

I am happy to say that Mr. and Mrs. Geddie, and their two children, Mrs. Johnston, and myself, are all well. It is a little past mid-winter now. The days are short, but beginning to expand. Vegetation is not so rapid as in the early months of the year. We have also less rain, and a much more agreeable atmosphere. The natives are preparing their arrowroot for the missionary meetings to be held next month.—I am sorry to say that it has suffered this year again from the high wind and heavy flood in January. Mr. Geddie is visiting the schools just now, and I intend, if spared, to begin next week. A new book has been prepared for the occasion,—the first instalment of what may be called Bible Stories, or Simple Bible History. Only one sheet has been printed as yet. Each sheet will be complete in itself, and the whole when completed will form a small volume. I send you a copy. It would be considered rather a diminutive book with you, but you know it is the day of small things yet here. Exodus is nearly completed, and will be a very large book in the estimation of our natives, till the whole New Testament comes to hand, and then that will be *the book*. It is also contemplated to reprint and enlarge our collection of hymns before long. Upon the whole, matters are encouraging. Especially are we filled with gratitude for present attainments when we think of the state of Tanna and Erromanga. An orphan school is being erected at Mr. Geddie's station, of which Mrs. Johnston will be the superintendent. On this side of the island nine new school-houses have been put up this year, and two more will be completed shortly. The natives are also preparing lime for the new church to be built after Mr. Inglis's arrival. The public health is tolerable at present. I find, however, that during the year ending last month the deaths exceed the births by one-half. The mortality appears thus to have been excessive, but this arises in part from an unusually small return of births, the effects of the measles. For three months in the end of 1861 there was not a birth on my side of the island.

Three days ago I returned from a visit to Tanna, Nina, and Erromanga. We left this island on the evening of the 7th. There were 24 persons on board our small vessel, the most of them adults, with a good deal of baggage. The first night, very fortunately, was fine, with a light but fair wind.—We got into Port Resolution the following day, about 10 a.m., and got rid there of eight of our passengers. These were Tannese all belonging, with one exception, to Mr. Matheson's station. They came to Aneiteum soon after the Tanna Mission was broken up. Mr. Matheson had them under instruction up till the time of his leaving for

Mare. For some time before he sailed some of them had been anxious to return to their own land, but when he left they all wished to go. Two of the men who came over died here, so that we had to land at Port Resolution two widows,—a circumstance that would help to confirm the Tannese in their superstitious ideas about the deadly nature of the gospel. As soon as the passengers had left the vessel, we set sail. The few natives we saw did not look particularly pleased to see us. In short, I felt the errand to be an unpleasant one, and hurried away. We learned this much, that there was peace among the natives, and that the captain of a trading vessel had taken away Mr. Paton's boat.

At sunset the same day we reached Nina, and anchored near the shore, on a coral patch. Not knowing how long we might be able to remain there, I thought it advisable to land the Rarotongan teacher and his wife, and their boxes, after dark. We got off a good big canoe, and succeeded in getting all safe to the shore. Not long after, we observed that the vessel was drifting out to sea, though we had not weighed anchor. Two of our crew were ashore. We shouted to them to come off without delay. One of them came off in time, but the other we had to leave, as the weather was thick and rainy, and we durst not beat up again to the shore, lest we should strike on some coral patch in the dark. When we got out fairly from under the shelter of the land, we found it blowing hard. We set only a couple of sails, but soon found that even these were too much. We were then on our way to Erromanga, and fearing lest we should miss the island (not being able to steer the vessel well from the sea that was running), we thought it prudent to halt in time. Under close reefed main-sail and reefed stay-sail we brought the vessel's head to the wind till, the weather should improve. It rained, and blew, and thundered, all night, and the cold was piercing. It was the most uncomfortable and the most anxious night I ever spent in the *John Knor*. When day appeared, the weather had not improved, and the barometer was low. About mid-forenoon it cleared off, and we saw Erromanga at no great distance. Early next morning we reached Dillon's Bay, and anchored, with the wind blowing nearly right on the land. We waited a while after daylight, thinking some native would come off, but we were disappointed. One of the Erromangans we had on board sprang into the sea, and swam ashore. We saw him reach the shore, and expected he would return immediately with a canoe. But when ashore he could do nothing, as there is not a canoe about the bay. In his absence, the head of one of the sandal-wood establishments sent off his dingey, saying we might have the use of it.