

however, was not inconsolable, but, the olive-branch being extended to him, accepted it, and took to himself another wife, of the same family who had eaten the late Mrs. G. He took her to sea with him, and, becoming weary of her society, finally left her on the Island of Aitutaki, where many years afterwards she was found by the enterprising missionary John Williams, and piloted him to her native land of Rarotonga, where she is still living. Goodenough never told of the land he had found—from commercial reasons so also Williams said nothing of what he knew concerning Goodenough's discovery, as he desired naturally enough to secure to himself the credit of it.

After the successful termination of the South American rebellions, war began to give way to peaceful industry, and sperm-whale fishers abounded in the waters of the Pacific; the privateers from the Indian Seas became converted into traders in search of sandal wood, pearls, and other valuables; a lucrative traffic also became established with China in the article of tortoise-shell (erroneously so called, as it is the scales of the hawksbill turtle which in the Pacific are known by this name: there is a tortoise of gigantic size existing on the Gallapagos, but his shell is of no value whatever), sharks' fins and beche-de-mer—that singular edible so highly prized by the gourmands of the Celestial Flowery Land.

At this time the agents of the London Missionary Society had, after repeated reverses, obtained great influence over the inhabitants of the Society Islands; and the extreme arrogance with which they dictated terms to the traders, and the vexatious regulations which they established for the guidance of morals, and restrictions upon the introduction of intoxicating drinks, engendered bitter animosity between themselves, the whale-fishers, and the commercial adventurers who visited the various Goshens over which they now claimed the sole control.

To these disturbances may be really traced the long sequence of troubles which eventuated in the war which ended in the French occupation. It was not in reality raised upon a question of religion (although that element was taken advantage of as a lever to effect a certain political purpose), but it was the result of a deep-laid scheme originating with merchants, who resented the interference of Protestant ecclesiastics with their worldly business.

Another ingredient of disorder was introduced into their midst by the arrival from time to time of escaped convicts from the penal settlements of Australia, who, finding themselves transplanted into a sort of Paradise, fraternised with seamen who had deserted from ships, herded together for mutual protection, and formed communities of dangerous ruffians. Their organization was, and in certain quarters of the Pacific still is, similar to that of the associated beachcombers of the Spanish Main—a description of gentry whose doings, if truly recorded, would fill several volumes of interesting matter.

In those days the trade of the Society Islands was chiefly confined to the barter of hogs, fowls, and vegetables, with whale ships; but a few adventurous traders, finding their way down so far from the China Sea, inaugurated a traffic in sharks' fins and beche-de-mer. It was while in the search for these articles that the attention of persons engaged in it was attracted to the vast deposits of pearl oysters which abounded in what is known as the Low Archipelago. It is in this strange region, commonly spoken of as a mere congeries of desert reefs, that the greatest wealth of the Society Isles has laid, and does still lie. Tahiti itself may be inexhaustibly fertile (as it is); Raiatea, likewise a paradise of gorgeous vegetation; so also all the other isles which cluster round the great volcanic centre; but in the present aspects of trade, all that they are able to produce is insignificant in comparison to the riches that will eventually be derived from the pearly lakes and palmy cays of the coral-bound Paumotus. I make this statement with all due consideration, seeing that I am about to demonstrate its truth; and before going further into the question that these islands, so lonely and so little regarded by the world that they are more frequently spoken of by mariners as a dangerous excrescence upon the surface of the sea, are precisely similar in their characters and conditions (as concerns the yielding of valuable products) to some thousands of others which are scattered over the whole face of the coral seas, which at the present moment, in a multitude of instances, may be either purchased for a mere trifle in the shape of blue beads and calico, or are at the service of any merchant who chooses to take possession of them. The time is not far distant when men of business in Auckland will look back with absolute astonishment to the blindness of these days, in which vessels are despatched to distant places to purchase cargoes of merchandise, and upon their voyage run through or pass by a hundred islands, upon very many of which they might obtain the very stuff they are going after for nothing, had they but experience enough to go on shore and collect it for themselves.

To illustrate this proposition, let us take, *par exemple*, what has been done in the Paumotus. (This name is commonly spelt differently; it is correct as I have given it. It is compounded of two words, Pau-motu, signifying a "cloud of islands," and is very expressive, as most barbarous names are found to be when one is able to trace their original meaning.)

This extraordinary region of shoals and cays, commonly called the "Low (or Dangerous) Archipelago," extends over 16 degrees of longitude, and consists of four groups, containing altogether 78 islands or coral atolls, all with the exception of three having lagoon reefs, varying in size from a few miles to over 100 miles in circumference. These islands have long borne an evil name by reason of the intricacy of their navigation, the powerful and sometimes contrary currents which set between them, and the extreme ferocity of their inhabitants. This is now past: the various islets, shoals, and straits are now well known and defined—thanks to the researches of MM. Delemarche and Chizoline, and the excellent charts of M. Vinedon Dumoulin. The numbers of the aborigines are very greatly reduced. Although the archipelago twenty years ago was immensely populous, emigration to the Society Islands, a love of roving—which is a ruling passion with these amphibious savages—disease, which has decimated them in a frightful manner, and the repeated raids of slave ships from the Spanish Main, have brought down the population to less than 5,000, of which probably not more than one-fifth who inhabit the S.E. portion of the archipelago are still in a state of primeval barbarism.

In former times these people were noted for their bravery—both in the navigation of the seas and in combats of all kinds; so much were they esteemed in this respect that Pomare the Great—as he was called from his conquests—always employed them as his guards, and the word Paumotu as applied to a man became synonymous with warrior, even as now when referring to a woman it constitutes a much less honorable distinction.