

expected to have such menial things done for him. As Woodford wrote in 1884, he ' . . . kept getting me to light his pipe for him'.⁴⁶

The passage on Binoka also provides an example of the manner in which Dana detrimentally tampered with Westbrook's text. In *Gods Who Die* there is an account of Binoka's mother being violently sick on board the *Falcon*. But a certain section is missing:

The pretty maids of [the Queen] looked concerned. It was scarcely expected that a woman of such royal dignity should be led to the side to discharge over the ship's rail; so, as she vomited, they caught it and threw it overboard with . . . their hands. The sight was rather repulsive. . . .⁴⁷

This statement is doubtless true. The maids would have been obliged to act as they did on account of the queen's rank.

The third and final case study is Westbrook's description of the old trading captain, Edward Rodd. This passage demonstrates that Westbrook has to be checked upon points of detail. The 'blood-thirsty Solomon Islands' was not the scene of the skirmish in which Rodd lost his left hand and his right eye. That took place in Morare Bay, New Caledonia.⁴⁸ Westbrook is correct, however, to say that Rodd was an apprentice on the mission brig *Camden* when John Williams was killed at Erromanga in the New Hebrides.⁴⁹ But Westbrook's description of Rodd can be used to show how he tended to romanticise in his writings. He gives a flattering account of Rodd who, in earlier years, was the most ruffianly of Robert Town's trading captains.⁵⁰

Further specific criticisms can be levelled at *Gods Who Die*. Nowhere does he mention there that he had children by island women⁵¹ whilst his invective against missionaries is partly the product of an embittered mind. But, more seriously, the book gives a romanticised view of a past that never could have been. The chapter on Funafuti, for example, bears no resemblance to a statement Westbrook made at the time:

If you would only bear in mind what a wretched life it is living on one of these sandbanks, no company, no amusement, no Theatres, no Bank Holidays, no beefsteak or fresh vegetables for 7 years, if sick no doctor, no news from home or friends, letters often lost or laid carelessly by, several times I have not received letters until long after written.⁵²

And over forty years later, in a letter to Dana, Westbrook said:

I have every reason to regret my wayward life, living on low-lying atolls. On these isolated one just dreams one's time away. Time flies before one is aware of it.⁵³

Westbrook deliberately falsified or omitted many of the details concerning himself for a number of reasons, such as interest in making