

*Erromango* has acquired a sad notoriety from the massacre there of the indefatigable missionary Mr. Williams, the well-known author of "Missionary Enterprise."

Aneiteum, Tana, and Vate are thus described by Lieut. the Hon. Herbert Meade, R.N., who visited these islands in H.M.S. "Curaçoa" in 1865:—

"*Aneiteum* is about fourteen miles long by eight broad, and bears a population of 2,200, which is at present stationary, or very slightly decreasing. The Natives are all Christians; the first teachers (Samoan) were placed here in 1841. The last case of cannibalism occurred thirteen years ago. Every person in the island above five years old can read more or less, and attends school. Crime is rare, life and property secure. Mr. Inglis, the missionary, states that their standard of morality is at present a high one, but asserts that before Christianity took hold on them they were as bad as any in the group. The climate is damp, and rather unhealthy. Cotton grows well. There are about twenty Europeans, traders and others, usually in the island. The island is volcanic, but reef-bound. Hurricanes frequent and severe.

"*Tana* is about twenty-five miles long by twelve broad, and the population is between 15,000 and 20,000. But since the introduction of European diseases and weapons, there has been a steady decrease. In 1861 a third of the people died of the measles. The state of morals is extremely low; the natives assert that the present excessive licentiousness was introduced by the whites who formerly resided on the island. The chiefs endeavour to get drunk every night on Kaca. The women do all the work, the men the fighting, which is their constant employment. Cannibalism is the custom all over the island.

"*Vate*.—This island is from thirty to thirty-five miles long, and about fifteen broad. Population, which is said to be decreasing, is estimated at 10,000 to 12,000. Climate rather damp, but healthy enough if care be taken. One village, Erakor, is Christian, and in another are a few favourable to the faith; but all the other people are up to their ears in paganism, cannibalism, murder of old men, widows, and children, and all the other ills that affect the heathen morals at dead low water. The cotton-plant, which has lately been introduced, does well. The Government is carried on by petty chiefs, who mostly rule over independent villages. Earthquakes common, sometimes severe."

The following description of the *New Hebrides* is by Commander Thomas C. Tilly, R.N., lately in command of the Melanesian Mission schooner "Southern Cross":—

"*General Remarks*.—The fine weather or dry season among the New Hebrides and Solomon Islands may be said to extend from May to October, both months inclusive, and the wet season from November to April; occasionally much rain falls in the so-called dry season, and is generally accompanied by a change of wind from the eastward. The normal direction of the trade-winds is from E.S.E., but the stronger winds which usually succeed calms are from S.E., and as a rule such may be expected when the wind veers round to E. or N.E.

"When in the vicinity of the islands, the prevailing trades are frequently interrupted, and calms occur, followed by easterly and north-easterly breezes accompanied with rain; occasionally the wind backs round, by way of north to west, and the trade direction is resumed with what is known among the Banks Islands as the 'Lan San' or strong S.E. wind.

"Hurricanes prevail during the whole of the wet season, and blow with greatest violence during the months of January and February. It does not appear that they are of frequent occurrence, but the information on the subject derived from the natives is very vague.

"It is said that storms are experienced more frequently at Aneiteum Island, at the southern extremity of the New Hebrides range, than amongst the islands further to the northward, and have been described as blowing with sufficient violence to destroy trees, huts, &c., their length of duration varying from two to four or even six days. They generally commence from the westward, from which quarter it blows hardest, and veer round by way of north, causing the sea to advance as a wave on the shore; whilst between Amota, Vanua Lava, and Valua Islands, the sea breaks as on a reef.

"The approximate mean temperature of the air amongst Banks Islands, during May and June, was 84°, and that of the sea generally corresponded with the temperature of the air at 9 a.m.

"*Population*.—The natives of the New Hebrides Group are dark in colour, of moderate stature, and in some places, as at Pentecost and Mallicollo Islands, are robust, muscular men, with woolly hair. For weapons they have clubs, spears, bows, and arrows—the latter generally poisoned—and in some places tomahawks. Their canoes are rude in shape, clumsily made, and fitted with outriggers. They have no recognized chiefs; and as their lives are characterized by suspicion and constant quarrelling, there is no security for either life or property.

"Although an appearance of friendly confidence will often tend to allay their natural feelings of distrust, strangers visiting those islands would do well to maintain a constant watchfulness, and use every precaution against being taken by surprise.

"*Productions*.—The productions of the islands composing the New Hebrides, including Banks Islands, consist of bread-fruit, cocoa-nuts, sago, bananas, nutmegs, sugar-cane, taro, arrowroot, sweet potatoes, and yams. Pigs are also occasionally procurable at Banks Islands, but principally at Mai Island. The best articles for barter consist of beads, fish-hooks, calico, axes, and, in some of the less frequented islands, iron hoops, and iron cut into short lengths.

"*Mai, or Three Hills Island*, has three elevations, which are respectively 1,850, 1,450, and 1,400 feet high; the eastern and highest hill, Rave-ná, is the most regular in outline, with a gentle slope from its summit, whilst its sides are thickly cultivated. The island lies about N.E. and S.W. for a distance of six miles, the average breadth being about two miles and a half.

"A supply of pigs and yams, the latter very good, may be procured; the barter used by the 'Southern Cross' being calico and tomahawks. No fresh water is obtainable, and but little firewood. The population has been estimated to be about 800 or 1,200, and in this small island no less than three dialects are spoken. The character of the natives is noisy and quarrelsome, and during communication strangers should be on their guard against surprise. The arms of these islanders consist of clubs, tomahawks, bows, and poisoned arrows, and they daub their faces, as well as other parts of their bodies, with turmeric. They possess only a few canoes.

"*Api, or Tasiko Island*.—This island is about twenty-five miles in length in a N.W. and S.E. direc-