

yet spoken. The former is, at present, confined within very narrow limits. The islands produce but little, and their consumption of foreign products is necessarily small. The capabilities of the islands have generally been underrated, for their soil and climate are suitable for raising all tropical productions in considerable quantities, and at a moderate cost. But very little investment of capital has yet taken place, and the business that has induced the establishment of several commercial houses has been more that of transit than for the purpose of supplying the consumption of the islands, or obtaining their exports. A table of statistics, (see Appendix IX.,) which was published in a newspaper at Oahu, compiled by intelligent merchants there, gives the amount of imports at four hundred and fifty-five thousand dollars. These are the amounts of goods actually landed—I do not include those that have been brought in, and retained on board ships; while the exports of native produce are no more than ninety-eight thousand dollars: one-half of the imports are set down as from the United States. From this great difference between the imports and exports, it would appear that many of these articles must have been reshipped to other ports, or are still on hand. The latter I believe to be the case. During the year for which the returns are given, more has certainly been consumed on the islands than in former years; but the interdiction of trade by foreign vessels on the coast of California, together with the exorbitant duties there, have most effectually paralysed all trade in that quarter, and, therefore, the goods intended for that market were landed at Oahu, and remained in store there. The trade on the Northwest Coast, formerly so much resorted to by our vessels, is entirely broken up by the Russians, who have interdicted the taking of furs on the coast of their territory, and obtain their supplies exclusively from the Hudson Bay Company, or by the latter, who have adopted the principle of underselling all competitors, and have thereby caused a monopoly, which effectually shuts out all small traders. Some articles of Chinese manufacture are sent from the Sandwich Islands to Mexico, but to no great amount. There are, comparatively, few transient vessels that call at these islands on their way to China, and the whole trade seems now confined to but a few vessels.

Although the Sandwich Islands are not so fruitful as many of the other islands of Polynesia, yet their geographical situation has rendered them hitherto by far the most important group in the Pacific Ocean.

They are the favourite and most convenient resort for those whale-