

THE MARQUESES.

MARQUESAS - a small group of islands lying 740 miles northeast of Tahiti

THEY - consist of eleven islands
- three large and eight small.

IN 1840 - the populations was
around the 100.000. Today it barely
numbers 2.500.

AREA - total area is 490 square miles. The principal islands are:-

HIVA-OA, 23 miles long by 11 broad. It is well watered and has, like other islands in group, an excellent climate where almost anything can be grown. Features of the island are : - Atunoa valley and a plateau, a thousand feet high. Mt. Temetiu, 4,000 is the highest mountain. It was on this island that Paul Gauguin, famous French artist, lived, died and was buried.

MUKUHIVA - 20 miles long and 12 wide, contains 47 square miles. Lies 70 miles to north of Hiva-oa. Very rich land, broad well watered valleys, lying between broad and well watered bush-clad hills. Once an important spot where Bishops and Governors' resided. Now desolate.

FATUHIWA - most southerly of group. Chief harbour is Oomoa. Rocky and forbidding coast, has mountains in interior rising to 3,000 feet.

TAHUATA - lies close to Hiva-oa and most notable as place where French first gained footing in 1841.. The native chief, Ioete, not being able to maintain order invited French to assist him : they did by helping themselves to the islands. The group now part of France's Colonial Empire.

OTHER - islands are smaller, in some mountains rise to 3,000 feet. All are noted for rich land, good climate and profusion of tropical fruit.

HERMAN Melville's book, "Typee" describes Marquesas Life. We recommend the book and have a copy which may be borrowed.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON - writing on the Islands said :- " The history of the Marquesas is.... much confused by the coming and going of the French. At least twice they have seized the archipelago and at least once deserted it and in the meanwhile the natives pursued, almost without interr-

uption, their desultory cannibal war

Ho and other writers comment on the enormous harm done to the natives by the introduction of opium.

IN his book, "White Shadows Over The South Seas ", O'Brien, writes :-

"The story of the Marquesas is one of the most tragic and sorrowful in the history of the South Seas. We Europeans can feel nothing but shame as we contemplate the record - even as we are acknowledging that there are wonderful opportunities awaiting in the Marquesas for the colonists who can take the place of the dead and dying Polynesians The white man brought the Chinese, and with them leprosy. The Chinese were imported to aid the white man in stealing the native land of the Marquesans and to keep the Chinese contented, opium was brought with him. Finding it eagerly craved by the ignorant native, the foolish white fastened this vice also upon his other desired slave. The French Govt., for forty thousand francs, licensed an opium farmer to sell the drug still faster, and not until alarmed by the results and shamed by the outcry in Europe, did it forbid the devastating narcotic. Too late! Health and happiness were destroyed because the white man came here to gratify his cupidity. The priest could bring no inspiration, sufficient to overcome the degradation caused by the traders. The Marquesans saw that Jesus had small influence over their rulers. Civilisation lost its opportunity because it gave precept, but no example."

".....The Marquesans were among the most handsome and charming people in the South Seas - magnificent physical specimens; and they were literally preyed upon by all the most evil elements among the wandering Europeans. The men were taught opium smoking and alcohol - the women were debauched. Disease went through their ranks like wild-fire --- they literally died in masses " .

Pacific Islands Year Book.

(For position of Marquesas see Map in Mess .)

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NEVER before has Alf Saunders moved so fast; it is questionable whether he will ever register it again....not unless he again runs into a swarm of bees as he did this morning when he found himself among the swarm. Asked why he concealed his turn of speed he said: "I cant let them see just what I can do."