

thousand, and for that of Eimeo one thousand. When this is compared with the estimates of the navigators who first visited these islands, an enormous decrease would appear to have taken place. The first estimates were, however, based on erroneous data, and were unquestionably far too high; yet there is no doubt that the population has fallen off considerably in the interval. The decrease may be ascribed in part to the remains of the old custom of infanticide, in part to new diseases introduced from abroad, and the evils entailed upon them by foreigners, and in part to the transition now going on from a savage to a civilized life.

Whatever may have been the case, during the first years after it was visited by Europeans, the population for the last thirty years has been nearly stationary; the births and deaths are now almost exactly in equal numbers. One of the oldest of the missionaries informed me, that although he saw much change in the character and habits of the people, he could perceive none in their apparent numbers.

Tahiti does not appear to be afflicted by many diseases. Some have been introduced by foreign ships, and among others, the venereal, from which the natives suffer much, being in possession of no method of arresting its ravages, and ignorant of the proper mode of treating it. In connexion with this subject, the want of a physician as a part of the missionary establishment, struck me as an instance of neglect in its managers; and I was surprised to hear that the London Society did not employ any medical men. From this cause, not only are the natives deprived of the benefits which might so easily have been conferred upon them, but the missionaries themselves are compelled to pay, out of their private purses, for medical aid, when it can be procured. They are even at times wholly without a physician. This happened to be the case at the time of our arrival, when a medical practitioner who had formerly resided on the island, had just taken his departure.

The effects of intoxication from ardent spirits and *ava* are said to have swept off many of the inhabitants. Secondary syphilis is in some cases severe, but their usual vegetable diet and simple mode of living, together with frequent ablutions, tend to mitigate this disease. Its continued prevalence, as well as the severity of some of the cases, are ascribable to the inordinate use of mercury, administered by a physician who was accustomed to distribute it in inordinate quantities among the affected, who were of course ignorant of its nature and consequences.

While lying at Papieti, we had an opportunity of seeing the manner in which justice is administered in criminal cases. The court was