

These people, in building their houses, dig in the ground an oblong pit, from thirty to fifty feet long, and fifteen or twenty feet broad; over this they form a roof of wood, which they cover with turf and earth. Near each end is left a square opening, one of which is intended to admit the light, and the other is used to go in and out of the house with the assistance of a ladder, or rather upright post cut into steps. Round the sides and ends of the habitation, the families, several of which dwell together, have their separate apartments, where they sleep, and sit to work, not on benches, but in a sort of concave trench, covered with mats, so that this part of the house is kept clean and decent, but the same cannot be said of the middle of the house, which is common to all the families. Behind and over the trench they place the few effects which they possess, such as their mats, skins, and apparel. Like those of the Greenlanders, their houses are heated and lighted by lamps.

These people produce fire both by collision and attrition. In the former case they strike two stones against each other, on one of which a quantity of brimstone has been previously rubbed. The latter method is performed by means of two pieces of wood, one of which is flat, and the other is a stick of about a foot and a half in length. They press the pointed end of the stick upon the other piece of wood, whirling it nimbly round as a drill, and thus fire is quickly produced.

The natives of this island do not appear to be long-lived; it is a very rare thing to see a person who can be supposed to have arrived to sixty years of age. What their religious opinions are, or whether they have any notions respecting a superintending first cause, and a future state, have not been ascertained. They inter their dead on the tops of hills, and raise over the grave a little hillock; but if the grave be by the side of the road, a heap of stones is raised over it, and every one