

been much afflicted during the past year. Two families who have resided on the island for a considerable time, escaped with little sickness; but four unaccustomed families were laid up with fever and ague for several months, and have been a serious charge to us. The wife of one of the teachers died; and some of the others are still suffering so much from the change of climate, that we shall probably advise their return to their native islands. The teachers are Samoans and Karotongans.

We were cheered by a visit from the "John Williams" about three months ago. She called here on her way from the Eastern islands to Sydney. She has gone there to repair damages sustained at the island of *Borabora*. In entering one of the harbors of that island, she struck on a reef, and narrowly escaped total shipwreck. She lay beating on the reef for six hours, and had she not been a very superior vessel, must have gone to pieces. Her loss would have been a serious disappointment to this mission, as she had on board, our years' provisions; as also, the boxes from Nova Scotia. The extent of damage sustained was not known until her arrival in Sydney. She is now on the slip undergoing repairs; and I have lately learned, by a letter, that she requires a new keel, and other material repairs. On her way to Sydney, she left at this island, five Rarotongan teachers, and their wives, five Erromangans, four Fatian, and four natives of Savage islands, to await her return. We expect her again in about two weeks; and after taking on board the teachers and natives left at Aneiteum, she will proceed on her voyage to visit the other islands of the group, and the Loyalty islands. Messrs Murray and Sunderland, of the Samoan mission, form the visiting deputation for the present year. They have been instructed by the brethren to invite Mr Inglis or myself, to accompany them; but neither of us, I fear, will be able to go. Such a voyage would be both profitable and pleasing to either of us; but our engagements at home are so numerous at present, that nothing less than urgent necessity would warrant an absence from the island, of even a few weeks.

For all general information about the mission, I refer you to the document

which accompanies this letter. You will learn from that paper much that must cheer the hearts of all who are interested in the evangelization of these dark islands. I am sure that you, and all the friends of the mission, will unite with us in thankfulness to God, that we labor with so much encouragement. The word of God advances at Aneiteum, with a steady progress, amidst obstacles which, however, diminish in number and power. Heathenism, with its follies, its cruelties and its crimes, passes away; and Christianity, in its divine and lovely symmetry, rises triumphant on its ruins. But, while I write thus, I would not have you suppose that this island, so recently, one of the strongholds of heathenism, and on which every abomination was practised, has become a paradise—it is still a region of darkness and spiritual death—nevertheless, the gospel has effected a great and happy change on it.

I have often had occasion, in former letters, to allude to the struggles between Christianity and Heathenism on this island. As soon as the gospel seemed to take effect, we encountered a most formidable, and, at times, alarming opposition, from various quarters. This opposition manifested itself in various forms, which it would be no pleasing task to record. We often look back on those days of trial with trembling and with thankfulness to God. This hostility to the mission seemed to have reached its crisis about the close of 1851, when an attempt was made on my own life and that of my family, by setting fire to my house at midnight, but the arm of the Lord was stretched out for our protection, and no harm was permitted to befall us. The excitement which that act caused among the christian party was very great, and it required all the influence that I possessed among them to control it. The enemies of the cause of God were then convinced that the truth had taken a stronger hold of the hearts of the natives than they expected, and if they opposed it by violent means, it must be at their peril. Since that time, opposition has been rapidly on the decline; and every new effort on the part of our enemies to arrest the progress of the gospel, has only discovered their increasing weakness. The last exciting event occurred