

previous residence in Eromanga may prove beneficial in the investigation of the matter; and I am not very sure, but I am personally acquainted with the perpetrators of the deed. Be that as it may, I hope we may see them brought to justice, as our safety on Tana, humanly speaking, is dependent upon the speedy execution of justice both upon the Aneiteumese and Eromangans. I believe that we would have been burned out of house and home long ago at both stations, did not our natives know that the man who burnt the Church on Aneiteum was in irons, and was to be severely punished for what he had done, and they not only glory in what the Eromangans have done, but say that by and by they will commit a similar deed.

There has not been a man-of-war in these seas for two years, and our natives are beginning to forget some of the salutary lessons which such vessels are calculated to teach, especially in cases where justice is judiciously administered.

During the past month we have had much less encouragement than in the preceeding month. There has been a slight falling off both in our Sabbath day and School attendance. About the middle of April, when the excitement caused by the sickness had in a good degree subsided, we again endeavored to get up a school. Having no school house in which to meet, we used to open our doors in the afternoon, and meet with any persons who would attend. Some days we used to have some twelve or fifteen, on other days but one or two. The first six weeks our daily male attendance averaged five, the last month only four. Kapukee and two other men had mastered the alphabet, and two boys are groping their way through two syllables, but their attendance is so irregular, that we almost despair of ever seeing them make any further progress. Biavia, one of the men who has mastered the alphabet, was among the first who came about us on our first arrival at this Island. During the five or six months which we then spent here, he learned all the letters, and when we were obliged to leave, he was making an attempt, tho' a very sad one, to wend his way through monosyllables. On our return we found that he had forgotten every letter but *I*. He was not however in the least discouraged, but set about again in good earnest, and by

the time the measles broke out he knew them all; but as our Missionary operations were all suspended during the time of the epidemic, he again forgot every letter.

In April he made another attempt, and was apparently more than ever anxious to learn to read. I took every possible pains with him, and had fondly hoped that we should make something with the third effort, but no; so soon as he had perfectly mastered the alphabet, I saw nothing more of him for several days, and was both amused and grieved at being told that he had got enough of the book for one time—that he did not know if it was good to take too much of it at once, and that he would hold on a bit, until some one should make equal progress. Our chief will not attend, and our common people dare not, indeed they are afraid of knowing more than their chiefs; and as ignorance is the mother of devotion in Tana, the less a person knows the better child he is in the estimation of the mother.

We generally spend a portion of every afternoon in instructing those who come about us not so much in teaching them the letters, or instructing them to write on their slates, as in asking and explaining—simple questions—easy passages of Scripture, &c. Our first and principal object being to instil into their minds some correct idea of God—of sin—its nature and consequences—of heaven—hell, &c. But the breaking up of the fallow ground, and preparing it for the reception of the good seed, is a work, for which no man is sufficient, and its difficulty cannot be adequately conceived until you try to operate upon a heathen heart.

During the former part of the month we were busily engaged at the Church, got up the frame, and the roof partly covered in, when war again broke out, and our natives were all in such a state of terror and excitement, that nothing could be done. There has not been such a war in Tana since we came here. I am not aware of one man or woman on this side of the Island, who was not engaged in it. When men go to war here, the women go to cook for them, and to carry home whatever property the men may plunder. Kapukee went at the head of the people in this and the neighbouring villages, and Yarese at the head of his party. Consequently all