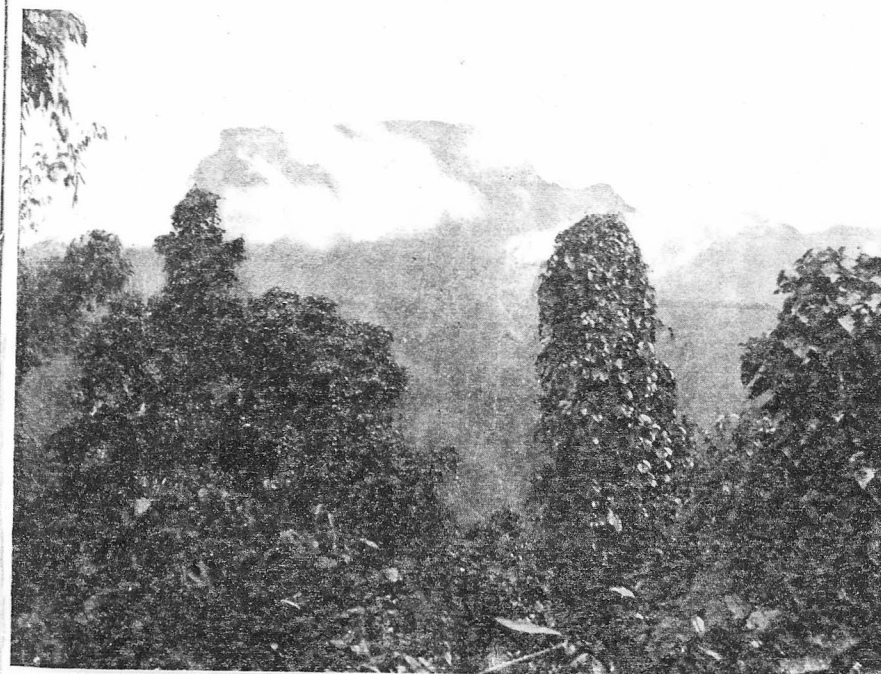
The decks of the "Evangel" were loaded with palm stems from Nongosila, and timber to build a house. In the hold



KUNGAVAL.  
Who went to One Pusu from Rennell Island.



A RENNELL ISLANDER.



MT. TATUVE, GUADALCANAR.

was iron for the roof, and a tank, for no fresh water had yet been found on Rennell Island. The people seemed to depend on coconuts and the brackish water of the inland sea or lake.

We had brought Mr. and Mrs. Abbott and their goods as far as Marau Sound, but could not land them at Talise, for a strong south-east wind had been blowing for a fortnight with a heavy sea breaking all along the coast.

But our time was limited, and on the morning of the 11th of August we set out on the journey of 150 miles from Marau to the anchorage at Rennell Island.

Out into a wild sea the good little vessel fought her way, every hour the wind and sea increasing in violence, the ship's company alternately soaked with seas and frequent rain squalls.

After battling for six hours we were reluctantly convinced that it was a vain struggle, and decided to return to Marau and await more favourable weather. It was a question whether we could make the harbour before dark. We tore along under full canvas, dragging a boat in our wake which every moment we expected would fill and be lost. As we approached Marau, heavy squalls obscured the land, and the dreaded night at sea seemed unavoidable.

How we prayed, and how God answered! The last squall cleared just in time for us to get through the reefs into the safe and quiet haven, and to receive a warm welcome from our anxious friends on shore.

That night and all the next day the wind roared, and the sea thundered as it broke on the reefs.

We gathered the Boys for special prayer, realizing afresh our utter dependence upon our God, and the following morning the weather looked more hopeful, so we set out again.

It was a rough journey, a long day, and a still longer night, but at daybreak we were approaching the long rampart of coast line, so strangely even that it is with difficulty distinguished from the horizon at night. By 7.30 a.m. we had doubled the western end, and then came a weary beat against head-wind and sea. Mile after mile of forbidding and inaccessible coast was slowly compassed—no sign of human beings or of habitation—for the people live beyond the cliffs out of sight.

At last we entered a wide bay, and at 5.30 p.m. we thank-

13<sup>th</sup> Aug.  
1910  
14<sup>th</sup> Aug.

fully dropped anchor in a delightfully quiet and sheltered spot.

Beneath the clear blue water are lovely masses of coral of every hue, a beautiful little sand beach lies between great cliffs of rock, and behind the beach nestles a grove of graceful coconuts at the foot of a wall of tropical foliage. Truly a lovely scene—the gateway, we hoped, by which the people of this island might be reached.

Two or three canoes came off to meet us, led by Temoa, one of the five scholars who had been at One Pusu. The others were at Jugugee and near the lake. The people gave us a warm welcome. We found some women and little children on shore who were very frightened at first, but Miss Dring soon won their confidence, and it was a funny sight to see two little naked picaninnies running along the beach in high glee each under one of our big umbrellas.

Our men were too busy building the teachers' house to do any exploring, for we could only spare three days, and all hands were clearing a site on the edge of the cliff above the beach, carrying the goods up the rough track and building a house in which everything could be safely stored under lock and key, for the Rennell Islanders have a habit of laying hands upon anything that takes their fancy.

They are a very intelligent people, eager to learn, repeating every word they hear, and already they had picked up quite a number of English words, perhaps from Temoa and the others. They could count to ten in English, and we held animated conversations, but concluded that the language of signs is not reliable.

A chief invited the two ladies of our party to visit the only village, about half a mile from the landing-place. Two Rennell Island women came ashore with us in the dinghy, but were displeased to find the crew rowing towards the further landing-place. They lifted up their voices in penetrating cries, shouting to the people on the beach in tones which would carry far and wide, not unmusical either. It was what one has heard a voice-trainer call "the herald tone," and would carry an immense distance.

We rowed over a coral flower garden and landed at the foot of a wooded precipice on a strip of sand and rock.

Meantime the chief had seen us from Kungava and came running round the shore over the sharp coral, swimming

or wading round cliffs, and reaching the shore to give us a smiling welcome.

He wore the insignia of rank in the blue tattoo marks on chest, arms and legs, beautifully drawn and designed, and evidently conveying distinct information as to his rank.

His long wavy hair was thrown proudly backwards, and occasionally tied back from the head with a strip of orange-coloured cloth made of bark. Round his waist he wore the usual bark cloth, a convenient receptacle also for tomahawk and other treasures.

He spoke in pathetic, pleading tones, and it was surprising how much could be expressed with two or three words. The constant *nga-we*—good, and *song-gu*—bad, could not fail to be understood, accompanied as they were with a beaming smile or a look of contempt.

"But where was the village?" we asked.

"Housey, no long way, Miss Young, come, housey!"

And he ran up the side of the steep cliff for some yards like a wild animal. Then stopped and laughed. "Miss Young, come, housey."

Calling to him to wait and help us, we followed, holding on to roots and vines, and climbing up till we reached the top of the cliff, hot and breathless. A narrow track through dense tropical foliage led along the cliff above the shore. Still no sign of habitation.

The chief led on, however, every now and then repeating, "Housey, no long way," and at last we reached a clearing, in the middle of which was a single leaf roof about twenty feet long, no sides at all. On the ground a few mats and—nothing else!

But the chief stood, proud and smiling: "Housey, Miss Young, *nga-we*?"

When we assured him that it was *nga-we*, his delight was unbounded. He ran round the shed, then stooped down under the eaves, threw himself on one of the mats, pretending to go to sleep; came out and again inquired if we admired his "housey."

There was a clear space at one end, towards which we walked, but he instantly stopped us.

"*Ta-bu—ta-bu*, Miss Young, *ta-bu*," pointing to the sky, and repeating the words again and again in such pleading fashion.



Of course, we would not transgress, but we thought of the fierce Malaita *Ambu*, such a contrast to this pleading.

There were no people at the village, they were all on the shore—no furniture, no utensils, nothing but the clearing and shelter. The people seem to live entirely in the open air, which perhaps accounts for their great strength.

Our chief showed off like a child in various ways, cutting down saplings with a single blow of his tomahawk. Then hopping first on one leg and then on the other over great roots and stones faster than we could run, and always appealing to us for admiration, "*Nga-we? nga-we?*"

The house was built, the goods safely stored under lock and key, and we sailed away with great confidence expecting the three faithful teachers would reap a rich harvest.

But God had prepared for them the martyr's crown.

Two months later Dr. Deck wrote a graphic account of the tragic fate which befell these three devoted teachers.

They were all clubbed to death three days after we left! There was no grudge or quarrel. The only purpose for the wicked deed was to obtain possession of the axes, tools and outfit supplied to the teachers. The very man, Kungivai, who seemed so friendly, and who took Miss Dring and me to see his "housey," was the leader in the assault, and he it was who killed dear Thomas Sandwich.

"To human eyes this tragedy seems like defeat, while really it is victory deferred. Some day a martyr's blood will reap a martyr's harvest."

Early in 1911 Dr. Northcote Deck paid another visit to New Zealand on deputation work. He held a number of meetings, and much prayerful interest was aroused. A council of advice was formed in Dunedin. The members were: Rev. H. Gray, Mr. G. Hercus, Mr. T. Maltby, Pastor Mallis, Mr. L. Cook, and Mr. John Gibson as Hon. Sec.

To this Council were added later, Messrs. Adam and Nat. Paterson and A. J. Nichol to take the place of those who have moved from Dunedin, or have been called to higher service.

During this visit God gave the Doctor a true helpmeet



THOMAS SANDWICH

Killed at Rennell Island, with two other teachers, in 1910.

"They climbed the steep ascent to heaven,  
Through peril, toil and pain:  
O God, to us may grace be given  
To follow in their train."

1910 Dec 11 ↓



RENNELL ISLANDERS AT KUNGAVA.

in Miss Jessie Gibson, the only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Gibson. The marriage took place in Dunedin on April 19, 1911, and Dr. N. Deck returned to the Islands with his bride by the May steamer. A house was built for them as head-quarters at Baunani, and the Doctor continued his work of visiting the out-stations in the "Evangel."

scrub, expecting Mr. Daniels to pass along the narrow track looking for pigeons.

But at last they remembered that the missionary did not shoot on Sunday, so as soon as darkness set in, they stealthily drew near the houses.

The evening meeting was nearly over. It was cooler sitting on the rocks outside; and in a recess formed by two of the houses the people had gathered for the usual Sunday evening praise meeting.

Many hymns had been sung. At last Simon asked for 640 in Songs and Solos, "Let us sing of the love of the Lord," as the closing hymn.

Then Mr. Daniels said: "We'll have just one more—461." They sang one verse, and part of the chorus.

Meantime the murderers had crept behind some bananas to within four yards of Mr. Daniels, who was sitting on a rock, with his acetylene lamp beside him, facing the audience and the unseen gun. A sudden report startled every one.

Mr. Daniels cried out—"Lord, save me!" and staggered, first backwards, then tried to make his way to the yam house where he slept, but fell. The ball had struck him in the breast, and on his hymn-book as it fell against the wound, the life-blood welled forth.

Lovingly and faithfully the Boys did all that was possible. Little Meshach gathered and locked up his possessions. Simon hired a canoe, and they took the body to Nongosila, where Silvanus made a coffin from a wooden chest and some boards.

Then a crew of eight Boys set off in the "Hope" to take the body to Malu, fifty miles distant, arriving on Tuesday night.

Early next morning the Malu elders carried the body to the grave, and the whole community gathered with Mr. and Mrs. Foucar and Miss McLaughlin for the last sad service.

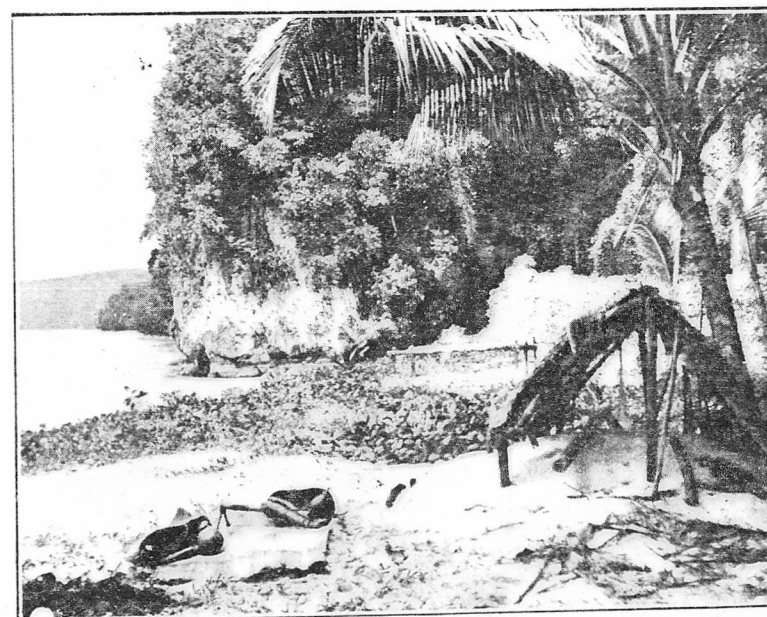
Close by lie many others awaiting the Resurrection, amongst them Charles Pillans, Fred. Schwieger, and Charley Lofia.

It was the spot our brother would have chosen, for he loved the Malu people, and they loved him.

For him we could only rejoice. It was a glorious translation from earth's sorrows and limitations into "fulness of joy." Across his life we believe God has written the word,



TWO RENNELL ISLANDERS.



GRAVE OF MURDERED TEACHERS.

Dodg  
1900

Dodg  
1900

these two, but it was not safe for them to stay at Malu, and we were asked to take them with us.

Some hours were spent at Bitama, then we called at Taravania, saw the new house and village there, and had a meeting with the three teachers and sixty-six natives on the site of the new Church, of which as yet only the posts were erected.

After a night at Fiu, we left for Gavutu. A strong wind and heavy sea arose, and we were well tossed and drenched in crossing Indispensable Straits.

I was securely lashed on the top of the low hatch over the hold. Miss Foster was shut up in the cabin. She insisted upon having the ventilating cowl turned towards the wind, for, indeed, it was otherwise stifling below. Presently we shipped an immense green sea. Grant was at the wheel. He saw it coming and dived into the stern cabin where the other men were. An avalanche of water poured down upon poor Miss Foster. She called for help, but there was no one within sight or hearing except me, and I could not move. She succeeded after a time in pushing back the sliding entrance to the cabin, and in agitated tones and with rather a scared face she demanded the reason of this deluge. I could only assure her that I was wetter than she was, but there was no danger.

We reached the haven of Siota safely at 3 p.m., and next day arrived at Gavutu just in time to catch the steamer for Sydney. I was able to arrange with Captain Svensen to deliver at One Pusu the materials for the mission-house which had been stored at Gavutu for twelve months. Mr. Abbott and Mr. Watkinson went across to One Pusu, and there built the house for our main station.

In February, 1906, Mr. Caulfeild relieved Mr. Abbott and Mr. Watkinson at One Pusu, and they went round to Nongosila and built a mission-house there as headquarters for Mr. Watkinson, who also visited in his whaleboat the whole of the east coast.

Frequent murders and deeds of cruelty were reported. In one letter from Malu Mr. Caulfeild said, "Hardly a week has passed lately without a murder." Men, women and little children were killed or wounded, and in some cases eaten, for cannibalism was commonly practised.



A HAPPY SCHOOLBOY AT ONE PUSU.



MARY, HOPE AND RUTH AT ONE PUSU.

Hope, Jessie and Ruth are Rhoda's Children, pp. 187, 227.



## CHAPTER XII.

## THE SHIP AND THE SCHOOL.

THERE are two outstanding features essential to the effective working of this Island Mission.

These are the mission vessel "Evangel," and the Training School at One Pusu for native teachers.

Dr. Northcote Deck has for many years had charge of the "Evangel," sometimes doing double duty as engineer as well as Captain on his ceaseless journeyings. The moment the anchor is dropped there follows the important and strenuous work of visiting the out-station schools to instruct, encourage, and guide the native teachers.

As the Doctor visits these out-stations he picks up a young man here, another there, to be trained for eighteen months at One Pusu. He also brings away teachers needing help or a change. The school usually has about 130 scholars, mostly young men, but including some wives and some small boys who act as pupil teachers.

The work of visiting the teachers in the out-stations was for a time greatly hampered for want of a suitable vessel. In rough weather the Doctor's launch proved to be too small and really unsafe and it became increasingly difficult to overtake the work. The need of a larger vessel became more and more evident, and at last we decided to build a fourth ship with two good deck cabins, more room on deck, and a more powerful engine.

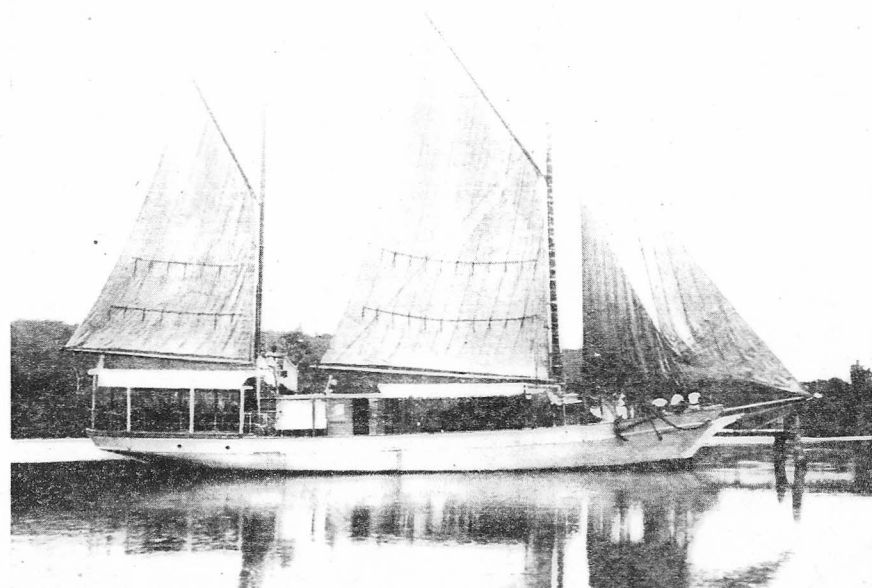
The new "Evangel" was completed before the end of 1915. She is a ketch-rigged yacht of about thirty tons—length 70 ft., beam 17 ft., and depth 7 ft. 6 in., with a 40-48 h.p. Skandia engine burning crude oil.

Dr. Northcote has built a third deck cabin and permanent awnings, and in other ways has added to the conveniences aboard, and we now consider that our mission ship is the best and most comfortable craft in the Solomons.

The building of this vessel and of a home at Katoomba on the Blue Mountains, N.S.W., prevented me from paying my usual annual visit to the Islands in 1915. But it was fortunate that this provision was made in that year.



Dr. NORTHCOTE DECK, M.B., Ch.M., F.R.G.S.



THE "EVANGEL" IN ONE PUSU HARBOUR.