

the regular and almost daily pursuits of the natives. The fish, however, are not very plentiful, and are for the most part of an inferior quality. A good many turtles are caught from time to time.— This is an island on which, by a moderate industry, an abundance of food may always be raised, but where the spontaneous productions of the earth and the ocean are much less abundant than they appear to be in the eastern groups. This may partly account for the natives being, in the estimation of the Samoans and Raratongans, niggardly and stingy with their food. They have indeed little generosity. Their feasts and presents of food among themselves are all given on the selfish, publican principle of receiving as much again.

In mechanical skill, the natives of this island, and indeed of all this group, are greatly inferior to the natives of Eastern Polynesia. Being evidently a much earlier migration than the Malays, they had brought less civilization with them, and being longer dissociated from the civilized world, they had lost more of what they originally brought. Their canoes, houses, ornaments, and weapons of war, show the least possible skill in their form and workmanship. But they are quite an improvable race, and are eager to imitate their superiors. Already their houses are assuming a greatly improved appearance. In their movements they are active and energetic; they work well at any kind of unskilled labour, and in a short time make good domestic servants. The island is divided politically into six principal districts, and each of these into about ten or twelve sub-districts; each of the sub-districts is governed by a chief. In the days of heathenism, there was a chief for each of the principal districts; but his office appears, from all we can learn, to have been more of the priestly than the kingly character, though both offices were generally combined in the same person. The power of the chiefs on this island is very limited. Ever man appears to do very much what is right in his own eyes. Formerly the men who were most distinguished as warriors, or famed as disease makers being most dreaded, possessed the greatest influence. Under the reign of heathenism, both in civil and religious matters, fear, and not love, was the grand ruling principle by which obedience was secured.

There is neither a town nor a village on the whole island. The system of cot-

tage farming is in a state of full development here. There is no large proprietor, no powerful or wealthy chief.— Every man sits proprietor of his cottage and his garden. The waste lands belong to the tribe; what each man cultivates belongs to himself. But this system, so warmly advocated by many in England, is not good as an exclusive system. Here we have no capitalists, no division of labour; every man cultivates his own garden, builds his own cottage, hews out his own canoe; every man does every thing, and hence he does nothing either fast or well. The mission stations, however, are becoming the germs of villages, and the arts of civilized life are fast springing up around them.

It is earnestly and extensively believed that the climate of the New Hebrides group is extremely unhealthy. From what I saw and heard when I visited this group in 1850, I fully concurred in this opinion at that time. And I readily admit that there are apparently good grounds for this opinion still. The French mission on Aneiteum was given up on account of the sickness of the missionaries; the sandal-wood establishment on this island was broken up partly on account of the sickness to which the men were so often subject; several of the first members of this mission suffered much from sickness; and all the Samoan and Raratongan teachers on this ground have suffered from ague and fever, and other diseases, and several of them have died in the very prime of life, in consequence of the diseases peculiar to the islands.— Still, after residing nearly two years on this island, after a calm and careful review of all these cases, and the circumstances under which they occurred, I am now fully of opinion that this is not, upon the whole, a peculiarly unhealthy group of islands. Aneiteum is perhaps as unhealthy as any island in the New Hebrides; it is certainly more unhealthy than some of them. Natives of Futuna, one of the islands nearest to this one, when they visit Aneiteum are subject to ague and fever as much as Samoans or Raratongans; yet we do not now consider this island as particularly unhealthy. This is not a climate like that of New Zealand, nor like that of Tahiti, nor even like that of New Caledonia, or the Loyalty Islands. It would be foolishness here in the extreme to tamper with the laws of health, and few could live long here as they might list with impunity;