

Samoa was first visited by the Rev. Mr. Williams, of the London Missionary Society, in 1830–32. Several native missionaries were labouring in Samoa when, in 1835, the Wesleyan missionaries from Tonga commenced a mission there; and soon after the Rev. Mr. Platt, of the L.M.S., commenced another mission, or, rather, reinforced the mission already established there. By the agreement of the two societies the Wesleyans relinquished the mission. Unfortunately, the King of Tonga sent Native teachers to Samoa in 1856, and, soon after, the Wesleyan Committee in Sydney appointed European missionaries. The action was disapproved of by the General Committee in London, but the Sydney committee found it difficult to withdraw without producing greater evils than those arising out of two missionary societies labouring in the same field.\*

The great work, too, of the British and American Bible Societies, in translating the Scriptures into the different Polynesian languages, must not be overlooked, nor the labour of the different missionary clergymen in providing grammars and dictionaries.†

The white residents number some 365 souls, which I understand is all that the group contains at present. Of this number 225 are British born, 90 Germans, 20 Americans, 15 Scandinavians, and 15 various nationalities. I am not quite certain of the exactitude of these figures, but they are the nearest I can give. The Chinese are also settling in Samoa, as well as in other parts of the Pacific Islands. In the Sandwich Islands they are in large numbers. I need scarcely point out to the Australasian Colonies the great danger that will arise should these islands fall a prey to Chinese settlement and piratage, like European vessels often experience among the Malay Islands.

With regard to foreign trade, that with the Australasian Colonies largely preponderates, New Zealand alone exporting £18,000 to £20,000 annually to Samoa. The Australasian Colonies send Samoa more goods than all the other exporting countries trading with the group put together. The British trade, too, is increasing, as it is bound to do, with these Pacific Islands so near our colonies.

For some fifty years or more, prior to 1872, the trade of the islands was almost entirely in the hands of the firm of Goddefroy and Company, of Hamburg. This great firm was almost a political organization, and ruled things in the South Pacific much as the East India Company used to do in India. They had resident agents and stores on every island where trade was to be done; they concluded treaties with the chiefs; they kept a fleet of vessels constantly coming and going; they acquired land, by all sorts of methods; and they had plantations and factories of all kinds. After the Franco-German war this firm collapsed, and a company was formed to carry out the Samoan branch of their business. But other foreigners had gradually settled in the islands, and the Germans are no longer in a majority there.

The trade of the islands is, therefore, no longer monopolised by Hamburg. Of a total import value of £120,000, £50,000 comes from Sydney; £40,000 from San Francisco; £20,000 from New Zealand; and not £10,000 from Hamburg. The exports are of the value of about £70,000 annually, and consist of about 4,000 tons of copra, and 2,000 bales of cotton. Here, again, I ask to be excused if my figures are incorrect; they applied a few years ago.

Copra is the dried kernel of the cocoanut, and is shipped to Sydney and London for the manufacture of cocoanut-oil. The imports are materials for clothing, timber, tinned meats, and preserved provisions generally, petroleum oil, hardware, flour, biscuits, and lager beer. Of this last item, it is said that the foreigners in Samoa consume more per head than any other community, but it is certainly infinitely preferable to the "square gin" which used to be a favorite drink when I was in Fiji.

The greater portion of the foreigners reside in Apia, where are also the consular offices. Apia is on the Island of Upolu, and at the head of a bay which for beauty is said to exceed anything known to travellers, and to throw into second place even such exquisite scenes as the Bay of Naples and the Harbour of Sydney.

Although cotton and copra form at present almost the entire exports, the islands are, beyond doubt, capable of producing a variety of other produce. The experiments instituted by Goddefroy and Company proved that both soil and climate are admirably adapted to the cultivation of wheat, coffee, tobacco, sugar-cane, rice, jute, chinchona, &c. The great difficulty is that which hampers Fiji—labour. The Samoans will not work; and the British Government will not allow their subjects freely to import labour, at least in the present uncertain political condition. The Germans have been accustomed to import Polynesians from the Kingsmill Islands, and even from New Guinea; but the supply has been decreasing, and last year was only about one-half of what it was three or four years ago.

The total acreage of the Samoan Group is something under 850,000 acres, of which 240,000 acres belong now to the English, 210,000 to Americans, and only about 80,000 to Germans. I suppose when the group enjoys the blessing of a recognised civilised Government, other than that of native chiefs, this land question will have to be taken into consideration, and a far less area allowed the Whites than what they claim at present—530,000 acres out of 850,000 acres being, in my opinion, far too great a proportion for the natives to have already alienated. It is to be feared, however, that, owing to the constant state of warfare which, it is alleged, is brought about by the English, German, and American rivalry, the natives will alienate nearly all their lands to the whites; and the difficulty will then be to take the land off the different consular registers without international complication.

"For their extent of surface, Samoa deserves special consideration. There are many valleys containing thousands of acres of rich soil entirely untillied; indeed, the portion of country under cultivation is very inconsiderable. For, as the fruits grow so abundantly without labour, the Samoans, like the Tahitians, display but little ingenuity in agriculture. In this they are greatly surpassed by their neighbours, the Tongatabuans, who subsist almost entirely upon produce raised by themselves. So long as the Tahitians and the light-hearted Samoans can work or play, rove

\* "Statistics of Protestant Missionary Societies," 1872–73.

† See the "Samoa Grammar," by the Rev. George Pratt (1861).