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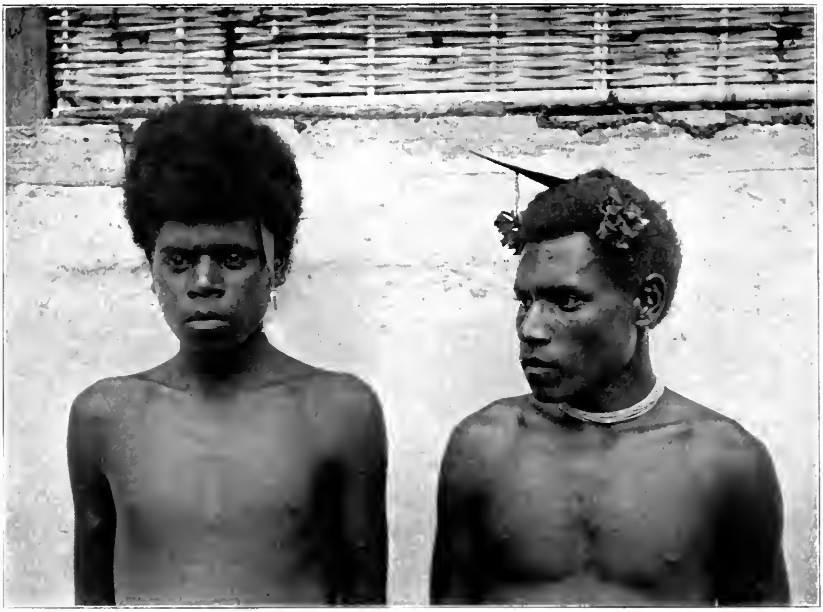

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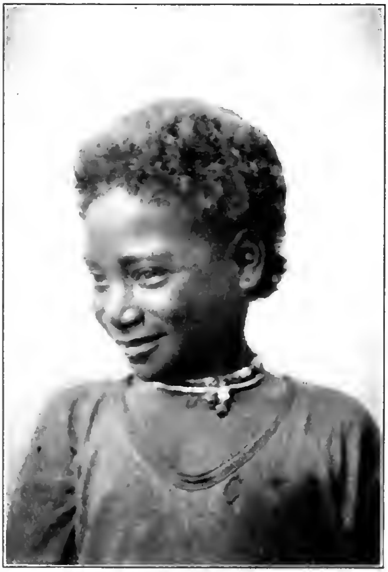

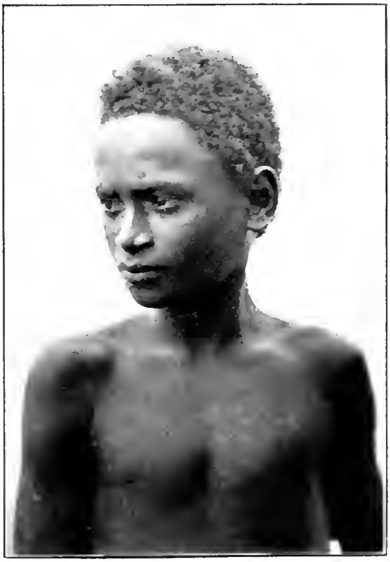

Northern Melanesia.

Frontispiece.

ISLANDS OF ENCHANTMENT

MANY-SIDED MELANESIA

SEEN THROUGH MANY EYES, AND RECORDED
BY
FLORENCE COOMBE

ILLUSTRATED WITH 100 PHOTOGRAPHS
BY J. W. BEATTIE

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
1911

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PREFATORY NOTE

If a book of this kind had any claim to invention it would be valueless. No apology, therefore, is offered for the debt which it owes to the information of others. Indeed, the material derived from the writer's personal observation and experience will perhaps be of the smallest interest to the reader. The writer only asks that errors and defects be accredited to her, and all illuminative facts to those who have communicated them.

Especial gratitude must be expressed to the following members of the Melanesian Mission, past or present, whose experiences have been freely drawn upon: The Right Rev. Cecil Wilson, D.D., late Bishop of Melanesia; the Rev. C. H. Brooke; the Rev. Preb. Codrington, D.D.; the Ven. R. B. Comins, D.D.; the Rev. W. J. Durrad, B.A.; the Rev. C. E. Fox, B.A.; the Rev. W. C. O'Ferrall; the Rev. L. P. Robin. To the last-named additional thanks are due for kind assistance in reading the proofs.

Passages of interest have also been culled from the contributions to the monthly organ of the Melanesian Mission, *The Southern Cross Log*, by the late Rev. F. Bollen; the late Rev. C. C.

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Godden; the late Ven. Archdeacon Palmer; the late Rev. H. Welchman, M.R.C.S., as well as from some anonymous articles.

Two books of reference have been consulted, viz. *The Solomon Islands and their Natives*, by H. B. Guppy, M.B., F.R.G.S., where an excellent translation in full may be found of Gallego's *Journal*, and *The Melanesians: their Anthropology and Folklore*, by the Rev. Preb. Codrington, D.D., a veritable mine of treasure for all who are interested in the subject-matter of this book.

The illustrations are from photographs by Mr. J. W. Beattie, of Hobart, Tasmania, with two exceptions, viz. that of the Santa Cruz sailing canoe, contributed by the Rev. W. C. O'Ferrall, and the two groups of Tikopians, contributed by Mrs. Cecil Wilson.

F. C.

NORFOLK ISLAND,
15th July 1911.

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Map of Melanesia . . . . . *End of Volume*

NOTE ON NATIVE WORDS

The spelling is phonetic. In the Oceanic words and names introduced in this book the vowels may be pronounced as follows :—

a as "a" in "pass."
e as "e" in "fête."
i as "i" in "sardine."
o as "o" in "tone."
u as "oo" in "fool."
ṅ is pronounced "ng" as in "sing."
g̈ is pronounced "ng" as in "finger."
ë is pronounced somewhat like the German "ö."

INTRODUCTION

Scattered over the bosom of the South-West Pacific they lie, the Islands of Enchantment, far away from the haunts of civilization, and well out of the route (save in one or two cases) of steam-boat traffic. This is why they are so full of fascination; the brown peoples who inhabit them are yet in their unspoiled primitiveness.

One feels it is a bold adventure this, to open the door a little way, and show to whomso turns the pages a glimpse of these world-children in their island homes. It is a wonder-region, a region of mystery and magic, in which the unseen has a greater influence upon men's actions than the seen. With a hand, as it were, upon the portal, the writer hesitates. By what right shall one act as guide who has but of recent years entered upon the enchanted ground? By one right only, the compelling right of love—love of these people, their folk-lore, their life-stories.

Men call the region Melanesia, over part of which we are to travel. The name is a misnomer, for the inhabitants, though brown of every shade, are never really black. The only approach to a black skin seen by the writer was that of the people of Vella Lavella, in the far Western Solomons, whither we shall not reach in this book. Our journeyings will take us far enough, for they will touch the Northern New Hebrides, the Banks Islands and the Torres Islands, Santa Cruz and the Reef Islands, and the Eastern Solomons.

It was the writer's privilege to visit these groups on board the *Southern Cross*, the steam-yacht which does the business of the Melanesian Mission in great waters. And it is not as tourists and strangers that her passengers go to and fro among the groups, but rather as "friends of the family," knowing somewhat of each island's story, and having familiar acquaintances among the brown folk everywhere, so that one is received and made welcome in the homes of the people.

The language difficulty presented by Melanesia is notorious. Every island, however small, in every group, has developed its separate speech, too distinct from all others to be lightly set down as a different dialect. And in an island of any size there are to be found tongues so various that those on the lee side cannot converse with those on the weather side, nor those in the interior with those upon the coast. For members of the Mission this difficulty is minimized by the cultivation of a lingua franca, which is used exclusively in the Training College at Norfolk Island. It is the language of Mota, one of the small Banks Islands; and as this is understood by all the seven hundred teachers who have passed through their course at S. Barnabas' College, an interpreter can be found almost everywhere.

The Melanesian knows nothing of the past history of his race. That he is not the aboriginal inhabitant of these islands is practically certain, but whether we shall ever know confidently whence and when he came seems doubtful. Various theories have been propounded, but we are not concerned here with the discussion of scientific hypotheses, so we will not linger over the subject. Enough that our islander's origin is rather Asiatic than African.

By nature they are creatures of the present moment—children in their outlook. By a long stretch one might carry back his mind to things told by a great-grandfather, but their interest is brief in what is matter of tradition, if unconnected with the supernatural. The memory of a great chief or warrior is green for fifty years perhaps, or until another great man dies. Then gradually the old name and fame cease to be mentioned or honoured. Probably it is always so where there is no written language nor stone building. Where the architecture must be carried out in reed and palm, bamboo and creeper, the track of the past is quickly obliterated.

As a general rule photographs do scant justice to a Melanesian, for on the rare and solemn occasions when he confronts the white man's magic box, he has not the faintest idea of looking pleasant, yet it is in the expression that the charm of his face pre-eminently lies. But you can see his features—the fuzzy hair, fine dark eyes, well-shaped brow, chin, nose, and neck, the wide-splayed nostrils and full lips, which curtain glistening teeth. The four boys' heads I have selected for illustration are fairly representative of Northern and Southern Melanesia.

The colour of the skin ranges from that of darkish oak to the sallow complexion of a Southern European, but it is dusky-clear, not sleek and shiny. And a laugh is never a great way off—no, not even when the bright eyes blaze with anger or well forth tears of grief. Proud, hot-headed, sensitive, shy, jealous—all this to a degree often ludicrous in a stranger's eyes; then what a blessing that to the Melanesian has been granted the priceless gift of a sense of humour! Where the kernel of the joke exactly lies is not always patent to a Britisher, but that is a matter of indifference to the Melanesian, whose laugh is, in the writer's ears, among the most delightful sounds of nature.

Every island seems to have evolved its own cast of countenance whilst leaving plenty of room for individual distinction; and the larger division of the groups shows, of course, more marked types of physiognomy. The new-comer to Norfolk Island begins to differentiate the individuals from the crowd by the character of ornament favoured, say, in the Solomons or the New Hebrides, but by degrees one comes to recognize the various islanders by a subtle difference in type impossible to convey in words. Where the Polynesians blend with the Melanesians or remain unmixed, in such islands as Pileni or Tikopia, the difference is manifest. They are bigger made, lighter skinned, the hair is often straight, the cheek-bones high, the gaze fair and square, with no self-consciousness.

The question is frequently asked, What religion have the Melanesians?

Whatever may have been the case in bygone ages, it is impossible now to detect among the untaught islanders any serious belief in one Supreme Being, or in any supernatural order of intelligences far enough removed above humanity to merit the title of gods.

Yet are the Melanesians by no means a materialistic people. So firm is their faith in things unseen that "faith" seems too blind a word to express it: it is conviction, unshakable conviction. The world of everyday is full of spirits: the spirits of the departed, who still concern themselves with the affairs of mankind, and can variously affect them; and another class of spirits, who never indwelt men, and yet are endued with many human attributes in addition to the superior power which makes them valuable patrons and dangerous enemies.

In Northern Melanesia the belief in both classes of beings, which for convenience' sake we may term ghosts and spirits, exists; but far more attention and honour are paid to the ghosts. In Southern Melanesia both are recognized also, but the ghosts are regarded with less respect than the spirits. In Central Melanesia the ghosts are again powerful, but the spirits share the honours almost equally.

With regard to the future life, again, we find a contrast in opinion. In Northern and Central Melanesia departed souls travel to desolate regions, which yet are upon the earth's surface, such as the volcano in Santa Cruz, or a barren tract of land in Bugotu. But in Southern Melanesia the dead go to a shadowy world somewhere beneath the earth, which is termed *Panoi*.

It must be understood that it is an extremely difficult thing to sort out and unravel the thoughts of the Melanesian upon abstract subjects; and to set down in black and white the articles of his dim and shadowy creed is an impossibility. A Melanesian is not given to definition in mental matters: he sees no need for it. And he does not care to talk freely or often about the things he sees which you do not see, which he fears, and you do not fear.

There are many reasons against it. Speaking in a foreign language, explanations become necessary, and explanations are abhorrent to the lotus-eater. The brown man wants you to see what he means without expressing every word, and white men are slow in the uptake—from his point of view. Then, again, he is content to accept things vaguely himself; why are not you? Moreover, white men laugh at the idea of ghosts, or tell you it is wrong to conjure with the spirits: then why should the brown man lay himself open to ridicule or rebuke by talking to you about them? And the new-born Christians shrink from chattering anent their old-time charms and terrors.

But this seems clear. The root of the matter lies in one word common to nearly every Ocean language: *Mana*. *Mana* is a mysterious power which may be attached to, or inherent in, any person, object, or spirit. It is discoverable by experiment and experience. If a man is successful in fight, he is so by virtue of the *mana* residing in him; should he be killed in the next battle, it is because the *mana* in the enemy, or the *mana* of the enemy's patron ghost, was stronger than his own. A great chief dies who was rich in *mana*; there will still be *mana* in his bones which, when not carried or worn as a mascot, may be kept in a house for the general benefit of a family or village.

You see an oddly-shaped pebble as you walk through the bush; it is strangely round. Depend upon it, it has *mana* for something. Perhaps it suggests the shape of the sun; employed with the proper charms, it will probably turn out to have *mana* for making sunshine. If this fails, perhaps it is *mana* for coco-nuts. Put it against the stem of a palm, and see if an abundant crop does not result. Particular leaves are hot with *mana*, and therefore much employed in charms.

So much by way of a brief and general introduction. Let us hurry to the Islands, and meet the Melanesians on their own soil.

PART I

IN SOUTHERN MELANESIA

CHAPTER I

RAGA (PENTECOST), NEW HEBRIDES

Natural features—Status of the pig—Native house—The *gamal*—The secret society—Dances—Cannibalism—Story of chief—"Is it peace?"—Feasts—The maternal uncle—A wedding—Snakes—The *mae*—Charms—Recipe for rain—Burial custom.

LONG, narrow, tapering both to north and south, the outline of Raga somewhat resembles an oleander leaf. Like all the volcanic islands, it is hilly. And it is undeniably beautiful, clad from end to end in a heavy green mantle of tropical foliage. But the trees and shrubs and creepers are too luxuriant; the island looks almost suffocated with clothing—as if you met a friend in the dog-days clad as an Eskimo.

It is hard to believe that what to the eye appears to be a mass of impenetrable bush is intersected with paths, dotted with gardens, and interspersed with villages. Only a little blue smoke-wreath here and there tells its tale.

Landing on the coral beach at the spot pictured, we were warmly greeted by the brown folk, clad very slightly, but sufficiently, waiting to shake hands and pronounce our names with laughing lips, or eager to help pull up the whale-boat out of reach of the surf. Then a move was made to the village, a small collection of native houses, surrounding a cleared space rudely fenced, where stand the little church and school-house. This open space in the centre of a village is called the *tinesara*, and as such I shall refer to it when necessary.

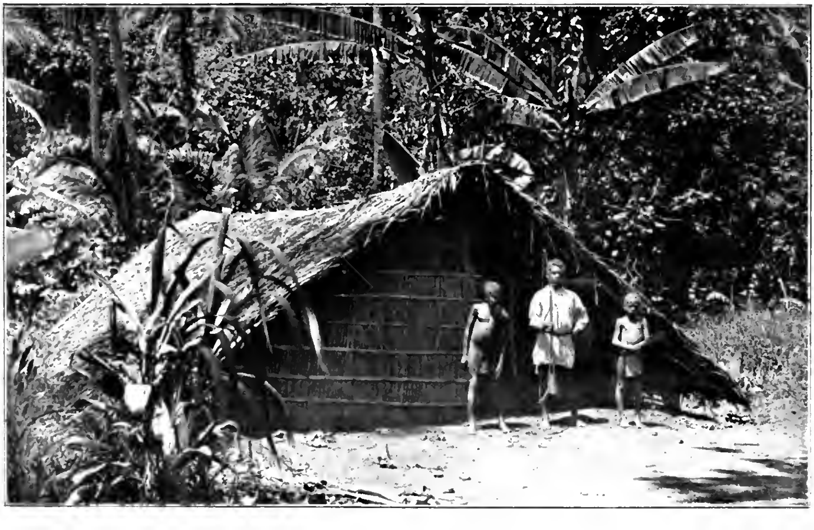
The object of the fence is to keep out the Pigs. Let us for once at least distinguish the word with a capital P, for it is of the greatest importance in Melanesia. The pig and the rat are the only native quadrupeds, and the pig receives in his noble self the appreciation due to the whole of the animal creation. Many a man's highest ambition, the purpose of his life-work, is to get pigs. In Ireland we meet the pig with due respect as "the gintleman that pays the rint," but here he is much more. He represents the highest form of currency, the gold and bank-notes of Melanesia. With pigs you rise to the heights of the aristocracy, and may even attain the chieftainship; with pigs you pay your debts, entertain your friends, and buy your wife (a good strong one will cost as much as four pigs in Raga); for pigs you dance till you are ready to drop, over pigs you fight for your life, if necessary.

And yet the pig has not a blissful time in Raga or any other island. Unfortunately for him, there is no sanctity attaching to him, as there is, say, to a kingfisher; and your natural Melanesian has no idea whatever of being consciously kind to any creature. The pig gets plenty of kicks and blows, and often a torturous death ends his existence. But at least he is fed and guarded, so we must hope he is not ill-content while his brief life lasts.

I inquired the name of the village. It seemed a little difficult to make out. The traders call it Steep Cliff Bay; the inhabitants call it Qatnapne; the dwellers along the coast to the north know it by

RAGA.

Steep Cliff Bay—Landing-place.



A Raga House.

P. 5.

another name; those on the south call it by yet a fourth. One would think the poor people must begin themselves sometimes to wonder where they really do live.

In Melanesia if you want to know the name of an island it is wise to ask those who live upon one adjacent, rather than the inhabitants themselves They have never felt the need of a name for their own home, unless they have travelled far afield. Pressed for one, they will tell you what the district is called by those who live outside it. And so, in early days in the Mission, sometimes the part got put for the whole—San Cristoval, for instance, being called Bauro, though that is only a portion of the island.

It was in Raga that I first entered a native Melanesian house. A photograph shows the exterior. The plan is oblong; the walls are of reed and bamboo; the roof is thatched with sago palm leaf. There is an opening for entrance at one end, sometimes at both, but no chimney or window. In many houses the far end is partitioned off to make an inner chamber.

A hole in the middle of the ground forms the fireplace. This is lined with stones, and kindling fills up the centre. When there is cooking to be done, the fire is lit, and covered over again with stones. By the time it is burnt out the stones are almost red-hot. The outer ones are lifted off with a stick bent into tongs-shape, and the food is placed among the ashes in the hollow. Yam-mash, taro, sweet potatoes, fish—whatever be the dainty—it has been divided into portions, carefully wrapped in banana leaves, and tied up in the neatest parcels with fibre from the mid-rib. The stones that were removed are quickly replaced so that the food is surrounded by heat. Mats of thick leaves plaited and sprinkled with salt water cover up the oven, and from the odour that issues the natives can tell to a nicety when the food will be cooked and the oven may be opened.

There was copra drying (and smelling!) over the fire in this house, where in the heat and smoke sat a mother nursing her week-old baby; for there are traders within call who are ready to buy all the coco-nuts that the natives can prepare for them. Copra, it may be well to explain, is the kernel of the coco-nut made ready for export. The nut is split in half and dried over a slow fire till the kernel shrinks from the shell. In this condition there is an unlimited demand for it for soap manufacture and other purposes, the oil being expressed by machinery.

In the houses live the women and children, and the men go in and out as they list, but for purposes of smoking, eating, and sleeping they have their own club-house in every village.

This club-house (or *gamal*, as we call it in the Mota language) we shall often have occasion to mention, so we will pause over it at the outset. In the Solomon Islands the big, admirably-constructed canoe-house supplies the men's want. But in the Southern groups we find the *gamal*—the lodge of the great semi-secret society, membership of which is practically universal among the males of the islands where it exists. The name of it in Mota is *Suqe*.

The Melanesian is the most sociable creature on the earth's surface. Rooks are not more gregarious than he and his. To do a thing alone is a penance;

to adopt an independent attitude is entirely contrary to his instinct. A man of position and strong will can, and does, lead his fellows, but let his influence for any reason wane, and the average Melanesian will quickly fall back among the herd. It is the rare exception who maintains an unpopular attitude. To these folk the tribal and national punishments recorded in the Old Testament suggest no hardship or injustice. To suffer severely *en masse* is to them far more tolerable than to bear individually a lighter sentence. Gardening, house-building, whatever the occupation, they make a "bee" for the purpose, and go at it cheerfully enough in company.

This spirit of sociability has led to the creation of a large number of societies akin to the Suqe, most having something of a secret nature about them, many professing to have traffic with ghosts and charms. Nearly every man and boy in an island will belong to one or more: the rare bird who, for some extraordinary reason, has never sought initiation, is known as "a flying fox"—a queer creature with queer ways of his own.

Probably no European is perfectly acquainted with all the ins and outs, the rules, penalties, and customs of any of these societies. But the Suqe is the best known, perhaps because it professes no connection with the supernatural.

There is no caste in Melanesia, but there are many ranks; and a man's prestige is gauged entirely by his position in the Suqe. This is indicated by his cooking-place in the long row of ovens down the length of the *gamal*—hollows in the ground, divided from one another by logs of wood. Each oven represents a grade in the Suqe, and one has a right to eat only at that to which he has attained.

The newly-initiated—young boys mostly, females of course being strictly excluded—share the oven nearest the door, whence they work their way up by degrees. Rank can be bought by pigs, and ratified by dancing and a feast.

Raga has a very elaborate series of ranks and titles, and the Suqe laws are stringent accordingly. The solemnity of the rites of initiation, and of taking a fresh rank, is marked by the candidate's going unwashed and unshaven for perhaps three months, during which time his house is also untended and unswept.

The lower stages in the Suqe are not expensive, but the high ranks are extremely costly. The members of the grades above that he is seeking divide the money received from the candidate, and as it is naturally a case of "the higher, the fewer," the Suqe nobles become veritable plutocrats. But as many as a hundred pigs may be slain at one feast by the aspirant for high rank.

As soon as serious preparations for a feast are set on foot, the native drum (the hollowed trunk of a tree) will be beaten each morning before sunrise to give notice by the number of strokes how many days remain before the feast takes place.

It is always preceded by an elaborate dance. From *Peter Pan* we learn that "Fairies never say 'We feel happy': what they say is, 'We feel dancy!'" From this I suspect that our Melanesians are akin to the fairies, for it is exactly what they say too. "*Nina we malakalaka*" means just that. I should think they are about the danciest people in the world, and there are few more entrancing spectacles than a Melanesian dance in the moonlight or the firelight. The Raga folk are as light-footed as any, and we always watch them with keen enjoyment. But these Suqe dances where the pig victims often have to play an unwilling part must be somewhat gruesome. The host performs marvellous and lengthy capers around each distracted animal, winding up with a knock on its head from his club, after which, leaving it to die, he dances on to the next. With even fifty pigs the process is exhausting, and after one of these dances and feasts the village sleeps a whole day.

No case of cannibalism has lately, so far as I know, been reported from Raga. I am not sure that they were ever among those who eat man with a relish, but to be eaten was the extreme penalty of chiefly law—if, say, a great man's pig be stolen or one of his wives kidnapped. Where extenuating circumstances can be urged, the culprit will be sometimes let off lightly by being only burnt to cinders. But to carry the sentence out strictly, the body must be cooked in the *gamal*, and portions distributed among every man, woman, and child in the village. This is the only exception to the general rule limiting women to woman-cooked food and man to that cooked by man. After a bitter fight, too, a body from among the enemy's slain will be treated in the same way as a sign of rage and indignation.

I know of one instance in which a man was added to fifty pigs for a feast that signified a chief's rise in rank.

It was in this very Steep Cliff Bay that in 1897 the Bishop of Melanesia was hospitably received by the chief, and made welcome to the accommodation of the *gamal*. In polite return the Bishop offered the chief some of his tinned meat, gladly enough accepted in the ordinary way. But on this occasion it was firmly refused, and at last the reason was ascertained. The chief was "holy," and could not eat ordinary food, as he had just finished making a feast which included a human sacrifice. In this the chief's share is the heart, brains, and feet. The usual row of fifty pigs had been tied to the quasi-sacred cycas trees in front of the *gamal*, and last of the row a man. Imagine the poor wretch being compelled to watch the long, long dance and ceremony with which each pig was killed, knowing that when the last was dispatched he in his turn would be treated precisely the same. It is a nightmare.

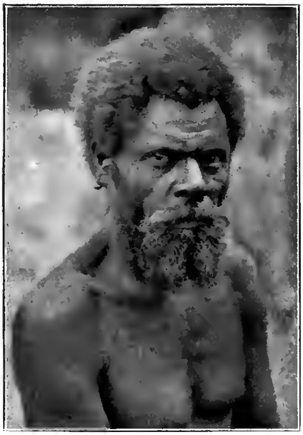
But now Steep Cliff Bay is a Christian village.

A dramatic incident took place not long ago in the middle of a great native feast in North Raga. The biggest chief of the whole district was present—one of the few then still heathen. He stepped forward, and handing his war-club to the giver of the feast, announced that it was to be chopped up and distributed among the other chiefs as a declaration of peace and goodwill.

The question, "Is it peace?" is one of no small importance to a dweller in Raga whose lot it is to travel from one village to another. The native method of ascertaining the answer is simple. You just stretch out your arms and fingers. If the joints crack, don't proceed on any account; you will certainly be shot. If they don't crack you may go on quite cheerfully.

Sometimes in approaching a village a pile of stones will be noticed on either side of the track. These are "Peace stones"—a sign that the inhabitants of the village and their chief are at peace, and wish to remain so. It is the rule, therefore, for all weapons

RAGA.



Old Raga.

Young Raga.

P. 11.

to be laid down outside the boundary, and whoso wishes to enter the village must do so unarmed. A tree at hand will probably be found stuck with tomahawks and warlike tools, left to be called for when the owners return. Sometimes a bundle of cycas fronds serves instead of the heap of stones, but in one way or the other every path leading to the village is marked, so that no one can plead ignorance.

The usual greeting on the road is not "Good day!" but "Where did you sleep?" and "Where are you going?" One gets rather tired of replying. If a man meets a woman, it is customary for her to turn off the path with her back to him, but even standing so, she can seldom resist putting the habitual questions, "Where did you sleep?" and "Where are you going?"

When a big Raga chief makes a feast, the neighbouring villages are invited, and bountiful packages of food are methodically prepared and assigned to each. There will be no mistake in the distribution, for under the fibre-lashing of each is slipped a sign. Here is a chip of bamboo, which is *au* in the Raga language. People are expected from Tabu*au*. There is a scrap of cycas frond, and the name for it is *mele*. The inhabitants of Vau*mele* will be among the guests. If a name occurs which suggests no rebus, some well-known man in that village must be thought of. There is Lalau, for instance, and the word means a cock's feather. Two long cock's tail feathers are inserted. In other packets you find fragments of coral, wild yam, and so forth. Ingenious, is it not?

They are a most generous people. A few years ago our food supply at Norfolk Island ran low, and a drought threatened. They heard of it in Raga when the *Southern Cross* called, but it was in the middle of their planting season, when a yam can hardly be bought. Yet fifty men from Qelhuqe village, where there is a school, came to meet the Bishop, each carrying a large yam for Norfolk Island. And these are they who have no word for "Thank you" or "Please," and of whom you may hear it said, "There's no gratitude in their nature"!

A native wedding, needless to say, involves a feast. The bride has been bargained for while still a child, and the amount agreed upon is paid by instalments. The couple most nearly concerned have often the least say in the matter—the bride never has any. It is arranged by the elders. Women's opinions are of no account in Melanesia, so mothers too are left out of the question. The father can often put his spoke in, but there is a relation more important still with both parties, who must be consulted and appealed to about everything that concerns the children—namely, the *maraui*, or maternal uncle.

Little as women are esteemed, it is by the mother that descent is reckoned in the islands. This seems the natural and primitive view. But they go farther. The father is held to be not of kin to his own son. The degrees within which marriage is permitted by native law are arbitrarily and very strictly defined. In every island of the New Hebrides and Banks group the population is divided into two parts, or sides of a house, as they call it, and each individual is free to marry only with one of the opposite side. The family ensuing is reckoned to the mother's division. *Qua* mother, then, she is of importance, but *qua* woman, not to be considered. From this it will be understood why her nearest of male kin, her own brother, plays so large a part in all that concerns her family. A man's nephew succeeds to his pigs, house, and garden; the son gets nothing from his father but what was given him in life.

At last the final instalment due from the bridegroom has been paid, and he declares himself anxious to settle down. A day is fixed, and the people crowd the *tinesara*, where the feast is prepared. The bridegroom exhibits the pigs, the food, and the mats that he has paid for his wife. Then a friend of the lady's—very likely her uncle—makes an appropriate speech. He adjures the husband to feed her well and treat her kindly, and therewith gives the bride away, dressed in the glory of a new petticoat and wrapped modestly in a new mat. In return, the happy man walks round the uncle, stroking him in sign of gratitude.

The *merai*, or Raga wedding dance, is a very pretty affair. With white feathers, grasses, and shredded palm bark the men manufacture most marvellous head-dresses and girdles. Though the bride takes no part, she is represented by some boy dressed in imitation of her, who enters dancing behind the bridegroom at a given signal. It is intensely amusing to see the pseudo-bride's assumed bashfulness, as "she" minces with dainty steps demurely behind "her" lord and master, whose energy is only equalled by the magnificence of his get-up. Having curveted for a while on the outskirts of the company who have been dancing vigorously for quite a long time, both suddenly enter the heart of the whirling maze; and I can say from experience that an onlooker's pulse beats quicker and the breath comes fast and short, and even a European foot tingles at sight of that infectious rhythmic frolic.

The dance is sometimes followed here by a sort of playful fight between the bride's kinsfolk and those of the bridegroom. Playful, yet it is not so sham an affair but that hurts are often received. The idea probably is to indicate the value set upon the bride's services, and the reluctance of her relations to finally give her up. The poor little bride's reluctance to be given up is often quite as great, and it is no uncommon thing for them to have to drag her by force to her future home.

I have alluded to the people's awe of the spirits. They will endure much rather than risk their displeasure. Some years ago the rains failed, and there was a scarcity of water in the island. One of the Mission clergy came unexpectedly upon a goodly stream of fresh water within easy reach of his house. He asked in amazement why no one had told him of its existence. The answer was that it was sacred. The spirits would be angry if men drank from it. And yet, oddly enough, no one hesitated to eat the fish of this same stream.

As in some of the far-away Solomon Islands, *snakes* seem here imbued with something of the supernatural. If a man happens to come upon a snake, either in a place sacred to the spirits or in his own house, he thinks himself marked out by good fortune for a prosperous career. He pours over his body the juice of a young coco-nut, and is perfectly happy.

There is a sea-snake, which I have seen, with its head erected and body floating in a coil, from which I suppose first sprang the superstition, extraordinarily widespread, not only in Melanesia, but in Polynesia, concerning the *mae*.

The *mae* is an amphibious snake, dreaded by every native, which has the power of transforming itself into the likeness of a young man or maiden. It is generally seen in a dim light. A young man returning from fishing or garden work sees an attractive girl not far off, decked with flowers, beckoning and alluring him. Should he yield to her invitation he goes home to die.

But there are many tests by which a *mae's* true character may be discovered, and these vary in different islands. The skin at the back of the neck remains always that of a snake; the tongue is a brilliant scarlet; and if the elbows and knees bend ever so slightly the wrong way, it is no human being, but a *mae*. Should a nettle-tree be at hand, a *mae* will accept an invitation to sit upon it, recking nothing of its sting, and thus will reveal itself. If a coco-nut is handed to it to drink from, it will hold it upside down in ignorance and spill the milk.

The *mae* never appears to those who walk in company. Only the man or woman who is alone need fear its approach, and the possession of a croton leaf, or the white flower of an amaranth, spells absolute safety. It is said that if the *mae* be struck with a croton leaf, the serpent tail shoots out and the creature's disguise is pierced.

Whatever view is taken of the *mae* by white people, it is doubtful if a native's belief in it has ever been permanently shaken; and it is certain that numerous deaths have occurred from supposed contact with *mae*, and that countless natives are profoundly convinced that they have seen them. We have our own theories about these and similar appearances. Few who have had much to do with the Melanesians can doubt that they are peculiarly susceptible to occult influences, and have a more than Celtic power of vision. Suffice it that the Christian Melanesian who believes in the reality of the *mae*, believes as firmly in a stronger Power Who will not fail those who trust in Him.

Natural death was until recent years a thing unheard of and unknown in Raga and many other islands. Perhaps in truth it was a good deal less common than it is nowadays. But whether illness or accident befell, it was always accounted for by malice—a man's or a spirit's, or both in co-operation, working by charms.

To work a charm expert knowledge is needed, handed down from some past-master or mistress, for female magicians are not unknown either in Raga or in Omba.

The principal wonder-working spirit in Raga is one Tagaro, and it is his name, occurring in most of the charm-songs, that adds peculiar efficacy. Here is a recipe from Raga for making rain. First be it understood you have found a stone which has *mana* for the purpose, if it be but assisted by a charm. You take a tuft of leaves; they look very ordinary, but the magician knows they are hot with *mana*. Put them in the hollow of a stone which serves as basin. Pound and crush some branches of the *piper methysticum* (or pepper-tree) upon it, but not too hard, or you'll get a gale thrown in! Add your *mana* stone, all the while singing charms with very little sense, but a great deal of "Tagaro"; cover the whole over, and wait.

The vegetable mash ferments, the steam ascends, charged, of course, with *mana*. Result—first, clouds; then, heavy rain!

The Raga folk bury their dead quite respectably.

The place is always near the *gamal* and dancing-ground, as being, I should fancy, the most lively and sociable position for the poor bodies. It is walled and heaped with stones, and is frequently, they say, shaped like a canoe, with the thought of the voyage the departed have taken. Sometimes it is planted with the sacred cycas palm. In the wall is a small hole through which the ghosts may escape into the future world—a provision (as there is no roof) which reminds one rather of Sir Isaac Newton and his kitten.

I left Raga with a laugh. A young teacher whom I had known at Norfolk Island asked me if I would like a bit of sugar-cane to chew. I thought I should. A minute or two later he came tearing towards the boat in which we were just pushing off with a mighty stem in his hand, beside which the bassoon of an orchestra were a toy. Thus armed I returned to the ship.

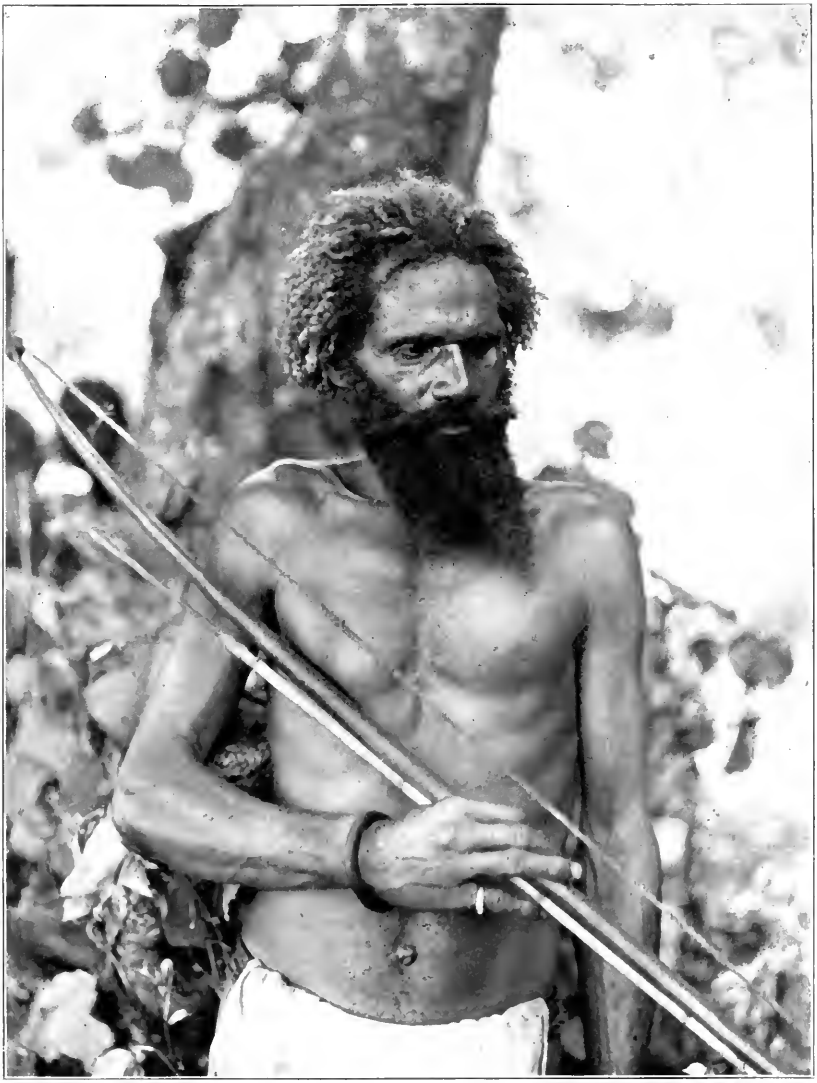
CHAPTER II

OMBA (LEPERS' ISLAND), NEW HEBRIDES

Name—Natural features—Connection with Raga—Decline of population—Character of people—Attack on Bishop Patteson, 1864—Murder of Rev. C. C. Godden, 1906—Murders by suggestion—The first field-glasses—Cannibalism—Story of Charles Tariqatu—The Suqe—Kava-drinking—Social laws—Chiefs—Folk-tale: "How Tagaro the Little found Fish."

The sinister name of Lepers' Island, which was given we know not when or why, seems to be gradually yielding even among traders to the more innocent native appellation by which we know it. Leprosy, whatever was the case in former days, is no longer apparent here, and one is tempted to wonder whether it was not the very common skin diseases and open sores from which every native suffers at some time or other that gave rise to the suggestion of leprosy.

The shape of Omba resembles nothing so much as a sheep's head. Like its neighbours, volcanic in formation, it is somewhat the size of the Isle of Wight, measuring 22 by 12 miles. Its hills rise to over 4000 feet, but none of the people live at a greater height than 2500 feet. It lies about eleven miles to the east of Raga, which island is a good deal more closely related to it than to Maewo, though connection by canoe with Omba is distinctly more dangerous, and Maewo is less than four miles away. Omba inter-



"Ever a fighter"—Man of Omba.

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marries with Raga, and has many practices in common. The favourite Raga songs are in a language so akin to Omba that one would think they were borrowed from there. This, however, the people emphatically deny. Is it conceivable, then, that their antiquity reaches back to a time when both islands spoke one tongue?

It seems impossible to gauge at all accurately the population of any of these islands where many are still heathen. One thing is grievously certain: the numbers are decreasing steadily and rapidly in Raga, Omba, and Maewo. The decline is due to many causes, some connected with heathen practices, some with white men's diseases; but above all, sad to say, to the old-established custom of deporting the strongest and healthiest of the men in the flower of their age to labour in distant sugar plantations, whence but a small proportion return.

The character of the Omba people has been described as "a perfect paradox; they are so peculiarly amiable and so particularly quarrelsome!" By nature undoubtedly the man of Omba is fierce, revengeful, and merciless—"ever a fighter," and troubled by no scruples of honour. But the only natives I know are Christians, and there is all the difference. Bright, affectionate, generous, and chivalrous, the boys and girls of Omba are as attractive as any. But they seem incapable of excelling, for the same reason as the tribe of Reuben; they are "unstable as water." They are also terribly impulsive. Quick to appreciate kindness, the instinct to avenge an injury often works more swiftly still.

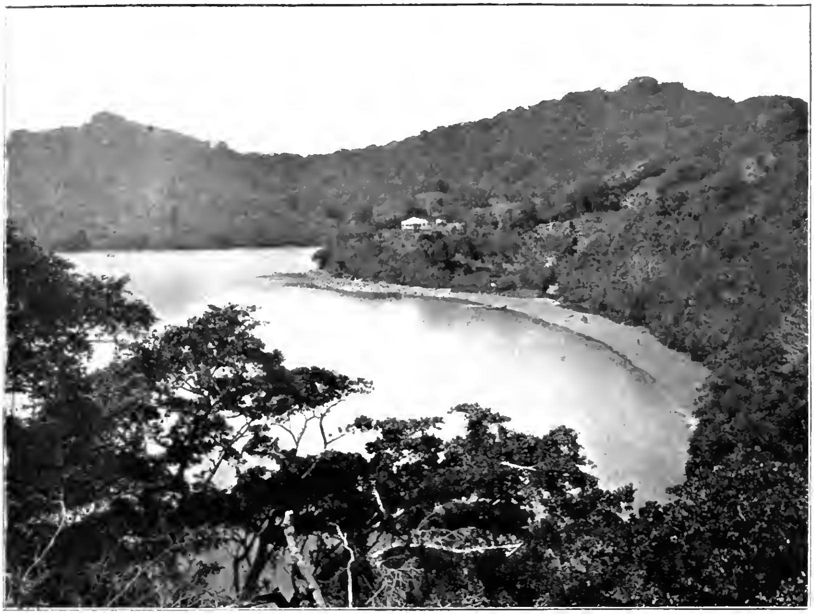
In 1864 Bishop Patteson narrowly escaped in Omba the very death he met in the Reefs seven years later. A few weeks previous to his visit an Omba man had been shot by a trader for stealing calico, but of this the Bishop knew nothing. He was sitting talking among a crowd on the beach when, to his surprise, they jumped up and left him. Turning round, he saw a native advancing upon him with his club raised. The Bishop did not move, but calmly held out some fish-hooks towards him. Courage returned to some others at sight of this, and the would-be avenger was seized by the waist and dragged away.

Forty-two years later—in October 1906—the life of one of our Australian priests was sacrificed in Omba to the same mad instinct. A half-witted labourer had been brought back from Queensland, where he had suffered imprisonment, vowing vengeance on the first white man who crossed his path.

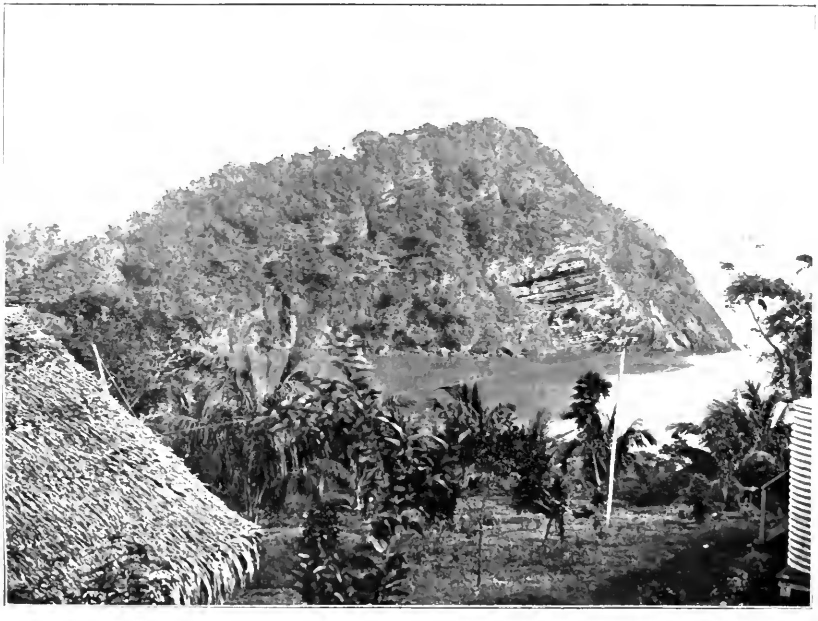
And that white man was Charles Christopher Godden, who had only four or five months before returned to his beloved Omba in company with his bride. Their home, a timber three-roomed house, shone out white among the trees as we neared Lolowai in the *Southern Cross*. It is a bay of surpassing loveliness.

Down on the green sward, just out of the surf's reach, you can see even in the photograph the little boat-shed where the weeping boys laid their white father's body while they clambered up to the house to tell the news to the one within who was expecting her husband's return from one of his customary missionary journeys. And when they got there they could not tell it; they could only lead her to the boat-house.

We visited the lonely grave. It is marked by an



"Their home shone out white among the trees"—Lolowai Bay.



The Home of Tagaro the Little—Lolowai Bay.

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iron cross, whereon is inscribed above the memorable date these words:—

CHARLES CHRISTOPHER GODDEN
PRIEST. MISSIONARY. MARTYR.
Faithful unto Death.

There is something truly demoniacal in the persistence with which the heathen native encompasses his enemy's death. It is often a clear case of murder by suggestion, though neither party would acknowledge that.

Some man has the misfortune to become the enemy of another, who forthwith resolves to shoot him. The arrows must be carefully prepared, and furnished with *mana* to kill. They are tipped with human bone, which is joined to the shaft to the accompaniment of charm-songs and much calling for help upon the ghost to whose body the bone belonged. The arrow is then smeared with acrid juices in order to inflame the wound.

An ambush is laid, and all too easily the victim is surprised and shot. Now comes the crucial question, who will extract the arrow? Is there a friend at hand, or will the enemy come rushing up to do so? If the latter, the arrow-head will be promptly burnt to accelerate the death of the wounded man, who is perfectly aware of what is being done, for he would have done the same had the positions been reversed. A bundle of *mana* leaves is tied on the bow, which is put in some ghost-haunted cave, the string kept taut and pulled from time to time, with the idea of thus straining the nerves and muscles of the wretched victim and super-inducing tetanus. The murderer can do one thing more, and he does it, inviting his friends to join in drinking and chewing such leaves and juices as will sting and irritate, while pungent herbs are burnt to make a choking smoke. The victim lies maybe a mile away, but each symbolic action adds to his agonies.

Suppose, however, the poor fellow were walking in company when he fell, and the arrow is extracted by a friendly hand. Damp leaves and a cool spot are prepared for it, and the cooler the arrow can be kept, the more quickly, it is believed, will the inflammation of the wound subside. Charmed shells are procured from the most powerful magician in the village, and are kept rattling upon the roof to ward off the inimical spirit. Wizards here have a horrid habit of transforming themselves into blow-flies, so the sick man must never be left untended; every fly must be driven off.

Dr. Codrington[1] tells of the case of two devoted brothers in this island, one of whom died. The other in course of time dug up his body and headed arrows with his bones. Thenceforward he was wont to speak of himself as "My brother and I," and all regarded him with gravest awe, believing the dead brother to be always at hand to supply *mana* to his efforts.

The first field-glasses seen in the New Hebrides brought bitter disappointment in their train. As one of the Mission clergy was walking along the shore, the native at his side pointed out a tiny figure in the distance.

"There goes one of my enemies!" said he.

The white man drew out his field-glasses and adjusted the focus, then handed them to his companion, who gazed through them in excited amazement, beholding his foe apparently close at hand. Dropping the glasses, he seized his arrows and looked again. The enemy was far away as at first. Once more he snatched the magic glasses, once more exchanged them for his arrows, and once more was baffled. To lose such an opportunity was hard indeed. A bright thought suddenly occurred to him.

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[1] *The Melanesians: their Anthropology and Folk-Lore.*

" *You* hold the glasses," said he to the priest, "and then *I* can shoot him!"

The tenure of life is frail indeed where Omba is still heathen. When the cause of a man's death is not obvious, suspicion falls first on the wife. It were meet that she show her grief by sharing his grave. One poor thing stood weeping beside the pit in which her husband's corpse had just been laid. Suddenly by the chief's order she was pushed into it, along with a dog that the dead man had acquired, and buried alive.

Cannibalism is a custom still resorted to occasionally in Omba. It is recognized that to be roasted and eaten like a pig is the worst thing that can be done to man by man, and indicates the fiercest anger or most deep contempt. But it is not done lightly or for the palate's pleasure. The awfulness of such food is felt strongly, and a man who has eaten human flesh is regarded as a dare-devil who will stick at nothing. In consequence, some have been known to partake of it in order to win a brave name and inspire fear.

It may well be believed that the spirit of revenge dies hard. Yet it does die under "The New Teaching" or "The Way of Peace," as Christianity is called by the Melanesians.

Some years ago there was a great feast in Omba, to which neighbouring villages were invited, and among the guests was one of our native head-teachers, Charles Tariqatu. A scholar of his named Samuel was standing near him, a loaded musket in his hand. It exploded accidentally, and a bullet entered Charles's shoulder.

Such an accident was calculated to set the whole district ablaze and to divide the population into opposing forces. What in fact happened?

Charles was tenderly laid in a canoe by his people and paddled home, where for ten days he lay conscious, then died. During those days he used all his diminishing strength in urging the school people to hold fast to what they had learnt. His relations gathered from distant parts with the idea of avenging his blood, but Charles assumed his authority as a teacher and sternly and absolutely forbade it.

He called Samuel to his side in their presence, put his hand on the youth's forehead and said a form of words, of which the effect was to prevent any from compassing the offender's death. Then he asked Samuel to take his own place as a son to the aged father he was leaving, to supply him with firewood, and to dig his garden. And the solemn promise was given.

On the morning of his death he would have none stay with him, but bade them all go as usual to Matins, saying he would be with them in prayer. On their return they found him dead.

Omba has its roll of heroes, and I think Charles Tariqatu is one.

In every island the Suqe regulations differ slightly, and it is a peculiarity of Omba that there is no initiation ceremony. All males are members when they reach a certain age, and take their meals in the *gamal.* The first advance may be bought with a fowl, but the high ranks are powerful and difficult to acquire, since those above may if they list refuse leave to rise to those below, whose business it is, therefore, to win their favour. If any one should attempt to eat at an oven above that which is his right, they have a short way with him in Omba. He is promptly clubbed or shot.

In such a fiery island it may be imagined how disastrous has been the illicit introduction by traders of fire-arms and "fire-water." The dual Government (France and England) is seeking now to put down these and other irregularities with a strong hand, but it is to be feared the gin still leaks in. There is an indigenous fermented liquor, *kava*, made from the root and stem of the *piper methysticum*, which the natives do not allow their women to touch. It is, however, of a very mild character, and even if drunk in quantity has no more than a stupefying effect.

Throughout Melanesia there exist most curious and stringent social laws restricting intercourse between certain relations and marriage connections. Nowhere are these laws more peculiar or more strict than in the New Hebrides. The caste and class distinctions of a higher civilization fix barriers between members of the same race; but the Melanesians draw the fence nearer still and make barriers between members of the same family.

As they grow in years a reserve grows between brother and sister in Omba, until the time comes when they may no longer meet or speak to one another—namely, when the boy first puts on a loin-cloth. Neither may so much as name the other; and if the girl sees her brother coming along the path, she runs and hides herself! Worse still, the mother and her grown son are forbidden intercourse. To her son-in-law a woman may speak, but she must not approach him. An Omba man must never mention the name of his wife's brother.

These instances are by way of illustration. We shall see the principle more minutely developed in the Banks Islands. They sound arbitrary and capricious, but there is no doubt whatever that every such law finds its origin and its justification in a Melanesian's instinct.

The maternal uncle is still of first importance, though it would seem that here the son is wont to succeed to his father's property. Dr. Codrington thinks it probable that the cousins are bought off in practice, or at least given a good share.

Omba rejoices in some fairly powerful chiefs. I have read of one interesting specimen, Guevu by name, a cannibal with seventy wives, who was found by one of our missionaries to be as a host "most kind and amiable," and positively lavish in his generosity. He believed himself to have the power of driving away sickness and commanding life and death. He was also a sunshine-maker, and when it rained went through a solemn and imposing ceremony of blowing away the clouds.

Theoretically speaking, the chieftainship is not hereditary. Whoever has most money and most *mana* is the greatest. Practically, however, it generally descends from father to son, because the father does his best to secure it by buying his son a high rank in the Suqe, and giving him his property, and also whatever charms, songs, stones, and magical appliances go to make up his reputation for *mana*.

In writing about Raga I mentioned the important name of Tagaro. He is a sprite whose home is in

Omba, so it is meet that we should hear a little more about him in that island.

There are really two Tagaros, Tagaro the Big (and Bad) and Tagaro the Little (and Good). Let me quote a few sentences from the late Rev. Chas. C. Godden's account of them :—

> In the beginning of things these two roamed the bare hills of Omba. . . . The bad spirit said, "Let it be always night!" But the other objected, and said that it was good that there should be day as well as night. Then Tagaro the Big wished to make all trees and plants to be of no use to man for food. But again the kind little spirit said, "No! Let some be good to help men, but let some be bad, so that men must work and not be lazy." And so with everything. Whenever Tagaro the Big suggested anything, immediately Tagaro the Little said, "No, that is not good!" and suggested something exactly opposite. And being little, he always managed to get his own way.
>
> At length this habit of contradiction so exasperated the big bad spirit that he retired to the lake on the top of Omba, where he has remained ever since. Occasionally when his wife vexes him he shakes the island in his fury. Occasionally also he burns something on his fire (which issues from under the ground) that causes the yams to die, and the bananas to yield very poorly for some distance around. On account of these little traits in his character, the Omba people prefer to be civil to him when they are unfortunate enough to be forced to go near his habitation.
>
> When Tagaro the Little resolved to settle down, he chose as his home a high cliff rising sheer out of the water on the north-east of Omba [beside Lolowai]. Here he enjoyed the society of his wife for some time, but at length she died, and a long rock in the water, which uncovers at low tide, marks her burial-place.

A folk-tale from Omba, in which Tagaro the Little plays the hero, has been translated by Dr. Codrington[1] as literally as possible, so as to convey as far as may be its Melanesian atmosphere. It tells

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[1] *The Melanesians.*

HOW TAGARO THE LITTLE FOUND FISH

They say that he drew down his canoe, and paddled out in search of fish; and he saw a great rock standing in the sea, and he floated gently without paddling to see whether he would find fish or not. And he saw many fish rising up to the surface from under his canoe, and he fed them with the food he had in his hand, and he perceived that these fish knew how to eat the food of the land. Then said he, "I am going to leave you; but the day after to-morrow I shall grate some *loko*[1] for you to eat and shall pour coco-nut sauce over it, and bring it here to you."

So he left them, and stayed, they say, one day at home. And when the second day came for him to go, he took that *loko* which he had sauced with coco-nut juice, and launched his canoe, and paddled out to the place where those fish were. And he called them with a song which he sang like this:—

My fish, whatever you are!
 Nice little fish!
Here is your food with sauce,
 Your food done with coco-nut sauce.

But there was another person, whose name was Merambuto, who stood on the beach and heard Tagaro calling his fish with a song like that, and next day Merambuto, having made haste to prepare food in the night, drew down the canoe in the early morning—Tagaro's canoe—and paddled out till he came to the place where Tagaro had floated before. And he also sang that song, "My fish, whatever you are!"

Then those fish heard his voice that it was loud, and did not rise; and he altered his voice so as to be small like Tagaro's. And he called them with a small voice, singing that song, "My fish, whatever you are!"

Then those fish heard that the voice was small, and they rose all of them to the surface, and he caught every one of them with a hook. And he made haste to paddle ashore, and went back into his village, and made up a fire, and put the fish in the oven.

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[1] *Loko*, a vegetable mash, very popular in Melanesia.

But when it was broad daylight Tagaro went himself, and they were all gone; and he understood that this thief Merambuto had caught all the fish, and paddled quickly back, and hauled up his canoe. And he looked for footprints to know which way he had gone round; and he found footprints and followed them, following on till he came to Merambuto's place. And there he went into the house to him, and sat down with him in a friendly way.

Then said Tagaro, "What is that in the oven? I am hungry."

And Merambuto said, "That is my food, but it is very bad, you cannot eat it."

Then says Tagaro, "Indeed! Is your food so very bad? But those are my fish, and you have caught them all!"

And he struck him, and killed him in his house, and set fire to the house, and it was burnt and destroyed. And Tagaro took back the fish from the oven, and went back, and put them into a little pool of salt water. And the fish revived; one side of them was gone, one side still remained. And we call them Tagaro's half-fish—soles!

CHAPTER III

MAEWO (AURORA), NEW HEBRIDES

The waterfall—Price of wives—Population—Pigs—Sacred stones, plants, and animals—Society of the *Qat*—Initiation rites—Burying alive—Native beliefs—A mysterious light—Spectacles—Smoked mats—Poisoned arrows—Betrothal rite—Folk-tale: "The Child who issued from a Rock."

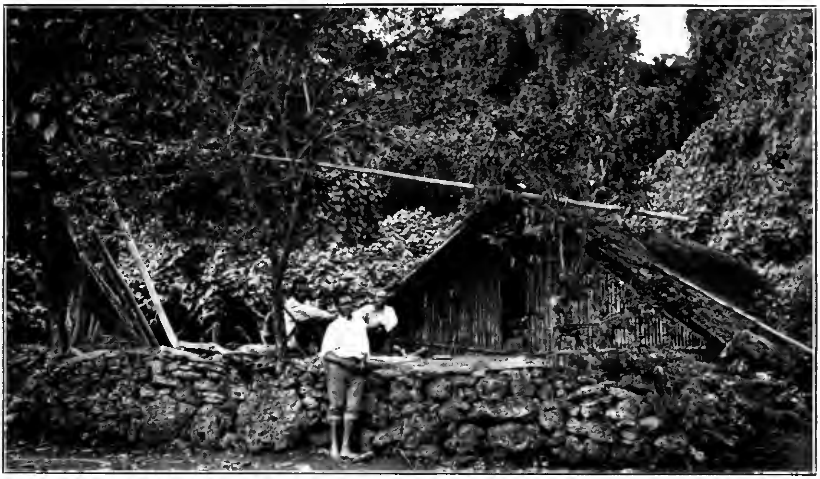
WITH my recollection of Maewo is wrapped up a sense of personal injury.

Maewo has a famous waterfall. I believe it is a magnificent waterfall. Waterfalls are rare enough in Melanesia to make me particularly anxious to see this one.

The rest of the company were familiar with it, and there was the usual Mission business to attend to; whilst, as the waterfall turns into a broad, cool river which flows close to the landing-place, all who were at liberty elected to bathe. So a native named Matthew was told off as my escort and guide to show me the waterfall. Perhaps he was not keen on the expedition, wanting rather to hear the news and chat with his friends. But he did not say so, and it does not excuse him.

We climbed up steep banks, over rocks and through mud, the sound of the water in our ears, until we came upon a small cascade. It looked quite pretty,

MAEWO.



A Maewo *Gamal*.

In the Distance, from the South.

and I said so. It was very ordinary, but I did not say so. I praised it and admired it, feeling that I was giving my guide pleasure by expressing my own. It was a mistake. Matthew must have argued with himself that if I thought so much of this it would be foolish to take me any farther.

He made no move onward, so I began to wonder if this could be the overrated waterfall I had heard so much about. Anxious not to hurt Matthew's feelings by evincing disappointment, I asked as contentedly as I could, "This, then, is the waterfall?"

Matthew assented cheerfully.

"Oh! It's a very nice one—a very nice one!" said I, and walked back with a conviction that one need not leave one's native shores to see the superior of Maewo's waterfall.

Later on, when we had left Maewo and Matthew behind us, I found out my mistake. The real waterfall was considerably farther on. Hence my sense of personal injury.

Women are cheaper here than in Raga. The standard is fixed. You can buy any wife, I hear, for one pig, small or large.

A photograph shows the contour of the island as we approach it from the south. A narrow waterway, some three miles in width, separates Maewo from Raga. Both islands are long and narrow, and you would expect from their geography to find Maewo a sort of lesser Raga. Strange to say, it is far more akin in language and in customs to the island of Mota, which lies ninety miles to the north, than to its close neighbour, Raga.

It has been estimated that Maewo contains about 800 people; but if the population continues to decline at its present rate, the time is not far distant when it will become a desert island—unless, as is more likely, it is opened up for trade and peopled with white planters and Asiatic coolies.

If Maewo is famous among its white acquaintances for the waterfall, it is more famous among its brown neighbours for its superior breed of pigs. Perhaps that is why a woman only costs one in Maewo! The Raga and Omba people paddle over and barter for them in order to buy themselves new dignities at home. There are stones with special *mana* for multiplying pigs. Certain leaves are placed upon these, with the expressed wish that the petitioner's pigs may be prolific.

Should one of these most precious pigs wander away, it is customary to imbue some dead relative with the virtue commonly attached to St. Anthony of Padua. The pig's owner goes to the grave, lays upon it some leaves of the croton, and expresses his wish, "Get back my pig for me!" If the ghost is good-natured it will drive the truant back into the village. Otherwise I suppose one has to go and hunt for it.

This brilliant-leaved croton has in many islands rather a sacred character, and I fancy it was among the beautiful foliage-plants that one of our early missionaries in Maewo collected for the adornment of the little garden round his house. Just in time he made the tiresome discovery that all these were *tapu*[1] to ordinary folk, and that therefore not only would no women venture near, but no one could come to school save the few who had attained a rank in the Suqe high enough to admit them to familiarity even with the plants of the ghosts. The natives were quite as sorry as the white man for his mistake, and did their best to make him amends by fetching quantities of unforbidden roots and planting them all over.

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[1] "*Tapu*," *i.e.* forbidden, often with the idea of something supernatural attaching. From this common Oceanic word we get "taboo."

Certain birds, fishes, and reptiles are considered by the natives to have a close connection with spirits, and therefore to be regarded with respect, though not in all cases with awe. Sharks and snakes stand out prominently in this class throughout Melanesia. They are credited with superhuman intelligence and faculties, and it would seem that the former are more frequently tenanted by ghosts, the latter by spirits. But in the New Hebrides you will also find owls, eagles, kingfishers, lizards, crabs, and eels looked upon as in some degree sacred. The wizards of Maewo are supposed to convert themselves at will into eagles, owls, or sharks.

The Suqe is not so strong now in Maewo as in the other islands. It seems that of yore it was chiefly prized here for the advantages it secured a man after death. The Suqe pig bought the entrance to Panoi, the world of shadows, and so a man's first thought for his infant son was the gift of the pig for Suqe membership. Should one die having offered no pig, his soul is left for ever hanging to some tree-branch like a bat.

But as we said before, there are plenty of other and more secret societies than the Suqe. The society of the Qat, for instance, appears to be powerful here. Qat is the shortened word for *head*, and the especial feature of this society is the colossal head-gear which is manufactured for the high days of the Qat. It is made of tree-fern trunks, and completely extinguishes the wearer's head. So heavy is it that one man cannot support it, but requires the assistance of three companions!

The ceremony of initiation into the most important section of the Qat is cruel and hideous. They say the trials to which the young candidates are put are contrived with the view of testing their powers of endurance. For some time all food is withheld from them; then portions are meted out to them half-cooked and covered with dirt and ashes. Weak and wretched, the lads are beaten with salted nettle-leaves, are flung down and trodden upon, pulled up and shot at with blunted arrows, compelled to grasp burning faggots—in short, their existence is made a torment in a score of similar ways.

Why, then, are they so foolish as to join the society? is the natural question. And the only answer one can offer is that it takes a Melanesian of more than average independence to withstand the pressure of public opinion. Social position depends upon a man's place in the society, and an outsider is of less than no account among his fellows. In the Christian villages, of course, there is freedom, and one cannot imagine a baptized boy willingly submitting himself to the futile bondage of the Qat.

During the long period of his seclusion the candidate may not wash, but the privilege is accorded him before he returns to the village. It was a fatal accident when a girl one day happened upon the scene of such a washing. In an instant she realized the terrible nature of her misadventure, and fled for her life to a school village for refuge. Sad to say, it was of no avail. The secrecy of the great Qat had been violated. The poor girl was pursued, captured, and —buried alive!

There has been a good deal of burying alive in Maewo. Really the correct thing when a person dies is for the next of kin to request to be at once killed and buried with him. If the petition is granted, the mourner is wrapped up alive with the corpse and then trodden to death.

One poor woman, in great grief at the loss of her daughter, was heard to exclaim, "Let me die too!" She was forthwith tied to the dead body, and then deliberately trodden to death by her own son.

One naturally shudders at such facts, but be it remembered that to the son it was a pious duty that he was performing to both mother and sister in setting free the mother's soul to keep company with that of her daughter.

In Maewo the body and soul are regarded rather as the white and yolk of an egg. At death the invisible centre of the body flies into a tree and laughs at the mourners down below. The body has been cast aside, but the individual is still close at hand, and the friends' tears seem meaningless. It is the custom to place a little food on the grave while the soul, or ghost, is still hovering around, as is its wont for a few days—not with any idea that material food can be consumed by spirits, but that the intangible essence or shadow of the food having been abstracted, the soul may travel on happily to Panoi, the realm of ghosts.

When Maewo people become Christians the spirit-world does not recede from them. It comes nearer—unless, indeed, as, alas, sometimes happens, the vision is obscured by the pursuit of pigs.

Two women who turned into their little bamboo church one evening to say their prayers, because quiet is so hard to get at home, saw a bright, unearthly light shining over the altar. And they said very simply that they knew it must proceed from Our Lord Himself. Quite independently the same thing was reported from a bush village. Some late traveller passing by glanced through the church door and saw this strange light streaming from above the altar. He awoke the school people and their teacher, and all gathered round the entrance to the church and saw the light for themselves. He would be a hardened materialist who would laugh to scorn the story told by these childlike hearts.

Yes, they are childlike, very quaintly childlike sometimes.

I think of two dear old Maewo friends, the head-teacher and his wife, Harry and Clara. Both are getting on in years now, and Harry's sight is failing. Spectacles have come to his aid, however (the first, perhaps, worn in Maewo), and with their help he can read as well as ever. A year or so ago they were spending a summer with us in Norfolk Island, and Harry took his turn in reading the daily lessons. But a sad thing happened. The glasses fell and were broken, and poor Harry had to ask to be excused from reading at Evensong on account of the accident.

"So Simon read instead," said old Clara, "but I don't know why! As I told Harry, it was only the glass of the things that was gone, and when he put them on he looked just the same, and no one would have known the difference!"

I have said that pigs are the gold and bank-notes of Melanesia; in Maewo the large silver is represented by mats! The mats are of grass, and very

MAEWO.

'After Coco-nuts.

P. 37.

skilfully plaited. Mats are used in every island—for bedding, carpeting, even for clothing and umbrellas. But the absurd thing in Maewo is that their value is enhanced by smoke! The mats must be made as black as possible, and the smoking of them becomes a regular industry. Small houses are specially built for the mats to hang in, and men in charge live and sleep there, and keep a constant slow fire burning under them. Here they remain till great stalactites of black smoke hang from each one, and the owners gloat over the ever-increasing blackness.

The preparation of poisoned arrows in the heathen parts of Maewo is another serious business, rather more elaborate, I fancy, than in Omba. Of course there must be the fine, sharp tip of human bone to begin with. Then an ointment is prepared by scraping the root of a certain creeper, roasting it over a fire, and mixing with it the juice of the screw palm. The arrow is smeared all over with the mixture, and after an interval of ten days is treated again. This time it is with the sap of a tree that has the property of hardening. One moon must now elapse, towards the end of which the hard coating cracks and the fluid beneath oozes through. The arrow is ready for its deadly errand.

There is a curious betrothal rite in Maewo. A baby girl is born, and the relatives of an eligible baby boy immediately apply for her. The match having been arranged, the future husband is carried into the house with a bamboo tube full of water. His hands are then guided to splash his bride-to-be, and from the day of this ceremonial washing the betrothal is regarded as an accomplished fact. What the symbolic idea underlying it is, I cannot make out.

Here is a characteristic folk-tale from Maewo, which was written down for me in Mota by a Melanesian, and which I will try to English without anglicizing. To one point I would direct attention. The crime of the story is not the massacre which ends it, but the harsh speaking that drives the spirit-child away. It has been said by one who knows well the Melanesian mind that to these people "a harsh word is more immoral than a lie." In Maewo it would seem to be regarded as more immoral than a murder. But here is the story. It is headed

THE STORY WHICH HAS BEEN PASSED DOWN ABOUT THE CHILD WHO ISSUED FROM A ROCK

Of old a father and a mother: their children were nine.

Upon a day they went for a walk. The father and mother walked following the road, but those nine children of theirs walked following a river, gathering chestnuts, yet not far off from them. Then they clambered down to the beach.

And the father and mother roasted the boys' chestnuts which they had gathered by the river-side. But the boys bathed on the sandy beach near the two. And when they were bathing their mother counted them, for she saw that they were not nine, but ten. Then spoke she to her husband about it thus, "But the children of us two are nine, yet I have counted them, and they are ten."

Then the couple fixed their eyes hard upon them, and they saw clearly that one of them was very beautiful, and not a son of theirs. So the two called them hither, and they saw that they were nine again. And they asked them, "Did you see any one at all with you when you were bathing?"

And they, "No one!"

But the two disputed with them, saying, "We two saw one little child bathing together with you. He is fair, and his hair is yellow, and he is very beautiful."

Then they sat down to eat. When they had finished eating, their father and mother sent them back to bathing. So they went back again to bathe, but as they were diving, that beautiful child came forth suddenly from a rock and dived together with them. So the father and mother then saw how that he came forth from a rock.

And the man said to his wife, "You will stay here and watch them intently. I will go for a net to the village."

So he went and got quickly a net, and ran quickly back to the beach. Then he made stealthily for that rock out of which the child had come. He laid the net over that rock, and when he had finished arranging it, he signalled to his wife that she should call them. After that she called them, and they came prancing up out of the water to come to her, but that beautiful little child went in the other direction, in order to climb back again into his place—the rock, that is. But he sat down, not as before upon the rock, but upon that net the man had spread. So that man drew it up. After that he questioned him, thus: "Where do you come from?"

But the child did not at once answer, only cried and cried. However, presently he answered him: "Nowhere; I live here always."

And the man said to him, "I want to take you to be my son."

But the child answered him, "I fear your sons; before long they will be angry with me."

And the man said to him, "No, I shall not allow them to scold you. I shall love you exceedingly, because you are exceedingly beautiful."

Then the little child rose up and went with him, and he returned with them into the village.

So they dwelt and dwelt there. But upon one day the father and mother said to the children, "We two are going out to work, but you will behave properly, and don't scold that little child."

Then they answered them, "Yes, indeed, we will behave properly."

But they lied to those two. When the pair had gone they began playing properly, but presently they fell to wondering who should shoot at the tusk of their father's pig. Then they said that that child should shoot.

But he refused, saying, "Presently I shall hit and break it, and then you will be angry with me about it."

And they said to him, "No; if it should be broken we shall not be angry with you."

So he shot according to their will. He shot; but the pig's tusk was broken. Thereupon they began to scold him.

That poor little child began to cry. Then he rose up. He would go back to the beach to his own place. And as he went and went along the road he sang a song and wept. So he went straight on until indeed he reached the beach.

Now his father heard the voice; he listened carefully, then heard distinctly that it was the voice of that beautiful little child. So he started up from the garden and ran swiftly to the beach. And he arrived there, but that child was in the surf already; only his face could be seen.

Then that man cried and cried, saying, "*Awo!* My dearest son, do not go away!"

But the little child paid no attention to him. Diving, he returned thus to his own true home, that rock. And that man sat down on the sand and wept and wept over that little child because he loved him exceedingly. Then he rose up and returned into the village.

But his wrath blazed out fiercely against those nine children of his. So he killed them every one.

CHAPTER IV

MERALAVA (STAR PEAK), BANKS ISLANDS

Natural features—Discovery—Interior—Augury—Suqe—Native idea of justice—The bird of evil—Contrast: 1874 and present day—Extract from native's letter—Everyday life—The priest in various capacities—The *mago* dance—"The Fools"—Canoes—Products of the island—Folk-tale: "The People from Above"—An Ocean language—Merig.

Both the names of this island are significant. Meralava means "Big Child," and is in contradistinction to Merig, or "Little Child," a very small neighbour to the north.

It will be seen from the map that Meralava itself is not a *very* big child. Perhaps it is fifteen miles round the base, and three miles in diameter. Star Peak well describes its shape. It is just the cone of a volcano, rising steeply out of the sea at an angle of about 45° to the height of some 4000 feet. There are several shoulders, which, spreading at the base, make a starlike figure.

When this island peak was discovered by Quiros the Spaniard in 1607 the volcano was active, but it has now long been dormant. It would seem that the steep mountain slope is continued beneath the sea, for there is no anchorage obtainable, and the one landing-place needs its whitened stone, which glistens like a spark in the distance, to mark where the dark stream of lava, still uncongealed perhaps when Quiros came, has solidified into a rocky ground, where the whale-boat may be beached.

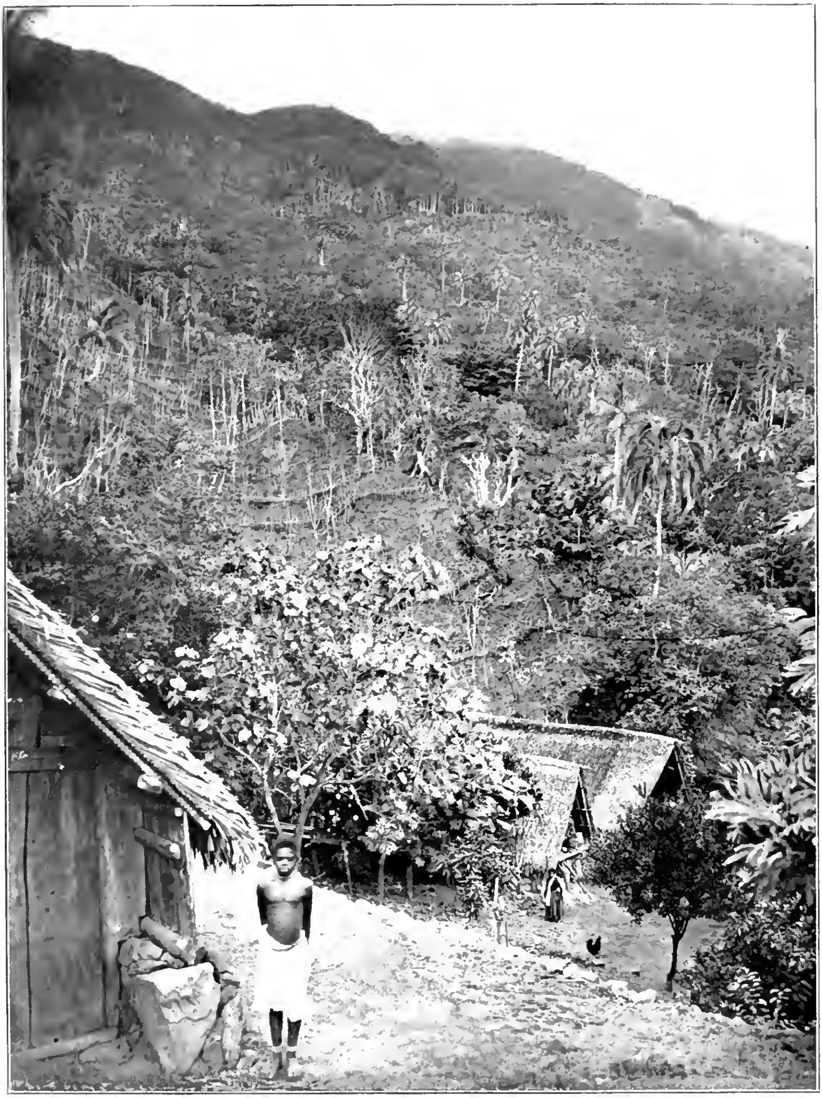
Meralava is the southernmost of the Banks Islands, politically and geographically included in the New Hebrides, yet in many ways strikingly distinct, as, for instance, in the fact that there appears no trace or tradition of cannibalism in this smaller group. They were named by Captain Bligh of *Bounty* fame after Sir Joshua Banks.

On nearing Meralava even the least observant eye must be struck with the character of the interior of the island. There is scarcely a rood of level ground from base to summit, yet the mountain-side is cut up into artificial terraces, divided into gardens, and planted with yams and other vegetables. Truly a wonderful evidence of industry!

Over the crater there usually hangs a cloud, as in the photograph, but upon one of my visits I had the good fortune to see it absolutely clear, with the only patch of bare earth on the island at the top. Time did not admit of our climbing to the crater, but whoso can do so must be well repaid. You find there a basin within a basin, the innermost being perfect in form. The sides are clothed with lovely ferns, and owls and hawks make it their home.

A primitive augury was formerly practised here. A man who desired to read his future had but to repair to the crater and mark what bird within first met his eye. He who was greeted by an owl might look forward to a long life, but woe to him whose glance fell first upon a red-crested bird or a black one. The former betokened a bloody death in battle, the latter an approaching illness. A hawk

MERALAVA.



"The character of the interior."

P. 42.

brought promise of future importance—a high rank in the Suqe.

There was once an old chief here who in rank far outdistanced all competitors. He rose higher than the highest stage hitherto dreamed of. So he invented an extraordinary head-gear for himself, and created a new title, "*We Tuka*," which signified that he had reached the sky; to rise higher was impossible!

The Suqe and its laws used to be taken very seriously in this small island. Its nobility alone might sit upon the platform of stones to be seen in each village. One of our native teachers, building himself a house here, thought to improve and strengthen it with a raised foundation of big stones. His action was interpreted as an infringement of the law of the Suqe, and the unconscious offender found himself penalized almost to bankruptcy by the inexorable law of the society.

Action of this sort is probably grounded on sheer cupidity. But it may be said once for all that the native idea of justice often differs widely from our own, and is hard to understand. Here is an illustration from Meralava.

A certain youth went over to Merig and died there. Witchcraft was said to be the cause. The husband of his father's sister, having for some reason ill-will to the lad, had obtained a fragment of his food (one of the commonest ways of encompassing a man's death in Melanesia), and by use of a charm with it had done the deed.

If this could be proved, most of us would feel inclined to pass sentence upon the man. Not so with the Melanesian.

It was the melancholy duty of the afflicted father to let fly an arrow at his sister, because her husband had charmed his son to death. The whole island looked upon the affair as a matter of course, and the father did what was expected of him, being careful, however, to hurt his sister as little as might be in the process.

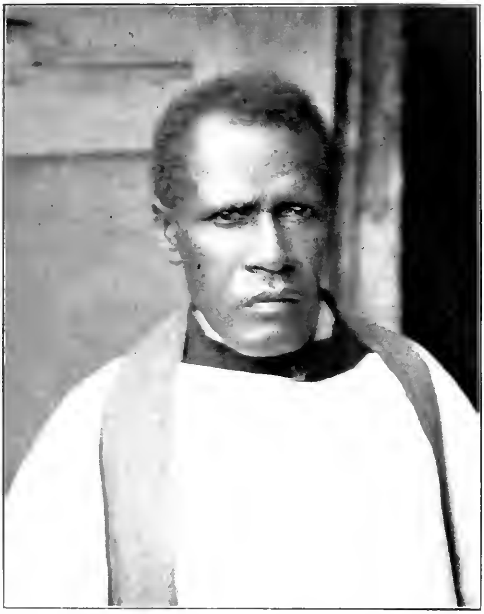
Some strange superstitions linger on in Meralava, and will probably be generally believed as long as the people retain their unquestioning faith.

The kingfisher is no longer here in any sense sacred. On the contrary, the poor little creature is called "the bird of evil." But they still impute to it a superhuman intelligence, and no one would kill or eat a kingfisher on any account. "He knows too much," they say. The bird's especial function nowadays seems to be the carrying of bad news. If a kingfisher perches near one, it is a sure sign that he has ill tidings, and the custom is to ask him, "Is so-and-so dead? Or so-and-so?" naming any friends who are absent. By the jerks of his head the bird signifies "Yes" or "No." I know a Meralava boy who spent a very sad day in the Norfolk Island hospital, the trouble being that a kingfisher had knocked against the window three or four times as if anxious to come in with news.

Meralava is now entirely Christian. It is in the charge of its own native priest, and from it many have gone out as missionaries to distant islands, of whom some have been admitted to Holy orders. It is one of the brightest spots in all Melanesia, a miniature picture of what Christianity can do for a people.

Here is the report of Meralava in 1874:—

"Found to be in a very hopeless condition; depopulated of all able-bodied inhabitants by labour-trade;



"Its own native priest"—William Vaget.

A Snapshot on the Landing-rock.   P. 44.

the old or weak dying or dead, and labourers returning with fire-arms, shooting and poisoning at will, the corpses being left unburied beside the paths."

In 1881 the first baptism took place, when fourteen catechumens were made Christians in the presence of more than 250 heathen.

What is the latest news? The whole population (475) baptized, and nearly 200 communicants. And what can be said of them?

"The people here are so happy and hospitable, and so devoted to their lovable old priest, William Vaget, that one's stay on this island, however short, is always pleasant and inspiriting. Preparations are being made for the building of a large church at Leqil, the increasing population now proving far too large for the present building."

And here I will translate a paragraph from a letter I received the other day from William's only daughter, now the girl-wife of a young Meralava teacher:—

> To-day the people have been to fetch sago palm leaves from the mountain, for they want very much just now to renew the thatch of the school-house, and also to make it rather higher and wider than before, for the children are very many, and the room is not sufficient. . . . The people from every school are gathering here to help with it. . . . Presently everybody will be busy beginning to clear their garden-ground, and it is well that the school-house should be finished first.

I can see them all vividly as I write, for the Meralava people are my especial friends. Their bright, laughing faces, their eager, outstretched hands, their clear voices—would that those who read this could see them too!

Finding the Suqe was a barrier to progress, of their own accord they put an end to it many years ago. And yet there is no white man mimicry among them. They find an interest and pride in work that they never knew in the old days, but they work in native fashion and live the simplest native life. Only—in all the villages the day's work is begun and ended with united prayer and praise in the village church "in a tongue understanded of the people." And since there are no magistrates, or police, or councils, the Church governs. Her laws express the public Christian opinion of the natives, approved and confirmed by the Bishop, and to them all submit.

It might be one day you would find the gentle old priest administering discipline—twelve strokes in the presence of the village is the Meralava rule for certain offences, together with excommunication for a considerable time; and the punishment and shame are keenly felt. But the next day, Sunday, will see William in the more congenial rôle of host, entertaining three or four villages (who bring their provisions) to the weekly social feast following on the service, where men and women sit down together, a thing unknown in Suqe times.

The one feature worth preserving from the Suqe still remains—namely, the dances. I think there is no daintier or more graceful dance in all Melanesia than the *mago*, and this has never been, nor will be, I think, allowed to drop. There is a real enchantment in the ceaseless triple thrum-thrum-thrum of the little drum which accompanies every movement of the dances, even when heard afar off. But to watch the *mago* is to realize the existence in these dark-skinned "savages" of the spirit of true art. Apart from the terpsichorean genius, there is evidence of a feeling for quite poetic beauty, a strong sense of rhythm, and an appreciation of dramatic effect.

Stand in a shadow when the moon is full and watch the *tinesara.* Two and two from all sides come strange and eerie figures, with streaks of white paint on their faces, wonderful white feather-tufted head-gear, girdles with fringes of shredded palm bark reaching to the knee, and round every ankle a string of dry bean-pods that rattle as they dance. On they come, scudding into the bright moonlight, career once madly round, and then fall into their places in that company a little way off, whose advance, dancing in two rows, is so gradual as to be hardly perceptible. Up and down the centre prances the leader, singing a sort of story prologue.

This is the opening of the *mago.* There is symbolism in every figure—such as the imitation of birds in one of the prettiest, where the call-notes are clearly to be recognized. But something of the old Suqe mystery still clings to the *mago*, and much of its meaning is hard to grasp. "We know there is a thought in every bit of the dance, and we would very much like to know what it is," said a Meralava girl to me as we sat watching it. "The men know it, but they do not tell it to us women."

The speed and excitement increases as the avenue of dancers reaches the central space and becomes a whirling circle. But perfect time is maintained throughout. The hands play a part as well as the feet, and there is much clapping in the air and patting of the ground to punctuate the jumping, skipping, and hopping, all being done in regular process to the beat of the little drum, and without confusion of the complicated evolutions. A single word from the leader, "*Zito!*" marks each change. Ever and anon all stop for an instant, in the strangest conceivable attitudes, in the midst of the dance, as if suddenly turned to stone. Or again, there comes with a shout a backward scurry, scattering in star-like pattern from the centre on to the outskirts of the ground.

In Melanesia the consecration of the village church, a confirmation, or a large baptism is celebrated by feasting and dancing. Does it sound incongruous to English ears? To us it seems entirely congruous, and methinks it would have been so to our forefathers. Is it the advance of religion that makes any frown to-day at the notion of such a connection? I am afraid it is rather the narrowing and retreat of it that sets up here and there an impenetrable barrier between secular and sacred—earth and heaven.

There are plenty of other recreations in happy Meralava; and though the people are such great gardeners nowadays, they can thoroughly enjoy the holidays prescribed by the Church. If a Saint's Day means a sermon at Evensong, it also probably means a long day's enjoyment in fishing, bathing, boating, cooking, and feasting. Then there are no end of native games for the children. And when one is tired he can lie on his back and get a friend to amuse him with telling stories.

They never weary of repeating anecdotes concerning a certain race of people—"The Fools," Meralava tersely calls them—who in the long ago inhabited one side of the island. Many were the adventures and misadventures by which they justified their name. One may suffice.

They grew coco-nut palms, but did not know the fruit was good to eat, till one from the other side

MERIG.

"THE LITTLE CHILD."

MERALAVA.

"EVERY SMALL BOY HAS HIS OWN *WELEWELE*."

of the island visited them and asked why they did not gather the nuts which abounded. When he had gone they made up their minds that his suggestion was a good one; but as it never entered their heads to climb the trees, they agreed that the only way to gather the fruit was to chop down the palm. Half-way through the task it occurred to them that if the tree fell heavily the nuts would be smashed and wasted, so a dozen of them were posted on the side it would fall, to catch it and let it down gently in their hands. But the tree, heeding not their kind intentions, fell with a crash, and they were all crushed beneath it!

The natural (though generally tragic) finale is accompanied by roars of laughter from audience and narrator alike, and the last sentence is always incontrovertible—"For they were such perfect fools."

I mentioned boating. The canoes throughout this group are most enticing—just the hollowed-out trunk of a tree, steadied by an outrigger, and forced through the water with short wooden paddles like big spoons. Such are the *welewele*, and every small boy has his own small one, and paddles whither he lists.

The generosity of the Melanesians has been already alluded to, and those of Meralava find their chiefest pleasure, I verily believe, in giving. We left Meralava with a boat full of love-offerings, yams, bananas, pineapples, coco-nuts, and almonds by the sack. Every year brings such gifts as these from my friends of Star Peak, and, in addition, exquisitely woven bags of dried grass, fans plaited from palm fronds, platters of the finest wicker-work woven from creeper stems and stained brown, bamboo ear-sticks the size of a penholder, and pearly bangles hand-ground between stones out of giant nautilus shells.

Here is a Meralava fairy-tale of the past that was written down for me in Mota by a native. It is headed

ABOUT THE PEOPLE FROM ABOVE

Long ago they lived and lived up above, and gazing down below saw there was a wonderful low tide. They thought they would go down to fish. So down they came, and put away, all of them, their wings beneath a *gire* [pandanus] tree, then after that went down to the beach to fish.

Now presently a man belonging to that place came hither, and then discovered them. And he wondered about it thus: "Where do these come from? For their faces are far fairer than the fellows here below."

Then he saw and gazed at the wings beneath the *gire*. And he took one wing and hid it secretly under a rock, then went away and concealed himself.

But when they returned hither every one put on again his or her wings and flew. One of them, however, had put on one of her wings, but searched in vain for her other wing. And she said to her companions, "*Ke*, sisters! where is my wing?"

But they all flew away from her, and she just sat down and cried and cried.

And when all of them had gone back and left her, then that man who had hidden away the wing came forth to her and stood beside her and asked her, "Where do you come from?"

But she did not answer him. So then he asked her again, and so now she answered him, "I am from above."

Then the man said to her, "Let us two go back into the village."

But the woman replied, "The people in the village are many."

But he played the strong man over her and said, "Let us go! There are no people in the village."

That woman arose and went with him. So the two reached that man's house. And he hid the woman in the house and went to the gardens to look for his wife.

When he reached her he asked her, "Are you willing or not?"

Then his wife, "What about?"

So he asked her again, "But are you willing or not?"

And she said, "I am willing."

So the two returned to the village, and he brought forth that woman to his wife.

And she, "*Ke!* What an exceedingly lovely woman!"

So because both of them loved her so, that man married her, and his real wife became just a servant to the two. They would not permit her [the stranger] to work; she stayed entirely in the house weaving mats. But that man and his true wife went every day to work in the gardens. But always when the pair returned she had made ready the food, and the three ate.

Now by and by she gave birth to a son, who was a lovely boy. But still as before it was not permitted to her or her son to go out to work. Presently, when that child had grown, she again gave birth to a son. But all three stayed entirely in the village.

Now when they were getting rather big their father made for them small bows, and the two went out every day to shoot blue lizards. And on one day they went again and shot one, and brought it back to their mother, and asked their mother thus, "Mother, is this good eating or not?"

And she answered them, "No, not for eating." Then they threw it away.

Now the next morning they went again, chase-chasing little blue lizards with white tails. Then one of these fled under a rock to hide, and the two tried to roll away the boulder, but strove in vain. So the younger sent the elder to go and fetch their mother. And off he went and said to their mother, "Mother, come and roll away the rock from this creature! We two have tried, but are not able."

And his mother rose up and went with him. And when the two arrived at that place the mother then rolled away the rock. Thereupon she saw her wing!

And her son asked her, "Mother, what is that?"

And she, "You two think that we three belong to here. We three belong above. This is my wing that they hid away. Come! Let us go and make everything ready for my going back."

Then the sons wept and asked her, "Where are you going?"

And she to them, "I am going back."

So the three killed a pig, and she divided her portion, and the portion of those who were remaining. And she said farewell to her children, then—went back!

Her sons stood gazing upwards overhead, gaze-gazing still at their mother until she was lost from their eyes.

Then they went back again into the house, lit a fire, and cooked the others' food. After that, when the couple had returned from the gardens, they asked the two boys, "Where is your mother?"

And they, "She has gone back!"

Now one day again those two brothers went out to shoot pigeons. And they went under a banyan-tree, and, looking up, discovered a big pigeon sitting there. So the elder shot, but the pigeon caught hold of his arrow. By and by the younger also shot, but it caught hold of that also.

After that the two talked together: "Look, it is killed, but why does it not fall?"

So they thought that they would climb up and see. Then the elder climbed. But when he got there, the pigeon spoke to him: "Are you alone, or is your brother there?"

And he, "My brother is here. That is he standing."

So the pigeon, "Call him here."

So he went down and called him. And the two climbed up.

Then the pigeon said to them, "Are you two the sons of my daughter who came down?"

And they, "Yes, truly."

So the pigeon said to them, "We three will go back."

So the three went back above.

And when they reached that pigeon's house, she hid away the two, then went and called her daughter who was their mother.

"My daughter, come here! You will see clearly if these are the two or not."

So they went together, and the pigeon brought out those two to her.

Then she, "Yes, indeed; these are the two!"

So she took the younger, but the elder remained with their grandmother, that is, the pigeon.

How blunt and crude it sounds in literal English! In vain one tries to reproduce the Ocean atmosphere with which the Mota surrounds it.

As primitive languages go, I believe Mota is considered easy. If you hear that there are no inflections, no genders, no plural suffixes, no voices, moods, or tenses, you are sure it must be child's play. Well, it is not quite that. We part with the old worries of our grammar lessons only to find fresh complexities. One has not merely to learn new words and ways of speaking, but new ways of thinking too, which is not easy. And where we English find one word sufficient, the Ocean folk will have at least a dozen, none of which is synonymous.

The pronouns we think at first will turn our hair grey. A certain vocabulary of nouns (which you can only find out by experience; there is no mechanical rule) must have the possessive pronouns tacked on as tails. Here is an example:—

O tuqei,	the garden.
Natuqema,	your garden.
Natuqenara,	your garden and mine.
Natuqek,	my garden.
Natuqena,	his or her garden.
Natuqenkara,	his or her and my garden.
Natuqenatol,	the garden of you and me and one other.
Natuqemam,	our gardens, we being several, but not including you.
Natuqemrua,	the garden of you two.
Natuqemiu,	the garden of you all

Natuqenratol, the garden of those three.
Natuqenkatol, the garden of two others and myself, but not you.
Natuqenina, the gardens of all of us, including you.
Natuqemtol, the garden of you three.
Natuqenrara, the garden of those two.
Natuqera, their gardens.

This is how the Melanesians deal with one class of nouns. There are other ways for other nouns. But we will be merciful!

I have been hesitating as to whether it is incumbent on us to call upon Merig, the little child, or not.

Cons: It is against my rule in these pages to talk about any island I have not myself visited, and we did not touch there, though we saw it in passing.

It is almost too small to talk about.

It is the most inaccessible spot in the Banks.

There is nothing very interesting to tell about it.

Pros: Poor little Merig gets passed by so often, it seems unkind to pass it by unnecessarily.

The Pros have it!

Merig, like so many of the Banks Islands, owes its existence to the now extinct volcano which rises in the centre. To the base of this a wide margin of coral has advened, so that it would probably take a good half-hour to walk round the island. There is no anchorage, nor even a landing-place worthy of the name. The sea is deep on every side and the surf is heavy.

When first visited, the people (about forty souls in all) were split up into hostile factions at war with one another. But now Merig is Christian, and the people are famous instead for the neatness and productiveness of their gardens.

If the *Southern Cross* cannot get a boat ashore, the population — "pretty, friendly, and merry," as they are said to be—come swimming out *en masse*, generally bringing with them samples of their varied garden stuff. They are intelligent and earnest, and one of them has now gone as a missionary-teacher to another island.

Yes, it would have been too bad to pass Merig by without a word.

CHAPTER V

GAUA (SANTA MARIA), BANKS ISLANDS

Lakona and Gaua—Discovery—Lake—Character of people—Battle and murder—Story of quarrel—Surrender of arms—A Lakona revenge — Debts — Distribution of property — Death-feasts and kindred customs—*Mana* superstitions—Recipe for sunshine—Kingfishers—The casuarina-tree—Death-stones—Qat the sprite—Story of flood, etc.—Traces of former population—Song from Lakona.

We generally call it Gaua, although, strictly speaking, that is only the name of the weather side of the island, which is divided into two districts, lee and weather, Lakona and Gaua, these being almost as distinct in speech and customs as if they were separate islands.

As the European name suggests, this island also owes its discovery to the Spaniards three hundred years ago. It is one of the largest of the Banks group, both width and length being about twelve miles. Obviously volcanic in origin, two peaks are noticeable to the north of the island, perhaps six miles apart. Between them lies an immense crater, or, as some think, two craters merged into one. This hollow, 1350 feet above the sea, is occupied by the only lake really worthy of the name which has yet been found in Melanesia. It is quite five miles in length, and of unknown depth. At one end there are springs

GAUA.

A View on the Coast, Lee Side.

A Village in Lakona.

P. 50.

of boiling water. Oddly enough, the only fish found in the lake are eels of a gigantic size, some exceeding 30 inches in girth! There is an outlet from the lake, which flows over the cliff into the sea in a goodly waterfall that is most refreshing to the eye—though it did not make up for my disappointment at Maewo!

Landing on the weather side is a very difficult matter. It is hard to cross the coral reef that surrounds the coast, and even when once in the lagoon it is by no means easy to beach the whale-boat and land dry. We were particularly fortunate here in our weather conditions, and I found myself on shore safe and sound, the second white woman to visit Gaua, my predecessor being the wife of Bishop John Selwyn many years ago.

There are some delightful people both in Gaua and Lakona. Christianity is making steady progress on both sides, and nothing could have been more kind and courteous than the reception I experienced. With particular gratitude I remember the Gaua pine-apples and coco-nuts, for it was a day of parching heat when we landed.

But I am bound to tell the truth, however regretfully; and it is a sad fact that the Gaua and Lakona natives are as quarrelsome and revengeful as any in Melanesia. Battle, murder, and sudden death have formed until recently the customary routine of native life—by "sudden death" being understood death caused by charms and wizardry.

When Gaua fights it is on a wholesale scale, but the resultant fatalities are generally few. It would seem they are braver in boast than when the action comes to close quarters. But peace is made impossible by the series of planned murders that follows a battle.

It is contemptible work. Six men will lie in wait to shoot one unhappy victim. Should they fail to hit, they all take to their heels and hope for better luck next time. If they succeed, the dead man's kin will attempt to avenge the deed in the same way.

Some years ago a school village was terribly upset by one of these deliberate murders. The white man in charge of the district paid a visit to the assassin and began to speak his mind on the subject. It must have been rather disconcerting to learn—when he allowed the criminal to get a word in—that the deed was done at the request of the murdered man's relations, who believed him guilty of practising upon them with charms in a wholesale and unpleasant manner. The sacrosanct laws of social order would have been violated had the aggrieved kinsfolk themselves used violence, so they found this way out of the difficulty!

Considering the fatal end of most quarrels, it is strange that it should be so "dead easy" (as the Americans say) to pick one in Gaua. The trouble is generally connected with charms and sorcery. Some one's ill-will is suspected as the cause of every sickness or mischance, and revenge is sought.

It is no uncommon thing when a man dies for another to be heard to boast in the *gamal*, "My doing, that!" He risks being shot in retaliation, but on the other hand there is something to gain of no small importance to a native, and that is the reputation of powerful *mana*. One likes to keep on good terms with a man who can charm you to death if he pleases, and he would be no true Melanesian who did not make his fame a source of profit to himself.

Two Gaua friends fell out over some trifle, who had formerly been intimate. Y. managed to get hold of a little bit of black tobacco from the stick with which Z. had filled his pipe. You can kill a man with less than that in Melanesia. Saliva scraped from the ground, a crumb of food—anything connected with him will do. Off went Y., gloating over his treasure, to the village wizard, and contrived that Z. should hear of it. Upon the instant Z. began to feel seedy, but determined to get revenge before he breathed his last.

So that evening when Y. was gaily returning from his garden he found himself expected on the path. A suspicious click gave him pause, and he turned to see his quondam friend only a few yards away pointing a loaded gun full at him. The same moment he twisted himself aside and escaped with a trivial wound.

But the fire was now alight. The village was emptied and the inhabitants split into opposing forces, all mad with excitement, yet not willing to bring the matter to an issue of open war. For some time it dragged on, both sides ever on the look-out for opportunities of cold-blooded murder.

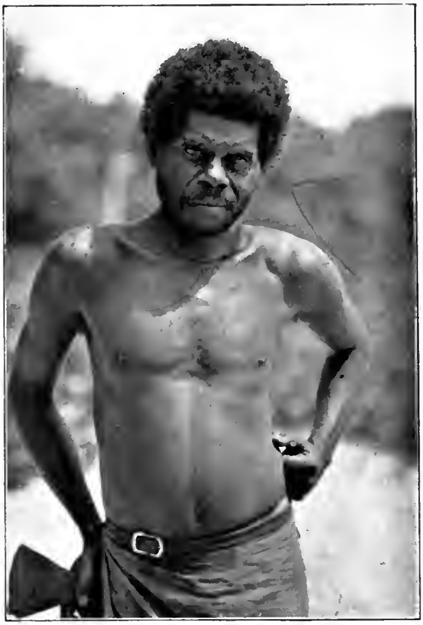
Happily, the village concerned had accepted a school, and made the acquaintance in consequence of a white man possessing tact and will-power in equal measure. He managed to persuade each side to surrender the dreaded fire-arms, though this was not the work of a moment. Fortunately, everybody knew exactly how many muskets there were in the place, and each side came to the point of agreeing to give them up—*if* the adversaries would do the same. So Y.'s friends might safely be trusted to count the weapons handed over by the friends of Z., and *vice versa*. In the end I believe every gun was accounted for satisfactorily, and there was peace.

About ten years ago there was another fine surrender of fire-arms. The chiefs (who are of more importance here than in the Banks generally) met in conclave, and came to the decision that if they meant to follow "The Way of Peace" they were bound to give up their much-prized guns and forbid the carrying about of fighting arrows. Twenty-six muskets of ancient pattern were yielded up to the missionary, who was implored to take them right away. They made ballast for his whale-boat in crossing over to Mota, and when still in deep water the wise man sent them all down to the fishes.

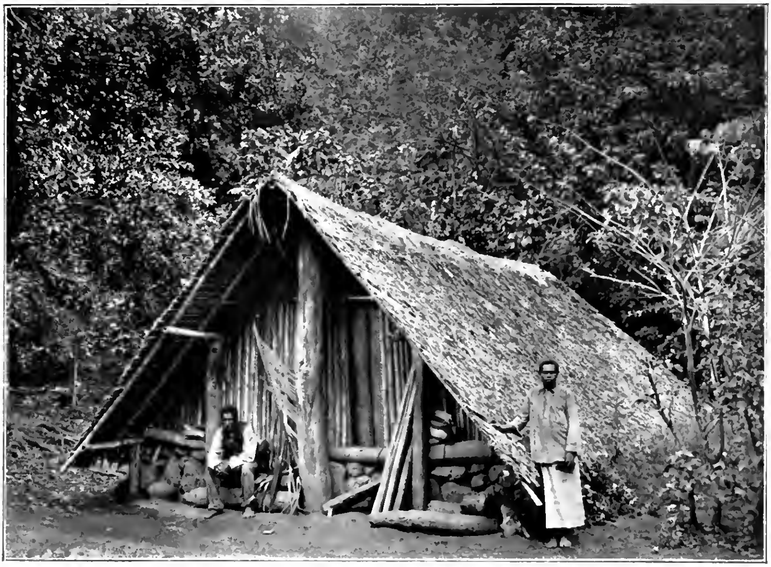
The Lakona method of fighting is certainly more bold and above-board. They thoroughly enjoy the occupation, and enter upon it in a business-like way that recalls the methods of Tweedledum and Tweedledee. The day and place are settled beforehand by both sides, and when they are tired of fighting, a halt is called by common consent, and the fight is continued on the following day, if convenient to both parties.

So strong is the belligerent spirit that outsiders often seize bows and arrows when they hear of a battle being arranged and hurry to the fray from adjacent villages which are no wise concerned in the quarrel. The social division of the island — that is, the two "sides of the house" already referred to —constitutes a natural ground for opposition, and the young men will range themselves accordingly and fight madly, it may often be with no idea of the true cause. It is said that if one of these outsiders should kill a man of his own village, he will never return there.

Revenge does not inevitably involve murder. A choice is sometimes offered. A Lakona man who had



"LET THE KORO MAN CHOOSE!"—MAN OF LAKONA WITH TOMAHAWK.



A LAKONA HOUSE.

a faithful friend was killed in battle by a man of Koro, the south end of the island. The friend (brother, it may have been) having discovered who shot the fatal arrow, sent a message to Koro to this effect:—

> Let the Koro man choose! Either let him await the death-stroke, which will surely descend upon him, tarry we never so long; or else let him forsake Koro and become a man of Lakona; let him take the place of him whom he has killed, accept his property [and presumably his debts], marry his widow, and adopt his children.

The Koro man selected the alternative, and, so they say, lived happily ever after. Of course the suggestion is obvious that the Lakona man knew he was contriving a more exquisite revenge in this remarriage! But, considering the status of women in Melanesia, that is unlikely. It is more probable that he of Koro was a courageous warrior famed for his *mana* in fighting, of value, therefore, to the ranks of Lakona.

When I interpolated the reference to the dead man's debts I was mindful of the fact that in these islands everybody is always in debt. Our own fiscal policy appears to many lay minds a trifle intricate. It is clear as daylight when compared with the financial laws that run throughout this part of Melanesia. They are too complex and elaborate altogether for the mind of a European—and a female.

This much is plain: if you wish to borrow, you must first pay an instalment of the interest. That is an inviolable law in the Banks group at all events. If your creditor presses for payment, settle his account at once, even should you have to borrow from several more in order to do so and thus plunge yourself into still deeper waters. I advise this especially in Gaua, because there is a process of dunning in vogue here which must surely be as disagreeable as effective.

A creditor, having applied in vain for payment, invites some friends to join him in a nocturnal excursion, to be followed by a series of picnics. Very quietly, under cover of the darkness, a cordon is drawn round the obdurate debtor's house. At daylight an entrance is made, and the party breakfasts upon whatever food can be found within or fetched from the man's garden. If he has a pig or so, there are some very enjoyable meals. The visitors settle down upon the poor fellow's substance like flies on a lump of sugar, but are a good deal harder to dislodge. They stay—stay—stay, and eat—eat—eat (as they would themselves express it), and nothing but payment of the debt in full will remove them. The food consumed is not reckoned in any way as a set-off! I think this method would provide a good illustration of the meaning of the word "drastic"!

A mathematical mind among Melanesians has not yet been discovered. It therefore seems the more surprising that they should be continually involving themselves in problems that would baffle most of us. Whether property is being acquired or dispersed, so many different agents are concerned that there must be some hard sums of addition and division to be grappled with by some one. This complexity is a concomitant of the semi-tribal system. Twenty people may have to be considered in connection with one man's debts and dues. If a wife is in the buying, her purchase-money will probably be divided amongst eight or nine relatives. After a man's death his garden-property is distributed amongst his sister's children, while his personal belongings may be claimed by his own. And by a curious concession the trees on his land descend to his sons and daughters.

In Lakona it is a common thing for a man to hide a portion of his wealth, and only to reveal it to his son if the latter perform his filial duties satisfactorily when old age creeps on. If the father thinks he has just cause for resentment, the buried treasure will remain lost for ever.

When a husband dies, the social laws of Lakona compel from the poor widow a very hideous duty. The corpse is hung above the ground in the house for a long period before burial, and the miserable woman must sleep and live immediately under it. That she can survive such an experience is surprising.

Burial of the dead is general in the Banks Islands, and the grave is dug by those on the other "side of the house" from the deceased.

A fainting attack is accounted for by the temporary departure of the soul. They say that it started for Panoi (that is, the nether-world, somewhere underground), but was sent back!

Respect to the dead is shown by the survivors in a series of death-feasts. In the case of an important man there may be one every morning for a hundred days, then one every fifth day, then every tenth, and so on till a thousand days have been completed. The fronds of a cycas palm will serve for calendar, one leaflet being pinched off or turned down every day. There will be a death-dance too, performed probably by outsiders who are paid for their services. The object, the people say, is to drive away grief and enable the guests to enjoy the feast with a light heart.

It will be readily understood that the island of Gaua is a very hot-bed of *mana* superstitions. There are round stones with *mana* for sunshine, long ones for sickness, and others warranted to cause wind, or rain, or death, to catch turtles, to bring in pigs and shell-money, or to ensure fruitful crops. Candidates for baptism will bring quantities of *mana* stones to be carried out to sea, and two old boilers were added on one occasion as being quite peculiarly full of *mana*. So implicitly is the power of rain-makers and sunshine-makers believed in, that in time of drought a party went in force and attacked the village of a certain sun-wizard in Lakona to make him withdraw the charm.

And be it recognized that the magicians themselves have unquestionably as profound a faith in the charms as have any of the people. They are no charlatans, whatever else may be said of them. As a rule they act as specialists rather than as general practitioners. There will be one wizard for weather, another for sickness, another for malevolent purposes, and so on. For a price the spells may be taught and the magic stones bought, but the usual custom is for the practice to descend from father to son, or from a man to his sister's child.

It was only recently that, a fair passage having actually been effected to Gaua (the weather side), the missionary entered the little school-house to find a heap of stones on a sort of platform over a fire. On inquiry he learned that to these *mana* stones he was indebted for the favourable crossing, and his Gaua friends were keeping them warm in order that the calm they had brought about might last.

I have given a recipe for making rain. This is the way to make sunshine.

A very round stone suggests the sun's shape. Wind about it a reddened string to give an impression of brightness, and stick owls' feathers round it to represent the rays of light. While doing this the proper spell must be sung in a low, mysterious voice. The words call upon the kingfisher (and I think this is an interesting fact when connoted with the Greek legend of "halcyon days") to eat the rising waves and make a calm. For here in the South-West Pacific not only has the kingfisher a generally supernatural character, but it is especially accredited with the power of controlling storms and rain. If a man is starting on a journey and hears the kingfisher cry, he concludes that it is angry and averse to his plan. He will therefore sing a charm to propitiate it.

Having done as directed, hang your sun-stone on a casuarina tree—as being also sacred—and wait for the sunshine!

There is something about the casuarina tree that does impress the imagination. "Nothing can be more weird and ghostly," says Dr. Codrington,[1] "than an aged casuarina standing alone on a wind-beaten beach, or rising on a lofty cliff, with bare grey stem and shadowless foliage, never without a voice whispering in a calm, or shrieking in the breeze."

Such is the reputation of this tree that the meaning of our word "sanctuary" seems best translated as *tano-aruaru*, that is, place of casuarina trees.

In the Banks Islands we lose sight of Tagaro the Little, his place being filled by a sprite named Qat, who is the hero of many stories, and always seems to me a very near relation to "Brer Rabbit." The great lake and the waterfall here have a legendary, diluvian connection with Qat's departure from this world.

They say that long ago all was forest-land between the two mountains where the lake now lies bosomed. And Qat made a mighty canoe up there from the wood of a mighty tree. And while he was a-building of it his brothers mocked him ceaselessly, asking him how he proposed to drag a boat of that size down to the sea. But always his one reply was the same, "You will see hereafter."

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[1] *The Melanesians.*

Now when the great canoe was finished he compelled his wife and his brothers to get into it, and he gathered together every kind of living creature in the island, even down to the smallest ant. And he had woven a covering to the boat, so that he could enclose them all beneath it, and himself to boot.

Then down came the rain, and it rained, and rained, and rained, and rained, gradually filling that valley with water, which flowed until it forced a passage between the hills that stood around it. And where it poured down to the sea is now the great waterfall of Gaua.

And the canoe made for itself a course through the water, and down the fall, until it reached the sea. Then it vanished. But the people say that with Qat went the best of everything in the island, and some day he will surely return. Bishop Patteson, when first he visited Gaua, was taken by some of the natives to be Qat *redivivus*.

There is a spider-spirit, Marawa, a little old greybeard, who is generally Qat's good genius and faithful friend, but in Lakona we find a legend that varies from most in this respect.

Why do people as time goes on lose their eyesight, hair, and teeth? In Melanesia grey hair is called one's "second hair," as if it were different from the first. And they say it all began with Qat. He had made a woman for himself (creation was Qat's favourite pastime, as that of Tagaro), and Marawa stole her. While both were asleep, up came Qat in anger, pulled out their teeth, shaved their heads, putting coarse hairy fibre from a tree-fern on their bald crowns, and finally spread cobwebs over their eyes. So when we buy our first spectacles we may blame Qat for the cobweb!

Was it in the days of Qat, I wonder, that the Gaua villages swarmed with inhabitants, energetic folk who worked with huge stones, building solid pedestals and wall-foundations for their *gamal* and houses, the remains of which can still be seen, pathetic witness of an age that is past? Here and there stand great hollowed stones, resembling the wine-vats found in Pompeii. Everywhere are traces of a formerly large and strong population.

What is left? Villages with only thirty to fifty inhabitants apiece, and amongst them not half a dozen babies. Magic and poisoned arrows have been doing destruction for generations, and sheer ignorance and laziness account for the scarcity of young children. It may be that brighter days are now in store for Gaua.

I have ventured to express my opinion that the Ocean people are an artistic race. Their canons (if they possess any) are naturally different from ours, and when one is asked, for instance, if there are poets among them, it is hard to answer in the affirmative, knowing what construction a European questioner puts upon the word. Perhaps the reminder is hardly necessary that there is no written language in Melanesia, and no prior acquaintance with any form of literature. But here is a specimen of a native song, after which the reader may form his own conclusion. Of course it is meant ("measured" is the native expression) to be sung, not said, and each division is repeated. The words are always put together for the music, so the poet is the "song-measurer." There is especial pleasure in producing an example from Lakona, where the general intelligence is reputed of a low standard.

The idea is that a Lakona man named Maros has left the island in his canoe, and been long gone. The song was measured in his honour, and to please his relations, so it is called

The Song of Maros[1]

Leale! Ale!
I am an eagle! I have soared to the farthest dim horizon.
I am an eagle! I have flown, and lighted at Mota.
I have sailed with a whirring noise round the mountain.
I have gone down island after island in the west to the base of heaven.
I have sailed; I have seen the lands.
I have sailed in circles, I have been strongly set.
An ill wind has drifted me away, has drawn me away from you two.
How shall I make my way round to you two?
The sounding sea stretches empty to keep me away from you.
You, Mother, you are crying for me: how shall I see your face?
You, Father, are crying for me: how shall I see your face?
I only long for you and weep;
It is irksome to me;
I go about as an orphan,
I alone, and who is my companion?
Rolusulwar [his little daughter], you are crying for me without the house!

[Then the poet addresses Maros.]

Youths!
My friend, you have lingered;

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[1] From *The Melanesians: their Anthropology and Folk-Lore*, by the Rev. R. H. Codrington, D.D.

I have lingered over your song.
I have measured it, and lengthened out my voice.
The sound of it has spread down hither to my place.
Ask! Hear!
Who was it that measured the Song of Maros?
It was the song-measurer that sits by the way to Lakona.

CHAPTER VI

MOTA (SUGAR-LOAF ISLAND), BANKS ISLANDS

Natural features—Description of people—Account of 1857—Natives' impression of white men—Lack of water—Fishing—The *un*—Social laws—Weather charm—Children's games—Social custom—Qat superstitions—Folk-lore.

It is an unromantic simile, but when I recall my first sight of Mota in the distance I shall always think of a coal-heaver's hat. From another point of view the resemblance of the volcano to a sugar-loaf is clear enough, but a first impression is not easily wiped out. When we neared it, however, one cried out at the sheer loveliness of it. The mountain, which is 1350 feet in height, is covered with dense bush, but there is a rich variety in the vegetation, and it rises from a coral plain, now very fertile. Round the coast there are fine cliffs and caves, against which the blue sea ever beats and breaks in dazzling surf.

The usual crowd of friendly natives was on the landing-rock to greet us, the air was musical with laugh and chatter, and for a few minutes my progress was somewhat painful and unsteady, tottering over jagged coral and stumbling over the tree-roots whilst shaking hands unceasingly with the eager, hospitable people of Mota. What struck me most at the outset was the positive beauty of the boys and girls. I did

MOTA, BANKS ISLANDS.

"WHEN WE NEARED IT."

"THE USUAL CROWD ON THE LANDING-ROCK."

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not notice a really plain one. Perhaps the type is rather sensuous than virile, but it is very pleasant to look upon. Large, dark, bright eyes with long curved lashes, small, well-shaped faces with full red lips, and softly curling hair, more often brown than black, sometimes tinged with a light reddish hue. And from out the dusky face flash the white teeth continually, for in Mota there is much laughter, especially when the *Southern Cross*—"our own ship," as all the islanders call her—arrives.

We have not yet entered the borders of those who chew the betel-nut, so there is no disfigurement from that cause. And the ears and noses are not distorted by heavy rings. But, best and strangest of all, what tattooing is done here is of the slightest. When the ship first visited Mota, in 1856, I find it recorded that "the natives wear neither clothes, nor ornaments, nor tattoo."

Since jotting down my own impressions I have come upon those of Bishop G. A. Selwyn on his visit to Mota in 1857, fifty years before our own :—

> The island "is of a peculiar form, having a volcanic cone in the centre, resting upon a flat base, as if an eruption of igneous rock from below had pierced through a flat coral reef, raising it 50 or 60 feet above the water, without altering its level. . . . It is in islands like these that we grow out of conceit with Heber's missionary hymn, because 'every prospect pleases,' and man is *not* vile!"

Mr. Patteson (afterwards the martyred bishop) adds his account :—

> The scenery was lovely. First, a steep wall of coral 40 or 50 feet high, covered with foliage, the parasites and creepers giving to the trees a regular dense roof; then the sugar-loaf peak, and a backbone running from it, towering

above the coral wall, so steep that it could be seen from the beach itself—and all covered with trees, coco-nuts, bread-fruit, etc.; a bright coral beach, and two hundred and fifty clear, tawny-coloured forms running, jumping, bathing, swimming, chattering, and laughing.

Now shall we hear what were the first impressions of the Mota folk when visited by the white men? Bishop Patteson, to pave the way for a friendly footing, presented the chief with an axe.

"He loves me!" exclaimed the man. "It must be my father! He had a dark skin when he died, but now he has left that in the ground and come forth white." And for some time the belief held that the white men were the ghosts of Melanesian ancestors.

"He is not a real man," they said of the Bishop, "for he has no feet, only something like hard stones!" And even when he took off his boots, they were still uneasy, for he had no toes!

Some of those on the ship wore red shirts, and the idea got afloat that such must hail from the place where the sky begins, and catch the redness of the sun when it sinks over there in the evening. The ship itself, though only a sailing vessel, was to them a magic monster. One of the natives has written down his first thoughts about it:—

> I thought the ship was made by a spirit. For why did it not drift ashore? I thought the ship must be like a man; it would move or stay as it was ordered, and I supposed it had been told to stay still.

The white men remained for three days, then went away:—

> The ship began to sail. We did not know they had weighed anchor, but one man gave orders to the others about the sails. I thought he was speaking to the ship,

telling it to go out of harbour. It sailed out quite straight. I saw no one steering with a rudder oar, so I again thought the word of that man had *mana*, and that he had told the ship to sail, and the ship obeyed, and I saw the ship sail straight out.

The same writer adds, with regard to themselves:—

> We lived at enmity then, one with another; we were always fighting, and always lived in fear.

For many years now all have been baptized, and fighting is at an end.

Mota has no water-supply. The natives drink coco-nut milk, or what brackish water can be found in holes in the coral. When the precious rain falls, it is collected with great care, and saved as long as possible. For the rest, there is always the sea to plunge in, and I have heard of washing in the juice that oozes from banana stems. The fishing is good, and there is no lack of fruit and vegetables, nuts and almonds.

No Mota native, by the way, will throw the shell of a coco-nut that he has eaten upon the fire, for the result anticipated would be a swelling of the roof of the mouth correspondent with the blistering of the inside of the shell.

The flying-fish are as big as a man's arm, and are excellent eating. But there is a piscine delicacy still more highly esteemed here and throughout all the Banks and some other of the Pacific islands. This is the strange and mysterious *un*, known to zoologists as the *Annelid palolo viridis.*

The *un* is a sort of sea-worm centipede, of thread-like thinness, but sometimes measuring a foot in length. Its colour seems to vary between black, dark brown, and green, down to a very light shade. The appearance is uninviting, but the taste is said to be like shell-fish in the form of vermicelli. The natives everywhere agree in pronouncing it to be by far the nicest of all the things produced by the sea.

The curious part about it is that the *un* only makes its appearance twice a year on a particular night for a few hours, well known beforehand to every native. The two *un* moons (which are named accordingly) correspond to our October and November, and on each occasion the *un* may be looked for six days after the moon has passed her fullness. And it never fails to appear.

The previous evening the natives all leave their villages, and, carrying long torches, made from palm leaves, wend to the shore, where they will spend the night in readiness for the coming of the *un*. It appears to be born in the cracks of the coral a little while before daybreak, and at sunrise disappears! For this brief space the sea around and inside the reef literally swarms with wriggling masses of these creatures. Some take them in nets by the thousand and put them into pots or baskets. But most are content to scoop them up in their hands until they have enough and to spare. For two days we can fancy the gormandizing that goes on, and then—one can almost hear the smack of the lips and the wistful sigh as the islanders resign themselves to another year of waiting for the too-retiring *un*.

I wonder whether it was originally an instinctive desire to add zest to daily life in these remote islands that led to the creation of all the complex social customs which are as binding in the little Sugar-loaf Island as anywhere in the Pacific.

The word *un* reminded me of them, for it has another meaning, which I will give directly.

There is an innate reluctance in nearly all Melanesians to pronounce their own names. The name, of course, is not the patronymic, but the individual appellation given to a child in infancy by its friends. It becomes a part of its owner, as it were, and there is possibly a feeling that to give out one's own name is in some way to cheapen oneself. At any rate I always have the conviction that it is not mere shyness, but a sort of self-reverence that deters them.

It does not last. Mixing with white folk, who are wont to ask the embarrassing question pretty frequently, the boys and girls by degrees grow accustomed to answering. But we on our part fall into the native way of asking, not the owner, but his or her companion, for the desired name, and then by turning the tables learn that of the other.

I was talking to a dear old woman in Mota, whose widowhood was marked, according to custom, by a rope tied round her neck. I asked her name, for she had formerly been at Norfolk Island, and might have been willing to enlighten me herself. But she only broke into a merry laugh, and, turning to a friend who stood by, said, "Her heart is dark concerning my name; tell it her!" And so I learned that it was Ro Ruav.

But this is a small thing. When you get to connections by marriage it seems to me it is hardly safe to name any one. A man may not name his father-in-law, his mother-in-law, his brother-in-law, his son-in-law, or his daughter-in-law. But if he pleases he may name his sister-in-law! A woman never names her son-in-law. A wife's parent may not name the husband's parent, and *vice versa.* By the intermarriage of their children the Melanesian imagination sees them meet upon the same path, so henceforward they designate each other as "fellow-traveller." A girl once betrothed will not name her fiancé or his sister. If he is a John, or has any other name that occurs elsewhere, it is taboo when met with, even in the books of the Bible.

One feels that these few examples (and probably the list of tabooed names could be vastly extended) must call for a gift of recollectedness in everybody, for to make any mistake is a serious error, and may involve a heavy fine. But not only is the entire name forbidden, but no part of it may be used in conversation.

For instance, a woman is named Ganvalqoñ. *Qoñ* means day. She marries, and thenceforward the unfortunate father-in-law is forbidden the convenience, if not necessity, of mentioning a day! The name of Ganvalqoñ's husband is Ulgau. *Ul* means to untie, or set free, and *gau* is the all-essential fish-hook. In what a predicament then is the lady's poor father placed by his son's betrothal!

The difficulty is met by an extra vocabulary of native words, employed to express all common objects, or actions, or qualities by those whom the social law has placed in a dilemma. These words are not fabricated: some are archaic, some are only an indirect way of expression, as one might say "cloud-water" for "rain." They are understood by all, and are known as *un* words. To employ one is to *un*.

There are other methods of showing respect to one's relatives. A parent speaking either to his son- or daughter-in-law uses the dual pronoun—"you-two"

—even when one alone is concerned. The mother must not come near her son-in-law. If they meet accidentally, she steps aside and stands with her back to him till he has passed. But the father need not avoid his daughter-in-law.

It is considered the height of disrespect to take anything from above the head of another or to step over any one's legs. When a husband or wife dies, the survivor shows respectful grief by abstaining from some special food for perhaps a year. Women are hired to come and wail for the dead as in oriental lands.

The Suqe has not yet been abandoned in Mota,[1] and it is only one of quite a number of similar societies in vogue here. The everyday life of the people seems to be inextricably knit up with them. One's debts are so connected with the Suqe that they cannot be either paid privately or forgiven altogether. The business must be transacted publicly, and a feast made about it. There seems no instinct of shame or discomfort in connection with money owed. As is the case in Gaua, so here. All are in debt more or less, and creditors are for ever roaming about trying to raise at least some of the money and pigs due to them, that they in turn may in part satisfy their own creditors. It has been said that the whole complex system is "a hopeless muddle." But those most concerned seem satisfied with it, so we can but shrug our shoulders.

There is also a custom of friendly loans between Mota and the adjacent islands. The money may not be especially needed, but it gives an object for a boat journey. Suppose a pig is lent, and the recipient in return gives some strings of shell-money as a first instalment of repayment. Some little time afterwards the creditors row over and call for what is due to them, and, following the lavish rate of interest common in these parts, they get two pigs for the one lent. Here the matter might end, but that would be thought a close-fisted way of acting. Instead, the visitors will before leaving request a loan, which will involve a return visit by and by, and matters will be fairly equalized. So "the ball is kept rolling, money is made, feasts are eaten, and friendships sealed."

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[1] At the time of writing (1911) a serious attempt is being made to extinguish it throughout the Banks group.

We climbed up to the nearest village, a very small one, but not without its long *gamal*. The entrance to this was screened with cycas fronds, a taboo sign put up by the Suqe with reference to a *kolekole* which had taken place a week before.

A *kolekole* is a festival in connection with some society, got up by a man who has built a new house, acquired some new possession, or is advancing to one or more of the eighteen steps in rank, each of which has its special name and privilege. The first step in the Suqe costs here but half a fathom of shell-money, and the early ranks are usually paid for by the useful "*Tata*" or mother's brother, the father and friends helping towards it. The new member has no share in the feast made on his account. After fasting and living in concealment for about five days, he must cook and eat only at his own oven in the *gamal*. In the higher ranks, where one step may cost as much as five pigs and sixty fathoms of shell-money, a man will have to cook for fifty successive days in his new oven.

Sometimes four steps are taken at once, and then the junketing is prodigious. The orchestra will consist of native drums of various sorts, one thumped on with fists, another beaten with sticks, another lightly tapped, while for treble instruments are shells tied up to rattle, and the elsewhere-mentioned anklets of dry beans.

Ceremonious dancing (prancing better describes the action) takes place between the great man to whom the money is paid and the happy candidate. The former makes a flattering speech as he trots about, approving the latter's zeal. The pigs are produced; each is solemnly smacked by the candidate, and at every smack three men of rank sound a blast upon conch shells. Then the shell-money is spread out in its strings, and the conches sound again. One pig at least will form the *chef-d'œuvre* at the feast, and after the feast comes more dancing, even the women contributing their quota in the *Leña*, a dance in which, I fear, there is nothing of grace or beauty.

And when the festivities are over, what does the result amount to?

The giver of such a *kolekole* may move four ovens higher up in the *gamal*. "There's glory for you!" as Humpty-Dumpty would say. He may sit upon the stone platform just outside the *gamal*. (I saw an aged, aged man sitting blinking there, surrounded by pineapples, and tried to realize the tremendous honour of such a position.) He may wear the feathers of a fowl dyed crimson round his neck and ankles. He may stick up a bit of sago palm to make a "taboo." He may also wear or set up certain very "taboo" kinds of hibiscus. All this is splendid indeed, and he doubtless lies down in the *gamal* that first night with an overwhelming sense of his own greatness.

It might be thought that wild flowers could be picked by any one and stuck anywhere. Once an innocent missionary put some red and white hibiscus into the little school-house to make it look bright for Christmas. To his dismay he learned that he had used a taboo sign of the Suqe and incurred the anger of all the most important people. Not only must the flowers be at once removed, but the white man found it advisable to pay the fine to which an offender was liable.

If a native dares to adopt the badge of a society to which he does not belong he is mulcted in a pig. This he has to bring in person, and suffer a beating from a member of the offended society for his impudence. After that he must find the requisite sum to cover his entrance fee and be initiated whether he likes it or not.

As I have inferred, the number of societies in Mota is extraordinary. Entrance to some costs very little, others are so expensive that none but the elders could dream of joining. The Great Ghost Society is the chief, and nearly everybody belongs to that at any rate. Of old it was supposed to enable the initiate to communicate with departed souls, but little if anything of the supernatural clings to it now.

Writing from Mota in 1877, one of the first members of the Mission says :—

> To-day I met a wild and grotesque-looking party of men ; they belonged to a society called *Tamate* [ghosts], and had been to pull a house to pieces in order to compel the owner to join them. They were adorned with hibiscus flowers and croton leaves, their faces were smudged with charcoal, in every mouth was a leaf, and each carried a stick. Two or three had on a kind of hat and mask, with a long fringe of leaves reaching down to the heels, completely hiding all the body but the legs. They danced along in a comical way.

In such disguise as this a gang of members would sally forth armed with clubs and visit the displeasure of the society with great violence on any unfortunates who had been known to hold aloof from it. The lodge of the Ghosts is not the *gamal*, where the Suqe reigns supreme, but the *salagoro*, an enclosure the secrecy of which is rigorously maintained. When any function takes place here, every path leading to it is made taboo with cycas fronds or some other recognized sign, and woe betide the unauthorized wight who ventures along one! A candidate for initiation must keep his fire burning in the *salagoro* for a hundred days before he is admitted, and then payment must be made to all the members.

Another society has no lodge, but a specially intricate dance which is taught in secret to every candidate. It was the custom when the newly admitted came out to perform the dance for the first time, for the old members who could no longer dance to gather round to criticize with bows and arrows. Keenly would they watch the steps, and if any one made a mistake, whizz went the eager arrow at the culprit! Supposing injury to be the result, it was universally regarded as the debutant's own fault; no blame attached to him who let fly the arrow. Methinks it must have been rather nervous work dancing then!

The women are not quite left out in the cold. They have a sort of Suqe of their own, a kind of feeble imitation of their husbands! There is paying of money, and making of feasts, and gaining of rank. A lady may advance to the tattoo stage, or to the wearing of a shell bangle, or, higher still, till she has the felicity of being allowed to improve her face with smudges of red ochre. But I have never heard that there is any secrecy in the women's Suqe.

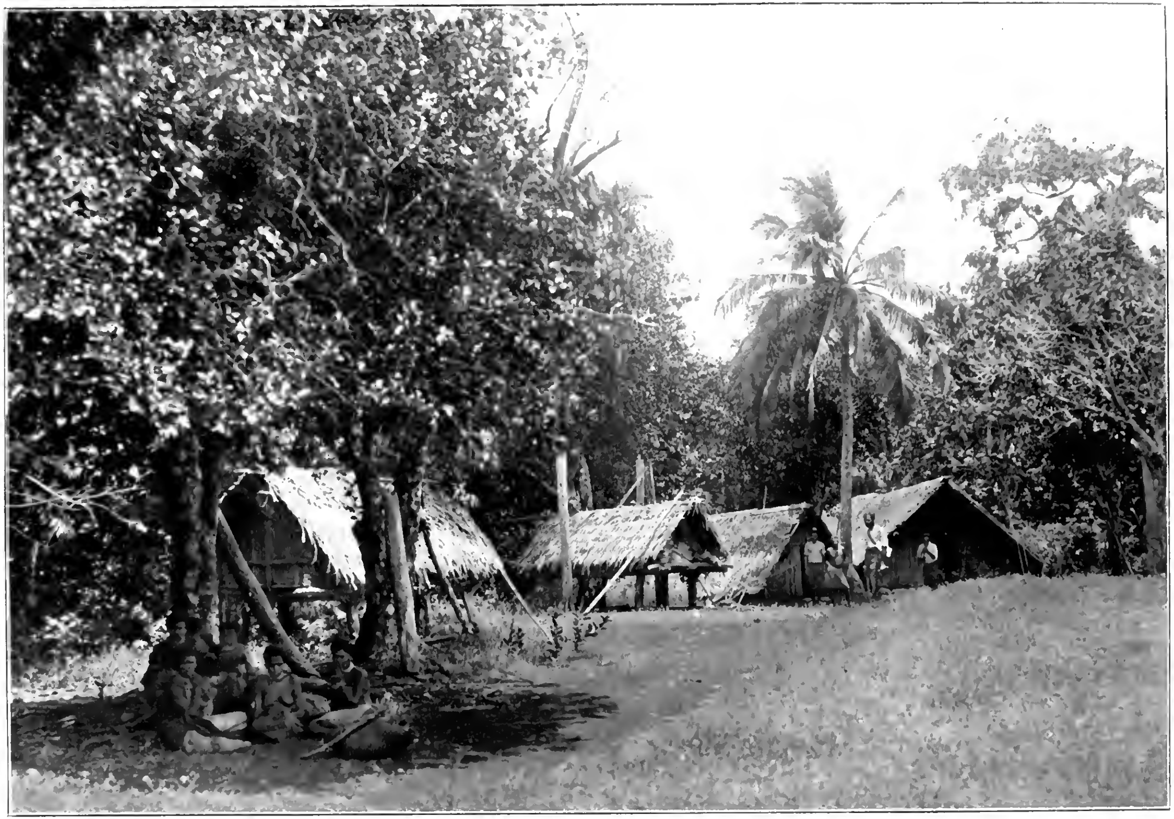
An injured wife in Mota has a possible remedy, if she choose to apply it, as has often been done. She can take to the water by night and swim out of her husband's clutches. The drawback is that instead of reaching a neighbouring island, one is apt in error to crawl ashore on the opposite side of one's own, and thus get caught and subjected to an intolerable deal of chaff. On the other hand, a case is known of a woman swimming from Mota to Lakona, a distance of twenty miles. She landed, and found a new husband and home there. Another more recently reached Motalava, eight miles off. The journey took six hours, but though her husband gave chase in a canoe, by diving and swerving she managed to avoid capture.

Of course I dared not peep through that palm-leaf screen into the long *gamal*, and doubtless one is much like another in these islands. The ovens vary in size, growing larger till the middle of the *gamal*, when they begin to diminish as fewer feed at each.

Sometimes a weather charm might be found within. Perhaps it is a large shell full of earth, in which is planted a longish stone smeared with red ochre. It is fenced round with sticks, about which the stem of a creeper is twined. And if you ask what this means, why, it binds up the wind so that we can't have a gale! Do they really think the wind will blow no more? Well, it can't while this is kept in good condition; when it rots, the wind will be set free. They are fortified against all mischance. If the wind rise to-night, the explanation is always the same, and incontestable. Somebody else is working a charm to make wind, which evidently has stronger *mana* than this one.

Turning from the *gamal* to the women and children's part of the village, my eye was caught by

MOTA.



IN THE VILLAGE.

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the little thatched sheds on piles, shown in the photograph. They looked like toy houses, but I soon found them to be larders. The children of a family will have their own apart from their parents, where their private pineapples, yams, etc., are stored.

I visited Mota twice, but did not sleep ashore. The custom of returning to the ship before dark had to be strictly observed (I only broke it once to prove the rule) by those who did not wish to contract malarial fever. The malignant mosquito (*Anopheles* is his name) is reputed to bite only after dusk. But a tropical island under the moon has a charm it knows not in the garish day.

And the children, who have no nurse to hurry them to bed at sundown, choose the moonlight hours for their play in the *tinesara*. Many and various are their games, and all have a singing accompaniment, as in our oldest English ones.

In one the little brown feet trace circles on the ground, big enough for three or four players to stand in, no ring being very close to another. They call the circles their ovens, with thoughts of the *gamal* and the Suqe. Then a round shell is thrown from one oven to another, and if it fall face downwards there is a rush of all the players to the oven of him towards whom the shell was thrown, and the owner tries to touch somebody before safety can be won by getting inside the circle. Even if a fugitive can only hold the hand of one of the occupants he is counted safe, and can save a friend with his own hand. But if one is caught, then there is another rush for that one's oven under the same conditions. If all find refuge together, the players sing a little song in words of an archaic Mota language and the shell is thrown afresh. Should it fall on its back there is no rush. The owner of the nearest oven merely tosses it on to his next neighbour.

There are other games which must have originated, one fancies, far back in our planet's history, when all the children of the earth played together; such are on the ancient principles of "Tig" or "Blind Man's Buff." But here is another, more definitely Melanesian in type.

It begins wtih the bright-eyed brownies all sitting in a big ring stroking their outstretched legs, which by and by are doubled up underneath them. Then one after another carefully rises, all listening meanwhile whether his joints crack. If they do, he is a flying-fox, and goes off inland. If they don't, he is a hermit crab, and goes seawards, but neither company travels far. Next, one crab hits another, who forthwith yells. There is a shout from the flying-foxes, "Who are you yonder?" "The children of the hermit crabs are we!" comes the reply. More questions and answers follow, in which each side insults the other, until, worked up to mimic fury, the two bands rush blindly backwards towards each other, upset as many as may be, and themselves probably, and the battle ends in a hurricane of laughter.

The birth of the first-born son in Mota is marked by a curious custom. When he is a day old the father carries him without the house, where a friendly little crowd awaits them, armed with wild oranges, with which they are gently pelted. The father is careful that the child be not hit, for if such a thing befell, it would augur that hereafter he would be shot with an arrow. When the playful attack is ended, the father distributes largess on a modest scale amongst those who took part in it.

We have already made acquaintance with Qat, and Marawa, his friend, the old man spider. In former days, if not actually worshipped, their help was sought. It was thought they had the power to give a boat a good voyage by holding fast to the mast, keeping danger away, and making the course smooth. This is how the Mota man in his canoe would appeal to them :—

"Qat! Marawa! May it be—let the canoe of you-two-and-me [it was prudent to give them the honour of part-proprietorship] turn into a whale, a flying-fish, an eagle! Let it leap on and on over the waves! Let it go! Let it pass out to my land!"[1]

In Mota they say that when Qat began creating he made men and pigs to walk alike on two feet. But his brothers suggested variety, so the obliging Qat beat down the pigs to go on all fours, and left the men on their hind-legs!

They say, too, that at first death was unknown. As old age approached, mankind shed their skins snake-fashion, and behold, they were young again. But there was one, a mother, who did so, and, on coming back to her house, found herself a stranger to her own child. In grief she went back to the bush, hunted till she found the cast skin, and clothed herself once more in it. The child knew her again, but the skin grew older and older, and the mother paid the penalty at last with death. From that day men cast their skins no more.

This mother has now the post of guarding the entrance to Panoi, the unseen world. When a ghost draws near she looks to see if his ears are pierced. If not, it is her prerogative to break her bamboo water-carrier on the head of the unlucky wight.

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[1] *The Melanesians.*

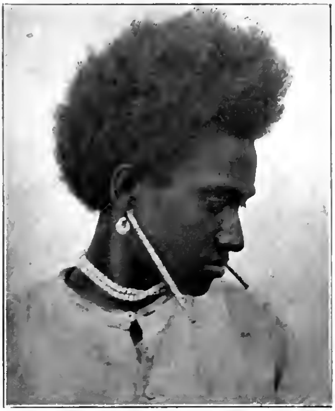
CHAPTER VII

MOTALAVA (SADDLE ISLAND), BANKS ISLANDS

Natural features—Origin of earthquakes—Ra—Lagoon-fishing—Suqe—Superstitions—Ghost-shooters—Story from Ra—Native beliefs—Funeral custom—Shell-money—Money-spinners—Social customs—Folk-lore: "Qat and the Nutmeg Tree."

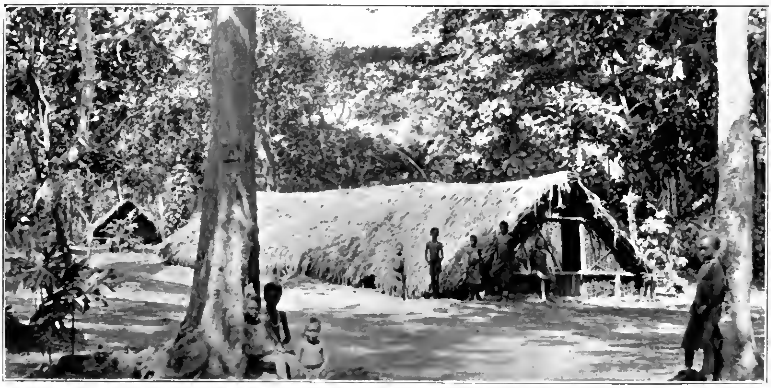
Some eight miles to the north of Mota lies an island with some resemblance to it in section outline, but fully three times its size. In plan it is lozenge-shaped, with one corner elongated into a tail. This is Motalava, or Great Mota, in contradistinction to its little neighbour. There is a depression in the volcanic mountains which make the island's backbone that suggested to Captain Bligh the name he bestowed upon it of Saddle Island. In common with Mota, Motalava has an expansive surround of flat coral land between hill and sea.

Earthquakes are common here, as in most of the volcanic Melanesian islands, and the old-time mythology of Motalava supplied an explanation of them. The world so far as they knew it (consisting of a few little islands and an expanse of ocean) was borne Atlas-wise upon the shoulders of a being whom they named "Father-of-us-all." Sometimes, excusably, growing tired of the weight, he was wont to shift his burden



KASPAR, A MOTALAVA BOY.

RA AND THE LAGOON.



TINESARA AT RA—"THE LONGEST *GAMAL* I SAW."

from one shoulder to another, and it was this abrupt movement that shook the islands.

The tail of land I have referred to is cut off from the mainland at high tide, and forms then a separate islet called Ra. Part of it is visible in the foreground of the accompanying picture. The sea retires to leave it a coral-reef peninsula, stretching less than a mile. But the Ra people will not allow that they live in Motalava. "No," say they, even when so far off as Norfolk Island, "No, we are not from Motalava; we come from Ra!"

A sheet of water lies inside the reef, perhaps two hundred yards across. This is a favourite fishing-place when the tide is low, but the method adopted may not commend itself to followers of the gentle art in more civilized countries. On a selected evening you may see a number of the natives busily engaged in scraping the bark of a certain shrub into the water. It is one of those of which the milky sap has poisonous qualities. They say it is astonishing how little is required to infect the whole lagoon.

Before the sea returns at break of day the surface is dark with canoes and swimmers, hard at work collecting their spoils. The dead fish in quantities lie at the bottom of the water, and must be dived for. Some, merely stupefied, are shot with bow and arrow. The strange part seems that the poisoned fish convey no harm to those who eat them, and it is said that the flavour is in no wise affected by the manner of their death!

It was at Ra that I saw the longest *gamal*, of which a photograph is appended, and here there was no taboo sign, so one might even venture to look in and see the row of ovens. It has been added to again and again to provide cooking-places for those who have attained to the very high ranks.

The Suqe and the Great Ghost Society have still no small power in Motalava. If a man is taking one of the higher steps in rank, or if the society merely wishes to add to its wealth, the whole island is "bound" for one day—it used to be for five—by order of the two societies. At such a time it is dangerous to leave the village, for there is risk in every path of being met and punished with violence by members disguised as ghosts. As the people submit implicitly, it is not surprising that we hear sometimes of the "ghosts" robbing gardens and stripping fruit-trees. While the island is thus "bound" no one may speak above a whisper! Of old no fire might be lit, but this rule, I am told by a Motalava woman, is now relaxed. Of course a fine is exacted for any infringement, and the society benefits!

The Christian religion has taken firm root in Motalava, but it need hardly be added that the superstitions of heathen days linger on, when, after 1500 years of Christianity, England is not yet rid of them.

A man gets ill, and then remembers he trespassed near some spot that was taboo in heathen days because pervaded by a spirit of power. Perhaps he is suffering on that account! At any rate, while the first instinct will now be to apply to the clergy or teachers for medicine and ask God's blessing on it, the second instinct may be (on the principle of leaving no stone unturned) to send a little gift of money to the owner of that uncanny bit of ground, on the understanding that he will use his influence to undo the mischief.

The ceremony to be employed in such a case is simple enough. It may not even be necessary to go as far as the spot indicated; for if by chance the man is met by one of the lizards so common in these islands, and it does not avoid him, that is a sure sign that the creature is possessed of the sufferer's soul, and if carried back it will restore it and the patient will recover. If, on the contrary, the lizard vanishes, the offended spirit's sanctuary must be visited and the sick man's name called aloud there twice a day. Each call is followed by a tense pause. Should a kingfisher cry in response, the soul may be prevailed upon with an entreaty to return, and the good news that he can recover at once is carried to the sick man, who naturally proceeds to do so.

There is a projecting cliff still known at Motalava against which a heavy surf beats ceaselessly with a crash of spray and foam, always followed by the menacing roar of the baffled enemy, retreating only to return untired to the attack. Standing on this cliff in former days, men would throw food or money into the foaming billows to obtain success in gardening or in fighting, as the moment's need dictated. Away beyond is a rock only to be reached by diving, but from which *mana* can be obtained at a touch.

Among very harmless notions entertained both in the Banks and also in the far-away Solomons is one that on a long walk, a difficult path, or a steep scramble a man can ward off fatigue and make better progress by throwing some leaves, or sticks, or stones to one side, with the words, "There goes my tiredness!"

But in the bad old times there was wizardry of the blackest in little Ra, to-day all smiles and sunshine. Yes, and the old times are not yet very old, not as old as a grown man. There were ghost-shooters in those days, from which the white man's guns take their Mota name.

The wizard must be persuaded with money to prepare a ghost-shooter. With preparatory fasting, and the accompaniment of the inevitable magic song, the bamboo is packed with its fatal ingredients, such as dead man's bone and leaves hot with *mana*. The weapon is then ready to be delivered to the man who has set his heart upon killing his enemy. It is such a little bamboo that it can be carried in the hand without attracting notice, and the open end is covered with the thumb until the unsuspecting foe is near at hand. Then with malicious triumph the hand is outstretched towards him—not in friendship! The thumb is lifted and the magic influence released in his direction. If the unlucky mortal sees the ghost-shooter he loses all power of resistance and falls to the ground. He might not die at once, but he will crawl home a doomed man whose hours are numbered. Yet nothing external has so much as touched him. Such was the power of the ghost-shooter.

A story comes from Ra of a rich man with a grudge against somebody, unknowing and unknown. All that was known was that the great man had made ready a ghost-shooter and a feast at the same time. So strong is Melanesian curiosity that all the Ra world came to the feast, whilst perfectly aware that amongst them must be the individual whose life was forfeit. The feast would be crowned by a "kill," but who would be the victim?

The host, to make his magic stronger, fasted unwashed for so many days beforehand that the feast found him too weak to walk forth to it. The excited guests assembled in the *tinesara* for the dance which, according to custom, must precede the feast, and presently a grisly object appeared, carried between two supporters—a blackened, shrunken skeleton of a man. There they set him down, at the edge of the dancing-ground, and all saw the thin trembling arm straightened ready, holding the ghost-shooter.

The drum began to tap and the dancers to circle round, while two burning eyes from out a wasted face watched each as he passed and waited still for his opportunity. The time went on, the dancers passed and repassed, and the watcher's gaze from intensity gradually gave way to bewilderment. Which was his victim? This? He raised his arm and uncovered the bamboo. Even in the midst of the dance's whirl all saw, all felt what had happened. The wretched man who stood in the line of the magic shot fell stiff and prostrate, and the dancing stopped. The same moment the shooter became aware that he had felled the wrong man, and loudly proclaimed his distress. Friends gathered round the poor fallen one, and urged him to put out his strength to resist the magic, since there was no harm wished to him in the act. And when the fainting man understood, he revived, and presently recovered. Of what afterwards befell the unknown who had so fortunately escaped I can find no record.

In Motalava from earliest times there seems to have been a recognition that by their conduct in this life men prepared for themselves their abode hereafter. Those who behaved in accordance with the native ideas of goodness departed after death to a vaguely happy, shadowy Panoi; those reprobated by their fellows were condemned to be vaguely miserable.

If any one of importance died, before burial his corpse was carried into the *tinesara*, and there publicly harangued. If he were popular he would then be well-spoken, and doubtless even flattered. But if his character had not been above reproach, now was the time to say quite openly what was the general opinion concerning him. On one occasion the funeral address was heard to end pathetically, "Ah, poor ghost! will *you* be able to enter Panoi? It's hardly likely!"

A good deal of the shell-money current in the Banks Islands is ground in Motalava. Each disk is about an eighth of an inch in diameter, pierced in the centre, and strung upon tough thread made from the fibre of a creeper. And each is laboriously chipped with a stone to its present size and shape. But the people tell one of a much quicker and easier way than this of coining money—by magic, the power of which abides with a certain lucky few to whom the spirits have confided it.

It was only quite recently that the Bishop of Melanesia, having heard of such a one in his neighbourhood, went on a visit of inspection to try and extricate the truth from the marvellous tales reported to him.

He found a quiet, harmless-looking old woman living with her husband, a man of sufficient wealth to have risen to the style of chief, which is of no great importance in the Banks Islands. Both are members of the Church, well reported of by all, and regular in attendance at prayers. Judging from the appearance of the money-spinner herself, one would say she must be rather stupid and unimaginative. Her own account of the matter is that a certain rock is the abode of a sprite ("*Vui*") with a family of four children, and that it is one of these juvenile sprites who influences her.

She was quite ready at the Bishop's request to give an exhibition of her powers. The performance began by dancing and singing. Then, rubbing her hands together after the manner of a European conjurer, sure enough forth came some native shell-money, apparently out of space. It must be remembered there were no sleeves where anything could be concealed. The Bishop examined her hands. Some remains of the money were clinging to them, and there were some leaves, chosen, no doubt, for their *mana*. The husband now came forward and began playing a little tom-tom, again there was the shuffling of the bare feet as if in a sort of dance, again the hands were rubbed together, and out came a long coil of fresh shell-money.

No explanation can be offered of this. There is no doubt that everybody in Motalava believes implicitly in the power of these money-spinners, and if one's own intellect did not stagger at such a possibility, it might be declared that the woman herself was convinced she had a supernatural power. The Bishop asked how it came to pass that her husband was not an exceedingly rich man if his wife could make money at will. The answer was ready:

"Because whenever he displeases her in any way the money all vanishes."

A Motalava friend informs me that now one well-known money-spinner has died, but the mysterious power has lately made its appearance in a little girl of three or four years. Long strings of shell-money are found in her hair, and if she drinks the juice of a green coco-nut or water from a cup, money is always found afterwards in the shell or cup from which she has drunk!

"In truth it is mysterious!" was the final comment of my informant, and I can close the subject with no better one.

From what has been already written, it will have been inferred that customs in Melanesia have so strong a hold upon the natives that they develop into laws, unwritten, but well understood and universally obeyed. There is one such custom throughout the Banks Islands, which is slowly dying, but will die very hard. Yet it is one that makes such a cruel demand upon parents that there will undoubtedly be rejoicing among many when it becomes extinct.

This custom rules that parents must give away their first-born son, should those relatives who have the right make request for him. Four instances spring at once to my own remembrance, and certainly in three of them the heart-strings of the parents were sadly torn in making the sacrifice. Two of these cases belong to Mota, and one to Motalava. Albinos are not uncommon here, and very odd the pink skin, flaxen hair, and weak, light eyes look in conjunction with the native cast of countenance. But they are admired by the people, and the albino child seems particularly treasured in a family. So one was really taken aback when a little pink and white infant of two years, who was the delight of its parents' eyes, was given away unhesitatingly on request being made for it.

And such surrender of a child is final. The relationship is broken off completely, never to be regained. But very commonly parents who have suffered a loss like this seek to console themselves by adopting in their turn a foster-son. The adopted child is of the same side of the house as his foster-mother, so he takes the position of a true child of the family. If out of pity an orphan, say, from the husband's side of the house should be adopted, it is all-important that the fact be kept from his knowledge as he grows up. Sooner or later the truth leaks out, and great is the distress of the lad. He will forsake his foster-parents, and seek a home on the other side of the house.

Remembering how strong the tribal feeling is among the islanders, it is surprising to find a child's individuality accepted and respected in Melanesia in a marked degree. You meet a mother on the path, her baby slung at her side, and remark, "You're going to work in your garden?" "We-two!" will be the gentle correction. The baby is regarded as an associate in whatever its mother undertakes, and must not be omitted in your consideration. The mother wants some cotton for her sewing, but "We-two want it" is her formula. And when the formality of shaking hands is gone through, a native will not omit to solemnly shake hands with the unconscious baby.

In Motalava every child has its own garden in which (as soon as old enough) to cultivate the roots for its own consumption. At about eight years old a boy is free from the care and control of his parents. He sleeps in the *gamal* with the men, cooks in the oven of his own rank, and shoots with his own bow and arrow.

In the accompanying photograph of a Motalava boy, attention may be drawn to the ear-sticks, which are an ornament very common in the Banks Islands.

They are made of bamboo, upon which minute devices are scratched, and then coloured by smoking over a fire.

With the advance of Christian habits, family life and family government are finding their way into the homes of the teachers, at all events ; and it will be an excellent thing for the youth of the islands when they learn all that fatherhood and motherhood should imply. As it is, they are fortunately controlled to a great extent by their innate respect for custom and by a natural docility.

Qat and Marawa have their due place in the myth-lore of Motalava, so I will here translate another Banks Island story from the traditional adventures of Qat.

QAT AND THE NUTMEG TREE

Qat's brothers were never tired of trying to deceive him, and Qat was never tired of foiling their plots. Once upon a time—

They gathered together and discussed how they might *do*[1] him, and they agreed to cheat him over setting bird-snares in the nutmeg trees. Now a piece of ground was prepared by each containing his own nutmeg tree, but that of Qat they prepared a good way off from the village, while the rest were close to.

And on a certain day they went, and took Qat with them, and started out to snare the birds in the nutmeg trees. And his brothers told him to go to that place away off, and he went.

They, however, did not go on long, but as soon as the brother who was nearest saw that Qat had climbed up, he got down from his own tree, stood on the ground [beneath Qat's nutmeg] and said, " My nutmeg, swell ! "

And the nutmeg became very big, so that Qat could not clasp it with his arms, even the top shoots and all swelled exceedingly.

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[1] Literal translation.

But Qat did not see at once, for he was arranging the snare, and he who had charmed the nutmeg tree ran back, gathered his companions, and they hurried back to the village, carried off Ro Lei [Qat's wife] by force, drew down the boat, and paddled swiftly away. And when they were out of sight of land, then they blew a conch-shell so that Qat might hear.

And he heard, and he was sure that his brothers had seized his wife and his canoe. Now to get down quickly from the tree! But he could not, because every bough of the nutmeg had grown so big. In vain he tried and tried to descend. And he could do nothing but cry.

Then that sprite Marawa, Qat's friend, heard his loud crying, and, coming up, saw Qat weeping and weeping.

So Marawa said to Qat, "What's the matter?"

And he answered, "My brothers have cheated me properly, for I cannot get down."

Then the other said, "Come down!"

Now Marawa had flowing hair, and he lifted up his hair to Qat, and Qat was able to come down by it,[1] and Marawa set him free, and off he went.

Now Qat arrived at the village, and saw only the rollers left which were used for dragging the canoe. And he looked in vain for his wife, for his brothers had fled, taking the canoe to be their canoe, and they had taken his wife also to be their wife.

After that Qat went inside the house and took a cock's feather, and some of the very small shell-money which is used as an ornament, and a clam-shell adze, and some red earth. Then said he to his mother, "Mother, where are my bananas?"

And his mother said, "The others have stripped the bunch clean, there are only the tiny ones at the end left."

So Qat tore off the very last ones. Next he took a coco-nut-shell water-bottle, packed these things into it, and this food of his. And [having first been rubbed small by Marawa, according to another version] he said, "Now, mother, do you shut me in and stop the bottle, and when you see three large waves roll on to the beach, and a small one following, then throw me on to the fourth small wave."

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[1] Another version makes the Marawa (spider) spin a web-ladder.

And Qat sat down inside the coco-nut. So Qat's mother counted the four waves and threw him in.

His brothers meanwhile had sailed right away—past Gaua, then Meralava, and were near to Maewo and out in the open sea when Qat was thrown upon the wave. But away he floated—floated—floated, fast—fast—fast after the canoe, and kept beckoning that canoe towards him.

The brothers were paddling as hard as they could in the opposite direction. Presently one turned round and exclaimed, "Hullo, what's this? We are drifting fast back to Meralava. We had almost lost sight of it some time ago, and now we are nearing it again. How is it?"

They settled to their paddling more earnestly than ever in hopes of making way, but all to no purpose. Qat was beckoning them back, and the canoe drifted towards him.

By and by Qat floated forward to the bow of the canoe, and he ate a banana and threw the skin into the sea ahead of the boat. And his brothers came upon the banana skin, and said, "*Eke!* That banana skin reminds one of Qat's, of which we took some." And they all asked one another if it was their eating, but everybody denied having eaten it.

Then said the Wisest Brother, "You fellows, it is Qat who has eaten this banana, and he has thrown the skin hitherward as a sign to us that he is not dead, but has escaped, and is coming after us."

But the others disagreed: "No, that cannot be! Qat is sitting in the nutmeg tree crying for his wife and his canoe."

"I know that that is the skin of Qat's banana," said the Wisest Brother.

Presently they saw that coco-nut that had Qat within it; it floated to the side of the canoe. And one of them took it up, saying, "My coco-nut! Mine to eat!" But he smelt it. "Ugh! it is bad!" and threw it away.

And it floated to the stern; and another took it up and said the same thing, and then threw it away; and so on, one after another. Only the Wisest Brother did not see this coco-nut they threw away.

Then Qat floated away before them, and floated to land at Maewo. And he came forth from the coco-nut, and he smeared his head red, and wreathed it with the fine shell-money, and decked it with the cock's tail. He looked quite spruce, considering that he was an ugly fellow. And he sat on the top of a *gire* tree on the beach and waited for the coming of his brothers in the canoe. Presently they came through the reef and neared the land. And they looked up and saw him sitting in the *gire* tree.

"Brothers, who is that sitting up there?"

"That is Qat," said the Wisest Brother.

But the others contradicted him. "It can't be Qat! It's too good-looking for him! And how could he have come here? He must be dead by now."

"Not so," said the Wisest Brother; "this is Qat indeed!" For that Wisest Brother knew more than all the rest.

And soon they found out that it was Qat.

"Qat, how did you come here?" said they.

"Oh, my own way," said Qat.

Then they struck on a rock; and Qat made the rock rise out of the sea, and the canoe was lifted high on to the rock. And Qat helped them all out of the canoe, and they arrived safely on shore.

And Qat said, "Now an ugly fellow lives here who eats men. We must mind what we are about or he will eat us. Hitherto we have not lived together as one in a friendly way. Our only hope now is to live together and help one another, or we shall all be killed."

Then he sprang forward with his shell adze and chopped the canoe up into little pieces, singing as he did so—

"Whose canoe is it?
    Why, Marawa's canoe!

My brothers hoaxed me
About setting a snare:
'Swell, nutmeg tree!'
The snare was loosed!
I had a canoe;
It sailed away from me."

And after that Qat made friends with them again.

CHAPTER VIII

VANUA LAVA (GREAT BANKS ISLAND), BANKS ISLANDS

Natural features—Native life—The Great Ghost Society—The cry of the Ghosts—St. Patrick's School—Mosquitoes—A shark story—Qat superstitions — Recent encounter with a sprite—Folk-tale: "Qat's First Meeting with Marawa."

Vanua Lava, being interpreted, is Large Island, and as Gaua is very distinctly larger, it does not strictly deserve either of its names, the English or native. Nevertheless, the islands nearest it look very small in comparison, and as Gaua is too far away to appear as a rival, it undoubtedly gives one the impression of great size.

There is a splendid view-point for the Banks group when Ureparapara lies immediately behind one, Rowa in the near foreground, with Motalava in the background, to the right of that Mota, still farther away to the right Gaua, and here in the right foreground Vanua Lava, its mountains and gullies all "with verdure clad."

I seem to see it now as I saw it first, looming gigantic before our face, vividly verdant after a spell of wet weather, and surrounded by a sea, still foaming and fuming, but of the most brilliant blue, flecked by "white horses" and flying-fish. A cloud of smoke from the heart of a mountain marked not an active volcano, but a sulphur spring, and I remember our Vanua Lava anchorage one Sunday becoming somewhat malodorous towards evening by reason of the sulphur wafted on the breeze.

A French company made an adventurous effort here to work the sulphur mines, but when they had lost 1,000,000 francs in the enterprise they retired from the field. The remains of their rail-track are still visible.

Vanua Lava plumes itself, on the strength of having two or three trading stations and a Central School connected with the Mission, as of importance equal to its size. But it is really sparsely inhabited, and the standard of enlightenment apart from the school is not high.

They are a bright, friendly people, eager enough when the *Southern Cross* appears to come swarming out to the ship in boat-loads, decked with fragrant coloured leaves and white blossoms. They are forward too with gifts — yams, and almonds, and woven girdles wrapped in palm leaves.

The village of Pek, which we visited first, was scrupulously clean and tidy, with its church and school fenced off from the pigs in the *tinesara*; and I spent a very pleasant morning there among the women. The houses are long and airy, with a door at either end. Over the door of the one in the picture are the words, *Ni tamata alo ima iloke*, *i.e.* Peace be to this house! Outside lie native bags and mats, the bamboo water-carrier, a few oddments of European extraction, and (on the reader's left) what looks like a birch-rod, but is really a besom composed of the midribs of sago frondlets. Where I sat, inside, there was a fine native chest full of almonds, with the ashes of a fire beneath it. Mats were spread on either side for sleeping on, and cooking utensils were hung about. The house was shared by plenty of shabby chickens and a scraggy little dog or two; the pig for once lay outside.

I have several friends among the Vanualavans, and one naturally dislikes to say anything to the people's detriment. But they do not enjoy a blameless reputation, and if they are not your friends they are likely to become very bitter, sullen enemies. Progress is slower here than it should be in the island which contains (here at Pek) the first church in all the diocese to be set apart for divine worship.

The fact is, we should soon see a very different state of things in Vanua Lava were people and teachers not overruled as they are by their secret societies. The Great Ghost Society is very strong here, and the little boys are initiated while quite young. An account, from another pen, of all that may be seen at an initiation may be of interest.

The inevitable feast begins the function. Then, in response to a long, loud cry from a man, the "Harmless Ghost" appears, rushing towards the *tinesara* from an inland path.

> He came along with a light, springy step, two white rods in his hands, which he jerked up and down. All you saw of the man were his two legs. On his head was a curious kind of hat [made of bark dyed and decorated with scarlet seeds] which is also a mask, with holes for the eyes. From the head fell long fringes of blanched coco-nut leaves which covered the body entirely, and formed a kind of Inverness cape, through which the hands protruded. He rushed about with a peculiar, high trotting action, the leafy cloak flying about him with a rustling noise.

Presently he came leaping over the stone wall into the central space with a springy bound, and danced round and round the group of children who were to enter upon their initiation. All at once with a shout he rushed into the midst of them, and beat his two wands together till they were broken over the boys' heads.

A tall enclosure close by, formed with a screen of coco-nut fronds about 20 feet high, conceals the precincts of the Ghost Society's lodge, which is always hedged round with secrecy. Into this enclosure the Harmless Ghost now retires, and the group of candidates file off in procession round the *tinesara*, where are many pigs tied to stakes. Every pig is solemnly smacked by every child, then all disappear one by one into the tall enclosure, to be seen no more for perhaps forty or fifty days, by which time the full payment in money and pigs necessary for membership will have been made up by the candidates' relations.

In Vanua Lava originated the peculiar and unearthly noise which of old much affrighted the innocent villagers, for it betokened that the Ghosts were out, and mischief might be expected. For long enough no one but the performers knew how the cry of the Ghosts was caused, but that little mystery is now solved and its origin.

It was two members of the society who one day heard this same curious sound proceeding from a point of rock always regarded by the islanders as ghost-haunted. On wending their way thither they discovered an old woman sitting on the beach making shell-money. She was shielding off the sun's rays with a palm frond, and using the stalk-end of the same to hold the shell. The rubbing of the stalk-end upon

Vureas Bay.

Landing-place, Vanua Lava.

the stone caused the fan to vibrate, and a really extraordinary, penetrating noise was the result. Pleased with a discovery which they saw promised to be profitable to them, they killed the unfortunate money-maker and carried off the stone and palm leaf for use in their mysteries.

There are two or three excellent anchorages off Vanua Lava, perhaps the best being Port Patteson on the lee side, named by Bishop George Augustus Selwyn after Judge Patteson, the martyred Bishop's father. Vureas Bay is another, which is overlooked by St. Patrick's Central School, with its mission-house and school buildings, church and cemetery, its beautifully-kept gardens and lawns, its bathing-pool, and the successful little coco-nut plantation. The school-house is picturesque enough to merit illustration. The fruit trees conspicuous are mummy-apple, which form a cool and luscious addition to the table in this climate. The boys were probably on the beach when the photograph was taken, but they may generally be seen enjoying themselves thoroughly in their play-time, looking trim and clean in their dark-blue striped singlets and *malo*[1] with leathern belts.

In Vureas Bay there is (or was till recently) a teacher's house built so close to the sea that it was said that in a strong north wind the fish were blown into the oven and the pigs up into the trees!

The mosquitoes are a terrible pest in parts of Vanua Lava; in the rainy season even the natives are driven at night to leave their houses and bury themselves in the sand on the beach in order to obtain rest. Social custom makes it rather tiresome for a man if his mother-in-law also finds shelter on the beach and happens to return to the village before him. He cannot follow the path as long as her footsteps are traceable, but must either wait till they have been obliterated or else make a circuitous detour.

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[1] *Malo*, a male garment, consisting of a piece of cloth fastened round the middle, and falling to the knee.

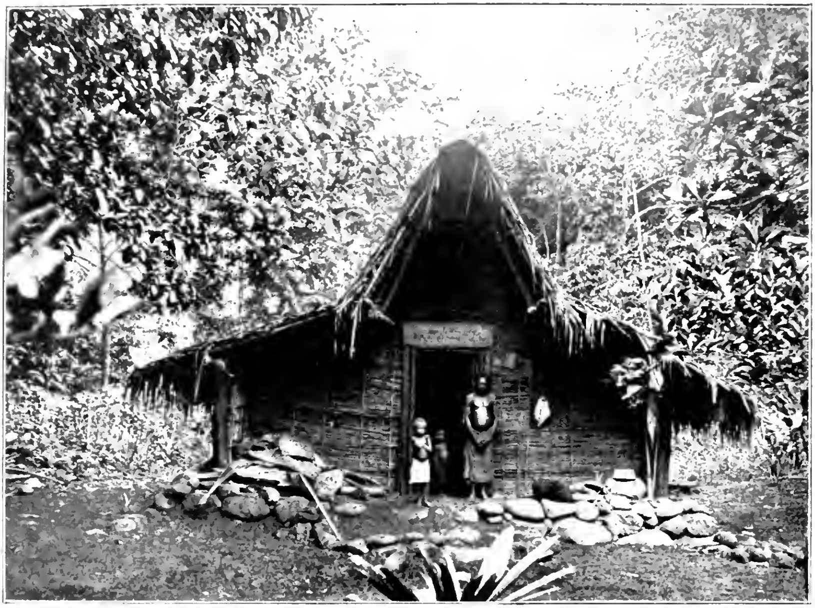
From Vanua Lava comes one of the shark stories which are believed or not according to one's disposition. While in Melanesia it is certainly easier (if you can) to believe than to disbelieve them, because they are so numerous, and the people are themselves so certain of their authenticity.

The son of a chief paid a Maewo man a sum of money to have a shark *sent* to him. I italicize the word "sent," because there was no conveying of the shark. The creature simply received his orders from his friend in Maewo, who knew the way to talk to him, and off he swam, north-north-east, till he reached Vanua Lava, where he was met as arranged by this Manurwar. The two became intimate. When Manurwar went down to the beach, the shark would swim towards him, and follow him in the surf as he walked along the shore. There are many strange things in the Pacific!

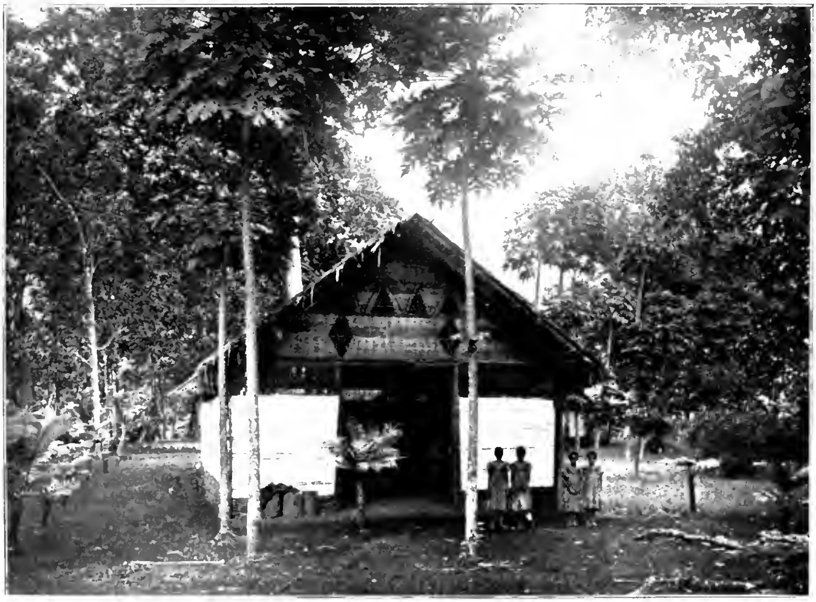
Vanua Lava has the honour of boasting Qat's birthplace, and the Hill of Qat is a familiar landmark. The stump of the tree which he cut for his canoe is still there; a little Vanua Lava maiden has just told me with pride that she has herself seen it, and it is very old! Canoe-makers are wont to put a little money on the root with the hope that Qat will give their canoes *mana* for swiftness and strength and ensure them against sinking.

To judge from an incident said to have occurred

VANUA LAVA.



A Vanua Lava House.



St. Patrick's School-house.

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here not long ago, Marawa must have remained in the world when Qat left it.

Early one morning a man was walking by the river-side when he saw before him a little pygmy with flowing hair. Of course it was a *vui* (sprite), and none other than Marawa himself. The mortal followed him up the valley till it narrowed into a rocky gorge, closed at the end by a rock. Marawa tapped upon the rock with his knuckles, and it opened to him like a door. Marawa entered, and the man followed close behind; then the rock-door shut upon them both.

At once the man saw he was in the house of Marawa, and the *vui* directed him to return to the village and fetch him some money, on which condition he promised to reappear to him and become his friend. From that day the man prospered in everything he undertook, and made no secret of the source of his success.

This is the story of

QAT'S FIRST MEETING WITH MARAWA[1]

It was proposed that Qat and his brothers should make canoes, so that they might sail to the different islands of Gaua, Motalava, etc., so they set to work and made axes out of a large shell. Qat alone remained idle, and to all their questions he gave some evasive answer. Soon they began cutting their canoes out of different trees; each one chose a separate kind of tree. They went away each morning, and came back late in the evening. When they went away, Qat found a shell, and began rubbing it down to the right shape, doing it all secretly, and hiding the shell about evening time. When his brothers came home they found him lying down, pretending to sleep.

"Qat, why don't you make yourself a canoe? What do you lie there all day for? By and by you will want to sail, when we go, and you will have no canoe to go in."

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[1] Mainly translated by the late Archdeacon Palmer.

"Oh," said Qat, "I will stay at home and take care of the village whilst you all are away."

"No!" said they; "go and make a canoe!"

This happened day after day. Soon Qat's shell-axe was finished, and directly his brothers had left to go to their work, Qat took his shell-axe and went in search of a tree. After a time he found the right one a long way off.

"Ah!" said he, "this will do for me. I will make a fine canoe of it!" and began cutting it down.

He had nearly cut it so that it was ready to fall when, seeing the sun about to set, he hurried home and lay down in the *gamal*.

"Qat, go and cut yourself a canoe, you lazy fellow! By and by you will want to sail with us."

"Very well," said Qat; "you are making canoes for us all. I will go in one of yours."

"Not in mine!" "Nor in mine!" "Nor in mine!" said they all. "Qat, you are a bad fellow, and we will not take you."

"They are *our* canoes you are making, and I will go with you."

"That indeed you shall not," said they all, "unless you make yourself a canoe."

"All right; you'll see if I don't," said Qat.

The next morning Qat went to the tree, and to his surprise he found the tree which had been almost cut through quite sound again; each chip had been replaced, and the tree was perfectly whole.

"Hallo!" said Qat; "what's this? I cut this tree all but through yesterday, and now it is as sound as ever. Who has been at work here, I wonder? What shall I do? Shall I cut this again, or find out another one? I will have another try at this, at all events."

So he set to work, and got it nearly cut through when, looking up, he saw the sun almost setting.

"I wish," said he, "I could wait and cut it right down, but I must hurry back, or my brothers will be home first."

So he left the tree and hastened home; and then the same scene occurred as on the preceding night, Qat pretending he would go in one of their canoes, and they one and all refusing to take such a bad fellow with them.

Next morning Qat returned to the tree, and found all the chips replaced again. This happened three times, and then a happy thought struck him. He cut out one very large chip, and instead of going home as usual, went to some distance in sight of the tree he had cut and lay down, covering himself with the large chip he had with him, to see who it was that kept hindering his work.

After a time a form like a very small old man with the longest white hair imaginable crept out of the earth and most diligently collected each chip and replaced it in the cleft, so that the tree was sound again, with the exception of the one large chip under which Qat was lying.

The little old man hunted about for this, but could not find it, and seemed terribly perplexed as to what to do. Qat saw him, and knew him to be Spider (i.e. *Marawa*) After a time the Marawa discovered the chip, and went to fetch it. He took hold of one end and drew it off Qat, who jumped up and made as though he would have killed Marawa.

"What do you mean," said he, "by hindering my work in this way? I want to make a canoe of this tree; why do you prevent me?"

"Look here!" said Marawa, "I will help you and make a canoe for you. How are your brothers getting on with their canoes?"

"They will soon be finished."

"Well, in how many days do you want your canoe?"

"Ten," says Qat.

"Oh, that is too long; five will be enough."

"Well, do you make the canoe, and I will make the paddles, and the sail, and the outrigger."

And so it was agreed, and Qat returned to his village. When there, his brothers began again about the canoes: "Why don't you make yourself a canoe, Qat?"

"Oh," said Qat, "I won't go at all. I'll stay behind and watch you sailing about, and take care of the village." And so he was left alone.

Qat's brothers having finished their canoes, they determined to have a sail, and so prepared food the day before, that they might have plenty to eat with them. Then in the morning, everything being ready, they went down to the beach, each with his wife, Qat sitting apart on the shore.

First one canoe was pushed into the water, and one brother and his wife sprang into the boat. But Qat lifted up his hand, and down went the canoe to the bottom, and the unfortunate couple swam ashore with their food in their hands and dried themselves in the sun. The next pair thought they would be more careful, but the same thing happened. And so it was with all the rest. Eleven new canoes were lost, and eleven husbands and wives scrambled ashore to dry in the sun.

Then Qat disappeared, and ran away to where his canoe was in the bush, and he and Marawa carried it down to the sea [in another bay], hoisted sail, and steered for the place where the brothers were, they in the meantime sitting on the rocks, disconsolate at the loss of their canoes, but trying to comfort themselves with the food they had saved. By and by they heard the blowing of a conch-shell.

And the Wisest Brother said, "The sound of that conch is as if Qat were blowing it."

But the others said, "No, he is moping in the village, sitting in the dust, staying at home all day."

And still the Wisest Brother persisted, "Qat has made himself a canoe!"

"Nonsense!" said his brothers; "how can he have a canoe? The lazy fellow was sleeping all day long. He can't have made a canoe!"

"But I tell you I'm sure he has, and you will soon see if what I say is not true. Look, he is away now! Let us wait here, and I'm sure we shall soon see him on the sea in a canoe. Don't you know that he always deceives us because he was born first?" And so they sat, the Wisest Brother keeping a sharp look-out.

In the meanwhile Qat was sailing towards the place where his brothers were, Qat and his wife, Ro Lei, in the bow, and Marawa steering. Just as they were coming in sight of the brothers they turned round, and so Qat steered and Marawa sat in the bows.

The Wisest Brother saw them first.

"There!" said he; "I told you so. There are Qat and Ro Lei in his canoe. But who is the little old man in the bows? It is Marawa!"

"Hallo, Qat!" said they; "where did you get your canoe from?"

"We two made it," said Qat.

After which he went and made all the lost canoes rise to the surface and float, and he drew them on shore.

CHAPTER IX

ROWA, BANKS ISLANDS

Natural features—The people—"William" anecdotes—Arts and crafts—The ways of turtles—The ways of sharks—Rowa's pride and joy—Native discipline.

A FEW miles to the north of Vanua Lava lies Rowa, an island too small, and low, and insignificant to have received an English name from Captain Bligh or any other voyager. It is just Rowa *tout court*, and nothing else. I doubt if any Europeans except ourselves have ever visited it.

You can hardly discern it at all until you get quite close to it, for it is only a little line of sand and coral just above the surface of the sea, distinguishable by the plumy coco-nut palms that twinkle fairy-like through the quivering, glassy heat.

I shall always see it so, as it was that wonderful, dazzling blue morning when we swung down by the rope ladder from the big ship's side into the whaleboat and set sail for that dream-shore. The oars were shipped, for the stiff breeze blew just as it should, and the boat cut a smooth, swift course for the land. It was too fine a day to be clear. The boundary between sea and sky was obliterated: we swept along through a water-world that seemed all blue, and white, and gold.

"WILLIAM."

"THE WHOLE POPULATION WAS ASSEMBLED"—VANUA LAVA IN THE DISTANCE.

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The enchanted island is guarded. An endless barrier-reef surrounds it, marked every here and there by projecting masses of coral rock that take the shapes of bears, whales, and fabulous monsters. Three times our boat struck rock in crossing the reef, but sustained no damage.

In the lagoon the water shallowed rapidly. The sail was furled, and oars were plied as long as possible, yet still a stretch of water lay between boat and shore.

But the whole population of Rowa, including babies (thirty-five souls), was assembled on the sparkling, powdered coral beach to welcome the expected visitors, and now they plunged into the water and came wading out to meet us. The dark skins were refreshing to the eye, tired by so much brightness. Two men, Sogotle and Alfred, carried me ashore sedan-chairwise, many brown friends surrounding.

Then came the happy, mirthful reception on the beach, dear old William Qasvaroñ, the native deacon, a true father of his people, and his fine, virile-looking wife Lydia doing the honours. Two or three warm-hearted, laughing women took possession of me with arms and hands, and hurried me off through the grove of palm-trees to the village.

Before reaching it let me say a few words about the inhabitants of this little island, so unimportant from the exterior, so noteworthy from the inside.

In 1886 the population was recorded as twenty-three, and I don't think that within the Mission's memory it has exceeded forty. Yet the Rowa people have a particularly marked individuality. Nature has endowed them with excellent gifts of mind and temperament. They are intelligent, friendly, and attractive.

Of course they have a language of their own, but their linguistic skill is such that they can converse equally well in any of the languages common to the surrounding islands—Mota, Vanua Lava, Ureparapara, Motalava, it matters not which.

Rowa has been a Christian island for many years now, and the people make keen and excellent missionaries, their facility in speaking, combined with their comparative independence and strength of character, helping to equip them for the task.

But Rowa has a temper to reckon with, which is not least conspicuous in the family circle of our excellent William. His daughter Clara, a handsome, well-built woman of some thirty summers, should have been married long ago, according to Melanesian custom; but the island is small, and it was said significantly that every one knows her! Reuben, the son, a man full of attractive qualities, is marred by his overbearing temper among his own people, though he works well now on a heathen island. And my old friend Lydia has the sharpest and longest tongue of all when she is provoked.

Poor William has a hard time at whiles, but one day a bright idea broke upon him. Lydia had been on the war-path and had refused him any opening. He longed to speak his mind, but the clattering tongue never ceased. Presently the church bell rang, and William hurried to his vestry to robe, Lydia to her place among the women. Prayers being ended, William came forward in his surplice to say a few words. What must Lydia's feelings have been when she found that she herself was the text of her husband's discourse! As she sat there, meekly and tearfully below him, for once William had his heart's desire and could say exactly what he really thought. And he had the first word, and the last word, and all the words between! I believe Lydia was greatly edified by that sermon, and the rest of the island enjoyed it more than most.

For a long time Rowa was the mint of the Banks group, and possessed the monopoly of making the shell-money. But, as we saw, the occupation has now spread to neighbouring islands. And it is said that they used to weave here the *malo*, or covering worn from waist to knee, but that art is lost. They are very expert fishermen, shooting their fish with reed arrows, tipped nowadays with fencing wire. The silver mullet is plentiful in the lagoon, but to shoot them is no easy matter, and the Rowa folk are reputed deadly shots. A catch of seventy fine mullet is not at all uncommon in one day.

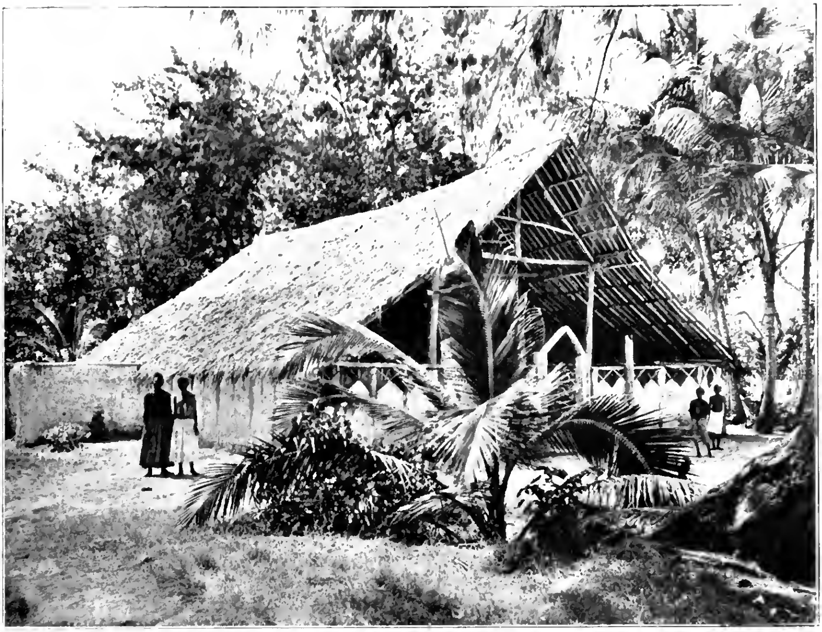
When more fish are obtained than can be consumed on the island, the men row across with them to Vanua Lava and exchange them for yams. In old times there were no yams at all grown on Rowa, for there was a rooted belief that, should Rowa plant yams, all the Vanua Lava yams would die.

As a young man William made it his *métier* to break down the island superstitions, and he succeeded. He grew yams, and still the yams across the water flourished as they did before. No sow had been allowed among the few Rowa pigs, for it was held that if she littered there, the people would be outnumbered by the pigs, who would devour them. William tried the experiment, and now Rowa breeds swine with a tranquil mind.

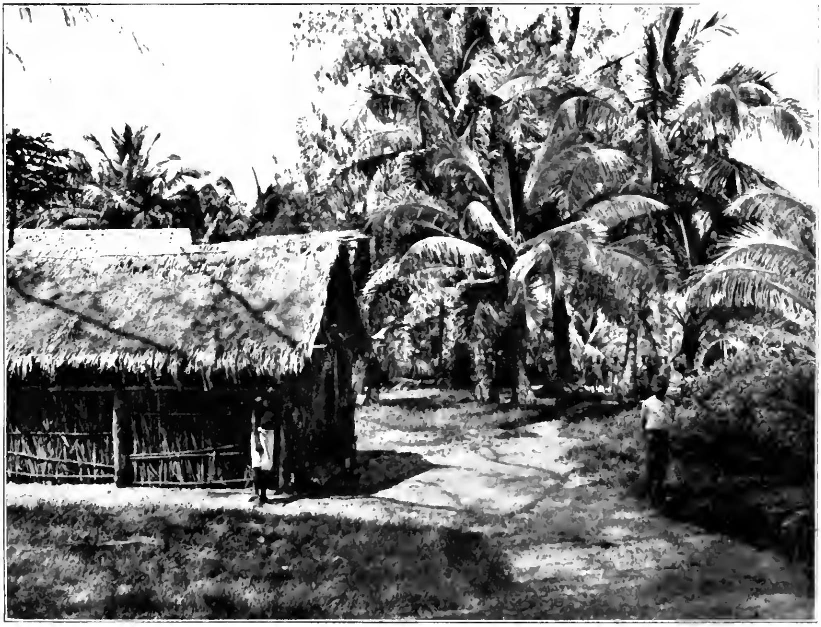
The sandy shore is a hatching-ground for turtles, whose eggs are regarded as a great dainty, the more so as they are not easy to discover, the turtle having developed a pretty ingenuity in the art of deception. Of course the turtle itself is most valuable, but harder to catch than one would imagine. There are two signs by which the natives tell when turtle will come ashore. The first is that a pig sneezes—a most obliging indication. The second is when certain red streaks are seen in the sky. Intelligent Rowa people, to discover facts like these!

There are other hints they can give you. Sharks abound in the surrounding water, but Rowa men say it is only black sharks who hate and pursue mankind, and that they would hardly ever do you injury but for their familiar, the pilot-fish. When a man swimming is seized by cramp, or is in difficulty of any kind, the pilot-fish bites him, and goes back to tell his friend the shark, who comes upon the instant. If, therefore, you can only seize and kill the pilot-fish in the act of biting, you may save your life. If a shark nears you in shallow water, your wisdom is to stand quite still, and the shark, whose lack of curiosity seems only equalled by his lack of gumption, will mistake your lower limbs for permanent features of the submarine world. In contrast with those we hear of everywhere else, methinks these Rowa sharks must be a feeble-minded race! Of late some new varieties, including the hammerhead, have appeared, to the perplexity of the fishermen, who may possibly find some of the old articles of their shark beliefs shattered by the newcomers.

Some years ago it seemed only too probable that the population of Rowa would soon be extinct. A disease fearfully resembling leprosy appeared in Motalava, and threatened Rowa. The white priest in charge of the Banks group wisely persuaded the



"What Rowa is most famed for"—the Church



"Just big enough for its purpose"—the School-house.

people of Motalava to establish a system of segregation, and this proved, most happily, to be an effectual means of stemming the disease's advance.

Rowa has an advantage over such islands as Mota and Meralava in its proud possession of a fresh-water pool. There are also one or two smaller sources, which a wandering ignoramus might in error term puddles. They assured me the water was excellent drinking, but I seemed to prefer the nectar furnished by a green coco-nut. The still water attracts myriads of mosquitoes, which make night on Rowa a very lively purgatory for a white man.

Just one small point of rock may be seen in the island which evidently represents the original nucleus that attracted round it the grains of sand and the minute polyps which together have formed the island as we see it.

But what Rowa is now most justly famed for is an edifice to which, in order that I might see it, my escort guided me through the fine coco-nut grove of Reuben's planting into the *tinesara* of the beautifully kept village, its ground of fine white sand dazzling in the sun. There before us we beheld the church, a really remarkable monument of purely native architecture, and of the spontaneous love, zeal, ambition, and perseverance of this small handful of dusky Christians.

With William at their head to design, to lead, and to encourage, these people, perfect novices all in the science of stone building, most of them strangers even to the sight of such a thing, have built a church of white coral rock, cemented with lime made by burning this same coral—a church 54 × 42 feet in area. Think of the labour involved to, say, fifteen unskilled workmen, and as many women and children. And these not energetic folk of cold climate and Teutonic blood, but slow, tropical, ease-loving Melanesians. Truly it is a standing marvel!

The roof is of sago palm leaf thatch. There are no conventional windows, but a generous space for air and light is left below the roof. Then comes a sort of screen or fence of bamboo, meeting the coral wall, which finishes with a zigzag edging. Outside, over the west front, is a striking, bright-hued cross.

Half the church is occupied by an apsidal chancel and ambulatory, which is ascended by three broad steps of the white coral. Indeed, the whole interior is of the same substance. Even the twelve long seats, which face each other choir-fashion, are of the smooth coral cement, the backs and ends being ornamented with nautilus and iridescent shells, inlaid in patterns. Unfortunately it has been found impossible to get a successful photograph of the interior, so bright and white is it.

The altogether disproportionate size of the church to its possible congregation is remarkable and suggestive. It recalls at once the ambitions and ideals of our mediaeval builders. The instinct is surely a worthy one—not to build God's house to the measure of the men who will worship there, but to make it bigger, grander, nobler than any other house, just as big and noble, in fact, as the designer's mind can plan and the workmen's hands accomplish. As a matter of fact, Lydia told me that when the church was first built, the roof was much higher than at the present time, but the Bishop recommended lowering it for greater safety in the event of a hurricane, and William lowered it accordingly.

From the great church we passed into the tiny school-house, just big enough for its purpose and no more. School is held here every day except Saturday, when there is a quaint custom of native discipline. The grown men and women come of their own accord at William's suggestion, gather around him, and in turn stand up and confess their principal offences of the week past, while he metes out penalties appropriate to each case. I feel sure he is very merciful when Lydia's turn comes, but no doubt he is sometimes able to jog her defective memory!

Good-bye, wonderful little Rowa! The glistening beach is shelving into the clear warm water of the lagoon. I hear the splash of many waders, the laugh and liquid talk of many voices; I feel the grasp of many brown hands; I see the waving arms grow doll-like in the distance. I turn, and Reuben is standing in the bows, seriously attent on piloting us through the treacherous reef back to our own ship—ours and the brown people's—the *Southern Cross.*

CHAPTER X

UREPARAPARA (BLIGH ISLAND), BANKS ISLANDS

Natural features—Life within a crater—Suqe—Concerning the women—Funeral customs—Expulsion of ghost—Chiefs—A narrow escape—Folk-tale: "Qat and the Ogre."

NOT far from the Fairy Princess lives the Ogre. Not far from Rowa lies Ureparapara, called by Bligh after himself on passing close by it in the open boat after being cast adrift from the *Bounty*.

Once upon a time Ureparapara was a mighty volcanic mountain, measuring it were hard to guess how many thousand feet from base to summit, since no bottom has been found there by sounding. Then—how long ago who can say?—came the stupendous catastrophe. Were the mountain slopes then the abode of men? We can only hope not. An eruption occurred of such appalling force that the mountain itself was almost shattered. As a fact, only the rim of the colossal crater remains above water, and of this the east side was blown clean away and the sea rushed into the Titanic bowl. But for 2000 odd feet the slopes still rise, and the walls of scoria and lava are beneficently hidden by luxuriant bush and garden clearings, where coco-nut palms, bananas, and yams grow for food to the people to whom Ureparapara is home.

UREPARAPARA.

"The Ogre"—Ureparapara from the North-west.

"The walls of scoria and lava are beneficently hidden."

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It was late in the afternoon when the Captain called me to the bridge to get the most effective view of the giant's cauldron in which we were to spend the night. Nothing can be well conceived more grim and eerie than was the appearance of the horse-shoe-shaped island "of slopes" (*ure parapara*) as we approached it. Shrouding mists parted here and there, giving visions of peaks and hollows, and gradually, reluctantly as it seemed, they cleared away. But there was no suggestion of sunshine. I find it hard to imagine the sun shining on Ureparapara.

Through the breach in the wall we glided into the smooth dark waters of the bowl—the bowl that is a mile in width and two in length (following the proportions of a Melanesian food-bowl), but only Neptune knows how many in depth. This is Dives Bay, and it was a work of time to find the anchorage obtainable only at the far end. Then we saw the smoke that told of a native village close to the shore, and a boat was lowered for the land.

Can it be wondered at if their environment affects the temperament of the natives? Life on the island cannot be healthy. The population is diminishing with hopeless rapidity; a village in Ureparapara may consist of one house and a *gamal*. Sickness and death are always ravaging them, and a gloom of melancholy is natural enough. But to this is added a gloom of fear. The native imagination peoples the crater with malicious spirits. Magic has sway, and no man trusts another. The tiniest crumb of taro or yam eaten thoughtlessly without the *gamal* may be seized with avidity by an enemy and used to work a man's death.

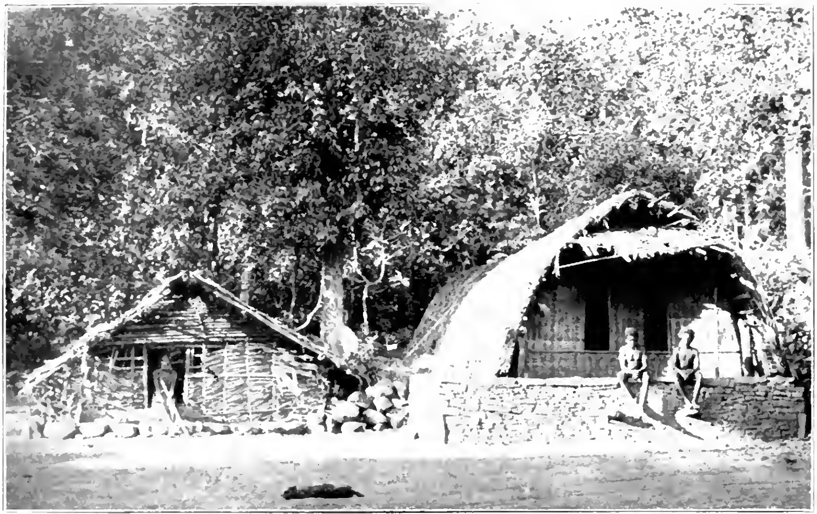
There are several Christian villages in Ureparapara, but a large part of the island is still shrouded in this double gloom. The Suqe and the Ghost Societies have a powerful grip upon the people, and at one school village we found they had been withheld by the Suqe from attendance at school or prayers for a hundred days, during which the society's feast had lasted.

The first period of initiation, too, extends for a hundred days, during which no fires may be lit anywhere. If a puff of smoke is detected, the Ghosts set up their sign and a pig must be paid. The candidate is hidden in the society's secret lodge during these hundred days, in which he is forbidden to wash, and when he reappears report says that the poor wretch is unrecognizable. "So dirty you can't see him!" is the people's account.

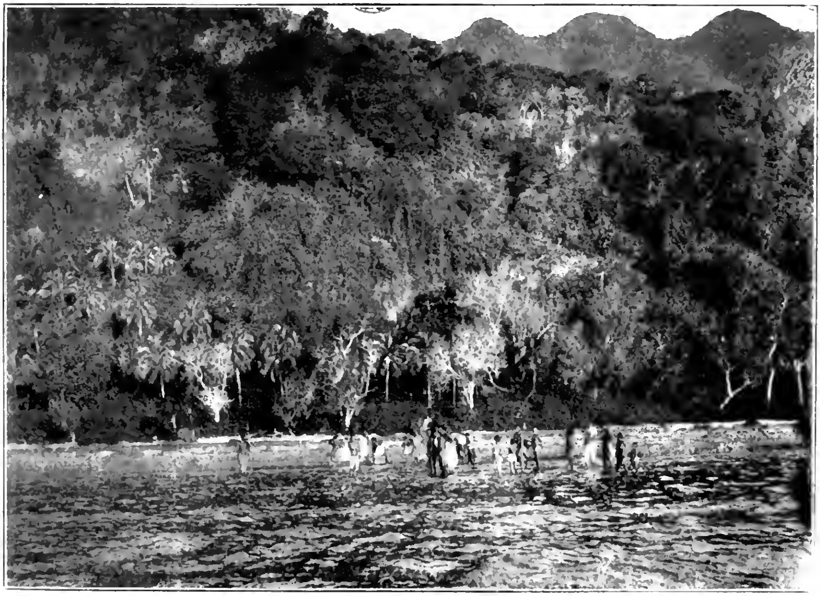
But I have a very pleasant memory of the twilight village of Leha, right in the heart of the crater. The people were so glad to see us, and eager for the privilege of being rowed out to the ship and allowed to wander about her. I was as usual taken charge of by the women, who in their demonstrative welcome embraced me till I could hardly breathe. One pretty maiden called Hanson, whose eyes and teeth vied in shining contrast, constituted herself my especial escort and never left me.

The report of the two native teachers contained two accusations concerning the women. The first was that they would persist in smoking! This practice is a matter about which the Mission lays down no rules. It is left to the judgment of the Church in each island, and in some it is condemned, in some approved. It may be remarked that the island has yet to be discovered where the men have condemned it as concerns themselves! But that is beside the mark. Here in

UREPARAPARA.



Houses at Leha, Ureparapara.



Leha—"Right in the heart of the crater."

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Ureparapara the Church considered it unadvisable, and the women must submit.

The second trouble was infinitely more serious from our point of view, for it touched one sad and avoidable cause of the decline of the population. There was some straight speaking on the subject, followed by an unusual silence in the group around me. I asked a question to see if the Bishop's points had gone home, and Hanson was quick with her answer, "We must not smoke, and we *must* have children!"

Where infanticide still prevails in Melanesia it is the boys who are put to death rather than the girls. A girl is of less importance as a person, but as a chattel she is valuable. As soon as she can walk alone she begins to be useful, and her use to her relations as a worker increases up to the time of her marriage, when her loss is atoned for by the handsome solatium which her purchase-money provides.

I felt sorry in a way that the Ureparapara women were debarred the recreation of a pipe. Of course the principle of deferring to native judgment in non-essentials is of first importance, and one would not tamper with it for worlds. But it just seemed a pity to knock off what was evidently a pleasure to the poor dears. So few of this world's good things seem to come in their direction, and so many hard jobs fall to their share. They can all play cat's-cradle in many complicated forms (strange that that nursery game should be common to the whole wide world!), but even cat's-cradle must pall in time.

The natural man is rather selfish in Melanesia. In heathen belief there is no after-life of repose for women. They have no money and make no feasts, so no one will want them in Panoi. The woman's soul hangs like a bat on to creepers in the bush, and waves to and fro in the wind. Poor women-folk!

How different is it when a man dies! As in Motalava, the body is carried into the *tinesara*, and there laid out, quantities of food being hung all round it. Then a speech is made to the dead man. He is entrusted (for his ghost has not yet quitted the village) with messages for others departed, and is adjured to bear the news of the place—the account of the last initiations, or the last steps bought in the societies, and finally he is instructed with whom the food is to be shared over there. For though to human eye the yams and bananas will hang on and on till eaten by human mouths, the spirit, the essence, of the dainties will be extracted as aforesaid and borne off by the contented ghost.

Five days after death the ghost is made to understand that it is high time he was off. Two of his friends take up their position in the house of the late lamented, a white stone in each hand, which they clack together. The ghost, if he is still loitering about the place, gets worried by the noise and passes out. The people, who have gathered at one end of the village, now sweep down, allowing no quarter for stray ghosts. They throw stones from side to side and make a clatter with bamboos. The ghost, finding that no peace is to be had in the old place, thereupon sets off, to return no more. The widow is now free to leave the mat whereon her husband lay, beside which she has hitherto kept watch like a faithful dog. If for any reason she should leave the house, she places a coco-nut to represent her until her return.

There are plenty of so-called chiefs in Ureparapara, as in all the Banks Islands. But they are not regarded with awe, nor even here with very great respect. The chief is simply the richest man in the place, who has gained the highest rank in one of the societies. It may well be that he has also the reputation of *mana*, by which he has acquired pigs or made his crops to prosper. He is therefore envied, and to a certain extent, no doubt, admired, and his wishes are politicly considered. But he has less authority among the people than many an English squire of former days. He may be said to be a leader of fashion, and his example is therefore of great value, but his commands, if issued, will be obeyed just so far as suits the convenience of his people.

I have said that we found anchorage in Dives Bay for the night. So we fondly hoped when as it grew dark we returned to the ship. But the wind got up, and began blowing in squally, gusty fashion. About midnight the ship dragged her anchor and began to drift. Almost before the truth had been realized, the bridge detected a sunken reef just ahead of our keel. Detected it in the nick of time. There was no bump. The engines were started immediately. A hurried consultation among the authorities (while the unimportant passengers woke up to wonder whether another eruption was taking place), and off we steamed, out of the ogre's cauldron, to find safety in flight upon the open sea.

QAT AND THE OGRE

Now there was a mighty one in that land, but he was exceeding fierce; his name was Qasavara. And he came upon Qat and his brothers, and said to them, "Where are you from, you people?"

Then he bore them off to his own place and kindled the fire in his oven for them.

And when evening came he said to them, "Come, you fellows, and sleep in the *gamal*! You shall be by yourselves."

But Qat and his brothers saw clearly that Qasavara and his men meant to murder them in the night, and the brothers were terrified. Presently their eyes grew heavy, and they were about to fall asleep.

But Qat said to his brothers, "Come along and sleep here!" With that he rapped upon a rafter with his fingers; it opened, and they slept inside it.

Now Qasavara and his men collected their clubs and bows and went to murder Qat and his comrades. But, however, they could not see them on their mats in the *gamal*, for they were asleep hidden in the rafter, and so back they fled to their place.

It was near daybreak when the cock crowed, and Qat awoke his brothers, saying, "Come along, let us leave this place and go out into the daylight." So they went out.

And when the sun was fully up, Qasavara and his men were going towards the *gamal*, but there were Qat and his brothers gathered together, chatting away.

Then said Qasavara and his men, "Where did you sleep?"

And they all told lies about it; but there was one of them who was a perfect fool in everything—his name was Tañaro the Fool—and he blurted out, "We slept in this rafter."

And they were all very angry with him because he had betrayed their hiding-place. So Qasavara and his men consulted together how in some other way they should murder Qat and his brothers when that night closed in.

But when it was night Qat rapped upon one of the side-posts of the house, and it opened, and they slept within it. And Qasavara and his men came in the night to kill them, and smashed open the rafter with heavy blows, but there was no one inside it, so they fled away again.

Next morning Qasavara and his men were making their way into the *gamal*, but Qat and his brothers were on the spot already.

"Where did you sleep?" said Qasavara.

And they lied, and said they had slept in the places he had arranged for them. But that Tañaro the Fool went and told their hiding-place again.

The following night Qat opened with a rap the middle post of the house, and they slept inside it; and Qasavara and his men came during the night and smashed open the side-post, but Qat and his brothers were not within.

And when morning came they were going into the *gamal*, but Qat and his brothers were there all ready.

"Qat, where did you all sleep?" said Qasavara.

And again they all lied—all except Tañaro the Fool, and he said straight out that it was in the middle post of the *gamal*. And they felt furious with him, because they had forbidden him to let out where their place had been, and yet when Qasavara asked them he forthwith told him!

Now Qasavara was most terribly anxious to kill Qat and his brothers, and he talked it over with his people, and they agreed, "To-morrow we *will* kill them!" They decided to hoax them in a matter of cooking, and when they were sitting at meat then they would smite them.

Night came, and with his rap Qat made the ridge-pole open, and they slept inside it.

And when it was light Qasavara kindled a fire in his oven for them, but Qat and his brothers were already aware that the purpose was to kill them. So Qat thought out a plan by which they should be saved. And first he planted a casuarina tree. Then he made an arrangement with his brothers beforehand, as follows:—

"When they are busy preparing the meal, all of you wash your hands and use up all the water in the bamboo-carrier. And if they look about for water, and order that some shall go and fetch it from the sea, let two of you say, 'We will go!' And two only must go, and instead of water, collect heaps of biting ants in a coco-nut shell. And when you return, climb up into the casuarina. You will all do the same." And they agreed.

Now the oven full of food was covered over with the mat of leaves. And Qasavara's men exclaimed, "What! There is no salt water! Who's to go for it?"

So two of Qat's brothers said, "We will go!"

And away they went. But they only collected biting ants in their coco-nut shells and sprang quickly up into the casuarina tree.

The rest waited for them, but as they did not return they said again, "Who else will run and fetch it?"

And two more of Qat's brothers said, "We will!"

So off they went towards the beach and filled their shells with ants, and climbed up and up into the casuarina.

And the others waited; but again their waiting was in vain. And so it went on; all the brothers acted like this, and assembled in the casuarina tree to wait for Qat.

But Qat was by himself with Qasavara and his men at the oven.

Presently the cover of leaves was turned back and the oven was opened. Qat took up a lot of the rough baskets that he might pack some food away. Then they separated the food, and Qasavara struck at Qat across the oven, but missed him. And Qat always threw one of the hot stones at him and went on taking food out of the oven, saying as he did so, "This is for my brother! This for my friend!" And he packed the baskets. And Qat went on like this till he had taken all the food out of the oven and every one of his baskets was full, and he threw the last hot stone at Qasavara.

And then Qat sprang up and ran after his brothers; but Qasavara was close behind, and as he went he kept striking at Qat and missing him, and thus he chased him until he reached his brothers.

Then Qat leaped away from him and climbed up to his brothers in the casuarina tree. And Qasavara climbed up after them. But just as he was very close indeed, Qat poured down some ants upon him, and he had to stop and scratch himself, because they bit so. So Qat and his brothers went on climb-climbing as fast as they could. And ten times they poured ants over him.

And Qat and his brothers clustered together in the tree-top, and Qasavara climbed close up to them, and he stretched out his arm to strike them with his club, and they sat still.

Then said Qat, "My casuarina tree, stretch out!"

And the tree stretched with them out of the reach of Qasavara. And it went stretch-stretching on right until it reached the sky.

Then Qat spoke again, "Bend down, my casuarina tree!"

And the tree bent down with them over the place called Tatgan, where was the *gamal* of Qat and his brothers. And there they descended, and Qat was the last of all.

Now he had not yet let go of the end of the bough, but was holding fast on to it. And there was Qasavara descending in their wake! He reached the end, and Qat said, "Now I have my revenge!"

"*Awo!* Qat!" cried Qasavara; "don't punish me! Receive me kindly as one of your household, and I will be your servant."

But Qat said, "Not so, but I will have my revenge, because you have persecuted me."

So he let go of the end of the bough, and the casuarina sprang back and flung Qasavara right away, and his head struck against the sky, and then fell on to the ground, and rolled forward face down, and turned into a rock. And in the old days they used to offer sacrifices to that rock. The sacrifices were for the obtaining of valour; whosoever wished to be mighty in battle, he would offer sacrifices to that stone. Which is Qasavara.

PART II

IN CENTRAL MELANESIA

CHAPTER I

TOGA, TORRES ISLANDS

Natural features of group—A warm climb—Visit to village—Crabs and souls—Funeral customs—Death-feasts—Sores—Musical instruments—Charm to create disease—Death charm.

The four inhabited Torres Islands are situate about fifty miles to the north-east of Ureparapara, whence they stretch in a line, like beads loosely strung, away to the north-north-east.

They are all of coral formation, but submarine volcanic action has subjected them to a succession of upheavals. So that now, although their terrace configuration reveals their origin, yet their appearance is so hilly, and in parts precipitous, that before landing there is a temptation to wonder whether one be mistaken in calling them coral islands.

Toga is the southernmost of the little group, and, where all are fair, I think the fairest.

"It's a terrific climb in the heat up to the village," I was warned, "but you'll perhaps say it's worth it."

I did say so, for worth it it certainly was. The track wound up and up through the bush that kindly screened us from the sun's fierce rays whilst it cruelly shut off from us the faintest suspicion of a breeze. But in determining to do a thing one often reckons up the cost so liberally that the estimate exceeds the event. It was thus with this climb of ours in the hottest part of the day in Lat. 13½° S.

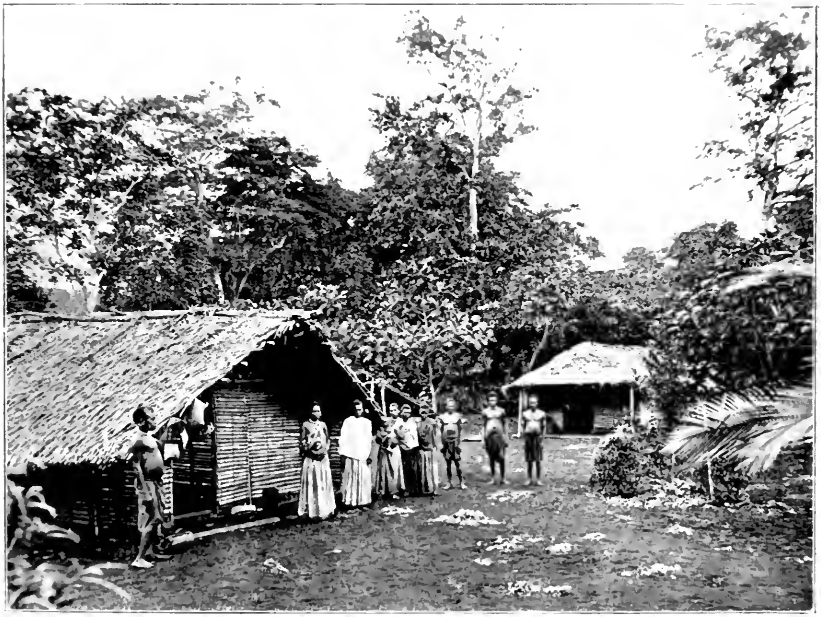
A lovely flowering tree gave forth the scent of a tuberose all the way, and the trees and plants were so strange and beautiful that our attention was effectually diverted from our condition. Ever and anon a bluff of coral rock shouldered up before our winding path with startling suddenness; one such there was most curiously suggestive of a ruined Norman keep. As we ascended we were granted occasional and refreshing peeps of wide blue ocean far below us, dotted in the foreground with the green companion islands of Loh, Tëgua, Metome (where the Tëgua people have gardens), and Hiu.

Presently we sighted the hill-top, and a vigorous spurt brought us out on to the coral plateau where stands one of the prettiest villages in Melanesia. No doubt on this day we found it extra clean and fair, for the first confirmation ever held in Toga was about to take place, and the women were in spotless white garments, and the men in white shirts, and all the Toga world was bright and smiling.

The eye is caught at once by a white cross of coral cement which evidently marks a Christian grave. The wife of a former teacher was buried here. A year or two ago the priest-in-charge saw a crowd clustered round this grave, the centre of their interest being a woman who was handling a land-crab of a species whose bite the natives fear. She, however, seemed quite unafraid, allowing the creature to crawl about her at will. Presently she put it down on the ground, and at once it sidled off into a hole under the cross.

The scene was interpreted afterwards in the

A Peep during the Climb—Loh and Tëgua in the distance.



The Village on the Hill-top.

confidence that evening brings. The woman was one reputed to be in touch with the spirit-world, and able to communicate with ghosts and see beings invisible to ordinary eyes. When she was thus engaged it was said that her face changed and her eyes protruded crab-wise. The crab itself was the soul of the teacher's dead wife whose remains were buried there. The hole was the passage by which it came up from Panoi, always taking the same visible shape.

Remembering the legend, I questioned one of the women who was standing by me, and she corroborated it, adding that the Toga belief is that all dead folk's souls go down into Panoi by crab holes, and reappear on occasion in crab form. "But some there are among us now who do not believe it," she added.

It was a plucky act of Simon's when Toga was still mostly heathen to dig that Christian grave in so prominent a spot and set up the cross in the confines of the village. The Toga line of action in the event of a death was so different that I suppose this simple burial must have seemed to them very summary and disrespectful. The native way, however, scarcely commends itself to us.

A platform is erected near the *gamal*, screened from view with bamboo and sugar-cane. Upon this the corpse is laid as soon as the last breath has expired, and for twenty days there it remains! During the first ten days no one leaves the village, but all blacken their foreheads in token of mourning. When the atmosphere becomes absolutely unendurable the people thrust sprigs of a very strongly-scented herb through their nose-rings. These are usually of bamboo, and distend the cartilage of the nose sometimes to the diameter of an inch. On the tenth day comes the burning of the screen aforementioned, the ashes of which are seized upon by the people and rubbed over the chest and forehead. They must not be washed off for another ten days.

It is generally on the twentieth day after death that the most solemn part of the obsequies is performed. The friends of the deceased have fulfilled their duty of clearing a wide path from the village to the sea. This Torres funeral custom is the *raison d'être* of the really very respectable roads, wide enough to allow three or four men to walk abreast, found here, but in no other Melanesian group, leading from a village direct to the sea. Four of the most important men of rank in the village having removed the head from the body, march down with it to the sea, singing as they go a sort of dirge. The people follow at a distance of perhaps 400 yards.

On arrival at the beach the head is carefully washed clean in the salt water, and the skull is brought back and placed in the *gamal*. What remains on the platform is deposited in a small walled enclosure, it being understood that when arrow-tips are wanted by the relatives the leg and arm bones are at their disposal!

Little altar-like erections may be seen close to the houses in heathen villages with a few skulls upon them (probably female) and a few yams or coco-nuts. The idea in placing food is doubtless similar to that in other islands—not in any way sacrificial, nor yet material. May it be akin to the feeling which prompts the placing of odd titbits, biscuits, etc., one sometimes sees before images in French churches?

Keeping the death-days of the departed, here as elsewhere, provides a pleasant occupation for the mourners. Certain days are fixed—say, the fifth, tenth, twentieth, fiftieth, and so on at longer intervals, until in the case of very important persons the thousandth and even two thousandth is reached. On these days presents are exchanged, the death-feast is eaten, and *kava* is drunk from sunset to sunrise.

Here in the Torres, by the way, we reach the boundary-line that separates the drinkers of *kava* from the chewers of the betel-nut. The latter habit begins in Santa Cruz, and is followed all through the Solomons. But the coco-nut-shell cups, lined with that prized blue enamel that the *kava* deposits, are never found alongside the ornamented bamboo lime boxes which accompany every betel-chewer.

The lack of water is a serious drawback to life in the Torres. The people are dependent upon holes in the coral rock and a few brackish springs which lie below high-water mark. This may be one reason for the terrible sores to which these people are subject, especially on the legs. They not infrequently result in premature death, and even with the greatest care are amazingly slow to heal, and quick to break out anew.

As heathen the Torres natives are reputed among the fiercest, but as I know them they are full of charm. Gentle, merry, warm-hearted, generous, and intelligent, the savagery dies away, and leaves little if any trace. Our Torres friends love music, but the music they make is of a different kind from ours.

They have four wind instruments. One is a kind of long flute with three holes that produces some sweet, soft notes. The other three are formed of reeds. There are the pan-pipes, large or small, with their succession of shrill notes which rise and fall in unvarying repetition. A single reed is also popular, which produces about three whistling notes. And last come the reeds in bundle form—the only instrument favoured by the women, who blow down the pipes, two women performing a duet, as it were, upon one instrument. Even so, one who has heard it says, "As a musical instrument it is of the feeblest. . . . The sounds produced are of the slightest, and would be inaudible except in a silence. Probably the pleasure derived from the instrument is shared only by the performers."

There are plenty of native songs or chants, but these are mostly connected with charms and magic. The air is nothing—simply a monotonous sing-song, but the words recited over, and over, and over again are everything. They have *mana* for cursing yams or blessing taro, for catching fish, causing death, bringing rain or sunshine.

The sickness and death charms in the Torres seem to differ from those used in other islands in one important particular. The fact of their preparation is kept a secret from the victim, thus precluding here the theory of sickness or murder by *suggestion*. Here is the Torres recipe for causing a painful disease.

Take about two inches of the wood of a certain tree, and bind tightly on either side a little bit of human rib. Hide this where the enemy is sure to pass over it, and wait in the bush till he does so. Take up the charm, and send it with instructions to a wizard on another of the islands. On receipt of it he fasts for forty days before setting to work upon it. To the charm are added *mana* leaves, and it is then wrapped in many shrouds of coarse, strong cobweb.

Here and there, by no means at random, long, sharp thorns are inserted, each with the object of inducing a piercing pain in separate parts of the victim's body, according to their exact position and the precise incantations used. The magician keeps a slow fire always burning, over which the charm is hung. If ever the fire should go out and the charm grow cold, its *mana* will be entirely lost.

The death charm only varies slightly. It is manufactured with still more exquisite attention to detail. Only the finest cobwebs are used, and instead of the thorns, little bits of bamboo are introduced, containing powdered human bone. The charm is worked very slowly, so that the victim may waste away gradually and not reach the end of his sufferings too quickly.

One need hardly add that only in the heathen districts of any island are the malevolent charms still resorted to. But the fact of the existence of such hideously ingenious inventions serves to bring out the unspeakable contrast between the "light-heart" and the "dark-heart"—the phrases by which the natives distinguish between Christian and heathen.

CHAPTER II

LOH, TORRES ISLANDS

A coral strand—Visit to village—"Thief-ships"—A wonderful cure—The Crab Dance—A Suqe incident—Land purchase: a misunderstanding—Folk-tale: "How Qat brought about Night."

When Bishop Heber wrote of a "coral strand" I wonder what mental picture he formed of it. He had not yet visited India. My own conception of it has undergone a material change since voyaging amongst the Pacific islands. Where the coral is crushed to a white sparkling powder, or into tiny, china-like fragments, as at Rowa—why, then it is pretty and pleasant enough. But when the shore is just the bare bed-rock of coral, while one would not deny that there is something very remarkable and wildly picturesque about it, no one could possibly term it either pretty or pleasant.

Appended is a photograph of the shore of Loh. I shall not soon forget my walk across it. Of course, ordinary leather would be in holes and strips before one had proceeded far, but even thick rope shoes could not protect one altogether from the knives and daggers formed by the asperities of the coral rock.

Two powerful and good-natured women, barefoot of course, undertook to conduct me over all difficulties

LOH.

The Coral Strand.

P. 140.

and seized my arm on either side. The journey was not a long one, only it seemed so. It was rather like dancing on hot coals from my point of view. At every other step one either slipped or landed on a spike, and whenever this happened, my guides, anxious to assist, squeezed me with a grip of iron, so that I cried out in fresh pain. Then they laughed hilariously, not knowing why I cried out, while I took advantage of the relaxation to stumble on two steps, chuckling weakly myself, though at a different facet of the joke. And presently we reached smooth ground in triumph, and walked with composure to the capital of Loh, a little village called Vipaka, which means "Under the Banyan tree."

As usual, while Mission affairs were occupying the men, I was taken everywhere and shown everything by the bright, hospitable women, and I duly admired the school, church, houses, and children. One woman brought me two eggs, and another gave me a fine tortoise-shell cooking-knife. In return for such gifts I ransacked the big pocket I always filled before coming ashore, and everybody seemed delighted. The Torres Islanders are notably good-looking, and as one took in the happy scene one's heart was filled with indignation to think how the population of Loh had suffered from the kidnapping of the people in the past (one can use no milder word) by labour vessels, "thief-ships," as the natives everywhere significantly term them.

Attracted by youthful love of adventure and curiosity touching the unknown, the boats are filled with ignorant natives ready to make a mark on any paper, to agree to anything to-day—and bitterly to repent to-morrow. So many, many have gone away; so very few return. It is no use crying over spilt milk. For the present, at any rate, since the Australian field was closed to coloured men, there is comparatively little transport trade, but it is easier to depopulate than to repopulate.

When the trade was at its worst a white priest-in-charge made a successful effort to stem the tide. Four labour ships called for hands, and the missionary spent all his time on the beach. Not one man went aboard.

"Are you going to stop about here long?" inquired one of the agents.

"I propose keeping you company," was the Englishman's reply, "just as long as you like to stay yourself."

"In that case I guess I may as well get back to my ship," said the agent. And went.

The same missionary was enabled to effect a notable cure in the eyes of the natives. His attention was caught by a sort of booth of tree branches in front of a *gamal*, and in answer to a question he was told that a man within it was dying. Pursuing his inquiry, he found the dying man had a strong pulse and normal temperature. What was the nature of his illness?

"This morning his nose bled—bled long; before night he will die."

And before night it is quite possible the poor fellow would have died, as many a native has done before him, simply in response to the general expectation. But a strong white will opposed itself. A drop of brandy was administered. Assuredly there was powerful *mana* in water that stung and burned like that.

"Now you will go to sleep, and awake better," said the white man, and sent the anticipatory mourners off to their gardens, looking a trifle disappointed. A dead man is rather exciting, with his feasts and his skull-washing; a living one is so very ordinary. But the patient preferred to postpone his friends' junketing, and got well rapidly.

The people of Loh have originated a unique form of recreation which they call the Crab Dance. Their copyright of the performance is not likely to be infringed, since only in Loh are the necessary properties (a particular kind of crab) obtainable in sufficient quantity. I have not myself witnessed the Crab Dance, but from one who has I take this account of it.

The peculiar feature of personal decoration for this dance consists of elaborately oramented belts. Beside the dancing-ground a fire is lit, and the drummers with their bamboo drums, perhaps twenty of them, take their places. The bandmasters cry "*I . . . wa!*" and at the slow first syllable all drum-sticks are raised, and brought down together upon the slits of the bamboos at the sharp "*wa!*" with the effect of a roll of kettle-drums. There is no baton, but *Accelerando* is indicated by shouting "*Op-op-op-op-op!*" very loud and fast.

The orchestra being ready, some children are told off to feed the fire with dry coco-nut shells, which burn fiercely and make a splendid blaze, and the rest of the people stand by, armed with empty baskets.

Soon the dancers in pairs come into the circle of light out of the surrounding gloom, each couple carrying a stick between them on which is slung one or more large baskets, full of a struggling mass of crabs.

All the spectators stand waiting developments.

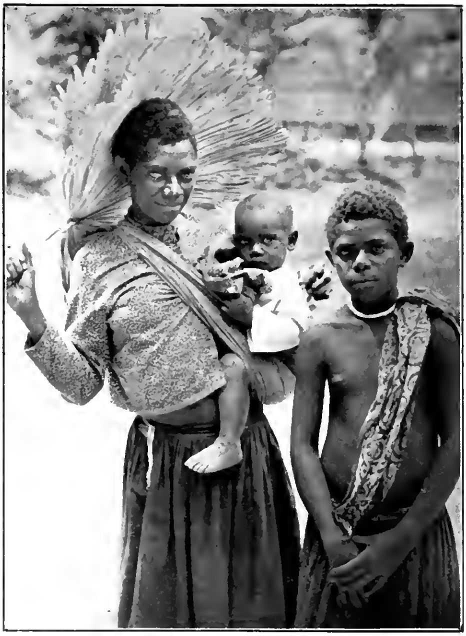
When the dancers have circled the orchestra several times the excitement grows hot, for they start throwing out crabs from their baskets, and as the creatures scuttle rapidly away they are pounced on by any one who can catch hold of them and transferred to the empty baskets.

The whole dancing-ground becomes thick with people moving round and round, dancers and crab-catchers being mixed up in a confused crowd, while the cries of excitement and the laughter and the shouting are mingled with the calls of the drummers as they cheer one another on to beat faster and more furiously. Gradually the dancers' baskets become lighter, and those of the catchers heavier, till the transference of the last terrified crab is the signal for the end. "*We-i-o!*" cry the bandmasters, and on the final vowel the drum-sticks fall for the last time, and the people retire to their homes to perform there the last figure—cooking and eating!

Some years ago Loh decided to abandon the Suqe (called here *Huqa*), not entirely on the same grounds as Meralava. The especial difficulty felt here was the eating in common necessary for all who became communicants.

Two men there were who had mounted in rank so high (they could wear a pig's tail in their hair!) that no one else in the village could eat with them. Presently one died. After his skull had been washed it was placed regularly beside his quondam friend whenever he ate from his exalted oven! The daily meals must have been very cheerful.

As the "New Teaching" won its way, many began to talk over its requirements, and the difficulty of complying with them. When once a man had attained



A Happy Little Family.

Boys of Loh.

rank, how could he possibly dispossess himself of it, and become a nobody?

At length a brave decision was come to by two Christian chiefs of rank. As they had "eaten up," stage by stage, so now they must "eat down," in order to break free from the trammels of high estate. Perhaps one needs to have some acquaintance with Melanesians, and the value they attach to their Suqe ranks, to rightly appreciate the sacrifice involved in such an unheard-of resolve. The pair embarked on a course of evening meals, of which each was eaten in the oven below that where they had dined the day before. Day by day they humbled themselves, grade below grade, each of which had cost so much to gain, until they reached the little oven at the entrance where the newly-initiated children cook their meals. And after the chiefs had thus literally "become as little children," they emerged into the open air free men. And a great united feast among the Christians fittingly celebrated the event.

The experience of sixty years has taught us native law respecting land-purchase, and our agreements are now made out very fully and carefully. When you buy land in Melanesia, the trees upon it must be specifically included, as they were by Abraham in his purchase of the Field of Machpelah from the sons of Heth. Otherwise they and their produce remain the property of the vendor, and a man will find himself unable to clear his own land without exciting the ire of the people, while the previous owner will come to gather the fruit which the purchaser fondly thought his own!

At Loh the Mission learnt another lesson in the same connection. A piece of land was bought for

Mission purposes by one of the native clergy, but not at once made use of. A few years later it was resolved to build a church on this site, and preparations were set on foot. But among some of the people murmurings were heard:—"The land belongs to X." Of course the matter must be at once threshed out.

"What, did you not know that so much money was paid for it by Edward?"

"Yes, truly, but Edward is dead, and X., whose it was formerly, still lives."

According to native custom, in this case the land reverts to the former proprietor, and the ground had to be bought back in the name of the Mission.

In one of the Qat legends, and that really the earliest in the series, the island of Loh plays a part, for which reason I here translate it. It will afford us our last glimpse of Qat, who goes no farther afield than this from his home in the Banks Islands.

How Qat brought Night

This Qat,—he did not always exist. He had a mother, whose name was Ro Qatgoro, and it is said that this mother of his burst forth from a rock, but what manner of rock that was is not known. And he had brothers too; they were twelve in all, called after the leaves of certain Mota trees, and Qat was the twelfth.[1]

Now they dwelt in Vanua Lava, in the place called Alo Sepere, and they were still living there when Qat created everything. And he had finished creating things; but he didn't know how to make night,—it was always day and daylight.

But his brothers said to him, "Look here, Qat, this isn't good,—always nothing but daylight! Can't you do something to it?"

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[1] Yet he is generally regarded as the eldest.

Then Qat considered what he could do about that daylight.

Now he heard that there was night at Loh, so he tied up a tusked pig, put it in a canoe, paddled to Loh, and with it bought the night from some person there, who also gave him a cock to tell when the morning came, and it should be light again.

After that he returned to his brothers, and said to them, "Now, all make ready places for you to lie down in!"

So they took palm-leaves and plaited them, and spread their mats in their places. Then Qat asked them, "Are you fellows perfectly ready?"

And they said, "Yes, we've finished."

Then Qat let out the night that it might be dark.

And he said to them, "If you see the face of the land looking strange,—but that is *it*, and all lie down on your mats."

To which they replied, "All ri-ight!"

After that they saw that it was dark, and they said, "Oh, what's this, Qat?"

And Qat said, "Why, this is *it* already! And if your eyes feel funny, all lie quiet!"

He spoke like this about sleepiness, because they didn't know what sleepiness was.

So when it was quite dark, they felt their eyes grow heavy, and they said to Qat, "Oh, Qat, what is the matter with our eyes?"

And he said, "That's the thing I told you about. Lie quite still, shut your eyes, and go to sleep!"

And they slept just as Qat told them to.

But when it had been night a long time, Qat took a red, glassy stone [obsidian] and with it cut the night, and the day emerged once more, because the night had only spread over it.

And they dwelt a long time in that place Lo Sepere: he created everything there.

CHAPTER III

TËGUA, TORRES ISLANDS

A school inspection—Melanesian arithmetic—A native house—House-warming—A lost art—"The moon is dead!"—Custom of *Uloulo.*

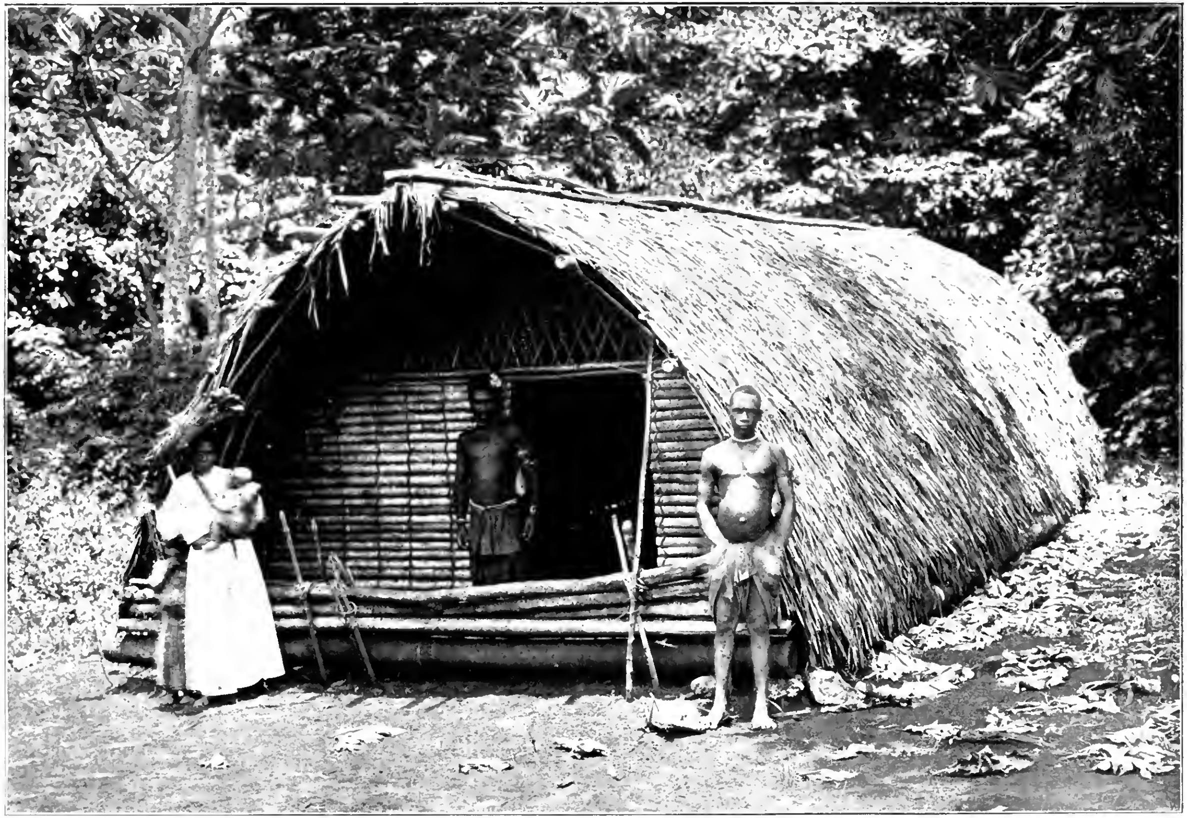
TËGUA possesses a coral strand like Loh. Here, again, I was taken into friendly custody by two strong women, and repeated my former experience with immaterial variations. There was a short climb up to the village through the bush, and then, for me, the round of inspection and admiration, followed (for the heat was extreme) by green coco-nuts and fans.

Yet I remember a home-like feeling coming over me in the bush—we were then fresh from the torrid Solomons—at the sight of patches of a sort of grass, and drifts of dead leaves.

The people, the *tinesara,* houses, church, and school were alike the pink of propriety and order. The blackboard was covered with an addition sum of quite formidable length, but on looking into it, one row ran thus—"ooooo"! I remarked upon it to my chief companion here, Amina, a teacher's wife.

"There! that was Robin!" she exclaimed, triumph and pleasure mingling equally; "and I *knew* it was wrong!" Robin was another teacher, not her husband. Human nature is the same everywhere.

TËGUA.



"THE HOUSE IS WORTH MORE THAN A PASSING GLANCE."

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I have said already that the Melanesians as a race are weak on the mathematical side. Their reckoning is always in concrete fashion, with fingers and toes, frondlets, etc., and it is no easy matter to teach them to add and subtract correctly in their heads, and write the result on slates. It becomes to them just a sort of elaborate and rather interesting puzzle. But why it should matter whether you begin to add from the right or the left of the sum; why, when you cannot take 9 from 5, you should not turn it upside down, and take 5 from 9; why 305 may not equally well be written 350—these are things past understanding.

"A chief had a hundred pigs: ninety-nine were killed; how many had he left?"

And the chances are there will come a prompt reply, "One hundred and ninety-nine!"

"God has given us no *thinking* like He has given you!" once said a girl. Our *way* of thinking is undoubtedly different. And what seems essential to us is often supremely unimportant to the Melanesians, who never so much as reckon the years of their age, content to rank as tiny babe, little child, young boy, youth, adult, middle-man, old one.

We passed into the cool darkness of Patrick and Amina's house, and sat there to exchange news with one another. The house is worth more than a passing glance.

In the Torres Islands the roof of a house is made first, and set upon posts, which support the ends and sides, and even divide the house within like pillars. The walls are added afterwards. A solid and elaborate affair this roof is, with its thatch often reaching to the ground, like hair upon a head. The long strong roots of the banyan tree form the ridge-pole and the wall-plates. The rafters are of a special timber, and across them are long bamboos laid parallel with the ridge. But the roof is not yet ready for the thatch. Across the bamboos, again, are laid a number of tough, peeled saplings. Be it understood there is no nailing or mortising in the Melanesian house- or church-building. Everything is secured by tying. The string is manufactured in the Torres by the women from the stem of a creeper. They peel it with their teeth, and roll up the rind ready for use.

The framework of the roof being finished, the thatching remains to be done. It is the women's business to prepare the leaves of the sago palm, folding and pinning them in substantial sections, so thickly as to be tropical rainproof. The men apply this thatch to the roof when the green has hardened and yellowed, tying each piece to the sapling rafters.

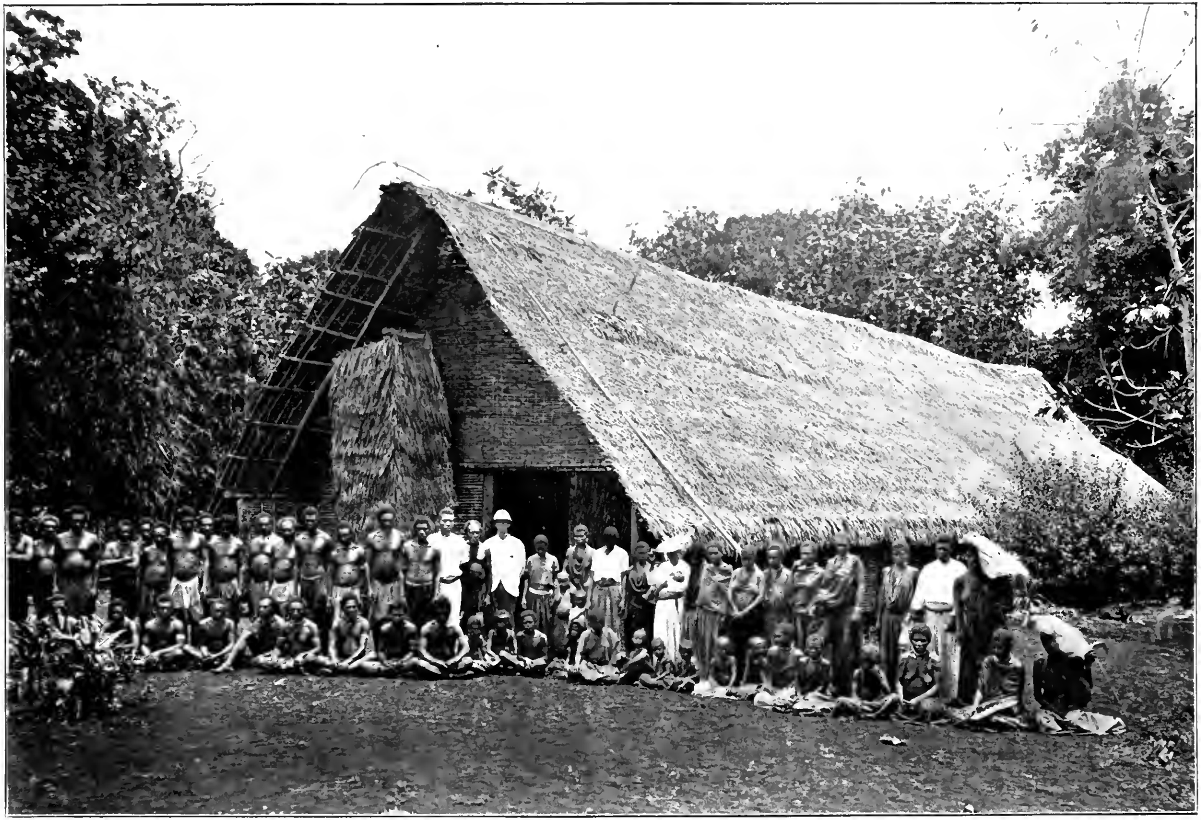
The walls are made of bamboo sections, kept in their place by lashings of the bark string.

In connection with the building of a house there are certain culinary ceremonies most religiously observed here. The roofing-in is celebrated by a dainty dish for the workmen of sliced yams, cooked with coco-nut cream. Then the future tenants come and consume young coco-nuts within the still unwalled area.

When the walls are finished, the oven-holes are dug in the ground, and fires are lit in them before the lining of stones has been added. A series of three feasts follows, each with its especial *chef-d'œuvre*; on the first day yams sliced, on the second day yams mashed, and a week later a fish-dinner. The house may then be considered to have been "warmed" in regulation fashion.

Clever as these people are at house-building, is it

TËGUA.



Church Parade.

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not a surprising fact that not a soul in the Torres Islands can build a canoe? Once the art was known as well here as elsewhere, but the knowledge was confined to the skilled few who formed a sort of guild of canoe-makers. One by one these men died, and the rising generation was presumably too lazy to seek admission to the craft. The inevitable day arrived when the last canoe-maker died, and all knowledge of canoe-making with him. The canoes he had left behind existed a little while longer, but soon the last was broken up, and there was no boat left in the group. Yet still no man was found with energy, or ambition, or desire enough to set him to solving the boat-problem for himself.

There are plenty of bamboos, and they will float. Tied together with creeper string, one can make a rough-and-ready raft of any size. And so—they make shift!

A very primitive people! A year or so ago the priest-in-charge was staying at Tëgua, and (since it was midnight) fast asleep. He was awakened by terrified cries and terrified figures. It was a nocturnal fishing-party that had come running back to the village with the tragic news that the moon was dead! An eclipse is a dreadful event in Tëgua.

Here and throughout Oceania runs the custom, common, they say, to every primitive people in the world, of hailing each new moon with a united shout, "*Uloulo!*" The actual meaning of the cry, which takes the same expression everywhere, is unknown. Every time I hear it, it sounds to me just a glad welcome back of the sky-friend whose absence is always missed. This seems probable—that "Uloulo!" was first cried in those far-off days when the human race on earth lived as one family, speaking one tongue.

CHAPTER IV

HIU, TORRES ISLANDS

New ground—Suqe laws and customs—Weapons—A fight that did not come off.

Until lately Hiu has been a sealed book to us, and personally I only know its beauty from the outside. In consequence we have no photographs to illustrate this island. To-day the doors are flung wide open, and the people are eager to be taught, and most pleasant to teach, but we have not known them long enough to speak familiarly of them or their land. A few facts, nevertheless, have already been ascertained.

The Suqe exists here, and is known, as at Loh, under the name of *Huqa*. In each village you will find the long *gamal* opposite the people's own houses, sometimes extending to the length of 70 and 80 feet. Within, bamboos mark divisions of rank, one of which will perhaps enclose three ovens. Down the centre of the *gamal* lie long bamboo pipes full of water, and every division has its own supply, propped up with a forked stick. Beside each oven is the heap of cooking-stones, and close to the water-vessel may be seen the coco-nut-shell drinking-cup with its shining lining of blue enamel.

No space in the *gamal* is wasted. The food-dishes, the mats of plaited leaves that cover the oven, and such things lie overhead upon the lower rafters, and pudding-knives of carved wood and polished tortoise-shell are stuck in the thatch. A sort of pestle with a carved handle, for mashing vegetables, lies ready to hand, and equally ready to hand—hanging within reach, or leaning against the wall—are the bows and arrows, too quickly seized.

The *Huqa* laws in the Torres are more rigorous than in the Banks. The rite of initiation lasts less than a fortnight, but every male inhabitant takes part in it, and the village is strictly "bound." In taking fresh rank, only members of equal or higher degree attend at the ceremonies.

Men may at no time eat anywhere except in their rightful oven-spaces, unless seriously ill, when it is permitted them to partake of food in their houses. They may not even eat of their own fruit in their gardens! Probably such a law as this has evolved as a protection against the *garata* magic—or charming with fragments of food. The yam that a man intends to eat must be dug and handled by him alone.

In the *gamal* he is prohibited not only from *touching* the food or belongings of any of different rank from his own, both higher and lower, but he may not even *look* at the cups, dishes, etc., of those who are above him. Should he in passing up the *gamal* accidentally touch some cooking utensil belonging to another space, he will pay a fine as a penalty for his clumsiness. If he wants a fire-stick from which to kindle his oven, he may seek the favour only from those of equal rank with himself.

The *Huqa* aristocracy are looked up to with much respect as men of powerful *mana*, and no boy or man of humble rank would dream of passing upright before them. The dignitary might profess himself as willing to condone such effrontery, but his *mana*, or the spirit behind it, would certainly take revenge. And if revenge is taken with a Hiu arrow, tipped with about 9 inches of human bone—well, one is generally sufficient!

A Hiu fight is no playful game, but is arranged beforehand with a coolness and method worthy of the most precise duellists. Archery is employed till the arrows are exhausted. Then recourse is had to clubs from 6 to 8 feet in length, and about an inch thick, and the battle becomes a hand-to-hand mêlée.

The following account by the present priest-in-charge of a Hiu fight that did not come off is best copied verbatim:—

> I am spending a week or so on the island of Hiu, and Sunday, September 29, passed tranquilly enough, as most Sundays do. We had our usual school and services, and during the afternoon several of the heathen came down and paid us a visit, and stayed talking for some time. But about nine o'clock at night, when nearly every one had turned in, I learnt there was war afoot.
>
> My Motalava teacher came and told me there was going to be a fight early in the morning between the school people and the heathen of a distant village about a piece of garden ground for which there were two rival claimants.
>
> We had a talk with William, the son of the chief, my right-hand man in school affairs, and he told me that the arrangement had been made during the afternoon, actually in the school-place itself. The heathen had wanted to fight at once, but the school people had declined an immediate set-to, because Sunday was a day of rest. They agreed that Monday morning would do, and the place of battle was appointed. I do not think they wished to fight, but they would not yield their claim to the land without a struggle.
>
> William and I determined to be ahead of the rest, and

just as dawn broke, we got up and set off for the fighting-ground. But happening to look behind me after going a little way, I saw the whole crowd of school people following in single file along the narrow path, armed with fighting-clubs, muskets, and bows and arrows—the last very deadly-looking things. All these had been hidden in the bush. Thus, instead of heading an embassage of peace, I found myself leading a party of warriors to the fray, and scarcely knew whether to laugh or be angry at the turn things had taken.

As they would not go back, I went on. It was a charming morning, the sky lighting up with soft and glorious pink and gold. The first early breeze gently stirred the fresh, cool, dewy foliage, and the pigeons cooed their matin-song in the trees above us. All the peace of nature seemed to rebuke the procession of men on warfare intent.

By and by we heard a shrill cry through the woods. We answered it, and it was repeated, and all of us stood still to listen.

"It is the enemy!" said William; and every man spat in his palm, and grasped his club tighter, and some lit their pipes and smoked furiously, and we all began to feel the excitement of the fray.

Running up the slope we were climbing, we soon reached a village, the people of which were friends of my party. There they were sitting about, awaiting our arrival, and their weapons lay beside them. After resting awhile, I gathered that the place appointed for the fight was some distance on, so telling the rest to stay where they were, I took three unarmed men, and followed the track.

As we turned a bend in the path, we saw right in front of us, beneath a huge banyan tree and near an open space, the enemy drawn up in line, naked and armed, in all a party of about thirty men, while a little group of women stood some distance off. Calling out to them that we had come to make peace, we advanced, and sat down on a log in front of them.

Then my party came up, but at my request laid down their arms; there ensued a parley of prodigious length, and chosen orators of either side harangued the assembly, their speeches being interspersed with a great gabble of talk. Obvious suggestions from myself, such as that the parties should divide the ground with a fence, and each take half, were set aside as crude and impossible.

After several futile attempts at a settlement, the two men who had originated the disturbance agreed to share the ground between them, and if either were to die, the other should take the whole. When the matter was thus settled, every one seemed wonderfully amicable, and men who had just been ready to smash one another's heads with clubs, grasped hands, laughed, talked, and even playfully hugged one another by the neck. When I had been assured that there would be no fighting at all, I returned with a very good appetite to a belated breakfast.

CHAPTER V

TIKOPIA

Natural features—The people: appearance and ornaments—"Trade"—Concerning the women—Token of grief—Betrothal by a nut—Mark of friendship—"What is your name?"—Song and dance—Wailing for the dead—The great lake—Visit to the chief—A returned wanderer—Native house—A forced gift—A born histrion—"Good-bye!"

THE island of Tikopia lies away by itself, out of sight of any other, more than a hundred miles east-north-east of the Torres group, and about 120 miles north-east of the Banks.

Our voyage thither was accomplished in the night, and we awoke to behold the island clear and green before us. A gully seems to divide it roughly into two parts. To the left is a hill, to the right an elevated plateau.

Soon we could descry little dark canoes setting out in our direction, and gradually their occupants became discernible. A strange, magnificent people are the Tikopians. So totally unlike any of our Melanesian islanders that coming into their midst was like taking a plunge out of the everyday world into some land of romantic fiction. On they shot towards us, paddling vigorously in their plain, workmanlike dug-outs.

The first canoe to approach us was a fair sample of the fleet. It contained seven tawny giants of pure Polynesian type, all well over 6 feet in height, their skin a pale, coppery hue, their hair—long yellow manes—floating in the wind, their features and expression strong and striking. Standing to their work, they came gaily along, laughing and shouting in rich, deep voices, clearly delighted to see us.

Leave was asked and obtained to come aboard our ship, the only vessel that can be reckoned upon by lonely Tikopia; and we all felt very small and insignificant when these great fellows, having scrambled monkey-like up the ship's sides, walked about amongst us.

The Tikopians do not go in much for ornament. It is as if instinct taught them that their natural form is comely enough, and more dignified, unadorned. They seem as a rule to be born with black hair, and then to treat it with turmeric or some other yellow dye. Only in a few cases I detected a glitter which might indicate a natural colour. There is very little face-tattooing, but elaborate devices down breast and back like columns of tiny fish, and rows of straight lines and curves, give a curious impression at a short distance of jackets or jerseys.

Many methods are employed to keep the hair out of its owner's way. Some wearing a sort of rounded comb, after the fashion of long-ago childhood, are suggestive of a burlesque Alice in Wonderland! Others coil the mane at the back of their heads into a massive chignon. But the favourite plan is to bind a strip of calico or native cloth over the forehead and round the hair, so keeping it partially out of the way.

A good many wear tortoiseshell ear-rings, and just a few a small inconspicuous ring in the nose.

Necklaces are not common, but we noticed some composed of black seeds. From a string round the neck frequently hangs either a fish cut in mother-of-pearl, or a single cowrie, and armlets of pearl shell are occasionally worn. Sometimes a rather elaborately-woven grass mat is wrapped over the tappa-cloth apron, but further adornment is not attempted. The children only are quite unclothed.

It was our pleasure to be bringing the Tikopians not only a brave and eager little party of Motalava teachers, but also a friend of theirs named Simon, who had left them two years before.

The Bishop was the first person to be sought out, and then Simon. And here for the first time I saw the ceremony of rubbing noses, which is not a Melanesian custom. It really consists—in Tikopia, at all events—of a brief contact and pressure of nose-tips. They all looked delighted to see Simon again, and greeted our whole party effusively—myself with some curiosity too. It was just a merry, noisy crowd of gigantic boys, with somewhat the aspect of ancient Britons.

Most of them had furnished themselves before setting out from home with articles they thought likely to strike the fancy of their white visitors, and result in an exchange for things dear to the Tikopian heart, such as calico, knives, or hatchets. The sticks of black trade-tobacco, so welcome in nearly every island, meet with no appreciation here. There were grass mats of every size, all beautifully woven, for us to select from ; palm-leaf fans, which they use themselves constantly, and carry stuck upright in the loin-cloth behind ; and shells : no great variety of goods.

I was buttonholed by one man who had an

article to dispose of that was clearly of exceptional value, for it was wrapped first in about three yards of native cloth, then in a second wrapping, so that it took a long, long time to unfold. However, he was patient, and so was I, and at last we came to the kernel. And behold! an English sixpence!! Poor fellow, I fear he was grievously disappointed to find the bidding for his treasure did not run very high.

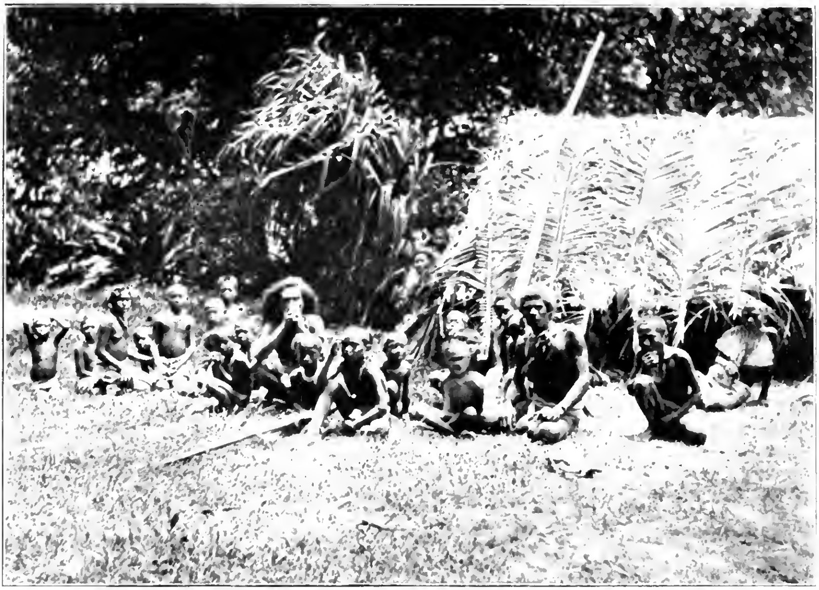
Soon we set off in boats for the shore, and on the way some men in a neighbouring canoe entertained us with one of their peculiar, plaintive songs, sung with faultless precision and accompanied by curious actions—swaying of the body, shaking of the mane, etc. The singing was punctuated by bursts of most hearty laughter—a sort of chorus in which we could all join.

A long wade was necessary in order to get to land. Scarcely was I clear of the ocean before the women were upon me. And truly they bestowed a right royal welcome. The glamour of rarity was about me, for I was but the second white woman who had been seen ashore, my predecessor (the wife of the present Bishop) having visited Tikopia about three years before.

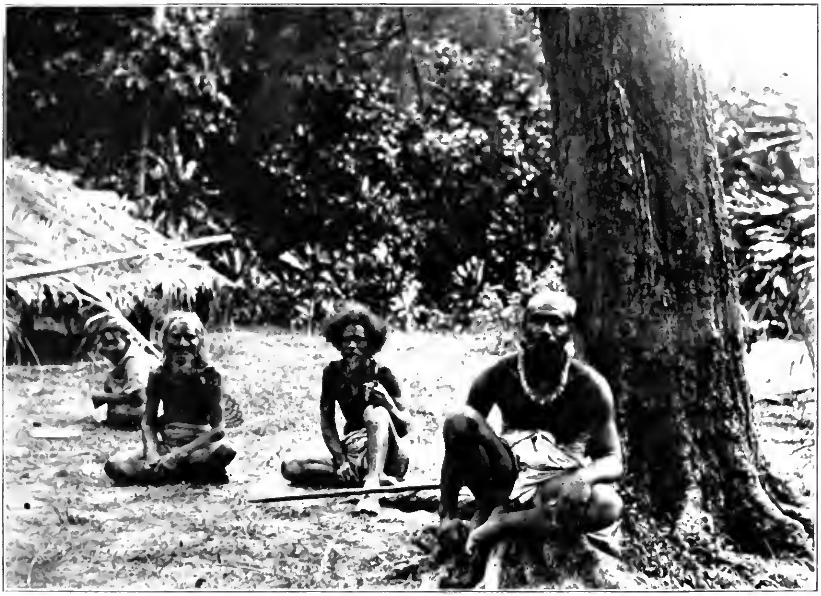
The hair of all the women is cropped short, and it was dark in every instance that I could see. By a curious custom, grief over death is signified by the chief male mourner cutting off his mane, which is then twisted into a rope and coiled round the head of the deceased's nearest female relation. We saw several of these mourning tokens.

While writing of customs I must mention that which concerns betrothal. An offer of marriage in Tikopia is made by the handing of a nut to a girl by

TIKOPIA.



"WHATEVER IS THE WHITE MAN DOING?"



SOME OF THE INHABITANTS.

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her admirer, and if she accepts him she accepts the nut. Nor will she refuse him lightly, for if that significant nut be rejected, the girl by her action signs her own death-warrant. She is actually compelled by social custom to commit suicide, and it is said that every year several girls drown themselves rather than marry the man who handed the nut.

I was appropriated at once, quite as a matter of course, by the four or five young women who had begun to attend our school, and who had picked up from the native teachers a few words and sentences of the Mota language. In the accompanying photograph some of the women may be seen peeping in the background, the foremost of whom wears the hair coronet of mourning.

The feminine attire, if certainly scanty, is quite sufficient for Tikopia; and they were adorned, as were also the men, with wreaths of orange flowers on their heads, fragrant white lotus blossoms stuck here and there in the hair, necklaces of fringy grass, and bunches of scented leaves sticking out of their armlets and girdles. Several girls presented me with their flower garlands, which I twined about my hat and hung round my neck, till I could dispose of no more, and then they gave me single lotus flowers to stick behind my ears.

So, with their arms embracing me with a torrid fervour (the bare remembrance of it makes me hot!), they led me to the village just above the beach. Here great forest trees cast welcome shade upon the hot white sand. The women spread a palm frond as a mat and bade me sit down. Then it seemed as if the entire female population of Tikopia surrounded me and subjected me to a prolonged examination, verbal and physical. I was stroked, and patted, and gently pinched; my blouse sleeves were turned up above the elbow to see if the white really went on all the way, and many searching questions were put to me.

And how they laughed and ejaculated! Everything dark was bad, we white people alone were good, and everything belonging to us! I meanwhile was absorbed in silent admiration of the children. Such beautiful little creatures, perfectly proportioned, with brilliant, intelligent eyes and clear, soft skins!

But next they must needs hear my name, and I theirs. Which hearing was immediately followed by the pretty Polynesian custom of sealing a friendship by the exchange of names. One by one the girls assured me earnestly that my name was theirs. And with equal gravity I responded by claiming as my own one long liquid name after another, which I could not even pronounce aright.

If you ask a Polynesian his name he will tell you instead that of his brother, a habit which, unless you are aware of it, is apt to lead to comical mistakes.

A thing that struck me during my short stay among these people was that, in contrast with the Melanesian ignorement of the names of their own islands, these sought every opportunity of introducing the word Tikopia with evident pride. It was uttered on all hands. "The way of Tikopia," "We are of Tikopia," "A song of Tikopia," "You have come to Tikopia." There was no doubt about the name of this island.

Suddenly, in the midst of all the chatter, as if by a simultaneous impulse—so unanimous that it reminded me of the chorus of a comic opera—they began to sing in their mellow, tuneful voices and to dance about me, clapping their hands in strict time, but between the words in such a way as to give the effect of syncopation. And as it is, I believe, with most native races, all the music of these merry-hearted folk is in a minor key. Again and again the performance was repeated, till at last they constrained me to take part. I stood up, and my hands were lifted up and down on either side, and waved about by a couple of supporters.

The fun and laughter were at their height when I felt my arm roughly seized and jerked by a young woman who rushed into the group. Abruptly the song and dance ceased, and the whole tribe was transfigured in a moment. The change took my breath away. One and all turned upon the newcomer with glaring eyes and furious faces. She fled precipitately, and immediately all was once more smiling peace. A girl on my left whom I questioned told me the intruder came from another village, with which these were not friendly, and added that she was a fool!

I fancied I heard singing in the distance, and said so. But my companions corrected me.

"Not so, it is the weeping of women over the death of their sons." And later on this was corroborated by those who went inland, and had come upon the women "keening" for their dead.

A Tikopian wailing is accompanied by the beating of breasts and the singing of funeral songs, of which every phrase is concluded by the word "*Seauwe!*" uttered, says one who has heard it, "in a tone like the passionate, intense, despairing cry of a person in the utmost abandonment of inconsolable grief and mental anguish."

The house of death is crowded with kinsfolk and friends. In the centre lies the body, adorned with a necklace of leaves and a bright orange-coloured girdle of tappa-cloth, the knees crooked, the head and breast smeared with a blood-red pigment. Near by sit the immediate relatives, and one by one from time to time they come shuffling forward on their knees, and, leaning over, lay their cheek beside the cheek or forehead of the dead. As they do so, they tear with their nails the flesh of their own cheeks just beside the corners of the mouth, till the blood trickles down upon the crimson face of the dead.

It was an interesting expedition that was made by the Bishop and some others of our company, though a long hot walk was involved. They saw the great lake of Tikopia, which must be beautiful, covered with white water-lilies. Wild duck abound there, so unused to sportsmen that they are pathetically easy to kill. It is reported of Tikopians that they shed no blood, either human or otherwise. Twenty-five birds were shot on this occasion, and we were thankful for the fresh food.

The old king, chief of the lesser chiefs, who was the object of the Bishop's visit, is truly patriarchal-looking. He was seated in state outside his house, his subjects keeping a respectful distance—only one, who might be a sort of prime minister, venturing close beside him. The Polynesian conception of chieftaincy is far removed from that which prevails in Melanesia.

Most impressive must have been the reception of Simon after his two years' absence. In obedience to

Tikopian etiquette, he approached the old king on hands and knees, his face to the ground. Then he placed his head between the feet of the great man, who lifted it in his palms and brought it to knee-level, where he laid his hands upon it, muttering words that were apparently of a benedictory nature; and finally he turned up the downcast face, breathed thrice upon it, and pressed his nose to that of Simon. The scene might have well represented, all agreed, a prodigal's return.

While this was going on in the interior of the island I was beginning to think I had surely played out my rôle as a curio, and might fairly be allowed to express a little curiosity on my own part, so I remarked once or twice how much I should like to see inside one of the houses. This seemed to surprise them, but one of the younger women offered to take me to hers, which was near to, and I was not sorry to get quietly away for a little while.

The houses are built close together, with the usual thatch roof, but the walls seemed to be mostly constructed of plaited palm leaves. A few holes here and there let in some light; but in place of the large entrance at one or both ends, there were five little low, rounded apertures at various angles of the house, to pass through which it is necessary to drop on to hands and knees. The ostensible purpose of these low entrances is that of shade and coolness, but one fancies there must also be the intention to secure the house against the intrusion of undesirable visitors. If a man began to enter against the will of the tenant, the latter could obviously make it very uncomfortable for him with a club or spear. From within all five entrances can be easily commanded, but when used as exits the number and variety of positions would assist in making escape possible.

Two or three others joined us, unwilling to lose sight of the new and strange visitor, and as our small procession crawled into the house I felt for all the world as if we were playing at bears!

Inside there was the usual oven, or hole in the ground, in the centre, and grass mats spread around. Fishing-nets, clubs, dried fish, and canoe paddles formed the furniture. It was spacious enough, and the atmosphere was not bad. Coming in from the sunshine, it seemed pleasantly cool, and I sat there for a good while.

The young mistress of the house pulled off one of her shell armlets and put it on my arm over my sleeve. Of course, following the rules of island courtesy, in return for each present I offered another. Matches had never been seen before, and when I struck one there was huge excitement and delight. Their gifts were mostly in food shape, refreshing green coco-nuts and sugar-cane. Every now and then I would feel a squeeze of my hand or arm, and hear a soft voice at my side—"*Pulsala!*" (friend), and then would be sung very slowly and carefully some fragment of a Mota hymn.

In the past the Tikopians have earned on the *Southern Cross* the name of consummate thieves, but this notoriety they are fast losing as they come under the new teaching. On the occasion of the present visit for the first time nothing was stolen from any of our persons or missed off the ship. Only for one moment was I the least uncomfortable when a man took a particular fancy to a tortoise-shell finger-ring from Santa Cruz that I was not disposed to part with.

He had asked to look at it, and I had too confidingly handed it over. Now, "with nods, and becks, and wreathèd smiles," he indicated that he would wear it himself. At first I firmly declined, but he would take no denial. As he had got the ring, I soon found, indisposed as I was to give it up, I was still more indisposed to displease my giant friends while I was alone in their midst. I therefore smiled rather artificially and acknowledged defeat.

On returning to the ship we found it fairly in the hands of our mighty visitors, who were swarming everywhere and driving a brisk trade in mats. One man attracted my attention above the rest. He is a chief's son, and a born actor, but whether tragedian or comedian I could not finally decide. Every gesture and expression was theatrically significant, and he was never for an instant at a loss. Watching him, it was hard to believe he had neither seen nor heard of a stage.

But they are surely a dramatic people. To witness the children dancing and singing with an unconscious grace no white youngster could rival strengthens this opinion. And here on the ship, in the midst of the jabber and barter, a little troop happened to come together, and began to dance and sing with a sort of exuberance of excitement.

The exhibition of our ship's gramophone had the same effect. The Tikopians stood still and silent for a moment, marvelling, then decided it was first-rate to dance to, and so danced afresh.

The time came to bid farewell to Tikopia and its people. But our guests were not at all anxious to go. It was necessary for both missionaries and sailors to say "Good-bye!" in peremptory, stentorian tones over and over again, and not only shake hands, but take the gentlemen by the arms and lead them to the ship's side.

Even then they hesitated, but one of their number, who was evidently a kind of policeman, armed himself with a most uncompromising spear and hurried to and fro, speeding the parting guests, who at the approach of the spear-tip lingered no longer, but toppled abruptly over the ship's side, careless whether into a canoe or into the sea, shouting with laughter either way. Last of all the old policeman dived in, and our final glimpse of him was a grinning face, bobbing above the water, nearly three-quarters of a mile from shore, and a hand upraised, grasping the trusty spear.

Thus we bade farewell to Tikopia and our plucky little band of brown missionary-teachers.

CHAPTER VI

SANTA CRUZ

Utupua—Vanikolo—Discovery of Santa Cruz—Natural features—The people — Canoes — Kite-fishing — Sharking — Tinakula — Graciosa Bay—Cruzians on board—Their wares—The loom—Cruzian characteristics—Ornaments—Nose-boring feasts, etc.—Adventures in the island—Arrows—After a fight—Story of a chief—Concerning the women—A successful pursuit—The little-known interior—The *gamal*—Round houses—Death customs—Feather-money—Betrothal customs—Ghost houses—Beliefs and superstitions—The ghost of the crops—Folk-tales: "Concerning the Sun and Moon"—"How Santa Cruz was made."

WE are approaching one of the most interesting islands in the realm of Oceania.

Santa Cruz proper lies 170 miles to the north of the Torres Islands, but before reaching it two islands are passed which should strictly be included in the Santa Cruz group. These are sparsely populated, and I have little to say about them, although the Melanesian Mission is now at work in both.

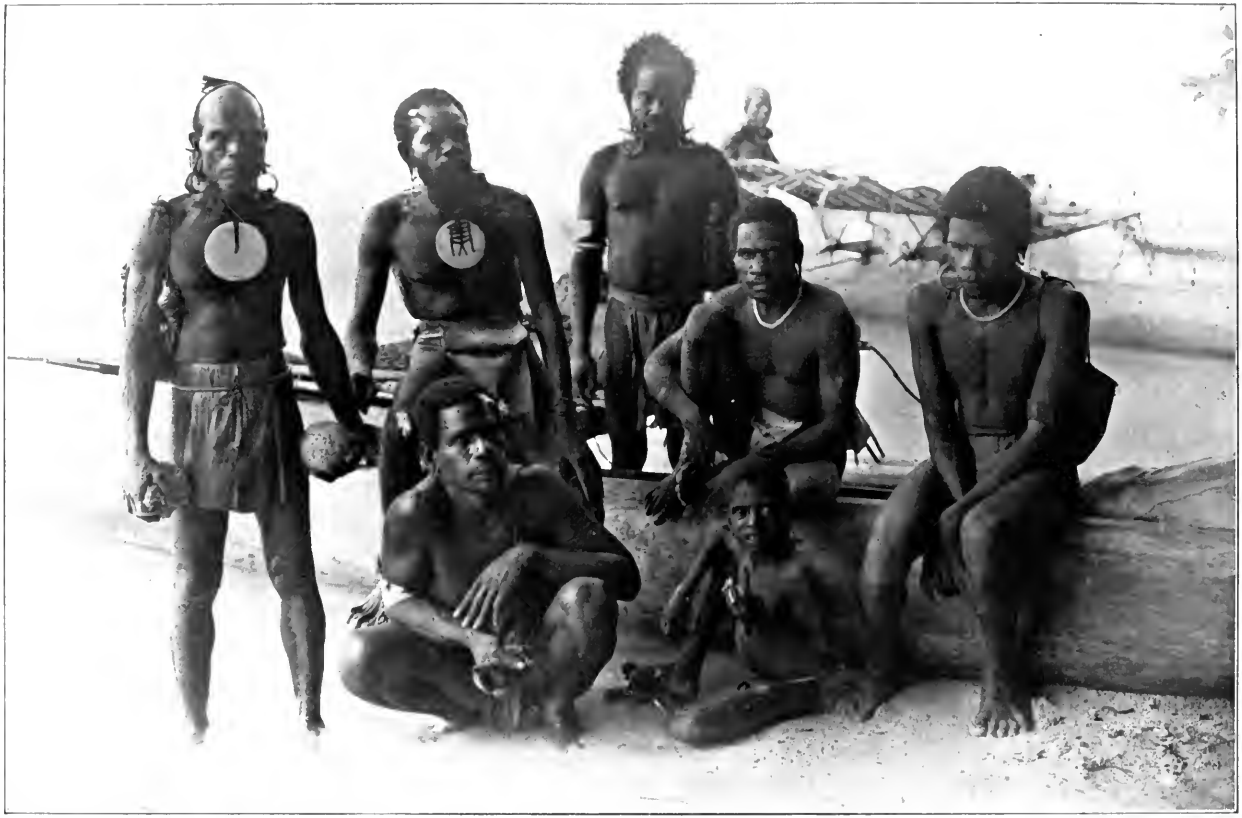
Utupua, the northernmost, forty miles from Santa Cruz, is a small, hilly, very pretty island of horseshoe shape, whose inhabitants are Cruzian in appearance. I was not among those who went ashore here, but they reported that the natives show skill in carving and decorating, and a *gamal* was observed ornamented with elaborate care.

Vanikolo is the larger and more southerly island, its size being 15 miles long by 7½ broad, with a great encircling coral reef, our crossing of which furnished some excitement, as the tide was ebbing, and there was only one spot where the waves had not yet broken. The people have a sinister reputation for cannibalism, which may be no longer deserved, and for battle and murder, which they certainly live up to at present. The latest letter I have from a native teacher in Vanikolo says, "There is much fighting going on. They have killed five men." When Bishop Patteson landed here in 1856 the remains of a recent cannibal feast were discovered, and also sixty European skulls, unmistakable relics of the crews of two French vessels on an exploring expedition wrecked here in 1788. And only last year the Bishop obtained two old coins of the period (French and Russian) which had been found here and preserved.

We did not see many people, and not one who could speak Mota, so my tongue was tied. A few women I met, but they were shy and apathetic-looking, and the habit of shaking hands has not penetrated to Vanikolo.

The main island of Santa Cruz is about twenty-two miles long, and half as broad, of very irregular outline. It was discovered and named by the Spaniards in 1596-1597. They proposed to settle there and found a colony, but the murder of a chief by some of the sailors made a continued residence dangerous, and after two months' stay the white people departed. Of their visit no tradition can be discovered, and very few traces of them have come to light. A small and exceeding rusty cannon now in our museum at Norfolk Island is the only one I have seen. As no very

VANIKOLO.



"THE PEOPLE HAVE A SINISTER REPUTATION."

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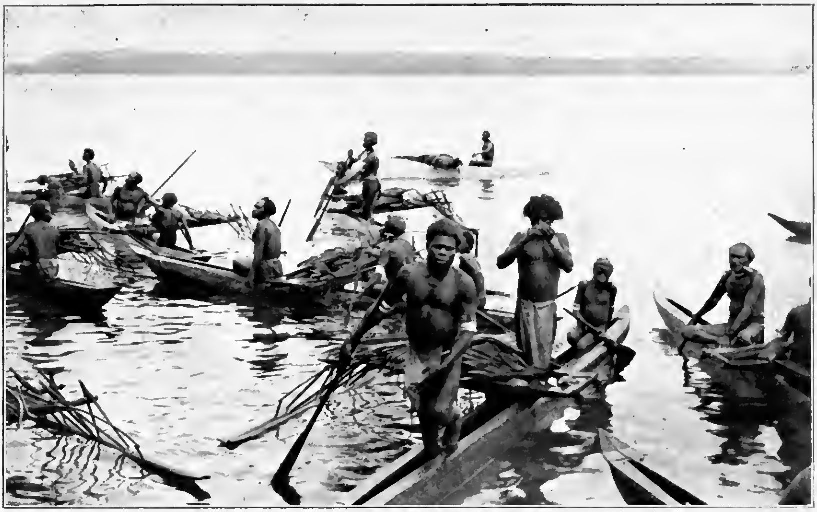
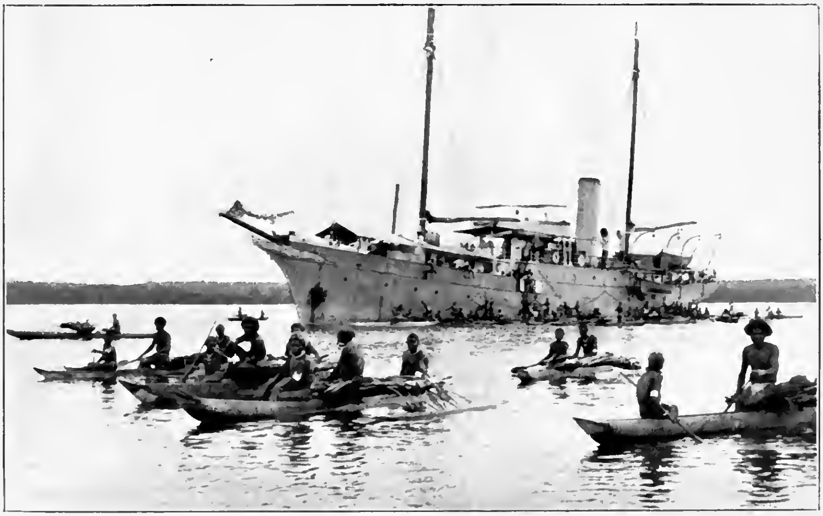
SANTA CRUZ.



"THE NATIVES CAME PADDLING OUT TO US."



"THE CANOES SWARM AROUND THE SHIP."

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pleasant memories could have been transmitted, the blank is scarcely to be regretted.

A range of hills forms a watershed in the centre of the island, some parts of which rise quite impressively to about 3000 feet. Like the more southerly islands, Santa Cruz is a mass of luxuriant foliage and dense forest which extends right down to the beach.

As we steamed along the coast in the early morning the natives came paddling out to us in crowds in their canoes. Friendly sticks of tobacco were tossed towards them, and the men leapt into the sea and dived for them without hesitation, though sharks abound here. The Cruzians are among the bravest and most timid people of the Pacific. Of men, creatures, and things they know no fear; of the unseen they have a quite fathomless terror.

The scene and the sound as the canoes gather numbers and swarm around the ship are not to be described in words. The Cruzians are altogether such an extraordinary-looking people, thanks principally to their grotesque ideas of personal adornment. Fortunately an illustration will help to convey an impression of the spectacle.

The canoes here are still the simple dug-outs, fashioned (like Qat's) with a clam-shell adze from a tree trunk, with an outrigger, and a little stage in the centre on which the "trade" to be offered is piled. The hollow of the canoe is only 6 or 7 inches across, while the length may be as much as 12 feet. Some of the smaller ones are only occupied by one man, but most are paddled by two, who, if they sit, put only one foot inside, the other being left to swing temptingly in the water.

For sailing purposes the Cruzians make canoes of a more imposing size than these, though constructed on the same principle. But the log is caulked, there is a central well, and the stage is large enough to support a palm-leaf hut where a voyager can shelter himself from sun or rain. The sail is of a curious shape, plaited by the women, and the boat is steered by a long paddle.

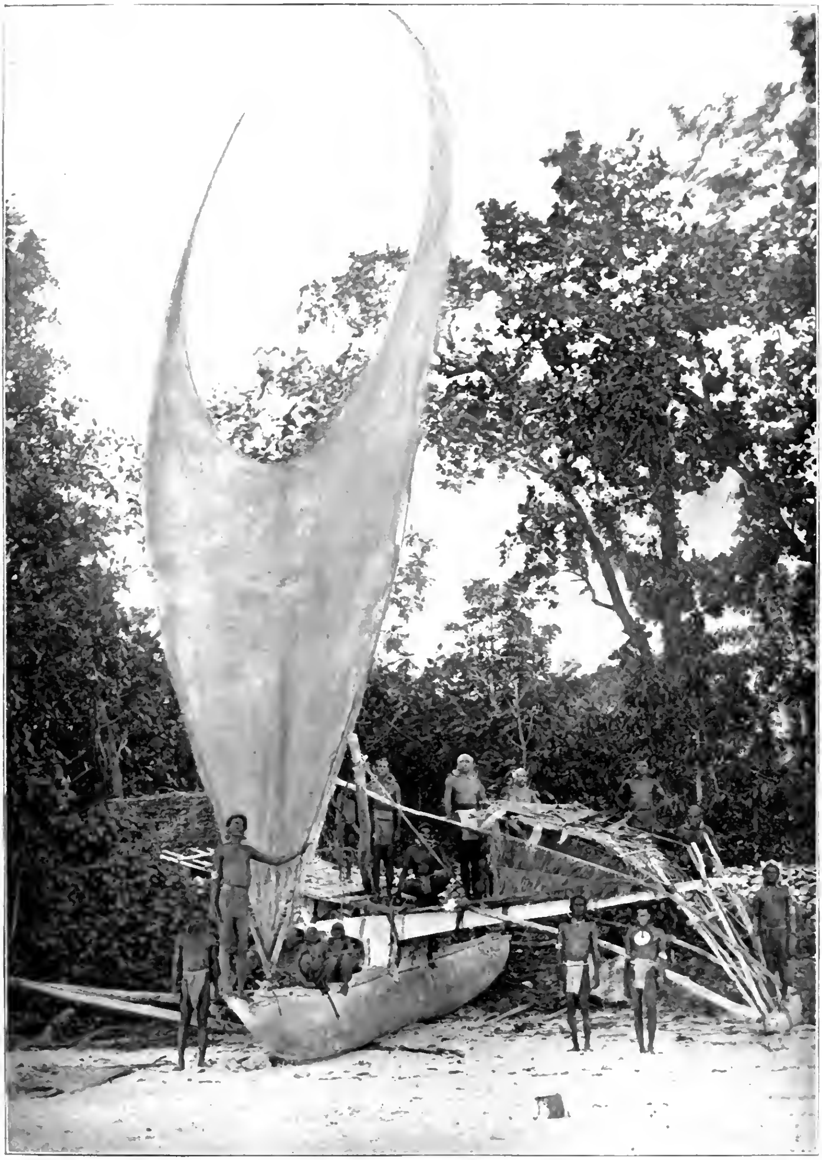
The craft of canoe-making is confined to the few to whom the knowledge has been formally transmitted. A Cruzian's account of the matter is as follows :—

> Only some men may dig out canoes, those whose ancestors dug them out. When a father is near death, that father takes water and washes his son's hands, and they think that the father is giving to his son understanding and wisdom to make canoes, and he signifies it through water. When a man has finished a canoe, he takes it down to the sea, and paddles very far, and makes it roll on the surf, and thus he thinks that he drives away the ghost from the adze with which he dug out the canoe, and the ghost of the spot where he cut down the wood for the canoe.

There are no Melanesians more at home in the water than the Cruzians. The very infants swim and dive as soon as they can walk, and we saw a crowd of boys inshore having rare fun on surf-boards.

We were still steaming along the coast when I noticed what I thought was a big black bird hovering over the sea, but the Bishop explained it to be a *fishing-kite.* The garfish is a great delicacy, but rather hard to catch in an ordinary way. The natives accordingly avoid alarming them with the shadow of the canoe by employing a kite to carry the line, which is manufactured from the bark of a tree. In a calm the kite is kept up by the pace of the canoe; in a breeze it obviates the necessity of paddling by acting as motive power.

SANTA CRUZ.



A Sailing Canoe.

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At the end of the kite tail, and floating on the surface of the water, is a large ball of strong cobweb, of the stuff that tropical spiders can spin. For what toothsome morsel the garfish takes the cobweb is more than I can say, but for some mysterious reason it is attracted by it, and the anglers have no need of hook or bait. The long snout is darted into the thick of the glutinous web, and the curved back teeth take a bite from which they cannot release themselves. Sometimes the first victim is used as a decoy, and his fellows who come up to see what's the matter with him are caught in a hand-net.

Sharking again is a favourite sport, often undertaken by one man in a small canoe, with a powerful noose hanging over the side. By rattling coco-nut shells the savage monster is attracted. When he is alongside the boat the man dangles a tempting bit of raw pig in front of the noose. The shark makes a dash for the dainty, and the man at the same moment hauls tight the noose with all his strength, catching the shark if possible between the fins. Then it is just a question of holding on till the creature is exhausted. Often enough the canoe is upset by its struggles, but the man will manage to right it and climb in again without releasing his prey. Probably for a while there is no need to paddle, since the shark will drag the canoe for a considerable distance. At length he grows tired, and the canoe drags him instead, until he is weak enough for the man to get him on to the outrigger and club him on the head. There follows a feast.

Viewed from the sea, Santa Cruz at first looked very different from the other islands we had visited, as the mountains are in the background, and a long, verdant ridge is alone visible, green to the water's edge, with here and there a clearing. Presently, however, Tinakula comes in sight, a lonely volcanic cone still active, over 2000 feet high, where departed souls are sent to undergo purification. Tinakula lies about eleven miles to the north-west, but in the clear atmosphere it seems close to. Then Te Motu stands before us (or Trevanion), a three-cornered islet to the north-west just cut off from the mainland. And now the sea takes more vivid colours and we enter Graciosa Bay, well named by the Spaniards, a lovely, spacious sheet of water where a fleet might ride at ease. Here we dropped anchor, and immediately a siege by eager Cruzians began in downright earnest.

Cabins were locked and port-holes closed, for where Cruzians are not yet Christians they are superlative pilferers. There was no need to lower the rope-ladder to assist our visitors. They were up the sides and all over the decks in a moment, every man jabbering at the top of his voice as only Cruzians can jabber. Wonderful shopmen these fellows would make, with a little cultivation and taming! Willingly granting that their voices need moderating, they have a peculiar skill in bargain-making without actually pestering one as Orientals do.

And their wares? Well, I jotted down what I happened to see, and this is my list. Fowls, fish, pigeons, pineapples, bananas, pumpkins, nuts and almonds, shelled and unshelled, mats and bags woven from the fibrous banana stem, bows and arrows, shells, plates of tortoise-shell, armlets of mother-of-pearl, scoops and spoons of the same, tortoise-shell ear-rings, nose-rings, and finger-rings, pieces of the native tappa-cloth beaten out of the bark of a tree, bone needles, looms, floats, tortoise-shell fish-hooks, snake skins, food bowls, fishing-lines of various thicknesses, nets, lime-boxes, girdles, and wooden models of men, pigs, birds, and canoes.

There was nothing about them which they were not ready to part with—for a price! Stay, there was one thing they were very chary of selling—indeed, in some cases they absolutely refused to consider any offer. This precious thing was the *tema,* or moon, a mark of rank hung round the neck and falling on the breast. It is a large round clam-shell disk, which in the case of high rank is overlaid with a carved tortoise-shell ornament.

I mentioned looms. In Santa Cruz, alone of all the Melanesian islands, is a loom found; but here it is, and a wonderful one too, upon which the bags and mats are exquisitely woven, patterns being introduced with the fibre of a black-stemmed banana. The nearest islands where looms are found are in the Caroline group, about a thousand miles away. Of course the first tempting suggestion that springs to the mind is that they were introduced by the Spaniards. This would be a romantic solution, but, strange to say, Mendaña, the leader of the expedition, remarks upon these same looms as in use when they arrived.

Looms run comparatively cheap. The Cruzians know they are in demand, and provide accordingly. But with an astuteness one can hardly help admiring, they carefully contrive to sell the loom and half-woven mat rolled and tied tightly in a bundle, if possible the last thing, when time will not allow of examination—and the shuttle is left out, the making of that being rather an intricate matter!

I have said that the appearance of the Cruzian is extraordinary. Let me try to be more explicit.

The Cruzian language, an extremely difficult and peculiar one, has yet certain features in common with other Melanesian tongues and cannot be reckoned as Polynesian. Yet among the people themselves we find many traits and customs distinctively Polynesian. How, then, are they to be reckoned? Their physiognomy should help us to a conclusion, but it is still the subject of debate.

Magnificently developed men many of them, comparatively fair-skinned, it is a pleasure to the eye to trace the curves and lines of their muscular, well-proportioned bodies. The only garment is a square of native cloth, before and behind, that falls some 18 inches from the waist—"spotlessly clean and squarely put on. No one can compare with him in Melanesia," says the Bishop. The hair is fuzzy, and almost always whitened or reddened with lime or turmeric. In this matter a whimsical fancy often has play. I saw one man whose hair was most evenly divided into longitudinal halves, black and white. Another's was entirely white, except for a thick black line all down the middle.

But what, it will be noticed from the pictures, gives to each face a ludicrous and even animal effect is the tortoise-shell disk, which begins with the nose-ring, and hangs over the mouth, making eating and smoking awkward and speech inarticulate. Frankly, it is the ugliest so-called "ornament" I have seen.

The poor ears, too, are horribly distorted. When but a few days old the first boring is accomplished and rings are inserted. By a system of plugging the hole is extended, until from eight to fifteen large tortoise-shell rings may be seen dragging from either ear, the lobe of which touches the shoulder, being often stretched to breaking.

Six to eight armlets of shell or beads, a necklace, anklets, and a girdle of shells, beads, or the stem of a creeper coiled round so closely as to give the wearer quite a waspish waist; such is the Cruzian full-dress.

But the right to it is only gained by a series of feasts given by the father and his relations. The first of these inaugurates the ear-boring. In a few weeks another celebrates the boring of the nose, on which occasion also the head is shaved, one small lock being left to hang over the forehead. At the age of six or seven another feast is given, when the lock is cut off and the hair thenceforward allowed to grow. As soon as the father can afford it, after the boy is about fourteen or fifteen, another and larger feast wins for him the right to don the coveted loin-cloth. But if the father chance to be a poor man, his son has often to wait long for this public recognition of his adult status.

Sometimes twelve villages will unite over a feast of this kind, which may celebrate the boring of a dozen babies' noses and the first loin-cloths of six boys. On such an occasion about 150 pigs will be consumed, they being killed by drowning in the holes on the reef. There will be all-night dancing in the smooth round space preserved in every village, enclosed by a rough coral wall, and for this the men get themselves up with exquisite care. The women dance alone, but are on rare occasions allowed to follow the men—on all fours! The accompaniment is the stamping of feet; no drum is employed. In some dances there is also clapping of hands, but in most either the bow and arrow are carried, or a dancing-club never used in fight.

Occasionally a great man will bequeath his dancing-ground to his son, but unless the latter be already rich, it must be hard to feel grateful for this particular legacy. According to social custom, friends are liable to arrive at any time, from any distance; they ask for a dance, and it is *de rigueur* that all be fed with pigs by the hospitable host. There are some men to-day who are kept poor, and have no hope of ever being comfortably off, because their fathers were so good as to leave them their dancing-grounds!

Excitable, impulsive, loud-voiced, pugnacious, the Cruzians have managed to create a strange fear and dread of themselves amongst other Melanesians. And in truth he is no genuine Cruzian who does not love a fight. Yet withal the hot blood flows from a warm heart, and the excitability is accompanied by a keen sense of fun. "A lovable fellow" is the verdict of one who has lived some time in their midst, but perhaps it needs an Irish nature to sympathize fully with their Irish traits of character.

The amazing variableness of these people's moods involves a glorious uncertainty which must add zest to life in Santa Cruz. With regard to the heathen, you will be wholly unaware how you may be greeted to-morrow by those who hobnobbed with you to-day cheek by jowl. We have had plenty of experience of this in the Mission, dating back from the year 1864.

Bishop Patteson went ashore where we did, in Graciosa Bay, and all seemed as usual. Just as he was about to re-embark, bows and arrows appeared, and the natives aimed deliberately at the boat. The Bishop on this occasion escaped, but three of his companions were shot, of whom two Norfolk Islanders died of tetanus a few days later.

In 1873 Commodore Goodenough was murdered by the natives in this same island for no ascertainable reason.

Te Motu has been friendly to us for many years. In 1889, however, when the missionary-in-charge called in the ordinary way, he was received with drawn bows, and to his astounded surprise a native rushed towards him brandishing an axe. Another tripped up the would-be murderer, but a regular pandemonium ensued. The air rang with shouts and yells as the natives ran madly about with bows and arrows, their eyes starting from their heads, the veins on their foreheads standing out.

The white man gained his house, came out on to the veranda, and vainly strove to make his voice heard. The cause of this outburst of violence was quite undiscoverable, then or since, but it seemed as if the missionary's life must be taken before peace could be obtained. Just, and only just, in time some young men rushed into the *gamal*, brought out a pile of feather-money, and laid it at the Englishman's feet. His life was ransomed. In another hour all was peace where tumult and violence had so lately reigned.

The next day the matter was calmly discussed. In answer to searching inquiries, many reasons for the attack were offered, of which none was probably the true one. Finally it was agreed that the three ringleaders should pay a fine, and that yesterday's truce-money should to-day be handed back. Then all was peace—hand-shaking and nose-rubbing, for the last-named Polynesian custom holds in Santa Cruz.

"The more I saw of these people the better I liked them," is the remark of the man who was so nearly their victim.

The only weapon of war is the bow, fitted with the horrid bone-tipped arrow about 4 feet long, smeared with vegetable juices, deadly in its effect. It is said that when a truce is made a fine is forfeit for every arrow that has found its mark. The number of slain is carefully reckoned on both sides, and the account must be equalized in a very barbarous manner. Little boys to the required number are sacrificed—handed over to the enemy, ordered to try and climb a tree, and there shot with arrows.

One would surmise that such a custom could only originate in hearts of stone. Yet these same people are positively lavish in their generosity. If a white man comes amongst them, they will bring food daily in quantities. At sunrise the patter of their feet on the veranda may be heard, and the missionary on going out finds baskets of nuts, yams, tomago, and coco-nuts. Even when he is absent on a boat journey the gifts continue to flow in. A teacher remonstrates in vain, "Why bring food when our father is at Nelua?" The rejoinder is conclusive. "What if he by chance came back to-day, and there was nothing ready for him?"

Perhaps incidents best illustrate the Cruzian mind and manners.

Natei, a chief of Te Motu, appeared one day in the Mission school, and took his place among the hearers. He came daily for a week, then asked the missionary to buy from him a coil of money. The white man agreed, and offered a fair price. Natei asked more, and the missionary consented. But the price was again raised, and the Englishman refused thereupon further traffic with him.

Off went the offended chief, and presently a message was brought by two men to the effect that Natei's anger had arisen, and he had tabooed the school for himself and his men. The idea was quite obvious: the missionary in dismay would pay whatever was required to secure the continuance of Natei's valuable friendship.

Not a bit of it! The messengers were refused admittance, and the Christians were strictly forbidden to pay Natei anything whatever. The business was the white man's, not theirs. Late at night, however, he was called to the *gamal*, and informed by the school folk with most cheerful faces that they had paid up the amount Natei wanted, and all was well once more. To their surprise and disappointment their "father" was by no means pleased. It was a sheer case of blackmail, and could not be allowed.

The next day Natei, with a serene countenance, presented himself once more as a scholar. But he was promptly turned out, and forbidden further entrance. Then it was announced clearly and decidedly that the money paid must be fetched back, and that there would be no more school till it reappeared.

Very soon back came the money. About noon a messenger arrived from the chief, bringing mats and more money. "Natei wishes to make amends for his great foolishness."

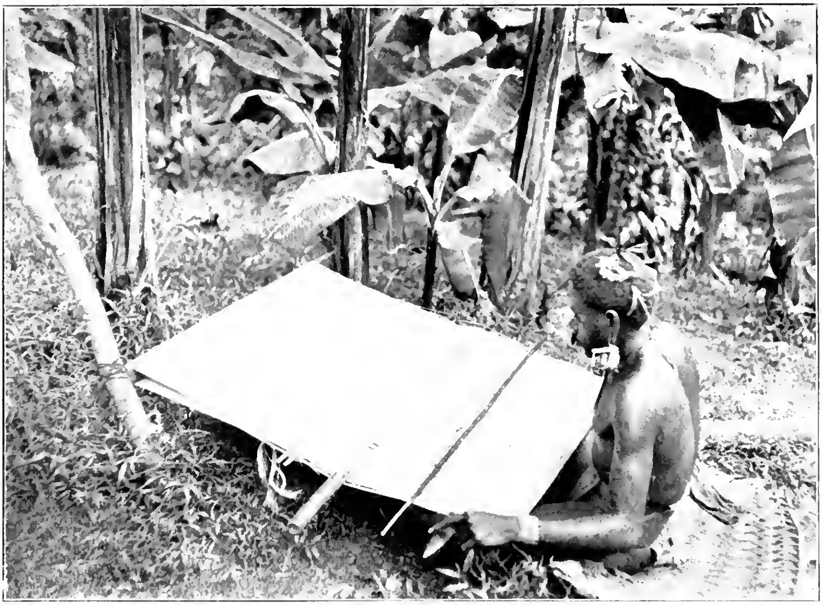
The peace-offering was accepted for the use of the school, but Natei was requested to appear in person. He was rebuked publicly, then readmitted to the school.

It was not long after this that the Bishop made Natei's acquaintance in strict accordance with native etiquette. The chief received the Bishop seated, outside the *gamal*. He then took him inside, gave him a head-rest and a fan, and bade him lie down. It is not correct in Santa Cruz to talk much to one's host, so the Bishop talked to his companion, and Natei to his followers. The former admired the shark-line, the pig-net, and other hangings of the *gamal*. Natei discussed the Bishop's blazer, legs, etc. Thus each showed that he *could* get on without the other, and mutual dignity was preserved!

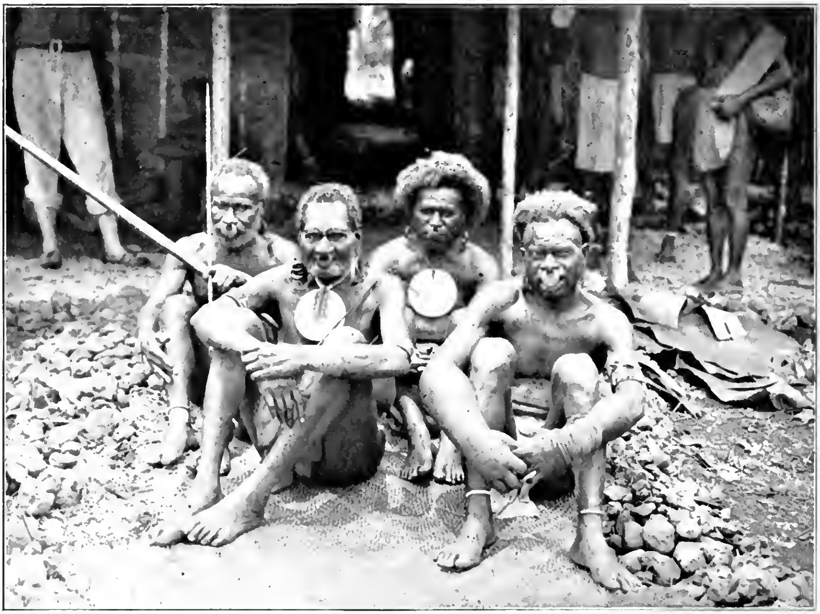
When this had gone on long enough, Natei made signs that he wished his guest to visit his own house, to see his eight wives, and all his feather-money. The Bishop acquiesced, and became the recipient of a shower of gifts from the chief—bags, mats, and food. These were received by the Bishop with cool equanimity, and carefully examined, he in return presenting red and blue calico, tobacco, and beads. To evince much gratitude is the reverse of complimentary in Santa Cruz: does it not imply that you regard the giver as a poor man, to whom the gift involves a sacrifice?

But now it was the turn of the eight wives, who threw mats and nuts across the room to the visitor, whose goodwill was indicated by going round and shaking hands with each, presenting each with a necklace of blue beads. All was now done *comme il faut*, and the visit was at an end.

Cruzian wives are not always so pleasantly engaged. Women's lot is here a hard one. From dawn to dark they are toiling in the gardens; all the heavy labour falls to them, in addition to the care of the children.



A Weaver at his Loom.



The Chiefs of Graciosa Bay.

The men's time is spent in weaving mats, smoking, chewing betel-nut, fishing, and so forth. The wife comes home to cook the meals for husband and brothers. If she excites her lord's displeasure he fells her with his club. When a few years ago the Mission purchased a site in Graciosa Bay for a station, a proviso was inserted by the old chiefs (here pictured) to the effect that women must not be invited to attend the school. They think a little learning would be a very dangerous thing for wives to acquire!

It is in consequence a hard matter to get into touch with these poor drudges, who are never allowed within speaking distance of the white man. My own first glimpse of them was at some distance as we neared the shore at the above-mentioned station. It was a group of veiled figures on a rock to the left of the landing-place, across a stream.

"Those are women," said the Bishop; "you must try and get at them."

"I'm afraid it'll be all trying," remarked the priest-in-charge.

"Of course there's no chance while we are about," said the Bishop; "but if you don't mind being deserted, you might bridge the gulf."

"There they go!" said the other as we landed; and the women vanished exactly like rabbits. "And you can't cross the stream dry-shod," was the last word of cheer.

However, all one wanted was to be left alone and to have a try. Just one or two of the mysterious forms still lingered, and I strove with gestures to show them that I wanted them to come to me and make friends. It was with the same vague hope that one fans the last spark in the kindling that will not burn. Out it goes; and away went the last of the women.

I walked a few yards up the stream, seeing the gorgeous butterflies, foliage, crabs, fishes, and lizards, and only thinking how to reach those tantalizing fugitives.

The first step seemed to gain the rock where we had detected them, behind which they might be hiding. After studying the situation, I thought I saw a chance of crossing the stream if I could reach a midway stone by one short leap. It was accomplished, and I was delighted to find myself crunching the white coral and wading through the glistening silver sand on the far side.

I soon arrived at the rock, but though there were plenty of naked foot-marks, no other trace of the women was to be seen. I followed the prints as far as I could, but they grew confused among some boulders, and as the ground became hard they disappeared. I began to feel less hopeful.

Just then a little canoe came paddling by close to the shore, and one of its occupants made a remark which I could not, of course, understand. He was a quite exceptionally ugly person, decked out with a plethora of rings for every member and feature of his body, and much betel-nut chewing had made his lips and tongue a brilliant scarlet and his teeth coal-black. He was further distinguished by wearing upon his forehead a native sunshade, like the peak of a cap woven in grass. He grinned benignly at me, and beached the canoe close to where I stood, so we entered into communication. Somehow, somewhere, he had picked up a word or two of pidgin-English, but the thing he knew best was, "Cum-on!" By signs I made him understand that I was in search of the women; by signs he indicated that they had gone into the bush, but that I was to "cum-on" after him.

So, one behind the other, we plunged into the thick bush. The track along which he led me was very narrow, but clearly defined. It wound and twisted continually, but on we went, he shouting the while to the unseen females, or turning round to encourage me with renewed "Cum-ons!"

When we had travelled some five hundred yards I came tentatively to a halt with a "S'pose me stop here," but this suggestion found no favour, and the "Cum-on!" became so urgent I thought I might as well accede. The surroundings were beguiling in loveliness, but this insistent old heathen gave me no pause for enjoyment.

By the time we had panted on nearly as far again I felt that my total disappearance might presently occasion trouble, so I came to an uncompromising full stop upon a fallen log, and showed that I meant to go no farther. The heathen looked disappointed, but impressing upon me by signs that I was at all costs to remain in that spot, he set off at a gallop, yelling and waving.

In a few minutes back he came into sight, prancing triumphantly, and emitting "Cum-ons!" so powerful that there was no resisting them. I arose, and came on a little farther. Presently, at a turn in the path where it was crossed by another, he motioned me to stand.

There, in the path at right angles, a few yards away, I sighted my quarry dodging in and out among the trees. Six or seven women were there, ranging from an ancient dame to bright little girls and a baby.

All were decently wrapped round with bits of bark cloth, and I especially noted that all had their heads covered with a cloth twisted into half-turban, half-veil —a custom not common in Melanesia.

It was the old withered woman who first summoned up enough courage to approach me, then the little children, and last the younger matrons. I took their hands, smiled and patted them, and made their eyes shine with some gay knots of ribbon that I distributed amongst them. When once the ice was broken they were quite ready to be friendly, and presently produced a gift in the form of a monster bunch of plantains, of which my guide made himself the porter, trotting off with it upon his head.

Then we retraced our steps through the bush, the women clustering around me whenever space permitted. But when we reached the rock where I first saw them they stopped, and no persuasion would induce them to cross their Rubicon. So we parted, the best of friends, with pats, and waves, and smiles.

There was no great difficulty in crossing the stream from this side. I returned to the boat to find the bunch of plantains deposited in it, and to learn with pleasure and surprise that my guide had refused the stick of tobacco he was offered, signifying that it was a free gift!

Little is known of the interior of Santa Cruz, the greater part being still untrodden by a white man's foot. One of our missionaries made a three days' expedition, during which he never set eyes on a human being. He reports that the heart of the island "appeared to be like a huge basin, surrounded on all sides by high hills, densely covered with bush." There were "numerous streams, with beautiful clear water," and "a large river, with waterfalls and deep pools, flowing between banks of coral rock." Of fish might be caught a considerable number, both large and small, and "any quantity of prawns!" The bush people of Santa Cruz live mostly on the western side of the island. To them belongs the monopoly of the manufacture of feather-money and of arrows.

Of arrows there are different kinds for different purposes beside the bone-tipped fighting ones. There are solid-headed ones for shooting birds, others with tree-fern tips for shooting fish, and four-pronged arrows for shooting flying-foxes.

You may see all kinds around the walls of the Santa Cruz *gamal* (or *mandai*, as it is called by these people), of which every village has one or more. It is a strongly-made square building, the walls usually constructed of slabs of wood, the framework being held together with bands of split cane. There will be a little low entrance on each side for the men to creep through. The floor is formed of big coral blocks, which raise it a foot or so from the ground. It is beautifully dry and clean, shingle is scattered over it, and upon it are spread mats of coco-nut leaves. The Cruzians are scrupulously careful of it, being in this respect quite un-Melanesian. It is the rule for every one before entering to kick against some stones outside and stamp their feet upon a board.

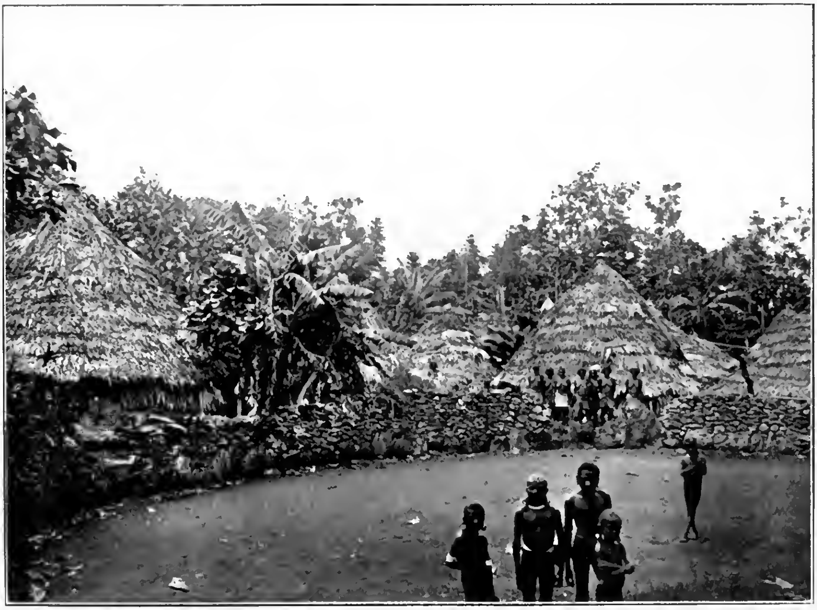
When we left the Torres Islands we left behind us the Suqe. Instead of the row of ovens with which we are familiar, we find here a big central fireplace, over which is supported what looks rather like a four-post bedstead. It is a stage with three or four platforms, one above another, very black and smoky, laden with dried food, nuts, gourds, etc. There are long bamboos reaching from one wall to another, and from these hang nets, shark ropes, shark rattles, native cloth, and fishing-lines with their tortoise-shell hooks. Along with the arrows I have mentioned you may see canoe paddles, with short blade and long handle, strong enough to punt with when required, and dried palm leaves like mighty fans, which serve the purpose of umbrellas. Further furniture is neither wanted nor provided, unless one dignify by such a name the wooden head-rest, sometimes beautifully carved, which marks each sleeping-place. From the smoke-blackened roof hang rather gruesome-looking objects. They are mementoes of past feasts, the skulls and bones of pig, fish, and turtle.

Another Cruzian characteristic is the fancy which dictates the building of the family residence on a circular plan. So unusual is it that we find these round houses remarked upon by the Spaniards on their visit in 1596. It will be seen in the accompanying illustration from Te Motu that the conical, palm-leaf-thatched roof is the principal part of the building, finished off with a piece of coral of a peculiar kind, shaped like a miniature tent. The very low walls are generally thatched also, though sometimes timber is laboriously hewn and cleft for the purpose. A circle of coral slabs around the base is a protection from flood in heavy rains. The native tools are few and primitive. There is a rude drill, a file made from the skin of the giant ray, the clam-shell adze we saw in the Banks and Torres, and—a shark's tooth! Te Motu having long had a school, the women here are comparatively friendly and approachable. They have even in this photograph come within reach of the camera.

In Santa Cruz we find a fresh species of currency

SANTA CRUZ.

Graciosa Bay.



Dancing-ground and Round Houses, Te Motu.

in the highly valued and most toilfully manufactured feather-money.

It consists of a flat rope about fifteen feet long, upon which are gummed (in narrow sections, one fringe laid upon another) the red breast-feathers of a small bird. A man will spend days in the forest catching these birds. He covers himself with leaves, and imitates their note; the victim is attracted, and settling on one of the twigs which has been smeared with bird-lime, is easily taken. The hunter will return home with several of the birds, alive, tied to his belt. When the red feathers have been plucked the bird is released. The money is kept carefully coiled and covered up on the platform over the fireplace. A rich man will sometimes build a hut in the bush for his money. As the feathers wear off, the coil depreciates in value.

We were sympathizing with the hard lot of the women in this island. It is only fair to add that they have one compensation. They are allowed the chief voice in all that concerns the children. Soon after the Loin-cloth Feast the mother begins to look out a wife for her son. Terms having been agreed upon, the lad is by and by informed that a nameless she has been selected for him, and that he must avoid going near a certain house. When the payment is completed the bride-elect is required to live a while with her future mother-in-law, where no doubt she is taught the "little ways" of her fiancé which must be humoured, the little dishes that please him most (for in Santa Cruz the women cook for the men), and so forth.

Meanwhile the young husband busies himself in building the house to which he presently takes his bride. His father-in-law he must never notice or address, nor will the elder hold any communication with him. If any matter of importance arise, an interpreter must be obtained. But as to his mother-in-law, he must never even see her face, nor may either mention the other's name. The man must not so much as allude to anything belonging to her. The social law requires that if the wife die in childbirth, the husband "pay for her again" (the native phrase) to those from whom he has already bought her!

Every house is a mausoleum. The Cruzians bury their dead at home close to the central oven! The usual wailing and weeping mark the event, and friends who lend their voices to swell the chorus expect to be rewarded with money as well as with food. The widow remains a prisoner till the interment is accomplished, and all the mourners blacken their bodies and faces with charcoal and abstain from food.

Through the noise of the wailing penetrates the interminable, lugubrious death-song, a strain so mournful that it seems to have the effect of compelling tears. A man will come to lament, and squat on the ground with the mourners, the tears raining down his face. By and by he slips away, and may be discovered in the *gamal*, chewing betel-nut, yarning and joking with the merriest; but when refreshed he will return to the house of mourning, to weep as loudly and copiously as ever!

In due time the remains are disinterred, what bones are desired are taken for making arrow-heads, and the skull is preserved in a basket.

There is no heathen village in Santa Cruz but has its ghost-house filled with stocks of wood to represent departed ancestors. The Te Motu one is quite elaborate, with carved beams and painted walls. Here one may see pictured ghosts shooting, ghosts fishing, ghosts making canoes—even ghosts smoking ghost-pipes! And whenever the artist paused to think what he should paint next, he put in a pig!

The souls, as I have said, go to Tinakula, the burning mountain, but some haunt the bush, and are occasionally reported to have been seen. In some way they must also be held to be cognizant of what goes on in the ghost-house, where a bedstead-shaped "altar" may be seen near the entrance, upon which food is offered. This is subsequently consumed by human mouths, but the idea elsewhere referred to exists here also, namely, that the spiritual essence of the banana or yam is abstracted by the ghost.

A man setting out upon a canoe voyage of some length or danger will customarily take with him a wizard in charge of his own familiar ghost (represented by the wooden stock), who undertakes to provide at his need a fair wind or calm. If danger is encountered the ghost is called upon, and a bit of food is thrown out with, "This is for your eating!"

One recovering from sickness will present the wizard with a pig for the ghost who cured him, a portion of which will be placed in the ghost-house before his stock as a thank-offering. Propitiatory offerings, too, are made at regular seasons to the ghost who presides over the garden crops.

In Santa Cruz we come again upon *mana* stones (though the word is here *malete*) which are sometimes hired from those lucky enough to possess them. At Te Motu there is a large stone called after a bird, upon which a fowl is offered when it is desired to protect newly-planted gardens from the depredations of the feathered folk of the bush. Perhaps it is as effectual as a scarecrow.

Appended are two legends told by the natives. The first is very brief.

CONCERNING THE SUN AND THE MOON

Long ago we thought about the sun and moon in this manner.—They two always went together in the day. And the Sun thought to himself thus: If we always go together, the earth will become very hot, and the trees will all die. So it came to pass, as they drew near a marsh, the Sun crossed over before the Moon; but he tricked her, saying he had crossed on the branch of a tree. Now that branch was rotten. So the Moon tumbled into the marsh, and after that she was black, and then she partly washed herself. But the Sun had already gone a long way ahead while she was washing, and it became night. And a part of the Moon was black.

She has not finished washing yet, for she wants to catch up to the Sun, so that they can walk together as at the first.

The second is a page from very ancient history. It tells

HOW SANTA CRUZ WAS MADE

There was one named Mosigsig who lived in Utupua.

One day he said to his mother, "Let us go and climb bread-fruit trees!"

So they went, and Mosigsig threw down fruit. When he came down, he saw one he had thrown down which was rotten inside, and he looked at it, and said, "This is my canoe!"—for it was hollow. Then he washed himself in a pool by the shore, and afterwards put the hollow bread-fruit in the water. He said, "If I dive, it may become a sailing canoe!"

And it did.

Then he said, "If I dive again, it may get a mast and sail!"

And it did.

Then he said, "If I dive again, it may have an outrigger and cabin!"

And it did.

Then he called his mother to come and see his canoe, and he bade her prepare plenty of food for him to eat at sea. But his mother told him not to go to sea, as there were large fish that would break his canoe and eat him. But he said he would go. And he did.

And when he had sailed with his younger brother near to where Santa Cruz now is, suddenly some fish began to jump in shoals on the canoe, so that it began to sink. Then he took a net, and caught them as they came on board, and carried them back to Utupua. And he called his mother, and said, "Make a fire to cook the food I have brought." And so they ate together.

Then he said again to his mother, "Prepare food for me to eat at sea."

But his mother said he must not go, for the big fish would kill him. And he went.

And when he came to the same place, a large clam tried to break the canoe; but he dived into its open shell, and killed the clam, and took it to his mother.

And he went again, and a large pearl-shell oyster tried to destroy his canoe; but he dived into it, and killed it, and carried it to his mother.

And he went again, and that sharp shell, which stands upright and pierces men's feet, tried to bore a hole in the bottom of the canoe; and he let down a hook, and pulled it up, and took it to his mother.

Then his mother told him that the fish which killed men was the one with eight fins like sails.

And so he went again, and presently he saw a fish with eight fins like sails, and he said to his younger brother, "Do you see one sail?"

And he said, "Yes, I see one sail."

And he said, "Do you see two sails?"

And he said, "I see two sails."

And so he asked him until he said he saw eight sails. Then Mosigsig said, "That is he who will kill us!"

Now the fish saw them, and said he would destroy the canoe.

But Mosigsig said, "Don't do that, for you are my grandfather!" And he invited him to come on board.

So he came, and ate some food. Then that fish said, "Where shall I sit?"

And Mosigsig said, "Sit there!" and he put a large knife under him.

And the fish cut himself upon it, and cried, "What shall I do?"

So Mosigsig pointed to another knife and said, "Sit there!"

And he cut himself again, and died. Then Mosigsig took him home to his mother, and they ate him.

After that he asked his mother if there were anything else that killed men; and she said, "Yes, near that same place."

So he went with a large hook and line, and let it down; and it caught round two trees. He hauled on them, and up came the bottom of the sea with them—and made Santa Cruz!

Now the sun was setting when they went ashore, and Mosigsig's younger brother was afraid, and ran away. He ran out into the sea, and back to the land; and when he came to the point he ran beyond it. So that is why there is a lagoon on that side of the island, and a long point at that end of it.

But Mosigsig was not frightened: he stood still. Therefore this side of Santa Cruz is all even.

Mosigsig was very angry with the younger brother for spoiling the island he had created, and making such a long point for people to have to walk round.

Then he went on board his canoe, and returned to Utupua, and lived there ever after. And you can still see the pool he dived into, and the bread-fruit which turned into a canoe. Every one seeing that pool for the first time must wash his face in it.

CHAPTER VII

MATEMA, REEF ISLANDS

Natural features of group—Melanesians and Polynesians—A hearty welcome—Products of island—Canoes—Fishing—Temper—Walled villages—Tribal defence—The ghost-house—Native beliefs—"What happens after Death."

To the north and east of Santa Cruz, about twenty miles distant, lies a miniature archipelago or chain of eleven small coral islands which roughly form an arc. No proper survey of these islands has yet been made. They are often included as part of the Santa Cruz group. On the chart, however, we find them distinguished as the Swallow group, whilst to the few white people who visit them they are most commonly known *tout court* as "The Reefs," from the wide-stretching reef by which each is surrounded.

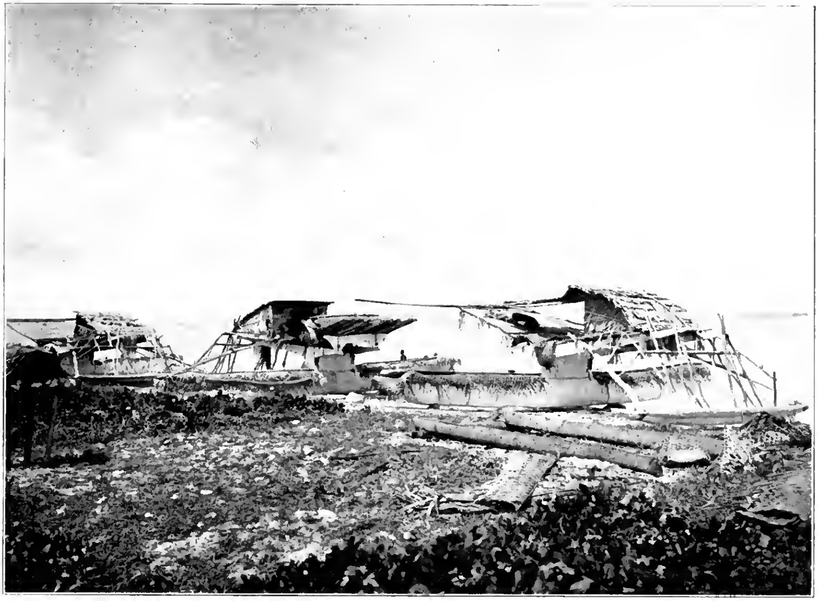
Most of these islands are very small, and now sparsely populated. Four of them—Matema, Pileni, Nupani, and Nukapu—are inhabited by Polynesians, who, from intermarriage with their seven Melanesian neighbour-islands, have acquired a Melanesian element discernible in appearance, custom, and speech. The frizzy hair of the Melanesian, for instance, is everywhere common. At the same time the distinction is far more apparent than any similarity. The language remains closely akin to the Maori, and a long way away from Mota, and the Polynesians are taller, fair-skinned, and perhaps even better-looking than the average Melanesian.

The only Reef Islands with which I am personally acquainted are Matema, Pileni, and Nukapu. The small one named Nifiloli, with a circumference of perhaps a mile and a half, now scarcely contains twenty people, but it is of peculiar interest from a philological point of view, because its language, whilst following the usual Oceanic construction in grammar, contains a large number of roots that have not as yet been connected with any known stock. It has been conjectured to be a legacy from the pre-Melanesian inhabitants of the Pacific Ocean, of whom we may be said to *know absolutely*—nothing!

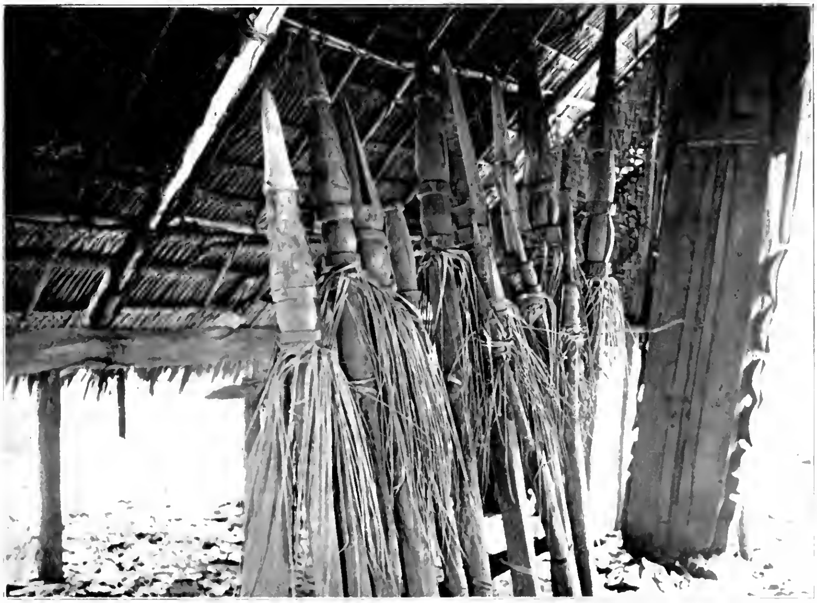
The surface of the island of Matema being but little raised above high-water mark, it only becomes clearly visible as you near it; but evidently the *Southern Cross* had been sighted long before from the land, for a whole fleet of dug-outs had reached us before our whale-boat was clear of the ship. The surrounding reef stretches for miles, and is bared every low tide.

Our welcome could not have been heartier. The familiar laughing face of one of our Norfolk Island trained girls caught my eye, and the next minute all her friends and relations were pressing round me, loading me with fruit, nuts, and freshly broiled fish! There are no gardens in Matema, and so the women have an easier time than elsewhere. Besides, in Polynesia they are no longer drudges. They fetch their firewood and water and cook the food. For the rest, their leisure is spent in plaiting and weaving

MATEMA.



"Their wonderful canoes."



The Stocks in the Ghost-house.

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the pretty bags and mats which always find a ready market when the Mission vessel appears.

The island abounds with bread-fruit, coco-nut, almonds, etc., and the surrounding water swarms with fish. Sometimes a voyage is made in their wonderful sailing canoes to Santa Cruz or even Vanikolo—seventy miles away. Mats are exchanged for yams, fish for feather-money, and the sailors return in triumph. The men of Matema are famous throughout the Reefs for their skilful and fearless seamanship, and the art of canoe-building rests with certain Matema families.

The sailing canoe, which will carry about ten people, has for hull a hollowed tree that lies low in the water. On one side a large outrigger supports a slanting deck, and upon this stands the steersman, with his long paddle over the stern. On the other side is a small and cosy cabin, where all perishables are stored for the voyage. The sail is a mat, which the women plait of grass, V-shaped, with tapering ends, fixed right forward on the bows. These vessels cannot beat to windward, but then time is no object hereabouts, and the natives will await, with perfect equanimity, for weeks at a stretch, the favourable wind. When beached, the canoe is carefully covered with coco-nut matting.

About once a month a trader from Santa Cruz will call for bêche-de-mer, which the natives pick up on the reef, receiving in exchange tobacco and calico.

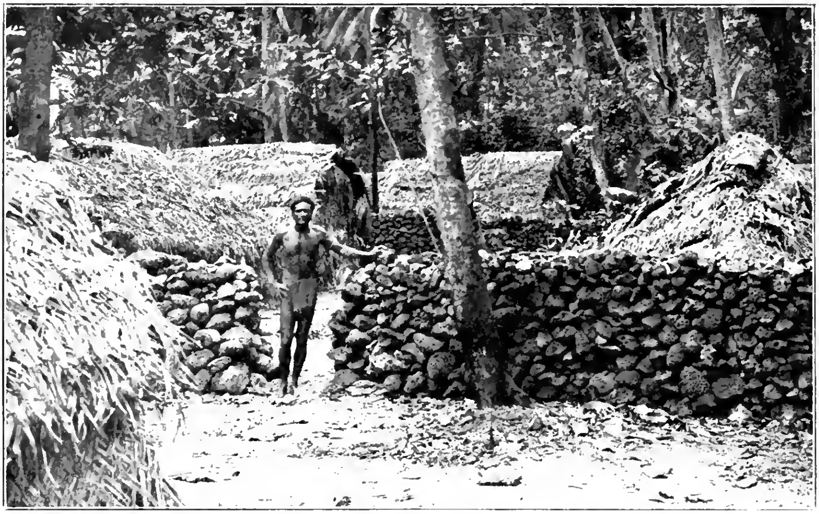
Where fish is so plentiful little art is required in capturing. The men wade out armed with hand-nets at the flowing tide. Some one sights a small shoal and raises the cry. With a dash the fish are surrounded, and the circle draws closer and closer. The fish try to escape out of it, and in their effort for freedom are taken in the nets. Each is swiftly removed, a bite at the back of the head kills it, and the men fling them over their shoulders to the eager boys, waiting to seize and thread them on a string of cane-grass for cooking.

It is almost impossible to realize when visiting these merry, child-like, affectionate Polynesians, whose life seems all sunshine and laughter, that the good-humour may at any moment, without warning, give place to a fury that can only be described as savage. The cause of offence is often a complete mystery, but like a bolt from the blue flashes forth the anger, which is so dangerous because completely uncontrolled. The bow is seized, and without an instant's pause the deadly arrow is launched into the body of the man with whom the minute before the archer was chatting and laughing in friendship. Death is not inevitable, but probable, and, what is worse, the tortures of tetanus.

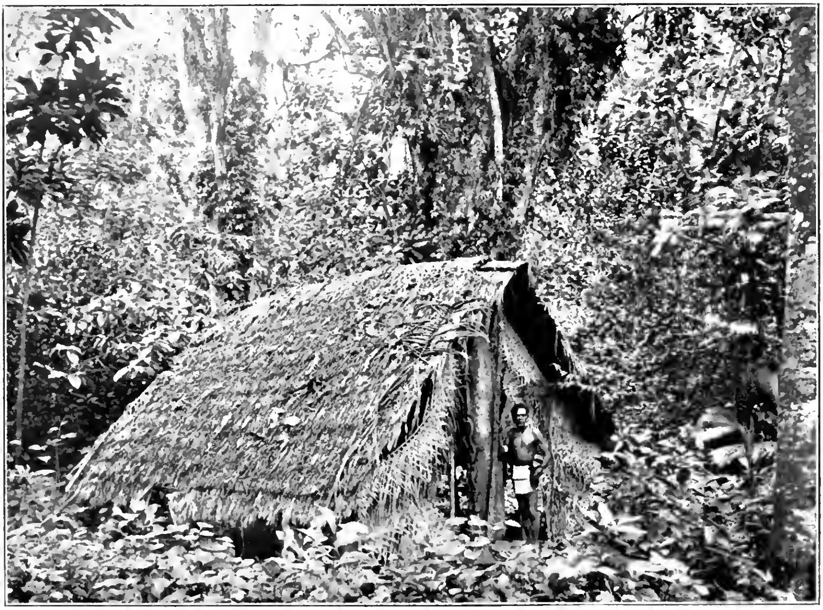
Exactly similar are the quarrels which are continually arising between village and village. Of old there were five villages in Matema; to-day there are only two. Three may be said to have been exterminated by internecine slaughter—no one could call it war.

We visited both villages. Shaded by great trees, which are the glory of Matema, the palm-leaf houses, cool and clean, stand two or three together, with a massy low stone wall surrounding, from 3 to 5 feet in height. One village contains five of these walled enclosures, each of which represents a clan or family, the members of which chum together thus for mutual protection. The tie of relationship is very

MATEMA.



Village with Walled Enclosures.



A Ghost-house.

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strong. Though a man make an altogether inexcusable attack, he can count upon the support and defence of all his enclosure. Who quarrels with me, quarrels with my brothers, and uncles, and cousins, and grandfathers! That is the law of the Reefs.

The wall struck me in some cases as very low, but it was shown to be quite protection enough for the archer, having let fly his shaft, to crouch behind while he fits another arrow to his bow.

Each village has its own ghost-house, standing within its own wall. These were not very elaborate—indeed, they had rather a deserted appearance, but this may have been partly due to the fact that the former ghost-house keeper has become a Christian and a teacher. No doubt they received more care when the ghosts were more esteemed. Where heathenism is strong, you will find a ghost-house to each enclosure—the *lares et penates*. Here one suffices for the five clans.

Each village acknowledges one great spirit, whose followers the inhabitants are, and who they trust regards them with especial interest—a sort of presiding genius, of a temper as uncertain as their own. The stocks in the ghost-house represent the departed members of the tribe, whose names are remembered with honour or affection, and every canoe in passing a ghost-house lowers its sail in respect for the dead who are commemorated in it. But the spirit alone is the object of awe and propitiation. The ghosts were his men when living; they are his ghosts when dead. The offerings of food which the villagers make are primarily to do honour to the spirit, but I imagine it is hoped that he generously shares the good things with his people, for certainly there is an accompanying idea of pleasing the ghosts as well.

The position seems to be this: When a man offers a sacrifice, the ghosts run and tell the spirit that one of his men is calling to him, and is killing a pig in his honour. The spirit then bids the ghosts go back and make sure that this really is the case. When they return to him, and confirm the report, he comes himself, sees the pig, and goes back well pleased with the man who has sacrificed to him.

The women have no part or lot in all this. As girls they know they are destined to marry men of another village, or even island, which acknowledges another spirit. They seem to feel it is not worth while to curry favour with a spirit which can do nothing for them in the future, seeing that a spirit has no power outside its own village. The teaching of Christianity comes to them as a great surprise, and at first the women and girls find it hard to believe that they are really wanted in the New Way.

The following is a native's account of

What happens after Death

A man's soul is distressed when it has just left its body, and goes to and fro crying for its mother, or wife, or children. The ghosts try to comfort it, pointing to this or that, and saying, "This is your mother!" or "There are your children!" But the soul sees that they are deceiving him.

Then after a few months he becomes weak, and the ghosts take him to the river Tevaiieke, and they put him on a piece of wood over the water. Then they turn the board over, and he falls into the river, and a large fish eats him up.

Then his ghost-relations catch a drop of his blood and work this miracle. They put it in a bowl and cover it with leaves. After five days they lift the leaves and look, and they see that the change has already taken place, for the blood has turned into a ghost. Five days later they lift the leaves once more, and they see that he has become a strong ghost-man—or if he was a boy, he is now a strong ghost-boy. After another period of five days he goes about, and grieves no more for his friends.

If a man is shot with an arrow he is treated differently from one who dies from sickness, for he goes to Temaunganefu, the mountain in Vanikolo. This is how it is. When there is fighting here [in the Reefs] the ghosts come from Vanikolo to see if any one is shot; and if so, they go back and cut bananas, and hang them up in the house in the mountain. When these ripen, it is a sign that the man who was shot is dead, and they go to meet him. The ghosts know according to the road he come by whether it is the man who was shot, for if he come by another road, they know he is a man who has died from sickness.

When they approach the house, the ghost who guides those who are bringing him cries, "Open the door!" And the ghosts inside repeat, "Open!" Then the man is brought in, and the door is shut. And the shutting of that door sounds like a gun-shot; it can be heard all over Vanikolo and the Reef Islands. There are men in Matema who say they have heard it.

Not all souls in the Reefs go to Vanikolo, but according to their families. One goes to Taumako; another goes to Temapapa [in Santa Cruz]; and another to Tinakula, the volcano, where they turn into ghosts in the fire in the crater. When the volcano sends out flames every one knows that some one has been shot. All who have been shot live round the tops of mountains, for they were strong men when killed; those who died from sickness live down below.

A Matema boy who had been for a short time at Norfolk Island developed tuberculosis, and died soon after his return. But the native diagnosis was, "Shot by the spirits!" because he had ventured to eat some coco-nuts which his mother had made taboo. It must have been rather a problem for the ghosts whether his future abode should be the summit or the base of the mountain.

CHAPTER VIII

PILENI, REEF ISLANDS

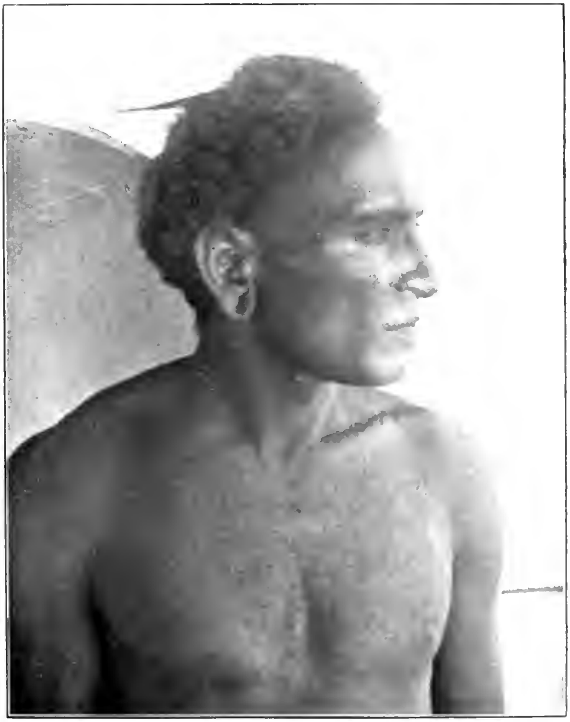
Characteristics—Dancing-grounds—Ghost-house—Love of fun—Native silo—Offering of first-fruits.

A WATER-WAY not more than a couple of miles in width appears to divide the Polynesian from the Melanesian peoples in the Reef Islands, and just to the west, or Polynesian side, of this imaginary line lies Pileni, a little low, long, green island about a mile and a half in circumference. It has less timber than Nukapu or Matema, but otherwise there is little to distinguish it. A similar reef, or fringe of coral rock, surrounds it at the distance of a few hundred yards, protecting it from the force of the waves.

There are three villages, in which, as at Matema, relations live together in walled compounds. There is the *gamal* standing square and solid, fronting the sea, with the houses of the families half-hidden in the trees behind. And now there is the school-house, which is quite an addition to the village, with its neat thatch and clean matted floor. And of course there are the dancing-grounds.

At first I was a little surprised to see two of these in one village, but I was speedily enlightened. One is for men and one for women! These are circular enclosures, with ground beautifully smooth, walled

Approaching Pileni—Nifiloli and Fenualoa in distance.



A Man of Pileni.

with flat slabs of coral set on edge, and with three or four entrances to each. I have been told that the Reef Island dances are neither graceful nor lively, chiefly consisting of shuffling, stamping, and clapping, but I have never seen one. They certainly give great pleasure to the performers, to whom an all-night dance, with no sitting-out and no supper interval, is quite an ordinary event.

The Pileni ghost-house was the first I ever entered. Outside I saw nothing to distinguish it from any other house. Within all was plain and simple, but a certain amount of decoration caught the eye, the wall-plate, ridge-pole, and principal rafters being adorned with native devices painted in red, black, white, and yellow.

The chief objects of interest, however, were of course the row of carved stocks or posts, each of which has a human interest. There were seven big ones—a very tall one in the centre and three rather shorter on either side. The carving is rough; no two are alike, but there is no attempt to portray a human head. They showed us which were men and which women. Each is decked with a fringe of grass. On the ground, leaning against the big ones, are a number of little stocks—eight or nine perhaps—each with its little grass fringe. These, they said, were the children. In the Matema ghost-house these juvenile stocks, it may be noticed, are bound to their parents. No sign was there of any other ornament, or offering, or garland. We were allowed to handle and examine the ghost-posts quite freely, and the people who accompanied us showed no sign of respect or awe—even laughing, talking, smoking, and chewing betel-nut within the house.

Of the Pileni folk I shall always have an affectionate recollection. It happened that here all were strangers to me, yet their eager reception, their generous hospitality, showed a true spirit of brotherliness. And their sense of fun—the dancing eyes, the infectious peals of laughter—a smile springs at the remembrance! With all the hot-headedness to which I have alluded, the reckless disregard of life, and hasty appeal to bow and arrow, I can only think of them as children—dear, lovable children!

The Bishop made a short stay here recently.

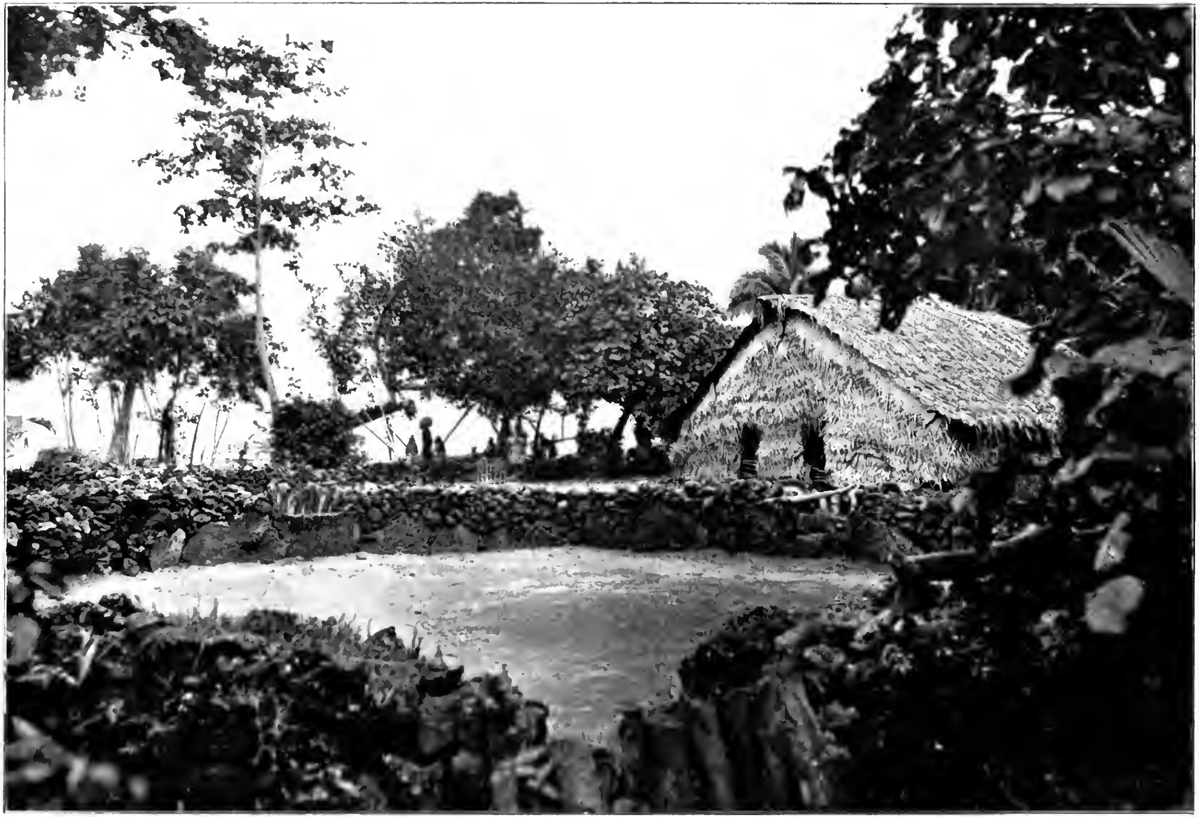
> "They were always laughing and joking," he writes. "A favourite practical joke was to fix a string to a man's loin-cloth as he lay asleep in the *gamal*, and tie the other end to the mat on which he lay. Then some one would cry, '*Te puke!*' (a sailing canoe)—a cry equivalent to our 'Sail O!'—at which he would start and fly out of the door, dragging the mat after him. I saw this hoax perpetrated dozens of times, but no one seemed to tire of it—not even the victims!"

Amongst the young men of whom the Bishop saw most, he happened to know that three had quite recently killed men, but no one seemed to think much the worse of them for that. They say, "There is always a good reason!"

Food is generally abundant, without the trouble of garden labour. For a small piece of feather-money, worth about a shilling, one can buy five large baskets of broken and dried bread-fruit, sufficient food for several months. And there is an ingenious method of storing practised which provides for the seasons of the year when fruit is scarcely to be obtained.

At the close of a plentiful bread-fruit crop a sort of silo is made by digging a large hole, and lining it

PILENI.



Gamal and Dancing-grounds.

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with the ubiquitous and useful banana leaf. This is crammed with bread-fruit, covered in with more banana leaves, and finally the pit is walled round against porcine incursions. In time of need it is opened, and the strong-smelling mash (which has become really a sort of ensilage) is by degrees consumed, and highly appreciated.

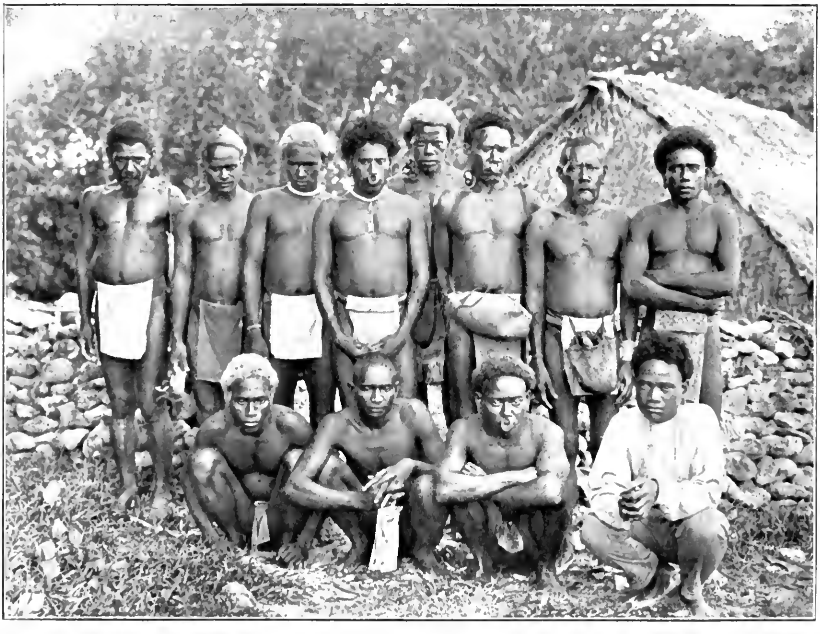
A ceremony is customary in connection with the fruit crops, akin to those observed in several of the Solomons, which certainly is reminiscent to us of the ancient Feast of First-fruits and the modern Harvest Thanksgiving. Here is a native description of it:—

> When the fruit of trees that are eatable is nearly ripe—such as bread-fruit or almond-nuts—about a month before the time that people eat it, they all go together into the bush. They must all go together for this holy eating, and when they return they all assemble in one place, and no one will be absent; they sit down and cook bread-fruit. While it is being cooked, no one will begin to eat, but they set it in order, and cook it with reverence, believing that the spirit has granted that food to them, and they return thanks to him for it.
>
> When it is cooked, a certain man takes a bread-fruit and climbs up a tree, and all the people stand on the ground, and they all look up; and when he has reached the top they shout out; and after that shout they cry, "This is the bread-fruit of the whole land!" Then he throws down the bread-fruit, which they pick up, shouting out again and giving thanks, for they think that the spirit who protects the fruit will hear.

We left Pileni laden with presents, chiefly coconuts and plantains. And our friends were made gay and happy in return with ribbons, flags, calico, and tobacco. The send-off was characteristic and charming—the people crowding round us to the last, and then, oh, the shrieks and peals of laughter, as all the child-population of Pileni plunged into the clear blue water in our boat's wake, capering, diving, swimming after the sticks of tobacco freely tossed to them. Pretty, laughing water-babies!

NUKAPU.

"This small emerald isle."



The Men-folk.

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CHAPTER IX

NUKAPU, REEF ISLANDS

Characteristics of island and people—How to get rid of a nuisance—An old story retold—Folk-tale: "About an Ogre and a very Big Pig."

No spot on earth's surface can be imagined more suggestive of peace than this small emerald isle, about fifteen miles westward from Pileni, girdled by a ring of glittering sapphire and reef-guarded, as a thin line of white foam bears menacing witness. Basking and twinkling in the sunshine of early morning, could this really be Nukapu of baleful memory, the island where those deadly wounds were inflicted which added three martyr names to the roll of the Melanesian Mission?

Before we had hove to, the little fleet of dug-outs had pushed off to us, the people to-day as fearless as friendly, scrambling on board, the chief first, followed by the teacher, at the earliest opportunity. Plenty of the rank and file followed, carrying finely-plaited baskets, mats, and bags for purposes of trade. Canoes, ornaments, hairdressing—all were after the fashion of Santa Cruz, yet the Nukapuans are undeniably Polynesian, and their language has little in common with the Cruzians'.

Alas! the tide was low—too low to admit of our whale-boat crossing the reef; the very canoes had to be carried across by hand. We made the attempt, being very anxious to land if possible, but had to return foiled.

It is a lovely little island—a natural temple, pillared by forest trees, curtained with creepers, and carpeted with ferns—of somewhat the same shape and size as Pileni. Winding tracks everywhere lead to the shore. Strange to say, birds seem to shun the groves of Nukapu, and the fauna is almost comprised in one word—rats! These swarm everywhere, but they cannot grow very fat, for food seems generally to be scarce here.

Our Polynesians are a lazy folk; they do not believe in making themselves hot and tired. Enough trouble is involved in gathering the fruit from the trees which grow of their own accord, without toiling and moiling over gardens. It is curious to note the contrast in this respect between the two races. At certain seasons you may pass from a Melanesian island to another close to, crossing in your passage that invisible dividing-line, and you leave behind an abundance of food, to arrive where there is practically none.

The Reefs are fortunate beyond some of the Banks in one respect: all can boast a good supply of fresh water, obtainable from wells whenever the tide is high.

The present population of Nukapu is only forty odd, divided between two villages. There were three formerly, but one was exterminated by fights. An illustration of the "kill-kill" tendency of these people was afforded us when, at their urgent request, a school was started here three or four years ago. One man who attended at first gave up doing so and adopted a hostile attitude. So to put an end to his obstruction the school people killed him! They had a secondary reason for hating him: he was a braggart; and to boast of one's strength and courage is the most heinous offence in the Reefs that can be committed. But the murder was to them the most ordinary action —just a common-sense thing to do when you want to get rid of an obnoxious person. They never dreamed of being hauled over the coals on account of *that*! Surely white people would have done the same!

During the Bishop's last stay in Nukapu he obtained some details of Bishop Patteson's murder which have never before been furnished, from natives who well remembered that fateful 20th September 1871.

It was, as we have always conceived, a matter of revenge for wrong committed by white men—labour-agents in name, kidnappers in fact—who had visited Nukapu and carried off certain of the natives. One of these escaped, but in the act was nearly murdered by the savage recruiters. This man, Teaduli, thirsting for revenge, readily agreed with the relatives of the lost men, to shed blood for blood, to help take as many lives as had been taken, white in exchange for brown.

The *Southern Cross* was in due season sighted; to Teaduli was granted the privilege of dealing with the Bishop, the others would attack the less important white men. Nothing was said to the rest of the people or to the chief of this conspiracy. Their welcome of the Bishop was genuine. He was their friend and powerful; he would recover their lost ones and avenge their cause.

The tide was low that day, as it was with ourselves thirty-six years later, and the Bishop came ashore in a native canoe. As was his custom, he entered the *gamal* for friendly converse, close to the chief's house.

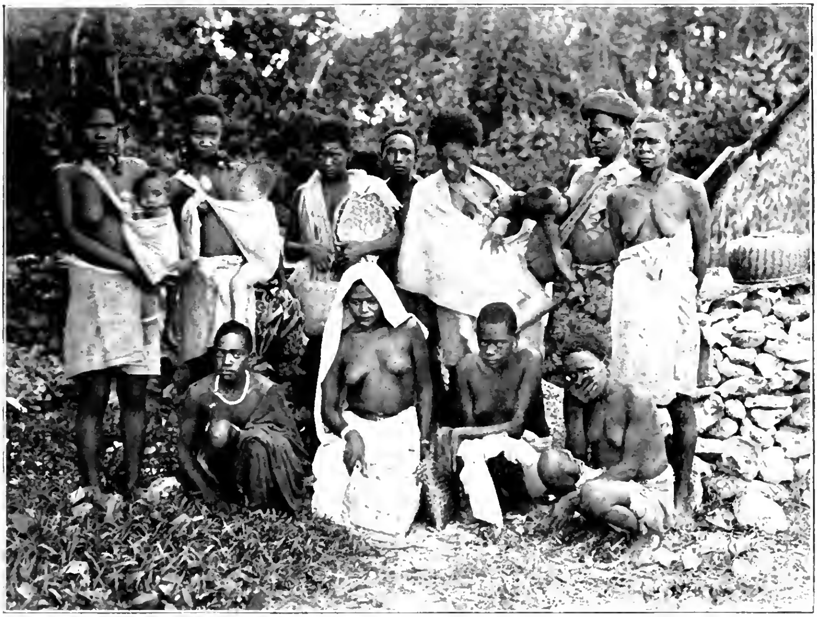
One can picture the scene perfectly. The central oven, and the men lounging around on mats, feet towards the middle, heads resting on the low, four-legged wooden supports, all smoking or chewing betel and sucking lime. When a visitor enters, etiquette demands an exchange of nuts, in place of which the Bishop was provided with presents.

The tale of trouble was poured into sympathetic ears. How must the Bishop have burned with indignation at the disgrace to the name of "white man"! Then came a pause. The Bishop lay down as one of themselves and closed his eyes. All saw Teaduli enter, but none noticed what he held behind his back until too late. The Bishop's head was close to the entrance and the fresh air. The murderous blow was easily struck with a club such as is used for beating out tappa-cloth.

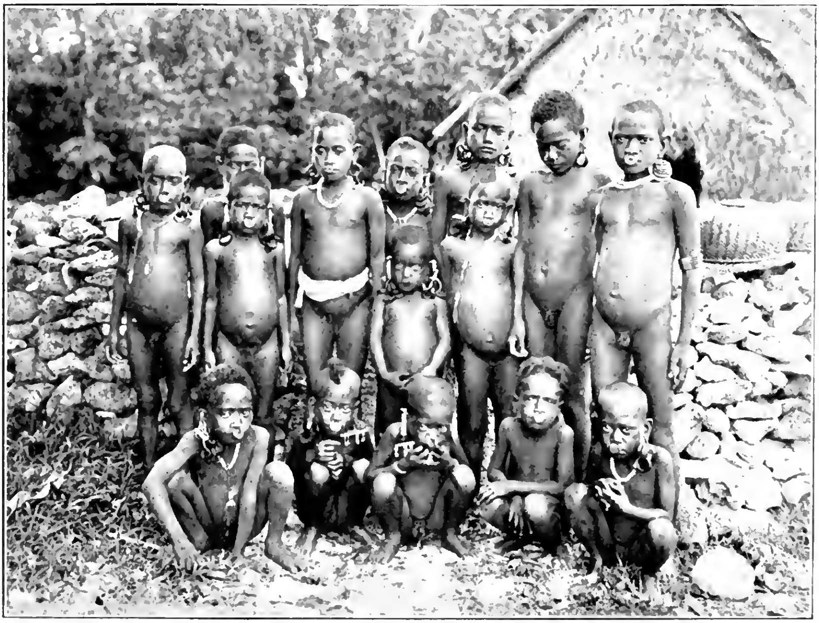
A panic seized the *gamal*, and all fled from the house. The chief, who had not been present, rushed in with bow and arrows on hearing what had occurred, to take vengeance on Teaduli, but he had already fled into the bush. The next idea was to conceal the body as quickly as possible—to bury it, but as far away as might be. Some men paddled at once to the north point of the island and began to dig a grave, whilst the women, according to custom, prepared the body for burial, wrapping it in a mat of woven grass, and laying those palm leaves, unconsciously emblematic, on the breast. It was placed in a canoe, ready for conveyance to the grave, when the ship's whale-boat was seen approaching. In fear the canoe was cast adrift, and those in charge returned in haste to land.

Teaduli was fined four coils of feather-money for

NUKAPU.



The Women-folk.



The Children.

his deed. Afterwards he went to Santa Cruz, and was there shot by a Matema man, dying subsequently at Pileni. Three of the kidnapped Nukapuans eventually returned, bringing dysentery with them, which is said to have swept away half the population.

To-day not only Matema and Pileni, but all Nukapu is following the new teaching, and amongst the scholars comes an old woman, the sister of Teaduli. She may be identified in the picture as the one on the reader's extreme right.

ABOUT AN OGRE AND A VERY BIG PIG

They two ate human flesh, and dwelt on the other side of Taumako, and that man was called Tepkakhola, and that pig was called Ulaka. And they two ate men until there was scarcely any one left—only ten brothers and one woman. So these met together and said, "Let us make a canoe, and flee away from here."

And they worked until the canoe was finished; then they made ready the food.

After that, in the evening they were to start; but their sister had a very large foot, and alas for her! when she put in one foot the canoe turned over. She tried with her first brother, but when her foot went up, down went the canoe! And so she tried with all her ten brothers, but it was the same with them all.

Then she said to them, "No matter! It's all right, those two can devour me!"

And they were very sorry for her, and said to her, "We will make a cave for you."

So they dug out a very big cave, and carried much food into it, and very many coco-nuts, and placed slats of wood at its mouth; and when they had covered them over with earth, they sailed away and reached Metema, and dwelt there.

But the woman lived entirely in the cave her brothers had made for her. And the slats at the cave-mouth rotted.

One day as she was sitting, two lizards came into the cave, one chasing the other, and they jumped down her throat. And she thought to herself, "Why have these two lizards entered into me?"

So by and by twins were born to her, and she nourished her two children till they were grown up and were very strong. And while they were still children they asked their mother, "Why do we three live together in this cave?"

And when they had become young men, one shot and pierced through the door, and for the first time they saw light. Then they spake together, "What is this thing?" And their mother told them.

Then they said to their mother, "Make a torch with coco-nut leaves!" and their mother did as they told her. She took some, and dried them in the sun; and when it was evening she made them into a torch for fishing. And the twins directed her to go to the place where the water springs forth from the rock, and that water is called Tutu.

So she went; and while she was seeking it, Tepkakhola saw the flame from afar, and he said, "Who is this? I have sought in vain for a man, and who is this?" And he ran, and when he saw her coming, he drew near and met her near the shore, and said, "Is it you, my friend?"

And she said, "It is I."

And he said, "Where do you live? I have not seen you."

And she said, "I live here."

And he said, "Give me some fish!"

And she gave him one bag full. And he came rather nearer, and followed her, and when he had finished one bag he said, "Give me more! If not, I will eat your sons." So she gave him another bag.

Now he came near the place where her two sons were. And they had made a cross-stick, and she had taken the midrib of the sago-palm leaf and made it like a fish-bone, and had put it into the net, in the place where the water flows forth from the rock.

As the woman neared the place, she drew forth the rib, and Tepkakhola said, "Give me that fish!"

But she said, "That is my sons' food."

And he said, "Give it to me!"

And she said, "There is only one fish, and I want it very much for my two sons."

And he said, "Give it to me!"

So she said, "I will put it into your mouth."

And when he opened his mouth wide, she thrust the midrib of the leaf down his throat, singing a song. And it stuck in his throat; and so it was that he cried out, "My sister, I am dying!"

And the Twins came suddenly upon him, and shot him, and he died. So they three dwelt in peace.

Now the Twins used to go shooting fish; and their mother said to them, "When you are fishing, don't go far away, lest that evil thing see you."

And they went and climbed a tree, and shouted out, "Ulaka! Ulaka!"

And the pig heard afar off, and ran; and as he ran, his tail struck the trees, and it snapped them off short. But the Twins kept quiet, for when they saw him they were afraid. And he went away; then they climbed down.

But one day they made a number of spears, and climbing into another tree, again they called out, "Ulaka! Ulaka!"

And the pig ran, and they kept quiet, and he came and found some coco-nuts, and he ate them. And his countenance was very terrible, and when he had eaten he lay down. And when they saw that he was gorged, they came down and speared him.

Now they had put spears ready in the path; and as he fled, one on the one side of the road, and the other on the other stood ready; and he turned to one to gore him, and the other speared him, then he turned again to that one, and the other speared him. And they kept on doing this till they reached the beach, and he died there.

PART III

IN NORTHERN MELANESIA

CHAPTER I

SAN CRISTOVAL, SOLOMON ISLANDS

History—Natural features—Head-hunting—Story of same—Cannibals classified—When heads are wanted—War summons—Sacrifices to ghosts—Peace-making—Chiefs—Taki, chief—A cannibal missionary?—David Bo, chief—Infanticide—Children—Tattooing—Dogs—Trials by ordeal—Snake-worship—Santa Anna—Wizardry—Sea-ghosts—How men become ghosts—Beliefs and fables—Ugi—The coco-nut crab—Folk-tale: "The Snake who turned into a Man."

Mystery, beauty, romance, blood-curdling adventures—are not these things bound up in the very name of the Solomon Islands, which we are now to visit?

The group was christened by Mendaña when discovered by him in the latter part of June 1567. The excited imaginations of the Spaniards conjured up traces of gold and silver in one of the islands, and hope arose of creating here a Spanish colony. Knowing the prevailing lust for ore, they thought to entice their countrymen by dangling before them a tempting name. They professed to have discovered the source of King Solomon's wealth, the lands of gold which provided material for the Temple.

But Fate had in store a revenge for Fallacy. The Solomon Islands were no sooner found than they were lost again, not to be rediscovered for 230 years, in spite of several voyages of search. It was in 1797 that a white man's eye once more sighted them, to Captain Wilson of the *Duff* (a mission vessel) falling this great good fortune.

I am limiting myself in this book to islands of which I have some personal acquaintance, and we shall therefore visit only seven of the easterly members of this archipelago—namely San Cristoval (including Ugi and Santa Anna), Ulawa, Mala, Guadalcanar, Ġela, Savo, and Bugotu.

Of these the first to be reached is San Cristoval, lying 200 miles to the east of Santa Cruz. The island is about seventy miles long and twenty wide. Its mountains rise to over 4000 feet, and form a background of grandeur and wildness. A lovely island it is, but with the lust of the vampire behind the mask of beauty—La Belle Sauvage!

The opening line of one of old Francis Quarles' "Emblems" sprang to my lips when we first dropped anchor off the northern shore of San Cristoval: "*Oh, what a crocodilean world is this!*"

The wide mouths of various streams, heavily overhung with branches, the grotesque reptilian shapes assumed by the ancient tree-roots, gnarled and bare—everything seemed to suggest the proximity of crocodiles.

But there are worse than crocodiles. We have reached the Dominion of the Head-hunters! Cannibalism and head-hunting may be said to be national customs in most of the Solomon Islands. The head-hunter no longer stalks naked and unashamed. The chief no longer ornaments his house and establishes his eminence with so many hundred human skulls. But the pagan sport is rather scotched than killed.

San Cristoval was formerly a great head-hunting

SAN CRISTOVAL.

"A crocodilean world"—River in San Cristoval.

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district. The avowed object of a raid was chiefly aggrandizement. A chief's *mana* was estimated by the number of skulls that decorated the entrance to his house, ranged in row above row on projecting slabs. These might amount in the case of a regular war-lord to as many as a thousand, but a petty chief might perforce be content with less than thirty. Some would have been slain in battle, the corpses being then decapitated and the bodies devoured, while the skulls were added to the chief's collection. But war was too slow, uncertain, and expensive a method to be the most popular. The favourite plan was to fix upon some distant village—it might be in another island—and to organize a nocturnal excursion.

The chief and his warriors would hold their council in the large canoe-house, which in all Solomon Island villages serves also the purpose of club-house or *gamal*. The great war-canoes are prepared and drawn down to the sea. The head-hunters smear their bodies with lime so that they may distinguish one another in the dark. Clubs, knives, hatchets, bows and arrows, every obtainable weapon is stored in the boat and the start is made.

The landing is seldom effected till darkness has fallen and the unsuspecting village is asleep. Silent as ghosts the dusky companies disembark, arm themselves, steal like shadows through the bush and surround the village. Sometimes they wait for the first glimmer of dawn, that no victims may escape under cover of the night. But whether sooner or later, the awful yell is heard that strikes paralyzing terror into the hearts of the doomed and stirs to excitement the men of blood.

The attack is simultaneous. Organized resistance is impossible. There is no pity; every corner is ransacked, and the inhabitants are clubbed, or stabbed, or shot, then fiercely beheaded, till the massacre is complete. Every head is equally valuable, male or female, infantile or adult. As many as a hundred were not infrequently the harvest of a single raid.

Ten years ago a singular instance of Nemesis occurred among the head-hunters of New Georgia. The entire fighting strength of a certain village—some sixty men—set forth upon a distant raid, with shields, spears, axes, and rifles. They landed unseen near their destination and concealed themselves in the bush; but the spies sent forward returned with the report that the villagers so far outnumbered them that an attack was not to be thought of.

On the way back to the beach, however, the angry head-hunters fell in with a returning fishing party—a score of defenceless souls, including some women and children. The whole were massacred and their heads carried off.

But while this was going on, it chanced that the people of Sibo, finding themselves also in urgent need of heads, had visited New Georgia with the very same object. The fates proved peculiarly propitious, since in the village they attacked was found no one capable of offering resistance; there were only the women and children and some aged men. Having captured every head, they amused themselves by ransacking the village and spoiling the gardens.

And when the men of the place returned from their own raid, it was to find the village a desolate wreck, devoid of a living soul.

When heads are wanted, live ones are as good as dead; so a certain number of prisoners would often be taken, as many as could be packed into the canoes, their limbs being broken first as a precautionary measure, if there were danger of escape or rescue. Some such would furnish fresh food on the homeward journey.

Head-hunters may be generally assumed to be cannibals, but it must be clearly understood that feasting is not the object of the hunt.

And here one may be allowed to digress for a moment on the subject of cannibals, who have been much misunderstood by the outside world from time immemorial.

The obnoxious custom seems to spring (in Melanesia at all events) from four principal and distinct grounds.

Rarest of all, we may place the sheer gross appetite for human flesh. By this I do not mean that it is commonly distasteful, but that it is not common to find a man killed simply to serve as a *chef d'œuvre* at a feast. But reluctantly I must confess that where, as in San Cristoval, after a battle we find dead bodies hawked up and down the coast in canoes for sale, we come very near the cannibalism of our boys' story-books. In Mala also we meet apparent cases of man-eating for pleasure. In this first class we must also include the instances of cannibalism in consequence of famine, such as was evidenced among the Maoris long ago.

In the New Hebrides we have seen cannibalism spring from another ground, and that a penal one, as a form of capital punishment. Men in general seem particularly to dislike the thought of being eaten, so the fate is held in reserve for overweening and obstinate offenders.

Yet again, cannibalism is the most effective expression of contempt that the native mind has succeeded in devising, and with this view the body of a dead enemy will often be consumed with gusto.

Some years ago the priest who was then working in San Cristoval came upon a party of natives in the act of cooking an enemy. He writes that his "sense of disgust and indignation was great; one felt inclined to upset the oven and its contents, but the thought occurred that he who did so would in all probability be the oven's next occupant!"

They seemed to have no idea then of a white man's horror, continuing to laugh and joke about their victim's last struggles, and sticking the finger-joints jauntily in their hair with their combs.

But here in the Solomons we find traces of still another idea struggling thus repulsively—yet surely to our sight with a wonderful pathos—to realize itself. A powerful chief who has long been dreaded and admired is slain in battle, and the yearning of all the men who were his enemies to obtain a portion of his spirit—that *mana* which was the secret of his valour and success—develops into an almost religious ceremony. A mouthful of the brave man's flesh and blood is thought to convey his coveted power. In this act of cannibalism we seem to detect the germ of a Divine truth.

Head-hunting on the barbaric, wholesale scale began to wane many years ago. The order for "heads!" was not given so frequently or indiscriminately as of yore. The headsmen sometimes deigned to bargain with a tribe. "Give us five heads—ten heads—twenty, and we will go!"

Then, if the chief dare not fight, he would hand over a batch of captives taken in one of his own raiding expeditions, to whom it would be no shock or surprise, for every such prisoner knows himself to be only a "head," to be decapitated when wanted.

It was quite customary, when enough heads had been obtained to satisfy a chief's immediate desire, thus to keep the rest, not only alive, but unharmed and unbound until required. Escape spelt death; submission spelt not slavery, for slave-servitude is not an Ocean custom, but freedom and food, a treatment, in fact, almost such as they would have received at home, and which might conceivably continue for many years. And in these strange, unrealizable circumstances many lads grew to men's estate before the fatal day arrived on which the head was wanted!

What head-hunting goes on to-day is mostly on an individual scale. A heathen chief has erected a new canoe-house, and it needs "washing down," and nothing but human blood will suffice for the purpose. The skull will be witness that the rite was duly performed. Or it is a new canoe that has been made, and it will have no success until it has been smeared with man's blood: another "head" is wanted. Or it may be the spirits of late have shown themselves malevolent. The ghost of a deceased chieftain is said to demand a head, and his blood-thirst must at all costs be assuaged. So liers-in-wait are stationed, and woe betide the solitary villager who ventures into the bush when chiefs have given the order for a head and there is none on hand!

It must not be assumed that because such ugly and treacherous means are resorted to, the natives are cowards and fear an open fight. Far from it! But fighting is a different game.

By an elaborate and ingenious method of telegraphy, the chief when necessary summons his adherents to the fray. The message is beaten out on the hollow hard-wood trunk that constitutes the native drum.

"Let all the villages who espouse my cause turn out with spear and shield, for the enemy is at hand! Think not that all is well, for danger is imminent!"

These drum messages carry for miles in the still, warm air. In every village there are some who can read them, and so the warning flies around.

Before the battle begins, the Ghost of War must be propitiated. His name is Harumae, and roast pork seems to be his fancy. Certain men are acquainted with the rites and forms of words which win favour with Harumae. I suppose we might call such priests.

There is a small house in the village which is the sacred shrine of Harumae. Having killed and cut up a pig, the priest washes his hands, and then with solemnity and respect carries a portion of the flesh into Harumae's house. There he calls upon him: "Harumae! Chief in war! we sacrifice to you with this pig, that you may help us to smite that place. Whatever booty we carry away shall be your property, and we ourselves also!"

He then lights the fire on the sacrificial stone and burns the flesh upon it. He also pours the blood upon the fire, and the flame blazing up to the roof is a sign that Harumae has heard the petition. The carcass of the pig is afterwards cooked and eaten by the people.

When the fight is over, terms are concluded, and a formal peace-making takes place at a fixed rendezvous. The rival forces assemble in their diminished numbers, still armed with clubs, and spears, and bone-tipped arrows, and something of the nature of a mutual review is held. Each side in turn squats tranquilly on the ground while the enemy of yesterday charges up to within three or four yards of them.

One of the tribe, chosen as orator, runs backwards and forwards incessantly, working himself up to a condition of effective excitement. He is making his speech meanwhile—a long harangue about the war and those who were killed in it—gesticulating with his spear, which he brandishes in a menacing manner, especially on nearing the chief, who seems in imminent danger of being stuck through. That great man is probably occupied with his pipe or betel-nut, and ostentatiously takes no notice whatever of the performance until the end.

The orator then subdues his emotions and produces some money from a bag he carries. This interests the chief more than his eloquence or his spear-play, and he condescends to step forward, count, and accept the sum offered. Then a similar performance is gone through by himself and his men, and the opposition has its sweet revenge in sitting down and taking no notice!

The money paid is a fixed sum in compensation for every man killed, so as a curious ensuing result the winning side has to pay the most! The fines are distributed among the relatives of the dead.

Chiefs in the Solomons are more powerful and important than in any of the islands we have visited hitherto, with the exception of Tikopia. It is a serious matter to be in the black books of one's chief in San Cristoval. The ingenuity of his malice is sometimes worthy of a Gilbertian invention.

Old Taki, the chief of Waño, evolved a grudge against a certain man, and resolved to punish him for it. He killed a large pig, and sent it as a gift to the offender, accompanied with a huge quantity of yams.

San Cristoval etiquette does not admit of the refusal of a chiefly gift: such would be an open and flagrant insult, bringing speedy chastisement. It is obligatory on the recipient to accept both pig and yams, and to make therewith a banquet. This does not sound like a very dire punishment. But the sting lies in the tail.

By the inexorable law of native custom the poor fellow knew himself compelled to send in return a present equal to, if not exceeding in value, what he had received. Taki was rich; his victim, poor already, was by the chief's lavish generosity (?) reduced to beggary. His small garden was insufficient to supply the yams required, and all his money was exhausted in buying food for the man of abundance!

Taki still lives and flourishes—an interesting character, whose portrait I am able to reproduce. Until about 1890 he was notorious as a leading head-hunter and cannibal.

Perhaps thirty years ago some influence induced him to give his son to the white men to be trained in our Norfolk Island Industrial College. But on the lad's return Taki would have none of his new-fangled ways. He dragged the lad down again into shameless savagery, and gloried in it. But the youth had hardly attained maturity when he was killed by a bite from a shark, and about the same time Taki lost both wife and brother. We have in our possession the stock which Taki caused to be carved to memorialize his son. It represents a shark's head, with the miniature figure of a man in its jaws. Thenceforth Taki declared war upon all sharks; the whole ocean tribe suffer for the act of the one. But he wanted something more valuable than the life of many sharks in revenge for the loss of his nearest. He wanted *heads*! And they were not so easy to obtain in 1885 as they had been in, say, 1880.

In vain he urged and gibed at the young men of his village for their cowardice; in vain he lamented and bewailed their desertion and his desolation. They were learning the new way, and could not be prevailed upon to organize one of the night-raids so dear to them of old time. Taki bound around him the girdle that signifies married-womanhood in San Cristoval. It was a sign to the world that he was in the position of an old woman, having lost his nearest and dearest, and yet being unable to obtain human heads with which to honour their tombs.

But in 1887 the girdle was put off. His desire was fulfilled. Two labourers returning from the Queensland sugar plantations, afraid to set foot in their native land, the wild island of Mala, pleaded for shelter in Taki's village, hoping for safety, no doubt, where a Mission school was planted. Taki was more than willing to receive them, he was delighted. Forthwith he sent money and instructions to some heathen down the coast, and the heads of the two Mala men were added to Taki's trophies.

The murder accomplished, Taki explained that a vow he had made necessitated his action, but that now all was over he would like to make a fresh start, follow his people in forsaking savagery, and learn the Peace Teaching!

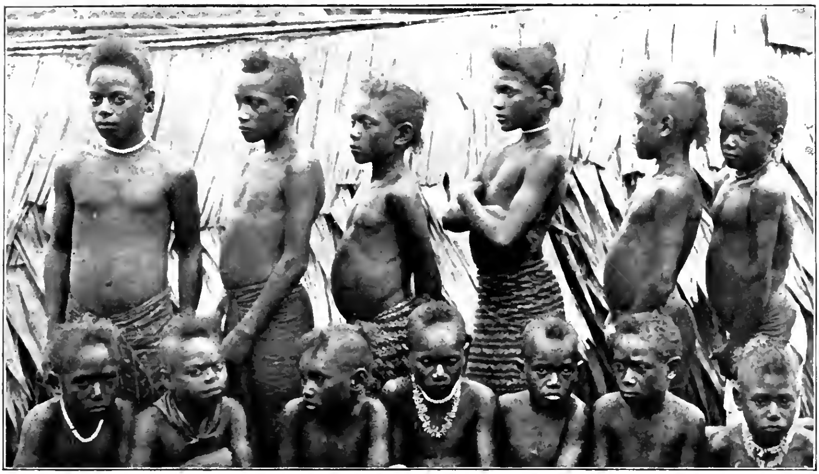
It need hardly be said that the resolution was of a very transitory character. He did indeed for a short time attend school, but in 1891, when he had a grand war-canoe made for him in Mala, it was his ambition to celebrate the event in the good old way—obtain a head for the canoe's ornamentation, make a feast off the body, and go for an exhibition voyage round all the neighbouring villages to receive complimentary offerings.

But the difficulty was that by this time nearly all his followers were baptized Christians. He called upon them for their assistance in the matter, and instead of prompt acquiescence they replied with a stipulation. There must be no "washing" of the canoe with blood and no sacrifices to ghosts. Seeing no help for it, Taki gloomily assented. The canoe was launched in state; the voyage was smooth and prosperous; the villages visited were lavish with their gifts. In spite of all disasters prophesied by the heathen, success attended the expedition from start to finish. And instead of man-eating and ghost-worship, there were Matins and Evensong in the vernacular every day—prayer and praise.

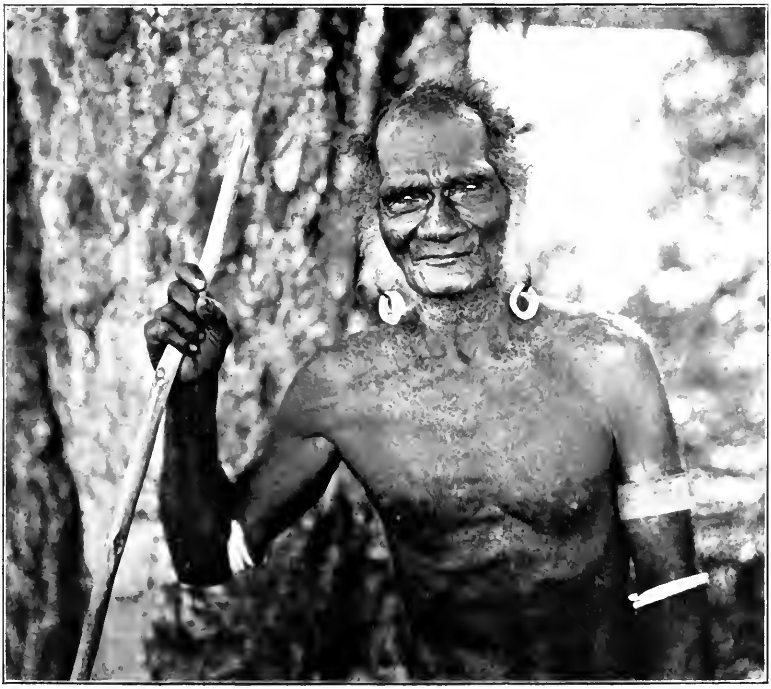
Even after this, it was not at once that Taki surrendered to the new teaching. But the gradualness and deliberateness of his steps made for permanency. After long and careful schooling came the old chief's baptism, and he has been true now for many years to his Christian profession.

Last year the Bishop spent a few days in Waño, Taki's village. He writes as follows:—

> What a service we had at Waño! They have built a beautiful church there—wonderful outside with its dog-tooth pattern in red, white, and black; and two doors side by side



"Attractive Little People"—Boys of San Cristoval.



John Still Taki, Chief.

at the west end, with large crosses on them in relief, and locks (without doubt, taken off their Norfolk Island boxes !). The inside was still more wonderful : a decorated, painted font; well-made seats, placed College-Chapel wise; book-desks resting on the tails of carved bonito-fish ; a bark floor, and cement altar-steps.

On Sunday morning, after Holy Communion in the new church, the people who had come from Christian villages in all parts, gathered for the Dedication ceremony. About 160 of them marched two and two in procession round the church, singing, and all taking part in it, the 122nd Psalm. Then *John Still Taki*, the old Chief, led the men in at one door, and two women-teachers led the women in by the other, and the church was filled, leaving little room for myself and the teachers to enter after them.

A bountiful feast followed, in which some of the heathen joined. It was a great day for old Taki, and he prowled around, leaning on his long stick, not unlike a good-natured gorilla to look at, seeing that all were well supplied and happy.

In connection with Waño a rather comical incident occurred, in which a white priest was concerned.

The mother of one of our native teachers, herself still a heathen, met with an accident while bathing, and was nearly drowned. She was rescued with difficulty by the missionary and her son, and carried to a hut near by, where various methods were employed to revive her, but in vain. The body was icy cold, and on finding that the stones of the ground oven were still burning hot, the missionary decided to apply artificial heat. He wrapped the unconscious woman in a thick mat, laid her upon the hollow, and piled the hot stones upon and around her.

Scarcely had he done so when the poor woman's husband and friends, having heard she was drowned, came rushing in. Imagine their feelings on finding the white man apparently intent upon cooking the corpse! The temptation had been too great for him—he had turned cannibal at last!

Fortunately for himself, the old mother obligingly yielded to the stimulus of heat, revived and sat up, and the missionary was able to hand his recovered patient over to her friends.

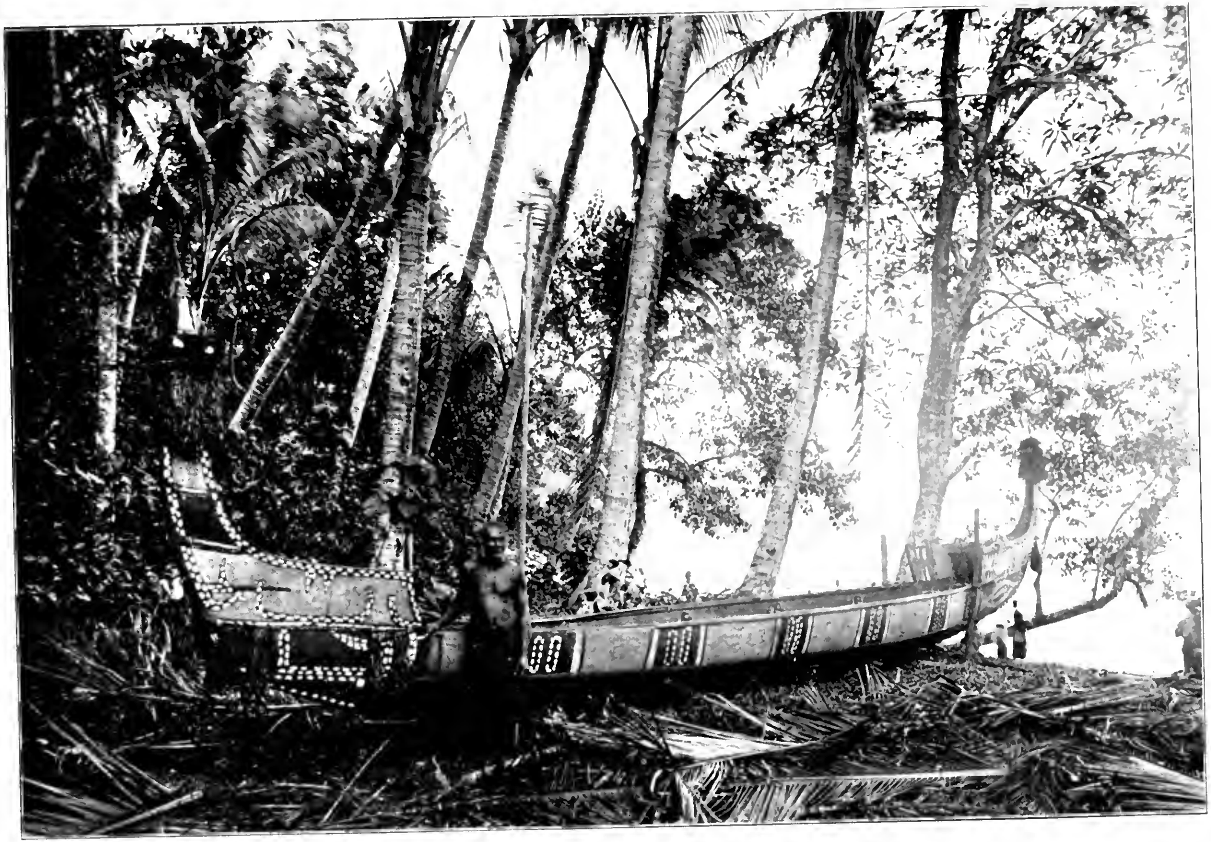
Another fine old San Cristoval chief died last year—David Bo of Heuru, also in his time a notorious head-hunter. Unlike Taki, his brother, as a heathen he was a worshipper of sharks. It was the wont of him and his followers, when starting on an expedition, to place food on a sacred block of red jasper, with prayers to the sharks that they might be propitious and guide the canoe safely. This block of jasper has a place now in the uppermost step leading to the altar in the church at Heuru, where I saw it. I was told that of old it had *mana* for inducing a prodigious appetite in its devotees!

Touching David Bo it may be mentioned that one of our head boys at Norfolk Island, a native of Heuru, remarked one morning a few months ago that he believed his chief had died. On inquiry he said that he had dreamed of him, and that although the chief seemed perfectly happy and full of life, he himself had wept greatly. A few weeks later the *Southern Cross*, returning from the islands, brought news of David Bo's death on the very night of the lad's dream.

David Bo's son (and Taki's nephew), Martin Taki, is one of our most promising cricketers at the present time.

From what has been written of the head-hunters it will rightly have been inferred that human life is little regarded in San Cristoval. Until recent years

SAN CRISTOVAL.



DAVID BO, CHIEF, AND HIS CANOE.

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infanticide was frightfully common. The legend ran among the younger matrons that a mother's strength was sapped by suckling her infant. But the old women were the chief offenders in the crime of baby-murder, and for the simple reason that when the young wives were kept from field-work by child-bearing the labour fell upon the elders. So these used all their powers to imbue the rising generation with the idea that to rear one's own children was a quite unnecessary labour.

It was a village chief in this island whose *apologia pro vita sua* in pidgin-English ran as follows:—

"My mamma when me born she no want piccaninny, so she dig hole, put me in. But 'nother woman she say, 'Me want piccaninny!' so she take me out an' feed me."

The antithesis to the story of Moses is provided by another, somewhat similar case. A mother having reared her first-born son, absolutely declined to undertake the business a second time, and the next little one was doomed to death. The mother insisted on the father's killing it, but his heart must have failed him. The grave was dug and the new-born child laid within it, but the earth was not stamped down.

A woman of compassion heard the feeble wail and rescued the child to bring it up as her own. Unable herself to nurse it, she applied to the mother-murderess, who consented to feed her own child, on condition of being paid so many strings of money, with the understanding that it was to belong entirely to its saviour and adopter. The general feeling was that this was a very reasonable arrangement.

The usual practice, and one still prevalent in many of the Solomons, was to buy boys and girls, as they were wanted, from the Bush people, at an age when they could look after themselves. Such children are adopted into the family, and treated exactly as if born there. Their foster-parents' relations are regarded as their own, so much so that here they are prohibited from marrying within the same limits as if they were indeed of kin.

The San Cristoval children are most attractive little people, clean-skinned, graceful, well-proportioned, with refined faces and musical voices. The heads are shaved, except for three poodle-tufts of wavy hair, one over the brow, one on the very crown, and one at the back. I was struck by the large proportion of indubitably almond eyes amongst them, often accompanied by a slight droop of the eyelids. Seeing them, it would be hard to dispute the existence of a Mongolian strain.

Tattooing is dying out among the Christians, and that is well, for it is a barbarous process enough. The favourite pattern is as follows: above the nose, a frigate-bird, and lines over the eyebrows to represent the evening sky; beside the eyes, circles to suggest the fruit of a certain tree; and on the cheeks, clouds and birds' wings alternately.

The child to be tattooed is tied firmly down, and his friends assemble for the ceremony, which is performed with the sharpened bone of a bat's wing, drawn heavily over the skin. The sufferer's cries are pitiable, and no wonder, for the blood flows freely, and has to be continually mopped away, and all acknowledge that the process is exquisitely painful. When one-half of the face is done, drums are beaten to announce the fact to the neighbouring villages; and when the frigate-bird is finished, the drums are beaten again.

An entire day is occupied by the operation, at the conclusion of which the tattooing expert receives a heavy fee. They say that for three ensuing days the child suffers grievously, and for weeks to come the poor little face is swollen and repulsive to the eye.

Happily, there is no overloading with ornaments nor distorting of the features. I was presented with a necklace of tiny grey seed-husks, which are here the token of widowhood, whether worn in tassels as ear-rings or round the neck. The hair too is cropped and the body daubed with soot and ashes.

In pitiful contrast to the well-fed and well-favoured children are the dogs one sees everywhere—so appallingly thin for the most part that you can almost see through them! And no wonder, for they are never fed. If one by any chance puts on a little flesh, it is promptly cooked and eaten. But they are owned and kept, poor wretches, for the sake of the two money-teeth which each possesses. At a given age they are buried up to the neck in sand and the owner knocks out the two teeth. These are not worth more than a penny apiece in San Cristoval, where dogs are plentiful, but they can be realized in G̈ela for sixpence each.

In a hundred ways one sees that the natural compassion of these people has either been long smothered or indeed has never yet awakened. In any case it is not dead, only waiting to be brought forth, as the tenderness and pity of the Christian natives evidence.

After all, maybe they are hardly more cruel than our own forefathers. Did they not make use of barbaric trials by ordeal, with implicit faith in the result?

In San Cristoval, when a man is persistently accused of an offence which cannot be proved against him, he is similarly put to the test. First, his own familiar ghost is invoked to assist by his presence, and presumably to see that his man does not suffer unjustly. Then the ordeal is undergone.

It may be by red-hot stones which he must lift bare-handed above his head three times. And if his hands show no burn, he is innocent.

Or he must eat unslaked lime, or suffer a burning wick to be thrust between his teeth; and if his mouth is not burnt, he is innocent.

Another plan is to heap dry, inflammable coconut leaves into a mighty pile and then lay a tree trunk over them. Fire is set to the leaves, and the accused walks down the log. If his legs are not scorched, he is innocent.

There is a pool, notoriously full of sharks and crocodiles. The accused is condemned to swim across it. If the monsters separate into companies and make way for him, *then* he is innocent.

Ask a native if any have ever succeeded thus in establishing their innocency. The only answer will be—if not, it is because all have been guilty.

We have already found serpents regarded with reverence and awe in Melanesian islands, but here in San Cristoval we seem to reach the very centre and source of snake-worship.

The creator of men, animals, and all good and pleasant things was a female spirit in the form of a snake, and in those days there was no death. Her name varies in every district of the island, but the legend is universal. To take one of her shorter names, this Kahuahuarii had her home in the great central mountainous mass of the interior of San

Cristoval. She made the first man out of a coco-nut; you may still see what suggested the eyes and mouth. How woman occurred tradition does not relate. She just came somehow and then the first child was born. Kahuahuarii loved it, and offered to take care of it, setting the woman free for her field-work. So the mother went away, and Kahuahuarii coiled in a circle round the baby. But the baby began to cry, and the snake could not stop it. In her efforts she coiled closer and closer round till the child was strangled. Back came the parents, and, seeing what had happened, tried to chop up Kahuahuarii with an adze. As fast as the adze cut through the body the pieces joined together again. But the serpent was offended, and glided away saying, "I go, and who will help you now?"

She left San Cristoval for Mala, and finally settled in the south-east of Guadalcanar, and since her departure everything has deteriorated. Yet there are some who say she lives still at Haunuru, a cannibal village on the south side of San Cristoval. Be this as it may, snakes in general are venerated and approached on account of Kahuahuarii, especially those in Bauro, and it is certainly from Haunuru that word goes forth when sacrifices are to be offered to her—namely, at the ripening of the bread-fruit, yams, and nuts. An offering of first-fruits is made, and the serpent's blessing is asked upon the crops.

Some of the natives keep snakes as their familiars. A certain chief who had buried treasure in his ground set his snake to guard the same, and the creature would lie coiled over the spot. If one man wishes ill to another, thither he sends his snake. It neither bites nor strangles its victim; it merely watches and follows him until he sickens and dies.

Off the south-east end of San Cristoval lie two small islands, Owa Raha and Owa Riki, or the Great and Little Owa. The former is better known to us by its Spanish name of Santa Anna. But as a matter of fact the Melanesian Mission knows but too little of Santa Anna. In vain has the opportunity been sought to establish a school here. The natives decline to have anything to do with the Peace Teaching.

Only the other day some light was thrown on the cause of their persistent refusals by a San Cristoval boy at Norfolk Island, a young fellow of eighteen or nineteen who is acquainted with Santa Anna. In conversation with one of the clergy he gave the following account of serpent-worship in this islet, where it seems to have reached a ceremonial development not met with elsewhere.

The people worship a great snake, Kauraha, and her brood, who inhabit a small cavern. Over and round this the people have built a long native temple, like a canoe-house, that would hold about sixty people. At the far end is the snake's cavern, walled off. On the walls of the temple are drawings and carvings of sharks, frigate-birds, and a strange monster, with a bird's head and turtle's flippers, which, according to San Cristoval belief, lives under the sea and is the cause of earthquakes.

Only certain men can enter the temple, and these are all old. When they go in, it is bowing down, their arms on either side slightly raised, the hands horizontal, the palms down-turned. They enter to take part in sacred feasts, to sacrifice, and to ask what is the will of the snake. Kauraha sometimes swells to a huge size when she is displeased, and on rare occasions she comes out of the rocky cavern with her brood, all swelling with anger. They begin to swell out, for instance, if a woman approaches the spot.

The snake asks her worshippers for what she wants—a pig, or even sometimes a human sacrifice. If any one falls ill, the old men are bidden to buy a pig and eat it before the snakes in their temple, a portion being set apart for the latter.

As on the mainland, these snakes also receive an offering of first-fruits. When a coco-nut palm first bears, some of the milk of the first young nut is drunk in the serpent's presence, before any one dare help himself to the fruit of the tree. When the yams are dug, the first yams are eaten before the snakes, and before the people plant their crops they offer sacrifices to them. If they wish to know whether to go to war or not, the old men take into the house a red strip of the sacred dracaena leaf. They then pull apart the two ends, and if the strand breaks they do not go to war, for the breaking of it presages defeat and death.

When the white priest landed here, Kauraha and her family were very angry indeed, and began to swell. But when the Bishop himself visited Santa Anna, asking the people to accept a school, and they inquired the snake's will concerning it, the whole brood swelled as they had never swelled before, and in their ire they even came forth from their inner chamber into the open space of the temple. So the people were forbidden in this way to accept Christianity.

It must not be imagined that in San Cristoval the high position of the ghosts is usurped by the serpents.

By no means. Honours are divided. The wizards are as powerful and necessary here as anywhere. It is not every man who can boast his own serpent. Among the rank and file if a man has a grudge against his neighbour he pays a wizard a pig to obtain a ghost that will "eat" his enemy—that is, cause his death.

The poor fellow falls ill and guesses what has happened. He sends to another wizard (or, as it sometimes transpires, to the same!) with, if possible, a larger bribe to secure a stronger ghost to rescue him from the clutches of the first. The two ghosts meet upon the mat where the sick man lies, and fight it out over his body with ghost spears. The result of the duel will be apparent in the man. If he dies, it is because ghost No. 1 was victorious; if he recovers, it is thanks to the superiority of ghost No. 2.

There are sea-ghosts also, who are particularly unpleasant because they act on their own account and are impartially malignant. Their favourite sport is to shoot men as they fish on the reef by darting invisible fish at them. Any native can draw you the likeness of a sea-ghost. In San Cristoval they will represent him as human-headed, with pronounced features, straight hair, and long, drooping moustaches. How did this conception originate? If you ask the artist whether he has seen one he will say no, but that they are always like that; their fathers drew them so, and their fathers' fathers. It is an interesting speculation whether in these sea-ghosts, who habitually deal death from a distance, we find at last a tradition of the Spanish visitants who, one fears from their own account, only too often dealt death from a distance along all these coasts.

"Seeing the insolence of the Indians" [they were all "Indians" in 1567], "some shots were fired at them, and two were killed."

"On account of the audacity" of another he was "knocked down with a shot."

"When" [on another occasion] "we saw their determined daring, shots were fired by which some were killed and many wounded."

Again, "Seeing their daring," the muskets were brought into action, "and many Indians were killed."

Later on, when the "Indians" actually ventured to throw stones, "some shots were fired, which killed two of them."

"Seeing their determined perseverance, we fired some shots, and having killed some, we ceased firing."

But the pen wearies of transcribing a multiplicity of these instances, tranquilly noted in the journal of Gallego, the Chief Pilot of Mendaña's expedition, the professed motive of which was religious—"to enable the missionaries who are to guide the infidels into the Vineyard of the Lord, to know where these places will be found."

Perchance it is as well that the Solomon Islanders had about 300 years in which to forget the first Christian emissaries before the next visited them!

It is not at the moment of death that a man becomes a ghost. He travels to an islet at some distance, feeling still a man; finds there his departed friends, and gives them the news of the village. But presently his head is pecked by a kingfisher (an uncanny bird in Melanesia, it will be remembered), and he forthwith develops into a full-fledged ghost.

Sometimes the soul of a man will migrate at the hour of death into another body. A sickly infant was born shortly before a certain old man died. Mysteriously the child's weakness departed, and he began to thrive exceedingly. Then it was recognized that the spirit of the dead Waiau had taken possession of the babe's body, and he was named "Waiau" accordingly.

To the ghosts of chiefs high honours are paid. When a great man dies, his followers may not wash themselves until a human life has compensated for that of the chief. A murder is accomplished as soon as may be, and then, a few days after the chief's death, the first death-feast is celebrated and the body is buried. The second death-feast is held a little later on, when the skull is exhumed and placed upon a shelf in the canoe-house. First-fruits are hung around it and sacrifices of flesh and vegetables burnt below it. A long fast of months follows this second feast, and then those who have thus honoured the memory of the dead keep their third feast. The fourth and last occurs when a new canoe-house is built to the glory of the departed chief and his figure carved on one of the posts.

The evening star is known as "He who watches the feasting," because feasts take place when this star is in the sky.

They have some fanciful fables in San Cristoval touching the heavenly bodies. Once, long, long ago, they say, the Sun and the Moon were equal in strength and heat. Day after day they crossed over the great bridge of the sky—the Sun chasing the Moon, and the Moon for ever fleeing for his life. At last one day the Moon fell into the sea, and ever since he has been pale and cold. That is how Sun and Moon became different. And now in the Moon there sits an old, old woman weaving mats.

The Milky Way they call "The Valley of White Pebbles." A rainbow is regarded with such awe that none will venture out of doors while it is visible. Should one be so foolhardy, boils will break out upon him. And if a boy is reckless enough to point with his finger at the rainbow, that finger will curl up, fester, and never straighten again.

Off the north coast of San Cristoval, distant a two hours' boat journey, lies the small island of Ugi, of interest to the anthropologist as being one of the few islands in Melanesia where descent is reckoned, not from the mother, but as in Europe, from the father.

The ghosts in Ugi make themselves useful as professors of music. All new songs are by them taught to the people. One man is selected by the ghost-composer, who visits him nightly in a dream, and teaches the song carefully, over and over, until he has learnt it perfectly and can instruct the people.

This little island is very green and pleasant to the eye, with its coco-nut plantation and stretch of grass, where real cows may be seen, the property of a trader, and—luxury of luxuries in the Solomons!—fresh milk may be drunk.

Wherever in Melanesia you see coco-nuts, you may be pretty sure that the coco-nut crab has seen them too. There are many land crabs, but this *Birgus latro* is as mischievous in the plantation as he is big. He climbs the tree and selects his nuts. The young ones he pierces through the eye and drinks. The old ones he husks and smashes by throwing them from the tree on to the ground. *On dit*, he aims at a stone, and so breaks the shell at once! If it fractures smoothly, he condescends to eat it, but if with jagged edges, he leaves that one and gets himself another!

When pursued, he throws earth and stones in the face of the enemy. The native method of capture is to tie grass round the tree the crab has climbed. Coming upon it in his descent backwards, he concludes that he has reached the ground, looses his hold of the tree, falls, and is stunned.

The Banks Islanders say that when this *n̈air* seizes anything with his smaller left claw, he will hold on to it till the sun goes down, and they call this claw *loaroro* (sunset) on that account.

The people of Waño have a legend about the crabs, which I think in varying forms is common throughout the groups. Just off Ugi, to the north-west, lies Biu, a tiny islet, and here they say on moonlight nights these coco-nut crabs hold high revel. Two of the biggest and oldest take their places and beat time, one claw upon another. The rest of the crabs circle round them in a dance, waving their claws just as the natives wield their dancing-clubs.

I believe it is an ascertained fact that all the land crabs go down to the beach to bathe on certain nights, and I have heard from an eye-witness that they do perform remarkable and orderly evolutions.

From a native of Ugi I have the following snake story:—

A TALE HANDED DOWN ABOUT THE SNAKE WHO TURNED INTO A MAN

Long ago there were a man and his wife. One day they went to work in their gardens. The woman there came upon a snake, short and extremely fat. Then she lifted up that snake, and the couple took it back with them into the village, and afterwards that woman put it in a bamboo and it lived entirely in the house.

Next morning the pair again went to work in the garden, but when they returned from the field the woman heard that snake weeping bitterly. So she asked him thus, "What are you wanting, my son?"

But the snake did not answer her.

She asked him concerning every kind of food, but the snake only answered, "No!"

Then his mother asked him again, "Is it a wife you want?"

And at once the snake replied, "Yes, yes!"

The man and his wife knew about two sisters in another village, that they were extremely good-looking. So they made ready and set forth to go to that village where the sisters were. And when they arrived they selected the elder, and bought her to be the snake's wife. After that they took the young woman, and the three returned.

Now it was not until they had reached the house that the girl they had bought clearly understood that her husband was a snake, and thereupon she rebelled. Every day the couple were to bathe in the river, but the girl would not hold the snake. She would pick him up with a stick and fling him into the water.

But before long the snake's adopted mother saw plainly that the bride they had bought disliked the snake. So they took her back to her village, and bought her younger sister in her stead. And she went back with them, and they saw clearly that this girl liked that snake.

Every day the two went to bathe as before, but this girl did not pick him up with a stick as her sister had done formerly; but she put him in a basket, and when they reached the river she first bathed the snake, then put him back into the basket, and after that, last of all, she bathed herself. And when she had finished bathing, she would take the snake, and the two would return to the village.

One day the man and his wife and that woman who was the snake's wife went to work in the garden, but the snake stayed in the village by himself. And when the three had gone, that snake issued forth from his skin and turned into a man. After that he went down to the beach to fish, and he killed a great many fish. Then he returned to the village, and hung up those fish in the house. Finally he climbed back into that skin out of which he had come, and turned once more into a snake.

Now by and by the three came home, and the snake said to his mother, " Mother, the fish over there some fellows brought ! "

So his mother took down the fish, and cooked it, and they ate it.

The snake did the same thing every day. The father and mother inquired about it, but could not find any one who had brought the fish to them. So one day when the three went out again to work, the wife of the snake went straight forward to the garden, but the father and mother hid by the side of the path.

And presently they saw that person coming out of the house, and that he was no snake, but a handsome man. And when he had gone down to the beach the parents returned to their house, and found that skin, and they took it and burned it. After that they followed their daughter-in-law to the garden to work.

Now by and by that person came back from the beach, and saw that his skin had been destroyed, and he sat down and just cried. After that the three returned and saw him sitting in the house. *Ke!* How that wife of his rejoiced, for she had no idea before that he was able to turn into a man.

There came a day when they went to a great feast in that wife's village. And the elder sister saw that her sister's husband was a very comely man. And as they were going back, the sister ran after them, crying, " Sister, let me go back with you two, and I will be your servant."

But her sister refused, saying, " No : I am able to do the work myself."

And because her sister would not allow her to do that, the elder went back and hanged herself.

CHAPTER II

ULAWA, SOLOMON ISLANDS

History—Natural features—The people—A bathing adventure—Shark-worship—Shark stories—Degradation of women—Banana superstitions—Story of Wes—Two murderers—Traces of totemism—Spirits and sacrifices—The white man's *Akalo*—Martin—A very new religion—Bonito-catching—Fish-hooks—A wedding—The Three Sisters—A pebble for a soul—Legend of Rapuanate—The call of the dead—A man-eating ghost—Story of a tank.

ULAWA is a small island lying perhaps thirty miles to the north of San Cristoval, its length being not more than ten miles, its breadth about four. It is generally known now by its soft native name, spelt varyingly, but in its time the little island has suffered from three different names at the mouths of white men, and none of them pleasant ones.

Mendaña, its first discoverer, in 1567 dubbed it La Treguada, in disgust at the "treachery" of the "Indians," who did not give them the pig they asked for, but instead "came out in their canoes with their bows and arrows." The Spanish musketry was, of course, promptly brought into action, and before an arrow could be shot by the treacherous Indians, three or four were killed, including a woman, and some of their canoes were seized.

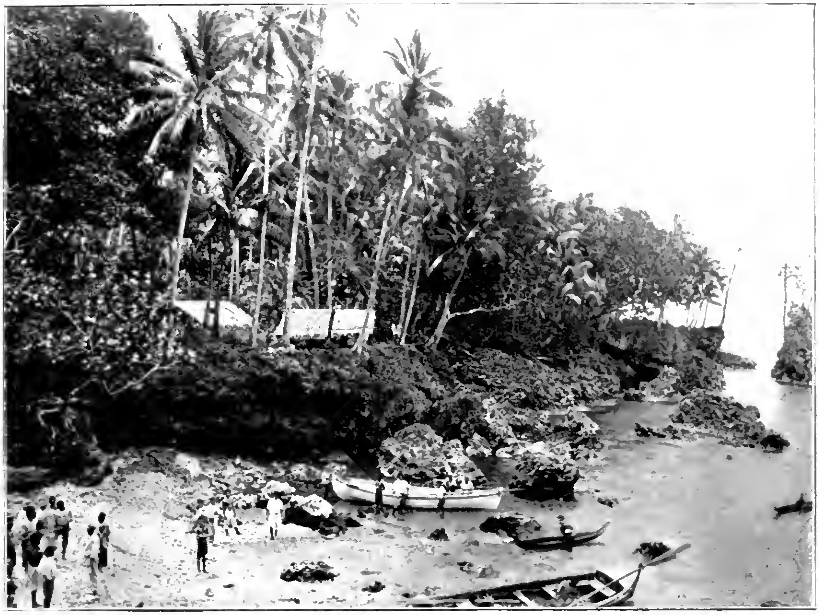
Two hundred years later (1769) Ulawa was rediscovered by de Surville, a Frenchman, who introduced the natives to the uses of grape-shot, because they did not appear particularly friendly. Of the number he slew there is no record. As he experienced bad weather round about the island, he called it Ile de Contrariété.

It was in 1790 that Ulawa was "discovered" for the third time, on this occasion by an Englishman, Lieutenant Ball, commanding the *Supply*. It was a prosaic age, but one can hardly help a shudder at the name he bestowed upon it—*Smith's Island!* Mercifully the designation failed to "catch on" with the world in general, and I doubt if Ulawa ever answered to the name of Smith. Lieutenant Ball must have been a gentleman sadly lacking in the romantic sense, as the nomenclature of Norfolk Island's loveliest features bears unhappy witness. And Owa Raha and Owa Riki became for him Sirius's Island and Massey's Island! All these he fondly believed no white man to have before beheld.

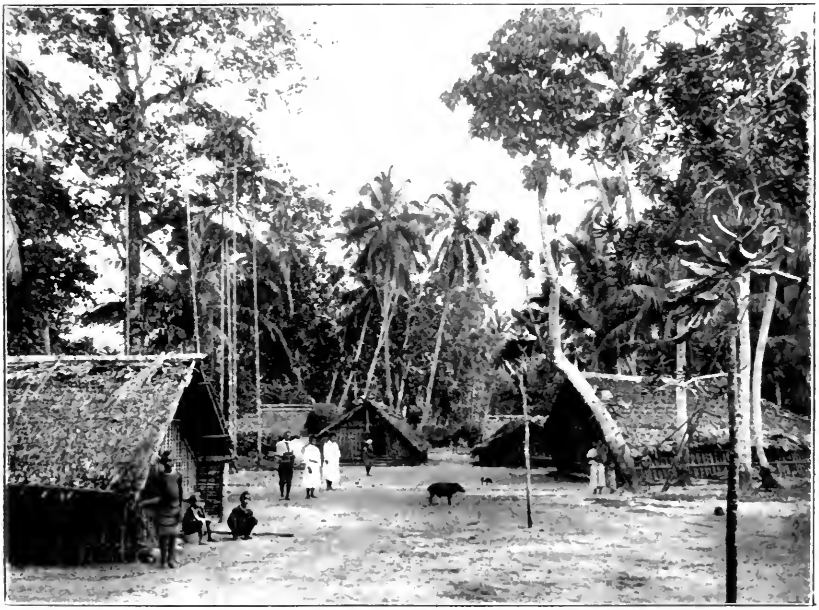
The central hill of Ulawa, which rises to about a thousand feet, is clearly of volcanic origin, but around this the coral-workers have built up terrace on terrace, so that we seem to need a "portmanteau word," as invented in Wonderland, to describe its formation—"volcanicoral," say! It is a beautiful spot, and the Christian villages are wonderfully clean. The pig maintains his importance throughout the Solomons. In the photograph he has unconsciously taken up a symbolic position—the centre of the stage!

Close to our landing-place slowly flowed a clear, wide stream, emerging from the luxuriant forest, the pools of which offered a paradise of rest for six exhausted ducks which we had brought as a present from Norfolk Island for the priest-in-charge. Two goats

ULAWA.



Shall it be "*Smith's Island*"?—Landing-place.



"Wonderfully clean."

were also landed here, but did not long survive, as they refused the native herbage.

The Ulawa natives are bright and friendly as any, and happily for us they have forgotten all about Mendaña and de Surville. Were it not for the disfigurement of the mouth and teeth by betel-chewing, and the ears by heavy rings, I think they would be particularly attractive-looking. But it is not pleasant to see a man's ear-lobes elongated until they can meet under the chin. In running it is usual to turn the lobes up over the top of the ear to keep them out of the way, or to fasten them together behind the neck by linking the attached rings.

In the case of two of the natives illustrated, the ear ornament is not a ring, but a disk. This is not suspended from the lobe, but the latter stretches tightly round it as if it were an elastic band. Of such ornaments I noticed abundant instances in the Solomons.

We are safe enough in Ulawa nowadays, but not so very many years ago the then priest-in-charge had a somewhat exciting experience. He was bathing in a secluded pool alone one day, when a heathen chief, with his executioner, a man of enormous size and strength (both, of course, cannibals), appeared suddenly upon the scene with some companions. These latter busied themselves with the clothes left on the bank, but the chief and the executioner made straight for the solitary white man with a briskness that was unpleasantly suggestive, and pinched and felt him all over, much as a farmer examines a prize ox.

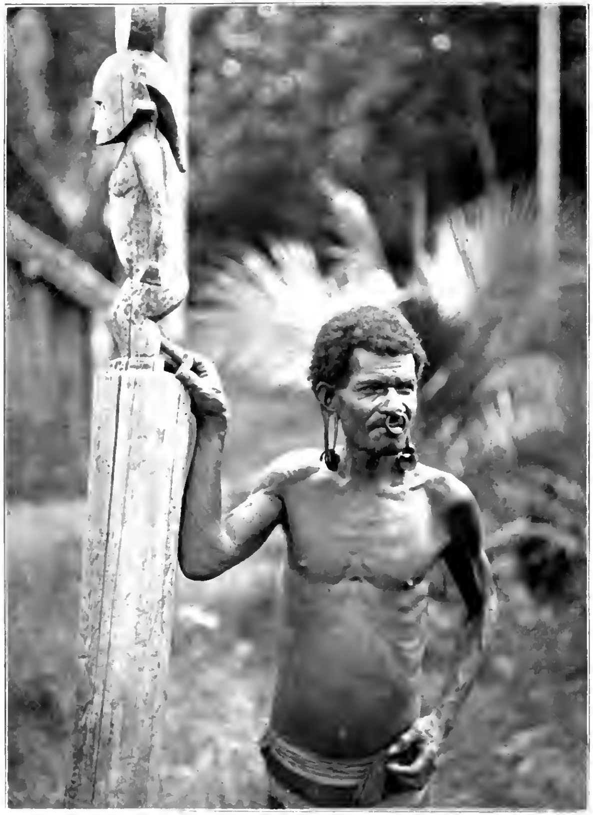
The subject of their attentions was wise enough to take it all good-humouredly, but caused a distraction at the earliest opportunity by exhibiting his soap, showing its uses, and then presenting it to them. The new treasure caused huge amusement; bodies and faces were lathered in a trice—mouth, eyes, and all—and in the midst of the spluttering and blinking that ensued, the white man found his chance to retreat with dignity.

It was the fashion here formerly to honour a departed chief by killing not one, but a fixed number, of the first strangers who chanced to land on the island after his death. This accounts for some of the murders of the past which have seemed perplexing in the groundlessness of their barbarity.

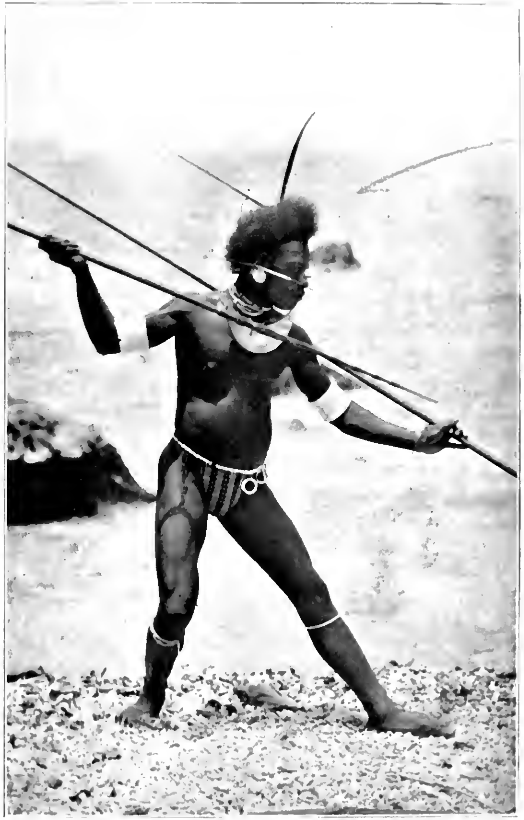
As San Cristoval is the heart of snake-worship, so Ulawa seems to have been in former days of shark-worship. Throughout the Solomons these creatures are looked upon with much dread, and regarded as the abode of ghosts. A man on his death-bed will predict his future appearance in the form of a shark, and when one distinguished in any way by its size or colour is observed to frequent a certain rock or strip of beach, it is regarded as representing the deceased or his ghost, and his name is bestowed upon it. I believe off Ulawa there still ranges a fierce man-eating shark, called after one Sautahimatawa, to whom propitiatory money is offered in the much-prized porpoise teeth.

In the two or three heathen villages yet remaining in Ulawa, the sharks are worshipped by all the people, who not merely expect to inhabit them hereafter, but in a vague, quasi-totemic way consider themselves the descendants of sharks. It is not every one who can communicate with them; only certain men are possessed of the requisite *mana*. The test is from a canoe, by means of a very heavy red stone or a very

ULAWA.



The Possibilities of Ear-lobes—an Ulawa Dandy.



A Fighting Man.

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large, light fruit. The man who wishes to prove his power throws out either one or the other, and should the fruit sink or the stone miraculously float, it is clear evidence that he has the desired *mana.*

The sharks seem to have a very proper feeling, for it is said that where they are worshipped they harm no one. They strictly confine themselves to *killing to order*; there is no freelance work. Their worshippers supply them with occupation, dispatching them on killing expeditions as far as San Cristoval and Ugi.

One of the villages boasts a famous school of sacred sharks. A certain man has *mana* to summon them when wanted, and a second knows how to send them about their business. According to the native account, which is very precise on the subject, they come when called in a regular order—two in front, and ten couples behind, nose level with nose, swimming straight into the small enclosed harbour where they are to receive their instructions.

Every shark is named. The leader is addressed, and to him is confided the name of his victim-designate. If possible, something connected with the man is supplied to the shark to assist the scent, even if it be only a handful of sand scraped by his foe from his footprints on the beach. Having heard their instructions, the sharks turn again and swim orderly off to work.

The shark especially named selects a large skate for its companion, whose duty it is to lash with its tail the doomed man's canoe until it is upset. Then it is the part of the shark to swallow the man headfirst, but without killing him. Off he goes, a pair of legs sticking out of his mouth, to the spot where his worshipper awaits him, and at his feet the prey is disgorged. The man will not be dead: he must not be! No sacred shark will eat a man unless he has been formally strangled to death. But he is extremely weak, "trembling and sobbing," they say. He knows he can hope for no mercy from the ruthless enemy at whose feet he lies. He is strangled and flung back to the shark for a meal.

Cases are told of a shark sent to destroy a man taking instead a capricious fancy to him—holding him under water once or twice for fun, playing with him, and then releasing him.

There was a famous shark-leader named Huaaha, particularly proficient in his profession. One day when the shark clan was summoned, Huaaha was not amongst them. At the same time came the news of the killing of a great shark in another village where they were no longer held in honour. Thither hurried the shark worshippers, to find that the body of the shark had been already consumed, and only the head remained on the shore.

The question was solemnly addressed to it, "Are you Huaaha?" and forthwith it stood up on end! Upon such conclusive evidence the infuriated people went straight up into the village, where the terrified inhabitants made no show of resistance, and ransacked the houses, burning and destroying everywhere. Down they surged to the beach, and broke up every canoe; up to the gardens in the bush, and ravaged them utterly, and then, glutted with vengeance, returned home.

In the same place there is said to be a hybrid sea-monster, with the head of a shark and the legs of a man, who harms no one, but swims sadly about, off the village where sharks are worshipped, with which he is friendly.

The bodies of great chiefs only are buried in the heathen parts of Ulawa. All other corpses are the recognized food of the sharks, offered, as it were, in sacrifice to please them. Many were the battles waged in the Mission's early days between Christian and heathen relatives touching the disposal of the bodies of the baptized. Great and real was the terror of the sharks' indignation at being deprived of their accustomed privilege. But now, of course, burial is the rule, and shark propitiation the exception.

One of the first Ulawa teachers had an elder brother named Wes, famous both as a fighter and as a magician. He was wealthy, and it was upon his land that the little school-house stood. Walter, this brother of his, was much afraid of him and his violent temper; and when an infant son of the teacher's died, bitter was the quarrel over the tiny body, which Wes demanded for the sharks. Peace was at last made, however, and sealed by sitting side by side, chewing betel-nut and pepper leaves from the same basket, and sucking lime out of the same lime-box. And after that Wes gave permission for his own children to attend the school.

Now as the sharks must be served and honoured in the sea, that they might exercise their power in man's behoof, so with the ghosts and spirits on land. It was believed that these unseen beings had a penchant for the fruit of the banana, so by common consent a taboo rested upon all bananas as far as human beings were concerned. They were the food of the spirits, and theirs should be the monopoly. So it gradually resulted in the eating of a banana becoming recognized as the first step towards Christian instruction.

One day this man Wes presented himself at the door of the Mission school and applied for a banana from a bunch that was hanging there. But just as he was about ceremoniously to consume it, it was whispered that some of the schoolgirls had already eaten one or two from this bunch, and no persuading would induce Wes to touch one now. It would be an indelible blot upon his name if he—the great fighter Wes—were ever known to have eaten a banana from the same bunch as a woman!

Where Ulawa is still heathen, the degradation of women seems to touch bottom. A sick woman is turned out of the house as defiling it, and even her own sister thinks herself bemeaned if she should show her any care. She is cast into the bush to die alone, for if she died in the house it would have to be burned down, since no one would enter it unless compelled.

The mysterious attraction of the New Teaching proved, however, too strong for Wes to continue to withstand. One evening a monotonous, curious kind of chant was heard proceeding from his house, where he was entertaining a great friend from a distant village. What did it mean? Simply this. After years of opposition, followed by hesitation, Wes had finally determined to give up his old life and follow the new way. But the old magic was too valuable to be cast off lightly. So here he was, divesting himself of his power to cure rheumatism, and so forth, and handing on the knowledge of his charms and incantations to his friend.

But having once turned his back on these things, Wes threw himself heart and soul into the new teaching, and proved himself a quick and intelligent learner.

It was in 1884 that a murder, flagrant in its treachery, aroused a fire of indignation among the people. A chief who was guest in a village was killed by two of the inhabitants, who thereupon found their own lives in jeopardy. Their steps were haunted by would-be avengers of blood; wait was laid for them on every hand.

The miserable pair took refuge in the vicinity of a school, where they seemed to feel more secure than elsewhere. Day after day, week after week, they hung about the place, and gradually, imperceptibly, they found themselves influenced by the words they heard. Publicly they owned their crime, expressed their penitence, and made what atonement lay in their power. This was followed by the eating of the banana, the surrender of a piece of coral exceptionally full of *mana*, and the two murderers became catechumens, and in course of time were baptized and (in 1895) confirmed.

Ulawa superstitions are very curious and numerous. In one village the people when climbing the coco-nut palm dare not throw a nut upon the ground lest a ghost in waiting should put an evil charm upon it. Instead, they string them together as they gather them, and load their necks with them, and so descend.

Ulawa custom, by the way, allows a man to plant coco-nuts on another man's land; and they will remain his exclusive property, however often the land may change hands.

Earlier in this chapter, in connection with the sharks, I used the expression "quasi-totemic." And I know no other way of explaining some of the superstitions which here, as also, we shall find presently, in G̈ela, make certain creatures taboo as food to certain people.

A man among his catch finds a fish which is taboo to him, and has to send for his boys to carry it home, for he may not even touch it. The children will eat and enjoy it, but were he to partake of the smallest portion, the violation would be visited upon his sons, one of whom would sicken and die.

A little fellow came to school one day with a huge scar on his body. His account of the matter was that it was caused by a crab. The white man was puzzled, for, so far as he knew, the crabs there were small and harmless, incapable of inflicting such a wound as this. But the explanation was interesting. No crab had touched him. But the crab as food was taboo to his mother: she had ventured to taste one, and no ill effect had resulted. But punishment fell upon her child in the form of this dreadful sore.

It would seem as if at the back of the native mind rests the idea of Justice,—stern, implacable, all-powerful—dealing out to every man his deserts, the verdict, of course, being founded upon the instinct and belief of the whole population. This might throw a ray of light on the trials by ordeal, which are also in vogue here.

An accused man is brought to a fire, and placed with his back to it. A blazing palm leaf is then held against the calves of his legs. If he flinches, or if the skin be burned by the flame, he is guilty!

The *gamal* (or *tohi*, as it is called in Ulawa) has here a sacred character, though unconnected with any society. Within it sacrifices are offered to the spirits, including the first-fruits of bush and garden, and venerated relics are kept. It thus becomes a sort of temple of the spirits, and no woman may enter, for no spirits would have anything to do with them. The sacred bonito-fish is cooked and eaten exclusively in the *tohi*, and turtles when caught are brought here for consumption—doubtless that the women may be preserved from indigestion! When a heathen village is visited by Christians, though they are allowed to enter the *tohi*, they may on no account pray there. The daily offices must be said outside.

"Nothing will happen to you," says the native frankly, "for your *akalo*" [spirit] "is more powerful than ours, as white men are more important than dark men. Yours is the white *akalo*, but He has no concern with us. Our own *akalo* will be very angry with us for allowing your worship in the *tohi*, and they will take vengeance on us."

It must make the people marvel to see women included in the care of that *Akalo* Whose superior power they acknowledge.

When it is a matter of building the village church, the men, women, and children all work together at it. To the men falls the hard sawing and squaring of the blocks, but the women carry them to the site. The children fetch sand for the mortar and join their mothers in bringing the coral from the shore, while the men chop wood for the fire and all help together in burning the lime.

The workmen, it may be remarked, are most reverent. From the time the first stones are laid there is no chattering or smoking; they will not even take their pipes or lime-boxes within the wall boundary. Those natives who still pay allegiance to the *akalo* of old time are scrupulous in averting the head when passing the church, lest the powerful *Akalo* should be vengeful; and if shavings from the timber used have fallen in the path, they brush them aside most carefully, lest by treading on them the white man's *Akalo* be affronted.

An incident which occurred just before we visited Ulawa gives some impression of the native character.

I came across a bright, handsome lad among the young teachers, with his wife, and was struck by his intelligent manner and happy face.

"Yes, that young Martin is a very good teacher," I was told, "but, like many others, a bit of a firebrand."

There had been a wedding in Martin's village, and among the congregation in church was a woman with her small child. The latter, for some reason or none, made an outcry, was removed by its mother, and smacked. The father's ire was aroused by the touch laid upon his child, and the woman was severely beaten by him for her temerity.

Martin, who was aware of the facts, flamed out in fury against the man, and deliberately burned down his house. It is impossible to deny that the punishment was excessive, and it was not Martin's business thus to play the avenger. But of course an Ulawa house is more easily rebuilt than one of brick or stone, and they are often enough demolished by their owners for one cause or another.

Still, having done the deed, Martin's conscience accused him, and without so much as good-bye to his wife, he fled into the bush, and for two or three days the school found itself teacherless, and nothing was seen or heard of Martin. Then early one fine morning he presented himself before the priest-in-charge, calm and penitent, quite ready to set to work again.

Just of such stuff are many Melanesians. Hot-headed, abashed, sobered, over and over again, but right-down good fellows at heart!

There was a very new religion introduced not long ago into one of the Ulawa villages. A returned labourer from Fiji, having brought back some floating impressions of Christian customs, joined the old magician of the place, and the pair set up as professors of it. The most popular of the laws they introduced was that which appointed three Sundays in every week—different days for men and women—on which it was incumbent upon everybody to do absolutely nothing! I know of such another one who was content to institute a bi-weekly Sunday, but insisted on baptising all his followers every morning in the creek!

I have alluded to the bonito-fish. We shall hear again of them elsewhere, but in Ulawa they are very highly esteemed as food. They swim in shoals, and are by no means to be obtained every day. When they appear, it is on the track of small fish for their own eating, and their presence is revealed first by the excited flock of birds overhead who are preparing to dart upon the bonito's prey. Then the bright lines on the water, caused by the fishes' leaping, confirm the hope aroused, and there is a general race among the natives to reach the spot and secure a bite.

The Ulawa fish-hooks are among the loveliest manufactures of the islands. Some have a pearl back of about two and a half inches long, with a notched end to which is bound by string a tortoise-shell hook. But the most exquisite are from half to three-quarters of an inch in size, the pearl carved into the minute similitude of a fish. In either case the shining pearl seems bait sufficient, for nothing is added.

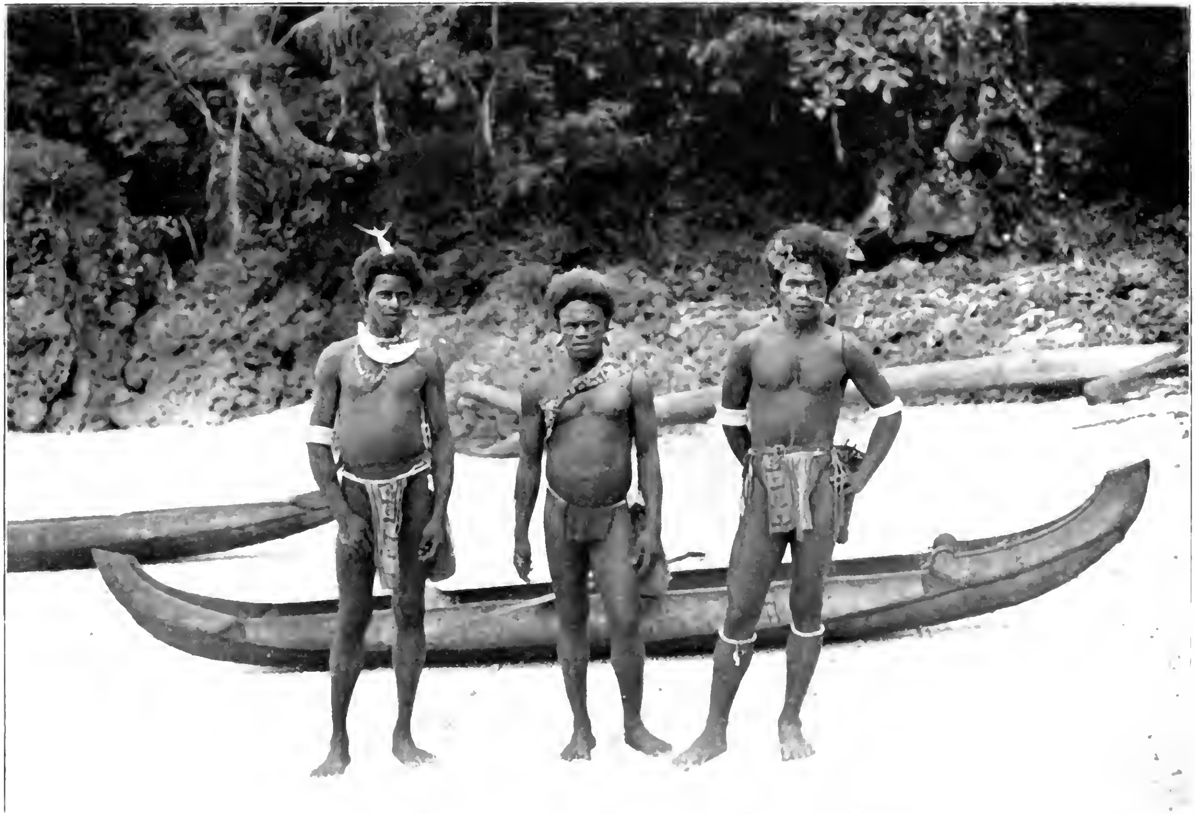
The canoes travel at an amazing pace (we have left the rough dug-outs behind, as the illustration shows), and when the shoal is neared, it is the work of one man to look after the canoe and keep an eye upon the line that is trailing astern, while his fellow angles warily for the coveted bonito.

I must not omit to mention the one occasion when women figure prominently. They form the orchestra at the celebration of a wedding. The interesting fact about a heathen wedding is that neither bride nor bridegroom is present. The happy man generally takes the opportunity for a quiet day's fishing on the rocks; where the girl is, who can say? It were hard to believe that she does not find a peep-hole in her hiding-place.

The feast is prepared at the village of the woman, and hither repairs the procession from the bridegroom's home, preceded by four women blowing down short reeds, and others beating with sticks upon bamboos. All travel single file, followed by the population of the man's village, ornamented and armed with spears.

The first item in the programme of festivities is the payment for the bride. She is a fairly inexpensive luxury, costing here perhaps ten strings of shell-money. Next the man's chief comes forward, and, grasping a spear, runs to and fro shouting. He is making request for the bride, and undertaking that she shall find a home, protection, food, and—plenty of work! The chief of the bride's village replies in the same forcible manner, announcing the general willingness to hand over the young woman. The agreement is clenched by the chiefs and near relatives chewing betel-nut together and sharing

ULAWA.



"*We* THINK WE'RE HANDSOME!"

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some coco-nuts. And the formalities end with a feast, it being remembered that what generally constitutes a feast in Melanesia is the distribution of food to all present, to be consumed by them hereafter.

Between Ulawa and Ugi lie three little green islands in a row, which are known as "The Three Sisters." They are uninhabited, and we could not stop to land, but I eyed them with no small interest, for according to native tradition they provide a resting-place for the souls of the Ulawa dead when they quit the body. A similar belief prevails in Mala.

The ghosts (or souls) travel straight to the southernmost point of their island, and thence cross to the "Middle Sister"—Olu Malau—land and rest there, so on to San Cristoval, where they climb up Hau Nunu, or Earthquake Rock, so called because the ghosts' clutch on landing causes it to tremble. From San Cristoval the ghosts proceed to a part of Guadalcanar called Marapa, which is the Panoi or Hades of the Southern Solomons. Those men who happen to touch at any of these ghost-frequented spots need be very careful lest they lose their own souls.

In Olu Malau there is a small cave, its floor and ledges strewn with round pebbles. The passing voyager who calls here will, if wise, deposit a pebble upon a ledge to compound for his soul, which the ghosts will otherwise extract upon the spot, leaving the poor owner to sicken and die, the ghost of him having already departed.

A certain prominent rock is called the Women's Rock, because female ghosts land there, and a constant ghostly chattering and peeping goes on.

Ulawa legend tells of a stupendous warrior-chief named Rapuanate, whose birthplace was Olu Malau, when all Three Sisters were inhabited. He exterminated entirely the population of the three islands, and then attacked another no longer existent, called *Hanua Asia* [Land of the Sea]. Having succeeded in seizing a quantity of money, Rapuanate paddled to Mala, and there bought a flood. With this he returned, and completely swamped Hanua Asia. One girl escaped, and reached Ulawa, twelve miles distant, on a log. A woman I know well in Ulawa is always said by the natives to be of the family of this fugitive's descendants.

The shallow known to traders as Lark Shoal is supposed to be this sunken island, and the natives say that if you paddle across it you may see trees still standing on the ground under the sea.

"As we rowed to the Middle Sister, and drew near shore," writes from Ulawa one of the Mission clergy, "a native suddenly said, 'Who was that calling?' There was a chorus of 'Where?' 'Why, some one called on shore,' was the answer. 'Oh, nonsense!' said the white man, 'who could be there?' But on returning to Ulawa the crew's first question was, 'Who's dead?' An answer was promptly given. So-and-so, a heathen, had died during our absence. 'Ah, we heard him call,' was the rejoinder."

Was it some faint, long-buried tradition of the visit of the Spanish ships that caused the natives of Ulawa to fall into a panic of terror when once again they saw afar off upon the sea a mighty black monster that spouted forth black breath from a great long neck! At all events the whole island agreed that the thing was a man-eating ghost, and that if they were seen they would die instantly. They hid themselves in rocky hollows and among the tree-roots, and called loudly upon the ghosts and spirits for protection. Within the village most of the people fastened themselves up in their houses, convinced that their last hour had come; but some were for killing and eating all the pigs straight away, that at least the last hours might be happy ones!

It appears that this ship in the long-ago did not touch at Ulawa, and the natives' next experience of civilization concerned a tank. The story is worth copying from a translation of the account of an Ulawa man which lies beside me:—

About a Tank

For some three years after that ship had gone, nothing of the sort was seen again; their spirits had driven it away, and they would not see it any more.

And now all their attention was fixed on catching bonito out in the open sea. The weather was very favourable: there was a bright sun and dead calm, and all their fear of man-eating ghosts had gone. One day there were great rejoicings, for those who were skilled in the worship of the spirits had been very successful with their sacrifices, and now every one hurried to get ready his rod and line and his bonito-hooks, and to see to his canoe, for on the next day they were to have a great haul.

The following morning when the people awoke, not a bonito was to be seen, but right out there was a large tank floating in the sea. It must have been lost out of some ship. By and by the bonito were discovered in shoals, but no one dared to paddle out after them through fear of that tank, since they in their ignorance took it for a ghost, and they thought it was the same one they had seen before, only in a different shape.

For two days that tank floated about, and no one dared to let down a canoe, but all hid away in canoes or in the bush, and just peeped out to see if it was still there. Then one old man went to his spirit, and asked whether the thing was a man-eating ghost or not; and the spirit answered, "No, it is no ghost; it will make axes for you. Paddle after it; I give it over to you!"

For two days longer they watched the tank, and then all the people of [four villages named] let down their canoes, and paddled after it. They paddled with a will, and as they drew near the tank, a number of sea-birds flew up from off it. That set them all to calling on their spirits to save them from the birds. Some of them in fear set off for the shore; the rest stayed near the tank, and called on the spirits to cast a spell over it, and make it drift ashore, that they might break it up, and make axes out of it. For a long time they stayed near it, waiting for their spells to work, but they only shouted themselves hoarse. Then they went back ashore, and filled their canoes with cords to drag the tank to land.

When they reached the tank again, they tied it with cords, each man as he tied calling on his special spirit to make the cord strong; and then they began to paddle with it, at the same time calling on all their spirits to help. Presently they reached shore, but they were tired out, and so they went off to sleep.

Early next morning they set about opening the tank, but they could not break it open, it was too hard, and they did not know of the lid. Different rocks were tried, but none of them availed to break open the tank. Their one idea was to break it in pieces to make axes, so they began calling on the spirits to break it open for them.

Then one old man secretly took up a big rock, and went off with it into the bush; he was going to charm it that it might break the tank. He called all the spirits, and the ghosts of dead men whom he knew of, that they might come and lie hidden in the rock. Then out he came, and carried the rock to where the people were striking the tank.

They at once made fun of him and his rock, for what could an old man do when the young ones were helpless? In reality, the tank was nearly broken through, but they were all sitting down tired out, and calling on the names of their spirits. However, the old man lifted up the rock, and struck the tank twice with it, and lo! the tank was broken. Once more he struck, and a big hole was made.

Up rushed all the people to see the sight. The tank was filled with biscuits! Now no one knew what these things were, but the people snatched them here and there, calling them moons, for they were round, and saying, some of them, "Do not put them to your mouths! You may be killed!" while others said, "These things have a very fine smell. If there had been death in them, surely we should have been dead already." Others thought they must have come up from the bottom of the sea. "Why, whatever are you doing?" cried an old man; "do not eat these things, or you will die! A spirit told me so; this is the flesh of ghosts, and fell down from the skies."

Some of them threw the biscuits away; others slily bit pieces out of them, and thought they were very good. But they did not know they were food, and so the biscuits were thrown away into the sea or into the bush, or were put up as a decoration in front of the doors of their houses and *gamal*.

And now all the people gathered together, and the tank was broken into pieces, each man getting four. These were to make axes with, as in former days their axes were made of flint, and were always breaking, and were never sharp. This done, they returned home with great rejoicings; the spirits had been very good to them in giving them such axes to work with.

CHAPTER III

MALA (MALAITA), SOLOMON ISLANDS

A needless scare—Natural features—Character of people—Ornaments—Bush *v.* Shore—Armed sentries—A distressful country—"A head!"—An interminable blood-feud—Islets of refuge—Sacred draw-net—Poor women!—A judicious truce—Food customs—"Bishooka!"—Porpoise-hunting—Shark story—Crocodile-worship—Trial by ordeal—Ghost sacrifices—In a cannibal village—An escape from cannibals—Chiefs—Dorawewe—Hanetarana—Oikata—Death customs—Canoes—South Mala: a contrast—The first soap—The first umbrella—Folk-tale: "Vulanangela and the Sun"—Ogres—"The little people"—Bewitched by a *Dodore*—Mala fairies.

We had no more than sighted our first landing-place in the island of Mala when I was struck by a peculiar feature of our reception. A number of canoes set out from the shore to meet us in the customary way, but instead of proceeding straight for the ship, they paddled a few yards, then drifted about uncertainly. Suspicion and caution were expressed as plainly as if words had been spoken. The natives were doubtful of our identity. The *Southern Cross* had recently been painted grey, a colour ominously suggestive of a man-of-war, and her tonnage (500) was not far off that of the dreaded vessels with which North Mala is unpleasantly familiar.

Presently a whale-boat dominated by a white helmet was distinguishable among the smaller fry which surrounded and followed it in confidence. It contained a man whom all the natives, heathen and Christian, could trust, and a nearer approach convinced even the most shy that our vessel was an old friend with a new face, a sheep in wolf's clothing! In a very short time the fleet had reached us, and the deck became like a parrot-house, with the natives (both men and women) screaming and chattering around us, considerably more ornamented than dressed.

But the incident was characteristic of the island we had reached, the wildest and most populous of the Solomons. In configuration narrow and tongue-like, Mala extends for close upon a hundred miles. The interior is mostly dense forest and the mountains are numerous, though nowhere probably reaching a greater height than 4000 feet.

The natives have long borne an unenviable character, and not without cause, as we shall presently see. Until within the last two years no trader or planter has ventured to settle here. The only white resident has been our own missionary-priest. Now at last the barriers are breaking down, the white irresistible tide is creeping in. Plantations have been started, and the Government has placed a resident Assistant Commissioner on the island, supported by a force of forty police.

For a longer period than we can say, Mala has been accursed with blood-thirst. The year before I made acquaintance with it, in the immediate neighbourhood of our first landing, the white priest had sadly counted fourteen murders within a period of six weeks.

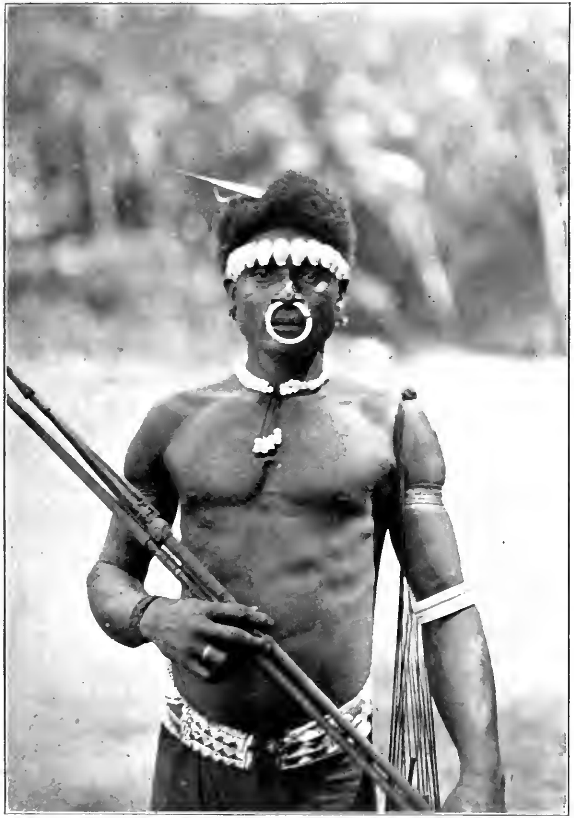
We shall have occasion to dwell upon the dark side of Mala and its people. Let me here quote the conclusion concerning the individual natives deliberately expressed by one who has cause to know them better than any man now living: "Yet these people are, speaking generally, gentle and tractable, lovers of quiet and order, affectionate to children, good-natured."

And no better witness to their sterling worth and fine physical capacity can be brought forward than the fact that Mala was, of all the Solomons, the favourite recruiting-ground for labour in the Queensland sugar plantations. With all their treachery and cruelty, their cannibalism and head-hunting, the men of Mala are the bravest and the strongest in the Solomons.

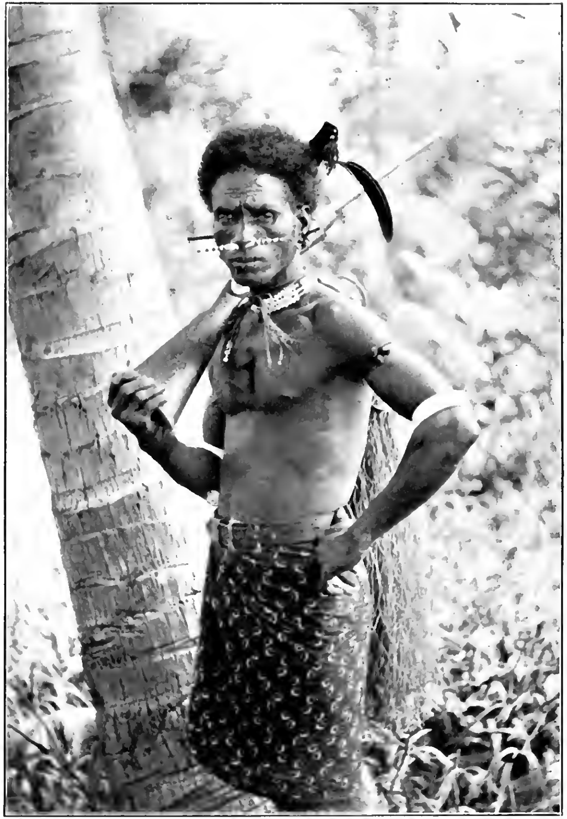
The canoes that came out to meet us were loaded with magnificent ripe pineapples, which were pressed upon us for a stick of tobacco (about a penny) apiece. The abundance of fruit might seem to indicate that in the intervals of fighting a good deal of gardening is accomplished. This is so, no doubt, in parts, but out here the pineapple may be said without exaggeration to grow itself. The prickly crown is thrown away when the fruit is eaten, takes root where it lies, and brings forth fresh pineapples.

I referred in passing to the personal adornments of the Mala native. The workmanship of these is really beautiful, and surprisingly varied. I noted carefully the ornamentation of a single ear, merely as a specimen; no two are dealt with precisely alike. In the top was a small hole, through which ran a short ear-stick, of a different kind from those favoured in the Banks, for though bamboo is the foundation, dyed, parti-coloured grass is plaited over it with exquisite fineness and invisible finish. From the second hole, a much larger one, was suspended a

MALA.



"Bravest and strongest in the Solomons"—Man of Mala.



On Sentry Duty.

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bunch of twelve tortoise-shell rings, each linked to a white shell ring below it, about the size of a sixpence. Below this again the lobe was converted into one gigantic hole, from which dangled a heavy object resembling a table-napkin ring.

Nose ornaments are very common and very diversified. In one case I noticed a fancy-headed gilt nail studding the tip, in others a little tail of beads hung comically down, a tiny tusk tilted pertly up, a carved shell ending in a bird's head, or a little tuft of dried grass, stuck straight out. The ring inserted in the cartilage is often varied by a sharpened bamboo or splinter of bone that protrudes fully three inches on either side. Some will pierce as many as eighteen holes in a circle round the nostrils, and carefully plug each one with a fragment of mother-of-pearl, producing the effect of a jewelled ring.

A fillet of the large white cowrie shells, such as are used to deck a canoe, gives somehow an air of aristocracy to those whose brows (as in the photograph) are thus adorned. A beautiful pearl chest ornament is often worn, frequently in the shape of a crescent extending almost from shoulder to shoulder, and these are not lightly parted with. I heard one man price his own at £5, and decline emphatically to consider any smaller sum.

Of rings, necklaces, armlets (above the elbow), bracelets, anklets, and girdles there seemed an infinite variety, composed of pearl, clam, tortoise-shell, grass, tusks, beads, seeds, fish teeth, according to the wearer's taste. And here I first noticed what I must distinguish as *leglets*, the most popular (just below the knee) consisting either of cowries or a string of white bone rings. The finish to the *tout-ensemble* would be a plume of feathers or grass, or a tasselled comb, set knowingly in the bushy hair.

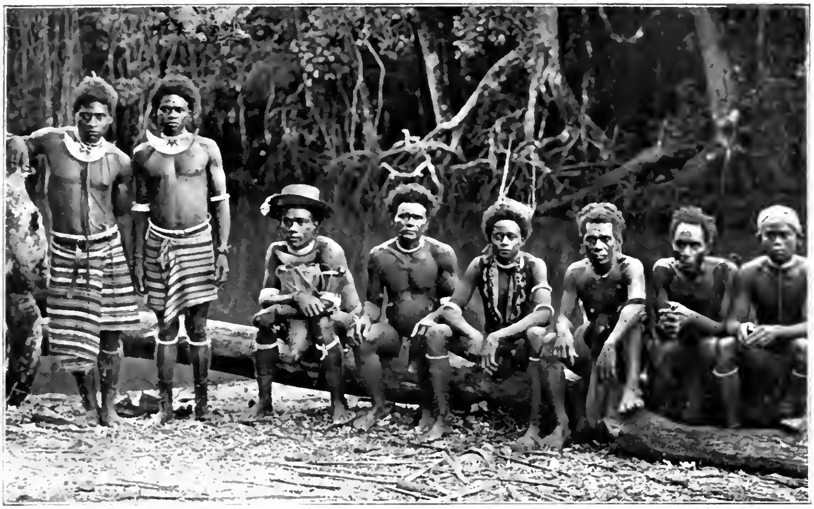
Mala has long been a "disthressful counthry," but all the evils originate from the discord and disunion that prevail. It is divided up into numberless small districts and tribes, all speaking very different dialects, and the nearest approach to union is obtained where the coastmen have been driven to combine against their ancient common enemy. Yes: still rages above all the petty quarrels and revenges the old traditional war between Bush and Shore, the natives of the inland fastnesses against those of the sea-line.

The advantages of the former are obvious, with their practically limitless cover, opportunity for hidden preparations, ambushments, approach, and retreat. For those who live on the shore, life is (or has been hitherto) a long reign of terror. Where the stations of the Cross have been set up, heathen animosity has raged most fiercely, though the Law of Peace forbids fighting save in self-defence.

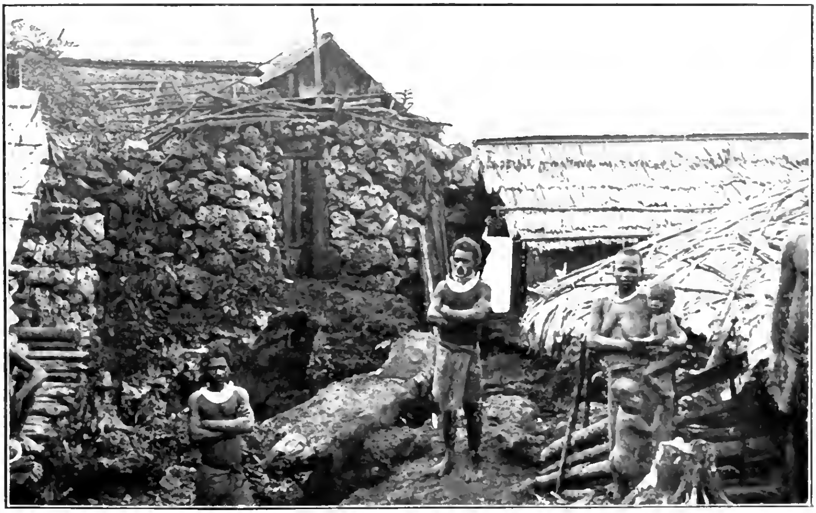
At this, our first stopping-place, N̈ore Fou, where there is a thriving school and church, the Government has been compelled to allow a limited number of fire-arms to the harassed inhabitants for purposes of defence. The villagers have appointed certain of their able-bodied men to take courses of sentry duty at night when they are asleep, and also during the hours of daily service and school.

Nearly every village in Mala is fortified with stone walls, and though happily there are not a few parts where this defence has long been uncalled for,

MALA.



Interested Spectators.



"Nearly every village is fortified."

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yet the people are chary, and probably wisely so, of casting away all means of protection.

Feasting and fighting are the principal interests of life in heathen Mala. There is not sufficient unity often to produce what could be called in any way decisive battles. Big fighting expeditions are suggested, and discussed, and noised abroad. A large proportion of them never materialize, and evaporate in threats and preparation of weapons, but they terrorize a district, and keep it in a seething turmoil for months together.

But "far more deadly," writes the priest-in-charge, "are the incessant individual murders. No one is safe, except perhaps the men who gain a reputation as murderers. Most chiefs have a few fighting men—professionals—who do the work (and are well paid for it) while the others do the accompanying, and make the noise over it."

The old cry for "A head!" is often the beginning of trouble. Some one has lost a child, built a new house or a canoe; a spirit has been angered or one man has cursed another. The lust for bloodshed makes a human life the favourite remedy, the most popular charm, the lucky complement, the only satisfactory retribution.

And, if convenient, a stranger or a foreigner will be the selected victim, as having no dangerous relatives to avenge his death. One of our young teachers was murdered in cold blood a year or two ago because he was a native of another island, and a man wanted to get clear of some curse his wife had uttered against him. On another occasion, when the *Southern Cross* called, we were entreated by the school people to take away with us one amongst them who had lately returned from Queensland after a long term of years, to find all his friends and relations dead. On that account, we were told, the heathen had "put out money for his life"—that is to say, they had made known that a specified sum would be paid to any one who killed him. Their pretext for this reminds one of Aesop's wolf: they said that an ancestor of his had bewitched their ancestors in old time, and so his life was forfeit.

But very frequently no friendless man is forthcoming. The murder is committed, and a ghastly ball thereby set rolling. The chief of the injured family gathers a company of some 200 to 300 men, and they set off on an expedition of vengeance in the great war-canoes, capable of holding over 150 men apiece. The sight of the canoe may be enough for the terrified population of the threatened village. Perhaps they voluntarily hand over a child to make amends. It is tied up in the canoe, much as a pig would be carried, brought back in triumph, and presented to the little boys of the place to kill with their little bows and arrows! This is not fiction: it is solid, stern fact.

Be sure, however, that unless, as sometimes happens, the child was one previously bought from a neighbouring tribe, its relatives will not regard the score as settled. They will bide their time, lie in wait, and watch their opportunity to steal a life in return. And the enemy, knowing this perfectly well, make the victim's nearest relatives the object of the next murderous attempt, so as to remove if possible the most formidable adversaries. And thus an interminable blood-feud is kept alive.

Then again, the charge of poison is always muttered when sickness befalls, unless the stricken man be very old. A wizard is consulted, a culprit named, and however innocent he may be, if death ensues, revenge will be visited upon him or his, even to the third generation. If he himself cannot be reached, perhaps his brother can be murdered. One sees how the knowledge that a man is vitally concerned in his relatives' troubles must add incentive to the prevalent system of family revenge, and family defence, of the individual.

The Government takes action when a murder is duly reported by sending a man-of-war and shelling a village. Needless to say, the murderer takes care to make good his escape, and those who suffer may be perfectly innocent. But I have recorded above the organization of a small body of resident police, and we may anticipate hearing of more effective justice henceforth.

And yet with the bush at the back it must surely be a Herculean task to track a fugitive. Our hope must lie among the people themselves, that they may in time come to recognize the fact that it is for their own good that murderers be put away from among them, and may assist in bringing even their own relatives to justice.

A few years ago there was a case in which three murderers, having been captured and imprisoned, escaped with a boat, rifles, and ammunition, and were seen no more until three years ago, when one of them paid a call on the missionary-in-charge, and with the utmost effrontery requested him to lay before the authorities an offer from him to surrender his stolen rifle on receipt from them of the sum of £20!

A teacher's wife told me that just before our ship arrived, a bush-man (or "man-bush," as Mala-English renders it) had sprung into sight, armed with a rifle obtained from a recruiting vessel ("thief-ship," the people poignantly call it), and had shot at one of the Christians, but, happily failing to hit him, fled back into the bush.[1]

I have spoken of the natural advantages of the Bush. But necessity is the mother of invention, and the Shore is not content to sit at home and be killed. The Shore's great and invincible ally is the sea. Here is the retreat of outnumbered fugitives; for the Bush has no boats, and, it is to be presumed, can neither swim nor dive. But canoes do not make comfortable dwellings, so native wit has devised homes at once stable and safe.

Off the north-east coast of Mala lies a coral reef thirty miles long, forming a calm lagoon around large tracts of the mainland. The lagoon is dotted with some twenty islets—natural in a few cases, but for the most part artificial—islets of refuge. These latter are constructed of blocks of coral gathered from off the reef, or rocks from the land, flung in quantities in shallow spots until they rise above the surface. Gaps and crevices are filled with refuse; crushed shells, sand, coral, etc., mixed with sea-water, form a rough cement, which is pressed in with logs, and at last a fairly flat surface is formed. Then bountiful Nature comes along with her free greenery, and the effect from a distance is charming.

The islets vary in size, the largest covering perhaps three-quarters of an acre, and containing about three hundred people, herded together with

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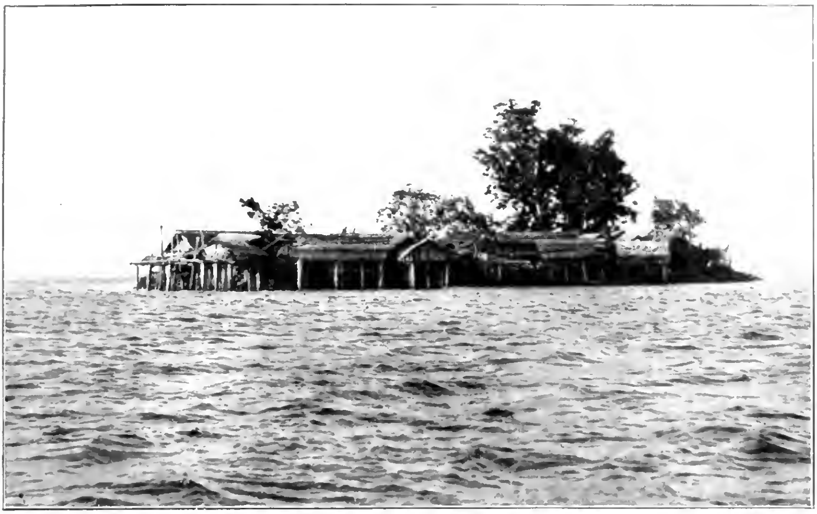
[1] The latest news from Mala (November 1910) tells of a man being shot on the missionary's veranda. As a punitive measure the Assistant Commissioner has burned three Bush villages.

MALA.



An Artificial Islet of Refuge.

Where the Alligator is worshipped.

P. 27[illegible].

their pigs, fowls, and coco-nuts. The smallest is no bigger than a moderate-sized schoolroom, but contains three houses, these, as is usual, built on piles. As is to be expected, the islet-dwellers fight amongst themselves, and huge logs are sometimes noticeable, set up for defensive purposes, where one islet fronts another.

It was the afternoon of our first day in Mala when we came to anchor in a beautiful bay called Su Aba. The sun was already low, and the blue, clear water was dappled with reddening gold. The verdant islets that caught the eye here and there looked like the fairy creation of some magic wand. Fortunately there was just time to visit one before nightfall, and we set off in the whale-boat with all speed.

The islet which we selected for our purpose was a fairly large one, fenced carefully round. The first object that caught my eye on nearing it was the great fishing-net, famous by report, which is hung all round the men's quarters, keeping them sacred from the profane foot of woman. In the illustration it can be just discerned on the extreme right.

The manufacture of this great draw-net, which at low tides is pulled over the reef by a couple of dozen men or more, is generally left to the grandfathers. The string is made from vegetable fibre, twisted and rolled on the palm of the hand. Woe to the woman who sees the net in the making! Woe to her who afterwards by cruel chance touches it! Woe to her who steps into a canoe where that net has previously lain! In every case swift death is the penalty.

Death happens also to be the penalty for the woman who alights at the men's landing-place, so I made careful inquiry before leaving the boat when it was beached. But it was all right; this was the women's landing-place. It occurred to me that strict equity would have slain my companions; but men, they said, might land anywhere, and we heard of no death penalties for the lords of creation. We may suppose that in this way the equality of the sexes is preserved—numerically!

Directly on our right was a wall of coral blocks, and a hole therein. Manifestly this was the main entrance to the quarters of the women, pigs, and babies, who dwell together. Here, then, I parted company from the rest and stooped through—the first white woman, I believe, to take that step—into the women's part.

No objection was raised. A little crowd of females (poor, poor things!), with the scantiest possible approach to decency in covering, but a plethora of rings of all sorts, surged forward to touch and stare. They did not know the practice of shaking hands, but all could clamour with outstretched palms for "tambaki!" I made them understand I had none, but the knots of red ribbon and gaudy handkerchiefs with which I adorned them charmed their eyes.

Closer and closer they pressed around me—pinching, patting, stroking. One seized my right hand, and tried vainly to pull the ring off my finger. But ecstatic was their delight when I showed them I was wearing a shell bracelet like their own; this caused some affectionate and vehement squeezes that were rather exhausting in that temperature.

And how they laughed and chattered all the time, asking me a hundred questions, though they knew I could answer none. I pointed to a pig and tried, "*Boe!*" which they understood, but replied with

"*Bikki!*" evidently an imitation of the English word. What pleased them most was attention to the babies, of whom some smiled at the new, funny creature, some howled in terror. A peep into the dark, dirty holes they share with the pigs was more than enough. They were indescribable. Then my new friends led me through the narrow passages that separate these kennels (I cannot even dignify them with the word hovel!), cackling still.

Suddenly one put out her hand and made a snatch at the little cross I was wearing. I saw her action just in time, and quickly covered the cross with my hand, saying gravely, "*Tabu!*" [sacred]. There was a sudden hush, then the word was repeated by them as gravely; they drew slightly away, and no one afterwards attempted to touch it.

One of the old crones nodded, as if to say, "Yes, yes, I know!" and then, pointing to the cross, she said, "Su-ku-lu!" I knew she meant "School," and was not a little surprised, as we have no school in that neighbourhood. But greater still was my astonishment when, pointing again to the cross, she pronounced quite slowly and distinctly one of the Divine Titles in full. It was all she knew, and I could add no more. Whence came that spark of light we know not.

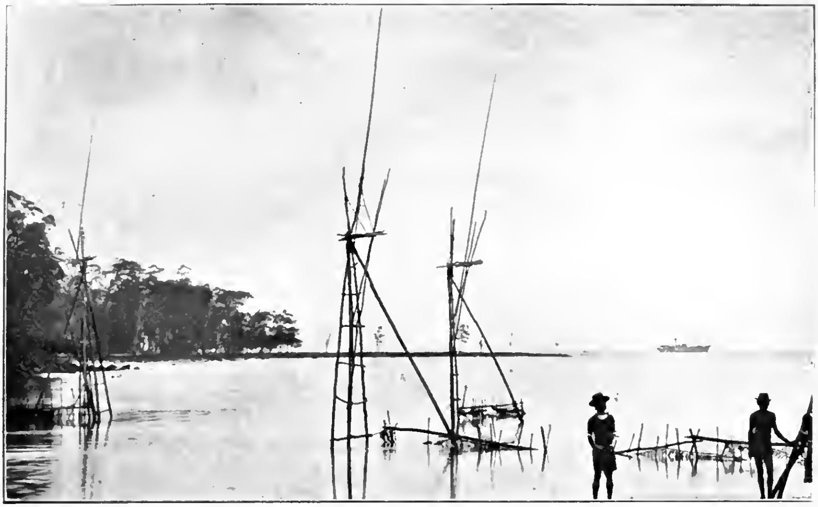
The chatter began again, and soon after we heard European voices close at hand. So they led me back to the entrance hole, women and children still clinging about me. And we stepped into our boat in the now gathering darkness, waved good-bye, and rowed away.

One was glad to think that these poor creatures are not perpetually confined to the pens and kennels in which I found them. It is a curious fact that here in Mala, once out of the village bounds, the women have a measure of liberty and responsibility very unusual in Melanesia. It may not have passed unnoticed that women as well as men came out to meet our ship in their canoes. In every other island I know of, it is only by special invitation that even our Christian women come out to the ship. But in Mala the women are quite expert traders, and the market is considered their especial province.

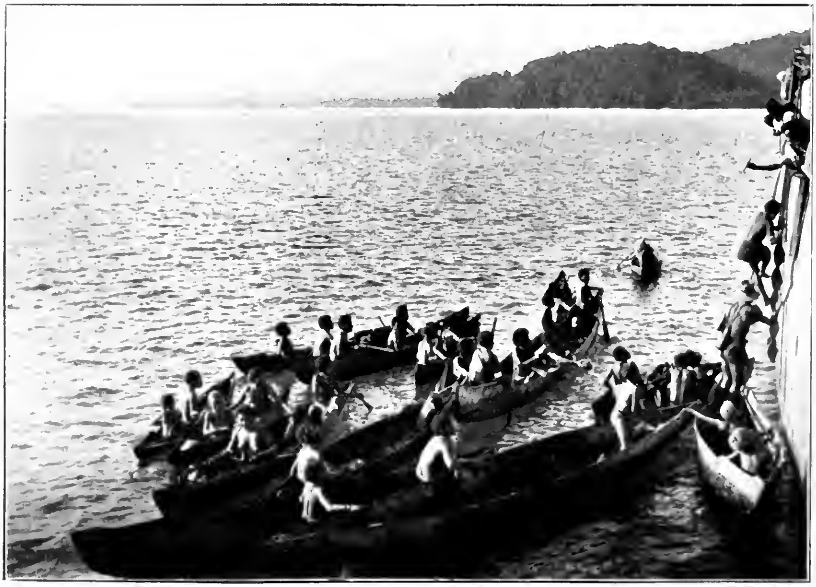
By mutual consent Bush and Coast have inaugurated a judicious custom of occasional brief truce for market purposes. The Bush has gardens, and grows yams and taro, but has no fish to give the yams a relish. The Coast has long ceased to attempt gardening, as the Bush is adept at ravaging. So it gives itself up to fishing, for fish are good, but better still when accompanied by vegetables. Hence this wise arrangement has been made.

The piece of land was pointed out to us where, I think every fourth day, the adversaries meet. Four canoes may be seen paddling towards this spot, all laden with fish, and conveying perhaps over a hundred women, and less than half a dozen men. As the canoes are brought to shore, out from the bush pours a corresponding regiment of women, loaded with garden produce, and followed discreetly by a few men armed. The company with fish is protected in a similar manner. The parties meet, and a brisk barter is carried on, the men at the back watching keenly to see that there is no treachery. We were told that it would undoubtedly be considered mean to kill during the truce, but enemies are not always scrupulous, and it seems wise to be prepared for emergencies. The market over and all safely retired, the truce is at an end.

One fancies the change and excitement must be



Fishing-fences and Perches.



"The women are expert traders."

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welcome to the feminine element, but all the best food goes to the men, the very small fish being thrown to the women, with, no doubt, the inferior vegetables. When turtle is caught, or a pig killed, such are understood always to be food for men only.

As a rule the people have only one meal per diem, at about 5 P.M. Snacks of things may be eaten during the day if one is hungry, or the juice of a green coco-nut will quench thirst; but usually nothing more than the indispensable betel-nut and lime will pass the lips.

I have said that the Coast gives itself up to fishing, and we have seen the importance attached to the great draw-net. But many other methods are employed, including the ordinary rod and line, which is universal. The delicately manufactured fish-hooks are rapidly disappearing before the now easily obtainable metal ones of civilization. These form most acceptable presents at all times, and one of our former Bishops must early have discovered and made use of the fact, for it was in Mala that he found his title and gifts delightfully confused when he was addressed by all as "Bishooka!"

Much skill is shown too in the art of spearing fish, and we find here and in Ulawa the kite occasionally employed as we met it in Santa Cruz. I noticed also fences of sticks projecting above the surface of the shallow water, and learned that into these the fish are driven, and caught in nets as they rush out again.

But highest among the water occupations is reckoned the porpoise-hunting. Porpoise teeth are currency equally with dogs' teeth, and a porpoise is furnished liberally with a hundred teeth. The flesh also is esteemed for food, so that altogether the creature is worth having, and it is pursued during two or three months of the year in so serious a fashion that only a proportion of the men care to practise it. The canoes used are built and reserved for this purpose, and during the manufacture of a porpoise canoe a taboo is laid upon the whole village, so that the inhabitants may mix with no other people. For some time before a porpoise chase the men to engage in it segregate themselves, living entirely in the *gamal* or canoe-house, and eating no food save what is cooked there for them. There is a special porpoise wizard whose business it is to study the omens and give the word when the propitious hour arrives. And there is a special porpoise ghost who must be approached and propitiated with prayers and offerings before the start is made. No food of any kind must be carried in the canoes.

One or two men in each keep clashing together flat stones, while the rest are engaged in paddling. A shoal when sighted is promptly surrounded and the porpoises driven ashore. The entire energy is concentrated upon preventing the prey from breaking away and escaping. If all goes well, the porpoises are captured *en masse.* Some are seized in men's arms and dragged ashore, others in vain bury themselves in the mud or sand. They are flung into the canoes, the flesh cut up, and every tooth extracted. A hole is subsequently drilled in each, and they become good money.

The porpoise ghost just referred to is a being who may be called Patron of the Chase, but I know of no ghost porpoises. There seems to be no respect whatever paid to them, but in Mala again we find ghost sharks. In one village the coco-nuts of certain trees are reserved exclusively for the food of one of these favoured creatures, and only those men who purpose after death entering into shark bodies are allowed to partake of these sacred nuts in a reserved place. It is told in another Mala village where sharks are worshipped, how two small boys playing one day on a bamboo raft floated too far away from shore and were quickly surrounded by a crowd of hungry sharks. The shark medium hurried to the edge of the water and shouted aloud, "Harm not those two! Know ye not they are your descendants?" And upon the word the sharks dived abashed and disappeared.

In at least one village in Mala the alligator is worshipped. There is said to be a mutually defensive alliance; the people protect the alligators, and the alligators the people. To the former is assigned the responsibility of deciding the innocence or guilt of accused men. If the crime charged against them be serious, and they cannot clearly disprove it, such are brought to a channel that is infested with crocodiles. The monsters are called together with charms by the alligator wizard, and the accused is condemned to swim across the channel through their midst. If he is eaten, he is guilty; if he escapes, he is innocent. One is really tempted to picture the poor fellow shivering on the brink and enunciating the old wheeze, "I deny the allegation, and I defy the allegator!"

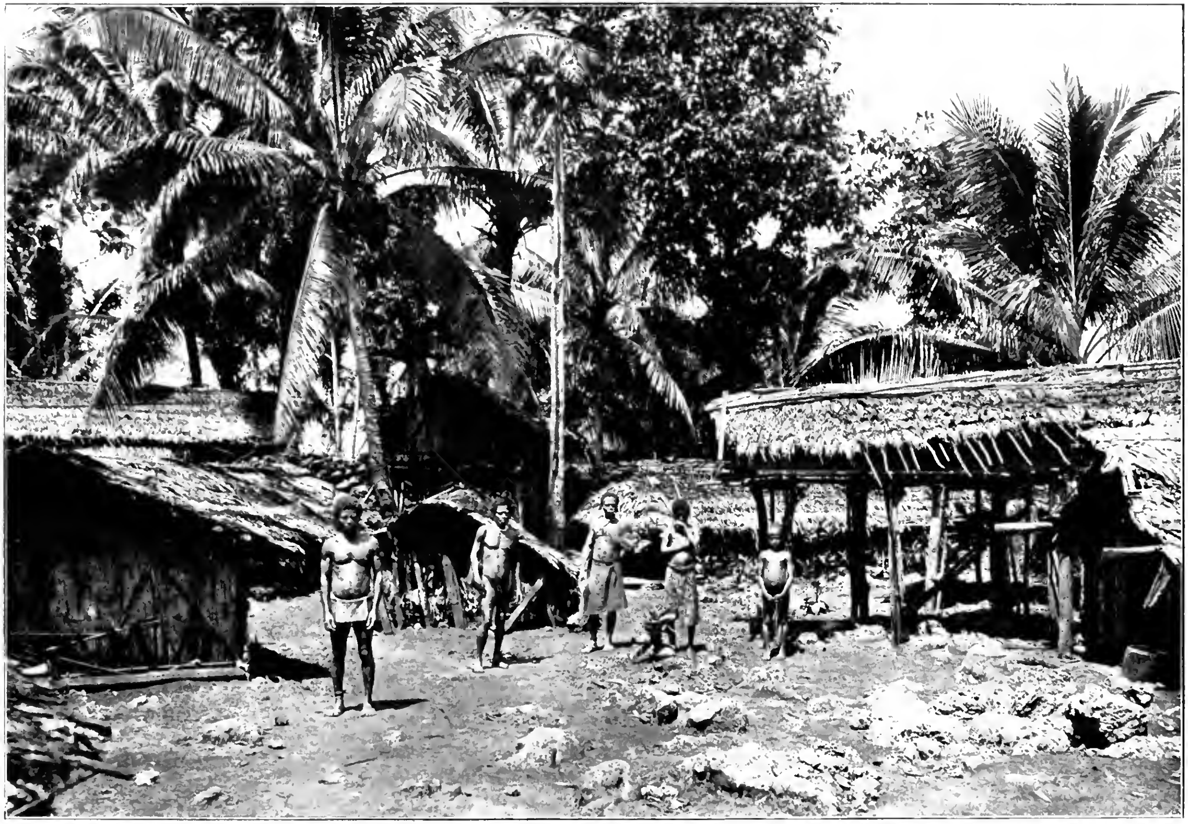
Sometimes the man is lucky enough to succeed in bribing the wizard to swim as his substitute. This is not forbidden, but we may be sure it is bought at a long price. Possibly the medium possesses some influence akin to that of a snake-charmer; at all events it is understood that he accomplishes the task unscathed.

If news comes of the slaying of a crocodile, not only are the worshippers naturally prohibited from partaking of the ensuing feast, but their horror of the crime must prevent their ever touching food in the vicinity of the slaughterous deed. Death by the breaking out of fearful boils is said to be the penalty of harming a crocodile. Sometimes a pig is sacrificed by cutting the flesh into fragments, which are wrapped in the large leaves of taro and floated down to the crocodilian haunts. If the wrapper leaves can afterwards be discovered untorn, it is a good sign; if the leaves are found torn, sickness and death may be expected in that village.

The sacrificial idea appears to be rather more defined and developed in Mala than elsewhere. The ghost-house, which one may find even in the artificial islets (on the men's side), really serves the purpose of a temple. There is a sort of recognized medium, or high-priest, or magician—in one case dwelling eighty miles off—who comes occasionally to sacrifice pigs on a stone altar in the ghost-house to the spirit under whose special protection is the great draw-net above referred to.

Before any expedition is undertaken, or a new house entered, the dance and feast in celebration is connected with an appeal to the spirits or the ancestral ghosts. If rain or sunshine is needed by the bush-folk for their crops, the spirits are again invoked. There is a domestic sacrifice sometimes offered, too, which is called "clearing the soul." If a man is taken ill, or heavy trouble threatens him, it is assumed that he has incurred the wrath of some ghost. A wizard is therefore called in, who cooks there in the house a dog or young pig, repeating while he does so the

MALA.



The Cannibal Village of Foate.

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names of such ghosts as are likely to be the *origo mali*, and beseeching them to do away with the mischief and purify the afflicted victim. Then the charred carcass is thrown into the sea, or set upon a stone in the place sacred to the ghost whose ill-will is most suspected. And a native's own comment on this ceremony is instructive. The roasted animal "is not put in a common place," he says; "it is holy, it has taken away the mischief, it has cleansed."[1]

In Mala I had the interesting experience of paying an afternoon call in a cannibal village where no white woman had been seen before. Foate is its name, and one could see even before stepping ashore amongst what utterly uncivilized people we were coming. Full dress consisted quite frequently of a necklace of human front teeth, a decoration I could not manage to admire!

A Mission school has been opened close by on the shore, but the village is on a hill just above it, walled round for defence like a little citadel. The men of the place received us in a most friendly and hospitable manner, but the women, quite unlike those of Su Aba, fled rabbit-wise to their dark holes at sight of us. In the end I managed to coax one or two back to their entrances and take a step towards acquaintance, but they seemed painfully frightened. The Bishop was made very welcome, and he sat on the wall chatting with the chief, perfectly at home. To me it was odd to realize when shaking hands with them that, given the opportunity, they would have enjoyed eating our hands as much as shaking them and adding our front teeth to their necklaces!

The ins and outs of that small village were by no means charming. I was extremely glad to have visited Foate. It gave one an indelible picture of the state which some arm-chair critics still scoff at or scold a Mission for disturbing. Would that they could have seen it and its inhabitants! But having visited it, I must confess to a sense of relief at returning to the boat.

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[1] *The Melanesians: their Anthropology and Folk-Lore.*

In 1877 two Reef Islanders were blown away from home in a canoe, and drifted 160 miles to westward, landing at Port Adam, in South Mala, now a Christian district, where the chief, Paul, teaches himself in the school under our native deacon. But when Bishop John Selwyn arrived that year in the *Southern Cross* he found the poor shipwrecked strangers made captive, and being fattened for killing. The Bishop offered the chief, one Oikata, a quantity of goods to buy off the two Polynesians. At last the thinner of the pair was handed over.

But it was no sooner done than repented of; the war canoes were brought out, manned, and launched, and it became evident that a bold attempt was on foot to cut out the ship. The captain saw what was planned, ordered a hurried start, and the ship got out in safety. A few weeks later she called again. The chief came aboard, all good-humour and smiles, but his mouth watered and his eyes glistened at sight of his recent victim, now the picture of health and plumpness. He pressed him earnestly to come ashore and visit his friend, who was still alive, being not considered yet quite ripe for the oven. But the invitation was stubbornly declined. The chief, on his part, stubbornly declined to sell his second windfall, so the ship left.

There is, however, a happy sequel. The night arrived before the feast at which human flesh was to form the *pièce de résistance.* The Polynesian was to die at sunrise, and by cooking all day would be ready for the evening meal. The house in which he lay was strongly guarded. But a strange deep sleep fell on the guards. The man, noticing it, crept out of the house and escaped to the beach. There he found a canoe, but no paddle. A return to the house was necessary. But the guards did not wake even when he fumbled in the thatch and found the desired paddle. Back to the beach the poor wretch stole, pushed off, and paddled for some miles. At length he landed, broke up the canoe lest it tell tales, and took to the bush.

After a week of wandering he came upon the village of Saa, and from a hiding-place saw his relentless enemy, Oikata, the chief of Port Adam, and his men questioning the inhabitants. Again he fled, but when another week had passed, he resolved, rather than starve, to risk the consequences and surrender himself to Saa. Fortunately the chief of that place took a fancy to him and gave him protection. There he was found in safety when the *Southern Cross* next called, and the Bishop had the great pleasure of restoring him also to his home at Nifiloli in the Reefs.

Every village in Mala, however small, has one chief, if not more. One village we visited was divided into a series of fenced enclosures, each having, say, four or five houses and its own chief. But there is generally one man in the district who, by sheer force of character, comes to be recognized as the big chief, and on him falls the direction of what may be classed as communal affairs.

Such an one, Qaisulea by name, made himself a *persona grata* with the Queensland recruiting vessels by the number of hands his influence secured them for the labour market. For a time, in consequence, he rode on the top of the wave, and his house was glorified by numbers of clocks, musical boxes, etc., the reward of his success. But the Mission never did show him much favour, and though he came on board to pay us his compliments, the old fellow was rather dejected in spirits, finding that with the cessation of the "thief-ships'" calls his glory and honour had departed.

There is an important chiefly family at Saa distinguished by the prefix "Dora" to their names. I believe all the members are now Christian, and most have gone through the College training at Norfolk Island. But in 1885, though a school had been started, Saa was still heathen and Dorawewe was the chief.

Trouble befell him in the death of a young daughter, and he became almost wild in his inconsolable grief. The little body was buried near the sea, and Dorawewe left his proper house and took up his dwelling in a wretched hut beside the grave. Of course the cause of the death must be imputed to some one, and it was remembered that ten days previously a friend from the interior had spent the day with the chief, had noticed the child, and given her some betel-nut. At once he was marked down as the cause of her death, and a price was set upon his head.

In order to compel his followers to share in his grief, Dorawewe put a taboo upon the beach, the river, almost the whole village. As it was thus wellnigh impossible to move about, the school came to a full stop, and the chief's next act was to forbid all ordinary occupations or amusements. There was to be no boating, bathing, fishing, or washing. Those who were thirsty sneaked to the forbidden river's edge and lapped hastily as much as they dared, fearful of being seen.

Now it was well known to all that the chief's grief would be lightened if *any* head were obtained, and there was universal relief when a large war canoe arrived bringing a head to Dorawewe. A neighbouring chief had taken the opportunity of getting rid of an old enemy and enriching himself at the same time, for Dorawewe was ready to pay highly for the prize. At the end of a month the taboo was removed, and when, not long afterwards, the suspected man also was slain, the chief was quite happy.

The following year, however, Dorawewe amused himself by laying such a heavy taboo upon the Mission school that nothing less than a human head and a large sum of money could remove it. A wizard whom he had consulted declared the school to be the cause of his rheumatism and other ailments. Of course there was nothing to be done but to remove the teacher till more auspicious times for the school dawned.

This same Dorawewe on another occasion lost a dog, it being killed by a man whose pigs it was injuring. Promptly Dorawewe put out a large sum of blood-money to be his who slew this man. And the action was regarded by his people as quite natural and proper.

In a story from Port Adam again we get an instructive glimpse into the native life. There was here a great chief named Hanetarana, famed for his lavish hospitality. One day a guest of his returned home feeling unwell, took to his mat, grew worse, and died. Needless to say, all his friends were convinced that Hanetarana had poisoned his food, and so they resolved to compass his death.

But when a chief is strong and popular, his murder is not an easy matter. A magician notorious for his skill was applied to, who lived at a considerable distance. This man seems never to have visited Port Adam, but so confident were his clients in his power that no doubt was felt but that Hanetarana was doomed.

Now among the magical mysteries in Mala is a peculiar spark of light which serves as guide to those who wish to track down the source of any trouble. Some say that the wizards can transform themselves into this spark of fire, and the rumour soon spread that every night the magician might be seen floating about the village in this form, and that he always ended by a long stay in Hanetarana's house. Such a rumour would not be long abroad before it reached the ears of the chief, and there the suggestion might safely be left to work.

One night he woke up in a fright, convinced that above his head he could see the fatal spark darting about among the rafters; and from that moment he gave himself up for lost. The thought of moving his residence occurred to him, only to be abandoned. He took the step of consulting a neighbouring chief, in rank slightly his inferior. This man, who was none other than the Oikata of whom we have already heard, thought he saw an easy way of attaining to the premier position. With deep sympathy he agreed with Hanetarana that no escape was possible for him but one. Was it not nobler and simpler to rid oneself of the burden of life than to peak and pine ignominiously under the influence of a sorcerer?

Hanetarana was not sure at first that he thought so, but Oikata seemed positive about it; and as he harped continually and lugubriously upon the subject the other at length decided to take his advice, so he shut himself up in his house and hanged himself. Oikata succeeded to the supreme power, and found himself heir to all his predecessor's earthly goods. He mourned for his departed friend with the utmost decorum, and levied a heavy fine upon those who were said to have sought Hanetarana's death by magic. This is not poetic justice, but it is authentic prose.

On the death of a chief, the figure of a great fish is carved in wood, split, and hollowed. In this the corpse is laid, the cracks are cemented with a sort of mortar made from pounded nuts, and it is set up inside the house. At the expiration of a year the fish is broken open and the bones are removed. The skull and thigh-bones are preserved in the house, the rest are thrown into a sacred place in the bush. The death-feast is held, when the debris of the cooking is carefully preserved, and it is requisite that one pig be burnt whole. In this there is very probably a propitiatory idea, but it does not atone for the human life, for which nothing but another man's blood can compensate. Plans for a murder are always set on foot, and the man who accomplishes the deed gets high praise and high pay from all the late chief's loyal followers.

In South Mala a different custom is followed in ordinary cases. The body is laid in the deceased's canoe, and this is hoisted up beside the sea, sometimes in the upper branches of a tree on the beach, sometimes on poles right out upon the reef. The ornaments and favourite belongings of the man are hung around it, and so it is left until the process of decomposition is completed. The skull is then preserved by the dead man's kindred, but the other bones are thrown into the sea.

It must have been rather grim to see a wedding procession pass close by the tree in which rocked the corpse of the girl-bride's father, but this occurred, and in South Mala the bride is present at her own wedding and formally conveyed home, although the presence of the bridegroom is dispensed with. I cannot resist inserting the delightful name of this particular bride —Ugenaramamukeni! I don't know whether she was called "for short" by any fraction of it.

I fancy the Mala folk must like a name that has some sound to it, for we found in one village the native deacon had recently baptized his infant son by the name of "Williams Archdeacon"—an inversion, but yet a remembrance of a friend and benefactor in New Zealand!

It seems to be the belief here that life after death is continued, but only for a while. The soul takes its long journey *via* the Three Sisters to the ghost realm in Guadalcanar. Here it lives in a shadowy way like a man. It can laugh, and talk, and bathe; can make shadowy houses, and gardens, and canoes. Its food is the nests of white ants, and the more *mana* was possessed by the soul when in bodily form, the longer will last its life after death. But at length comes the end, and it is the same to all. The souls turn into white ants' nests themselves!

One has had cause to refer to the canoes, and it would be a shame to leave Mala without a word about them. Everywhere in the Solomons the war-canoe is well worth inspection. I had an opportunity of closely examining a fine specimen in Mala which was built in one year as a gift of love by an expert native and presented to the priest-in-charge. Some are as long as 60 feet, made of planks shaped with a rough adze, and smoothed with a hard flat stone. Holes are drilled along each plank's edge, about the size and distance apart of those for boot-laces. These are indeed for lacing with dried and prepared creeper-fibre, and the canoe is squeezed into shape by an exterior frame, the pressure of which is counterbalanced by the interior purchase exerted by ribs (of the curved roots of the mangrove) and thwarts. The lacing is gradually tightened till the planks meet as nearly as may be. The joints are then caulked with the nut cement mentioned above, which sets as hard as iron. Carved wooden figures are added by way of ornament; for the same purpose cowries and other shells are laid in the caulking material, and the canoe is finally dressed with waving bunches of dyed grasses, etc.

A chief will spare no money or pains over the glorifying of his canoe. He will send an order to each village which recognizes his authority for one or two thousand pieces of nacre, for which he pays fairly, and his own artist will work these into marvellous patterns on the side of the canoe—such as birds, clouds, etc. As many as 50,000 pieces may be employed upon one boat. The first voyage is of the congratulatory nature described in Ulawa.

South Mala is already largely Christian; malice and violence are no longer the usual causes of death.

When I think of the island, it is not always of the degraded, terrified, heathen parts which will soon be non-existent. My mind recurs with delight to the sunrise of one Sunday morning when we rowed ashore at one of the most picturesque landings imaginable on the coral beach beside a tree-shaded stream. I think of the dewy, grassy climb among ferns and blossoming trees to the sunny village above, brilliant and fragrant with flowers and shrubs. I see the happy folk assembled ready, the men in their clean loin-cloths, the women in gay petticoats, and I hear the ting of the little church bell, and follow with the bright-faced, but silent, reverent crowd into the building for a Service in which the English Bishop is served by a Mala deacon. And as Mala is in part already, may it soon be entirely!

Civilization spreads fast, and soap and matches, umbrellas and pipes, are familiar objects already. But a few years ago, when the first cake of soap was seen in Mala, it was taken for a seed, planted and watered with care, and watched for the growth of a soap-tree! As for the first umbrella, it was the envy and admiration of a whole village. As a great favour the loan of it was begged, and the owner's consent having been obtained, the happy borrower ran off to get it. It so happened that the umbrella was inside the house, but open, in which form it refused to pass through the narrow door. Puzzled, but not confounded, the man removed a sufficient portion of the roof thatch to allow of the open umbrella's exit, and so went off in triumph to enjoy an hour under the wonderful, beautiful thing. One wonders whether he spent a *mauvais quart d'heure* with the owner by and by!

Mala mythology has its hero, one Vulanangela, who was unfortunate enough to be swallowed by a fish while trying to catch it, and carried as an inside passenger for a long ten days' swim to eastward, where the fish grounded in a shallow, and Vulanangela, remembering a flint-stone he had about him, cut his way out.

On emerging he found that it was early morning, but the sun had not yet risen; so he sat down on the beach to wait for it. It was very cold, and he sat there a long time, but no sun appeared. What could be the reason?

Suddenly Vulanangela was startled by a violent and tremendous knocking underneath him. Said he, "Who knocks?"

"I!" was the answer—the inevitable Melanesian answer.

"But who are you?"

"Why, I am the Sun, of course, and I'm waiting to get up, but can't because of you!"

By this Vulanangela knew that he had sat down over the very hole through which the Sun comes forth. The man jumped up, and up jumped the Sun.

"Now, who are you?" he inquired.

"I am Vulanangela."

"Is that so? Well, do you want to stay here, or are you coming along with me?"

"Oh, with you!"

And so off went the two together, and travelled till they reached the house of the Sun, where Vulanangela remained two years, and was then lowered to earth again, carrying with him a precious gift for the children of men, the gift of fire!

A myth of the past is this, but there is fairy lore of the present to be found in Mala, little as one would expect it in such a lurid region. Perhaps one might anticipate ogres, and to be sure they tell of a similar order of malevolent beings with flowing hair. Such inhabit caves far in the bush; they scent man's approach, and hunt him down. Very strong and swift, human kind has little chance against them. With their long-nailed, claw-like fingers they kill their quarry. Sometimes a bush traveller comes upon a mysterious fire. If one of the he-ogres has built it, the wood will be laid horizontally, but if an ogress, the kindling is set end up.

But besides these ogre folk of Mala, in most of the Solomon Islands we find a firmly-rooted belief in the existence of a little people far in the interior, who occupy just the place that fairies did in the minds of our own ancestors. Many natives will assert positively that they have seen glimpses and traces of them; all can tell you something of their characteristics and customs. It is an unanswered question whether this widely-spread conviction has its origin in the existence of some remnant of an anterior race in Melanesia. What if in the long ago, when the Melanesians landed in the islands from their unknown land of origin, the aborigines, possibly very few in number, retreated before them to the fastnesses of the interior, to be thereafter but rarely encountered in the bush? Others have suggested the existence of some race of apes to account for the legends told.

Be it as it may, here in Mala every one is aware of the *Dodore* who live in the heart of the bush. A *dodore* is a little man with only one foot and one arm, and long, flowing red hair. A very wicked old-woman *dodore* reigns over the tribe, and they are all dreaded because they have the power to bewitch people and things, and many men, it is said, have been lured away by the *dodore*, and such go mad, and forget their home and friends, and wander on till they die.

One boy here in the College at Norfolk Island is quite sure that he was once bewitched by the *dodore*, and only miraculously recovered by his friends. When at last they found him, he says he only wondered who they were and what they wanted. In another case a man weaved himself a new mat for his sleeping, and the plant he used grew in a *dodore's* lair. The first night he lay upon his mat he dreamed the *dodore* came to him and said, "Give us back what is ours!" But he took no notice. The second night he dreamed the same again, but still he took no notice. The third night a band of *dodore* came and carried him away, mat and all. But when he awoke they were afraid, dropped him, and fled.

These Mala fairies do not seem to be seriously malicious. They are playful and mischievous, and more silly than children. They love to hide a man's bag, or adze, or pipe which he has laid down for a moment, and what they steal they often throw away. On the tops of the banyan trees, by the side of pools, in the midst of rain, they are heard laughing, shouting, and singing. Sometimes they chance upon a human being asleep, and great is their excitement. The queer monster is discussed in whispers, poked with sticks, and his fingers and toes are counted over and over.

The Mala boys' account of them reminds one of the *Bandar-log* in Kipling's *Jungle Book*, or the doings of the Wise Men of Gotham.

"If they see a crooked tree, they begin to chatter all together, 'Why is it crooked?' 'Why isn't it straight?' 'What is the matter with it?'

"One of them wishes to gather nuts, and he fixes a long bamboo on his back to strike the nuts off with. He begins to climb, and the long bamboo is dreadfully in the way; but he can't make out what is the matter, and tries and tries to climb till he gives up in despair. Another climbs a little way, and stops. 'Up you go!' says his mate below. 'I can't,' he replies; 'it's too dark up here; the place is full of clouds.'

"Then they throw spears at the glistening nuts, but they never hit the fruit, only themselves, and then they all yell, and say, 'Let's try again!' but they never succeed.

"They go a-fishing, and catch a big red fish, and put it in a bag, and tie it round the neck of one of them. The fish struggles in the bag. 'A ghost is after us!' cries one, and all begin to run. The more the fish struggles, the faster they run; but they never think it is the fish!"

Such is the light side of Mala.

CHAPTER IV

G̈ELA (FLORIDA), SOLOMON ISLANDS

History—Natural features—Civilization—Coco-nuts—Honggo to-day—Honggo in 1873—The two Pengoni—A war dance—A dance of death—An ugly record—Kalekona, chief—*Tindalo* worship—The six *Kema*—"Abominations"—Killing-ghosts—*Tindalo* rites—Sacrifice of first-fruits—A secret society—The tyranny of vengeance—Break-up of the *tindalo* worship—David Tabukoru, chief—"Taboo with 100 porpoise teeth"—Sermonizing—"The wild man-eating pigs"—Bound by vows—A foundation-stone laying—A native parliament—A female creator—Burial customs—Crocodile-catching—Out of the monster's jaws—Folk-tale: "The Heron and the Turtle."

"It is twenty-five leagues in circuit," writes Gallego in his journal, "and is a fine island in appearance, with many inhabitants, who are also naked as in the other islands; and they redden their hair, eat human flesh, and have their towns built over the water as in Mexico."

This was the report of 1567, when the natives of G̈ela had the privilege of coming into contact with civilization first in the form of the Spaniards. They do not appear to have appreciated the honour of their acquaintance as they should have done. For though they began in a friendly way by presenting hogs and offering more than the Spaniards could accept, we read the following day of twenty canoes of fighting-men, "who planned taking us to their town and capturing us, and displayed much delight amongst themselves."

Their manner was "very fierce" and their hurry was great, so—

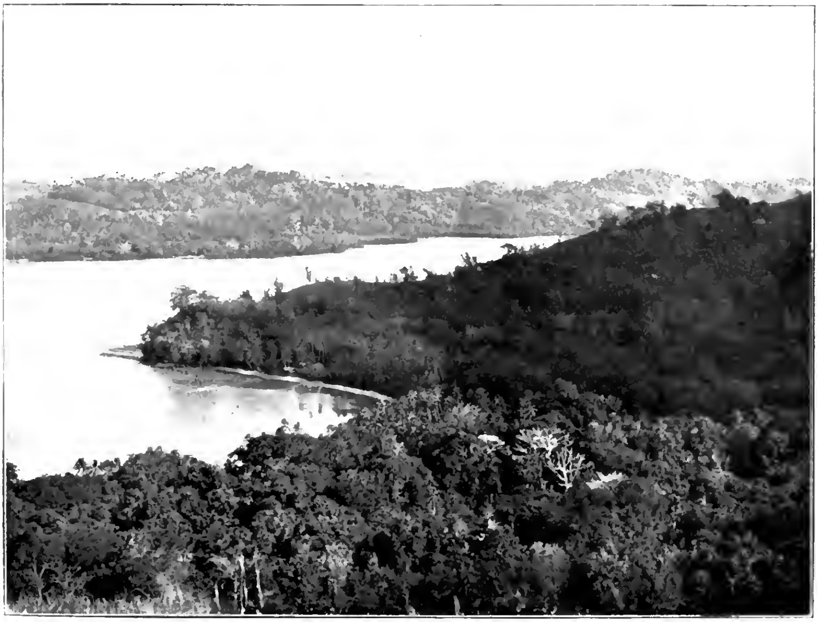
> Seeing their daring, we replied with the muskets, and many Indians were killed, and the whole were repulsed; and they rallied, and came on to the attack with greater fury, but this time they suffered even more, and for the second time they were repulsed and routed.
>
> Deserting their towns, they went off with many howls and cries to the higher land in the interior. Soon the *maestre de campo* landed with twenty men, and he endeavoured to bring off some provisions to the brigantine, and to restore friendship with the natives; but from their dread of the muskets they would never approach [What foolish Indians!] and they kept far in advance, calling to each other by conch-shells and with drums. Seeing that there was no help for it [!] we set fire to a house, after having taken possession of the island in the name of His Majesty, as in the case of the other islands; and we gave it the name of La Florida.

Small as it is in comparison with its surrounding neighbours—Mala, Guadalcanar, San Cristoval, and Bugotu—La Florida is certainly second to none in natural beauty. Intersecting waterways divide it into three separate parts, and if we include the multifarious little islets cut off from the mainland on all sides, it has been said that the island is not one, but fifty. One of the two channels is scarcely more than a salt river, but the other, the Ututha, measures about ten miles in length, by a hundred yards in width, and will permit of the passage of the *Southern Cross*.

The scenery has a variety not found everywhere. There are precipitous hills and deep ravines, luxuriant

GELA.

"THIS WAS HONGGO."



"SECOND TO NONE IN NATURAL BEAUTY."

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forest, and what at least gives the effect of grassy slopes and knolls to the passing traveller. At closer quarters the grass is found to be rank, coarse, and waist-high, but it adds a very charming element to the G̈ela landscapes. And often the air is disturbed by the whirr of a hundred wings, and a flock of white cockatoos, sunset-crested, contribute fresh picturesqueness to the scene.

For better, for worse, G̈ela to-day knows more of civilization than any other spot in the Solomons. It is the seat of government, the point of call of many vessels, the centre of a large trade in copra; has its post office and its stamps, its medical officer of health, whose visit must be received before a landing is permissible, and its "store," where you may buy billy-cans and bangles, and several other things you are not likely to require.

However, it is neither the official nor the commercial side of G̈ela which is of most interest, so we will not linger over them. The plantations of coco palms are happily things of beauty as well as of profit, with their foliage like giant ostrich feathers, their stems like firm and slender pillars in a dryad's temple. Well has the coco-nut been called the island staff of life! Its stems make the poles which support the houses, and in the fighting districts form spears; its foliage makes mats, thatch, torches, fans, umbrellas, and feminine costumes; the husk of the nut makes excellent firing, and the kernel provides food and drink in all its stages. And then civilization comes along, wanting soap and matting, and finds even such luxuries obtainable by grace of the Coco-nut!

It was in the Honggo district that I took my first walk in G̈ela, through native gardens and plantations, the blue water lapping on the dazzling sand just beyond the shade of the trees. Again and again I noticed a stick set up with a bunch of leaves tied thereto, so asked John Pengoni, my companion, its signification. He told me it was a taboo sign, protecting the coco-nuts from pilferers—just a primitive "Trespassers will be prosecuted!"

About a mile farther on we came to the village—clean, and bright, and pretty. The native deacon, John Pengoni's house is distinguishable by a bright new tank, and in the centre of things stands the church, with brown stone walls, real glass windows, and a beautifully thatched roof.

The G̈ela people are blamed for many things—self-opinionativeness, avarice, idleness, and much else. No doubt they are full of imperfections, but there is rare good stuff in them too, to be found by those who look out for it. Nothing can exceed the heartiness of a G̈ela welcome, and the affection of the children is delightful. "Oh, stay with us! Stay with us! Don't go away!" was the chorus of entreaty.

But this was Honggo, and I must place against this present-day visit to Honggo an account of the first visit paid there by any white man, in 1873, when a member of the Mission induced the men of Mboli to escort him to the land of their hitherto fierce enemies, the Honggo tribe.

It was an adventurous expedition, thirteen canoes being employed—the big war-canoe holding forty men, the rest not less than twenty apiece. A formidable company of visitors! The Honggoites and the Mbolians were now formally at peace, but the latter seemed to feel it was rash to put too much confidence in ignorant savages like the Honggoites. And it seemed prudent to make sure of the approval of the patron ghosts first.

Off a pretty point our fleet drew up into line, and their occupants became completely silent. Something evidently was about to happen. Suddenly, but gently, all the canoes began to sway slowly from side to side. This was the work of the *tindalo* [ghosts], and the silence remaining still unbroken, Takua [chief of Mboli, a noted head-hunter] exclaimed, "Now! Inquire of the *tindalo*! Shall we go up, or shall we forbear? Now! Inquire of this one!"—as a strong ghost-wave rocked our war-canoe—"Why are you all silent?"

Then rose the old Guavi, and cried, "*Ai huatigo! Ai huatigo! Huatigo! tigo! tigo! tigotigotigo!*" (We inquire of thee! 'Quire of thee! Of thee! Of-thee-of-thee-of-thee! etc.) And no response—that is, no swaying—being forthcoming, he added, "Do you see? He forbids us!"

Then the names of several *tindalo* were proposed—Keramo [the generic name for *tindalo* of killing], Pandagi, etc. etc. I was quite uneasy lest the *tindalo* should not relent. At last Hauri [the shark-ghost] was inquired of, and a wave of assent bowed our tall poop and prow, and Guavi interpreted, "Let us go up to Honggo! Let us dance, and eat, and pipe, and betel," etc.

Honggo was presently reached.

The canoes grounded. Our party got out and stood in a double line in front of them, across the mouth of a break in the belt of bush. The order issued was to stand as still and emotionless as death, happen what might.

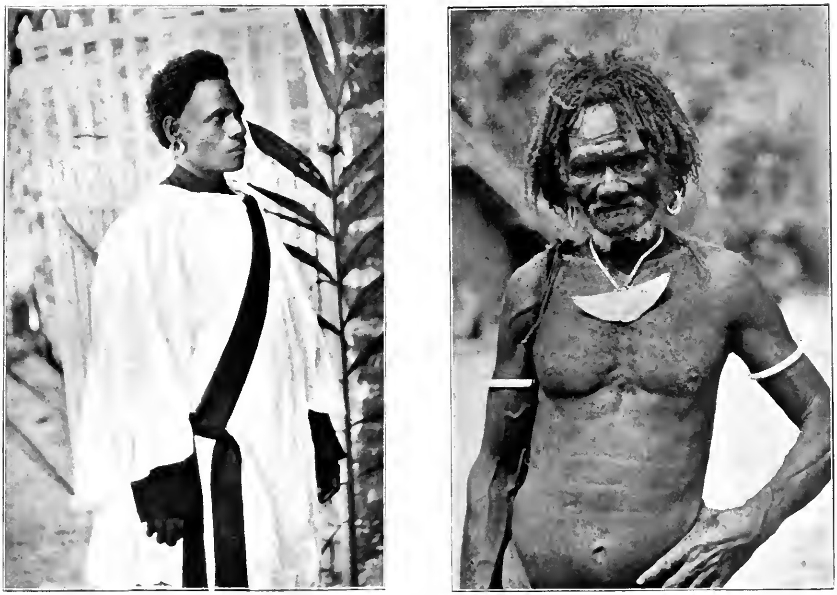
I observed that our great orator, Sauvui, was gorgeously arrayed in rings, and suns and moons on his forehead and his breast, bearing a splendid shield with a cross of tufts of red, blue, and yellow parrots' feathers in the middle, together with a tomahawk glitteringly inlaid, and a long spear of ebony, with point of elaborately carved and splintered human shin-bone. A most military spectacle, truly! He was horribly afraid, but his look was imposing in the extreme. Each individual of our double line stood on guard, with shield up, and spear held back at arm's length.

After a short interval, a rustling was heard in the cover to the left, whence defiled a company of the Honggo men, about a hundred strong, armed with tomahawks and spears, and carrying shields. I could not compliment them on their erect military bearing, for they were all stooping so low that each man's body was covered by his shield, the bottom of which nearly touched the ground, the warrior's nose resting upon the top. This fierce, grotesque array of swaying bodies, wagging heads, rolling eyes, dancing legs, hanging shields, and quivering spears, passed so perilously close to our line that at one dreadful moment a Honggo spear caught in a Mboli shield. The shield might have been hanging on a post for any emotion discernible in its bearer, but it was like watching sparks fall among barrels of gunpowder.

Scarcely had the novelty of this troop worn off, when there emerged a second from the right, and lastly a third marched down the opening in the middle, each of which went through exactly the same performance as the first, all forming into line a few yards from ours, the numbers on either hand being nearly equal. After much fierce bo-peep behind their shields, and threatening of our unwinking eyes with their spear-points, the Honggo line broke up and retired.

Then came to the front the Chief of Honggo, Pengoni, a smiling, child-like man, who had to deliver the speech of the afternoon, but, his memory proving inconstant, laboured under great difficulties, and had to be prompted from behind. He was understood to say: "Takua! Sauvui! (etc. etc.) Come on shore here! We are all cousins, and brothers, and uncles, and aunts, and mothers-in-law, and fathers-in-law! This is no strange land to my friends of Mboli. Come on shore, say I, this bachelor here!" And away he walked, a bachelor by rhetorical licence only, since Mrs. Pengoni was introduced to me afterwards to receive a present, that I "might know her by means of beads," in the technical phraseology of the locality.

G̈ELA.



Père et Fils

The Rev. John Pengoni and his Father.

Going to Confirmation.

Several other speakers followed on either side, and guns were let off by our party, after which a small Honggo band burst through our line, and cast some baskets of food into the nearest canoe.

Presents were exchanged and salutes of cheek or hand, and the visit ended in the customary way, with cries of "Go! Go!" on the part of the Honggo hosts, and "Stay! Stay!" from the Mboli canoes—words which do not sound a particularly hospitable farewell, yet are so considered.

Thirty-seven years have passed. The old Pengoni is still unbaptized, for he cannot bring himself to surrender either of his wives. But his son John has been admitted to deacon's orders, and is one of the hardest workers and best teachers and organizers among our people.

From the description above of the war dance I think I recognize the *Siokoli*, which we see danced by the Ġela boys in Norfolk Island. It has a distinctly menacing appearance, increased by the accompaniment of banging shields, rattling anklets, and a sort of *bouche fermée* chorus, punctuated by deep growls. When the boys told me it was generally selected for performance by a dancing party on tour of the villages, and added naively that every one gives them money when they see it, I was not surprised. One felt that it would need a man of heroic mould to refuse his dog's tooth if that spear-armed, growling company signified a desire for it.

These dancing parties are a common occupation in the piping times of peace, when the weather is too rough for boating. The daily practising is criticized by the chief, who, when calm weather sets in, takes round his troupe and gives performances all along the line, receiving food and money in return.

This is all very well, but these good people, light of heart and light of foot, could dance to another tune not so long ago, a tragic dance of death. In 1876 G̈ela had as bad a reputation as any island in the Solomons, and with reason. In the heathen parts a white crew landed at peril of their lives. They might seem to be received hospitably, and their sense of security would be enhanced when the dance and song began. But treachery lurked behind them, and sudden, cruel death came with a stab in the back to the jovial, unsuspecting sailors who were watching a death dance, and knew it not.

It is an ugly record. In 1871 the *Lavinia* was cut out and all hands massacred. In 1875 the *Dancing Wave* was cut out and her crew murdered. In 1880 the young Lieutenant Bower, in charge of a boat's crew from H.M.S. *Sandfly*, was killed with six of his men.

There is no question but that white men first created for themselves an evil reputation among the natives by their conduct towards them. Some of these and other murders were committed while the islanders were smarting under the treatment they had met with at the hands of white men in labour vessels, whose treacherous methods of kidnapping were bound to recoil upon their own heads or those of their brother whites.

But in the case of the *Sandfly* massacre the only suggested motive was the pacification of a big chief, Kalekona, who was furious over the loss of some strings of money, and could be appeased with nothing less than human blood. One only of the crew escaped. He swam to an islet near Honggo, where he found protection with the chief, Tambukoru, though the people clamoured ruthlessly for his head.

I was talking about old days to a young Ġela woman, and asked if she knew the name of Kalekona, whose collection of heads was among the largest in Ġela. She laughed. "Why, yes, Kalekona was my grandfather!"

I have translated the word *tindalo* as equivalent to "ghost," and this for the sufficient reason that the people assert with one consent that every object of their worship was once a man. In the case of such as Hauri, the shark-ghost, his human progenitor has passed entirely out of popular remembrance. But some names have only become recognized as *tindalo* of recent years. Ganido, for instance, was a famous warrior, who died gloriously from wounds in battle. Before the next killing excursion party set out, the experiment was made of consulting Ganido in the capacity of a *tindalo*. The expedition was highly successful, the canoes returned laden with heads, and the cry uprose, "Great is the *mana* of Ganido!" A little house was built for his bones, his shield, club, and other relics, a man was chosen to be what we may call the "priest" of Ganido, and the shrine was invested with a very sacred character. When we speak of the ghost experts as priests, it must be clearly borne in mind that there is no priestly caste, and they are only regarded as apart from other men when acting in this particular capacity.

The little *tindalo* houses, or shrines, made of a few sticks and leaves, used to be very numerous, and a native guide would turn aside half a dozen times in a short walk to avoid places sacred to *tindalo*.

Instead of the two "sides of the house" which divide the population in Southern Melanesia, G̈ela is cut up into six divisions or *kema*, members of which may not marry within their own clan. Each *kema* had of old its own patron ghost, and one forbidden creature (their *mbuto*, the natives call it, which may be translated "abomination"); and this no member of the *kema* must eat or touch.

"By my *mbuto*!" is a strong asseveration. A native of G̈ela has written as follows on the subject (translated):—

> If you were to bring an accusation against any one, and he should say, "Not I, by my *mbuto*!" it would be the truth, for he swears by his Abomination—by that which is forbidden to him. And our belief is this, that should any one eat of his abomination, he would die.
>
> Now this is the explanation of the *mbuto*. We believe the *tindalo* to have been men once upon a time, and something which they did, or had to do with, long ago, becomes the forbidden thing of those who possess the *tindalo*. . . .
>
> For instance, the Gaombata tribe have for their *mbuto* the giant clam-fish. Now this is found on the spot where they catch fish for Polika [their patron *tindalo*]—the fish, that is, wherewith to offer sacrifice to him; and they call this clam-fish Polika, believing [in some vague way] it really is Polika, this clam-fish. Wherefore the tribe of the Gaombata do not eat the clam-fish.

To another *kema* a crab was thus taboo, to a third a white pig, to a fourth a parrot, to a fifth a pigeon. The patron ghosts were, of course, hereditary, and the priestly power of "throwing the sacrifice" aright was transmitted from one expert to another.

Beside the tribal ghost, every man would have his own familiar killing-ghost, a relic of which—in hair, tooth, bone, or stone—hung round his neck. Sometimes ill-luck would befall his venture, and, feeling dissatisfied with his own demon, it was quite permissible to buy another in his place! From the same native account from which I quoted just now we learn that every man has to buy his own killing-ghost with a large sum of money. It is not hereditary. With the ghost the seller imparts information as to the special plants, and leaves, and trees which belong to this *tindalo*, by means of which a man can communicate with him and obtain *mana*.

> Then they take the things named and put them on their shields, and with the flowers and the creepers they gird themselves, and the sprigs they stick all about them, and then they go to battle. Now all these things which they take they suppose to belong to their own *tindalo*, and they take them in order that he may come upon them and strengthen them, that they may prevail, and beat the enemy. Moreover they eat all these things belonging to their *tindalo*, and they call it eating *him*, in order that he may enter into them, and make them strong. The enemy does the same, and if he prevail, then they say, "His killing-ghost is a powerful one!"

Before killing a man the murderer calls upon the name of his killing-ghost and dedicates his victim to him for food. But "whoever commits murder, and does not possess a killing-ghost, his body will suffer from it, it will ache and waste away."

Then there are the local *tindalo*, too, which, even if not one's patronal ghosts, may with advantage be approached if an expert is present. For instance, there is a certain harbour-crossing, dangerous for canoes on account of the reefs. It is usual for those desirous of coming in to shore to land on a small central reef and hang some coco-nuts on a mangrove tree to propitiate the antagonistic spirit and ensure a safe crossing of the barrier-reef. Once well on the other side, a frugal man will go back to recover his nuts, the spirit's assistance being no longer necessary.

But when the *tindalo* of one's own neighbourhood is hostile, it is an awkward matter, for ill-health is sure to result, and a sick chief will leave home, not so much for change of air as for change of *tindalo*, since by passing into another part (even as we noted in the Reefs) the spiritual authority is transferred.

A deprecatory offering, such as that of the coconuts mentioned above, must not, of course, be confused with a sacrifice. The sacrifices offered to *tindalo* seem to vary in nature from a mark of genuine respect and affection to an effort after conciliation.

The attitude of a man towards a *tindalo* is almost invariably deprecatory. And for this reason—the ghostly *instinct* towards man is malevolent. A man's bodily existence is *per se* an offence to the ghosts. This is pointed out by Dr. Codrington, who adds that "all human powers which are not merely bodily are enhanced by death." Imagine, then, how must a *tindalo* be feared whose disposition in life was fierce, and whose *mana* for fighting was even then dreaded! Generations of experiment have evolved certain regular methods of propitiation, and the *tindalo* may be placated to such effect that they become patrons and benefactors instead of adversaries.

Twice in every season are general sacrifices offered to the *tindalo* of the crops by their worshippers. The first is that common to so many places and peoples—an offering of the first-fruits. The delicious *nai* (an almond), so highly appreciated by all the natives, must not be touched until the priest has declared the time ripe for the sacrifice to be offered in the grove of the *n̈ai* trees, and honour thus paid to their patron ghost.

The second sacrifice takes place two months later, when the roots used for food have been dug. Three men will be engaged first in a sacred enclosure fenced off from the public, in making a great almond mash and moulding it into cakes, which are deposited upon stones. Then comes the ceremonial part. One of these rolls or cakes is consumed by fire, whilst the priest calls upon the spirit by name and invites him to partake of it. The rest of the mash is then consumed by all the men assembled. Throughout Melanesia women and children have no part in sacrificial rites. The ceremony and the formula are probably very similar in all the ghost offerings, and one account, furnished by Dr. Codrington in his book,[1] may be taken as typical of the rest.

The priest takes the dedicated food and heaves it from side to side, crying as he does so:—

"If thou dwellest in the east where rises the sun, Manoga! come hither and eat thy *tutu*-mash! If thou dwellest in the west where sets the sun, Manoga! come hither and eat thy *tutu*-mash!"

Having cried to the four corners of the earth, he proceeds:—

"If thou dwellest in the heaven above, Manoga! come hither and eat thy *tutu*-mash!

"If thou dwellest in the Pleiades, or the Belt of Orion, Manoga! come hither and eat thy *tutu*-mash!

"If thou dwellest below in Turivatu, Manoga! come hither and eat thy *tutu*-mash!

"If thou dwellest in the distant sea, Manoga! come hither, etc.

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[1] *The Melanesians: their Anthropology and Folk-Lore.*

"If thou dwellest on high in the sun or in the moon, Manoga! come hither, etc.

"If thou dwellest inland, or by the shore, Manoga! come hither and eat thy *tutu*-mash!"

The invocation thus completed, the mash is burnt in the fire.

When on solemn occasions a human sacrifice was offered to the ghosts, minute portions of the flesh were consumed by the worshippers in order to obtain *mana* for fighting.

It is by the operation of the *tindalo* that charms take effect. When the death-charm is employed—that one common throughout Melanesia by which a crumb of fallen food works a man's doom—the material is taken to a *tindalo*-haunted spot and deposited in a shell. The ill-wisher need do nothing more: the accomplishment may be left to the *tindalo*. So profoundly was the terror of this charm engrafted into the native mind that not only every adult, but even an infant of three or four years old might formerly be seen making a tiny fire directly he had finished his food, there to burn the shred of skin lest it be used against him.

Strange to say, in G̈ela alone, so far as I know, of all the Solomons, we hear once more of a secret society, with its ghostly associations, its frauds to frighten folk withal, its dress and ornaments, its song and dance. The *Matambala* is now almost, if not quite, extinct. If it lingers anywhere, it will only be away to the west, where Lipa, the old heathen chief, maintains the old ways. But in its day it was an awful power. If a man infringed a taboo set up by the *Matambala*, death was his portion. Watch was laid for him, he was seized, and his windpipe bitten through by a human vampire. Then the neck was wrapped round so that no marks were visible and the body was freely exhibited—"slain by the *tindalo*!"

Vengeance is the supreme law in heathen Melanesia. It is pursued and wreaked by man upon man, village upon village, district upon district. Here in Gela if one village had or imagined a grievance against another, a large sum of money would be contributed by its inhabitants, and set aside as a reward for whomso should avenge them. The news of it was widely circulated; and thenceforward the threatened village knew not who among its most familiar visitors might be tempted by the bribe to turn traitor and assassin. Life became a voluntary imprisonment and terror haunted every man, woman, and child.

If ever there was an island "fast bound in misery and iron," by reason of its lust, cruelty, and superstition, it was Gela in bygone days. And the release came almost suddenly. In 1879 the first signs were noted of a general move towards Christianity; the year 1883 saw the baptism of 200 instructed natives and a mighty overthrow of the *tindalo* power. The break-up began among Kalekona's people. The old savage chief called his men together, and dared to propose a general destruction of charms, images, and *tindalo* relics. The assent was almost eager. A great collection of all sacred properties was made and the whole thrown into the sea. Kalekona preserved only the sacred image of his own tutelary *tindalo* for a gift to the missionary. It is a lemon-shaped stone, roughly carved into the semblance of a human face. Hitherto no one had been allowed to see it. It was kept by Kalekona in the secret place where his father before him had kept it, and before starting on a canoe voyage it was his habit to visit the image and invoke the protection of the *tindalo.* Of course the news of the action taken by so famous a man as Kalekona and his company spread like wild-fire. The chief and his followers presented themselves like children at the door of the Mission school and asked for teaching. The rest of the people prophesied calamities untold at the hands of the insulted *tindalo*, and when nothing happened were forced to admit that there was *mana* in the New Teaching stronger than that of all the *tindalo.* This was confirmed when a chief who was visiting this part, finding himself weather-bound, exerted his arts to make a calm, and failed.

Kalekona's example was speedily followed by individuals and by tribes. Among the former was an inferior chief, noted for his courage as a professional murderer. He had scarcely become an adherent of the school when blood-money and instructions to kill were sent him by a superior chief. But the money was sent promptly back, with a declaration that he could do such work no longer.

One of the chief experts in *tindalo* mysteries, referred and deferred to by all, also renounced his profession, and when the time came to "throw the sacrifice" which annually made the beach taboo for more than a mile, the old priest refused to do his part or transmit his knowledge, and so the *tindalo* was unapproached. Children played on the beach and canoes landed safely where formerly in such a case every occupant would have been massacred.

Doubtless the prestige of the chiefs has diminished with the overthrow of the *tindalo* which bolstered their authority, and the indiscriminate bloodshed by which they gained respect and fame. But still real power clings to them, and they exert a very material influence upon their people.

Tambukoru, the heathen chief whose protection, as we saw above, saved a white sailor's life, found almost as hard a task before him eight years later, when he was a Christian. A European trader of vile character had shamed his race, darkened David Tambukoru's district, and behaved abominably to the chief himself. At last retribution fell; the man was deported, and forbidden to return. But David laid a strict embargo on his house and property, and not a stick was looted by the indignant people. Not one even of the empty bottles under the house might be carried away until the chief had consulted his white friends upon the subject and made sure that the owner would want them no more.

In another part of Ġela a white trader by his conduct roused the righteous indignation of the chief, who replied by putting a taboo of a hundred porpoise teeth upon the selling of coco-nuts to him. In other words, a native venturing to transact business with him would be mulcted in a fine of this magnitude. The consequence was that the trader left the place. On one occasion the boat of the priest-in-charge was injured by boys, and the chief promptly fined the lads' parents a hundred porpoise teeth, at the same time making the boat "taboo with a hundred porpoise teeth." That is to say, no one might touch it, save in helping to haul, on pain of such a fine. The value of a tooth is slightly more than a penny.

Though still superintended by a white man, Ġela, in common with many of the other islands, has now its staff of native clergy, and, to judge by an extract from the journal of one of them, the people cannot complain that they are stinted in the sermon line:—

> In the evening all the congregation came together. I talked a long time to them, and some of them went to sleep and fell off their seats.

And later:—

> On such a night I spoke long to them, and some fell from their seats, for sleep oppressed them greatly.

The adventures and accidents of translation form the subject of many amusing anecdotes, but I cannot resist retailing the quaint rendering that was furnished by native assistants in G̈ela, in early days, of Psalm civ. 11 ("the wild asses quench their thirst"), viz. "the wild man-eating pigs drink to stop the hiccups"!

Like all Melanesians, the G̈ela people are quick-tempered, and nothing would be commoner in a moment of anger than to utter a vow of retaliation, which might be repented of as soon as the hot blood cooled down. Very often the vow would be of such a nature as to rebound most unpleasantly upon the one who uttered it. Now in old times the remedy was simple. A small offering of food or money to the *tindalo* made things all right and the rash man was free from his vow. When Christianity came in and ousted the *tindalo* a difficulty arose. Tempers were still hot and quick, vows were still made in haste and repented of at leisure; but the people saw now no means of release, and native custom constrained them to stand by their oaths, however absurd or inconvenient.

For some years the trouble was not divulged, but at last the Bishop was confided in, and asked if he could do anything to lift the burden. Of course he gladly came to the rescue, and the news flew from village to village that the Bishop would release any from their vows who desired it. The extent of the trouble may be gauged by the fact that during a few weeks only no fewer than 966 persons appealed for this help, and were set free from rash oaths taken as long as twenty years ago.

The commonest form of vow was to the effect that one would never again eat food cooked or grown by some other. But there were girls who had sworn not to marry, husbands not to live with their wives, sons not to see their fathers, sisters not to be friends again, brothers not to speak to each other, a mother not to eat with her children, a wife not to enter her husband's canoe, a woman not to nurse her sick niece, and so on and so forth. So it was a great day when it was discovered that even Christians could be freed from the bondage of a rash oath.

I visited several parts of Ǧela, for we had to spend some little time there, but the most important day was when the laying of a church foundation-stone coincided with the annual *Vaukolu*, or Church parliament, held on that occasion in Mboli.

A stone church in England involves the selection of an architect and a building firm, a subscription-list and some collections, a few concerts, and a bazaar probably. In Ǧela the native priest is architect, clerk of the works, master-mason, and foreman. The people are the building firm—men, women, and children. And their own ready hands and feet supply the place of subscriptions and entertainments. Every block of stone had to be fetched and conveyed by water, and hewn and squared with tools at which white masons would have jeered.

The plan was Alfred Lombu's[1] own. It was frankly reminiscent of the only other stone church with which he is familiar—St. Barnabas' Chapel, Norfolk Island. And were not our earliest churches in England reminiscent of the Roman basilica? The church at Halavo is none the less native for that. Naturally it was still the day of small things when the foundation-stone, graven with a small cross, was laid in the groove appointed for it on the south side of the sanctuary. The walls were already raised to perhaps 30 inches from the ground, and as the site occupies about 75 by 35 feet, some good hard work was already represented. The east end is apsidal, with projecting chambers both to north and south. At the entrances and on all sides palm branches made the place taboo against trespassers.

Alfred is an old man as Melanesians go, crippled with rheumatism, but when he came limping and smiling along, one felt he had still joy in life.

The whole service was a memorable experience, for it was Alfred's arrangement from first to last—the long procession of native teachers of the district preceding the clergy and Bishop; the carefully-drilled choir, singing in parts and antiphonally, male and female; the unpremeditated words spoken by Alfred after the Bishop's sermon and the blessing of the stone. And around the site a crowded assembly of natives, singing, kneeling, listening with a unity and reverence that would have been a lesson to many a European congregation. There was no musical instrument, but the plash of the waves on the beach

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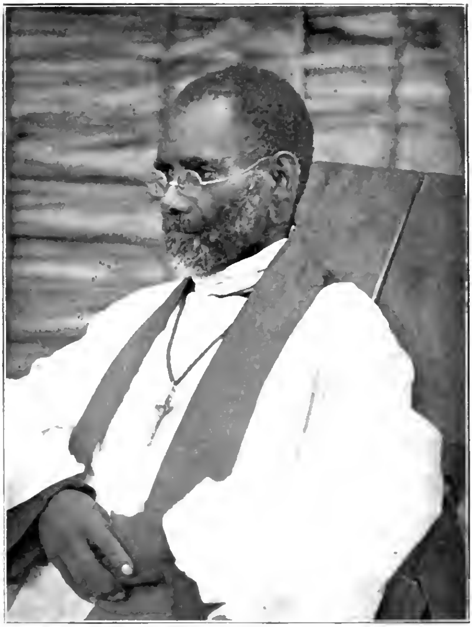
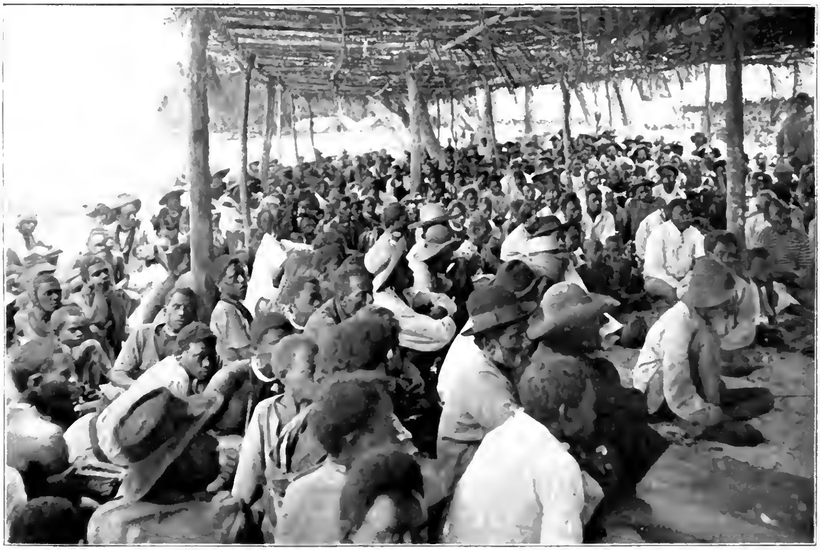
[1] Native priest. See illustration.

G̈ELA.



Alfred Lombu, Native Priest.



Listeners at the *Vaukolu*.

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within a few yards of us made an accompaniment—that beach where only some thirty years ago strangers landed on peril of their lives.

We had but a short interval after the service, and then made our way to the big shady booth that had been erected of palm fronds for the accommodation of the *Vaukolu*. Here were gathered the Bishop and clergy of Ġela, white and brown, the chiefs and the teachers—old heathen Lipa among the chiefs.

Various subjects were discussed, concerning dancing parties, heathen marriages, burial-grounds, coco-nuts, guns and dynamite, " undesirables," the price of wives, and the abuse of tattooing.

The price of wives, it seemed, had really become exorbitant; fifty to a hundred strings of money, or if in pigs, from ten to as many as twenty would be charged for an attractive girl. The result was that men were prevented from marrying unless they were rich, and the women were developing an opinion of their own importance that was highly inexpedient.

It has been the custom to enhance the market value of the young girls by an elaborate but really cruel system of tattooing, similar to, but even worse than, that described in San Cristoval. I have often seen the girl's face just a web of small concentric circles. Instead of the bat's wing, a bamboo with chisel-like edge is employed, and the cuts inflicted, failing to heal, cause sometimes painful, suppurating wounds which make a lifelong disfigurement. A long list of villages was read out where this practice of *Uhuuhu*, as it is called (and it sounds pathetically onomatopoeic!), has been abandoned under the influence of the chiefs; and each name was received with applause by those present.

While the *Vaukolu* was proceeding, we could see and hear the preparations afoot for the big feast which always follows it. The food-laden procession seemed almost ceaseless; monstrous black porkers, trussed and carried on poles, women tripping along with huge, piled-up baskets on their heads—these passed silently by. But beyond we could hear the rattling of coco-nuts and the squealing of unhappy pigs. And as soon as the *Vaukolu* was closed we hurried to the scene of action, where the food was already divided and apportioned for all the different villages invited, the names being called in turn, for the representatives to come up and receive their shares. Not even yet do all sit down and eat together here, so strong is the force of old habit.

But the barrier between the sexes is less rigid in G̈ela than in the New Hebrides or Banks Islands. Betrothed couples are encouraged to become better acquainted before marriage, and boys are found commonly to select wives older than themselves. Cases actually of uxorial henpecking have been heard of in G̈ela, a feminine vice almost inconceivable elsewhere in Melanesia.

Does the position of womanhood in this island owe anything to the old G̈ela tradition that the great creator of all things was a female spirit? This Koevasi seems to have nothing of the serpentine nature of Kahuahuarii of San Cristoval. From Koevasi all the people of G̈ela claimed descent, and she who was the author of life was also the origin of death. The confusion of tongues is ascribed to Koevasi too. It seems that she took a voyage, in the course of which she was attacked by ague, and shook so much that her utterance was confused. Wherever she landed, people caught from her lips an almost unintelligible speech.

G̈ela buries the bodies of its dead, and with them all personal possessions, such as money, pipes, tobacco, and ornaments, but it is said these are often stealthily dug up again. The corpse is laid with feet inland and head seaward, and the people never return from the grave by the same path as the body was carried, lest the ghost follow them.

As in other islands we have visited, food used to be provided for the deceased with the idea that the soul does not at once depart to Ghost-land. But the path it must presently travel was known to all, and the twittering of the souls might be heard there as they passed along to a rocky point where they wiled away the time in dancing till the ghost-canoe from Guadalcanar should arrive to transport them across.

It is only on landing, says legend, that they discover they are dead, when they are met by a ghost with a rod, who thrusts it into their noses to discover if they are pierced. If it be so, they may travel by a good and easy path, but if not, they are condemned to scramble painfully along a trackless way.

Apparently crocodiles have never found worshippers in G̈ela. Indeed they are hunted in a scientific way in the great Ututha Channel, where the mangrove swamp is infested with them. A trap is laid, or rather hung up, in a narrow fenced passage, consisting of a loop of tough cord, slip-knotted, with a bait of pig's flesh visible beyond, to reach which the crocodile pushes his head through the interposing loop. This automatically tightens its hold upon him, and there he has to stay until speared to death by the villagers.

A remarkable and authenticated escape from a crocodile attack occurred in G̈ela. A man bathing one early morning in dangerous proximity to a mangrove swamp was suddenly seized by a crocodile. The long teeth closed upon his chest, and penetrated some of the intercostal cartilages of the ribs. One arm of the man was in the creature's mouth, and with this he made his fight for life, twisting the huge tongue and striving to wrench it from the root. The monster was compelled to expand his jaws, and his victim escaped, though wounded almost to death, and was borne away by his friends. The lung injury was such that at every breath the wind whistled out of his wounded chest. Yet eventually the poor fellow made quite a good recovery.

A G̈ela folk-tale, rather of the "Uncle Remus" type, has been translated by Dr. Codrington,[1] which I here append

The Heron and the Turtle

One day a Heron caught his foot fast in the coral; the tide came in, but his neck was long. When the tide reached to the top of his neck, there came along a Shark.

"Come and save me!" says the Heron.
"Wait a bit!" says the Shark.
There comes a *Boila* [a large fish].
"Come and save my life!" says the Heron.
And the *Boila* says to him, "Wait a bit!" says he.
There comes the great Gar-fish.
"Come and save me, brother!" says the Heron.
The Gar-fish says, "Wait a bit!"
There comes a Rock-cod.
"Come and save my life!" says the Heron.
"Wait a bit!" says the Rock-cod.
There comes a Crocodile.
"Come and save me!" says the Heron.
"Wait a bit!" says the Crocodile.

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[1] *The Melanesians: their Anthropology and Folk-Lore.*

In the end all the fish came, and nothing could be done. Then comes a Turtle.

"Brother, come here and save my life!" says the Heron.

And the Turtle says, "You will pay me, of course?" [This is a touch quite characteristic of the Gela native!]

And the Heron says, "I have nothing with me to pay you with."

Now there was a Sea-urchin alongside the Heron. And the Heron says, "I will pay you with money," says he.

But the Turtle says, "No!"

And the Heron says, "Dogs' teeth and porpoise teeth!"

But the Turtle says, "No, I don't want it."

Then he offers him the Sea-urchin, and the Turtle eats it up with great delight, and says joyfully, "Now I will save you; you have given me my pay." So he smashes to fragments the stone [that held the bird's foot], and the Heron is saved.

And the Heron says, "Now you have saved my life; if ever hereafter you are in need, in case you are going to be killed, and I should hear you call, I will come and save you," says he.

After this, the people of Hagelonga went to fish; and they let down their net, and sat holding the corners of it on their tripods of poles.[1] There comes a Shark.

"A fish below! Shall we pull up the net?" say some.

"Not for that!" say the others.

There comes a Rock-cod.

"A fish below! Shall we pull up?" say some.

"No," say the others.

In the end all the fish in the sea come along, and they don't pull up the net. Then comes round the Turtle, and comes into the middle of the net.

And they cry, "Here he is! We will see what he is worth."

And the Turtle comes right up into the net, and they take him, and tie him, and carry him ashore, and make a fence round him.

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[1] Lofty perches above the water, perilous-looking enough, three or four of which mark the fishing-stations in the lagoon and channels here as in Mala and several other islands. See illustration, p. 276.

And the Chief of Hagelonga says, "To-morrow we will split firewood for him, and get leaves for him, and dig up yams for him,—this turtle of ours!" says the Chief.

So as soon as it was light they went off, and they split wood, and they gathered leaves, and they dug food; and they appointed the boys to watch the Turtle, and went away.

And when they were far away, the Heron comes along, and the boys say to him, "Where have you come from?"

And the Heron says to them, "I'm just idling about." And he says to them, "Should you like me to dance for you?" says he.

And the boys say, "Yes, we should like you to dance for us."

And the Heron says, "Bring me the porpoise teeth and dogs' teeth ornaments of your fathers and mothers, that I may dress myself up in the best."

And they brought him the best ornaments, and he dressed himself up in them, and then he danced for them.

So he danced along to the fence in which the Turtle was, and the Turtle saw him coming, and cried out, "Now I am to die, my brother!" cries he.

And the Heron says to him, "And now I shall save your life, because you saved mine before."

And the Heron came into the house where the boys were, and there he danced for them. And he says, "*Kerembaembae! Kerembaembae!* Loosed is your leg that they have tied!" And his leg is loosed.

"*Kerembaembae!* Slipped out is your head!" and his head slipped out.

"*Kerembaembae!* Clear the forepart!" And the forepart of him was clear.

"*Kerembaembae!* Clear the hinder part!" And his hinder part was clear.

"*Kerembaembae!* Clear the rest of you!" And the rest of him was clear.

"*Kerembaembae!* Follow the path! . . . *Kerembaembae!* Reach the sand! . . . *Kerembaembae!* Down with you into the sea! . . . *Kerembaembae!* Dive out of sight! . . .

Kerembaembae! Go a fathom's length! . . . *Kerembaembae!* Go two fathoms!" So he escaped with his life.

And the people returned from inland, and came out into the open, and looked at the fence. But the Heron was gone; and they said, "Some one has stolen our turtle!" And they asked the boys, and said, "Who has been here now?"

And the boys said, "There was only a Heron came here and danced for us, and we gave him all your things, and he deceived us so that we did not go and look after the turtle," said the boys to them.

And bad were the feelings of the people of the village; and they went and looked at the path, and there they saw the traces of the Turtle; and they said, "Yes, he has saved himself for certain! Nobody has stolen him," said they.

CHAPTER V

GUADALCANAR, SOLOMON ISLANDS

Natural features—"The wild Mumoulu"—Story of the past—Sulukavo, chief—The difficulties of a rain-maker—A strange reward for courage—A chief's feast—A feminine vanity—Shark worship—Funeral custom—The *Vele* magic—Populous with ghosts—Legends of the spirits.

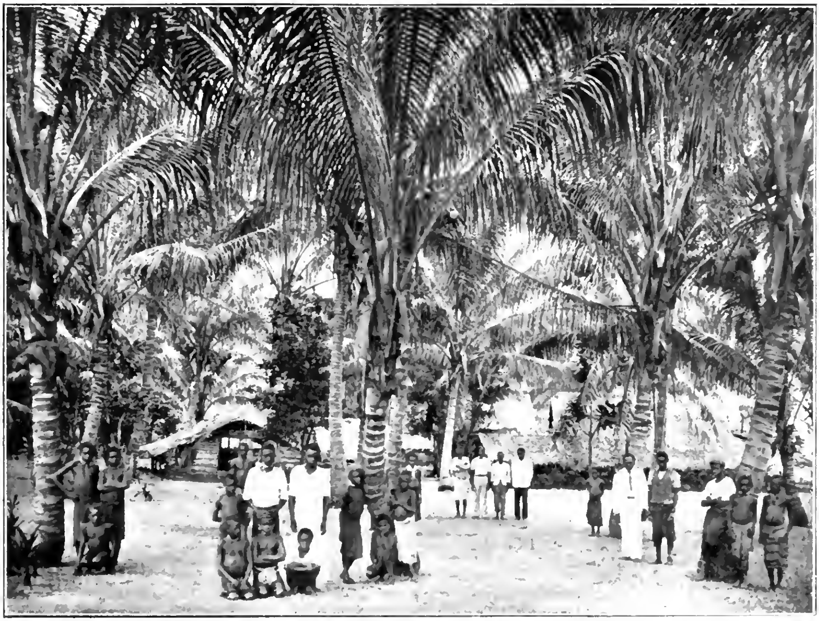
About twenty miles south of G̈ela we touch the shores of the largest island in the diocese of Melanesia—Guadalcanar. Magnificent! is the exclamation that inevitably escapes one at sight and at memory of it. Truly magnificent!

A luxuriantly wooded island, extending some hundred miles by thirty, it is irrigated by "many an ancient river," crocodile haunted, whose watershed is in a massy backbone of mountains that run from end to end of the island and rise to a height of 8000 feet. From the base of this chain to the shore a fertile wooded plain extends along the north side of the island for fully thirty miles. On the precipitous southern side the mountains seem to rise immediately out of the sea.

The effect upon the imagination after visiting so many lesser islands, and seeing for so long an all-surrounding waste of waters, on gazing from the deck at this beautiful, mysterious, awful land, is such that

GUADALCANAR.

"This beautiful, mysterious land."



"The First Christian Village."

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one feels complete sympathy and comprehension with Gallego on reading in his journal that he does "not estimate its size, because it is a great land, and half a year is needed to sail along its shores." A stupendous lie like that needs not to be condoned. It seems in keeping with one's own unenlightened sensations, and possibly gives a more truthful impression than the strictly accurate computation.

One hardly needed to be told that the interior was still unexplored; but one longed to pick up a staff and set forth at once for the misty blue heart of the unknown, where range the giant men with tails, and hairy bodies, and heads of flowing hair—the wild Mumoulu, with their long, strong nails, who speak a language of their own and live in caves. They hunt men for food with spears and nets, spreading the latter around trees where men climb. And on their hairy backs they carry bags of a glassy, volcanic stone with which to pelt their quarry. And when they cannot smell man at all, they make shift with snakes and lizards for food. Grim, uncanny creatures, these Mumoulu! One would expect just such a race to inhabit the vasty, dim interior of Guadalcanar.

This book does not profess to give an account of missionary work in the Melanesian Islands. That may be read elsewhere by whoso will. But for once I may be pardoned if I sketch briefly the adventurous struggle which the Faith has maintained in Guadalcanar.

My first landing was beside a big white cross that marks the establishment of the first Christian village in the island, and it only dates back from 1897. Up to that time it seemed as if every effort to introduce light and peace was destined to fail, and even to-day a great part of the island is still heathen.

Yet as long ago as 1883 three chiefs expressed themselves as anxious for the New Teaching. They gave up boys to be trained at Norfolk Island, they asked for teachers, and one set about building a house for him. And then came a head-hunting chief from Savo, raided a Guadalcanar village, killing thirty men and capturing as many women. The priest-in-charge confronted and rebuked him on the beach, where the heads were smoking over fires, but to no effect. The friendly chiefs were by him terrorized into an opposite attitude. The boys at Norfolk Island were forbidden to return, and a lad was nearly murdered for lending the white man a hand with his boat.

A few very simple successes in medicine brought the missionary spasmodic fame, but his patients were avoided by their friends, who would not even touch food they had cooked, lest the white man's *mana* should influence them for harm. One chief, whose life was being charmed away, recovered on being assured that fear only was killing him. He said that after receiving the message his pains gradually travelled down his body till the last twinge oozed out at the toes. And he would fain have presented his benefactor with a pig. The rumour of this man's death had already started, the announcement had been shouted from hill-top to hill-top according to custom, and the dog-like howling of the women (who cared nothing for him) had been rending the air. The recovery became notorious. But no school resulted from it.

When in 1893 a man-of-war visited the Eastern Solomons to proclaim the establishment of the British Protectorate and to hoist the national flag, the authorities sought to leave a pleasant impression on the natives' minds by means of gifts. Old Taki in San

Cristoval was delighted with the white people's attention, and received with open arms all they had to bestow; but the chiefs of Guadalcanar handed back flag, proclamation, and presents without thanks! In Mala, too, they refused to touch the proclamation or accept the flag; and the Rubiana folk fled before the white company, so that the captain could only hoist the flag and leave the proclamation in a bottle at the foot of the mast. When the natives ventured to return to the spot they divided up the flag into loin-cloths and tried to drink the proclamation!

It was in the following year that a Guadalcanar boy whose training at St. Barnabas' College was completed, returned determined to win an entrance somewhere, somehow, for the light. At his own desire he was set down alone, and in six weeks he had been robbed of everything he possessed. No one would listen to him, and he had no books. Perhaps that was as well, for the people said there were certainly ghosts living within the covers, else how could words be found in them?

So the young man lived for two years far back in the bush, among the savages and yet not of them, trying to carry his religion into practice. And at last the villagers began to question him as to why he was different from themselves, and his answers made the beginning of the first school in Guadalcanar. It was scattered by head-hunters almost as soon as started, but the brave teacher managed once more to collect his little flock. In 1899 he died, and his place was taken by Hugo Goravaka, his brother, now a deacon.

From that time onward the work has gone slowly forward, though it has been at times a matter of building with sword in hand, for some of the chiefs were fiercely antagonistic to the newly-formed schools, and strove by raids, and murders, and threats to stamp them out.

During my visit to Guadalcanar I had the pleasure of gazing upon the countenance of the old chief who was our arch-enemy in this island from the outset—Sulukavo. For some time now he has refrained from harassing us, and on this occasion for the first time he actually did us the honour of coming on board the *Southern Cross* to meet the Bishop, whom he had never encountered. Frankly, I have seldom seen a more repulsive-looking individual. There was nothing kingly in his appearance. Clad in a dirty shirt, with ragged, unkempt hair and beard, a mouth dyed from betel-chewing, and with a protruding under-lip and light, restless, shifty eyes that never looked you in the face, it was not hard to picture the old fellow planning his siege of a school village and craftily plotting the death of the white priest, which he failed to accomplish.

When the Mission first made Sulukavo's acquaintance he was hand and glove with another chief, and the two were busy stirring up the people against the white men, and calling in bushmen to their aid, because the dwellers along the coast would persist in declaring that they did want schools. In vain was the experiment tried of throwing ghost-stones into the village at night. If any were hit by them they refused to die with amazing effrontery.

After employing various futile expedients, the great rain-maker of the district was approached. Shortly afterwards heavy floods of rain occurred, and, as was only natural, the rain-maker gave out that they were his doing, with the object of washing out the New Teaching and all who followed it. After one of the nights of torrential rain some bushmen appeared at the priest's house with a gift, and a humble assurance that they were in no way concerned with the deluge, that in point of fact it was spoiling their gardens and was most unwelcome. Finally they inquired whether they had permission to go and tie up the offending rain-maker!

In this case Sulukavo adopted a righteously indignant attitude. He sent an angry message to the rain-maker to the effect that if he did not bring his ridiculous downpour to a stop immediately, he should be heavily fined. And then, of course, the rain-maker could not asseverate with sufficient fervency that he had had nothing whatever to do with it!

Like the rest of the chiefs, Sulukavo keeps a regular harem, but some of the wives have a considerable amount of liberty, may work in the gardens, fetch water, and so on, while a selection of the favourites are kept in strict seclusion within the house. The taboo wives these, who may never emerge even to wash so long as they live. If any man catch sight of one he is mulcted in a heavy fine.

One day Sulukavo, being vexed, beat one of his wives within an inch of her life. Another of them coming in from the gardens saw her lying on the ground covered with blood. In a panic lest the same fate should befall her, the second woman fled into the bush, and after existing there in terror for about a month, she found her way to the house of her father.

No refuge awaited her there, however. The father, desperately afraid of the chief's wrath, took his daughter back at once to her cruel owner. But Sulukavo was not to be pacified easily. He declared that nothing less than a man's head and a large sum of money could compound for the injury his dignity had suffered.

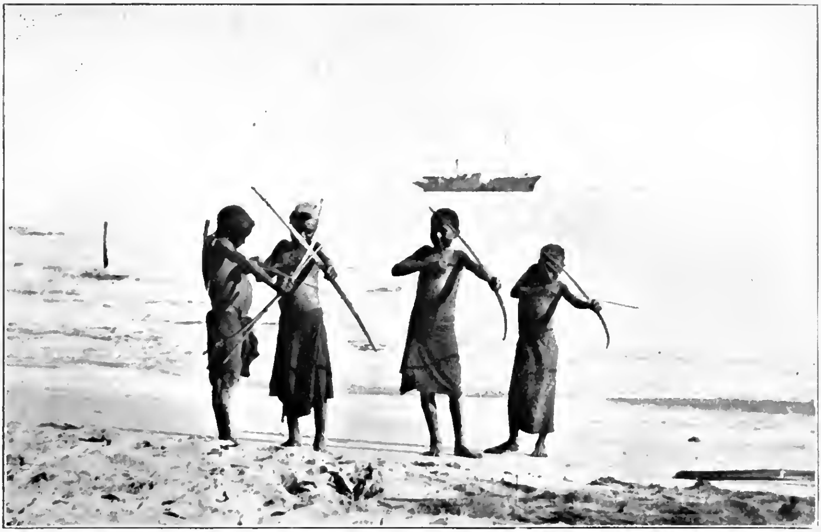
News of his announcement reached the white man, who, though he could not get an interview with the chief, sent him a very strong remonstrance by one of his head-men. The reply was a treacherous attack upon a school village and the beheading of one of the inhabitants.

To be chosen by a chief for his wife must be an honour to be dreaded indeed. It was in Guadalcanar that a chief went out pig-hunting with a girl-wife in attendance on him. The man was attacked by a boar, knocked down and injured. With great bravery the girl succeeded in beating off and killing the pig, thus probably saving her lord's life. Yet on her return to the village she was deliberately put to death because, forsooth, she had been unable to prevent the animal from injuring the great man.

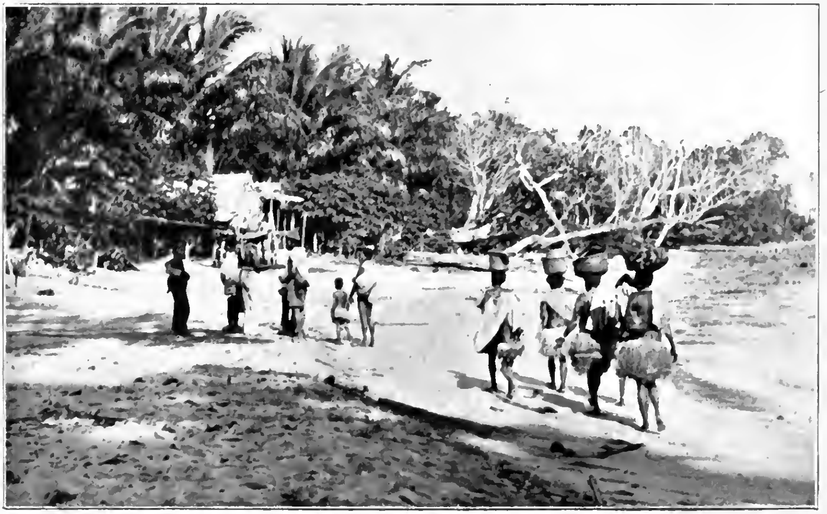
I have nothing exciting to recount from my own experience in this island, for here I visited none but school villages, where all was peaceful and happy. But one Saturday afternoon we came into contact with heathens mingled with Christians at a chief's feast.

In his village there is a school and teacher, but he had invited chiefs and people from the surrounding neighbourhood for this occasion, and most of the visitors were heathen. One fine-looking old chief had hair which reminded me irresistibly of "Shock-headed Peter." It was a surprise to a good many of us when, just before the food was distributed, the whole crowd rose to its feet at a sign from the young teacher, who stepped forward and said grace in the

GUADALCANAR.



Boys with Bows and Arrows—*Southern Cross* in background.



Women returning from Work in their Gardens.

P. 329.

most natural manner during perfect silence. Then the roasted pigs were carved with axes, and we were all given little banana-leaf parcels of a very stodgy, dark "pudding" which I could not manage to enjoy.

The heathen women here seemed very forbidding, but no doubt their moroseness of expression was really shyness. They were but little ornamented. A grass fringe round the waist by way of petticoat and a short pipe in the mouth were in many instances the only additions to nature. But I did notice here, as well as in other of the Solomons, a most atrociously tight armlet that seemed extremely fashionable—so tight that the skin above and below was horribly puffed out. I spoke my mind about it, and all seemed interested, but I saw no armlet cut off, and indeed it involved an operation I should hardly have liked myself to attempt.

Here and there in Guadalcanar are found evidences of shark worship. There is a shark ghost—one Luvusi—whose counsel is sought before a canoe ventures on an uncertain landing. The sign granted is the same as we saw in G̈ela; if Luvusi is agreeable the canoe sways from side to side. Luvusi also takes the place of wireless telegraphy. If death or accident occurs in a man's village while he is on a voyage, Luvusi causes him to be aware of it.

At one village on the coast the celebration of a feast must be accompanied by a gift to the sharks of the entrails of a dog. Two men, recognized shark mediums, swim out with the offering, and the sharks collect in the sea to receive it. It is said that none but these two men might perform the errand with impunity, but no shark would harm either of them.

Many beliefs and practices in Guadalcanar are too similar to those I have described in other islands to be narrated. Head-hunting is dying out here as elsewhere, but cannibalism is still practised in different parts.

One of the native girls told me that, except among the Christians, a man's death is always followed by the destruction of all his goods and the cutting down of his fruit-trees. "They say," she explained, "'These are his: let them follow him!'"

But there is one terrible instrument of death wielded in this island, so potent that by those who can best judge it is held accountable for the destruction of scores of lives every year. It is the *vele* magic.

In the record of Sulukavo's efforts to oust the white man I notice on one occasion "a little bag of bones was shaken in the missionary's face." This we now can identify as an attempt at *vele* magic, and perplexed and amazed must the natives have been when even the infallible *vele* produced no effect.

Whether *vele* be, as was formerly believed, the name of the spirit who is supposed to give *mana* to the charm-bag, I do not know. The word seems generally used simply to denote this form of magic. Similar as it is in some respects to the death-working "ghost-shooter" of the Banks Islands, I doubt if that was ever in such frequent use as is the *vele* in Guadalcanar.

In appearance the charm somewhat reminds me of the wicker rattles of babyhood, for the *mana* bones or leaves are enclosed in a small wicker casing about three inches long. Nothing could be simpler than the working of the *vele*.

A, let us say, has a grudge against B. B one day, working alone in the bush, or in a corner of his garden, or over his canoe on the beach, hears suddenly a hiss. Looking up with a start, he sees A standing with his left arm stretched out towards him, and on the little finger of that hand is the fatal charm.

Its effect is immediate. B falls helpless to the ground. A advances, and with the charm he touches B in various places—ankles, knees, thighs, shoulders, elbows, forehead, neck, chest, and stomach. Then he speaks, and tells his wretched victim on which day he will die; and having done his work, A leaves him and hides. Presently B crawls to his feet, and totters back to the village, a doomed man with no hope. He has neither wound nor malady, but on the day named he assuredly dies.

Dread of the *vele* magic lies like a poisonous fog, depressing and destroying, over all the inhabited parts of Guadalcanar which are still heathen. Frequent attempts have been made with *vele* upon school people, but they tell with triumph that not a single success has been scored amongst them. Those who use the charm and fail go home, it is said, and die themselves. If this be so, there will probably be caution in future before this magic is brought to bear upon a Christian.

Last year the Bishop had an opportunity of talking to a Mission boy upon whom an attempt at *vele* had been made. He said the sensation was as if a heavy weight pressed upon him, his head swam with giddiness, and he all but fell. Then he remembered Who was stronger than the *vele*. "Yes, I remembered," he said simply; "had I not I should have died."

Everywhere the old men tell the same tale. Long ago the villages were many and large, and thickly populated. But violence and magic have mown down the people.

The ghost population, however, must be prodigious in the eyes of the heathen, for here is the final home of all souls in the Eastern Solomons. The majority make for Marau Sound, but those from Savo and part of Guadalcanar itself settle on Hausori, a low hill on the Mission lands.

Many are the spirits worshipped in this island. Probably, as in the case of G̈ela, all were once men. If not, one would unhesitatingly call them gods, as many have done.

Among them is Sovala, a sort of amphibious Neptune, who is a thief, yet takes care of travellers—little in size, but important in position. He is patron of gardens also, and his seasonable favour may be won before beginning garden work by an offering of money. Who offers not will miss the blessing of Sovala. And when the time of ingathering arrives it is to him that the first-fruits are offered. Of old there was an image said to depict him, but this has been lost.

Luvusi of the Sharks is represented by two bits of wood from some special tree.

Then there is Bojabata, the Mars of Guadalcanar, whose representation is a round stone. When men are going out to fight, he appears in the path to those he favours, and strengthens them so that they are bound to win the battle. But if Bojabata be not met, the hearts of strong men fail them, and they will return and seek the protection of the mighty brethren whose names should surely be Castor and Pollux, but are instead Koko and Porobato. These in their lives were powerful chiefs, and after death they appeared to their mother, and now have been installed as objects of worship. If offerings be made to them, they will direct their followers as to whether they may confidently go forth to fight or had better, and they value their skins, stay safe at home.

Tiahi is a spirit of the coast, whom the people seem to fear greatly. Those who like to show off their "Inglis" call him "Big fellow devil-devil." Yet as a rule he appears to be quietly behaved. It is only in February, his sacred month, that he bestirs himself and takes his walks abroad along the beach. So in February the shore people are full of engagements in the bush, and you will hardly find one about from the beginning of that moon to the end.

The return to the shore, when Tiahi has finished his walking exercise, is celebrated by big feasts, in which the spirit is not forgotten. Portions are set aside for him, and carried with circumspection to a headland not far distant where land crabs have their holes. These holes form the entrance to Tiahi's sanctuary (just possibly he is a crab ghost). The food is placed at the mouths, and it soon disappears. Tiahi is satisfied, and so are the crabs. All is safe now. Once more the canoes are dragged down, the fishing-nets brought out, and the beach is dotted with happy natives.

Koevasi, the female creating spirit belonging to G̈ela, once reached Guadalcanar on that voyage when her ague had such strange effect. And here, while the chill was still upon her, she bathed in a certain river, the water of which became thereupon so cold that to this day to wade in it makes one ill.

CHAPTER VI

SAVO, SOLOMON ISLANDS

History and characteristics—"Hottest and sharkiest"—The true Savoans—Peculiarity of language—Mesmerism—Poisoned weapons—Story of a revenge—Tree-houses—Death customs—Brush turkeys—The only woman.

"THE hottest island in the sharkiest water in Melanesia!"

With this enticing description I was introduced to Savo, an island off the north-west coast of Guadalcanar, no bigger than Toga in the Torres group, but of considerably greater importance.

Discovered by the Spaniards in the sixteenth century, it was by them named Sesarga, but the brief and convenient native appellation has ousted its European rival. Its central position, limited dimensions, and fertile soil probably account for its popularity. European traders have resided here for over forty years, and its population is shifting and heterogeneous, including immigrants from Mala, Bugotu, Russell Island, Guadalcanar, and G̈ela. For its size (about fifteen miles round) little Savo produces more coco-nuts than any of the surrounding islands. The plantations of palm stretch along the coast, a wide border of white, glistening sand dividing them from the blue water, famed for its abundance of turtles and sharks.

The truth of the latter part of Savo's claim was cruelly illustrated by the first news that greeted us on landing. Kelo, a jolly little Savo lad who had come home for a holiday, and was to return with us to Norfolk Island, had just been killed by a shark when bathing! Shark worship is not universal here, but at least one man is recorded to have had a shark-familiar, to whom he would swim out fearlessly with food, and who would come at his call. And the natives say his intimate relations with the creature were the result of some ancestral connection with it.

The heat of Savo is also proverbial. Of course the sun alone in Lat. 9° S. has considerable power; but here added to this is subterranean heat. In the very centre of the island is the crater of a still active volcano, which is filled with smoking sulphur. Besides this there are numerous boiling springs which create mud pools hot enough for the natives to cook their food over them and dispense with the necessity for firewood.

I only spent one day in Savo, and on that particular occasion the heat was not so overwhelming as I had feared to find it. Indeed, when we got under shelter of a canoe-house one could imagine one felt something like a cool breeze.

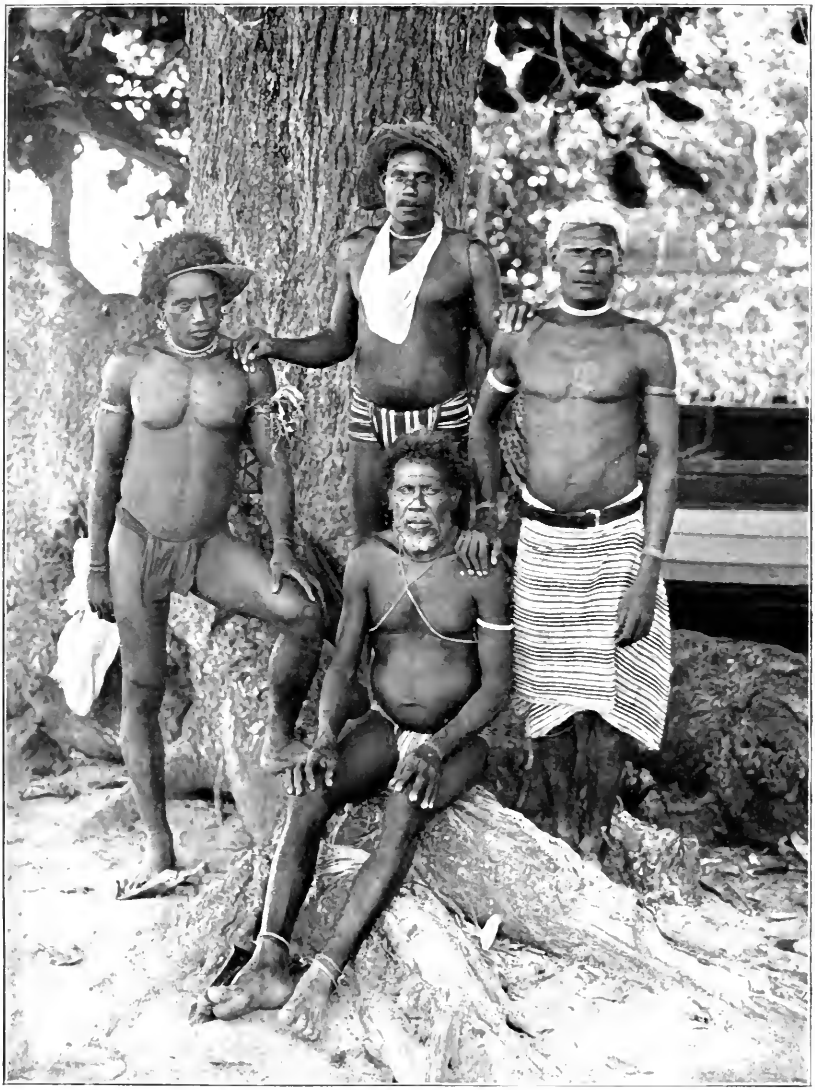
But for the luxuriant vegetation, the jagged peaks which crop up abruptly all over the island and the precipitous ravines would give a wild and eerie effect; but creepers, bushes, and trees conspire to clothe every spot and soften down all the sharp points and sudden descents, making only beautiful contrasts of light and shade.

A casual visitor does not at once differentiate the true Savoan from his neighbours, but one has not to stay long to discover him. Out of the four here illustrated, two are wearing native sunshades of plaited grass, not very unlike those of Santa Cruz. The Savoan appearance and demeanour are distinctive; it is said that for true, old-world courtesy he has few equals in Melanesia.

But especially is his language a thing apart. In philological circles there is a serious opinion extant that the language of Savo is a descendant of that spoken by the long-forgotten aborigines of Melanesia, the men who were in possession of the island in those far-away days of which no historical record exists, when our brown people came sailing in strange ships from what lands we know not, came to settle down in the Pacific, and by degrees to take the place of those they found there. A very strange and thought-provoking fact that in this one small spot a language probably Papuan in origin is still spoken, with a grammatical construction entirely distinct from those of Melanesia or Polynesia. It will probably be obsolete in the not very distant future, for the language of G̈ela is that most commonly used here now, and known to all the natives; and doubtless in its turn this will give place to the hideous mongrel jargon which is rapidy encroaching everywhere on the vernacular, and called "pidgin-English."

Handed down from antiquity would also appear to be the knowledge of a seemingly hypnotic power possessed by a certain few Savoans. With the ghost-shooter and the *vele* material charms are regarded as essential, and though the malevolent object in Savo is similar, the method in this respect varies. It has been sometimes exercised for purposes of murder, and probably is still a screen for robbery. Occasionally it

SAVO.



Four Savoans.

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may be employed purely in mischief. It is generally practised on a lonely nocturnal wanderer. He meets a man who fixes his eyes on him, and stretches his hand towards the other's face. The victim immediately falls down in an unconscious condition, and when found his body is rigid, his limbs stiff. Attempts have been made upon traders, doubtless with the motive of theft, but without success, and the natives of G̈ela are said to be equally recalcitrant. They share with the white man a *mana* that is superior to the mesmeric witchcraft.

Instead of regarding themselves, as might be expected, as closely related to the people of Guadalcanar, who live, so to speak, just over the way, a most cordial mutual hatred has for long existed. Now that Savo is accepting Christianity the antagonism will inevitably die down by degrees.

It is noteworthy that on our visit the teachers brought to the Bishop the result of the first "Church collections" that Savo had ever contributed, and bows and arrows were the principal coins! The recognized method of poisoning weapons in Savo was to thrust the spear or arrow into a man's dead body, and leave it there for several days.

Savo is small, but her vengeance does not go unwreaked for that. On a certain occasion a party of Savo men paid a visit to a place named Gao, with which they believed themselves to be at peace. They were entertained hospitably and merrily; the Gao people fell to admiring of the Savo spears and arrows, their value was discussed, bargains were effected, and the weapons changed hands. Then without warning the Gao hosts turned enemies, and the defenceless Savoan party was massacred in cold blood.

How was revenge to be accomplished? Messengers were sent in canoes to the island of Bugotu with a large sum of money, and instructions how it might be earned. The hire was accepted, and Gao received a surprise party from Bugotu, whose errand was recognized too late. A full tally of lives was secured to equalize the losses of Savo, and one man was carried away uninjured.

The next thing was the triumphant arrival at Savo of a Bugotu war-canoe, containing about fifteen men, of whom three stood brandishing shields and tomahawks, swaying and gesticulating in time to the paddling. Amongst them was a prisoner, brought whole and unharmed, as a proof of the deed's accomplishment, and a *bonne-bouche* for Savo. Two or three hours later the Bugotu canoe returned with one passenger the less, but stuck upon their weapons were portions of a human body—a heart on a spear-point—to hang as trophies of the day upon the trees around their houses.

Until gunpowder found its way into the Solomon Islands, Savo had wonderful citadels of refuge in the tops of trees. None of these ingenious tree-houses now remain, but beside me lies an account of a visit paid to one in the year 1879 by members of the Mission, which serves as a specimen.

A short, steep path led to the brow of a precipitous cliff some hundred and fifty feet above the sea. On a small level space at the cliff edge grew a large tree, the lower branches of which had all been lopped off. Up in the highest boughs could be seen a well-built house, framed with bamboo, its A-shaped roof thatched with sago palm leaf. It towered like a huge dovecote 60 feet above the ground.

A very shaky ladder, made of rope-like creepers twined together, led up to the entrance, which the natives, young and old, men and women, some heavily-laden too, scaled with the agile ease of monkeys. With much more difficulty it was ascended by the white men, who were well repaid for their pains. The outlook was glorious, and the house was strong enough when gained. How the bamboo platform and framework was erected there they were fain to acknowledge "a mystery." The house itself was found to measure 31 by 13½ feet. In front and at the back was a stage or look-out, extending about 6 feet — that in front actually overhanging the precipice! The walls were low, the roof long and sloping. The floor was especially admired, it being composed of split bamboos, woven together into a strong plait.

Inside the house was the inevitable oven, or ground fireplace, a circle of stones enclosing a substantial earth-foundation, upon which the fire was laid. An ample stock of nuts and water secured against starvation, in addition to which was a long fibre rope for drawing up provisions from below. The only other furniture was a menacing pile of rough stones preserved as ammunition to be hurled down on the heads of enemies who approached near enough.

It needed but a rumour of head-hunters to send the villagers hot-foot up the ladders into their tree-houses, the last to ascend drawing the ladder in after him; and once there they could tranquilly defy every opposing force. Every opposing force as they then knew it, but the demon balls that came from far away, whistling death, proved even these tree-nests to be pregnable, and from that day their doom was sealed, and they gave place to the primitive fortresses afforded by rocks and holes in the ground.

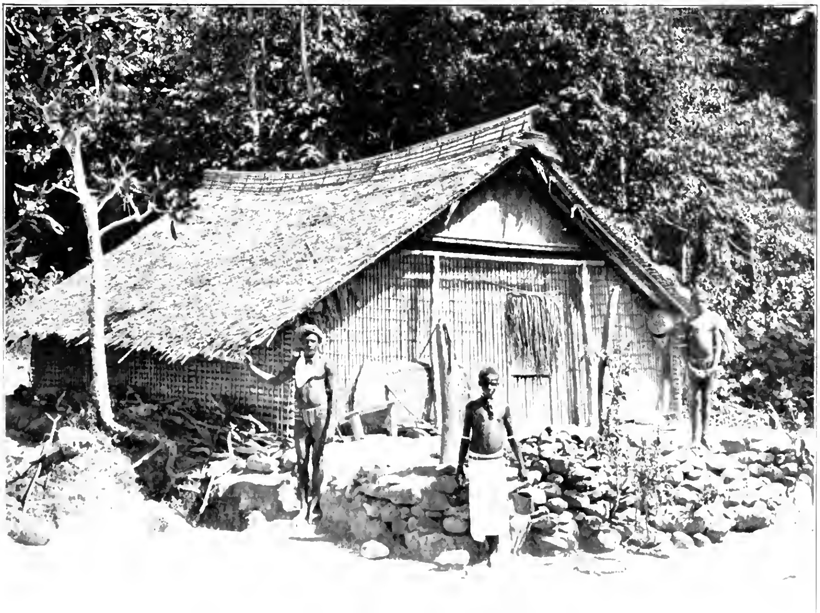
The dead are disposed of in Savo as in Ulawa, being thrown into the sea; chiefs only are buried. These great men have other privileges; I heard of one who rejoices in thirty wives; they will be a stumbling-block to his acceptance of the New Teaching.

We know little as yet about the ways and thoughts of the real Savoans. Only I have heard of a fateful snake, to see whom was of yore to die. But that snake has vanished.

A little of our time in Savo was occupied in counting eggs—brush turkeys' eggs, of which our ship was ready to purchase any quantity at the rate of three a penny, without rejection. A certain proportion always prove fit to cook, and if mixed with herbs, etc., make fair imitation omelettes when no other eggs are obtainable.

That is another thing for which Savo is famous—brush turkeys, but I knew nothing about these creatures till I met them there. They are undeniably of the queerest. The natives insist that there are no males amongst them: all alike lay eggs! The Savo beach is deep sand, and this is their laying-ground. The bird is reddish-brown, about the size of a moorhen. It never flies except in emergency. In the day the turkeys flock together in the bush, but at night come down to the beach to lay their eggs—which are large out of proportion to the parent's size—in the warm sand. They burrow a hole, often very deep, deposit the egg, cover it with the sand, and from that moment take no more interest in it. The soft sand makes an excellent incubator, and, if undisturbed, the

A Portion of the Beach—Guadalcanar in the distance.



A Typical House.

chick will hatch and emerge, and manage to shift for itself from the beginning.

The natives divide up the beach into allotments, and every man knows his own patch of sand. Daily with a wooden spade he digs for eggs, finding them sometimes at a depth of no less than 5 feet. A fair number are duly left for hatching, for the birds are highly valued. It is said to be a far more heinous crime to kill a brush turkey than to murder a mere man!

The women in Savo were conspicuous by their absence on the occasion of our visit. Presumably they were all in the bush, working in their gardens. One only I caught sight of, peeping at me from behind the grass screen that shaded her house door. I could not help thinking as I neared her of primitive man as pictured for us in *Punch's* "Prehistoric Peeps." Her hair was a wild yellow mop, under which dark eyes glittered Skye-terrier-wise, and her grin extended right across her face when we shook hands. Her costume was a poetic fringe of grass. I think our interest must have been mutual, for though she had seemed to be in the midst of cooking, I noticed her long afterwards following us at a wary distance.

CHAPTER VII

BUGOTU (YSABEL), SOLOMON ISLANDS

History—Natural features—Scourged by head-hunters—Visit to a village—Story of a raid—Tappa-cloth—A rescued "head"—Cannibalism—Chiefs—Wizardry—Story of Bera, chief—Soga, chief—Marsden Manekalea—Figirima, chief—Charms and counter-charms—Bonito-catching—Children's games—A pygmy race—Fireflies—The frigate-bird—Gardens of the Ghosts—Story of Kia.

SAINT YSABEL! Thus was Bugotu named of the Spaniards—the first land that gladdened the eyes of those intrepid explorers, and it was the first glimpse of Melanesia ever gained by Europeans. The expedition had started on S. Isabel's Day (Nov. 19), 1566; and though it was on the Feast of S. Polonia that they landed here (Feb. 9, 1567), it was to the patroness of the voyage that the first discovery must be dedicated. As one reads the journal of Gallego, over the 350 years since it was penned still is borne a thrill of the doubt, the hope, suspense, fear, joy, and thankfulness that surged successively through those brave hearts. Whatever they lacked in sympathy and pity, they lacked nothing in courage.

When the seaman aloft pronounced the "elevated mass," that the chief pilot half doubted whether he could detect in the south, to be land, the *Te Deum* was sung. As they neared it, the mountains seemed

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All among the Mangroves.

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very high and the coast so long that they thought they had found a new continent. The utmost difficulty was experienced in steering among the surrounding shoals, and an anchorage at first seemed impossible to find. Those of us who know what it is to watch out for "green patches" in uncharted and (what is worse) incorrectly charted waters, to crawl, and stop, and turn, and twist among reefs and shoals, to listen with tingling ears to the continuous splosh of the lead and cry of the leadsman, "Mark five, sir! . . . By the deep four!"—those, and only those, can fully appreciate the Spaniards' position.

But suddenly a miracle!

> Although it was midday, over the entrance of the reef a star appeared to us! . . . We were cheered in spirit, and became more hopeful. As we proceeded, little by little the water deepened. . . . And presently we entered the harbour with the star over the bow, and we anchored! . . . The harbour we named Saint Ysabel of the Star, and we named the island Saint Ysabel!

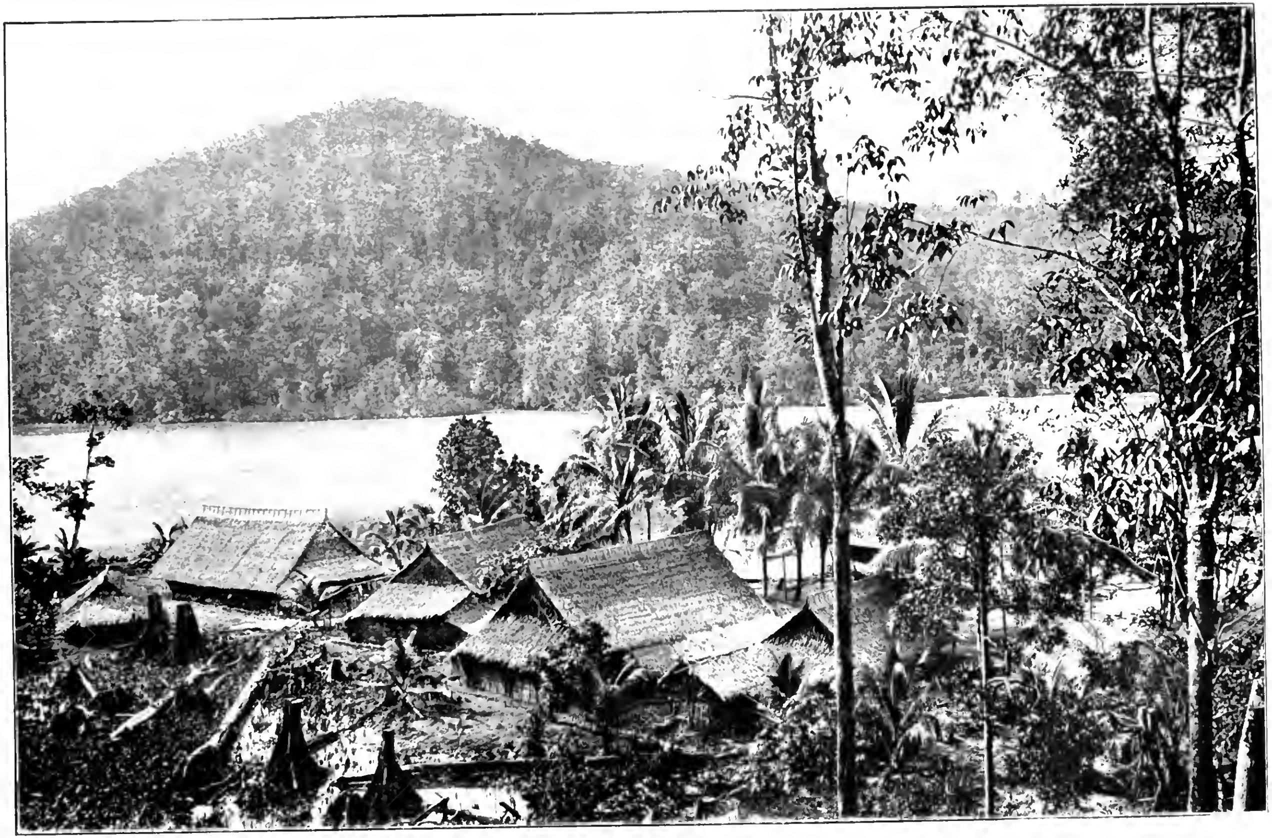
It lies about twenty-five miles to the north-east of G̈ela, and is nearly a hundred miles long, but very narrow, like Mala. The usual backbone of hills forms a watershed for many streams, and the bush here, as everywhere, is luxuriant. The interior lacks the magnificence and grandeur of, say, Guadalcanar, but the coast is very lovely. The varying depths and shallows, which spelt peril to the Spaniards, give wonderful contrasts and varieties of colour to the water, and countless islets, vividly green with mangroves, and bordered each with a strip of bright, tawny-gold sand, afford a fresh feast to the eye, which in Melanesia can never go hungry.

The island is sparsely populated, containing, it is computed, scarcely more than 2000 souls. There is no doubt that, had head-hunting continued, it would ere long have been completely desolated, for from without and from within was poor Bugotu scourged by these human beasts of prey. Here every little new canoe must be crowned with a human head, while the death of a chief or the launch of a war-canoe demanded forty or fifty. The proof and ground of a great man's *mana* was, like Sir Christopher Wren's epitaph, to be reckoned by the eye—"*Circumspice!*" It was shown forth by the rows and rows of skulls that magnified his house. So chiefs hunted for heads, dead or alive, with the tireless zeal of collectors in all ages.

And to Bugotu were wont to come head-hunting fleets from distant islands, with whom there might be no previous quarrel, to land, to massacre, and to take flight once more, all in an hour or two of the early morning. A league of defence among adjacent villages was impracticable, because long years of habitual treachery had engendered habitual distrust, and every man knew that he and every other man was ready to buy his own safety by betraying either his own people or those of a neighbouring village.

The last actual raid on record here occurred on Trinity Sunday in the year 1900 or 1901, and the murderers were from New Georgia, far away to the south-west. It was a Christian village that suffered, and one that we visited in Pirihandi Bay, as pretty a spot as could well be found. Cheerful, hospitable folk were they—the women looking gaudy and quaint, with brilliant calico petticoats over thick grass girdles, which gave a very comical, almost Tudor-hoop effect!

Tobacco and betel-nut banished all shyness, and among the presents I received there was what I can



THE VILLAGE IN PIRIHANDI BAY—"AS PRETTY A SPOT AS COULD WELL BE FOUND."

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only call a scent-sachet about 16 inches square, a wrapping of dried leaves enclosing sweet-smelling grass, and tied with creeper-fibre. Returning to the ship that day in a deluge of rain, my kind brown friends taught me the value of a native mat, which served me effectively as umbrella and cloak combined.

But what about that other day, when the visitors came from New Georgia, and not from Norfolk Island?

The villagers were assembling for their Sunday Matins, when from the hill they espied three canoes passing the mouth of the bay. Two of these were large war-canoes, the third a small one. The occupants were paddling along quietly enough, and a red handkerchief was fluttering from each. That was the signal arranged by two of the powerful Bugotu chiefs, Soga and Rona, to indicate that the canoes contained friends and not enemies. The canoes were making for Cockatoo Island, quite near by.

The Pirihandi people discussed the unexpected arrival. Judging by the signal, the canoes must be from Vulega, where a party of the Pirihandi men had lately gone. They were not expected back yet, but perhaps something had befallen them and the visitors were bringing news.

When service was over, Julian, the teacher, with five companions (including a chief's son, just baptized), took canoe, determined to go and hear what the visitors had to tell, and whither they were further bound. They pushed off, and soon disappeared round the point in the direction of Cockatoo Island, while the villagers sat about gossiping and smoking, awaiting their return. It was perhaps an hour later that the three strange canoes again crossed the mouth of the bay in the eyes of the people, travelling now in the opposite direction, and with haste.

Uneasiness was felt in Pirihandi when the fourth canoe did not reappear. The chief especially was disturbed, and he determined to set off alone and make certain if all were well. The people followed him down to the beach, there to wait anxiously.

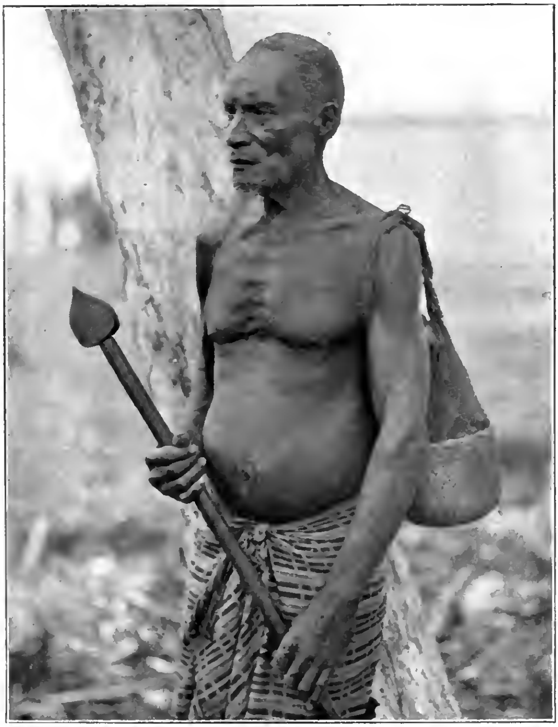
Very soon he came paddling back to them in grievous distress. All was but too clear. There on Cockatoo Island, between two palms (the exact spot was shown me) lay six headless bodies. A loud wailing rent the air when the tidings were disclosed, and a party of men went off laden with mats and cloth to the islet, to return with the piteous corpses, which received Christian burial on the hillside that same day before sunset. But six heads had been borne away in triumph to New Georgia.

I spoke of cloth and mats being used to shroud the bodies. Bugotu is proud of its tappa-cloth, the manufacture of which is carried on in many islands. It is made, as is well known, from the bark of the paper mulberry tree, which is soaked and beaten long and hard with a short, heavy club. Bishop Patteson, it will be remembered, was killed by a blow from a tappa club. The strips are welded together to any required width, and then very often a design is stencilled upon it. In substance tappa-cloth is like a thin and rather shoddy felt, but it is serviceable in many ways.

It will have been noticed that only the heads of the six men were carried away. I know nothing of the customs of New Georgia, but the Bugotu head-hunters would have acted similarly. If there had

BUGOTU.

Cockatoo Island.



"By no means a mere figure-head"—A Bugotu Chief.

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been boys amongst them, such would probably have been carried away as live heads, to be useful to their captors until their heads were needed.

Not in Bugotu, but after a service in Guadalcanar, my attention was drawn to one of the communicants, a young man named Barnabas, who, when a little lad, was captured and carried off by New Georgian head-hunters, where he was kept alive and treated well enough, but with the ever-present knowledge that whenever another head was required, his might supply the want. After he had been in exile for several years, the tale was told to a member of the Mission, who made a representation on the subject to the next man-of-war that visited these parts. The matter was taken up. Upon official inquiry being made in New Georgia, it was found that the kidnapped boy still lived, and he was restored to his home and friends.

During our stay in Bugotu another man was pointed out to me, whose face was horribly disfigured by a long, deep scar which seemed to cut it in half. It was the work of head-hunters in his childhood, who had for once failed to accomplish their desire.

Cannibalism is not unknown in Bugotu. Human flesh is occasionally consumed for enjoyment, but always by stealth, the practice being reprobated even by the heathen.

The Bugotu chiefs are by no means mere figure-heads. Their will and their word are law, and they have power over the lives of their own people. "I speak, and they do," as one of them remarked simply. If one chief wishes to propitiate another, he will present him with a boy, who becomes the recipient's absolute property, to be kept for work, given away, sold, or sacrificed to the *tindalo* at his owner's whim.

The sacrificial system here is similar to that described in Ġela. When the heads of enemies killed in fight are captured, a small portion of the flesh of each is burnt in sacrifice. But human sacrifices are infrequent, and they say the practice has only been introduced among them from the islands farther west.

If a man falls ill who can afford to call in the "doctor," he summons the wizard, whose first duty is to find out which ghost is responsible for the malady. The method is simple. At the end of a string a weight is hung, and the wizard pronounces the names of all those who have recently died, watching the string as he does so. At the name of the author of the trouble the string oscillates. The next thing to learn, and this is done by the same means, is what object offered will propitiate the offended *tindalo*—say, a yam-mash, fish, or pig? And if the weight hangs obdurately still, in the last resort the suggestion of a human life is made. Whatever is indicated as being acceptable must be laid in offering on the spot where the ghost's earthly remains are interred, and—is it necessary to add?—the illness subsides!

Among the first of the chiefs of Bugotu with whom the Mission came in contact was one Bera, a very savage ruffian, whose worst barbarities were the offspring of his mother's brain, she being a terrible old hag, who might have served as model for the character of "Gagool" herself!

It pleased Bera (and his mother) to appoint as his successor his grandson Kikolo, a quiet, well-dispositioned young fellow, who had already joined the Mission school as a hearer. But shortly afterwards signs of wasting and decline were visible in the youth, and Bera was almost beside himself with anxiety.

Curiously enough, he seems to have attached no blame to the New Teaching with which Kikolo had connected himself; but, making up his mind that his grandson had offended the local *tindalo*, he bore him hither and thither, from islet to islet, in a vain endeavour to escape out of his jurisdiction. Kikolo's weakness increased, and at last in despair he was brought back to Bera's own house, that there he might die and be buried in chiefly fashion. But one last resource remained, and that should be tried. The *tindalo* might perchance yet be appeased by a human sacrifice.

A mother was working in her garden with her little child beside her, three or four years of age. She never noticed the stealthy approach of one of Bera's men, who, from a short distance away, attracted the infant's attention, and lured it towards him. As soon as it could safely be done, the child was seized and carried off in a canoe to where Bera impatiently awaited the fulfilment of his command.

The poor little innocent was borne into the presence of the dying youth, and its throat was cut so that the blood flowed around him, while Bera cried to the *tindalo* to accept the child's life in lieu of his grandson's. But the same day Kikolo died.

On hearing of the death, the teacher hurried to the chief, and offered to make a coffin and bury the body. Something induced Bera to accede to his suggestion, but he reckoned without his mother, who insisted on the old ceremonies being performed.

A large, deep grave was dug according to custom, in which the corpse was placed upright. Then Kikolo's wife and child were dragged thither, strangled on the brink, and cast into the grave. All the dead man's goods followed—his rifle, his money, and so forth. Every one owning allegiance to Bera next advanced bearing an offering of some sort, which was in like manner thrown into the grave. Then the earth was filled in up to the dead man's neck, the head protruding from the ground. Round this fires were lighted, and kept burning until the flesh was cinders and the skull bare. This was then carried to the great canoe-house, and there deposited, henceforth to receive worship and sacrifice as a *tindalo*.

The dead man's property—coco palms and banana groves—were all hacked down, a heap of stones was piled over the grave, and the period of howling and wailing set in. An expedition for compensatory heads would be set afoot as soon as possible, for until these are obtained, no one leaves the village or resumes ordinary life.

Besides the destruction of his property (a custom observed in common with Guadalcanar), there is in Bugotu a taboo laid at a man's death upon the places and things he commonly used—*e.g.* his bathing-place, the fountain where he drew his water, the landing-place for his canoe, and the paths he most frequented. The number of things which become taboo is proportioned to the importance of the deceased. The relations signify their grief in the usual manner, by abstaining from washing, from cutting their hair, and from changing their loin-cloth, and also from eating some special food—it may be coco-nut, betel, yam, or taro.

Before old Bera died (in 1884) the principles of the New Teaching had begun to make their influence felt upon him, although he never became a catechumen. When he felt his end was near, he called some of his people and pronounced his last commands.

"Let no one be killed on my account. Do no damage to food or property when I am dead. Let no trees be cut down or houses burnt because of me. There has been enough of this. I did it myself when I succeeded to the power with which I am now parting. Yes, and I have often done so. Soga and Nambe" [two inferior chiefs, brothers] "are to succeed me, and to divide my power. I charge them to see these commands carried out."

With a single exception Bera's wishes were observed. One woman was tomahawked, but her murderer, instead of being praised, was seized and heavily fined.

Soga and Nambe succeeded to the power, and both asked the Mission for teachers. Nambe, indeed, married a Christian wife, became himself a hearer, and tried to help on the work. But Soga was at first afraid of it, and, when he fell ill, put it down to the anger of his *tindalo* on account of the school. If Soga was afraid of ghosts, however, he feared nothing else. A man of valour and force of character, his influence soon became paramount in the district and his rule autocratic, his brother sinking contentedly into the position of a village chief.

In 1886 he added immensely to his prestige by carrying out with *éclat* a head-hunting raid in the north and adding about forty skulls to his collection. And when the Bishop arrived in the neighbourhood shortly afterwards, a messenger came from Soga requesting a small present! The Bishop decided to pay him a personal visit, but, on nearing the house, noticed a small red flag flying, and asked the meaning of it.

"That shows us that the baby—Soga's son—has been fed. Until he has had his morning meal, no one may land here without payment of a fish's tooth. But now the way is clear, and you may for the same fish's tooth see the baby!"

An attack of influenza gave the Bishop an opportunity of improving his acquaintance with Soga by means of a medicine bottle. But the week following the chief became seriously ill. Of course the suggestion was bruited that the Bishop's medicine was responsible, but Soga himself scouted the idea. It was the angry *tindalo* again, and he left his own village to get out of the ghost's power, and removed with all his people to an islet off the south coast. The Bishop again visited him, and boldly proposed a dose of quinine and brandy, which he had himself found beneficial. Soga was willing, so the Bishop mixed it; but it was considered necessary for himself, the teacher, and every one in the house to take a sip out of the coconut shell, to show there was no harm in it, before it was handed to the chief. Then, with a very simple explanation of the object in doing so, the Divine blessing was invoked upon the medicine.

Soga's recovery ensued, and his goodwill was ensured. He sent a large present to the Bishop, gave encouragement to a school in his village by lending a house, and consented to allow two boys to come to Norfolk Island.

The next year he took another forward step by ordering that all the children of the village should attend the school. Something, however, happened to revive his old fears of the *tindalo*, for a few months later a handsome contribution of yams to the missionary was accompanied by a polite notification that he no longer desired a school, for other chiefs who had allowed schools had died from the effects! A further interview with the Bishop, however (which Soga tried hard to avoid), resulted in a renewed permission for the school's continuance.

When 1888 dawned it found Soga amongst the most regular of the Mission scholars. He had put away all his wives but one, and when his old friends visited him with the old purpose—to bargain for heads—they found a new Soga, who would have nothing to do with the traffic. In 1889 he was baptized, with his wife and about seventy of his people. He was able to read fluently and intelligently, and to write well also. Indeed, the Book of books fascinated him, and he would sit for hours poring over it.

The following year Soga determined to revisit the scene of one of his last head-hunting raids in a different capacity. So the fleet of canoes was again prepared, and Soga took his men thither on a dancing expedition. The terrified villagers fled into the bush at first glimpse of the canoes, and only a few of the bravest were in sight when the chief landed.

"Where is Kahijagi [the biggest chief]?" cried Soga. "Where are all your great men? Bid them come to me! See, there is no weapon in my hand. We come peaceably. Of old my intention was bloodshed, but now you need fear me no longer. That is all done with, for I am now one of Christ's men, and I want to make friends, so I have brought my men to dance for you."

Reassured, the chiefs ventured near and accepted the gifts Soga had brought in reconciliation. Then he persuaded them to sit down and hear about the wonderful New Teaching which put away enmity.

Soga was changed, yet he was the same man still. His force of character became a most valuable asset, and he was none the less a chief because a Christian. He took the deepest interest in the progress of the school, and personally helped every day in the teaching. He also threw himself whole-heartedly into the business of translating fresh portions of the Bible.

An unpleasant task lay before Soga when a head-teacher, of excellent character, was accused to him of assaulting a man with a canoe paddle. But new convert as he was, he did not flinch from his duty as a chief to try the case.

He arrived at the village concerned with an escort of five large canoes, beautifully ornamented, manned by about thirty men, all paddling together in perfect time. A new mat was spread on the beach for the great man; around him his bodyguard stuck their spears and tomahawks in the sand and hung their shields upon them.

Accuser and accused were brought before him, and happily the teacher frankly confessed his fault. It was in a moment of passion, he said, and he was truly penitent. This being so, Soga inflicted no punishment, but boldly and unsparingly reprimanded him before the people for so forgetting his position and his profession.

Then the court broke up, and the evening was spent in a typically Melanesian manner, with feast and song, smoke and chatter.

On another occasion (it was in the year 1894) Soga's own son was found guilty of wrong-doing. His father fined him heavily—to about the value of £7, a large sum for a native—and instead of himself receiving the fine, according to chiefly wont, it was handed to the native deacon, who purchased with it a canoe for church work in Bugotu.

Behind the village a large garden was fenced in with coral and fringed with pineapples. Here wrong-doers were set to labour as a punishment in cases where a fine did not meet the case. It goes without saying that sometimes misapprehensions occurred. An accusation was brought in against a man for robbery who lived forty miles away. Soga ordered him to appear before him, but the man defied his messenger. "Soga is a Christian now," he sneered; "Christians don't kill!"

But Soga was still Soga, and not to be braved with impunity. He promptly dispatched a war-canoe, with forty men, who had orders unfailingly to bring the offender before him. These did their work, and added something on their own account. Having captured their man, they set fire to his house, cut down all his trees, devoured all his roots, and conveyed him to Soga. The chief decided that he had been punished sufficiently, but gave him a scolding and a warning that he was not likely to forget, and then allowed him to make his way back.

Head-hunting raids still occurred occasionally, and when one fine day in 1897 a war-canoe from New Georgia, containing sixty men, but no boys, landed in Pirihandi Bay, suspicion was aroused in spite of their assurances that they only came to pay a friendly call and wanted nothing but food. Later on the real object of their visit was proved by a headless body in a bay on the opposite side of the peninsula, but the people were wise enough to send messengers to Soga without waiting till their suspicions were verified. At the same time they busied themselves in preparing food for their uninvited guests.

When the messengers reached Soga and told their tale, his first answer was a refusal to "come down and see them."

"I shall not come down," he said; "I don't want to see the New Georgia people. They are no friends of mine; you can tell them to go away."

"No, they are not your friends, and they are not ours," was the plaintive reply, "and we don't know what to do with them. You are our father, and if you will come and talk to them, your words will have weight. Come, Father!"

Soga was prevailed upon, but he took strong defensive measures, sending messengers to all the surrounding villages bidding them arm and prepare to join his force early on the morrow. When Soga reached the entrance of Pirihandi Bay, it was in company with twelve canoes full of men. Beside me lies a translation of Soga's own account of this affair, which I will transcribe:—

> There must have been 150 of us, and I think there would be 70 or 80 men in ambush on the land. We came down the bay, and did not land, but lay off the shore, outside their canoes.
>
> I called out, "Where is your chief?" and Kanijama came out with spear and shield, and threatened me with his spear. But I took no notice of that, and I said to him, "What are you doing here? You come here to disturb us and kill our people. We don't come and trouble you. You leave us alone, and we will leave you alone. We want to be friends with every one, but if you come in this way, we must punish you. My men are all round you, and if I say the word, you will all be killed; not one shall leave this place alive."

With that Kanijama looked round, and he saw that some people had come out of the bush behind them, and were standing with their spears and fire-arms raised, waiting for the signal; and he knew there were more at their back. Then he looked our way, and saw that all our men were ready; and he stood silent, and so did all his men. Then, without a word, he came down to the water's edge with a rifle, and fired it off in the air over our heads.

When the Chief began to fire, his men began to fire in the air too; and then my men began to get angry, and some of them began to fire in the air as well. So I got down out of the canoe, and went ashore, saying, "Stop, all of you! Stop, my men! Kanijama, stop your men!" So they all stopped, and when it was quiet we went into the canoe-house. All the New Georgian men were there, but all my men stopped outside, and only two or three of us went into the house.

Then I talked to him. I said, "Why do you still come troubling Bugotu? Do you not know that this is a forbidden place? We do not follow your heathen ways, to go and kill men, and take their heads. We live at peace, and will have no bloodshed here. God forbids it. We follow Him, and this is His land now, and we tell you to keep away from us. But if you don't listen to me, the fault will lie with you, and I must kill you to save my people."

Then he said, "Father, we did not come to kill you here, but only the bush people. We know that this is your land, and we mean no harm to you."

But he was lying to me, for I know what he had said at Russell Island, and besides, that same morning he had snatched two Pirihandi boys, but the second chief and the teacher took them away again from them.

So I said to him, "It is all my land, and the bush people are mine too. And now you have killed one of Figirima's men, and have brought his blood into the Church of God. You have done very wrong, and I must kill you all."

He was very frightened, and some of his men began to weep. One man, a rather old one, cried out aloud, and shook all over. And then another man got up and said to him, "Why cry? If the Chief kills us, he kills us. We are in his power, and he can do what he likes, to save us or kill us."

All this time my men were standing round the house waiting for orders, and the New Georgia men were sitting sulking inside, for they could see that they could do nothing: we were four to one.

Then one said to me, "You are a friend of mine; you will not hurt me."

He was my friend in old days, and is a Bugotu man and a relation of mine. But he was carried off in a raid, and has married among them, and he has become worse than them, for he shows them the way to come and attack us. So I said to him, "You are my relation, and you were my friend, but I shall kill you as well as them."

So he was silent. Then I said to their chief, "Now you know my mind, and I tell you that if it had been a few years ago, not one of you would have been living now to hear me speak. But I have learnt to know and serve God, and it will be well for you if you come to know Him too; and because I am a changed man, I give you all your lives this time. Food shall be given you, and you shall go in peace, but if you come again you shall not escape so lightly."

Then they were all comforted, for they had expected to be killed at any moment. All their weapons were lying on the ground, and no man attempted to take them to defend himself. Then Kanijama gave me a sacred breast-ring, but I gave him nothing in return; and he gave the second chief a shield. I sent for the food that was cooked, and then we dismissed them. When they were well on their way, we went home again.

Afterwards I heard that they said to the Russell Island people, "We were all dead men: why did he not kill us?"

Soga's last work involved a ten days' voyage in a canoe to make peace between two hostile tribes. It was successful, but before he could reach home the chief's last illness had begun, and both he and his people realized its serious nature. Most tenderly was he nursed and watched over, but he would not allow the daily life of the village to be disorganized on his account. The daily services in church, the morning baths must all go on as usual. All agree that he had felt he was dying, though he never thus spoke of it. But several times he said, "My children, I am going to leave you, but we shall meet again." His own son, Ellison, has written in plain, unvarnished words the story of that last week of the chief's life. I will copy the final part from a translation.

> In the evening we went to church again, and he had prayers in the house, as he had done morning and evening since he was taken ill. When we came back he said, "I think I am better, for all my pains are gone, and I feel stronger." And he rubbed his shoulders and his body, and laughed, and said, "There is nothing wrong here now. To-morrow I shall bathe!" But we were doubtful, for he could not lie down, and his cough was very bad.
>
> When it was quite dark outside, he said, "Put out the light, and all of you go to sleep, for I too will sleep." And they all lay down and slept, but we three still kept watch. He did not sleep much, for his cough kept him awake, but he lay back propped up, and was quite quiet.
>
> In the middle of the night he startled us by saying, "Who is this? There is a white man beside me, ruddy and beautiful. Who is it? I do not know him."
>
> With that he got up, and went to where Ben was lying, and he found him asleep; and then he came to me, and I helped him to get back to the bed, for he was very weak. It was quite dark, and we saw nothing, and we did not answer him, for we did not know what to say. We thought perhaps he had seen a spirit.
>
> He sat up for a short time, and said, "Give me the matches. I will smoke a little." And we gave him his pipe. He did not smoke long, but gave the pipe back to me, and he lay back. Then he began to talk again about this man. "I do not know him; he is very beautiful!" And very soon he lay quiet. I was fanning him.

Presently he said, "My children, do not grieve and be troubled. This is my day!"

It was just about cock-crow, and I saw a change in him. They lit the lamp, and we saw he was breathing his last. It was not like the death we know; it was just as if he were falling asleep.

So passed away Monislaws Soga, the famous old head-hunter.

The white priest had been already sent for from G̈ela, but could not reach the village until after the chief's death. He hurried to his house, where no howling and shrieking were to be heard and the broken-hearted widow craved for comfort.

"I then got up to take my leave," writes the missionary. "The house was dark, but while I was talking I had a consciousness of a man standing behind me, and when I stood up, I found I had been sitting almost under the body all the time. It was suspended from the rafters of the house by strong native ropes, and a man stood at the head, and another at the feet. They were changed at intervals, for watch had been kept thus day and night ever since he died; and except for the singularity of the suspension of the body, no watch could have been more solemn over any crowned prince.

"When night fell there was a change, and for two or three hours the dirge was raised, but in subdued tones. It was a plaintive wail, reciting his virtues, his deeds, and sayings, sung only by men; the very tone of the chant carried sorrow with it. The body was coffined in a new canoe, decorated with mother-of-pearl; this was lined with quantities of tappa-cloth and English calico, and the whole was wrapped in many layers of each. A new quilt was laid over all as a pall."

Directly after the funeral the chieftaincy had to be arranged. Nambe declined the honour of succeeding his brother, and the power was divided between the two men, Lonsdale and Ellison, whom Soga had designated as his successors. Ellison is now a senior teacher as well as an influential chief, and is studying for Holy orders. A cross marks his father's grave. Translated, the words upon it run thus :—

OUR CHIEF
MONISLAWS SOGA
15TH AUG. 1898.
HE WAS FILLED WITH LOVE.

Among the Christians, the chiefs and teachers are generally excellent friends, and it is not uncommon to find the former helping regularly in the schools. But when a teacher is placed in a heathen district, where the chiefs are opposed to the law of righteousness, he needs the courage of a John the Baptist. And such courage is not unknown in our annals.

One Marsden Manekalea came thus into conflict in Bugotu with a heathen chief named Lambi ; for although he lived on the opposite side of the bay from Marsden's village, the latter fearlessly rebuked him on his return from a head-hunting raid. The chief in fury threatened to attack the Christian village, and his purpose came to the teacher's ears.

" No, his quarrel is with me, not with all of you. I will go myself to see him," said Marsden simply. " If he kills me it is no great matter, for it is instead of the many."

But some of the school people said among themselves, " We will go and die with him ! " And so they paddled across too.

Lambi saw them coming, and they found him surrounded by armed men, who were under orders to kill Marsden only. The latter walked straight up to the chief with the plain question, " Why are you angry ? "

"You have insulted me," blurted the chief, taken aback.

"No, I have not insulted you," was the calm reply: "but I did tell you, and I tell you still, that this hunting for men's heads is wrong."

While Marsden was speaking, one of Lambi's men had crept up behind him with a tomahawk, ready to strike when Lambi gave the signal. The teacher, who was aware of it, took out his pipe and turned abruptly round upon him with the inquiry, "Have you got a light?"

The would-be murderer, astounded and confused, dropped his tomahawk, and after some more quiet talk the chief allowed the teacher to return unharmed, and the matter passed over.

When I visited Bugotu it was very interesting to see the province where Soga held sway and the villages where the various incidents recorded occurred; but place names on paper when multiplied are not illuminating, and I have therefore for the most part withheld them.

The priest-in-charge of Bugotu (who died at his post in 1908) told us of an adventurous call he had made at a remote bush village, hitherto unvisited by any white man, but whose chief, Figirima, had been reported favourable to the new teaching. A walk of ten hours with a few native companions brought them to Figirima's village, and before a meal could be prepared the white man was sent for by the chief.

The little party was conducted into a large house screened off at one end, where they sat on the ground on one side, and Figirima's men opposite them, all silent. Presently came a deep voice from behind the screen, "What have you come for?" Etiquette forbade the great man's too readily exhibiting himself before the eyes of strangers. Answer was given that they had come in order to make his acquaintance. Whereupon a civil surprise was expressed and the long journey and bad roads were commented on. He was clearly honoured and flattered by the compliment paid him, and showed his sense of it by inviting the visitors to stay two nights in his village.

The following morning Figirima condescended to become visible, and graciously accepted the few small gifts they had brought. In return he presented them with a pig and the comprehensive message, "Tell all the world I am the white man's friend." At the same time he was careful not to commit himself to any promise with regard to a school. "By and by I will visit Soga," he said, "and hear more about the Way. It would not accord with our customs to act in haste."

It was more than a year after this, I think, that Figirima made the great decision that he, like Soga, would accept the ruling of the Invisible Chief and become "one of Christ's men." But when he had thus resolved, he resolved also that it should not be his fault if all his neighbours did not likewise accept the Peace Law. To which end he sent word to all the chiefs in the vicinity that it would be a good thing for themselves from every point of view if they applied for schools and teachers. This was a stroke of policy ensuring, if successful, that though he could raid no more, at least his village could not be raided. But the chiefs considered that indecent haste in such a matter would be very unbecoming, and incidentally they wanted to make sure first how much in earnest was Figirima.

He kept quiet, wonderful to relate, for fully twelve months, and then something made him angry. A petty chief took occasion to raid a distant village against which lay some old score. One or two men were killed, a few more taken captive, and what loot could be found was seized. With Figirima's avowedly peaceful propaganda there seemed no vengeance to fear. But the aggressors were mistaken.

Figirima was on fire with rage at the breaking of the peace and determined to inflict condign punishment. His warriors were overjoyed on learning this. The strongest and bravest were summoned, and instructed to go to the petty chief's village and do their worst without shedding a drop of blood.

They did their best. The village was unprepared for them, and the inhabitants were driven out naked, neck and crop, into the bush. The houses were stripped of everything worth taking, and then burned to the ground, the gardens were ravaged and destroyed, the pigs and fowls seized as spoil. Then, well laden, they returned to Figirima.

The despoiled villagers emerged from the bush to find but one relic from the universal wreck—a little pig that had somehow escaped. Upon this animal they bestowed the name of Vasoesole, which means "made naked." Who could object to this small, rather humorous comment upon their aggrievance?

Ah, we need native ears and native intelligence to appreciate the insult thus subtly conveyed. Had they dared, they would have dubbed the pig Figirima outright. They implied it, and every one who heard understood. It was Figirima who had "made naked" the village, and he was likened to a pig.

He heard all about it, and was very wroth, but took no active steps to avenge the insult until the word came that young Vasoesole was being fattened up. Then he was rather frightened as well as freshly enraged, for in the news he read a grim significance. There was to be a feast, and the cause for rejoicing was to be his death.

The chief was in a pitiable fix. Nothing but blood could possibly wipe out such an insult as this, and he was tingling to avenge himself. But he had promised to raid and kill no more, and he was a quarter of a Christian already. What on earth was to be done?

One can almost see the poor fellow biting his fingers in perplexity, native fashion, trying to swallow down all the foaming threats he longed to pour forth. But presently a brilliant thought struck him. There was Sorusage, who was still a wicked heathen, and loved fighting. Lucky man! There was no reason why he should not act as Figirima's instrument and deal as was fitting with these miserable scoundrels. The chief sent an oblique message to his neighbour, who perfectly understood and was quite agreeable. Straight away went Sorusage to the offending village and had good sport, killing two, capturing three, and scattering the rest of the inhabitants. Then he sent word to Figirima that his majesty was avenged for the insult of the little pig, and the chief, we can well imagine, grinned complacently.

Wizards and charms play their customary part in Bugotu village life wherever there is no school, and possibly sometimes where there is. The crumbs and food fragments that one drops are collected with as much care, and for the same reason. The makers of winds and calms, of rain and sunshine, still find their avocation a profitable one.

It was in Bugotu not very long ago that the house of a weather wizard was blown down by a storm on the very day when he had manufactured and guaranteed a calm. Was anybody's faith shaken? Not in the least! What had happened was so clear. Some person or persons unknown had been working a counter-charm, the *mana* of which exceeded his own. Unfortunate, but was he to blame?

The catching of the favourite dainty, bonito-fish, is a popular pastime here as elsewhere, but the Bugotu method of attracting them is a variant. A bamboo scoop is carried in each canoe and plunged into the sea, the idea being that the fish shall hear the splashing, and, deceived into thinking it is produced by other bonito jumping out of the water to feed, come swimming up to share in what good things are going.

Of a moonlight evening on the beach the children may be seen like dusky elves playing their quaint island games. A favourite one concerns a magic wand, which all are supposed earnestly to desire. A rod is rubbed with smelling plants and decorated with rings and rattling bean-pods. The players sit facing each other in two rows, and a boy on one side holds the coveted wand, and beats it in time to the following words which are chanted by all:—

> *Dukonio faafarakonio!* [no known sense attached]
> Come here, some one!—
> Bimbi or his wife!—
> Come and take away
> This wizard's staff.
> It is rubbed with scent,
> It smells beautiful,
> The rings have jingled,
> The beans have rattled;
> Come and take it away!

The invitation has quite a pressing sound, but the point of it lies in the fact that only he or she may take away the rod who can succeed in rousing a laugh from the side that is in possession. If they fail, a nonsense reason for refusing the stick is invented by the leader, and the player retires defeated. One by one they try their luck, twisting themselves into the most grotesque attitudes, contorting their faces, and disguising their voices ludicrously. Often they succeed, for at least some one is constrained to laugh, and then the stick changes hands, and it is the turn of the victors to chant the invitation. It is a long while before the powers of invention are exhausted and the game abandoned.

Among the bush villages of Bugotu is found a race of men so small that they may fairly be termed pygmies—dear little men and women, timid of manner, towards whom one feels as towards children. In visiting one of these remote villages, the people are usually found drawn up in line, serious and still, every one with the right hand stiffly outstretched, ready to be taken and shaken by the visitors, but looking for all the world like a row of automatic figures, waiting for the penny in the slot!

My gravity was seriously threatened at a confirmation among these little people. One tiny old man scurried up shyly, rather in the manner of the White Rabbit of Wonderland fame, and then could not remember the right posture to adopt before the Bishop. He squatted tentatively on his heels, but the teacher was behind, and unceremoniously upset him forward on to his knees!

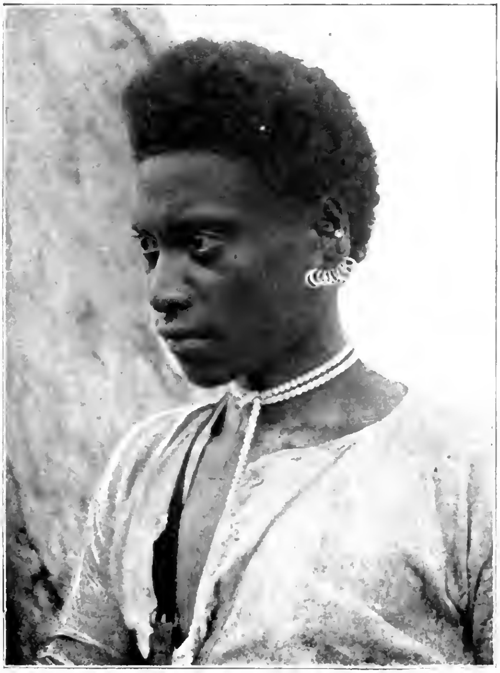
One of my rare evenings ashore was spent on Bugotu, where I saw my first fireflies and *felt* my first land crabs! When I saw how astonishingly bright a spark the little beetle emits, I could appreciate the *vraisemblance* of the stories told me in more than one place of night alarms created—"Enemies approaching with torches through the distant bush!"—which turn out to be fireflies distant less than a stone's throw!

Flocks of cockatoos we saw continually, and I also noticed here an unusual number of frigate-birds, or the man-o'-war hawk. This bird is sacred in Bugotu and throughout the Solomons, with it being connected many *tindalo* with *mana* to help one at sea. The extended wings, forming a sort of W, constitutes the most popular tattoo-mark in all Melanesia, and in Bugotu it may generally be seen on the backs of men's thumbs. For this there is a reason.

Steaming one day down the coast, my attention was drawn to a desolate rocky point which I was told was Tuhilagi, or the Bugotu Panoi (Hades). The bare patches upon the slopes are the Gardens of the Ghosts, where nothing will grow but spirit yams and spirit bananas. But before the Gardens can be reached there is a bottomless pit to be crossed by a narrow tree-trunk. The Great Ghost who rules over Tuhilagi sits ever on the rocks, with outstretched arms beckoning the souls of the dead towards him. But he sets his wife to keep guard over the black pit. It is the duty of the old woman to examine each soul that approaches, in order to see whether upon their hand they bear the mark of her lord (*i.e.* the frigate-bird on the back of the thumb) which will admit them to her husband's realm. If not, they may start the perilous passage of the tree-trunk, but the old woman forthwith pushes them over

BUGOTU.

The Gardens of the Ghosts.



A Bugotu Boy.

P. 368.

into the abyss. Ultimately such unfortunate souls emerge from the chasm in the form of butterflies.

At the extreme west end of the island of Bugotu lies Kia, formerly a notorious stronghold of head-hunters, but now a Christian village which we were to visit. The men of Kia formed one of those two tribes which it was Soga's last public work to reconcile. But they did not at that time accept a school.

On the long way to Kia we heard a little of its story. For so many years they had clung to their old bandit life of kidnapping and murder, that when first visited by the white man they were very shy and unfriendly. But in or about the year 1904 the ice was broken, and a teacher was applied for by one of the Kia chiefs, who was fairly teased into doing so by his wife. Slowly but surely the New Teaching made its way, and one chief after another burnt his boats and entered the school.

Yes, it is the period between becoming a hearer and being baptized which is dreaded. You turn your back upon your old familiar spirits, who will naturally be enraged at the desertion, yet you are not at once taken fully into the protection of the Great One Spirit, and your position is therefore a parlous one.

Before any baptism could take place in Kia it was required of the chiefs and catechumens to make proof of their sincerity by formally demolishing the altar-tombs where the ghosts of their buried ancestors were worshipped and the skull-trophies of the old head-hunting raids were preserved.

The deed was done, and by their own hands. The slabs of coral that composed the tombs were hurled down the hill into the sea, to form again a part of their original reef; the venerated bones from within them, and the victims' skulls from without, were gathered into a great heap and burned to ashes, while prayer was offered that the sacrifice might be accepted. It was an entire and irrevocable break with heathenism that was symbolized by this dread and imposing ceremony.

The end of our journey was accomplished in a delightful row of nearly an hour over the lagoon, all among mangrove-covered islets, whence we suddenly emerged upon the principal village of Kia, situated *à merveille* just above the water. All the houses are built on piles over the mangrove swamp, and we clambered from the whale-boat up on to what looked like a sort of pier, but which was really the veranda of some one's house.

The teacher's wife promptly attached herself to me, and I think we visited every house in the village, having to enter each by a different variety of ladder. The chief's was especially lofty. We found him at home, wearing a beautifully-cut pearl cross. He had lately put away his superfluous wives and been baptized. The wife he had kept was a nice-looking little girl, who seemed rather pleased with her position. I was also introduced to his father and mother, and to the woman above mentioned, to whom the advent of the first school was really due, but whose husband had since died.

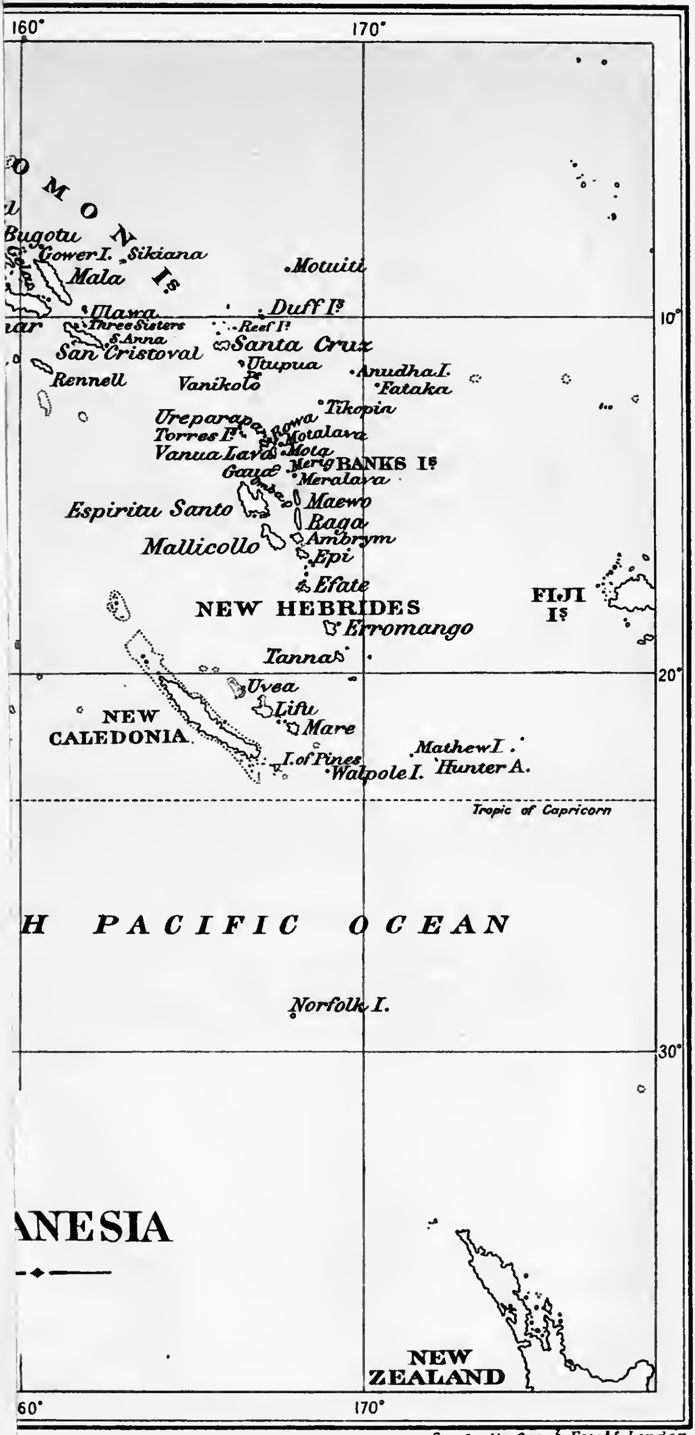
While I sat in the teacher's house the church bell rang for Evensong. The women approach by a different path from the men (and a more difficult and slippery one!) and enter by a different door.

The church is beautifully constructed and finished off. The floor is entirely matted and the sanctuary is raised by two steps. There is a wonderful native reredos, made of wood and painted with various designs, including crosses and frigate-birds. On the altar stands a really lovely little cross of dark wood, inlaid with mother-of-pearl. A beautiful giant clam-shell forms the font, with a post before it carved emblematically of the Evil One as a crocodile with gaping jaws. The whole is quite a triumph of Melanesian handicraft. And the craftsmen are the erstwhile ferocious savages of Kia!

The row back from Kia will always be one of my favourite island memories. It was long and slow, for we were hindered by cross currents, but I think no one would have murmured had it lasted longer still.

The sun sank soon after we started back, and the brief twilight melted—not into darkness, but into a star-lit air. The phosphorescent water glittered and glimmered all about our keel, and the warm, still green of the growth around us was intermittently lit up and obscured at the freakish will of the blue-white silent summer lightning. The liquid plash below and an occasional whirr of wings overhead alone broke the silence.

Over many of the Islands of Enchantment day has not yet broken. But where was once pitch darkness there are stars in the sky. There are lights in sea and air. And the morning is on its way.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170°
O M O N Is
Bugotu
Gower I.
Sikiana
Mala
Motuiti
Ulawa
Duff Is
Three Sisters
Reef I.
S. Anna
Santa Cruz
San Cristoval
Utupua
Anudha I.
Rennell
Vanikolo
Fataka
Tikopia
Ureparapa
Rowa
Torres Is
Motalava
Vanua Lava
Mota
Merig
BANKS Is
Gaua
Meralava
Aoba
Espiritu Santo
Maewo
Baga
Mallicollo
Ambrym
Epi
Efate
NEW HEBRIDES
FIJI Is
Erromango
Tanna
Uvea
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NEW CALEDONIA
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Walpole I.
Hunter A.
Tropic of Capricorn
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H PACIFIC OCEAN
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ANESIA
NEW ZEALAND
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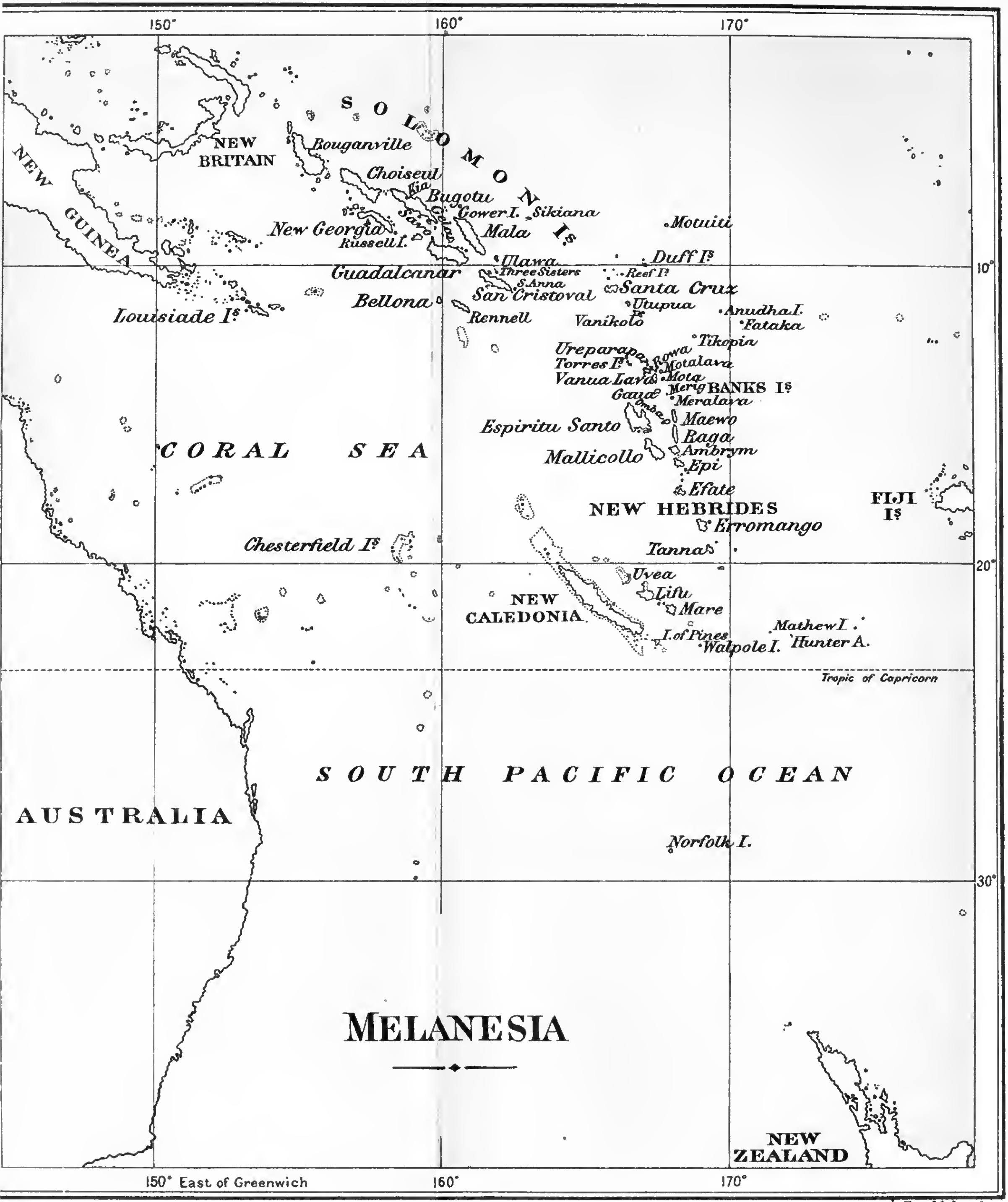
150°
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SOLOMON Is
NEW BRITAIN
NEW GUINEA
Bouganville
Choiseul
Ysabel
Bugotu
Gower I.
Sikiana
Savo
Gela
Mala
New Georgia
Russell I.
Motuiti
Ulawa
Duff Is
Three Sisters
Reef Is
S. Anna
Guadalcanar
Santa Cruz
San Cristoval
Utupua
Louisiade Is
Bellona
Rennell
Vanikoro
Anudha I.
Fataka
Tikopia
Ureparapara
Torres Is
Rowa
Motalava
Vanua Lava
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BANKS Is
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Maewo
Espiritu Santo
Raga
Mallicollo
Ambrym
Epi
CORAL SEA
Efate
NEW HEBRIDES
FIJI Is
Erromango
Chesterfield Is
Tanna
Uvea
Lifu
NEW CALEDONIA
Mare
Mathew I.
I. of Pines
Walpole I.
Hunter A.
Tropic of Capricorn
10°
20°
30°
SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN
AUSTRALIA
Norfolk I.
NEW ZEALAND
150° East of Greenwich
160°
170°

MELANESIA

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