

meaning "many islands." They are found in groups along nearly the whole of that portion of the equatorial line, and for about 30 degrees on each side of it. The archipelagos of the old world sink into insignificance, compared with this little universe of insular abodes. The navigator sails for months, in a direct line, through these beautiful spots of earth—the most recent of geological formations, and newer, in every respect, than the new world of America. They are clothed in all the beauty and freshness of youth. Here, the eye of the voyager, weary of the green expanse above and below, is refreshed by the sight of fairy scenes—the lofty mountain top, the soft hill, and the luxuriant vegetation of a tropical clime; and his senses are regaled with the odours of trees and flowers that bloom and decay in a perpetual summer. Unlike other oceans, the Pacific is a peopled solitude. These insular spots have been planted by the hand of God, across the largest ocean in the world, as if to serve as a noble bridge of stepping-stones from the old world to the new, as a highway for the nations, as resting places for the adventurous missionaries of Christianity and commerce, and it may be as little Antiochs in the ocean, from which our future St. Pauls may advance, to attack Romish superstition in South America, and vast religious structures of Asiatic idolatry, that have stood for long ages, and now enthrall hundreds of millions. The future Malay convert, having received the Gospel from the descendants of Japheth in the west, may return to disenthral the lands from which he sprang.

As the Almighty often employs outwardly insignificant means to bring about great results, so the workman whom he has employed to construct the most of these islands is the small coral animalcule. Like "the potsherds of earth," he works for one object; but the Almighty overrules his work for another and a greater. On examining a piece of coral, it is found to consist of an infinite number of small cells, each of which is a separate home for a little creature. Myriads of these insects are at work in the bosom of the ocean, secreting lime from its water, and constructing houses for themselves and their progeny. They work to a depth of 18 fathom, stopping at the surface, and extending their works laterally. The interior of the Pacific is thus for thousands of miles a vast manufactory, where, under the arrangements of a wise and beneficent God, immense structures are being raised by this small creature—structures that shall afford homes for the human family, where the Gospel shall earn its most beautiful laurels, and display the perfections of the Deity, in nature and in grace.

Upon these singularly favoured islands, there is abundance of valuable wood for domestic and commercial purposes. The sandalwood attracts the cupidity of traders from all parts of the world. Arrowroot grows

wild, and oranges, and other tropical fruits, when planted there, grow to perfection. What the cow and the sheep are to us, the *cocoa-nut* tree seems to be to the inhabitant of a South Sea Island, with this difference, that it needs little cultivation, and solicits no food. It supplies him, all the year round, with an excellent *food*, and with a delicious *beverage*, with which to cool his lips, parched with heat. The shell forms his drinking *cup*, and the bark *thatches* his house. Its tough fibres are made into *cords* and *garments* to cover his person. When his floor has been *scrubbed* by its *hushs*, its *beavers* form an excellent carpet, wherewith they are covered. To the Polynesian, the *bread-fruit tree* is his baker, who supplies him with little loaves about a foot in circumference, which, however, have to be cooked. The *banana* produces a bunch of fruit capable of dining 30 men. His potatoe is the *taro*, a tuberous root sometimes 15 inches long. He has also now got our own potatoe, which thrives well. Our pumpkins and squashes are regarded by us as species of vegetable monsters, but the Polynesian grows upon his vine a *yam*, sometimes so large as to require two men to carry it. At this rate, it must be easy to store a house, and support a Polynesian family. No long bills need be run up with the grocer, the butcher, or the baker; no alarms need be felt about hungry and frozen cattle; no fearful pictures of children squalling for bread, while the larder is empty, terrify the mind. Except when they fight and devour one another, the men of these islands are vegetarians, and the earth is bountiful. One writer, quoted by Mr. Patterson, even draws the ridiculous picture of a native fishing upon the Tanna shore, and pitching the captured fish over his head into a boiling spring, to be cooked! Since the Polynesian enjoys such an abundance of those substances that support life—a beautiful shore, plenty of fish, an island protected by its reef from the violence of the sea-storm, vegetables that produce two or three crops annually, a clear sky, a warm sun, refreshing intermittent showers, produced by the trade winds, immunity from the burdens of civilization, and from the inclemency of northern lands—one would suppose that, if ever that picture of the happiness of the child of nature, which French infidels used to draw, and carnal mind's fancy, were realized, it must be here, amid the perpetual bloom of these gardens of ocean. A nearer view shows, however, the dark cloud of misery. Sin and happiness are an impossible combination. A closer acquaintance proves the South Sea Islander to be the slave of a misery and degradation of which he does not know the cause. There, already, thousands bless the day that the Spirit of God delivered them from the "happiness of the child of nature," and brought them into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

The inhabitants of Polynesia consist of the Malay and Melanesian races—the former the