

cers, which we attributed to the great quantity of salt they eat with their flesh and fish. The *Erees* are very free from these complaints, but many of them suffer still more dreadful effects from the immoderate use of the *ava*. Those who were the most affected by it, had their bodies covered with a white scurf, their eyes red and inflamed, their limbs emaciated, the whole frame trembling and paralytic, accompanied with a disability to raise the head. Though this drug does not appear universally to shorten life, as was evident from the cases of Terreeoboo, Kaoo, and some other chiefs, who were very old men, yet it invariably brings on an early and decrepid old age. It is fortunate that the use of it is made one of the peculiar privileges of the chiefs. The young son of Terreeoboo, who was about twelve years old, used to boast of his being admitted to drink *ava*, and shewed us, with great triumph, a small spot in his side that was growing scaly.

There is something very singular in the history of this pernicious drug. When Captain Cook first visited the Society Islands, it was very little known among them. On his second voyage, he found the use of it very prevalent at Ulietea, but it had still gained very little ground at Otaheite. When we were last there, the dreadful havoc it had made was beyond belief, insomuch, that the captain scarce knew many of his old acquaintances. At the Friendly Islands, it is also constantly drunk by the chiefs, but so much diluted with water, that it does not appear to produce any bad effects. At Atooi, also, it is used with great moderation, and the chiefs are, in consequence, a much finer set of men there than in any of the neighbouring islands. We remarked, that, by discontinuing the use of this root, the noxious effects of it soon wore off. Our good friends, Kaireekee and old Kaoo, were persuaded by us to refrain from it, and they recovered amazingly during the short time we afterward remained in the island.

It may be thought extremely difficult to form any probable conjectures respecting the population of islands, with many parts of which we are but imperfectly acquainted. There are, however, two circumstances that take away much of this objection; the first is, that the interior parts of the country are entirely uninhabited; so that, if the number of the inhabitants along the coast be known, the whole will be pretty accurately determined. The other is, that there are