

fine energetic natives saying that they knew the land was doomed to pass from their children. Every one has heard of the inexplicable reduction of the population in the beautiful and healthy island of Tahiti since the date of Captain Cook's voyages: although in that case we might have expected that it would have been increased; for infanticide, which formerly prevailed to so extraordinary a degree, has ceased, profligacy has greatly diminished, and the murderous wars become less frequent.

The Rev. J. Williams, in his interesting work,¹ says that the first intercourse between natives and Europeans "is invariably attended with the introduction of fever, dysentery, or some other disease, which carries off numbers of the people." Again he affirms, "It is certainly a fact, which cannot be controverted, that most of the diseases which have raged in the islands during my residence there, have been introduced by ships;² and what renders this fact remarkable is that there might be no appearance of disease among the crew of the ship which conveyed this destructive importation." This statement is not quite so extraordinary as it at

¹ Narrative of Missionary Enterprise, p. 282.

² Captain Beechey (chap. iv. vol. i.) states that the inhabitants of Pitcairn Island are firmly convinced that after the arrival of every ship they suffer cutaneous and other disorders. Captain Beechey attributes this to the change of diet during the time of the visit. Dr. Macculloch (Western Isles, vol. ii. p. 32) says, "It is asserted that on the arrival of a stranger (at St. Kilda) all the inhabitants, in the common phraseology, catch a cold." Dr. Macculloch considers the whole case, although often previously affirmed, as ludicrous. He adds, however, that "the question was put by us to the inhabitants, who unanimously agreed in the story." In Vancouver's Voyage, there is a somewhat similar statement with respect to Otaheite. Dr. Dieffenbach, in a note to his translation of this Journal, states that the same fact is universally believed by the inhabitants of the Chatham Islands, and in parts of New Zealand. It is impossible that such a belief should have become universal in the northern hemisphere, at the Antipodes, and in the Pacific, without some good foundation. Humboldt (Polit. Essay on King. of New Spain, vol. iv.) says that the great epidemics at Panama and Callao are "marked" by the arrival of ships from Chile, because the people from that temperate region first experience the fatal effects of the torrid zones. I may add that I have heard it stated in Shropshire, that sheep, which have been imported from vessels, although themselves in a healthy condition, if placed in the same fold with others, frequently produce sickness in the flock.