fertile gardens, and its belt of palms, sometimes intersected by stream-fed valleys which open on the sea-shore—forms a most pleasing foreground to the grand amphitheatre-like mountain ranges. A good road surrounds the entire island, which is divided into eighteen districts, each under a chief and a municipal council of which he is president. A railroad is in contemplation. By the last census the population of the entire island was 9194, one-eighth being French and foreigners. The majority of the natives pro­fess the Protestant religion.@@1

The extreme north of the island is formed by Point Venus, to the east of which lies the Bay of Matavai, and some miles still farther east Papeete, the European town and the seat of govern­ment. The beautiful harbour, of fair size and depth, is entered by two passages in the reef, Papeete to the north, 7 fathoms in depth, and Taunoa to the east, the wider and more convenient, though shallower. The town, in 1881, had a population of 3224, half of whom were French or French half-castes, but at least a dozen different nations were represented by the 800 whites. The little city is decidedly French in character. “ Papeete is the emporium of trade for the products of the South Sea Islands east of 160o E. long. Small schooners of from 20 to 50 tons burden bring the produce of the various groups to Tahiti, whence they are shipped direct for Europe, either by Cape Horn or the Cape of Good Hope, according to the season of the year. These schooners, of which about twenty fly the Tahitian flag, take back portions of the cargoes of vessels arriving from Europe for sale or barter amongst the islands. The chief exports are cocoa-nuts, mother-of-pearl, cotton, and some sugar, mainly to England and Germany, very little to France ; and oranges, trepang (for China), and edible fungus to California.”@@2 Many whalers formerly visited Papeete harbour, but for some years there has been a steady diminution in their number. In 1845 forty-eight called there, in 1860 five, and none in 1874. Commerce has also in other respects decreased. Three sugar-mills with distilleries attached, two cotton manu­factories, and a manufactory of cocoa-nut fibre were at work in 1886. Oranges and vanilla are profitably grown. The timber of the country is hardly used, great quantities of Californian pine being imported. Oxen and hogs are reared. The artificial culture of the pearl oyster is beginning to be discussed, but the pearls of the Society Islands are not to be compared in number or quality to those of the Tuamotus. A good deal of trading in fruit, fibre, shell, &c., is carried on W'ith the natives, but still mainly by barter. The competition of the Chinese immigrants, of whom in 1886 there were already 400 on Tahiti and Eimeo, is beginning to be keenly felt. The importation of “labour,” chiefly for the plantations, from other Polynesian islands was placed under Government control in 1862. The Tahitians themselves prefer handicrafts to agricultural work, and many are employed as artisans by European masters, who find them as handy and industrious as their own countrymen, but for domestic service they show no aptitude. Papeete is in direct sailing communication with San Francisco, and with Sydney by a Government steamer which calls every five months; also with France by Bordeaux steamers which touch on their way to Noumea.@@3

*Climate.—*The seasons are not well defined. Damp is excessive ; there is little variation in the weather, which, though hot, is never­theless not depressing, and the climate for the tropics must be considered remarkably healthy. The rainfall is largest between December and April, but there is so much at other times of the year also that these months hardly' deserve the name of the rainy season. During this period north-west winds are frequent, con­tinuing at times for weeks, and there are thunderstorms and hurricanes, though they are not nearly' so destructive as in some of the neighbouring islands. During the eight drier and cooler months south-east winds (corresponding with the trades) prevail, but there are southerly winds w’hich bring rain, and even westerly breezes are not unfrequent. The mean temperature for the year is 77° F. ; maximum 84°, minimum 69o. The average rainfall from December to March (4 months) is 29 inches; from April to November (8 months), 19 inches. The above observations apply' to the coast only'.

*Fauna.—*Neither the zoology nor the botany of the archipelago has been thoroughly investigated. Mammalians, as in other Poly­nesian islands, are restricted to a few species of bats (mostly of the genus *Pteropus*)*,* rats, and mice, none of them peculiar. Of domestic animals, the pig and the dog—the former a small breed which quickly disappeared before the stronger European strains— were plentiful even in Wallis’s days. The ornithology is very poor as compared with that of the Western Pacific ; and, in marked

contrast to the isolated Hawaiian archipelago, the Society Islands possess no peculiar genera and but few peculiar species. They claim, however, a thrush, several small parrots of great beauty, doves, pigeons, rails, and a sandpiper. Of this sandpiper, *Tringa leucoptera,* which, with many of the birds here mentioned, was dis­covered as far back as Cook’s stay' in the islands, only one specimen (now in the Leyden museum) is known to exist; and of the rest, their range being often limited to one portion of a small island, several species are (through the increase in the number of cats, &c.) threatened with extermination. A jungle-fowl (var. of *Gallus bankiva)* is found in the mountains, but as domesticated fowls were abundant, even when Tahiti was first discovered by Europeans, these wild birds are doubtless the offspring of tame birds, probably imported with the pigs and dogs by Malay vessels. There are no peculiar reptiles, and batrachians are entirely wanting. The lagoons swarm w’ith fish of many species. Insects are poor in species, though some of them are indigenous. Crustaceans and molluscs, on the other hand, are well represented ; worms, echino­derms, and corals comparatively poorly. A noteworthy feature of Tahitian conchology is the number of peculiar species belonging to the genus *Partula,* almost every valley being the habitat of a dis­tinct form.@@4

*Flora.—*This, though luxuriant, is not very rich. Like the zoology, it is much poorer than that of the more western groups of the Pacific. *Metrosideros, Metastoma,* and *Acacia* are the only links which this typically Polynesian region has retained to join it to Australia. Four genera are peculiar, of which three are claimed by the *Com­positæ* and *Lobeliaceæ,* orders characteristic of Hawaii. It is rich in trees, shrubs, and hardwood plants, poor in the smaller under­growth. Orchids, including some beautiful species, and ferns are abundant ; but, here as in Polynesia generally, *Rubiaceæ* is the order best represented. Remarkable are the banana thickets, which, chiefly on Tahiti, grow' at an altitude of from 3000 to 5000 feet. Along the shore—in some places almost to the extinction of all native growth—many exotics have established themselves ; and a great variety of fruit-bearing and other useful trees have been successfully introduced into most of the islands.@@5

*Inhabitants. —*The Tahitians are a typical Polynesian race, closely connected physically with the Marquesans and Rarotongans, but widely divided from them in many of their customs. The dialects, also, of the three groups are different, the Tahitian being perhaps the softest in all Oceania. The women rank with the most beauti­ful of the Pacific, though the accounts given of them by early voyagers are much exaggerated; and for general symmetry of form the people are unsurpassed by any race in the world. Even now in its decadence, after generations of drunkenness and European disease and vice, grafted on inborn indolence and licentiousness, many tall and robust people (6 feet and even upwards in height) are to be found. The women, as a rule, are small in proportion to the men. Men and women of good birth can generally be dis­tinguished by their height and fairness, and often, even in early age, by their enormous corpulence. The skin varies from a very light olive to a full dark brown. The wavy or curly hair and the expressive eyes are black, or nearly so ; the mouth is large, but well-shaped and set with beautiful teeth ; the nose broad (formerly flattened in infancy by artificial means) ; and the chin well developed. So long as the native costume was retained, the *tiputa,* an oblong piece of bark cloth with a hole in its centre for the head, and the *paru,* a plain piece of cloth round the loins, were worn alike by men and women of the higher classes. Men of all ranks wore, with or without these, the *maro,* or Τ bandage. The women concealed their breasts except in the company of their superiors, when etiquette demanded that inferiors of both sexes should uncover the upper part of the body. The chiefs wore short feather cloaks, not unlike those of the Hawaiians, and beautiful semicircular breastplates, dexterously interwoven with the black plumage of the frigate bird, with crimson feathers, and with sharks’ teeth ; also most elaborate special dresses as a sign of mourning. The priests had strange cylindrical hats, made of wicker-work and over a yard in height. Circumcision, and in both sexes tattooing, were generally practised, and much significance was attached to some of the marks. The houses *(vare)* were long, low, and open at the sides. Household utensils were few—plain round wooden dishes, sometimes on legs, cocoa-nut shells, baskets, &c. Low stools and head-rests were used. Pottery being unknown, all food was baked in the “ native oven ” or roasted over the fire. Their chief musical instruments were the nose-flute *(vivo)—*often used as the accompani­ment of song—and the drum *(pahu).* Of the latter, those kept in the *marai* were huge elaborately carved hollow cylinders of wood, the upper end of which was covered with sharks’ skin. Conch­shells (*bu*) were also used. Tahitian stone adzes, which are greatly inferior in finish to those of the Hervey Islands, are, like the adzes of eastern Polynesia in general, distinguished from those of western Polynesia by their triangular section and adaptation to a socket.

@@@1 The best chart of Tahiti is that published by the French Government in 1876, and corrected down to 1881. Morea is given on the same sheet.

@@@2 Wallace, *Australasia,* London, 1884.

@@@3 For fuller statistics, see *Notices Coloniales,* Paris, 1886, vol. ii.

@@@4 Finsch and Hartlaub, *Fauna Central-Polynesiens,* Halle, 1867.

@@@5 De Castillo, *Illustrationes Floræ Insularum, Maris Pacifici,* Paris, 1886.