

and of little value, so I told the natives to let it remain as a visible token to friends and foes that we had not abandoned the island. As the frame only of the new house was up, at which Mr Gordon was working on the day of his death, I arranged with the natives to take it down and store it in a house at the Bay, as it may be useful another day. Having finished our business on Erromanga we bade adieu to that island with mingled feelings of sorrow and gladness, and proceeded on our way.

VATE OR FATE OR SANDWICH ISLAND.

September 13th. We were close in to Vate this morning after a night's run from Erromanga. We approached this island with mingled emotions of fear and hope. Before we reached the island we heard that the teachers were all dead, and again we heard that they were all alive. Our minds were soon relieved; by seeing a number of canoes coming off from the shore, and among those on board of them the teachers could be recognised. The ship was brought to anchor in the large bay of Erakor, at the head of which the teachers reside, about two miles from the anchorage. The teachers were soon on board and gave us the cheering information, that they and their families were well and much encouraged in their labors.

The mission had suffered severely from measles, but all connected with it had recovered with the exception of a child who died. The disease had also spread over a considerable part of the island, but it was less fatal here than on the more southerly islands. It was taken to Vate by the schooner "Jessie" from Aneiteum. A number of diseased natives were landed at the bay where the teachers reside, and no intimation was given to them or others of the fearful scourge introduced among them. The natives did not blame the teachers for the sickness as in some other islands. We were glad to hear that the scarcity of food of which there is so much complaint on some islands did not extend to Vate. The teachers and natives seemed to have abundance of the necessaries of life, and a good present of yams was given to the ship.

The report which the teachers gave of the mission was more encouraging than it had been our privilege to hear during any previous visit. The time to favor this dark island, on which so many devoted teachers had fallen by the hand of violence and the deadly influence of disease, has at last come. The whole population in the district where the teachers reside is professedly christian, and attend on the instructions of the teachers. The tribes around them are however in darkness and continue to practice the worst abominations of heathenism, and from these the christian party receive some annoyance. But at the time of our visit the heathen were at war among themselves and the christians were not molested by them. It was a truly lovely sight to see a small community of persons, attached to the doctrines and practising the duties of our holy religion, amidst the unbroken heathenism that surrounds them. The little haven will in due time leaven the whole lump, and the spark which has been kindled in Erakor bay will become a mighty flame to illuminate the whole island. The teachers told us that some of the natives were desirous of being baptized and publicly professing their faith in Christ and obedience to his will. Some of the natives of this place had been at Samoa and understood something about the nature and design of Church ordinances. Neither Mr Murray nor I were prepared for such a request, yet we dare not hastily dismiss it. We concluded after much consideration to examine 13 candidates who were recommended by the teachers. After the examination of the several persons on the ending truths of the Bible we were satisfied with ten of the number. Their views of divine truth were clear and far more extensive than we ventured to hope; the earnestness which they manifested gave us much confidence in their sincerity; and their general conduct the teachers assured us was consistent and exemplary. Unprepared as we were for dispensing the sealing ordinances of religion, yet after a long interview with these Vatan disciples, we could only say as Peter did on another occasion, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized?" It was accordingly arranged that we should spend the Sabbath at this island and dispense the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The Sabbath was a lovely day. The sky above was clear and cloudless, and the sea around was calm, the breeze being scarcely strong enough to ripple the surface. After breakfast two boats were lowered, and Mr and Mrs Murray, Capt and Mrs Williams, Mrs Johnston, Mr Turpie, first officer, myself, and all the