

On the Christianized islands life and property are as safe as in the best regulated municipalities in Canada. There is no drinking of ardent spirits. In heathen days they chewed the Kava root, spat the saliva into bowls and allowed it to ferment, thus producing a powerful intoxicant. But the Kava root has been destroyed, and the people are all and always sober. No Christian is expected to use tobacco in any form. In their heathen state they were frantically fond of it; but they now regard it as evil. There is no Sabbath-breaking. The whole of the sacred day is devoted to the public and private exercises of God's worship, "except so much as is to be taken up in works of necessity and mercy."

The experiment which has been made on Aneityum, on Anieva, on Erromanga, on Esaté, is a fresh proof of the adequacy of the Gospel as the grand and all-sufficient agency in the regeneration and elevation of the lowest of our race. What can be effected with a population of two or three thousand will hold true when the numbers are millions. The problem is essentially the same always, everywhere.

The history of the New Hebrides Mission illustrates the necessity of sending to teach and preach in heathen lands men of devoted piety, sound common sense, and burning zeal for the glory of God; men who are willing to be taught and able to learn, as well as apt to teach. A man who has not the fear of God before his eyes may lapse into virtual heathenism. A man lacking common sense is sure to prove a total failure. A sickly man, however admirable as to mental and spiritual qualifications, is unfit to face the hardships of missionary life. Stubborn and self-willed men may scorn the lessons of experience to their own ruin.

It is the declared policy of our own Church and of the Free Church to withdraw gradually from this field of labour, seeing that Australia and New Zealand have such special advantages for prosecuting the work. There are now eighteen missionaries and about one hundred and fifty native teachers, occupying twenty islands. More are required, and no doubt they shall be forthcoming, until these lovely isles become a moral paradise adorned with the beauty of holiness, in keeping with their natural charms and splendours.

France has long coveted this group; but the vigilance of Presbyterian missionaries has hitherto kept the destroyer at bay; and now the influence of Australia is all on the side of continued independence or absorption into the British Empire. French domination would mean the incoming of the Jesuit and the convict, and the utter overthrow of our mission work.

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