

John Williams, "A Narrative of
Missionary Enterprises in the
South Sea Islands," John Snow,
London, 1837, pp 326 - 325.

CHAPTER XIX.

Sail for the Navigators—Fauca expresses his fears about Tamafainga—
Reach Savaii—Astonishment of the Natives at seeing Europeans—Tama-
fainga killed—Character of Fauca—Intercourse with the Natives—Most
favourable Reception — The War — Malietoa — The Author's narrow
Escape.

WE now again bent our course for the Navigators or Samoa Islands. Fauca, the chief, was in high spirits, from the prospect of speedily seeing his home, from which he had been so long absent; yet there appeared an expression of great anxiety in his countenance. We had not been long at sea, when he came and sat himself down by my side, and said that he had been thinking of the great work before us, and although he had no doubt but that the chiefs would gladly receive us, and the common people all readily attend to Christian instruction, yet there was a person there, called Tamafainga, and if *he* opposed us, he feared that our progress would be impeded. I asked him who this Tamafainga was; when he informed me that he was the man in whom the *spirit* of the gods dwelt; that he was the terror of all the inhabitants; and that, if he forbade it, the people universally would be afraid to place themselves under our instruction. This was rather discouraging information; we had, however, no alternative but to

proceed, looking to God alone for guidance, protection, and success. We glided pleasantly along for some little time, with a fair wind; but it soon became adverse, and we encountered, for forty-eight hours, a most furious storm, which rent our sails, and crippled us exceedingly. An influenza also broke out among our people, which laid aside nearly all on board; and it was not until the seventh day after leaving Lefuga, in the month of August, 1830, that the cloud-capped mountains of the beautiful island of Savaii, which is the largest of the Navigators group, were descried. As the wind still blew furiously, and all our people were ill, we determined, if possible, to find an anchorage, and ran to the leeward side of the island for the purpose; but could not succeed. As soon, however, as we neared the shore, a number of natives came off to us in their canoes, of whom Fauea asked a variety of questions, to all of which he received satisfactory answers. At length, with a tremulous voice, as if afraid to hear the reply, he said, "And where is *Tamafainga*?" "Oh!" shouted the people, with evident delight, "he is dead, he is dead! He was killed only about ten or twelve days ago!" Frantic with joy at this unexpected intelligence, Fauea leaped about the vessel, and ran towards me, shouting, "*Ua mate le Devolo, ua mate le Devolo*;" "The devil is dead, the devil is dead! our work is done: the devil is dead!!" Astonished at this singular exclamation, I inquired what he meant; when he replied, "The

obstacle we dreaded is removed : Tamafainga is dead ; they have killed him : the people now will all receive the *lotu*." On hearing this we could not be otherwise than deeply affected with the seasonable interposition of a gracious providence ; and we were encouraged to hope that the time to favour the people, yea, the set time was come. And here appears to me the most remarkable feature in this providence. Had this individual been put to death a month or two prior to my arrival, time would have been afforded for the chiefs of the various districts and islands to have met, and nominated a successor, who, from the nature of his office, would of necessity have opposed our designs ; but as he had been killed only a few days, the time had not been sufficient to convene a meeting, and consequently there was no person in possession of that important office.

From this intercourse we were convinced that Fauea was really a chief ; for his countrymen addressed him as such, the common people kissed his hands, and the chiefs saluted him by rubbing noses.


Finding ourselves sixty or eighty miles to leeward of the residence of Malietoa, the principal chief of the settlement which we intended to make our head-quarters, we had to beat against a very strong wind ; and on Sabbath-day, being thoroughly exhausted, our people all ill, and our sails much torn, we determined, if possible, to find an anchorage ; and, for that purpose, sailed into several bays, but

without success. At length we thought we had succeeded, and dropped our anchor, hoping to enjoy a quiet night, to rest ourselves and our sick people, and after employing a day or two in repairing the damages which the vessel had sustained in the gale, to prosecute our voyage. As soon as the anchor was dropped a number of natives came off to us, bringing with them females, and articles for barter. Fauea informed them that, as ours was *e vaa lotu*, a praying ship, women would not be received; and that, as it was *le aso sa*, a sacred day, they must bring off food, and other articles for sale, in the morning. This was to them extraordinary information. Fauea, however, gave them to understand who we were, and what was the object of our visit; and having gathered them in a circle around him, on the quarter-deck of our little ship, he informed them of the number of islands which had become Christian, naming Tahiti, Rarotonga, Tongatabu, and others; and then specified some of the advantages which the inhabitants of those islands were deriving from the introduction of this new religion;—to all which they listened with great interest, and expressed considerable pleasure at the prospect of being instructed, especially if by so doing an end would be put to their fearful wars. “Can the religion of these wonderful *papalangis** be any thing but wise and good?” said our friend to his naked countrymen, who by this time had filled the deck, and who, with outstretched necks and gaping

* Foreigners.

mouths, were eagerly catching the words as they fell from his lips: "Let us look at *them*, and then look at *ourselves*; their heads are covered, while ours are exposed to the heat of the sun and the wet of the rain; their bodies are clothed all over with beautiful cloth, while we have nothing but a bandage of leaves around our waist; they have clothes upon their very feet, while ours are like the dogs';—and then look at their axes, their scissors, and their other property, how rich they are!" They all appeared to understand and appreciate this reasoning, and gazed on us with great interest and surprise. Some of them then began to examine the different parts of our dress, when, not meeting with any repulse, one pulled off my shoe. Startled at the appearance of the foot with the stocking on, he whispered to Fauea, "What extraordinary people these *papalangis* are; they have no toes as we have!" "Oh!" said our facetious friend, "did I not tell you that they had clothes upon their feet? feel them, and you will find that they have toes as well as ourselves." On finding out the secret, he was exceedingly delighted, and began chattering away to his countrymen about the wonderful discovery he had made. All of them came round us, and in a moment the other shoe was off, and both my own feet and those of my excellent brother underwent a thorough examination.

After coming to an anchor, we had sent the teachers, their wives and families, with all our sick people on shore. The chief of the bay received



them with kindness, and supplied them with some food. A crowd, greater than that which surrounded *us*, collected about *them*, and the wife of Fauea was equally diligent with her husband in describing to the natives the wonders she had seen, and the value of the religion now brought to their islands. When the food was spread out, she stood up herself, and asked a blessing in an audible voice, in the presence of the assembled multitude. In the midst of all this interesting work, our vessel dragged her anchor, and we were driven to sea, with about forty fathoms of chain out, so that we were compelled, most reluctantly, to send the boat immediately and bring our people off again. After several hours of hard labour, we succeeded in hoisting in both chain and anchor.

As the wind moderated during the night, we made considerable progress, and on Tuesday morning we found ourselves in the straits, between two of the largest and most beautiful islands we had yet beheld, having on the one side Savaii, being two hundred and fifty miles in circumference, and on the other Upolu, which is about two hundred. At the mouth of the straits, which are six or eight miles wide, are two small islands. One of these, called Aborima, is a huge rock, about two miles in circumference, and two or three hundred feet in height; the other, a beautiful little spot, called Manono, is the residence of chiefs and distinguished persons. It is exceedingly fertile, and clothed with the richest verdure; but as I propose to give a geographical description

of all the islands of this group in the account of my next voyage, I shall abstain from further remarks on that subject in this part of the narrative.

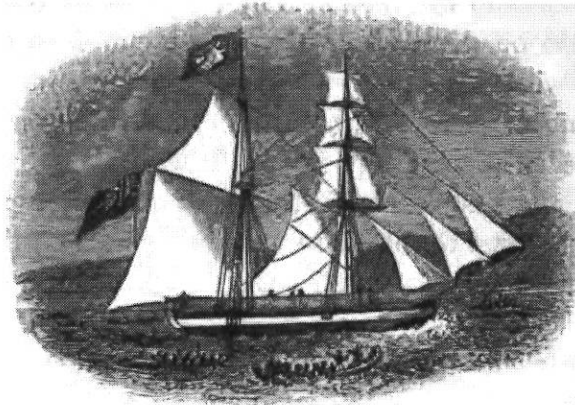
By ten o'clock we reached the settlement of Sapapalii, where we intended to commence our labours, and to which Fauea belonged. In all our conversations with that individual, we were impressed with his intelligence, shrewdness, and good sense, but never more so than on the morning we arrived at the place of our destination, when he led us to a private part of the vessel, and requested us to desire the teachers not to commence their labours among his countrymen by condemning their canoe races, their dances, and other amusements, to which they were much attached, lest, in the very onset, they should conceive a dislike to the religion which imposed such restraints. "Tell them," said he, "to be diligent in teaching the people, to make them *wise*, and then their hearts will be afraid, and they themselves will put away that which is evil. Let the 'Word' prevail, and get a firm hold upon them, and then we may with safety adopt measures, which at first would prove injurious." Thus we were constrained to admire the goodness of God, in providentially bringing to us an individual whose character and connexions so admirably fitted him to advance the objects we had in view.

Our vessel was soon surrounded by canoes, and the deck crowded with natives, who were so agile, that they climbed, like monkeys, over our boarding

nettings, although these were ten feet in depth. At length we welcomed on board *Tamalelangi*, son of the skies, the brother of Malietoa, the principal chief of Sapapalii, and relative of Fauea. After the usual salutations, we requested Fauea to state to his relative the object of our visit, and also our wish immediately to land our people, with their wives and families, many of whom were suffering severely from long confinement in the vessel. A consultation was then held by the chiefs as to what should be done, when it was determined to send forthwith a messenger to Upolu, the seat of war, to inform Malietoa of our arrival, and to request his presence as soon as possible. It was also arranged that the teachers and Fauea should accompany *Tamalelangi* to the shore, and return on the following morning, if every thing was favourable, for their families and property. A canoe was accordingly despatched to Upolu for Malietoa, and the teachers accompanied his brother to the settlement. The pleasing prospect of accomplishing the object of our voyage excited feelings of the liveliest gratitude, and we followed our friends with fervent prayer that God would graciously allow us to realize all the bright anticipations, which the occurrences of that eventful day had led us to indulge.

An interesting incident occurred in the course of the day, which gave us rather an exalted idea of the character of the people. *Tamalelangi*, and his brother, not knowing who we were, had brought off some pigs, bananas, and cocoa-nuts for sale; but,

on seeing his relative Fauea, and on being informed of the kindness he had received from us, and the object of our visit, he ordered the pigs, with every thing in his canoes, to be arranged on the deck, and then presenting them to us, stated, that had they known us, they should not have brought off any thing for sale ; and that in the morning they would bring a more abundant supply. Every canoe around the ship followed his example.



Our wishes were realized, and a full reward for all our perplexity, anxiety, and toil was granted, when, early on the following morning, the teachers returned from the shore, accompanied by the noble young chief, and about fifty canoes. They gave us the most flattering account of their reception, and seemed elated beyond measure with the prospect of success. In about two hours, the eight teachers, five women, and ten children, took their property with them, and left the vessel grateful and rejoicing. The poor heathen were as much delighted as them-

selves. Thus auspiciously, in the month of August, 1830, was this important mission commenced.

As we were expecting Malietoa from Upolu, we could not accompany the teachers, but promised to come on shore, either in the evening or on the following morning. While we were engaged in lading the canoes, our attention was arrested, by observing the mountains on the opposite shore enveloped in flames and smoke; and when we inquired the cause of it, were informed, that a battle had been fought that very morning, and that the flames which we saw were consuming the houses, the plantations, and the bodies of the women, children, and infirm people who had fallen into the hands of their sanguinary conquerors. Thus, while we were landing the messengers of the Gospel of peace on the one shore, the flames of a devastating war were blazing on the opposite; and under these striking circumstances was this interesting mission commenced.

This disastrous war was occasioned by the death of Tamafainga; for although all parties heartily rejoiced at the event, yet, as he was related to the most influential families in the islands, they were bound, by the custom of the country, to avenge it. Several skirmishes had already taken place, and a general and terrible encounter was expected in a few days. It appeared that the people of Upolu, wearied with the outrages and oppressions of this tyrannical monster, whose rapacious grasp neither wives, daughters, nor property escaped, who had

power of life and death, and who was actually worshipped as a god, had waylaid and murdered him.

About four o'clock in the afternoon, in a heavy shower of rain, the celebrated old chieftain *Mali-toa* arrived. He appeared about sixty-five years of age, stout, active, and of commanding aspect. *Fauea* saluted him with the greatest possible respect, bowing sufficiently low to kiss his feet, and making his child kiss even the soles of his feet. He was immediately invited into the cabin; and having no clothing except the girdle of *ti* leaves, worn by the people generally, and being excessively cold and wet, we gave him a large piece of Tahitian cloth, in which he wrapped himself, and with which he appeared much pleased. We then stated our object to him. With this he professed to be highly delighted, and said that he had heard of the *lotu*, and being desirous of instruction, was truly glad that we had come to impart it. We expressed our deep regret at finding him engaged in so sanguinary a war, and inquired whether these differences could not be settled amicably, and the dreadful contest terminated. He replied, that as a person related to himself, and to all the principal chiefs, had been killed, they must avenge his death; and that if he left the war unfinished, and his enemies unsubdued, he should be degraded in the estimation of his countrymen as long as he lived; but he promised that he would take care there should be no more wars after the present; and that as soon as it was terminated he

would come and place himself under the instruction of the teachers. He informed us that he had met the enemy early in the morning, when an encounter ensued, in which he drove the opposing party into the mountains, burnt their houses, and desolated their plantations, the destructive blaze of which we had seen, while, assisted by Tamalelangi, we were landing the Missionaries on the opposite shore. How differently were these two brothers employed at the same moment—the one, with his ferocious warriors dealing misery and destruction upon the objects of their savage vengeance—the other, with his delighted people, conveying to their shores, with expressions of frantic joy, those who would teach them the principles, and impart to them the blessings, of the Gospel of peace! We advanced every argument we could command to induce the old chieftain to make peace; but he persisted in declaring that he could not do otherwise than prosecute the war until he had conquered his enemies. We then made him a present of two strings of large blue beads, which the natives prize above every other article, an axe, a chisel, a knife, and some Tahitian cloth, after which he took his leave, promising to come off in the morning, with his largest and best canoe, to convey us on shore.

While Malietoa was on board, a circumstance occurred, which, from that moment to the present, I have never thought of but with mingled feelings of horror and gratitude. The natives, heathen-like, had surrounded our vessel, with great clamour,

and, climbing over the boarding-nettings, very soon filled the ship. This had excited in the young man I had as captain, some apprehension, and, unknown to me, he loaded a small brass blunderbuss with eight bullets, and returned it to its usual place. The old chief perceiving this weapon, and thinking it would materially assist him in the conquest of his enemies, took it down, and began to examine it. He cocked it, with its muzzle directed towards myself, and was just about to pull the trigger, when John Wright, our interpreter, said, "Stop, perhaps it is loaded." At this moment the captain rushed from the deck into the cabin, and exclaimed, "Oh, Sir, you have nearly been blown to atoms! why did you let the chief touch that blunderbuss? I have just loaded it with eight bullets!" Thus have I been preserved from dangers and from death, by sea and by land, some designed and some otherwise: but both from the one and the other has a gracious Providence protected me.

During the night our vessel was drifted by the current to a distance from the settlement so considerable, that in the morning we were entirely out of sight, and Malietoa could not, in consequence, perform his promise of fetching us. Supposing the distance not above ten or twelve miles, and it being a dead calm, we determined to go on shore in our own boat. But we erred in our estimate; and although we left the vessel at between nine and ten o'clock in the morning, it was past eight in the evening when we landed. Providentially,

it remained calm until we were within two or three miles of the shore, or we could not have reached it, as all our crew were ill. Mr. Barff and myself were compelled to tug at the oar during several hours; besides which, in the severe gale we had encountered, something had fallen upon the boat, and made her so leaky, that it was with difficulty we could keep her above water. Being seen from the shore before sunset, Malietoa despatched a canoe to our assistance, which conducted us to the landing-place. An immense crowd had assembled to witness, I believe, the very first Englishmen who set foot upon their shores. What an advantage it would have been to the pagan aborigines of every country, if the first civilized beings by whom they were visited, had gone on the same errand of mercy, and conveyed to them the same blessings which it was our object to impart to this interesting people!

The scene which presented itself on our landing was unique, and most remarkable. The natives had kindled a large fire to serve as a beacon, and multitudes had supplied themselves with torches of dry cocoa-nut, and other leaves, to conduct us to the chief's dwelling. A passage was opened for us through the dense crowd, who were kept in order by a sort of native police, armed with spears and clubs, and stationed there for the purpose; and though we compassionated the unlucky sufferers, we were not a little amused to witness the severe blows which were occasionally dealt out by these

officials upon the thick craniums of those who transgressed their orders. In the meantime, some were busily employed in supplying the fire, some in conveying various articles from the boat, others in carrying them to our lodgings, whilst a crowd, anxious to testify their good feeling, as soon as orders were given, rushed into the water to haul up the boat. The majority, however, had enough to do to gaze upon the wonderful strangers, and for this purpose they climbed the cocoa-nut and other trees, upon the trunks and branches of which they were seen in clusters, by the red glare of the fire and the torches, peeping with glistening eyes and wondering look from amongst the rich dark foliage which surrounded them.

In these circumstances we proceeded to pay our respects to Malietoa. Mr. Barff and myself had each a guard of honour, nor did we meet again until we arrived at the chief's residence. The natives vied with each other to show us every possible attention, some by carrying flambeaux, while others with their formidable weapons kept all intruders at a respectful distance. As we were walking along, having intimated to the young chief that I was exceedingly fatigued from labouring the whole of the day in the boat, he uttered something to his people, and in an instant a number of stout fellows seized me, some by my legs, and others by my arms, one placing his hand under my body, another, unable to obtain so large a space, poking a finger against me, and thus, sprawling at full length upon their extended arms and hands, I was carried a distance

of half a mile, and deposited safely and carefully in the presence of the chief and his principal wife, who, seated on a fine mat, received us with all the etiquette of heathen royalty. A beautiful mat having been spread for us, we squatted down upon it, and stated to his majesty that we had not come to transact business with him then, but simply to pay our respects before we retired to rest. He expressed himself pleased to see us, gave us a cordial welcome to the shores of Savaii, and requested that we would take up our abode at his house; but, as our people were so unwell, and our stay would be short, we begged to be allowed, while we remained, to reside with them. On going from the house of Malietoa to that allotted by his brother for the residence of the teachers, we passed a dancing-house, in which a number of performers were entertaining a large company of spectators. On looking in, we observed two persons drumming on an instrument formed of a mat wound tight round a framework of reeds, and six young men, and two young women, jumping about with great violence, and making motions with their hands and feet in time with the drummers, while others contributed to the rude harmony by singing a song in honour of the arrival of "the two great English chiefs." We saw nothing bordering upon indecency in the performance, which, however, required so much exertion, that the bodies of both the males and females were streaming with perspiration.

On arriving at the teachers' residence, we were

grieved to find most of them suffering from influenza. Two of these we bled, and administered to others such medicines as we thought would afford them relief. They were delighted with the treatment they had received from the people generally, and with the circumstance that although their property had been distributed in many different canoes, and conveyed from them by various hands, not a single article was missing. At first, indeed, the teachers had endured considerable apprehension about their children, some of whom were not brought to them until several hours after their arrival. Upon inquiry, however, they found that those natives who had been so fortunate as to obtain a child to bring on shore, instead of carrying it direct to its parents, first took it to their own residence, killed a pig, prepared an oven of food, gave the child a thorough good "feeding" of the best they could procure, and having kept it as long as they dared, they brought it to the anxious parents. All this was most delightful intelligence, and our hearts must have been insensible indeed, if it had not excited feelings of the liveliest gratitude.

The teachers' wives prepared for us a cup of tea, the very first ever made on the island of Savaii, and after family prayer, they screened off an apartment with native cloth, where we stretched our weary limbs upon our mats, and, using a bundle of dried grass for a pillow, closed our eyes in sleep, thankful to God for having prospered our way far beyond our most sanguine expectations.

CHAPTER XX.

An interesting Meeting—Interchange of Presents—Ceremonies observed on the occasion—A display of noble feeling between the two Brothers—A newly purchased Bride—Marriage Ceremony—Female Degradation—Matetau—His Person—His desire for a Missionary—Remarks—Fauca's Character.

MALIETOA, being anxious that four of the teachers should take up their abode with him, had sent repeated messages on the preceding day to that effect; to which our people replied, that as we were expected on shore very shortly, they wished to defer a removal until we arrived. On being informed of this, we determined to place four of the teachers under his care, and to give the others in charge to his brother, who brought them on shore. Having made this arrangement, we thought it advisable to divide the present we intended to make into two equal parts: the one for the elder, the other for the younger brother. This consisted of one red and one white shirt, six or eight yards of English print, three axes, three hatchets, a few strings of sky blue-beads, some knives, two or three pairs of scissors, a few small looking-glasses, hammers, chisels, gimlets, fish-hooks, and some nails. Every thing being prepared, we proceeded to the chief's large dancing-house, where we found a great concourse of people waiting to witness this

in the magnitude of his preparations. We visited the young woman upon whose account these arrangements were made. She appeared about nineteen years of age, of fine person, handsome features, and agreeable manners. A pleasing pensiveness was apparent in her looks and general deportment; for the prospect of the marriage feast appeared to have excited in her mind feelings the opposite of those generally evinced by the animated countenances of English ladies, on the eve of keeping the marriage festival.

Polygamy prevailed to a great degree in the whole of the Friendly Islands: and in order to overcome the evil, and show his people a good example, this man of master mind put away all his wives, and remained single for a considerable time; and when the desired effect was produced, he selected one to whom he was publicly married. He has maintained a most decided and consistent profession of Christianity, ever since he embraced it, and at the present moment is one of the best and most efficient local preachers in the mission. But the last, though not the least display of noble-mindedness and Christian principle, was the circumstance of his emancipating all his slaves. This he did, in consequence of having heard from the *Missionaries that slavery was inconsistent with Christianity*. I have been the more minute in these observations, because I admire the man, or rather, the grace of God in him.