

I am getting a boat house built at the landing in the harbor, as I intend to visit Meli regularly, and it is too much to ask the natives to bring round my boat, as there is generally a bad sea, you know we have the windward side of the island.

I don't know what the French intend doing, whether they intend to annex the islands or not. No doubt you heard that they established a military post on this island and on Malikula. I believe they lately withdrew part of the troops, but I don't think they mean to withdraw them all. It is now reported that priests are to be settled on Meli. As you can imagine this is not very gratifying intelligence to us. But the Lord reigneth. He can thwart their crafty counsels.

Since last July about sixty have come in from heathenism, and about one-third of these have moved away from the interior and settled at a village much nearer us.

I have been kept very busy. I have superintended the building of two other churches, taught school, translated Philipians, 1st Thesalonians, 1 Timothy, Titus, Phileman and James, since July, besides dispensing medicine, itinerating, and attending to other duties too numerous to mention.

Three new missionaries came down this trip, but there is not time to settle any of them this season. Their names are Morton and Leggatt, supported by the church of Victoria, and Landels supported by that of New South Wales.

I remain,  
Your affectionate brother,  
J. W.

ERAKOR EFATE, Jan. 11, 1887.

*My Dear Father and Mother :*

I expect to have an opportunity in a day or two sending away a mail, so I am getting a few lines ready for you. Amanda is feeling the heat very much this hot season, and looks as if she needed a change. We are not thinking, however, of going to Sydney before the end of 1888, and then a sore trial will await us. We will have to leave Norman and Morrison, at school, and so the thought of this will make a trip to Sydney anything but enjoyable. We are entitled to a change this year, on account of the boys we do not intend availing ourselves of this privilege.

My own health is very good. Am very busy at present, and have been for some time. You are probably aware that we built a new church. It was completed some time ago, all but the seats, and these we are getting from Sydney. Our natives will look quite civilized when we get the seats. I do not like to see them sitting on the floor, and it would not do to bring in the logs we had for seats in the old church. The natives seem quite proud of it.

I am now busy translating my part of the New Testament. Mr. Macdonald and I are translating alternate Books. He has Matthew and I have Mark and so on. Then we meet once in a while to go over it together. He was round here a few weeks ago, and I intend going round to Hav Harbor about the middle of next month.

There is a great deal of sickness at present amongst our natives. The chief of Eratap lost a nice little girl from dysentery about ten days ago. Several more children have had it, but no one else has died so far.

We had the Communion in our new church for the first time about a fortnight ago. The church was crowded to its utmost capacity. The women were seated in rows as close as we could get them, on one side of the church, and the men on the other side, with only room enough between for one to pass along. Admitted 6 for the first time. One of them was a young man whom I baptized some twelve or perhaps thirteen years ago. He was then a little boy. Last Sabbath I baptized his child. When I look back and think of him as a little boy the first time I saw him, it makes me realize that I am getting old, and that I have been here a long time. It is a solemn thought for me that should I be spared to arrive at the allotted span, the three score years and ten, more than half of my time is already gone. And yet I feel as if only beginning life. Another circumstance which makes me feel that I have spent a long time in the mission field is, that a few weeks ago I married a young couple, and the bride was a wee bit baby, perhaps a month old when we came here.

We are still anxious about the French, lest they should annex the group. So far they have not interfered with our work, but we know not how soon they may. I saw it stated somewhere that they have