

not approach what can be annually realized from a mile of cocoanut plantation, cultivated and utilized as they are on the coasts of Cochin or Malabar.

Great profits have in past times attended the traffic in cocoanut oil, which is now becoming superseded by the kobra, or dried material, as involving less labour, less waste and stowage room, as well as when manufactured in Europe producing a superior sample of clear oil, free from rancid smell, and leaving the substance of the nut available for cattle-food, for which purpose it is largely sold, pressed into cakes after the manner of linseed. When it comes to be generally known here that for several years back not less than a dozen large ships, despatched by some of the leading mercantile firms of Hamburg and Bremen, have been always to be found loading in one group or other of the Pacific with this material alone, we can surely reasonably expect that Auckland will eventually secure to itself some share of a trade so profitable as this unquestionably is.

1.—Trade and trading arrangements : Mr. Stergdale.

#### NO. IV.—TAHITI AND RAIATEA.

Although the Island of Tahiti is inexhaustibly fertile, it is not superior in that respect to Raiatea, another great island of the same group. There, walking up any of the central valleys, one sees the mountains clothed up to the very summits with plantains, feiis, and bananas, growing altogether wild, and so thickly that the valley bears the aspect of a golden forest. But it is merely a beautiful wilderness. There are no systematic industries beyond a few small plantations of cotton and sugar-cane, the property of sons of missionaries of European extraction. The island is not half populated, and the lives of the inhabitants are spent in idleness, intoxication, and occasional civil war. The people of the neighbouring island of Huahine vegetate under precisely the same conditions—vice, and an indolence from which they never awaken unless it be to quarrel among themselves or with the foreigners with whom they come into contact, is with them the rule of life. Many lamentations have been poured forth by persons interested in South Sea missions concerning the evil influences of French domination over the Society Islanders; but their premisses are groundless, and their arguments unsound. The Tahitian race never could be rendered systematically industrious or truly enlightened; they were always, and still are, indolent, luxurious, superstitious, and incurably vicious. Although by nature gentle, amiable, generous, and intensely affectionate, they delivered themselves up *con amore* to the vilest forms of heathen superstition, in the practice of which they exhibited an amount of depravity almost unparalleled in the history of mankind. Their conversion to Christianity was—I will not say in every individual case, but certainly in the aggregate—either mere pretence, induced by the liberal bestowal of blue beads, tomahawks, cotton print, and the like valuables; or the exchange of one superstition for another, generated by reverence for the superior strength of the gods of those invincible strangers who wielded the lightning of the musket and the cannon. It needs that one should live intimately among them to know them well, and such as have done so are very well aware that they are still as grossly superstitious as they were a hundred years ago: in fact, if not in outward form, like the strange nations which the Assyrians transported to Samaria, “they fear the Lord, but still unto this day they do after the former manners,” and they love the memory (and still play the rôle) of the Aroli libertinism in which their forefathers were wont to dwell, though they have broken their idols and thrown down their stones of sacrifice. I have said they have no industry; but in their heathen days they practised a certain degree of it. They had all their own clothing to make, and very beautifully and ingeniously they made it from silky bark and fibres of trees. This was the work of women. The men laboured at the building of great canoes, wherein they made voyages round the Low Archipelago, the Austral Isles, and to Nukuhiva. Now, it is hard to persuade them to work at anything, unless it be some kind of occupation very easy, and speedily profitable to them, such as the gathering of oranges or fungus, or the making at times of a few barrels of lime-juice or cocoanut oil. Of course, all of them (except chiefs) work a little, but the amount of time spent in useful occupation is but a tithe of that consumed by them in idleness and debauchery. They never look poverty-stricken. The men are always well dressed in white shirts and “parieus” of figured cotton; the women in prints of elegant patterns, in the choice of which they display wonderfully good taste, and in the care of them the most fastidious cleanliness, being in this respect, in all that concerns their domestic habits, as superior to the common people of any nation of the earth with which we are acquainted as they are remarkable for the entire absence of moral purity—a virtue which it would be as vain to look for among them as to expect to “gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles,” though one might surely look for better things if one were to believe all the twaddle which has been written about them. Every one who intimately knows the Tahitian people must candidly confess that all attempts to inculcate persistent industry have resulted in complete failure. They will not work any more than is sufficient to supply them with clothes and rum, which last they regard as a necessary of life; the food they require, being produced spontaneously upon their fertile lands, or easily caught in their coral bays, costs them little trouble to obtain.

Consequently, in the coming time, when Tahiti becomes (as it inevitably will become) a great centre of commercial activity, the labour required to conduct the plantations which will cover the whole available surface of the Society group must be obtained from elsewhere, not exactly as is at present the case at Atimaona and Moorea, where Chinese coolies and Kingsmill savages have been imported in swarms, but a European race will establish themselves upon the land, who will perform their own labour chiefly with their own hands. They will not be the sickly sort of Papalangis whom one sees now generally throughout Polynesia on mission or trading stations, who have reduced themselves to a condition of chronic dyspepsia by persisting in European habits of food and living (ignoring the fact of their utter unsuitability to the dwellers in the torrid zone), or who kill their livers with alcohol, and then lay the blame on the climate, but men healthy, powerful, bronzed, and hardy, accustomed to paddle their own canoe, not afraid to look the blazing sun in the face, to plunge into the foam of a breaker, or make their way to land upon a surf-beaten shore: such men as Jeff Strickland, of Aitutaki; William Masters, of Palmerston; Eli Jennings, of Quiros Isle;