

In Motalava.

(By Miss Florence E. Coombé.)

It is an interesting experience to spend a few weeks from time to time on an island other than that where we are stationed for the greater part of the year. The men missionaries are continually on the move, visiting one district after another of their large ocean parishes. We women, on the contrary, are for the most part required to "stay put"—if I may use an expressive Americanism. In this we have perhaps one advantage. Where the men find a village demurely awaiting inspection, on its most proper behaviour, we know it familiarly, in undress, so to speak, and on its everyday behaviour, good or bad as the case may be. Melanians don't remain "proper" for very long.

We are just now enjoying six weeks on Motalava, within sight of our head-quarters some ten miles across sea, and it is a change in every way—of air, scene, work, people, and even (unfortunately for us) of language.

Of the two islands, Motalava is much larger and more populous. It is also (and this I do not admit willingly, but of necessity) in every way distinctly more advanced than our own little island, Mota, although that, as all friends of Melanesia know, first received the good news of God. The people here are better instructed, keener, more independent, more self-controlled. Yes, I must confess, succinctly though ungrammatically, that, taking them all round, they are far "gooder" (and incidentally more self-complacent) than the Mota people. But I positively decline to call them "better!" Be they what they may, poor, wicked, disreputable little Mota can give place to no other island in the hearts of its two white mothers!

None the less, one is free to grant that it is not only cheering but inspiring to see how naturally the Church here takes the foremost place in the daily lives of the people. I refer now especially to the village of Nereingman, nearest to us, which is the head-quarters of Ben Corin, one of the native Deacons.

Though native built, the village Church is long and spacious; its decoration and most of its furniture the loving, careful work of unskilled brown hands employing primitive implements, and guided

by eyes to which a crooked line and unsymmetrical curves seem more congenial than the geometrical proportions of civilisation. The floor is matted with plaited coconut fronds, sago palm leaves form the roof-thatch, coral and lime the walls.

The houses of the village cluster thickly without, fenced off from the Church and school enclosure by a stone wall which serves to exclude the pig population from too familiar approach.

It is about seven o'clock on a weekday morning. A young man stands at the schoolhouse door and rings the bell by striking the clapper against the sides with his hand. Out from the houses pour men, women, and children, and a steady stream flows into the Church, where it divides, the males taking their places on the south, and the females on the north side. There are rows of rough wood benches, but some of the old folk, the Big Chief amongst them, prefer to sit in their accustomed manner upon the ground, and these group themselves accordingly about the font. The whole congregation seems reverent and attentive. In prayer time there is no indolent crouching, no comfortable squatting, but every soul is on his knees, and so far as one can judge, every voice utters the responses.

(To be continued.)

News from Other Dioceses.

CHRISTCHURCH.

The newly consecrated Bishop of Melanesia was given a welcome by the members of the Church here on Tuesday, July 16. In the absence of the Bishop, the Dean was in the chair, and spoke of the splendid work, accomplished by the splendid men that had occupied the position that Dr. Wood had accepted. The Primate also was present, and introduced the new Bishop as one who he was quite sure would prove to be a worthy successor of those that preceded him.

The Rev. Nelson Drummond also spoke, giving a graphic description of the work of a missionary in the Islands, and showing clearly the great improvements in the conditions of life that had been effected by Christianity.

Dr. Wood, who received a great ovation, pleaded for the moral

support, the prayers, and financial help of all Church people. He stated that Dunedin had given a motor boat as a result of his meeting there, and expressed his assurance that Christchurch and the cities further North would not be found wanting.

C.E.M.S.—Advantage was taken of the presence in Christchurch of the Primate and the Bishops of Wellington and Auckland, and a conference was held, at which, besides the three Bishops, the Rev. J. D. Russell, General Secretary, the Rev. P. B. Haggitt, and Messrs. J. C. Adams and F. George, were present. The main subject was the proposal to secure an Organising Secretary for New Zealand. As a result, several recommendations are to be sent to the authorities of the C.E.M.S. in New Zealand, one being that an Organising Secretary be secured for two years; another that he receive £300 per annum exclusive of travelling expenses; a third that the money for the stipend be not raised by means of a levy, but that each Diocesan Council be asked to contribute a definite proportion; a fourth that the position be filled by a man already in New Zealand, one argument being that the expense of getting a man from England would be too great yet. If we secure the right man, his appointment and existence, together with the coming visit of the Rev. J. E. Watts-Ditchfield, will surely bring a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon our C.E.M.S. and the Church generally.

Poverty Bay Clerical Association.

The fiftieth meeting of the Poverty Bay Clerical Association was held at Patutahi Vicarage on Monday, July 8th. After celebration of the Holy Communion, the Rev. H. T. Raunsley gave a helpful devotional address on I. Corinthians, I., 17, 18. The subject, which was discussed afterwards, was "Future Punishment," which was opened by the Rev. Pine Tamahori.

A Big Legacy. — Mr. George White, of Melksham, Wiltshire, has left £100,000 to the Bishop of London's Fund.