

Enclosure.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS.

MY LORD,—

H.M.S. "Goldfinch," Suva, Fiji, 3rd June, 1891.

I have the honour to report that I left Rarotonga at 5.45 p.m. on the 29th April, having embarked Mr. Frederick J. Moss, the British Resident for the Cook group.

2. The course was shaped for Mangaia, the windward island of the group. On getting into open found a very heavy swell from eastward, with fresh breeze from east to east-north-east.

3. On the 30th, weather thick, with frequent rain-squalls. Sun obscured during whole day, so that no observations for latitude or longitude were obtained, and I eased engines, thinking it possible ship might run past Mangaia. The weather cleared on the evening of the 30th, and on the 1st May we found by observation that ship had set forty miles southward since 6 p.m. on the 29th—a most astonishing result of an easterly wind. Mangaia was sighted during the afternoon of the 1st, and I lay off and on under sail for the night.

4. The British Resident landed on the morning of the 2nd, and held a general meeting of the people, with the result of which he was much pleased. There is nothing to add to the remarks in the sailing-directions about Mangaia. The people appeared healthy, prosperous, and happy. The scene from the ship as we steamed up to the reef was one of great beauty. I left Mangaia at 5 p.m. on the 2nd May, for Mauki. The weather had entirely broken, and a very light easterly breeze was experienced.

5. Mauki was reached on the afternoon of the 3rd at about 3 p.m., and it was only after firing guns and blowing our whistle that we could see any indication of the island being inhabited, the village being at least a mile and a half from the landing. There is nothing to add to the remarks in the sailing-directions about Mauki.

6. The Resident landed at 3.20, and re-embarked at 6 p.m., having held a satisfactory meeting of the people. I lay-to off Mauki until 3 a.m. of the 4th, and then made sail for Mitiero, reaching there at 9 a.m. The Resident landed, and called a meeting, which, like the others, was very satisfactory. The Island of Mitiero was suffering from the effects of a hurricane of past season, and the people were badly off, and were busy repairing their houses, &c.

7. I left Mitiero at noon on the 4th, and arrived off Atiu at 5.10 p.m. of same day. The village being some distance from landing, I landed, myself, to see the Arikis and to manage a meeting next day for the Resident. Here the people, having more time, collected presents of fruit, pigs, and vegetables; and in return I invited them to visit the ship, which they appreciated very much, coming off in hundreds, and taking the greatest interest in everything we had to show them. An epidemic of dysentery visited the island a few months previously, and over seventy lives were lost. A number of people here looked unhealthy, especially the children.

8. I left Atiu at 5 p.m. on the 5th, and arrived at Aitutaki at 2.25 p.m. on the 6th. The Resident landed, and, having satisfactorily concluded his business, I determined to leave for Rarotonga that night, and not to wait until the following day, as had previously been arranged. My reasons for cutting short the visit were, glass showed signs of a change, and I had only 20 tons of coal left, which, if a fresh southerly breeze had sprung up, would have left me in an awkward predicament. Leaving Aitutaki at 7 p.m. on the 6th, reached Rarotonga on the 8th, at 7 p.m., and disembarked the British Resident. At 9.30 I proceeded into Avatiu Harbour, and secured ship to await arrival of schooner with coal.

9. On the 11th the schooner "Hausman," with coal, came into harbour after a passage of twenty-one days from Auckland, and having a large cargo of sundries and lumber to discharge. This took them until Saturday, the 16th, as they could not get the natives to work, the presence of one of Her Majesty's ships being sufficient excuse for a holiday. Accordingly, I commenced coaling on Monday, the 18th, and on Tuesday coaling was impracticable for part of the day on account of the very heavy rain. In the afternoon, weather looking very dirty, and glass falling, I stopped coaling and got ready to clear out of the harbour; but in the evening the wind shifted to south-east, off the land, and after some more heavy rain weather quite cleared up, and we completed coaling on Wednesday morning, and in the afternoon prepared for sea, and left the harbour on Thursday morning, the 20th. I then steamed round the island and made a running survey.

10. The reception by the natives of Her Majesty's ship under my command was one that will not be forgotten by an officer or man of the ship. Kindness can hardly express their treatment of us: from the moment of our arrival until we left we were overwhelmed with presents of fruit, fowls, pigs, and vegetables. From Mr. Exham, the late British Consul, we experienced the greatest assistance in mooring, he acting as interpreter. I may mention that Mr. Exham kindly lent me a large whaleboat suitable for landing on reefs while visiting the group, for which purpose our boats are almost useless.

11. I visited the Arikis, three in number—Makea, of Avarua and Avatiu; Pa, of Ngatangia, Mitivera, and Titikaveka; and Tinomona, of Arorangi—and invited them and their people to visit the ship, arranging separate days. This they did in state, Makea coming on Tuesday, the 12th, with all her people, and boatloads of fruit, vegetables, pigs, and fowls. At least four hundred people must have come off—a very pretty scene.

(a.) On the evening of the 13th I gave a dance on board to the Arikis and principal natives of Avarua and Avatiu, and, if one can believe all they said of their entertainment, I may flatter myself that I have been in some way instrumental in fostering the loyal and kindly feeling the natives have for the British flag.

(b.) On the 14th, Pa, Ariki of Ngatangia, Mitivera, and Titikaveka, visited the ship, coming in state with all her people, and loaded with presents of coffee, fruit, &c.

(c.) On the 15th, Tinomona, Ariki of Arorangi, visited the ship with all the people, as the others, overwhelming us with presents, among which a bullock. All of them expressed the most loyal and