

Their canoes are exceedingly graceful and light, and without the outriggers common to all others. The natives also possess large war canoes carrying from thirty to sixty men, and in these they traverse great distances, sometimes beyond the sight of land. They are skilful in carving, and most of their implements are inlaid with the mother-of-pearl shell.

I.—The Islands generally: Mr. Seed.

#### LOUISIADE ARCHIPELAGO,

Near the south-east end of New Guinea, embraces the following islands: Adele Island, Roussel Island, the Rénard Islands, St. Aignan Island, De Boyne Islands, the Bonvouloir Isles, D'Entrecasteaux Islands, and the Trobriand Islands.

Roussel and St. Aignan are the largest of the group; the last named is about twenty-seven miles in length. The others are small coral-islands. This group is but imperfectly known, and little or no intercourse appears to have been had with the natives, who are said to be numerous. The known productions of the islands are coconuts, yams, bananas, and sweet potatoes.

It is probable that fuller information regarding this group will result from Captain Moresby's recent visit to the coasts of New Guinea in H.M. ship "Basilisk," under his command.

#### NEW BRITAIN AND NEW IRELAND

Are two large islands situated between the eastern part of New Guinea and the equator; contiguous to them are numerous smaller islands.

The western part of New Britain is thus described by M. D'Urville, who visited it in 1827:—

"Rarely has nature imprinted so delicious an aspect on a country untouched by the hand of man, with such an agreeable diversity of surface and beautiful effects of perspective. The coast throughout quite safe, accessible, and washed by tranquil waves; the land gently rising in the form of an amphitheatre in various places, here and there shaded by dark forests, or by less thick vegetation, and more particularly by extensive tracts of greensward, the yellowish tints of which contrasted richly with the darker shades of the more sombre forests and woods surrounding them. The two peaks of Mount Gloucester crowned this smiling scene with their imposing masses, their majestic summits frequently hidden in the clouds. In all the western quarter, and at twelve miles distance, our horizon was occupied by the undulating lines of Rook Island, which, with New Britain, forms the Strait of Dampier."

#### ADMIRALTY ISLANDS.

The largest of this group is Admiralty Island, the centre of which is in lat. 2° 18' S., long. 146° 44' E. Some of the islands of this group are described as being thickly populated by an apparently happy and contented people. They appear to live principally on coconuts, which are abundant on the islands.

#### TOKELAU OR UNION GROUP, ELLICE GROUP, AND GILBERT OR KINGSMILL GROUP.

These islands are thus described by the Rev. J. S. Whitmee, of the London Missionary Society, who visited them, in the mission barque "John Williams," in 1870:—

##### "Tokelau or Union Group.

"This group consists of three clusters of islets, named respectively Takafo, Nukunono, and Atafu. The islets of each cluster are connected by a reef, forming one of the numerous atolls to be found in the Pacific. These reefs are more or less circular in form, enclosing a lagoon in the centre. The land is formed on the raised reef by the washing of sand and broken coral from the sea during rough weather. In some of the older atolls the land is connected and forms a continuous ring round the lagoon; but more commonly land exists only here and there along the reef, thus forming a ring of islands, some from one mile to six miles in length, covered with coconut and palm and other trees, and some only a few yards across, upon which two or three stunted coconuts barely manage to exist, while others again are mere sandbanks destitute of all vegetable life.

"*Takafo* (Bowditch Island), lat. 9° 26', long. 171° 12' W.—The most easterly in the group, consists of more than twenty small islands, encircling a lagoon eight miles long by five miles wide. All the islands are very barren, yielding little except coconuts, palms, and a species of edible pandanus. Upon these and fish, which are plentiful, the people entirely subsist, and they appear to thrive very well upon them. The population of the island is only 223 at the present time, and more than two-thirds of the adults are females.

"*Atafu* (Duke of York Island), in lat. 8° 33' S., and long. 172° 25' W.—This atoll is of similar formation to Takafo, but the lagoon is smaller. The islands studding the annular reef are about twenty in number, and consist of sand and broken coral washed up by the action of the waves, without the slightest trace of soil. Here I had a peep into the secret of island formation. As I was walking on one side of the island on which the village is situated I noticed a series of sandy mounds running parallel with the coast, and varying from 10 to 50 feet in breadth. Some had coconut palms and pandanus already growing on them and producing fruit, on others the vegetation was of a more recent growth, while others were bare, or with only a few of the pandanus fruit, which had by some accident been cast upon them, sprouting and giving promise for the future. The outer mound was fully 50 feet across it, and had been washed up during heavy weather at the beginning of the present year. The population of the island is 136, it having been greatly diminished by Peruvian slavers.

##### "*Ellice Group.*

"*Nukulaelae* (Mitchell Island or Group).—It lies in lat. 9° 18' S., and long. 179° 48' E. There are several small islands encircling this lagoon, on one of the largest of which is the village. The population is very small, only ninety at the present time. This is the place where the Peruvian slavers made the greatest havoc in 1863.