

MISCELLANEOUS.

Written for this Paper.

JENSON'S TRAVELS.

LETTER NO. XLVIII.

Thursday, January 23rd, 1896. After giving the parting hand to Elders William Gardner, John Johnson and R. Leo Bird, I boarded the little steamer Richmond, and sailed from Auckland, New Zealand, at 6:10 p. m., bound for Tahiti, Society islands. The weather was good, and the long voyage commenced under the most favorable circumstances. The course taken was a northeasterly one, across the Hauraki gulf, and we passed into the ocean proper with Cape Colville on our right, and the Great Barrier on our left. Just as we were eating supper in the cabin an alarm was sounded on deck, and thinking that a man had fallen overboard, or that something serious had happened, we all rushed on deck, when it was discovered that one of the sailors had got his hand entangled in the chain connected with the ship's rudder. The limb was badly squeezed and wounded, causing the blood to flow freely; but no bones were broken. I had a good night's rest; but felt somewhat lonesome.

Friday, January 24th. I spent my first day at sea reading, the weather being fine and the sea smooth. No sea sickness was experienced by any one on board. At noon our position was 17° 17' south latitude, and 177° 41' east longitude; the distance from Auckland was 187 and to Rarotonga 1463 geographical miles. I also became acquainted with the other passengers, of which there were only four, namely, three French pearl merchants and Mr. Edenborough, who is part owner of the steamer. The ship's crew consists of the captain (Robert G. Sutton, a congenial Scotchman,) two officers, nine sailors, three engineers, six firemen, two cooks and two stewards, making twenty-five men altogether. Adding the five passengers, we are thirty souls on board, and not a woman among us. The ship is loaded with merchandise for different islands of the Cook and Society groups. There are also five bullocks, twenty sheep, two cats and two canary birds on board. The rats, of which there are many, were not counted. The ship registers 750 tons, was built in Dundee, Scotland, about ten years ago, and has the reputation of being an excellent sea boat.

Saturday, January 25th. The weather continued fine and the sailing pleasant.

Sunday, January 26th, ditto.

Monday, January 27th, ditto.

Tuesday, 28th, ditto.

Wednesday, 29th, ditto, but the weather is getting warmer. I have spent the time on board so far reading, writing and conversing with passengers, ship's officers and the ordinary sailors, cooks, and all on Utah, the Mormons, true versus, false religion, the condition of the world, the prospects of war, and scores of other subjects; but as it was not customary to have preaching or lectures given on board the Richmond, I did not apply for the privilege of speaking publicly. The voyage has been somewhat monotonous; not a sail or vessel seen of any kind since we left

Auckland. One of the most enjoyable features of the trip has been the watching of the beautiful sunsets nearly every evening.

Thursday, January 30th. Last night we crossed the line known as the Tropic of Capricorn, and thus the beautiful morning found us watching the limits of the tropics. At noon we were in latitude 22° 26' south; longitude 160° 63' west. We crossed the 180th meridian several days ago; but the ship still keeps New Zealand time. We are now 1554 miles from Auckland, and it is 96 miles to Rarotonga; the thermometer stands at 82° F. in the shade. In the afternoon some of the sailors announced that they saw land ahead, and at 6 p. m. the mountainous heights of Rarotonga could be seen with the naked eye by the ordinary mortal. The evening was most beautiful and almost cloudless, and the bright full moon beamed upon us and upon the broad expanse of the ocean in such perfect grandeur that words fail to express the thoughts that passed through my mind in thus gazing upon the beauties of nature. The island came nearer and nearer, and its rugged mountain peaks, which in some instances attain a height of nearly 3,000 feet, seemed to possess a peculiar charm and attraction on this occasion; for hours I never tired resting my eyes upon them. Soon we saw a bright light on the west shore of the island; next we could see and hear the breakers spend their fury upon the coral reef which encircles Rarotonga, and finally, after rounding a point we cast anchor off the town of Avarua, about half a mile from the shore, on the north side of the island at 10 p. m. There is a little harbor at this place protected from the ocean by a coral reef, through which there is an opening about one hundred yards wide; but the water in the harbor is only deep enough for very small vessels; the Richmond draws too much water to go in, hence, our anchorage on the outside. Soon after anchoring a boat manned by about a dozen natives, came out, when it was decided to unload the cargo which we had on board for this island at once. A whistle, which was understood on shore, was blown, after which a number of boats were soon plying between the ship and the wharf, bringing in the goods; and this work went on most of the night. I landed in one of the first boats, and spent about three hours on shore, where I found nearly the entire population of the town, both whites and natives, gathered around the post office, anxious to receive the mail which the Richmond had just brought. And this was not to be wondered at, for it was nearly two months since the previous mail had reached the island, as the steamer did not make her usual trip in December last. I conversed with a number of people, among whom Mr. Fred J. Moss, the British resident, John J. K. Hutchin, the chief Protestant missionary in the Cook Islands, Henry Nicholas, a New Zealand Maori, who is the editor and proprietor of a little news paper called "Te Torea" Mr. Hubert Chase, a Josephite missionary, and others. By means of these conversations I obtained considerable information about the Cook islands, which I believe are very little known to the average American news-

paper reader. It was about two o'clock in the night when I returned to the ship.

The Cook islands are eight in number which lie in the Pacific Ocean between 18° and 22° south longitude and 158° and 161° west longitude. The most important, the most fertile and perhaps the most beautiful island of the group is Rarotonga, which is situated in 21° S. latitude and between 160° W. longitude. The island is of volcanic formation with mountains rising to a height of nearly 3,000 feet, clothed in forest and bush of different tropical varieties. The circuit of the island is about twenty-five miles, and a good carriage road has been made all around it. A few small openings break the coral reef surrounding the island, an advantage which has made Rarotonga the chief resort of shipping, and the centre of trade for the group. The natives are good ship and boat builders. One of their vessels, a schooner of about 100 tons, recently built entirely by the natives, has already made several visits to Auckland. All their vessels are worked by native sailors; but when they make distant voyages, a European master is engaged. A census of the inhabitants of Rarotonga was taken June 30th, 1895, which was the first regular census attempted in any one of the Cook islands. According to the returns of that census the inhabitants of Rarotonga numbered 2454 souls, namely 1,350 males and 1,104 females. Of this number 2,121 were natives of Cook islands; 186 were born in other Pacific islands, 59 in Great Britain, 24 in America, 4 in Germany, 1 in France, 2 in Norway, 8 in Portugal, 11 in China and 38 (mostly half casts) in other countries. In the matter of fruit growing, especially oranges and bananas, Rarotonga can hardly be surpassed. The native houses of the island are generally roomy and well built, and are mostly clustered together in villages which are all situated on the sea coast, on the strip of level lands which intervened between the foot of the mountains and the sea shore. The weekly newspaper (Te Torea) is published at Rarotonga by Henry Nicholas, a small four page folio printed in both English and native in parallel columns; it is highly appreciated by the natives, who take special delight in waiting for it, the editor's greatest trouble being to find space for their effusions. The other islands belonging to the group are Mangaia, lying 110 miles southeast of Rarotonga, Aitutaki, about 150 miles north of Rarotonga, Atin, Mitiaro and Manke, lying about twenty miles apart and from 100 to 120 miles northeast of Rarotonga, and the two small Hervey islands (called by the natives, Manuai and Vitake) lying between Aitutaki and Atiu.

The Cook islands are now a federation, which has a regular government, and derives a regular revenue from import duty. The population is about 8000. The imports for 1894 amounted to £22,433, and the exports to £20,665. Of the imports £13,151 were from, and of the exports £15,909 to New Zealand. The chief exports are coffee, of which a very fine quality is grown, copra (the dried coconut,) oranges, and general tropical fruits and cotton. Coffee and oranges grow very luxuriantly and without much care. Cotton, owing to low prices, has gone largely out of cultivation, though £1,700 sterling worth was shipped in 1894. Owing to their thorough natural drainage, the islands