

The island of Niua is one of the smallest in the group and probably contains not more than 300 inhabitants at present. The natives are a branch of the Malay race and speak a dialect similar to those of Eastern Polynesia. Teachers from Samoa or Rarotonga would learn the languages very soon and their books might be made to suit the island with slight alterations. The dialect is very difficult to teachers from this island.

ERROMANGA.

September 11th. It was with painful emotions that we entered Dillon's Bay this morning. The day was fine, and the island never appeared more lovely. It was hard to think that so interesting a spot of God's creation should have been desecrated with the deeds of darkness that have been perpetrated on it. A deathlike stillness prevailed around the bay and very few natives could be seen. The fatal disease which swept over the island, has fearfully reduced the population, and the survivors, whether friends or foes, were ashamed or afraid when they saw the ship.

A boat was soon lowered and sent on shore under the charge of Joe one of the Erromangan natives in Aneiteum, whom he brought as an interpreter. The boat soon returned bringing several friendly natives, and among them Kauiaui the man who killed Mr. Williams and Harris, the son and successor of Niwan, the late high chief. Our interview with these poor Erromangans was an affecting one, it was some time before they spoke, and they shed many tears. They gave us full information about the massacre of Mr and Mrs Gordon. The account we received of the sad event is substantially the same as I have already forwarded to you, with some additional particulars. A full statement of the whole affair has been carefully written by Mr Murray, from information collected on the spot, and will probably appear in the "Missionary Chronicle" of the London Missionary Society.

It ought perhaps to be mentioned that Mr Gordon was not ignorant of his danger. He did not live at the bay where the native settlement is, but on a high hill, about two miles distant, and very inaccessible. This locality appears to have been chosen for health. In this secluded place he was in a measure beyond the reach of his friends, and much in the power of evil disposed persons. The only natives near him were those on his own premises. As soon as the natives at the bay heard that the heathen intended to kill the mission family they sent word to Mr Gordon of their intentions, and urged him to remove to the old mission premises, where he would be in the midst of his friends, who would protect him. These warnings were repeated three days in succession, on the last of which the massacre took place. We do not know the reason why these warnings were not attended to, probably Mr Gordon thought the natives were not sincere in their threatenings. There is no probability that any injury would have befallen the mission family had they been at the bay.

The natives among whom we landed appeared very friendly. Our whole party consisting of Mr and Mrs Murray, Capt. and Mrs Williams, Mrs Johnston and myself visited the graves of Mr and Mrs Gordon. They are buried in a small grove of trees near the stream that empties into Dillon's Bay. The graves are covered by a small mound made of coral and plaist-red over with lime. A fence enclosed the whole, inside of which a number of small mulberry trees were growing, planted by some friendly hand.

The Erromangans have committed an awful crime in the murder of their best friends, yet we must not abandon the island. We found things in a much more hopeful state than we expected. There are small parties in different places friendly to the mission, who meet to worship God on the Sabbath day. It is more than probable that steps will be taken to resume the mission next year. You will be glad to hear that Mr Copeland has been appointed to conduct the mission on Erromanga, and he will go to his destination as soon as he is released from his engagements on this island. He is a very prudent man, and seems well suited for such a sphere of labor. He will take along with him a good band of native teachers, and by God's blessing we hope that Erromanga will become an easy conquest to the gospel.

During our visit, I removed the remaining property belonging to Mr Gordon on board of the ship. The old house on the hill was much injured by the hurricane,