

isle to another for trade in such articles as they make, and often for mere pastime. They wear fine clothing, both men and women, from across the chest to below the knee; it is of their own making from the leaf of the pandanus, blached white, and beautifully variegated, the material being dyed of various colours before being plaited. Some of these garments are many fathoms in length, and are pleasant to wear upon the skin, being soft, like coarse duck. This fine pandanus mat is no doubt the fabric so frequently alluded to by the Spanish voyagers of former times, which they believed to have been wrought in a loom, as did Lopez de Ligaspi and Juan Fernandez. Indeed, the latter speaks of islanders clad in "woven cloth."

The products of these islands are kobra, of which the natives now prepare great quantities, cocoa-nut oil, beche-de-mer, and tortoise-shell. There is no pearl oyster upon any of them.

The number of inhabitants is supposed not to exceed 12,000 or 14,000. Upon five of the islands—*i.e.*, Mille, Aur, Jaluit, Ebon, and Namurek—there are European traders, chiefly in the employment of Messrs. Godeffroy. There is also one Capella, who has lately commenced to do business for himself on a large scale, and has some stations here and in the Carolines. Some merchants of Sydney, as Captains Smith, Randall, Urie, and McDonald, have been used to resort here, as have others of no nationality, such as Captains Pease and Hayes. All have done or are doing well, but all alike keep their proceedings as secret as possible, from commercial jealousy.

About half the number of isles in this group are populous; the rest are thinly or only occasionally inhabited. Some of the smaller ones have no cocoa-nut groves, but are covered with jungles of pandanus; all, however, if in the possession of Europeans, could be rendered valuable. A trade systematically prosecuted, under the protection of a civilized State, would so develop the natural good qualities of the Marshall Islanders as to secure to them a prosperous future.

Eastward of the Marshall Group extends the great archipelago of the Carolines, covering the sea from the Radack chain to the Palaos, a distance of over 2,000 miles, and containing more than 500 islands, most of which are very little known. Some of them, especially towards the westward, are uninhabited, having been depopulated by the Spaniards for the settlement of the Ladrones. Others are immensely populous, and, with the exception of that particular group known as the Seniavinès, at the eastern end of the archipelago, and Yap, at the opposite extremity, have enjoyed very little acquaintance with civilized man.

Of the eastern isles of the Carolines, the most important is Ualan, otherwise called Kusaie or Strong Island. It is lofty, basaltic, about eighty miles in circumference, and it has two secure harbours for the largest class of vessels. It is governed by a King named Keru. There are about 1,800 inhabitants, of a light copper complexion; intelligent, in so far that they readily acquire the mechanical arts, and naturally industrious and well disposed, although to some extent demoralized by contact with the crews of whaling ships and beche-de-mer fishers, of whom this has been a great place of resort. They reject missionary teaching, and abide by their ancient usage, which is a mild form of heathenism apparently; but they keep their ceremonies very secret, and do not permit strangers to penetrate into their sacred enclosures. An agent of the American Board of Missions, named Snow, has resided among them for somewhere about thirteen years, but I believe has made no progress whatever. Much of his ill success has no doubt been due to the antagonism of Europeans domesticated among the natives, who, disliking the prospect of any change in the normal condition of things, have done their best to influence the islanders against missionary innovations. This feeling upon the part of cosmopolitan white sinners, throughout the whole Pacific, has done more to obstruct the progress of conversion than either native savagery or heathen superstition.

There are, nevertheless, some peculiarities in the character of the Strong islanders, which render them capable of civilization in a higher degree than most Polynesians. They are a people who have degenerated from what must have been in some respects a much more prosperous and enlightened state than that in which we now find them. A great part of their land is covered with ruins of the most massive description, built upon a general plan such as could only have been conceived by men of power and intelligence, acquainted with mechanical appliances for raising enormous weights and transporting huge blocks of stone considerable distances both by land and water. These works, which strike even civilized men with astonishment, could only have been effected by the labour of thousands of men working in concert and under command, and they prove, from their aspect and the evident intention of some of them, that their builders must have had, at the time of their erection, some form of settled government and system of religion. Many of their customs seem derived from some ancient civilization, as the institution of kings, high chiefs, and common people; the peculiar laws which regulate the intercourse of these castes; and the fact that the nobles are considered a sort of sacred persons, and hold meetings by night in caverns or vaults, artificially constructed in the interior of some of the great ruinous buildings. These nobles associate by means of signs and speech not known to the people. When a distinguished person dies, they make a mummy of the body, and swathe it in coloured bandages. It is watched for a whole year, a fire being kept beside it, which is never allowed to go out. They keep records by means of wooden beads and knotted cords, which they carefully preserve, and refer to when they want to tell what happened in former years. In plan and construction, their dwellings are far superior to that of other Polynesians, the timber being neatly squared. They have possessed from remote times the arts of pottery and weaving with the loom; and traditions they repeat of their ancestors point to the conclusion that they must have been a people exceedingly numerous and powerful.

The descendants of such a race cannot fail to retain within themselves the elements of progress, however obscured by ages of barbarism and by several generations of evil example of reprobate Europeans; for these islands, so remote and unvisited by English navigators as to be spoken of as almost new discoveries, were a rendezvous of the Spaniards on their way between Manila and the Main long before the days of Commodore Anson. Both upon Strong Island and Ascension, which is the next in extent at this end of the Carolines, are to be found, in the vaults and ditches of the great stone structures, cannon of an old pattern, and shot rusted out of shape. It was the fact of these relics, combined with the aspect of the immensely thick walls, which caused the officers of His Majesty's ship "Larne," following the opinion of M. Dumont D'Urville, to describe