

At Depeyster's Group, ten degrees farther west, are found people speaking the same language with those of the last-mentioned islands, but of very different personal appearance. In colour, they are as dark as the New Zealanders. Their hair is thick and bushy, and in some slightly frizzled. They differ from all the other Polynesians in having abundant beards. Their skin also is rough to the touch, as in the Melanesians. For reasons which will be hereafter given, we are inclined to believe that some admixture from the neighbouring negro tribes has given rise to these peculiarities.

CHARACTER.*

The trait with which a stranger is first struck, in his intercourse with the Polynesian islanders, is a general gaiety and good humour, a desire to please, and a willingness to be amused, which are not only in themselves attractive, but which gratify us the more when we remember the cold gravity of the American aborigines, or the sullenness and irritable pride of the natives of Australia. On the other hand, we find in the natives of the Caroline Archipelago, or at least of some groups in it, the same degree of good humour, accompanied by a real good nature and kindness of heart, of which it is too often, among the Polynesians, but a deceptive indication.

Connected, perhaps, with this is an extreme fickleness in their passions and purposes, a great susceptibility to new impressions, and a readiness to adopt new customs and new modes of thinking,—in which last characteristic they differ strikingly from most savage and many civilized nations.

* Nothing is more common in the writings of many voyagers than such phrases as the following:—"These natives, like all savages, are cruel and treacherous;"—"The levity and fickleness of the savage character;"—"The tendency to superstition, which is found among all uncivilized tribes;"—"The parental affections which warm the most savage heart," &c. These expressions are evidently founded on a loose idea that a certain sameness of character prevails among barbarous races, and especially that some passions and feelings are found strongly developed in all. A little consideration will show that this view must be erroneous. It is civilization which produces uniformity. The yellow and black races of the Pacific, inhabiting contiguous islands, differ more widely from each other than do any two nations of Europe. The points of resemblance between the negroes of Africa and the Indians of America, even under the same latitudes, are very few. In delineating the characters of the different races of the Pacific, an attempt will be made, by contrasting them with one another, to show more clearly the distinguishing characteristics of each.