

to obtain clothing. Any small issue from our press is prized, as the nugget would be by the Australian miner, and is sought after with equal avidity. A fact proving the value they attach to their book is their anxiety to keep it clean—a piece of paper for a cover is considered by them a very valuable accompaniment to their little library, and so incessant is the application for it, that I have been compelled to appoint one morning a week at a certain hour for the distribution. An English bystander might imagine, from the whole scene before him, that I was distributing Bank of England Notes rather than the advertising pages of the *Evangelical Magazine*, or bits of old newspaper. Each one also secures his books in a neat bag of native plat. A slate is greatly esteemed by all; but by the boys and young men in particular, many of whom can write very nicely; and those who possess slates may be seen on Sabbaths taking down portions of the sermon. After service each slate forms the nucleus of an inquiring party for the purpose of obtaining information on the various topics of the discourse, they then prepare themselves for the questioning service which usually follows each sermon.

“The capabilities of these people are of no mean order; although, in their uncivilised state they present a very degrading spectacle, they very quickly learn to read and write; indeed I never met with children who would acquire the art of writing so quickly.

“The whole of the people are very persevering and industrious. This will be accounted for by the fact, that they are compelled to work hard to obtain a livelihood. This island produces very little compared with many of the islands in Eastern Polynesia. This has very little of the bread fruit, while they abound with it; and the cultivation of the yam, the staple of these islands, is much more laborious than that of the taro, the staple of the Eastern groups, but it is really a very fine vegetable, some weighing upwards of thirty pounds, and not watery as they are at Tana. Almost all tropical fruits might be grown here; and owing to its proximity to the temperate latitudes, many of the English fruits and vegetables might be introduced, with additional comfort to the mission families, besides a great advantage to the people. The whole island is quite destitute of pure water. The rain which falls in great abundance, appears

to filter through the porous coral of which the island is entirely formed. In a few of the deep natural wells, with which the island abounds, water is found, chiefly at high water; and, having connection with the sea, it is brackish, and sometimes very salt. There is no such thing as a stream on the island. The principal drink of the natives is cocoa-nut milk, sugar-cane, and melons—of the two latter they never speak of eating but always of drinking them. The sugar-cane is grown very extensively in their plantations, solely for this purpose.

“Formerly, the whole of the population made the interior of the island their principal residence, and came to the sea coast occasionally for the purpose of bathing and fishing. Since the introduction of Christianity, those who have embraced it make the sea-coast their principal settlement, and go into the bush to work their plantations. They generally leave on Monday and return on the Friday.

“On our arrival at this island we found a Mr Nihill, a clergyman, residing at Guama, left by the Bishop of New Zealand for the benefit of his health. He has since died. We have derived great assistance from him in acquiring the language. We found several portions of the Scriptures circulated among the people, translated and printed by himself, and the whole very correctly executed; also the Ten Commandments in large print, for the Schools. A hymn-book containing twenty-six hymns, and a School-book containing an outline of early Scripture History. Besides these, he very kindly and readily delivered over to us many other portions of Scripture, manuscript. He had also compiled a small grammar, which he allowed us to copy; this at once cleared up many difficulties, which would have entangled us much in our future studies of the language.

“Mr. Sunderland has, since our arrival, printed a school-book containing elements of reading, to which is appended the Book of Jonah, Psalm xcv., and the Lord's prayer, translated by Mr Nihill. Mr Creagh has since taken through the press the first chapter of John's Gospel in the Lifu language, which Mr Nihill also translated with the assistance of the natives of this island, who understand the Lifu very much as English people do the French language. Mr Creagh is now printing the whole Gospel of Mark in