

which supplies them with fish, the New Zealanders and other savage tribes are much accustomed to establish themselves at the mouths of rivers. Among the American Indians, as in New Zealand, a piece of ground is always left unoccupied in the middle of the village, or contiguous to it, for the holding of public assemblies. So, also, it used to be in our own country, almost every village in which had anciently its common and its central open space; the latter of which, after the introduction of Christianity, was generally decorated by the erection of a cross.

It is curious to remark how the genius of commerce—the predominating influence of a more civilized age—has seized upon more than one of these provisions of the old state of society, and converted them to its own purposes. The spacious area around the village cross, or the adjacent common, has been changed into the scene of the fair or the daily market; and the vicinity of the sea, or the navigable river, no longer needed as a protection against the attacks of surrounding enemies, has been taken advantage of to let in the wealth of many distant climes, and to metamorphose the straggling assemblage of mud cottages into a thronged and widespread city—the proud abode of industry, wealth, elegance, and letters.

Rutherford states that the baskets in which the provisions are served up are never used twice; and the same thing is remarked by

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