

*Manihiki.*

This island sustained great damage from the sea which swept over it during the January hurricane. The islet on which the main settlement of Tauhunu is situated was completely submerged, the people taking refuge in their boats, which were moored in the lagoon. Practically all the houses were destroyed, but fortunately no lives were lost.

In the Settlement of Tukao the islet was only partially under water, and the people saved themselves by running to the unsubmerged portion. Here also most of the houses collapsed, owing to the foundations being washed away.

The people have plenty of copra and no lack of provisions, several schooners having visited the island with supplies since the hurricane. The water-tank at Tauhunu and Tukao proved a great boon to the inhabitants after the storm, as they were for the time being deprived of other sources of supply.

Accompanied by Mr. Williams, the Resident Agent, I visited all the habitations in both settlements and saw all the sick. The health of the people is remarkably good, and the cases I saw were mostly of a chronic character or cases of skin-disease.

There are no cases of leprosy at present on the island. I examined three suspected cases, but did not find any evidence of this disease.

*Rakahanga.*—Here also, accompanied by Mr. Williams, I visited all the dwellings and found the conditions as regards health very similar to those at Manihiki. The island, however, did not suffer so severely in the hurricane as the latter.

Two new cases of leprosy I ordered to be sent to the leper island, and three suspected cases, members of one family, I ordered to be segregated until opportunity offers for examination. On the leper island, at the time of my visit, I found two persons—one a male leper, the other a woman not leperous, who has voluntarily exiled herself for fifteen years on the Molokai, nursing her husband and three children, who were all lepers, and who have all died there. The last survivor, a girl, was drowned during the hurricane when the island was inundated. The girl was in a weak and emaciated condition, and was washed away by the sea in spite of the mother's efforts to save her. This heroic woman only saved herself by climbing a coconut-tree. I examined her carefully, and, being unable to detect any evidence of leprosy, ordered that she be liberated.

*Penrhyn.*

Penrhyn has not experienced any severe storm during the last hurricane season.

There are two settlements on the island, the chief of which—Omoka—has about two hundred inhabitants. The other village—Te Tautua—is about eight or nine miles distant on the other side of the lagoon, and has approximately a hundred people.

In each settlement the concrete tanks of 5,000 gallons capacity provide a good supply of drinking-water, the church-roofs acting as collecting-surfaces.

The health of the people cannot be described as satisfactory, and this is not surprising considering the circumstances under which the Natives live. The houses in the settlement of Omoka are much too close together, forming a congested area on which all sorts of filthy rubbish lie. Taking into consideration that the Native method, or want of method, of disposing of refuse is to throw it on the ground outside their houses, it may well be guessed that the soil in the neighbourhood will be badly contaminated with decaying and putrifying organic material, and that this is so is well attested by the horrible effluvium which everywhere assails the nostrils. The majority of the houses are in a dilapidated and wretched condition, unpainted, and built of old and rotting boarding. Coconut shells and husks, empty tins, &c., are thrown into the lagoon, and the beach of the small bay in which the settlement is located is littered with hundreds of such receptacles for rain-water, which thus form breeding-grounds for the mosquitoes, which are very numerous. A slimy evil-smelling mud has formed along the shore of the bay, and in calm weather the stench from this stagnant water is exceedingly unpleasant, and must be prejudicial to health.

Much could be done to better the conditions by a vigorous policy of supervision. The Natives should be compelled to keep their houses in sanitary repair, suitable arrangements should be made for the disposal of household and other refuse, and on no account should pollution of the lagoon be countenanced.

At the time of my visit there were no lepers on the Molokai, which is the island set apart for sufferers from the disease. I examined, however, two female suspects who had been isolated on land near the Settlement of Tautua and four suspects (two male and two female) on the Island of Tokerau. These six people I ordered to be sent to the Molokai as lepers. Another female who had been brought from the Molokai, and was living in Omoka, I ordered to be sent back.

*A Note upon Leprosy in the Cook and Northern Islands.*

It has been asserted that leprosy is rife in the Cook Islands, but in my opinion there is nothing to justify such a contention. Possibly a definite statement as to the actual facts will dispel the illusion that the disease is here widespread or highly prevalent. I have confidence in speaking on this subject, as during the last two years and a half I have visited all the Islands of the Cook Group, and in most of them have dwelt for days or months visiting all the settlements and practically every house on them, and I have just returned from a tour of inspection which included all the inhabited islands of the northern group, during which I had ample time in each island to carry out the necessary investigations.

At present I know of fifteen cases of leprosy, distributed as follows: Aitutaki, 3; Palmerston, 2; Rakahanga, 3; Penrhyn, 7. There are also three suspects in Rakahanga and one in Penrhyn, who have been isolated. In Mangaia, Mauke, Mitiaro, Atiu, Pukapuka, and Manihiki I have not discovered