

*Aitutaki* is smaller than *Mangaia*, but of the same character. Also without harbour or anchorage, but surrounded by an ocean coral-reef as well as a shore reef. The ocean reef is said to be sixty miles in circuit. The lagoon, thus formed off one end of the island, is a large sheet of water and described as capable, by a moderate outlay, of being made suitable for large vessels. If so, the position with regard to a future canal at Nicaragua would be valuable. Population: native, about fifteen hundred, with only one European trader. There is also a resident English missionary and native school.

*Atiu*, *Maukè*, and *Mitiaro* may be treated together, the two latter having been formerly conquered, after long and hard fighting, by the King of *Atiu*, who is therefore lord of the other two islands. *Atiu* resembles *Aitutaki*, but *Maukè* and *Mitiaro* are smaller. They have no anchorage nor harbour at either of the three, and the joint populations are estimated at eighteen hundred. There are only two foreign residents, and the missionaries in charge are native teachers from *Rarotonga*.

Communication within each island is entirely by roads or tracks. They have no river nor coastal traffic. Between the islands communication is entirely by sailing-vessel; very uncertain and irregular. From *Tahiti* come regular trading-vessels, and also from *San Francisco*. The only steam-communication is by the "*Richmond*" on her round trip from *Auckland* to *Tonga*, *Samoa*, and *Tahiti*, calling at *Rarotonga* once in five weeks, on her return from *Tahiti* to *Auckland*.

*Productions*.—Cotton, coffee, tobacco, copra, arrowroot, fungus, oranges, limes, bananas, and all tropical fruits flourish luxuriantly. The cotton, with care, could be produced at *Mangaia* and the other coral islands equal in quality to the best *Sea Island*. The coffee is a specialty of *Rarotonga*, and of excellent quality though growing in wild thickets self-sown from the dropping seeds of trees planted by the missionaries more than a quarter of a century ago. Not a tree has been since planted by the natives, but some 40 acres have been planted by Europeans within the last two years. The same remark applies to the orange- and lime-trees, which produce abundantly, and of excellent quality. All kinds of native food—taro, breadfruit, kumeras, yams, bananas, and the indigenous plaintain, are fine and plentiful. Many products of a temperate clime do well. Maize flourishes, but is not eaten by the natives, and is very little cultivated. Coffee must be the chief staple of *Rarotonga*, which island alone is considered capable of producing at least a hundred thousand pounds' worth for export annually.

From its position, climate, beauty, and fertility, *Rarotonga* is by nature pre-eminently fitted to become the tropical fruit-garden and winter resort of the people of *South New Zealand*. Direct steam communication would speedily bring this about.

*Live-stock* (except sheep) do well in all the islands on a species of couch or wire grass, which appears to be indigenous. The quantity of cattle and sheep must always be very limited, and the staple animal food be pigs and poultry. Beyond *Rarotonga*, but within easy reach, lie also the splendid archipelagos of the *Society*, *Paumotu*, and *Marquesas Islands*.

*Land-tenure* in the different islands varies in some details, but *Rarotonga* may be taken as a general illustration. The owners of that island are the three ruling *Arikis*, descendants of the old kings and queens (as they are usually styled by foreigners), and two other *Arikis* (descendants of the old priestly families, to whom was accorded that rank by the natives on their office being superseded by the introduction of Christianity). The other owners are the *mataiapos*, or lords, numbering in *Rarotonga*, so far as I can learn, some forty-five or fifty. The *rangatiras* come next, holding in perpetuity, on terms of service by no means onerous or costly, and generally fulfilled by labour at planting or house-building, or by presents of food when required for feasting or similar great occasions. The *tautauongas*, below the *rangatiras*, are only tenants-at-will. A little land is held by foreign residents on lease, at low rentals, for terms extending to thirty years, without compensation for improvements. The township at *Avatiu* is all leased in sections of half an acre to an acre, at \$30 to \$60 per section per annum. A considerable quantity of very fine rural land is yielding little or nothing; and upon its proper cultivation the progress of *Rarotonga*, especially in coffee-growing, must depend. The subject will require careful approach, and is not likely to be settled till the natives have gained confidence in the administration by which it may be undertaken. The law forbids all sale of land, and has always done so. There has been no survey of the islands, and accurate information as to the extent or character of the land in actual cultivation, or available for further occupation, is not obtainable.

*Food, Wages, Clothing, and Occupations*.—The natives subsist largely on indigenous, or easily-cultivated products, aided by pigs and poultry, but they eagerly purchase biscuit, flour, preserved meats, salted beef, sugar, and other imported articles, when able to do so. The *Rarotongans* prefer working for themselves as a rule, and do not seek employment as labourers. The chief agricultural labourers are the *Mangaians*, and others who come to *Rarotonga* from their own less fertile islands. Rural labourers receive \$10 per month and their food, which, I was informed, includes preserved meat and other imported articles, making the total cost about \$20 per month. Day-labourers receive \$1 per day, with a ration of half a pound of bread and one pound of preserved meat, costing 25 cents more. The dollar is nominally 4s., but its value fluctuates with that of silver, and may be taken at 2s. 10d. to 3s. 3d. for exportation. Domestic servants get \$8 to \$10 per month and their food. A good cook sometimes gets \$20. The employers usually pay half, or more, of the wages in goods. The profit on the goods reduces the cost materially, but when paid in cash the wages are still the same.

The clothing is European in fabric and style. The old native *tapa* has long been discarded, but all go barefooted except on occasions where full dress is required.

Agriculture is the universal occupation. Many of the natives are skilful mechanics. They build capital whaleboats, and have the hull of a vessel of about 100 tons nearly completed at *Ngatangira*.