

It would be well if a regulation were made providing that before any new building be erected or any extensive structural alteration made to an existing building the Resident Agent be notified, so that by his advice many of these evils could be prevented. I made a close inspection of many of the houses, and am firmly convinced that some sort of supervision is necessary in order to deal with existing insanitary dwellings, and to prevent their erection in the future. It might even be advisable to frame building regulations which would guide the Natives in such matters as lighting and ventilation.

Water-supply.

As at Mangaia drinking-water is derived almost entirely from rain collected from roofs in tanks of various kinds. In most months of the year a sufficient supply is obtainable from this source. A regulation should be made, however, prescribing the forms of tanks to be used, and making it compulsory to have all receptacles suitably screened to prevent the entrance of insects. At present all sorts of vessels are used for storing water, and most of the houses are surrounded by a fringe of old barrels, kerosene and biscuit tins, &c., the water in which is alive with mosquito-larvæ. In some of the settlements large concrete tanks have been provided, and in the new village of Tautu the Resident Agent is arranging to sink a well. Water for washing is obtained in part from springs.

Personal Hygiene.

It cannot be denied that with some exceptions the personal habits of the Natives leave much to be desired, and it is certain that an improvement in this respect would be rapidly followed by an improvement in the health of the community.

Clothing: Although considerable sums are spent by the Natives in the purchase of expensive silks, satins, and ribbons, the clothing made from these materials is reserved as a rule for high days and holidays, and on most days of the week the dresses of the women present a slatternly and bedraggled appearance, and are mostly the reverse of clean. On week-days also the tattered and filthy singlets and trousers of the men and the dirty garments of the children sufficiently indicate the fact that these people have no proper appreciation of the virtue of cleanliness.

Vermin: As might be expected among such people, body and other forms of lice are frequently observed. The majority of the women and girls have nits in their hair, and even a superficial search will usually reveal specimens of the head-louse. Scabies is also of frequent occurrence.

Teeth: The Natives pay little attention to their teeth, so that, unlike other coloured races, who are mostly very particular in this respect, the Maoris are not remarkable for the beauty of these useful ornaments. Dental caries is common, partly no doubt owing to the nature and mode of preparation of the food, contributed by the absolute neglect of any precautions in the way of brushing the teeth or even rinsing out the mouth after a meal.

Many of the adults suffer from *Pyorrhœa alveolaris*.

Food: The staple articles of food on the island are kumaras, taro, and arrowroot made into *poi*. These starchy foods are cooked soft, and swallowed without much previous mastication or insalivation. Meals also are taken at irregular times. It is not surprising, therefore, that dyspeptic ailments are exceedingly common. The hands are rarely washed before a meal, and much of the food is taken up by the fingers from dishes or leaves laid on the floor on which the diners sit. As at all times the Natives have the habit of expectorating freely on the floor, it is not difficult to account for the spread of many diseases.

Disposal of Excretal and other Refuse.

My remarks on this subject in my report on Mangaia sufficiently indicate the conditions prevailing at Aitutaki.

Disposal of the Dead.

The dead are buried in small cemeteries, of which there are many on the island, usually at some distance from the villages. The Aitutakians do not follow the objectionable custom common in Rarotonga of burying the dead in the immediate vicinity of dwellinghouses.

Mosquitoes.

These dangerous pests are very numerous in Aitutaki, which is not to be wondered at, considering the facilities afforded for the development of the larvæ. In view of the prevalence of elephantiasis in this island the question of reducing the numbers of the mosquitoes is a very important one. Mosquitoes breed as a rule close to the houses where the adults find their human food. They tend to be strictly local in their habits, and to abound most where they can the most likely find food, shelter, and stagnant water for themselves and their larvæ. In most cases, therefore, when mosquitoes are plentiful in a house they are being bred in tins or other vessels containing stagnant water in the vicinity of the dwelling. The idea that the insects travel or are carried by the wind from distant marshes has little evidence in its favour; as a matter of fact, directly a strong wind begins to blow mosquitoes take shelter. It is a matter of common observation that one house may swarm with mosquitoes and another a few yards distant may have comparatively few. If, therefore, all stagnant water, such as collects in empty meat-tins, broken bottles, coconut-shells, gutters, wells, pits, drains, &c., be removed from the neighbourhood of dwellinghouses, and all tanks and cisterns for collecting or storing water be screened with mosquito-proof covers, the adult mosquitoes—which must have water to drink and to lay their eggs in—soon fly away. They continue to breed, of course, in collections of water such as taro swamps and marshes which cannot be got rid of, and a few may wander into the settlements from