

Before going any further with this report, I want to first thank Colonel Gudgeon and his able staff throughout the Group for their untiring efforts and kindness in helping me in every conceivable way in their power during my sojourn amongst them. I am certain that without their aid my work would have been nullified to a great degree. Their courtesy and willing help rendered my work one of pleasure and pleasant memories. I have also to thank the Arikis for their lavish hospitality and the ready ear they gave to a total stranger. This may be perhaps accounted for by the fact that I, in common with them, sprang from the loins of the same ancestors. One chief said, "Yes, Turi went from here many many moons ago, but his spirit has at last returned in you"; and so it was that I had no trouble, but was constantly kept busy administering to their medical needs, more of which anon.

The Natives I found to be closely related to our Maoris, not only in language and ancestry, but also in their habits and customs. A certain writer lately made a few casual observations, and wrongly concluded that the Maori was a lazy good-for-nothing individual. If stock had been taken of some of the European scum which had drifted hitherward, probably shame would have stayed the accusation anent the Native. The real fact of the matter is that the Native is not half so bad as he is painted, and in reality his fault is the great Polynesian one of over-hospitality. He may be a little improvident, but what of that "where every prospect pleases, and only man is vile"—where Dame Nature ever smiles benignly, and is abundant in her gifts of food? "Hei aha ma wai?" ("Who cares?") is almost right in these tropical realms. And then, why should we attempt to introduce conventionalities and the everlasting worry after money amongst a people who are already contented, law-abiding and happy? Yet the Native works really hard; you only want to see Port Awarua on shipping-days and see eight or nine hundred tons of cargo being brought in and shipped at 3s. per day per man. On the whole, the Maori does a lot of work, copra-making, picking coffee, oranges, bananas, &c.

There is no doubt whatever that the Maoris of the Cook Islands have up till now been gradually dying out. A casual glance at the attached statement will show this at once, at least as far as Rarotonga is concerned. Too much reliance, however, cannot be placed in the earlier figures, as they were mere estimates taken by the London Missionary Society. Now, since the Government has taken charge of the Islands, a correct census has been taken of the Group, and henceforth we shall be able to be absolutely certain in this matter.

In the year 1827 the estimated population of Rarotonga was 6,000; there were 3,000 adults and children attending the mission schools alone. In the year 1843 the estimated population was 3,300. In 1895, true Rarotongans, 1,623; estimated population, 2,454. In 1901 the estimated population was 2,207, a decrease of 247, or of 114 in the true Rarotongan born. In 1902-4 there was a decrease of 69. In 1905 there were 90 deaths and 81 births. The birth-rate in England in 1885 was 32·5 per 1,000; in Rarotonga in the same year it was 25·92 per 1,000, or 6·58 per 1,000 less than in England. In 1906 the population was 2,334: until we have the next Government census we shall not be able to state definitely the extent of the decrease. The above figures were gathered from various sources, but principally from Mr. Blain's paper on the Natives.

The following is the population of the various islands, just taken by the Government enumerators:—

Islands.	Population.	European.	Chinese.
Rarotonga	2,334	107	6
Aitutaki	1,154	8	..
Atiu	914	4	2
Mangaia	1,523	8	..
Manihiki	519	2	..
Rakahanga	351	1	..
Mitiaro	208	2	1
Mauke	444	2	1
Pukapuka	435
Palmerston	82
Penrhyn	430	6	..
Totals	8,394	140	10

At Atiu in 1896 there was a population of 825—442 males, 383 females; 1902, 919; 1903, 889; 1904, 912; 1905, 914; 1906, 914: so we see they have actually increased 89, and have been able to maintain their numbers. The drop of 30 in 1903 was due to a kind of dysentery that was brought over from Tahiti, but since then the people of Atiu have been fairly healthy.

The causes of the deaths in the Group can be better judged by a list of the diseases I found in the Islands. I have not the slightest doubt that, given fair opportunities for sanitary reforms and medical attendance, a few years' time will find the Natives healthy, prosperous, and numerous.

DISEASES.

From a medical standpoint I may say that I have had a feast of good things, for I came across a variety of ailments, and some of which I had only read of in books on tropical diseases; and, as for surgery, I regretted exceedingly that I had only a pocket-case of instruments, for I am certain many lives could have been saved if I had had a full set. However, we did our best, and the result was marvellous. During my visit I saw about seven hundred cases, 503 of which I saw alone; the rest I saw in company with Dr. Gately. List of 525 cases attached.

(1.) Measles was quite common a little while back, it being introduced by some passing vessel, and it proved fatal to the Islanders as usual. There was one case in Rarotonga while I was there. I have no doubt that some of the other infectious diseases have been prevalent, but were unrecognised.