I.—Trade and trading arrangements: Mr. Sterndale.

otherwise the oil penetrates the concrete and destroys its cohesion. A vessel of this class—the "Cæsar Godeffroy"—was ballasted with brickwork bound together and levelled with a floor of cement as hard as marble; but it was found after carrying a cargo of kobra that the cement had decomposed and the ballast was all adrift.

Such small vessels as cruise round the islands to pick up cargoes and carry them to central dépôts, such as Tahiti, Samoa, Vavao, or Tongatabu, take their kobra in bags for the convenience of transhipment, or in baskets of nikau (cocoanut leaf), made by the natives. The price usually paid by the traders for the dried material varies from one to three cents per pound in goods upon which the usual profit varies from 100 to 300 per cent. Thus, low lines of prints costing from 7d. to 8d. per fathom are retailed at 2s. Shirts which cost in the colonies 15s. per dozen are sold at 6s. a-piece, needles one penny each, and a small reel of sewing cotton 1s. A card of what is called Vandyke braid (an article in great demand in the islands) costs 7d., and contains 21 fathoms; it is usual to retail it at one real (or 6d.) per fathom! What comes under the denomination of "manongi," that is to say, bergamot, musk, or the like strong scents (of which the Polynesians are intensely fond, and which they consequently buy with the greatest avidity), constitutes a very profitable medium of exchange, insomuch as in Sydney this article is obtained at 7s. per dozen vial bottles, which it is usual to retail to the barbarians at one dollar each! Combs, looking-glasses, and gilt ornaments command proportionately high prices; and upon fish-hooks, files, and various iron implements the profits are very great. Cavendish tobacco is in all cases a dollar a pound, and prints, of whatsoever kind, are never sold at less than half-a-dollar per fathom; the superior lines and Turkey-red muslin, as likewise denims and twilled duck, always 75 cents. In the matter of ribbons, dyed feathers, beads, &c., the trader "sticks it on" according to his judgment, regulated by the amount of anxiety to possess these articles exhibited by the natives with whom he may be dealing. A judicious trafficker, on going ashore for the purpose of trade, usually makes himself a perambulating advertisement of his own goods, thus: He puts on a pair of trousers of precisely that kind he is most anxious to sell—a shirt of some gaudy colour or "flash of lightning" pattern, round his waist he winds a crape sash or piece of handkerchief of imitation silk, he wears a felt hat with a huge buckle and a great bunch of dyed feathers of the most gorgeous description, his ears are pierced and loaded with gilt rings, round his neck are wound several yards of ribbon, strings of beads, chains, &c., and his clothing is saturated with bergamot, verbena, or some similar perfume; as by these kinds of strong scents the Polynesians are as irresistibly attracted as rats are by that of aniseed, or dogs by the odour of a red herring. Thus attired, regardless of expense, he is looked upon as a sublime personage, and marches up the village street escorted by a dense crowd of simple islanders bursting with admiration, pushing and "scrouging" to get a nearer view of his gorgeous habiliments, influenced by much the same feelings with which the ladies of London regarded the Persian Shah.

Each article of his dress or ornament is separately criticised, and when informed that any one of these splendid things can be purchased so cheaply—only a basket or two of kobra or a few calabashes of oil—they become wild with excitement, and rush off to collect their produce so as to be in time, lest the stock of valuables should be soon exhausted. Once get Kanakas to fancy a thing, and they are not particular what they have to pay for it; furthermore, when one man buys a thing all his friends and neighbours commonly go in for the same kind of investment. One very good way of "heaving a sprat to catch a mackerel," is to present to the chief or great Panjandrum of the settlement a sample of whatsoever stock you desire most especially to get rid of. The distinguished personage is certain to wear it in public, and the people to buy the like from the force of example. Although on most of the semi-civilized islands of the Pacific articles of dress, ornament, and domestic comfort are the commodities most in demand, there are other groups where kobra and pearl shell are obtainable, and where firearms, swords, and other weapons are required in exchange. In such cases, enormous profits are frequently made. Thus, in 1871, Mr. Vogleman sold to the King of Apiang a 4-pound iron gun (which had been put into his vessel as ballast) for 30,000 dried cocoanuts, of which the value in the islands was 300 dollars (£60). The piece of ordnance itself was intrinsically worth £1, the price of old iron, it being thickly coated with rust, and honeycombed to a degree which rendered it very dangerous to discharge. At the same time, his Majesty bought a quantity of gunpowder at a rate corresponding to five dollars per pound, and a number of lobster cans filled with scrap iron at a proportionately high figure.

Near about the same date, Captain Hayes sold to the people of Huahine a 9-pound gun, upon a slide, for 1,000 dollars' worth of cocoanut oil and oranges; and swords at 20 dollars each, which had been bought from Spence Brothers, of Melbourne, at half-a-crown!

On some islands, where cocoanut is dried in great quantities, such as the Kingsmills and Mulgrave's, the natives, who are a low type of savages, exhibit no desire for any articles of barter beyond knives, tomahawks, blue beads, and tobacco. This last they have been used to obtain from Sydney traders. It is of the description known as "sheepwash," of a very vile kind, inasmuch as they have been known to retail it to white men at 1s. per lb. It was quite of a similar character of excellence to a brand of gin which a year or two back was being retailed in the islands at 9s. per case of 15 quart bottles. It was known by the name of "chain lightning," and in flavour and aroma resembled that methylated spirit which in Australia is distilled out of gum timber in charcoal factories. This delectable elixir was brought to the islands by a New Zealand trader, but what city of the Southern Hemisphere could claim the credit of its manufacture is one of the mysteries which will probably never be solved in this world.

The process of the manufacture of kobra is of the simplest kind. The best is that which is dried whole in the nut. For this purpose nothing is necessary but a large house or shed in which to stack the nuts. They must be placed upon a floor or stage to prevent them from touching the ground, else they will not dry but grow. The husk must not be removed, otherwise the eye in the end would be attacked by the "kalulu," a sort of cockroach, for the sake of the water they contain; and, the air being admitted to the interior, the kernel would at once begin to decay. If