

of causing which, by the fruits of distillation, they had been taught to manufacture in a rude way by some Sandwich Islanders;—these and many other immoralities, and the numberless miseries which they occasioned, even amidst surrounding plenty and beauty, have happily given place greatly, to the active results of the better feelings, and to the practice of those restraining virtues which Christianity enjoins.

In addition to these humanising changes, the rapidity with which the people have imbibed literary instruction from the Missionaries, and adopted successively the institutions of civilised nations, is almost incredible. Besides the numerous schools and other inferior seminaries scattered over all the islands, and the general progress made by the people in the elemental branches of education; a minor kind of college has been erected in the island of Eimeo, under the imposing name of the South Sea Academy; in which the present king of Tahiti received his education, and where sciences and ancient languages are even now taught, both to the sons of the Missionaries, and to many apt scholars among the natives.

Besides also the introduction, to a considerable extent in these islands, of European buildings,

dresses, and habits of life; and of the important institutions of Christian marriage and burial; besides baptism, and other rites of the church; a regular code of laws have also been adopted, and promulgated by the King of Tahiti in solemn assembly; which contribute, in no small degree of course, to that security and good order, which is a distinguishing feature of civilisation in society. These laws were loudly called for by the circumstances of the people; and together with the consolidation of the government, (effected also by the efforts of the Missionaries, by the favourable disposition of Pomare, the king,) have been an immense boon to the common people, even in saving them from those irregular and tyrannical exactions of former times, by which no man's property was at all secure, but which inveterate custom had allowed the king and his rapacious followers to exercise, where they chose, with perfect impunity. This code of laws, which were approved of and promulgated, not only by Pomare and his chiefs, but by the king, and other leading persons of the neighbouring islands, it is needless to add were drawn up, after repeated consultations, by the ablest of the Missionaries; and are

distinguished by their mild spirit in regard to the punishment of crime, and by their wise adaptation to the simple circumstances of the society in which they are meant to operate. \*

But the most surprising evidences of the rapid progress of civilisation in this quarter, have been the erection of a representative government; the formation of a parliament of chiefs, stately meeting in the island of Tahiti; the levying of a regular revenue, to meet the expences of the state; the appointment of magistrates and judges, with due regulations for themselves and inferior officers; and even the general adoption of *trial by jury*. Whether in these important innovations upon the simple habits of an almost savage people, the Missionaries have not proceeded at too quick a pace, time will show; but as far as we have yet learned, no ill result has occurred from these arrangements, and the beneficial effects of the laws and of the mode of their administration, seems to be felt and acknowledged by all. Besides the progress in agriculture and other arts, the introduction of needle-work among the fe-

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\* A translation of the greater part of these laws will be found in Mr. Ellis's *Polynesian Researches*, vol. ii. page 427.

males, and of a taste for British goods, which have accompanied these changes, some manufactures have been begun in these islands and prosecuted with success; but the confinement necessary in the spinning of cotton, which was attempted, and other similar sedentary employments, will not soon become congenial to the indolent and roving habits of the islanders.

One great means of these remarkable changes, unparalleled for the short time in which they took place, was the conversion, in the first instance, of Pomare the king, which thus opened the way for all that followed, from the operation of the usual principles by which, in cases of this nature, mankind are generally affected. The king's studious habits too, and partiality for learning, assisted greatly in the promotion of education, from the same causes; and the effects afford another lesson (as to where they ought to begin) to those who would introduce any important novel arrangement among a whole people. Pomare wrote a good hand, and even kept a regular daily journal, for a long period. Though as ostentatious of his religion, and as new fangled for a time, as young converts frequently are, and though in his

latter years, he fell somewhat into inebriety and other vices of his country, he was, upon the whole, a tolerably good man, and generally a respected prince. He died in December, 1821, aged forty-seven, and was succeeded by his son, Pomare the Third, who, agreeable to the European usages taught by the Missionaries, was crowned when he came of age, in April, 1824, with much ceremony. Since that period Mr. Ellis has returned to England.

Of the many interesting facts in the history of man, and of this part of the world, which, in the course of his researches, Mr. Ellis was enabled to ascertain, we can only further notice one or two within the limits of this volume. It has been often asserted that insanity is a disease exclusively belonging to civilised life, and that it is unknown among communities of men living in the simplicity and indolence of mere nature in a productive country, without that care and forethought for subsistence, which necessitates anxiety and abstraction, or being subject to the complex relations, difficulties, and trials of artificial life. But even among the delightful islands of the South Sea, our Missionary found that this dis-

ease was by no means unknown ; those afflicted in this way, however, being believed to be inspired or possessed by some god, were treated with the utmost respect, and left entirely without control ; so that their actions being considered as those of the god, and not their own, when they destroyed themselves, which they sometimes did, the act was never sought to be prevented, nor deplored, after it had taken place.

Among the fastnesses of the interior mountains of Tahiti, a number of wild men were found to exist, who avoided all society with the rest of the natives ; whose appearance was melancholy and striking ; their hair uncut for years, their bodies, naked, except a girdle round the loins—and one of whom, seen by Mr. Ellis, being taken, would neither eat, drink, nor speak ; but although treated with every kindness, took the first opportunity of flying by night back to the mountains. The Missionary supposed that terror, after some defeat in battle, and probably the murder of their families, had driven these men to take refuge in the mountains ; and that, fear, and their solitary and wild life, had brought on a degree of mental aberration.

Among the singular customs and barbarous attempts at surgical cures, practised by this people in cases of accident, or when wounds were received in their wars, Mr. Ellis mentions one which deserves to be noticed. It was reported to him that several persons were still alive in the island of Barbora, upon whom the operation of trepanning had been successfully performed; and that in other cases where the head had been broken in battle, and the patient had lost a portion of the brain, the rude operators opening the skull, and killing a pig, which they had ready at hand, took out the brain of the animal, and putting a portion into the head of the man, covered it up and sent him away, supposing him cured. It is added, however, that in such cases the man always afterwards became furiously mad, and died. English surgeons would say this was not to be wondered at.

From what country of the old world the numerous nations of Polynesia derived their origin, is entirely unknown. But the copiousness and perfection of their language, their skill in the computation of numbers, the existence of many fragments of pavement, and rude temples of

considerable antiquity on the island, together with the traditions preserved among them, and other circumstances, prove them to be a very ancient people. Connected with the researches into the superstition and antiquities of Polynesia, the name of Mr. Barff, another intelligent Missionary and coadjutor of Mr. Ellis, deserves to be mentioned. Some of the traditions which he obtained are extremely poetical, as well as curious; exhibiting a mixture of the essoteric revelations of the Brahmins, and, in some respects, a striking analogy to the scripture accounts of the ancient Jews; particularly a most fanciful variation of the Noachian deluge. The inhabitants of the South Sea Islands, when asked whence they originally came, agree in pointing to that quarter of the horizon where the sun sets; and many of their customs bear a strong resemblance to those found among the Hindoos and other nations in the East, in the course of the researches of Dr. Buchanan, Mr. Ward, and Bishop Heber.

Of these distinguished men, however, and their labours as travellers, or as Missionaries, we cannot in this place farther speak. Since



the time of Bartholomew Zeigenbalg, a German, who was the first Protestant missionary to the east, (1706) many remarkable men have laboured in that quarter of the world ; from the benevolent Swartz, after Grundler and others, to the persevering Carey and Marshman at Serampore ; the laborious and erudite Dr. Morison in China, and the amiable and enthusiastic Henry Martyn, lately so well known, who sacrificed his life in Missionary labours and travels under the burning sun of Hindoostan. These names, however, with others that might be added, we have now only space to allude to here,—for the gratification of the benevolent, and to the honour of humanity.

THE END.

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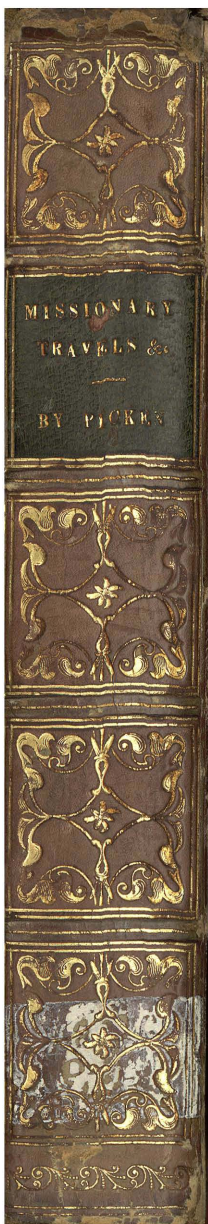
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