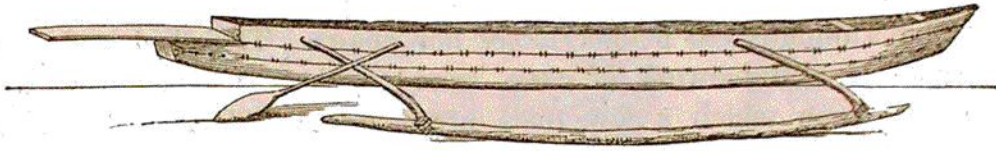


dispose of any portion of their soil. They find in its possession an acknowledged right to rank and respectability, and it spontaneously yields them and their followers the means of subsistence. So powerful is this repugnance to the admission of foreigners to any of the privileges arising from a possession of land, that those who are attempting to cultivate sugar, &c., hold their leases by so uncertain a tenure as to prevent their making any permanent improvement.

The canoes at Tahiti show an evident improvement on those of the Disappointment Islanders; the bottom is constructed of one piece. They use an out-rigger, and have a projection over the stern for landing. The paddle is also different.



COMMON TAHITIAN CANOE.

The fertile portion of the island of Tahiti lies in the valleys, which are of small extent, and in the plain which extends from the sea-shore to the spurs of the mountains. These produce tropical plants in great abundance and luxuriance, and are probably not exceeded in fertility by any portion of the earth's surface. The climate of this region is warm but not enervating, and is well adapted for the enjoyment of all the pleasures of life. To this climate the habits and pursuits of the natives are well adapted, or rather they are its necessary results. Their disposition leads them to the quiet enjoyment of the beautiful scenes around them. Their cottages are to be found in retired and lovely spots, and are usually surrounded by neatly-fenced enclosures. In these, which are often of considerable extent, are to be seen growing the bread-fruit, vi-apple, and orange, and sometimes extensive groves of tall cocoa-nut trees. In one corner are the patches of taro and sweet-potatoes.

The cottages are of an oval form, usually about fifty or sixty feet in length, and twenty in breadth. The walls are formed of bamboos set in the ground, with intervals of about an inch between them, for the admission of light and air. To the top of these a plate-piece of the hibiscus, a light and strong wood, is lashed with sinnet. From this the rafters rise on all sides, and meet in a ridge, which is about half the length of the building. The rafters touch each other, and are covered with small mats made of the pandanus-leaf. These are closely fitted together, and lapped over each other, forming an impervious and durable roof. The floor is the natural earth; there are no partitions,