

rather warm days, is fine and no ardent lover could wish for more cool and beautiful nights than are common in this favored land. But notwithstanding that nature has been lavish with her favors, Tahiti is not a pleasant place in which to live. Quite the opposite to one who has been reared among the Saints of God, and one is reminded most forcibly that it is the people, and not the natural advantages of a place that make a country great, prosperous and desirable. Our mountain home, though once a desert, has more flowers and prettier gardens than Tahiti, with all her copious rains fruitful soil and genial sunshine. What wonders can be worked where there is faith and constant devotion!

Tahiti has a population of about 7,000 and there are from one to four churches in every settlement, representing five different faiths. Papeete, our headquarters, has a population of probably 2,000 natives and contains a veritable horde of office-holders of the French government which took forcible possession of the islands in 1844, though Captain Cook with uplifted hand had declared them to be his majesty's, the king of England's, in 1769. Their moral influence (the French) is bad and the public examples set by many of those high in authority are most disgusting. The sanction of immorality (by absence of law as well as individual acts) augmented by the presence of large companies of soldiers and sailors from the men of war and different trading ships, has a demoralizing effect upon missionary labor among the native people of Papeete and who are only too apt to imitate the vices rather than the virtues of those with whom they come in contact. The curse of drunkenness is deeply rooted among the people of this town and my observation leads me to believe that there are few who do not become more or less frequently intoxicated. This evil is allowed to grow without restriction, no laws being made to control it. A crowd of drunks singing and dancing (sometimes the hula-hula) in front of a police station is not an unusual occurrence. In the country villages there is not so much of it. Breweries and gin halls are not so conveniently situated. The people are lazy and in nine cases out of ten where you ask one his occupation he will answer "parahi noa," which means when literally translated, "sitting continually." The men are strong, lusty fellows capable of doing good work and which they do when necessity presses them. In carrying their food from the mountains they will often sustain a burden of from 125 to 175 lbs for many miles. The women generally attend to the household work and the men supply the family with their few necessities as in our own land. A meal for the family costs but a few cents, and they can teach the white man a lesson on economy in cooking. The firewood used by the housewife in America to simply kindle the fire is sufficient by their mode of cooking to prepare the family meal. It is done in this way: A hole is scooped in the ground in which the kindlings are placed and covered with small stones about half the size of an egg. When they have become hot the remaining embers are scraped away and the food placed upon them (fish, etc.,

being wrapped up in leaves) and the whole is then covered with a thick layer of leaves to keep in the heat and steam, and allowed to remain for an hour or so. It is then ready to be served. The preparation of a meal generally takes from two to three hours, for the simple reason they keep nothing on hand, and when they become hungry they are forced to hunt kindling wood, climb the trees for coconuts, gather herbs to flavor their foods and in fact everything necessary. They have no system whatever and keep nothing prepared for future wants. Consequently they are very often in rather straightened circumstances and compelled to live on half fare. What! you ask, live on half fare in a land so fertile and blest with the copious rains of heaven? Yes; live on half fare and go to bed with a empty stomach, where with a little thought, and less work, everything to sustain life might be had within a few rods of the doorstep. I have had my enduring qualities tested once or twice and am ready to candidly confess that a native can go without anything to eat for a longer period than anyone I ever saw. At one time when Brother Cannon and I were in the country living on half fare, he awoke one morning from a fairyland dream in which he thought he ate a good meal, to find his shirt ripped at the back almost from top to bottom and which his gaunt condition made quite inexplicable. That imagination is the stepping stone to reality, at least for the time being, is herein fully demonstrated.

When partaking of their humble meal they squat on the ground and eat with their fingers, generally first playfully rolling and moulding it in their hands, and constantly dipping their fingers into a sort of sauce which is conveyed into the mouth by a violent suction and which sounds, as near as I can convey it on paper, like z z z o-o-o if you pronounce it with an inward motion of the breath. It always reminds me of the dude, who, after smacking his lips over a dish of ice cream, with a two-for-a-nickle smile, said to his intended, "It's good Sal, go buy you some." They retire to rest at dark and arise at daybreak, or as it is termed in their tongue "feracrao," (the time when it is light enough to see flies flying.) They bathe frequently and as a general rule keep their bodies clean, though one not infrequently meets with disagreeable effluvia, such as is noticed in coming in contact with our Indians.

The native house is made of bamboo canes, the roof of carefully arranged long, tough leaves which keep out the wet as well as shingles, and grass resembling our wild bay is spread on the ground for a floor. They are cool and dry but in a couple of years or so begin to look like old forsaken chicken coops.

The people are naturally sociable and hospitable though the deceptions so often practiced upon them have made them rather shy of foreigners. When we are received they give us the very best they have and spare no pains to make us comfortable and will even go out and borrow beds, etc., that our stay may be a pleasant one. Near friends and relatives salute with a kiss and others by shaking hands and we are spared the ordeal of nose rubbing

which is customary in New Zealand. When one wishes to leave he tells the occupants to sit or remain where they are. They then ask him if he is going. He replies in the affirmative and they tell him to go which to the stranger at first sounds rather odd, but when one reflects a little it seems to be much more sensible than pressing one to remain with a hope-you-don't smile as is quite customary in our country. Their only social amusement is singing, and every Sunday and sometimes several times during the week our neighbors squat down in a circle under a tree, rum flows freely, song follows song, and peal after peal of silvery laughter is borne on the balmy air. A more noisy or jolly crowd is seldom seen. This is continued all day and in some cases for three or four days at a stretch, barely stopping for meals and sleep, which is another proof of their enduring powers.

Intelligently they are yet far behind the civilized races, have not much executive ability, while system and order are almost unknown. They have very peculiar ways of reasoning sometimes, and we are continually asked many curious questions. On exhibiting a photograph of our newly completed Temple I was asked by a convert why the Church did not build one like that here in Tahiti. "All the people will then join the Church," said he. Another wanted to know why Queen Victoria did not come to visit them and when told she ruled over ten thousand islands, he said "It would be good to visit all the people." They have no idea of number and even forget their ages. One asked where money came from and upon learning it was taken from the earth, wanted to know if it was planted and grew. Their language is pleasing to the ear being much softer than our own. Its construction is simple and there are but few changes in the conjugation of the verb, though the lack of proper text books makes the task of learning to speak somewhat difficult. The pronunciation is phonetic. To commence on the Bible, the most finished and difficult part of the language, is like teaching a child to read before it knows the A B C's or to climb an almost perpendicular mountain, yet such is the difficulty we have to encounter, and I am happy to say we have succeeded in climbing some few steps up the mountain where we can get our heads above the tangled brushwood and see where we are at.

Many amusing incidents might be told at our expense, of our endeavors to make ourselves understood. While holding consultation near the beach the first day of our arrival some friends brought a couple of baskets of bananas. After partaking freely we desired to thank them but did not know how. Having picked up a few words I attempted to tell them they were very good, thinking they would draw the inference that we were thankful, but unknowingly said they were *not* very good. On another occasion several of the boys were swimming in a canyon stream near by when several young ladies came along and sat on the shore to watch them in their sport. They endeavored to politely invite them to go away but instead told them to come nearer.

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