

royal cabinet of natural history at this court. These Indians are pacific, cheerful, jovial, and docile, manifest great genius in the building of their houses and canoes, and in the manufacture of their woven stuffs. They, however, use the barbarous custom of sacrificing to their false idols. Whilst the aforesaid missionaries were amongst them, the eriri fell sick, and to implore with greater success for his speedy recovery, they sacrificed to their deity four of their unfortunate prisoners. They form amongst themselves societies, wherein they mutually engage to stand by and assist each other in any difficulties; but it is indispensable that those admitted should be without male children, and this ordinance has been the cause of parents continually putting their infant sons to death.

[Otaihiti consists of two peninsulas, which are connected by a low neck of land, about two miles over; the circumference of both peninsulas is somewhat more than 90 miles. The whole island is surrounded by a reef of coral rocks, within which the shore forms several excellent bays and harbours, where there is room and depth of water for any number of the largest ships. The face of the country, except that part of it which borders upon the sea, is very uneven; it rises in ridges that run up into the middle of the island, and there forms mountains, that may be seen at the distance of 60 miles. Between these ridges and the sea is a border of low land, extending along all the coast, except in a few places, where the ridges rise directly from the sea. This border is of different breadths, but no where more than a mile and a half. There are several rivers much larger than could be expected from the extent of the island; among the rocks through which these precipitate their waters from the mountains, not the least appearance of minerals is to be found. The stones shew evident tokens of having been burnt. Traces of fire are also manifest in the very clay upon the hills. It may therefore not unreasonably be supposed, that this and the neighbouring islands are either shattered remains of a continent, which were left behind when the rest was sunk by the explosion of a subterraneous fire, or have been torn from rocks under the bed of the sea, by the same cause, and thrown up in heaps to an height which the waters never reach. The low lands between the foot of the ridges and the sea, and some of the interjacent valleys, are the only parts of the island that are inhabited. Here indeed it is populous. The houses do not form villages or towns, but are ranged along the whole border, at the distance of about 50 yards from each other.

When the island was first discovered, hogs, dogs,

and poultry were the only tame animals; ducks, pigeons, paroquets, with a few other birds and rats, the only wild animals. The breed of hogs has been greatly improved by some of a larger kind, that were left by the Spaniards in 1774. Goats were first introduced by Captain Cook in 1773; to these the Spaniards have added some, and they are now in such plenty, that every chief of any note has them. Cats were left by Captain Cook, and European dogs of several sorts by the Spaniards. In 1777, the stock of new animals received the important addition of a turkey cock and hen; a peacock and hen; a gander and three geese; a drake and four ducks; a horse and mare; a bull and three cows. A bull and a ram had been also left by the Spaniards. Beasts of prey or noxious reptiles, there are none.

The vegetable productions are bread-fruit, coconuts, bananans of 13 sorts, and all excellent; plantains; a fruit resembling an apple; sweet potatoes, yams, and cocoas.

The people exceed the middle size of Europeans in stature. In their dispositions, notwithstanding the charge of infanticide, before alleged against them; they are brave, open, and generous, without either suspicion or treachery. Except a few traces of natural cunning, and some traits of dissimulation, equally artless and inoffensive, they possess the most perfect simplicity of character. Their actions are guided by the immediate impulse of the reigning passion. Their passions are the genuine effusions of the heart, which they have never been taught to disguise or repress, and are therefore depicted by the strongest expressions of countenance and gesture. Their feelings are lively, but in no case permanent; they are affected by all the changes of the passing hour, and reflect the colour of the time, however frequently it may vary. Their vivacity is never disturbed by anxiety or care, insomuch that when brought to the brink of the grave by disease, or when preparing to go to battle, their faces are unclouded by melancholy or serious reflection. Their language is soft and melodious; it abounds with vowels, and is easily pronounced. It is rich in beautiful and figurative expressions, and admits of that inverted arrangement of words, which distinguishes the ancient from most modern languages. It is so copious, that for the bread-fruit alone they have above twenty names. Add to this, that besides the common dialect, they often expostulate in a kind of stanza or recitative, which is answered in the same manner.

The two peninsulas formerly made but one kingdom. They are now divided into two, under the]