Slings were perhaps the favourite weapons of the Tahitians ; they had also plain spears expanding into a wide blade, and clubs. The bow and arrow seem only to have been used in certain ceremonial games (*tea*)*.* Their canoes *(vad),* from 20 to 70 feet in length, were double or single, and provided with sail and outriggers. They were not well finished, but the high curved sterns, rising sometimes to a height of 20 feet, of those destined to carry the images of their gods, were carved with strange figures and hung with feathers.@@1 Cannibalism is unknown in the Society Islands, though some cere­monies which were performed in connexion with human sacrifices may possibly be survivals of this practice. The staple food of the islanders consisted of the bread-fruit, the taro-root, the yam, the sweet potato, and in some districts the wild plantain (*fei*) ; but they also ate much fish (the turtle was considered sacred food), as well as pigs and dogs, though of the latter, as pets, the women were so fond as to suckle the puppies sometimes even to the exclusion of their own children. *Popoi* was a favourite dish made of bananas and cocoa-nut. Kava (*ava*)*,* which was prepared in the usual Poly­nesian manner, was drunk, but in moderate quantities and only by the chiefs.

Tahitians were good fishermen and bold seamen. They steered by the stars, of which they distinguished many constellations. The land was carefully tended and the fields well irrigated. Three great classes were recognized:—(1) the *huiari,* of divine origin, which included only the suzerain (*arirai*)*,* who bore a semi-sacred as well as a political character, and the reigning chiefs of districts ;

1. the *bue-raatira,* proprietors and cultivators of inherited land, who also built canoes, made arms, &c. ; to these two classes also belonged the priests *(tahora),* who were medicine-men as well ;
2. the *manahune,* fishers, artisans, &c., and slaves *(titi).* As wars and infanticide depopulated the island this class gradually acquired land and with it certain privileges. Rank is hereditary and de­termined by primogeniture, not necessarily in the male line. The firstborn of an arirai received at birth the title of *otu* ; the father, who was the first to pay homage to his own child, then abdicated, and henceforth took up the position of regent. It is easy to see that, while this custom tended to keep honours within a family, it may have encouraged the practice of infanticide, which was common in all grades of society when Tahiti was first visited by Europeans. The age at which the otu’s authority became real varied according to his own abilities and the will of his subjects. Though arbitrary, the power of the arirai was limited by the power of his vassals, the district chiefs (*raatiras*)*,* who ruled absolutely over their respective districts, and who might be of as good blood as the arirai himself. The arirai had a councillor, but was alone responsible for any act. The bi-insular form of Tahiti promoted the independence of the chiefs, and war was rarely declared or an army or fleet despatched without the raatiras being first summoned to council. Without their favour nothing could be accomplished, for their power over their own people was absolute. The form of government was thus strictly feudal in character, but it gradually centralized into a monarchy, w’hich, in the person of Pomare II., the English missionaries greatly helped to regulate and strengthen. The arirai sent his commands by a messenger (*veo*) whose credentials were a tuft of cocoa-nut film. This tuft was returned intact as a sign of assent or torn in token of refusal. After the chief the wife ranked first, and then his brother. The arirai was carried on the shoulders of his subjects, and chiefs were not allowed to feed themselves. Women always ate apart. Their places of worship (*marai*)*—*national, local, or private—were square tree-surrounded enclosures. They each had a single entrance, and contained several small courts, within which were houses for the images and attendant priests. A pyramidal stone structure, on which were the actual altars, stood at the further end of the square. The marais were also used as places of sepulture of chiefs, whose embalmed bodies, after being exposed for a time, were buried in a crouching position. Their skulls, however, were kept in the houses of their nearest relations. In the great marai at Atahura the stone structure was 270 feet long, 94 feet wide, and 50 feet high, and its summit was reached by a flight of steps, built of hewn coral and basalt. Sacrificial offerings, including human sacrifices, formed a prominent part of Tahitian worship. An eye of the victim was offered to the arirai, and placed within his mouth by the officiating priest. Every household possessed its own guardian spirits *(tii),* but there were several superior divinities, of which, at the begin­ning of this century, Oro was the most venerated. The images, which are less remarkable than those of Hawaii, were rough repre­sentations of the human form carved in wood. Some were covered from head to foot with small human figures cut in relief; others were mere sticks clothed with feathers. The *areoi,* a licentious association of strolling players, men and women, which numbered among its ranks the highest chiefs, and practised infanticide, was a special feature of Tahitian society.

The Tahitians are light-hearted, frivolous, courteous, and gener­

ous; but with these traits are blended deceit, irritability, and cruelty, which formerly reached an unexampled degree of savage brutality. Their notions of morality were never, according to our ideas, very precise ; and their customs, such as the *tayo,* or exchange of name with the rights which it carried over the wife of the giver of the name and all her female relations, seemed to the earlier European observer strangely revolting. It would appear, however, that with the introduction of the vices of civilization such limita­tions as their primitive morality recognized have disappeared and all self-respect has been lost. Especially characteristic were the elaborate costume-dances *(heivas)* performed by women. Besides dancing, the singing of songs *(pehe),* and the recitation of historical and mythical ballads (*ubus*)*,* the natives had also a variety of sports and games. During the periodical seasons of rejoicing wrestling (*maond*)*,* boxing (*moto*)*,* and spear-throwing *(vcro patia)* matches, with foot and canoe-races, were held; also sham fights and naval reviews. They had several games in which a ball was used,—one, *apai,* not unlike our bandy, while another, *tuiraa* (played chiefly by women), was a kind of football; but surf-swimming (*faahee*)was perhaps the most favourite sport with both sexes. Kites were known. Cock-fighting (*faatitoraamoa*) was much practised.

*Discovery und Exploration.—*There is little doubt that the main island and some other members of the group were visited by the Spaniard Pedro Fernandez de Quiros in February 1607. They were rediscovered in June 1767 by Wallis in the “Dolphin,” who took nominal possession of Tahiti for George III. and named it after him. In the following year Bougainville visited Tahiti, claimed it as French, and called it La Nouvelle Cythère. With Tetuara (called by him Umaitia) and Eimeo it makes up the Archipel de Bourbon of his most inaccurate chart. Almost all we know of the early state of the islands is, however, due to Captain Cook’s visits in 1769, 1773, 1774, and 1777. The name of Society Islands was given to the Leeward group on his first voyage in honour of the Royal Society. In 1774 Tahiti was also visited by two Spanish vessels, which left two priests, who remained for ten months on the island. The Spaniards named it Isla d’Amat. The islands were again visited in 1788 by the “Lady Penrhyn.” Bligh in the “Bounty” spent five months on the island in the same year, and it was revisited by that ship after the famous mutiny. At this time the leading chief was Pomare, whose family had been pre-eminent in the island for more than a century. Aided by sixteen of the “ Bounty ” mutineers, and armed with guns procured from Bligh and a Swedish vessel, Pomare greatly strengthened his power and brought to a successful close a long struggle with Eimeo. In 1791 the “ Pandora” carried off fourteen of the “ Bounty” mutineers, and from this time forward visits were frequent.

*Missions.—*The attempt of the Spaniards in 1774 was followed by the settlement of twenty-five persons brought in 1797 by the missionary ship “Duff.” Though befriended by Pomare I. (who lived till 1805), they had many difficulties, especially from the constant wars, and at length they fled with Pomare II. to Eimeo and ultimately to New South Wales, returning in 1812 when Pomare renounced heathenism. In 1815 he regained his power in Tahiti. For a time the missionaries made good progress,—a print­ing press was established (1817), and coffee, cotton, and sugar were planted (1819); but soon there came a serious relapse into heathen practices and immorality. Pomare II. died of drink in 1824. His successor Pomare III. died in 1827, and was succeeded by his half-sister Aimata, the unfortunate “ Queen Pomare.” In 1828 a new fanatical sect, the "Mamaia,” arose, which gave much trouble to the missions and whose influence is still felt. The leader pro­claimed that he was Jesus Christ, and promised to his followers a sensual paradise.

*French Annexation.—*In 1836 the French Catholic missionaries in Mangareva attempted to open a mission in Tahiti. Queen Pomare, advised by the English missionary and consul Pritchard, refused her consent, and removed by force two priests who had landed surreptitiously and to whom many of the opposition party in the state had rallied. In 1838 a French frigate appeared, under the command of Μ. Du Petit-Thouars, and extorted from Pomare the right of settlement for Frenchmen of every profession. Other acts of interference followed, and at length, in 1842, Admiral du Petit-Thouars procured the signature of a document placing the islands under French protection, the authority of the queen and chiefs being expressly reserved. In 1843 Petit-Thouars reappeared, and, alleging that the treaty of 1842 had not been duly carried out, deposed the queen and took possession of the islands. His high­handed action was not countenanced by the French Government, but, while it professed not to sanction the annexation, it did not retrace the steps taken. Two years were spent in reducing the party in the islands opposed to French rule ; an attempt to conquer the western islands failed ; and at length, by agreement with Eng­land, France promised to return to the plan of a protectorate and leave the western islands to their rightful owners. The London missionaries were replaced by French Protestants, but neither they nor the priests have been very successful, possibly because French is a compulsory subject in the Government schools. In 1880

@@@1 The museum of the London Missionary Society and the British Museum con­tain important collections of Tahitian images, dresses, weapons, &c.