

I.—The Islands
generally:
Mr. Seede.

largest island of the group is called Kotoo, and is scarcely two miles long, and about the same breadth; a coral reef surrounds it. Its N.W. extremity is as low as Hapai, and around it are eight other islands, as shown on the charts.

Tofoa, or *Toofoa*, an active volcanic island, lies to the N.W. of Kotoo, in lat. 19° 45' S., long. 175° 3' W., according to D'Urville, and is about 2,800 feet high. A remarkable lake is said to exist on it, from which the islanders bring small black volcanic pebbles, which are much in request, to cover the graves of their friends. It is covered with trees to the summit, and is about five miles in diameter.

Kao is a vast rock of a conical figure, and about 5,000 feet high, to the N.E. of Tofoa.

Vavau Group.—This, which is the northernmost cluster, is one of the most important, as it is perhaps as much frequented as any. It lies seventy miles N.N.E. of the Hapai group. Vavau is the principal island of the group.

Latte or *Lette Island* lies to the west of the Vavau group. It is a high island, formerly a volcano. The peak, 1,790 feet high, is in the centre of the island, from which the hill falls with a pretty gradual slope into the sea. The island is six or seven miles in circumference, and is sufficiently high to be seen at twenty leagues off.

Amargura, or *Fanoualsi*, is the northernmost of the group. It is a barren spot. It is formed of two hills, the N.E. the highest, connected by a very low space, everywhere surrounded by rocky cliffs, except in two places on the west side.

The following particulars regarding Tonga-tabu are extracted from Lieut. Meade's account of the South Sea Islands, visited by him in 1865, in H.M.S. "Curaçoa":—

"The native population numbers from 9,000 to 10,000, all of whom profess Christianity.

"The present King, whose name is George Trebon and title 'Tui Kanakabulu,' governs with the assistance of a Parliament of chiefs, and has reigned for twenty years. There are fifty-four Europeans in the island, who look to the Consular Agent in the Fijis."

In Commodore Wilkes's account of this island (1840) he states that "The natives cultivate yams, sweet potatoes, bananas, cocoanuts, bread-fruit, sugar-cane, shaddock, limes, and the ti (*Spondias dulcis*); the pandanus is much attended to, and is one of their most useful trees, and of it all their mats are made; a little corn is grown, and they have the paparo apple (*Papaya*) and water-melon. The missionaries have introduced the sweet orange from Tahiti, and a species of chirimoyer (*Aunona*). The botany of this island resembles that of the Samoan group. A species of nutmeg was found here, differing from either of the Samoan ones; the trees were full of fruit and much larger; one of them was observed 1½ feet in diameter, and upwards of 40 feet in height."

Fiji.

Admiral Washington, the late Hydrographer to the Admiralty, in his report dated the 12th March, 1859, in reply to certain questions sent to him by the Colonial Office, states that the "Fiji group consists of some 200 islands, islets, and rocks, 1,900 miles N.E. of Sydney, and 1,200 north of Auckland; the two largest islands may be some 300 miles in circumference: 65 of the islets said to be inhabited."

A proposition was made in 1858, by Thakombau, the present King of Fiji, to cede the sovereignty of the group to Great Britain. The British Government thereupon sent Colonel Smythe, R.A., in December, 1859, as a special commissioner to inquire into the nature of the cession, and as to the desirability or otherwise of accepting it. Colonel Smythe, it will be remembered, reported that it was not advisable to accept this offer.

The principal islands are—Viti Levu, Vanua Levu, Ovalau, Lakemba, Koro, Moala, Totoia, Vuna, Kandavau, Ngau, Vanua, Valavo Vatata, and Yasawa. The following description of them is abridged from that given in Findlay's *South Pacific Directory*:—

The island of *Viti Levu* is the largest of the Fijian group. The affix Levu means "great," thus Viti Levu means Great Fiji. It is about thirty miles in length by fifty-five in breadth.

Vanua Levu ("great land") is the great northern island of the group. Its greatest length is about ninety-six miles from E.S.E. to W.N.W., and its average breadth may be about twenty-five miles.

Ovalau is eight miles in length north and south, by seven miles in breadth east and west; it is of volcanic formation, and its rocks are composed of a conglomerate or pudding-stone; it is high and rugged throughout. The valleys only extend a short distance into the interior, and leave but little level ground; they are, however, exceedingly fertile and well cultivated. Ovalau is the principal residence of the white men of the group. It possesses a fine harbour, Levuka, on its eastern side. It has always been the favourite residence of the whites, and must continue so to be from its central position with regard to the remainder of the group.

Lakemba is the largest island of the eastern group. Its form is nearly round, with an extensive encircling reef. Lakemba is five miles from east to west by three miles north and south, and, like the rest of this (the eastern) group, is of volcanic formation. The soil is similar to that of Vanua, composed of a dark-red loam.

Koro, or *Goro*, is considered by the natives one of the most fruitful islands of the group. It is a high island, though not so much so as the others, and from appearance would be susceptible of cultivation to its very top. The island is nine and three-quarter miles long by four miles wide. The produce of Koro is oil and tortoise shell, and exceeds in quantity that of any other island of the group.

Moala, or *Monala*, is of a triangular form, and may be about eighteen or twenty miles in circuit. It is mountainous and volcanic, about 2,000 feet high, and covered with wood.

Totoia is of a circular form, six miles in diameter, and when viewed from its peak presents a huge extinct crater, now full of ocean water, of thirty fathoms depth, over a space of three miles diameter; the wash of the tide and swell on the southern side has reduced the rim to low-water level, while the ridge contains peaks nearly 1,200 feet above the sea, surrounding this large but