

fifteen feet in depth, still, and calm, and clear. The bottom is of white sand, with every here and there a clump of coral, and all around these clumps the fish are playing, and darting into their holes and out again. Little blue fish, about the size of your little finger, little black fish about the size of your thumb, gold, and green, and yellow fish, from six inches to a foot in length, crabs creeping along and leaving their track behind, cuttle-fish holding on with their suckers, young sword-fish skimming along the surface; and every now and then a dolphin, with his blue jacket and white waistcoat, gets in among them, or a young shark, with his ugly mouth, pursues them, and then you see them leaping in shoals out of the water to elude him, or rushing into shallow water to escape his jaws.

Now, I must introduce you to one or two of the people; and, to be polite, let us begin with the ladies. Well, then, here is Tonna, the woman, fair, fat, and forty-five,—a perfect polyglot of a woman. She belongs to Rarotonga, knows the Samoan language; lived on Tanna for some time, lost her health and her first husband; came to Aneityum, acquired the language; went back to Samoa, and returned in two years with a new husband; was settled on Fate ten years ago, and has remained there ever since, and been a most useful teacher. She knows as much English as to be able to make herself understood, exercises a great deal of influence in the village, and is the presiding genius at births and burials. She is as remarkable for her immense size as for her knowledge of languages. A canoe sunk with her crossing the lagoon some time ago, and the poor woman has not been allowed to forget it.

Toma, her husband, is also a Rarotongan, —a most excellent man,—a capital singer, with one of those deep rich bass voices that have so much melody in them. He has taught the people music; and the natives of this village are the best singers in the New Hebrides. He is, however, scrofulous, and has been confined to his couch for more than a year. He is improving in health, and notwithstanding his illness is still very useful in the mission. He gives the texts and divisions of sermons to the elders, from which to address the people. His house is close by mine, and every morning at the dawn of day, and every evening when the longo beats, I hear his voice singing the praises of God.

Here is Galid, a teacher who came with me from Aneityum last year, and is staying at Erakor till he gets the Fate language, before he goes to some heathen part of the island; perhaps one of the most talented natives you will meet with, a perfect orator, with ready command of powerful words,

and fertile in illustration, and with the easy and graceful gestures of an untutored speaker. He is now pretty well up in years, and has long desired to be a teacher on a heathen land. Notwithstanding his years he has made great progress with the Fate language. I was in the habit of asking him, and another Aneityum teacher who came with me, occasionally to pray in church. This they did at first in their own language, of course. I was rather astonished, however, at Galid one day after we had been about three months on Fate. I asked him to pray. He commenced in Fatese, and after going on a while very correctly, was obliged to finish up in his own tongue. He has only one drawback—that he does not keep himself tidy or clean.

Here is Pomal, the chief of the village. A young man about my own age,—a very smart fellow,—pulls a good oar, and knows how to manage a boat,—is a capital hand with tools, and a good shot with a gun,—a good fisherman, and one of the best singers and speakers in the village. He spent a year in his youth at the station of a missionary in Samoa, and has greatly benefited by it. He has been most useful and attentive to me during the past season. I had some gunpowder and shot, with which I supplied him for shooting pigeons, he keeping half to himself and giving the other to me—so that we had pigeons to dinner about twice a-week, which we found a most welcome addition to our scanty fare.

During Mr. Morrison's continued illness I have been appointed to continue in his station throughout the ensuing year. I enclose you a copy of the minutes of the conference held here. As the time is so short, I shall not write you any more at present, but trust to do so more fully by the next opportunity. Mrs. Neilson, myself, and the baby are quite well at present, having had no fever and ague as yet.—Believe me, etc. THOMAS NEILSON, JUN.

#### Work in Fotuna.—Letter from Rev. Joseph Copeland.

FOTUNA, NEW HEBRIDES, MAY 14, 1868.

*My Dear Sir,*—Not much calling for notice has occurred on this island during the last six months. Our health has been good on the whole, as has also that of the natives. Food has not been so plentiful during the late summer. The weather for the most part was fine. February throughout was more like a winter month. The sky wore a deep blue appearance from day to day. This was the result, no doubt, of a hurricane, the outer circles of which brushed us on 30th January. The average minimum temperature for February was two degrees lower than in the corresponding month last year. The Mission work pre-