

I.—The Islands  
generally:  
Mr. Seed.

"*Funafuti* (Ellice Island).—We reached this atoll the day after leaving Nukulaelae. Its position is in lat.  $8^{\circ} 29' S.$ , and long.  $179^{\circ} 21' E.$  The lagoon is twelve miles or more in one direction by five or six miles in the other. In two places there is a sufficient depth of water over the reef to allow vessels to go inside the lagoon. Captain Fowler took the vessel inside and anchored. The island presents an appearance very similar to the others we had visited. Some of them were evidently older than any we had hitherto seen, except Quiros Island. The island on which the village stands could boast of a nearer approach to a legitimate soil; consequently more variety of food is produced. Besides the cocoanut palm, which is almost sure to be found wherever a sand-bank raises its head above low-water mark, and the pandanus, we found here a few breadfruit trees and bananas, with two species of the edible *arum* or taro. One of these grows to an immense size; and, although to our palates it appeared to be quantity without quality, it doubtless is an acceptable addition to the alimentary stores of those whose daily fare is chiefly confined to cocoanuts, pandanus, fruit, and fish. The way the people cultivate the taro, bananas, &c., in these islands is worthy of a brief notice in passing. They dig large trenches, like wide moats, along the centre of the islands. Some of these are from 100 to 200 yards across them, and from 6 to 8 feet deep. To carry out the sand from these trenches must have been the work of generations. These low levels are moist, and on them they make as much soil as possible by throwing in decayed wood and leaves, and here they plant every thing which requires special care. Nothing edible but the cocoanut and the pandanus grows on the upper sand. We brought two cases of useful plants from Samoa, and distributed them amongst the islands we visited, in order to add to the temporal as well the spiritual well-being of the people. These were very gladly received.

"*Vaitupu* (Tracy Island), lat.  $7^{\circ} 31' S.$ , long.  $178^{\circ} 46' E.$ —We reached this island the morning after we left Funafuti, October 7. It is nearly round, about four miles across, and has a salt-water lagoon in the centre, completely shut off from the sea by a ring-like strip of land about half a mile across. The island is evidently older than some of the others we have visited, and is more productive. Cocoanut palms are very abundant and very productive. There is also a good supply of taro, and there are some bananas. Their people are the most advanced we have yet visited. They were delighted to see the missionary ship, and gave us a hearty reception. The population amounts to 376; and besides these there were thirty or forty natives of Nintao, a heathen island in the group, here on a visit. Before we went ashore we were struck with the appearance of the settlement, which is very pretty. A neat stone chapel stands in the foreground, behind which is the teacher's house, while on either side are ranged the houses of the natives.

"*Nukufetau* (De Peyster Island), in lat.  $7^{\circ} 51' S.$ , and long.  $178^{\circ} 35' E.$ , was the next atoll at which we called. We arrived on Sunday morning, October 9. Here there is a large lagoon, surrounded by a coral reef, on which a number of islands have been formed. The village is on one of the larger islands. There is a passage into the lagoon by which ships may enter, so we went in and anchored. The description of Funafuti will apply equally well to Nukufetau, except that the lagoon in the latter is smaller and more circular in form. The population of the island is 202.

"*Nui* (Netherland Island).—We reached this island the morning after leaving Nukufetau, October 11. It lies in lat.  $7^{\circ} 15' S.$ , and long.  $177^{\circ} E.$  It is a single island, nearly circular, with a lagoon on one side of it partly open to the sea, but with no entrance for ships. Its productions are similar to those of Vaitupu, and very abundant. The people are very different from those peopling the rest of the Ellice group. All the other islands have been peopled from Samoa. The Samoan language is the basis of theirs, and they have traditions of their forefathers being drifted from Samoa to Vaitupu, whence they spread to the other islands. On Nui the people trace their origin to the Gilbert group, and they speak the language of that group, which is totally different from the Samoan. Here, for the first time, I had to speak entirely through an interpreter. The entire population is 212.

"*Niutao* (Speiden Island).—This island is in lat.  $6^{\circ} 8' S.$ , and long.  $177^{\circ} 22' E.$  It lies to windward of Nui, and we had light winds and calms on the way, so we were more than two days in reaching it. We landed on the morning of October 15. The island is of similar formation to the others we had visited, but has, I was told, two lagoons. I saw one. It is very shallow, and not more than one mile across. The belt of land around is not less than from three-quarters of a mile to one mile broad. This lagoon is situated in one end of the island, and I was told there is a similar one at the other end, but I had no time to visit it. The island is plentifully supplied with cocoanut palms and bananas, but there is not much besides of an edible nature. At the time of our visit there was a scarcity of food on account of a long-continued drought. The population on the island at present is about 360; but over 100 people are away at other islands, many of them at Vaitupu.

"*Numomaga* (Hudson Island).—This island lies to the west of Niutao. I determined not to detain the vessel to call at the island, but to proceed at once to the north, and visit the Gilbert group.

"*Nanomea* (St. Augustine Island) is in lat.  $5^{\circ} 38' S.$ , and long.  $176^{\circ} 17' E.$  This is the last island in the Ellice group. As a call there would have taken us fifty miles to leeward of our course for the Gilbert Islands, we proceeded first to that group, and called at this island on our return south. But I will give my notice of it here, and finish with this group before describing our work in the other.

"We reached Nanomea on Sunday morning, October 23. There are two islands within three or four miles of each other, connected by a reef, which is dry at low water. The westerly island is named Lakena. It is nearly round, two miles or more across, well stocked with cocoanut and other trees, and has a deep fresh-water lagoon in its centre. The natives described it as being unfathomable; but by that they would only mean they cannot dive to the bottom. This and Quiros are the only two islands where I have found fresh-water lagoons. Lakena is not inhabited, but is used by the people on the other island for the cultivation of food. Nanomea is the name of the other island, which is about four miles long, by one or two wide. It has a shallow salt-water lagoon towards the east end, partially open to the sea.