

Fate, who could speak the language, stood up in the boat and called out to the man on shore that our vessel was a missionary ship, and not to be afraid of us. The word soon spread, and the natives began to emerge from their hiding places and gather around us when we landed. We were glad to find among them two men who had been taken to Mare in the *John Williams*, and spent a year with the missionaries there. They were delighted to see us, and remained with us during our stay. We soon learned that a slaver had been here and carried off a number of natives, and this was the explanation given of their distrust in us before they knew us.

In the course of the afternoon the captain and I went to visit a native village about three miles from where we lay. The place was small, and we did not see more than a dozen of houses. As our guide was very talkative, I wished to glean all possible information from him. I asked him if it were true that they did not bury their dead, but kept their bodies in their houses. He said it was, and took us into a house close by, where we saw a body rolled up in mats, and the woman of the house attending to her domestic duties, and laughing at our curiosity. The reason given for this strange and revolting custom is affection for the dead. The body is retained until decomposition ceases and the bones only remain, which are then buried, but some of them are usually retained to make points for their spears and arrows. The natives next led us to a place where some little spots of ground had been planted with taro, yams and bananas, and told us that these were plantations for the dead. These islanders, with all their darkness, feel that man does not cease to exist at death, and that some provision must be made for another world. The idea of the soul's immortality seems to be interwoven with our very constitution, and is universally believed by these barbarous tribes of the human race as well as by the more refined nations of antiquity.

On our return to the vessel a pleasing incident occurred, which ought to encourage us to "sow beside all waters." The captain ordered some food to be given to the *Samoan* natives who had been with us.—They sat down to eat it, but before the food was touched, one of their number, who had been at Mare, in a most devout manner asked God's blessing on it. The example of this poor heathen ought to make many blush in our own favoured land, who never acknowledged God in all their mercies.

October 21st.—The population about the bay is very small, and the largest native town is nearly four miles distant. After breakfast this morning a party from the vessel, accompanied by some natives, set out to visit this place. When we were on

our way the spot was pointed out to us where the *Rarotongan* teachers lived, and their graves also. They were stationed here by the Rev. A. W. Murray and myself in 1861, but they took fever and died a few months after we left them. They appear to have removed from the locality where we expected them to live, and they could scarcely have chosen a more unhealthy spot than the one which they did. An orange-tree which they planted is in a most flourishing condition, but the natives consider it sacred to the dead, and do not eat the fruit of it. A tiresome walk under a burning sun brought us to the town of Vovo, which was our destination. It was impossible to compute the number of houses, as they were much concealed by trees, but there were many of them. They were not laid out with any degree of order, but were usually in groups of four or five, and each of these groups was surrounded with a neat reed fence. It was pleasant to walk through this native town, though there was little to be seen in it. It was very quiet, as it was planting season, and most of the people were away at their plantations. We visited the town-house, where all public meetings are held, and found it a good thatched building, and the order in which it is kept is very creditable to the natives. We called on Lepas, the chief of the place, and found him in his own private house ready to receive us. He is an elderly man, venerable in appearance, and very little of the savage about him. He has two wives much younger than himself, who seemed very attentive to him. We made a present to the chief, and he gave us some yams in return. On our return we took a road which led us through the plantations of the natives, and saw many at work planting yams. The chief, at our request, accompanied us to the vessel. I asked the natives of this place if they wished Christian teachers to live among them, and I give their answer in the simple and graphic language of our interpreter—"Plenty man like missionary too much; suppose missionary come here, man Santo no more fight; by-and-by all man make book"—i.e., learn to read. This part of the island, as well as *Nakw-in-china*, is clearly open for missionaries, and no time should be lost in entering doors of usefulness which God in His providence is opening to us. May God, in mercy to these islanders, speedily raise up men who will be willing to forsake the endearments of home, and come far hence to preach to them "the unsearchable riches of Christ."

AMBRYM.

October 24th.—Arrived at this beautiful island to-day. A boat was lowered, and we pulled in towards the land. It is three years since the *Dayspring* visited this place, and