

of the whole group. On Apamama, Kirby saw collected from six to seven thousand warriors, belonging to it, Nanouki, and Kuria: the joint population of these three islands may therefore be reckoned at twenty-eight thousand; it would seem reasonable to estimate the remaining twelve islands, which have been observed to be thickly inhabited, at the same number.* This apparently would give from four to five hundred inhabitants to the square mile; for, if only the dry land were to be taken into the account, there would not be more than one hundred and fifty square miles; but to this should be added the lagoons and sea around, from which in reality these natives derive the greatest part of their sustenance: this would increase the area to upwards of five hundred square miles, giving one hundred and twenty inhabitants to the square mile for support.

These islanders have had but very little communication with strangers; and although they have occasionally been visited for the last forty years, but little change has been brought about by the intercourse. There is nothing to induce the visits of vessels, for little is to be had in the way of refreshment: neither wood nor water is procurable in any quantity, and there is nothing for a profitable exchange. Of course, therefore, only a few vessels anchor in their harbours; of which, as has been pointed out, they have many good ones, an advantage not possessed by other low coral islands.

The articles of trade being but few and trifling, only a very small amount of the manufactures of civilized nations have found their way into these islands. The southern islands have been most visited, in consequence of their lying more in the immediate neighbourhood of the whaling-ground; the consequence has been that they have been able to obtain enough iron implements to have almost superseded those of native construction. The people of the southern islands have also imbibed an extraordinary fondness for tobacco; and these, with some diseases, may be said to constitute their acquisitions from the whites, to whose depraved appetites they at an early day learned to administer.

The same causes that prevent them from being the resort of vessels also deter sailors from deserting; and, as has been seen, both Kirby and Wood had become disgusted with the lives they led, and were glad to make their escape. From Kirby's account, there were only five more white men, and one black, on the islands. An Englishman and an American reside on Nukunau, (Byron's Island,) the former of whom had become a high chief, and acquired much influence; but it is believed, from his being of a bad character, that the intercourse

* Wood estimates that of Makin at five thousand.