

of Paumotu divers, and by their means obtained from it over 100 tons of shell in less than eighteen months. These strangers established themselves upon the fishery by force of arms, and after their departure it was no more prosecuted, for the same reason which had necessitated their employment—that is to say, the incapacity of the Manihikians to perform the work. This is so, because they subsist in a great measure upon the *Paahua* or *Tridachna*, a sort of clam, which is obtained by diving in shallow water. According to their custom, it is the duty of the women to procure these shell-fish, the occupation of the men being the gathering of cocoanuts, and fishing with lines and nets in the deep sea, outside the coral reefs. The lagoon, therefore, is the domain of the women, who alone are skilled in diving. When the pearl-shell traffic had been introduced to their notice by the intrusion of the Paumotans, the Manihikians would have continued it by the labour of their women; but they, finding it as much to their profit and more to their comfort to manufacture cocoanut-oil, rejected the task. There are upon this Isle of Manihiki cocoanut groves of an area sufficient, if the produce were economized, to yield annually 300 tons of kobra (value £3,000); in two years, by a little labour and care, this return would be greatly augmented, and in seven years increased at least fourfold.

RAKAHANGA ISLAND.

The island of the Grand Duke Alexander, or Rakahanga, resembles Manihiki, except that it is not quite so large, and contains no pearl shell in its lagoon. The density of its cocoanut groves has excited the astonishment of all mariners who have visited it. This place is, however, very little known, much less so than even Manihiki, for the reason that, its villages being built out of sight, and its anchorage difficult to find, it has more frequently been passed by under the supposition of being uninhabited. There are, however, about four hundred people upon it, who are even superior to the Manihikians in hospitality, ingenuity, and the possession of everything necessary to their comfort and happiness. The village which they inhabit is built entirely of stone. The houses are large and substantial, plastered with snow-white coral lime; they have panelled doors and Venetian shutters; the floors are laid with fine mats of variegated pattern, in the manufacture of which they are more skilful than any other people of the Pacific. These mats they barter to traders when they have opportunity, at the rate of one fathom of mat for the same dimension of unbleached calico, of which the men make their clothing. The mats themselves are of so fine a description that in civilised lands, when obtainable, they are highly prized for covering the floors of even the best houses. Those of one kind are even used as table-covers. The natives have good furniture, made by themselves, of their own island wood. Their hats, which they readily barter to traders, sell in the Pacific ports at one dollar each. They are similar to those of Panama. Their boats, of the fashion of a whaleboat, are handsome and seaworthy. They profess Christianity, and can read and write. They have a church in the middle of the village, handsomely decorated within, the wood-work inlaid with mother-of-pearl. The vessels which they use in their religious ceremonies are of solid silver, and were purchased from traders who had procured them from a wreck. Their laws are just and well administered; they have no superstitious customs.

PENRHYN ISLAND.

North-east of Manihiki four hundred miles is Fararanga, or Penrhyn Island. It is about thirty-five miles in circuit, and contains a lagoon twelve miles long by eight miles broad. There are but few inhabitants now, the place having been almost entirely depopulated by Peruvian slavers, who carried away not less than a thousand persons (probably more); the present inhabitants number about a hundred and fifty. It is one of the most famous pearl islands of the Pacific. There have been taken from it annually, for the last twelve years, certainly not less than 200 tons of pearl shell. It belongs to no one but the remnant of its aborigines, who must soon be extinct. *Bêche-de-mer* is in vast abundance. There are very few cocoanut-trees upon this island, the natives having cut them down during wars in past years. If planted out again, the place could be made a valuable possession. The harbour is a splendid one for ships of any draught, being a lagoon with two entrances.

Hervey or Cook's group consists of seven islands, all but one (Hervey Island, or Manuai) inhabited by a well-disposed and highly intelligent people, now greatly reduced in numbers by mortality, apparently caused by the adoption of European habits of clothing and living. They can all read and write, and are Protestants; and they practise many useful industries, as the cultivation of coffee, cotton, arrowroot, and other products. The largest islands are Mangaia and Rarotonga, each of them being about thirty miles in circumference. The former is about 700 ft. at its highest point, and is of volcanic origin. There are over one thousand inhabitants (reduced from four thousand in 1848). They are industrious, hospitable, and respectable in every way. They make a considerable quantity of cocoanut-oil, arrowroot, tobacco, &c. They have an English missionary residing among them.

RAROTONGA.

Rarotonga is a magnificent island, resembling in aspect Ropoa, in the Marquesas. It is about 3,000 ft. high, and is clothed to the very tops of the mountains with splendid vegetation. It has abundant streams, considerable tracts of sloping land, and rich alluvial valleys. There are two small harbours, not secure at all times, but sufficiently so for the most part of the year. A steam-vessel might make use of them at any time. The population of this island is about 3,000; they are governed by a Queen. They are in an advanced state of civilization; one sees nothing like it in the South Pacific, not even in Tonga; and as far as concerns sobriety, decency, and quiet behaviour, they are superior to the Sandwich-Islanders. Their villages are all laid out in streets; their houses are of stone and lime; they have furniture; they dress nicely in European fabrics; they are all well-fed, happy, and prosperous. Their laws are just, and well administered; they fear God, and