

Chateau Larose in the company of indigenous damsels, whose eyes and curls (to borrow an expression of Artemus Ward) "were enough to make a man jump into a mill-pond without bidding his relations good-bye."

A history of this Island of Tahiti, written by some man possessing the requisite local knowledge, could not fail to be intensely interesting, and, if truthfully recorded, would prove unquestionably valuable in the future. To begin with their own account of themselves. Barbarian tradition is not worth much, but if supported by any collateral testimony, possesses a certain amount of value to the scientific inquirer. We will set aside the question of who were the three Maouii who fished up the earth from the bottom of the ocean? or the whereabouts of the mysterious Hawaii (Hawaiki); the legend of the Are Ura (Whare Kura), which reminds one strangely of some part of the "Niebelungen Lied" (it is to be regretted that some of the scholars of Europe do not get hold of these stories and investigate them), the voyages of Rongomatane, or the sorceries of Hine nui te Po. These may be mere myths, but are, for all that, strongly suggestive of some ancient connection between these Maoris (as Maoris they call themselves, all the copper-coloured races of the Pacific) and some of the peoples of the old world. But these questions lie within the domain of legitimate inquiry: From whence came the builders of pyramids so enormous as those which are (or were) to be found in the Society Islands? Who were those white men of whom they spoke as having come to them from the rising sun? What men put up that iron cross on Taravau with the monogram of the King of Spain upon it? From whence came that ram which Cook found on Bora Bora? There is something worth knowing at the bottom of all this, if one could only get at the truth. Ay! but truth is so hard to get at, as we have a notable instance in the case of the mutiny of the "Bounty"—a story so well known to the world that one would have thought it altogether disposed of. But here we have now, more than eighty years after, a new history of that affair, published with evidence so reliable that we find the leading newspapers of Great Britain lauding the memory of Fletcher Christian as "an unfortunate, brave, and honorable man," and lamenting that Captain Bligh "should have ever afterwards been permitted to hold His Majesty's commission, instead of being held up to universal contempt." Truly time is the great avenger, and sets many a man's memory right before posterity; but that that is any advantage to the dead man is not so obvious.

Then followed the arrival of the first missionaries from Europe, who, like the traveller in the Gospel, "fell among thieves" by the way, from whose hands the Emperor Napoleon (premier) did generously release them, bidding them God-speed on the good work upon which they were engaged, and to whom they rendered that amount of gratitude which might from them be reasonably expected. After this succeeded the long wars of Pomare the Great, (?) of which it is a pity that the world does not know more, as the recital of them would materially support the aphorism that "Jesuitism is not confined to Rome." Let us not despise the day of small things; there is a useful lesson to be gained even out of the politics of Lilliput—and there were great men who came to the surface in those days: Joe, the armourer, who first fixed a cannon upon a slide between two double canoes; and Roberts, who had once been a clerk in Cox and Greenwood's, who was the King's Minister; and Rigole, the Captain of the Guard. Ah, one should have seen these things, or have heard them from the lips of those who passed through it all, as I have heard! These were stirring times. None the less so when the young Queen came to wear the maro, "La Reine des Gabiers," she who is Queen even now, though a pensioner of France—an old woman with wrinkled cheeks and a scarlet gown. She is not much to look at now, but many men in times past have taken their lives in their hands to do her a service; and I do not suppose, since the days of Chastelard, there lived a woman about whom more lies have been told. She was a woman who, as she never failed to make friends, never forgot them, and she had many brave and clever men. Captains Hunter, and Henry, Middleton, Moerenhout, the Baron de Thierry; but she had one evil genius, whose name was Pritchard, who took upon himself the office of her political adviser, and, embroiling her in a quarrel with the Jesuits, caused her kingdom to be taken from under her feet.

I have said this much concerning Tahiti for the reason that it is the longest known to us of any of the islands inhabited by the Maori race. The immediate cause of its annexation by a European State was the mismanagement of a man who had virtually usurped to himself the supreme power on the place, and who was destitute of commercial or political experience. That which did so happen to the Tahitians is an example (with variations of the *modus operandi*) of what most eventually happen to every other island of the Pacific—to wit, an epitome of the manifest destiny of all Polynesia.

NO. II.—TAHITI AND SOUTH SEA TRADE.

Although the Island of Tahiti might have been rendered immensely productive, consisting as it does of volcanic ridges of inexhaustible fertility and valleys watered by abundant streams, it has never proved of much commercial value to France. The only object which induced the Government of that country to take possession of it having been to secure to themselves a naval station and penal settlement for military or political offenders, industry of any kind never received much encouragement from the State until a few years prior to the fall of the Emperor Napoleon, when an immense plantation of coffee, cotton, and other products was instituted at Atimaona, with Government assistance, under the name of "Terre Eugenie," a concern which has chiefly passed into the hands of English proprietors. The French do not usually make successful colonists or pioneers of commerce. Whatsoever settlements they found in foreign dependencies are commonly of one distinctive character—a caserne and canteen, some gun batteries, a Bureau maritime, café and billiards, *voilà tout*. A little life is visible in the early morning and in the afternoon. At midday all the town is asleep; scarcely any sound disturbs the stillness, but the wind among the green alleys which border the streets, and the tramp of the gendarme as his sword clanks upon the stones.

Exclusive of the landing of military stores and material, the traffic of Papeète (the principal seaport of Tahiti) has been almost entirely inaugurated and supported by English enterprise; most of the leading merchants having been of that nation, their ventures in the majority of cases having been pre-eminently successful, some of them having realized very handsome fortunes. For example, a merchant who landed there, within my recollection, with, according to his own statement, only a few shillings in