

have a wonderfully good and dry climate—cool and agreeable for a tropical climate. Hurricanes are rare. The wet season lasts only from December to the end of March, and has little of the close humid weather that prevail in many South Pacific islands. The natives belong to the Polynesian race, and speak nearly the same language as the Maoris of New Zealand, and possess all the qualities, good and bad, of that most amiable of dark-skinned races. The rule of the chiefs among the natives has always been absolute. Each tribe has its ariki (king or queen as the case may be,) who is really the leading matrapo, or noble. The ariki is only the first among equals, the mataiapos being the real rulers. Those holding land directly of a mataiapo are called rangatiras. There are no money rents, but an ariki receives certain definite services from the mataiapos, and, through the mataiapos, from the rangatiras. These services are all honorable; but below the rangatiras are the ungas whose work is of a menial nature, such as pig feeding, cooking, etc. There is no armed body of any kind on the islands, and crime is claimed to be almost unknown, at least on Rarotonga. A very small body of police, or rather watchmen, suffices to keep order, despite the perpetual petty quarrels in which the remnants of old jealousies still involve the natives.

Some of the islands belonging to the group were introduced to the civilized world by the great navigator, Captain James Cook, who in 1777 during his third great voyage of explorations around the world. The islands visited by him that year were Atiu and Mangaia, and the two little islets which he, (on first discovering them in 1773) called the Hervey islands, after one of the lords of the admiralty of his day. The name "Hervey" has in consequence often been applied to the whole group, but wrongly. The Cook islands is the only name by which the group is officially known. Captain Cook never visited Rarotonga, where he might easily have landed and obtained supplies; but he didn't discover that island. Those at which he touched faced him with unbroken coral reefs and surfs, through which no boats could pass; while the natives were drawn up along the shore in menacing array. At that time the natives were cannibals, and in constant warfare with each other. Generally three distinct tribes lived on each of the larger islands, and each tribe was at war with its neighbors.

In 1821, Mr. John Williams, a London society missionary, came from Raiatea, one of the society islands, to Aitutaki, and established a mission there. From that island missionary labors were extended to the other members of the group, and by 1825 nearly all had embraced Christianity as taught by the London society missionaries, and men, women and children flocked to the schools to learn reading and writing. Soon, also they began to adopt European habits, some of which were good and others bad. Among other things they made for themselves a tasteful style of European dress, from European cloth. But while they had flourished and multiplied in numbers under heathenism and in the midst of war, they soon commenced to decrease alarmingly fast under the new conditions of living. Various causes have been assigned for this. When the missionaries first came the population was estimated at 16,000.

Thus, during the seventy years which have elapsed since that time, they have dwindled down to one half of that number.

Fearful that the islands might be taken possession of by the French or Germans, the natives sought the protection of Great Britain. In 1885, Makea Takau, the ariki vaine or queen of Avarua, one of the three districts of Rarotonga, visited Auckland, New Zealand, and there saw Mr. Ballance, the minister of native affairs, who, agreeable to the queen's request, represented the situation in the Cook islands to the Imperial government. Always on hand to extend her possessions and influence, Great Britain readily responded to the request of the native queen for imperial protection, and on the 27th of October, 1888, the British flag was hoisted on the islands, which were thus placed under British protectorate. The natives were assured that neither their laws and customs then in force nor the governments of their arikis (chiefs) would in any way be interfered with. This agreement has ever since been complied with. In December, 1890, a British resident was appointed in the person of Mr. Frederick J. Moss, who, since April 1891, when he finally entered upon the duties of his office, has done a great work in behalf of the people. His office is to advise the natives, to see that no injustice is done to any one on the islands, and to protect British interest in particular. At the instance of Mr. Moss delegates were sent from the various islands to Rarotonga to frame a constitution for a contemplated federation and government of the group. The delegates met June 4th 1891, and remained in session till the 10th, when a simple constitution was adopted, leaving each island free to regulate its own affairs, but creating a federal parliament to raise a custom revenue, and see to mail services and other purely federal matters. The appointment of a chief was one of the greatest difficulties in the way of federation, but finally, after much desputation, the queen Makea Takau was elected to hold the office for life.

Under the constitution adopted Rarotonga, Mangaia and Aitutaki, send each three members to the Federal Parliament; and Atiu, Mitiaro and Mauke, who for a long time had been under one local administration, sent three more, making twelve in all. The members meet at Rarotonga, in a parliament house which was built for that purpose in 1893. The islands have in great measure laid aside their mutual jealousies, and the business of the government is now carried on without much difficulty. Public schools for teaching English and the general branches of education are also being established, and the steamer Richmond on her present trip, brought the first furniture for such a school which is about to be opened at Rarotonga. At present the only taxation is a federal import duty of five per cent ad valorem. The sale of stamps by the post office is also a source of revenue. British coin has been the only legal currency since January 1st, 1895; but the Chilean dollar is still used by everybody except the government. Originally introduced as equivalent to four shillings, this dollar has fallen in value until it is now passed for two shillings; This is caused by the fall of the price of silver of late years; the bullion value of the Chilean dollar at the present time is only one and a half

shilling. It is about twice the size and weight of the English florin, its equivalent as coin and is preferred by the natives on that account. In the Cook islands there is no definite wages class. All the Rarotonga people have land enough to supply themselves and households with food; but the land is held by the household or family and not by the individual cultivator. They have no rent to pay and work only to obtain such luxuries or enjoyments as they may desire. Those who have to pay rent are natives coming from other islands. They are also the chief workers for wages; but their number is not large. Under these conditions there is no accumulation of wealth, and consequently no reserve of capital.

Friday, January 31st. The Richmond resumed her voyage at 4:30 a. m., and when I got up on deck, at 7:30 a. m., the island of Rarotonga was only visible as a little speck against the western horizon. A number of passengers came on board at Rarotonga, among whom were the Josephite missionary Hubert Case and wife who are returning from an unsuccessful missionary trip to Rarotonga. They brought with them a little six weeks old child who was born on Rarotonga. After sailing in a southeasterly direction till noon, land was again seen ahead, which proved to be the island of Mangaia, one of the Cook islands situated about 110 miles southeast of Rarotonga. About 4 p. m. we came to a "standstill" about a quarter of a mile off the west coast of Mangaia, where the main village (Onoroa) of the island is beautifully situated in a cocoanut grove. Soon we saw a canoe with two white traders and three natives in it push through the breakers and make for the ship. The two traders came on board and remained with us nearly an hour while the natives took the mail matter to shore and then returned in company with a bigger canoe on which two heavy bales of paper was sent on shore for the London society missionary who resides on Mangaia and who has a printing press on which he prints occasional pamphlets in the native language. It seemed to require the utmost skill on the part of the natives to steer the canoe through the breakers who spent their fury on the coral reef which bounds the coast at this point. There is absolutely no consistent landing place on this island; and in stormy weather it is impossible to effect a landing on this or any other part of Mangaia. This makes trade with the island very difficult.

Mangaia, is about twenty-eight miles in circumference, is of coral formation and covered with tropical vegetation; its highest point is less than 700 feet above sea level. There are about 2000 natives, (most of whom live in three main villages, namely, Onoroa, on the west, Tamarua, on the south and Ivrua, on the east coast. The white population consists of seven persons, namely, three traders, one London society missionary and three women. Of the later, two are the wife and servant girl of the missionary and the other wife to one of the traders. The missionary church edifice, a concrete building with thatched roof, is situated on rising ground near the shore and looks quite imposing from the sea; it is said to one of the finest and largest houses of worship on the South Sea Islands. The London missionary society representa-