

Christians. Superstition is fast losing its power over the natives. We had an example of this at the time of our visit. We were greatly in need of yams, which were all under *tabu*. An application was made to the chief priest to know if anything could be done for us. After much hesitation, he agreed to remove the *tabu* for one day on the receipt of a certain amount of property, which we were glad to give. The time is not far distant when any breach of the *tabu* would have cost a man his life. The time to favour this dark-hearted people draws nigh.

We next visited the large harbour at the north-west end of Ifate. There are a few white settlers at this place. They have recently bought up most of the land around the harbour. The settlers were preparing the land for cultivation. Two vessels were absent at the time of our visit, in search of natives. The cultivation of the land about the harbour will add to the healthiness of the place. At the request of the natives, three Rarotongan teachers were stationed at this harbour. Two of them were settled on the main land, and the third on a small island which forms the north side of the harbour. The natives were also most urgent for a missionary. They seemed to have an idea that his presence would be beneficial to them in the event of collisions arising between them and the settlers, which is likely to be the case. I trust that we will be able to settle a missionary at this important station next season.

As we were leaving Havannah harbour, on 29th June, we were met by the "Jason" coming in. The wind was light, and both vessels were within speaking distance of each other for some time. She had 98 natives on board for the Queensland market. As we were passing, a number of the natives climbed up the rigging of the "Jason" and sang a plaintive song of their own island. There was a native of Ambrym on board of the "Dayspring," and he told me, after we parted, that these men were his countrymen, and had sung to attract his attention, as they espied him on board of our ship. They had a sad story to tell him, but by no means uncommon in these islands. A party had gone from Ambrym on a visit to the neighbouring island of Mollicolo. On their voyage home in a canoe, they were overtaken by the "Jason," which lowered a boat and captured the canoe and those on board. The canoe was then broken in order to make it unserviceable. The following are the names of the stolen natives—Wamille, Paragkatis, Paragtagkau, Perper, married men; the unmarried men were Saksok, Urunpatik, Tapi, Kailog, Masengpu, Napog, Babg. There were two others,

married men, who made their escape at the island of Apee. The natives were all from the same part of Ambrym as my informant, and one of them was a younger brother. From the unsophisticated and circumstantial manner in which the case was told, as well as from the previous character of the vessel, I have no doubt of its accuracy. The days of piracy and outrage are not yet ended in these seas.

Before leaving Ifate, I may mention that during the present month Captain Welsh, of the "Maria Douglas," died at Havannah Harbour, of arrow wounds received at Bank's group; Captain Robinson, of the "Marion Rennie," died there also, of a spear wound received at Santo; and Captain Bradley, of the "Swallow," died in his vessel at sea, of arrow wounds received at Lepers' Island.

NGUNA.

Mr. and Mrs. Milne had been ill with fever and ague, but were recruiting at the time of our arrival. Much preparatory work has been done here, and the missionary will be able henceforth to give his undivided attention to his proper work. The natives around are friendly, but do not manifest much interest in divine things. We look forward in faith and hope to brighter days for this and other islands. There were three Rarotongan teachers on Nguna at the time of our arrival. Two of them had previously arranged to settle on the small island of Pele, not more than one mile distant. They expected to occupy two stations, on opposite sides of the island. I went with them to the first station, but the people would not receive us. They told us that a Queensland vessel had been there ten days before, the Captain of which had purchased their part of the island, and that no Christian was to settle on it. They liked Christianity, they said, but were told not to receive missionaries, as they seized the land wherever they went and left the people destitute. We could not remove their fears, though they seemed friendly; and we were obliged to leave without accomplishing our object. On the following day, I visited the opposite side of the island, hoping to settle a teacher there. Our visit happened at an unfavourable time. The chief who had promised to receive a teacher was making preparations for a great feast, and, according to custom, was sacred for the time, so that he could not see us. Nothing can be done for the small island at present.

During our visit to Nguna I investigated a story which, a few months ago, went the round of the Australian papers. The Rev. Mr. Milne was charged by a man named William Irving, mate of the "Jason," with