

MISCELLANEOUS.

Written for this Paper.

JENSON'S TRAVELS.

LETTER NO. LII.

Friday, February 28th, 1896. After enjoying a good night's rest in Mapuhi's house on Takaroa, Elder Frank Cutler and I prepared to spend the day in our little room engaged in historical labors; but soon a representative from the few Josephites on the island called on us and desired us to accompany him to the house where they hold their meetings. On our arrival there we were greeted with a nice little speech and presented with two live chickens, and two baskets of coconuts. Soon after returning to Mapuhi's house, a delegation from our own Church waited on us and conducted us to a dwelling where a number of Saints had gathered. A speech of welcome and a presentation of a small pig, a number of chickens and several baskets of coconuts were next in order. Elder Cutler responded in a little speech for both of us, having done the same in the Josephite meeting. All the food was sent to Mapuhi's house, where we, according to appointment met with half a dozen old men, three of whom had been personally acquainted with the late Elder Alvarus Hanks, but the natives on the Pacific islands seem to have no conception of dates, so we obtained only a very little information from them. At 4 p. m., we attended the regular Friday testimony meeting with the Saints, at which Elder Cutler and several natives were the speakers. Just after the meeting closed, a genuine tropical rain storm commenced and lasted nearly an hour. So violent was the descent of water from the clouds that the thought occurred to me that had the island not been based on a good solid coral rock foundation, it would surely have been washed in the ocean. In the evening Brother Mapuhi, who had been away planting trees on another part of the island, returned home, and we had a long conversation with him. He ranks as the leading business man on the Tuamotu islands; he owns three schooners and stores on nearly all the principal islands. Since the re-opening of the mission in 1892 he has given our Elders free transportation on his vessels, and provided a good home for them whenever they have stopped at Takaroa. The French officials at Tahiti call him the king of the Tuamotus. He is a half caste.

Saturday, February 29th. We spent the day gleaning historical information from all possible sources pertaining to Takaroa, and its ecclesiastical history. The island of Takaroa is about eleven miles long from southwest to northeast and five miles wide on an average. The only village on the island which is called Teavaroa covers all of a small motu containing only about thirty acres of land; this lies on the northwest side of the island on the north side of a narrow passage (through the reef) which is deep enough for smaller vessels to pass in and out. A substantial stone wharf has been built in front of the village about half way through the passage coming in from the ocean. The houses of the village are generally neat cottages built in European fashion, and some of them are very comfortable and even

stylish, Mapuhi's house being the best of them all. Nearly all the buildings are surrounded with verandas or porches, which are so essential for comfort in a tropical home. The streets are laid out regularly so as to conform to the shape of the motu; and the whole town plat is covered with a thrifty growth of beautiful coconut trees. In all matters pertaining to progress and improvements, Mapuhi is the leading spirit. The centre of the island of Takaroa is situated in latitude $14^{\circ} 27'$ south, longitude $144^{\circ} 55'$ west of Greenwich. It is about 350 miles in a straight line north-east of Tahiti, and 100 miles north-north-east of Fakarava.

Takaroa was seen by the navigator Roggewein in 1722, when Cook subsequently discovered that and the neighboring island. Takapoto he named the two King George islands; but this appellation is ignored by the French. The first Latter-day Saint Elder who preached the Gospel on Takaroa was the late Alvarus Hanks. Accompanied by a native Elder, he first arrived at the island in 1851, being sent from a conference held at Anaa in August, 1851, agreeable to the request of some of the leading men of Takaroa and Takapoto who attended said conference, and some of whom were baptized on that occasion. Elder Hanks, on his arrival, was well received by the people, and he soon baptized most of the inhabitants of both islands and organized them into branches of the Church. He made Takaroa his headquarters, and from there he made successful missionary tours to other islands. Elder Hanks left a good name behind him, and is remembered as an industrious man, who not only preached, but by example showed the natives how to make their homes comfortable and to take proper care of their animals and other property. In the first organization of the branch on Takaroa, Marere Tepo was made president. In due course of time he was excommunicated from the Church for drunkenness, and Maru succeeded him about 1870. Maru perished in the great cyclone of 1878 while on a visit to the island of Kaukura, after attending conference at Fakarava. Pehutiniui was the next president. He acted till October 9th, 1890, when Tearike, the present incumbent of the office, was appointed president at a conference held at Temarie, Anaa. During all these years, meetings were held regularly, and Church matters attended to as correctly as the natives understood them. When the Josephites came they were not received, as the natives doubted the correctness of their statements, and the Saints now rejoice that they did so, as the Takaroa branch is one of the few branches of the Church in the Tuamotus which remained firm and did not yield to the Josephite delusions. When Elders Joseph W. Damron and Thomas Jones arrived in Takaroa, November 1st, 1892, they found a branch of the Church numbering about 100 members. Its present numerical strength is 130, including children. This constitutes the great majority of the permanent residents of the island, the few others are Catholics and Josephites. The Saints are engaged in erecting one of the finest Church buildings on the Tuamotu islands. The coral rock walls were

completed in September last, and are now waiting for the roof. The building is 69 feet long by 34 wide, and 20 feet high to the square. Meetings are now held in a smaller house built in native fashion with thatched roof.

The islands and archipelagoes in the Pacific ocean are susceptible of classification into three well marked types, namely, first the atoll or lagoon island, second, the raised coral island and third the high mountainous island. Darwin, Dana and other eminent scientists have expounded the following theory of the formation of atolls and raised coral islands: During the long ages, past and gone, as the land or the traditional Pacific continent was imperceptibly sinking, "the reef building polyp raised its great bastion on the mountain flanks and kept pace with the slowly submerging mass. The combined movement ended in the formation of the great reef, an eternal movement of the mountains buried beneath the waters of the lagoon which it encloses. On the tops of the mountains, as they sank beneath the lagoon, the coral continued to build, forming the rock patches of greater or less extent characteristic of them all." The raised coral island, according to the Darwin theory, is the only atoll with a shallow lagoon gradually filled with coral debris, and the whole elevated by submarine forces until a solid island, never exceeding 100 to 200 feet at its highest point, was the result. These theories were based on the belief that the reef building polyp cannot exist at a greater depth than 120 feet, can flourish only in water of the greatest clearness and purity, and must have a solid rock foundation for its infant home. But modern geology disputes the Darwinian theory of coral formation, and a new theory has been advanced through the researches of Mr. John Murray, naturalist of the British government steamship Challenger, and strengthened by subsequent discoveries made by others. The new theory is held to meet the ascertained facts more naturally and more completely, but as I have no scientific works by me treating upon this matter, I am unable to explain the theory to the readers of the News at present.

The name atoll is of Maldivian origin. According to a book written by Honorable Frederick J. Moss, now British resident of Rarotonga, the potentate who rules over the Maldivian group, styles himself "Sultan of the Thirteen Atollons and Twelve Thousand Isles." In one sense the title is only a mild Oriental exaggeration, each consisting of a salt water lagoon and a number of islets—sometimes a very large number—strung together at irregular intervals on the narrow surface of the surrounding coral reef. The islet covered reef hems in the deep lagoon which it has cut off from the surrounding ocean. Its characteristic features are the steepness and great depth of the reef walls, and the narrowness, flatness and low level of the islets formed upon its surface. Few lagoons are less than five miles long and three or four miles broad. The majority are much larger some being of great size. Thus the lagoon of Ragirola, one of the Tuamotus, is forty-two miles long and twenty miles wide. In approaching a lagoon island, it cannot be seen from a ship's deck in the clearest weather at a greater distance than ten to twelve miles. Even then it is only the tops of