

They have shown little desire to live with us as domestics, notwithstanding their mania for the white man's property. They are probably under the influence of some superstitious fear, which prevents them from coming into too close contact with us.

For manual labour, such as fencing, we have had to pay them well. We cannot say that they have idolised us, or spoiled us with kindness. Their gifts have been exceedingly rare. Generally, we have been treated civilly. A few have been troublesome, and disposed to annoy us. At times we have felt pleased with their general conduct, and at other times we have felt disgusted and dispirited. The greatest tax has been laid on our patience. It has been tried by their inquisitiveness, sometimes by their persistency, occasionally by impudence. For some months our cook house was the place where passers-by came to lounge, to get their pipes lighted, (and who does not smoke on Fotuna?) or a brand to kindle the fire in their own house, so that Mrs C. had often difficulty in getting near the fire. So much fuel was carried off, that our servants complained that the Fotunese got quite as much of the wood as we did. At times our own house would be so full that we could get nothing done for the din of voices, the stifling heat, and having to watch their movements. Then they would take up the bread on the table and smell it, or try on a hat or a pair of shoes; while we were assailed unceasingly with their, Give me this, that, and the other thing. But of late they have improved. Curiosity has been somewhat gratified, and they know that it is one thing to ask and another to get. We are no longer troubled with crowds of them in the house; we can forbid a man from coming in by the window; and we have now no fear of telling some one who has stretched himself out at full length for a nap on the floor, to seek for a couch elsewhere.

The island is divided into seven districts, and the population is at least nine hundred. Divine service is conducted at three places on Sabbaths. About fifty attend in all, with tolerable regularity. My opinion of those professedly favourable to Christianity has greatly fallen of late. So long as there was nothing to try them, they appeared to be attached to us, and our mode of worship. But some have left us because I did not give hatchets as part payment for work done by them, others threaten to abandon the cause if they are not taken to Anciteum in the *Dayspring*, while all of them have lately taken part in the worship of the gods of the island, and in sacrificing to them. Neither their external appearance, their religious knowledge, nor their practice, becomes their profession. Without under-

valuing the labours of those who have directly or indirectly been seeking to evangelise Fotuna, I may safely say that Christianity has but the merest hold on the island. The people are all idolaters, and superstition holds unbroken sway. The institution of tabu exists in great force. The sea has been tapu, the roads, and even the water. The symbols of the rain maker, the calm maker, the food producer, etc., meet you in all your rambles, while the sounds of their midnight dances, and the shrieks of those pretending to be possessed by spirits, often drive sleep from us.

We seem to have been wisely directed in the matter of our location on the N.E. part of the island. This district, though not the most populous, is the seat of the idolatrous worship. If we can, by the blessing of God, cut its roots here, it will soon die out over the island, but if we cannot succeed around us, we are not likely to accomplish much in the distance.

From not knowing the language we have been to a great extent in a quiescent state. Mrs C. met with a few of the women living near, two or three days in the week, to teach them sewing, by making garments for themselves, the materials being found gratis. As the time for their annual heathen festival drew near they came less regularly, and when it began they withdrew altogether. This class has been suspended for a time. This is the less to be regretted as it was not productive of much good. Had Mrs C. been able to give them *viva voce* instruction, the results might have been different. We have not started a school, as we judged that the natives were not sufficiently interested in the acquisition of knowledge to attend. I have not attempted public speaking in the language. For some time I have conducted family worship in Fotunese. Sometimes a native or two are present. With the help of one of the Rarotongan teachers I have prepared four hymns, a brief catechism, and a rough version of Mark.

Of the three teachers now on the island, two are anxious to leave by the first opportunity for Rarotonga. One of them has been here for seven, and the other for three years. One wishes to go home for the sake of his children, the other, very properly, as he and his wife do not live happily together. We hope their places may be supplied from Anciteum.

Yours, truly

JOSEPH COPELAND.