

small schooners from Tahiti trade there occasionally for hogs and goats, which are there in great plenty. These islands, if systematically cultivated, would produce great quantities of cotton, coffee, sugar, indigo, &c. and would constitute for Englishmen one of the most profitable investments in the Pacific.

*Hervey* or *Cook's Group* consists of seven islands, all but one (Hervey Island, or Manuai) inhabited by a well-disposed and highly intelligent people, now greatly reduced in numbers by mortality, apparently caused by the adoption of European habits of clothing and living. They can all read and write and are Protestants; and they practise many useful industries, as the cultivation of coffee, cotton, arrowroot, and other products. The largest islands are Mangaia and Rarotonga, each of them being about thirty miles in circumference. The former is about 700 feet at its highest point, and is of volcanic origin. There are over 1,000 inhabitants (reduced from 4,000 in 1848). They are industrious, hospitable, and respectable in every way. They make a considerable quantity of cocoa-nut oil, arrowroot, tobacco, &c. They have an English missionary residing among them.

*Aitutaki* resembles Mangaia, but is not more than half the size, although it supports somewhere about a like number of inhabitants. It is very fertile, but the people are indolent in comparison to their neighbours, and do not produce much of anything, although their island yields abundance. Nevertheless, they manage to contribute largely to the funds of the London Missionary Society—it is reported, usually £200 per annum. Most of their time appears to be spent in attending school, so they can all read and write, and it is said that some of them are so well acquainted with the Bible as to have it nearly by heart. On the whole, they compare unfavourably with the rest of the Hervey Islanders, which may in some degree be attributed to the monotony of their existence, their laws not permitting any of them to leave their own land without special permission, which is seldom accorded. An English missionary lives among them, and exercises supreme power.

*Rarotonga* is a magnificent island, resembling in aspect Ropoa in the Marquesas. It is about 3,000 feet high, and is clothed to the very tops of the mountains with splendid vegetation. It has abundant streams, considerable tracts of sloping land, and rich alluvial valleys. There are two small harbours, not secure at all times, but sufficiently so for the most part of the year. A steam vessel might make use of them at any time. The population of this island is about 3,000; they are governed by a Queen. They are in an advanced state of civilization; one sees nothing like it in the South Pacific, not even in Tonga; and as far as concerns sobriety, decency, and quiet behaviour, they are superior to the Sandwich Islanders. Their villages are all laid out in streets; their houses are of stone and lime; they have good furniture; they dress nicely in European fabrics; they are all well-fed, happy, and prosperous. Their laws are just, and well administered; they fear God and deal hospitably and honestly by all who visit them. There is no superstition, no barbarism, no want or discontent among them. If they have a weakness, it is a fondness for intoxicating drink; but their dissipation is of a mild form, and seldom goes further than the imbibing of several pints of beer, which they manufacture from the juice of oranges and squashed up China bananas. They are industrious, and cultivate the ground assiduously when assured of a market for their produce. They also practise all manner of handicrafts: among them are good carpenters, smiths, sailmakers, stonemasons, &c. They plant cotton and coffee, and export great quantities of oranges. Besides the agent of the London Missionary Society, there are several Europeans resident upon Rarotonga, who are married to native wives; also half-castes (as they are called) from Auckland, domesticated in the same manner. They have stores, plantations, cotton-gins, and several small vessels trading round the Hervey group, and running to Tahiti and Auckland with their produce.

All the sympathies of the Rarotongans are English. They have had frequent communication with New Zealand. Paora Tuhaere, the loyal and intelligent chief of Hauraki, visited them a few years ago, with his family, in a vessel which he chartered for the purpose. Some of his near relatives who accompanied him took to themselves Rarotongan wives. The islanders of Rarotonga regard Auckland as the centre of civilization, and its people, represented by Captain Daldy and Paora Tuhaere, as their protectors and best friends. About the year 1864, they made a formal application to Her Majesty's Government, in the shape of a letter addressed to the then Governor of New Zealand, signed by the King and his chiefs of Awarua, Ngatangia, and Arorangi, which represent the whole people of Rarotonga, praying to be taken under the protection of Her Majesty or to be made subjects of Great Britain. The same feeling continues. Of course, we know that this very sensible and rational desire to become a part of the British Empire has arisen mainly from English missionary teaching; but it has been partly the result of the experience of very many of the islanders, who, having shipped as seamen on board Colonial vessels, have visited Auckland, Sydney, and even the Australian gold mines; and partly of fear of France, in consequence of the terrible (and, to speak justly, exaggerated) tales which have been circulated among the islands of the oppressions of their military system and cruel treatment of their labourers, or slaves, as it has become usual to call them, upon the plantations of "*La Terre Eugénie*." Unfortunately, no notice was taken of the petition of the Rarotongans, but the same desire animates them now; and no doubt can exist in the minds of all true friends of these islanders but that their annexation by some British colony would be to them the commencement of a new era of prosperity.

The other islands of the Hervey group, Atiu Maukè and Mitiaro, are from ten to twenty miles in circumference; they are of upheaved coral, with fertile soil. There are altogether about 1,000 inhabitants of a like disposition to those of Rarotonga. The islands are not much visited. Their products are cotton, coffee, cocoa-nut oil, fungus, Tomano wood, tobacco, and dried bananas. These islands, especially Maukè, bear great quantities of splendid ironwood; it is obtainable in long lengths, from twenty to forty feet, and even more, and from a foot to three feet in diameter. The value of this timber I believe to be very great at this time, when heavy and hard wood is so much in request for the timbers of armour-plated ships, for slides of heavy ordnance, and similar purposes. Some of this wood is so extremely heavy, that the interior portions weigh within a fraction of two ounces to the cubic inch.

Hervey Island is without permanent inhabitants; an aged American beachcomber resides upon it with his half-bred children. It is a large atoll, densely covered with cocoa-nut trees, and consists of two *cays* divided by a lagoon; it is very productive. I have seen 400 nuts on one cocoa-nut tree at this place. It is much frequented by turtle, and yields a great deal of beche-de-mer. The King of Aitutaki