

VI.—The Fijis.

As the settlers are now making every exertion to extend the cultivation of cotton, it is earnestly to be hoped that their increasing industry may not be cheated, and the country retained in wanton opposition by barbarism on the part of the native chiefs.

Whenever the community increases sufficiently in wealth and members, its influence will, undoubtedly, be felt in the general management of the country. Until this takes place they must be dependent for protection on the representatives of their different Governments, assisted by the ships-of-war which from time to time visit these islands.

## No. 2.

REPORT by JOHN B. THURSTON, H.M. Consul in Fiji and Tonga, for the Year 1867.

THERE has been a slight decrease in the aggregate tonnage of shipping visiting the Ports of Levuka and Rewa during the past year.

This can be partly accounted for by the withdrawal of one or two ships from the trade, and to their being replaced by vessels of less capacity, but better adapted to insular navigation.

The trade of this group is at present carried on by British vessels, sailing from ports in the adjoining colonies.

The following statement shows the number of ships and gross tonnage entered, compared with last year :—

	1866.	1867.
British ships entered ... ..	27	24
Foreign ... ..	3	1
Gross tonnage ... ..	4,024	3,797

During the past year three small vessels have been built, measuring respectively 30, 40, 45 tons.

The number of small craft, belonging chiefly to British residents, occupied in Island traffic, amounts at the present time to 18, measuring in the aggregate about 350 tons.

As the cultivation of cotton and other products, now engaging the attention of the settlers, progresses, it will be necessary to build or purchase other small vessels, for the purpose of collecting the various articles from outlying districts, where it would not be safe or expedient for a large ship to proceed.

There is a prospect of an enterprising Sydney firm despatching a ship direct from this port to London or Liverpool during the coming year. Not having a recognized Government at Fiji, there are no port charges, dues, or imposts of any nature.

The navigation of the group is open with safety from April until December, during which time the south-east trade winds prevail. From January until April, the winds are variable, frequently blowing with great violence from the north and north-west, attended with heavy rains.

## Commerce.

The following comparative table will indicate the progress this group has made during the past year :—

Article.		1865.		1866.		1867.	
		Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.
Cotton .. ..	cwt.	2,400	£ 9,200	5,880	£ 19,800	7,586	£ 34,004
Cocoanut oil .. ..	tons	500	11,000	450	9,000	150	3,260
Bêche-de-mer .. ..	piculs	500	1,200	300	600	880	1,600
Wool .. ..	lb.	10,120	400	8,396	320	469	134
Tortoise-shell .. ..	lb.	750	375	2,000	1,000	1,700	812
Coir .. ..	tons	50	1,500	Nil	..	Nil	..
Pigs, fruit, &c. .. ..	..	..	500	..	250	..	150
			£24,175		£30,970		£39,960

In addition to the above return are cash remittances, the amount of which cannot be estimated.

The imports do not exceed, so far as I can ascertain, the estimate formed for the year 1866.

However, during the past year, many of the immigrants from the adjoining colonies are of a class possessing some means, and have imported a considerable amount of trade and barter on their own account.

The total amount of imports may approximate,—

By traders .. ..	£26,000
By settlers .. ..	3,000
	£29,000

The satisfactory increase in the value of exports is owing to the success attending the cultivation of cotton. It will be observed, by referring to the foregoing table, that cocoanut oil, formerly the principal export, has in quantity fallen short of what might have been expected. This, however, can be explained.

## Cotton.

The expense in shipping cotton to the colonies is excessive, and has a depressing effect upon the planter, which can only be removed by direct communication with England. This effected, I