



## THE MARQUESAN ISLANDERS.

THE tribes included under the name of Polynesians inhabit the eastern part of Oceania, namely, the Sandwich Islands, the Marquesas, the Friendly and Society groups, etc. The people of all these bear a close affinity to each other. Their complexion is olive, verging on brown, but not copper-coloured; they are tall in stature, and have sinewy limbs, high foreheads, black and expressive eyes, and but slightly flattened noses. Their lips are generally larger than those of the whites, but they, nevertheless, have handsome mouths and splendid teeth. Their hair is straight and black.

Most of the tribes belonging to the Polynesian family are thorough savages, but their stock is diminishing day by day, and the result of neighbouring civilisation will be to replace the native element by European races.

The Marquesas group consists of thirteen islands in the South Pacific Ocean. They vary from thirty to seventy miles in circumference. They are called Washington Islands by the Americans, who discovered several of them; and they are now under the protection of France. The entire population is not more than 20,000.

The inhabitants of these islands are a fine race—tall, strong, and healthy. In former days they carried the art of tattooing the body to a greater perfection than any other people. The bodies of the chiefs were covered all over with the most regular and even elegant patterns. The operation of tattooing was a work which required a long time to perform. For it to appear in full perfection, thirty or forty years were sometimes given to the process, as was the case with the

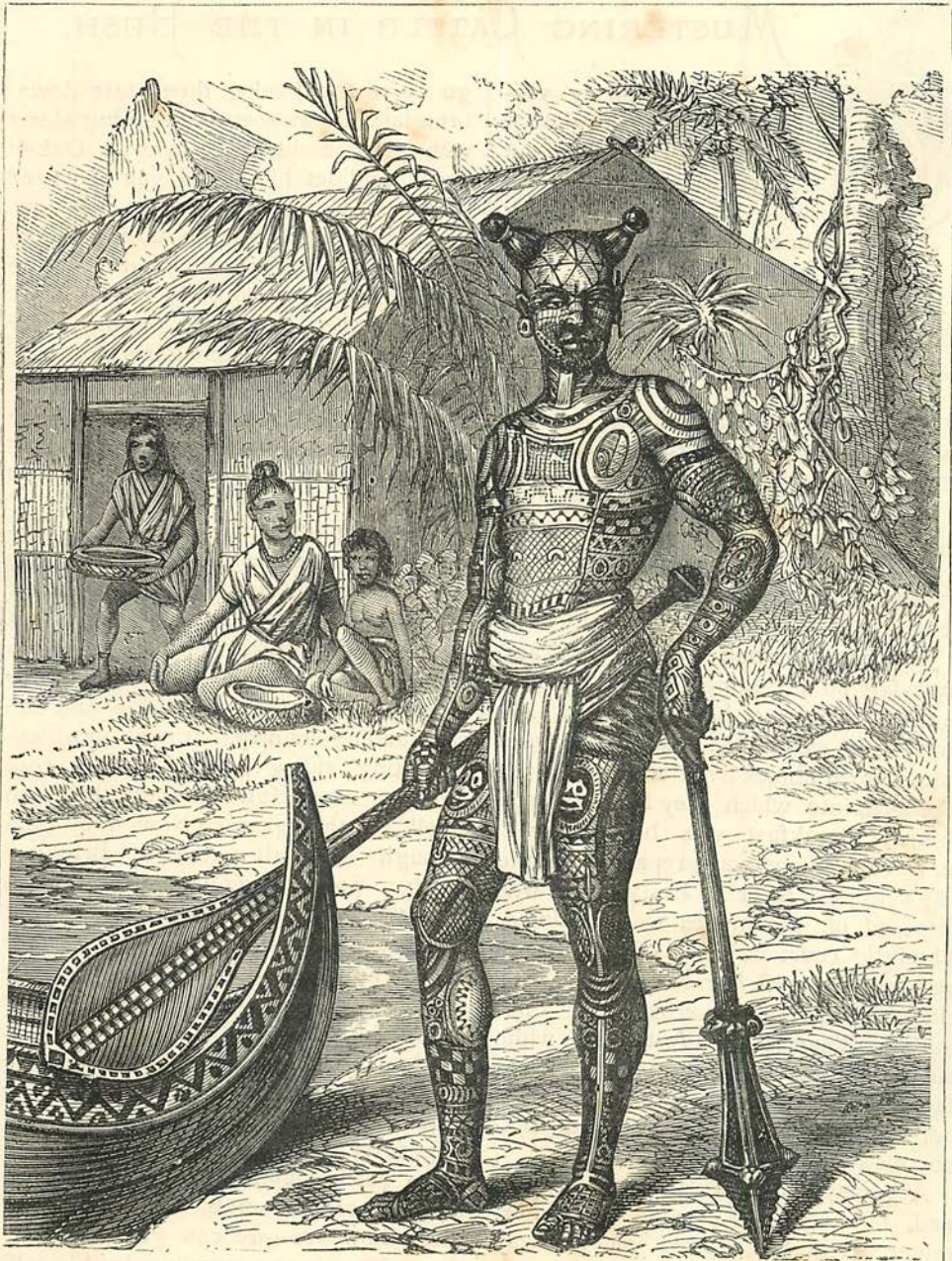
chief represented in our engraving, which was copied from a drawing taken from life. It was begun in boyhood, when the principal outlines were traced; these were finished gradually as life advanced. As the punctures in the skin had each time to be healed before the operator could proceed with his work, and payment had to be made to "the artist" of one or more pigs on each occasion, only chiefs could afford the price or give the necessary time, in order to appear in the highest style of Marquesan fashion.

The islands are of volcanic origin, each consisting of a mountain ridge rising to a height of 2,000 feet or more, from which lesser ridges shoot out in every direction to the shore, with fertile valleys between them. The soil consists of hundreds of layers of decomposed vegetation, and produces the yam, sugarcane, banana, plantain, taro, sweet potato, cotton, and other tropical plants, almost without culture; while the hillsides are covered with forests and underbrush, the predominant trees being the cocoanut, bread-fruit, pawpaw, and fanpalm. Animal life is very limited, there being no indigenous mammalia, although the hog, cat, and rat have been introduced from Europe. There are not more than half-a-dozen species of native birds.

The islanders find an abundant supply for their wants in the forest of cocoanut bread-fruit, and pawpaw-trees.

With the fruit and vegetables they supply the ships that visit the bays of their islands. Missionaries have succeeded in inducing the people to give up many of their pagan rites; and even tattooing is rapidly on the decline.

Cannibalism is sometimes practiced, but only as an act of vengeance; not, as in the Fiji islands, as a repast.



A MARQUESAN CHIEF.