



TAHAA

RAIATEA

3^d PORT.



GARPENTIER

20

SOUTH PACIFIC



RAROTONGA

1st PORT.



MANGAIA

WEDDING ISLAND.

TO N.Z.

CHART

*of our Islands
& Peace.*

160



150

THE ATOLL

MOOREA
OUR ISLAND.

TAHITI

TO USA

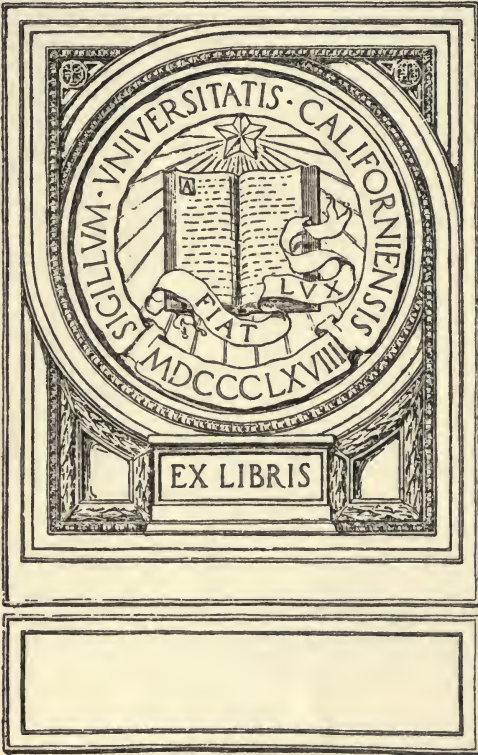
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SOUTH SEA SETTLERS



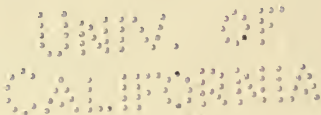
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SOUTH SEA SETTLERS

BY

J. R. GREY AND B. B. GREY, F.L.S.

With 28 photographs and 15
Linoleum Cuts by B. B. Grey



NEW YORK
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

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CARPENTIER

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ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

MUCH has been written about the South Sea Islands. Most of it consists of the romantic vapourings of young men, who talk only of the wonderfully beautiful women and the lotus-eating life led by the entire population ; or else it consists of spiteful and scandalous stories of those people who were the kindest and most hospitable to the authors. Feeling, therefore, that the time has come to write of the islands from the point of view of people who lead an everyday existence in them, we have given a true account of our own experiences there. There is so much charm and beauty that, to our minds, there is no need to try to enhance it by regarding native girls—at whom one would not look twice if they had white skins—as creatures of celestial beauty. If there were not a native left in the islands, their charm would remain the same. It lies in the peace that envelops these lazy lands, where Nature is at her most smiling, and where she has given only of her best : she has kept her evil beasts for less fortunate climes.

These are lovely islands, set in a calm blue sea,

PREFACE

while, overhead, soft white clouds chase one another across the sky and temper the heat of the tropical sun.

It is the Lotus-land, and he who leaves it is still under the spell, and will surely be drawn back to its white beaches and swaying palms.

OUR ISLAND

There are jagged, furrowed mountains, that embrace mysterious
valleys,

Where a green gloom reigns beneath the leaves of mighty forest
trees,

And the rushing torrents never see the sky
Till, suddenly, they mingle with the wide lagoon's still water,
As it lies, a placid smiling blue inside the jealous reef,
Where the foaming breakers ever moan and die.

There the laughing, dancing wavelets of the limpid surface
water

Are reflected on the bottom as a broken golden line

Where the timid sharks lie sleeping on the sand.

And the lovely, living corals spread their many-coloured
branches,

Like a gorgeous fairy garden, with the fish for butterflies

As they float there in a rainbow-tinted band.

There, far between two mountains, that are ever verdure-clad,
Runs a bay of jade-green water that reflects the hill-side's
green,

And the little waves that fringe its shores are gay

With the joy that they, at last, have left the ocean for the
beaches,

And the palm-trees bow their graceful heads to every passing
breeze

As it ruffles up the surface of the bay.





WHO has not sometimes longed to live in the South Seas : to see the palms sway in the trade wind, while the white breakers crash on a reef which encircles a blue lagoon, through whose clear warm water the coral heads peer, the home of many strange and lovely fish ; to see the happy, laughing, brown - skinned natives playing like porpoises in the sea, to see them dance in the shade of the cocoa-nut palms crowned with flowers and coloured leaves ?

We knew that this was a romancer's dream, but that there were peace and beauty there, warm waters, hot sun and cool breezes, and that Nature gave with both hands to anyone who asked for her fruits.

We are both of a temperament that can be happy without the company of fellow-men ; books and boats and Nature being to our minds far greater

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entertainments than tea-parties and dinners with people to whom we are indifferent.

We thought that marriage was a matter that concerned only the two principals, and so we started for the South Seas, there to get married quietly in the Isles of Romance.

Alas! even in the few years we have lived here Romance has become a shadowy ghost who is being exorcised from the land by the loud speaker and Ford cars.

We started off gaily enough (after all our plans had been nearly frustrated by a railway and shipping strike) in an old hooker of 1,800 tons, once a "swell" passenger ship, but now a fruit and copra carrier, with a few passengers by no means "swell." B. rather gasped when she saw our liner, as she had just got off the *Niagara* and the contrast was rather painful. However, the weather was kind, and the week or so at sea was pleasant enough, though, for cabin companion, B. was inflicted with a very sea-sick woman, who ate oranges and drank ginger-beer, and then went and lost the lot in her cabin during meal-times. As the cabins all opened into the dining saloon, the sounds were not exactly conducive to a vigorous appetite.

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She was a friendly ship. Before lunch J. usually joined the second steward (who remembered him as a little boy) in a cocktail; sometimes the bedroom steward participated also, and when the Doctor joined the ship at Rarotonga the party was, if anything, more convivial. The Doctor was an old island resident, and everyone knew him and he knew everyone.

After dinner the ship's cook, a musician of no mean order, usually came up to the social hall, and for a couple of hours made the old piano forget its age and want of tuning.

At Mangaia—a small and lovely island—we went ashore with the Doctor on his official inspection, and, in the meantime, the ship lay off the reef discharging her cargo of cases destined to be filled with fruit against her return in a week's time.

When we landed, the natives, who had only seen two or three white women in their lives, took a tremendous interest in B., and wherever we went we were followed by a throng of children eagerly staring and chattering.

Our stay ashore was only for a few hours, but the Government Agent, although he was busy with the mails, etc., made time to be very kind to us.

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He gave us the run of his house, and told someone off to show us the sights.

The island is one of the most curious in these seas. A narrow strip of fertile land along the shore ends at an abrupt cliff, which is an old uplifted coral reef. At the top of this lies another strip of flattish land, and then again rises a coral cliff, while the centre of the island is an earthy, barren, gently-rounded cone. The road winds through breaks in the cliff where one gazes up at jagged coral walls where lovely ferns grow in every cranny. We were told that there are great caves on the other side of the island, but unfortunately we had not time to visit them.

We returned to the ship before lunch in one of the big canoes which carry all freight and passengers between ship and shore at this island. There is no opening in the coral reef, so everything must go over it through the breakers, which is all right in fine weather, but if there is any swell, one runs an excellent chance of being spilt out. Fortunately the day was fine, and we got off with a slight wetting.

The canoes here are unique in the Pacific. On the island there are no trees large enough to construct them, so great logs are imported from other islands. For the biggest of the canoes two logs are hollowed

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out, and then the two sections are laced together with plaited cocoa-nut fibre and the join caulked. The finished canoe is about thirty feet long, two feet wide and two feet deep, and the stern is cut off square, as in a boat, instead of being pointed, as in the canoes from other islands. Big outriggers made from small tree trunks are securely lashed to two heavy bars which, in their turn, are made fast to the gunwale of the canoe.

As there was no sickness in the place, the Doctor decided to come with us for a little holiday trip instead of staying on the island chivvying natives round to make them clean up their houses and backyards, which he as well as anyone knew would lapse into their usual state of disorder as soon as he had left.

After another two days at sea, with continuous fine weather, we arrived at Raiatea: a much bigger island with a splendid lagoon enclosed by a coral reef with openings every few miles. As we approached the entrance in the late afternoon, an outrigger canoe, about twenty feet long, with an enormous spread of sail, driven by a fresh fair wind, overtook and passed us as though we were standing still, though in reality we were doing about eleven knots. The islanders are like fish in the water and,

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having no fear of the sea, go about in cranky old boats and canoes, taking risks that no seaman would dream of taking, and generally managing, in this land of fine weather, to get away with it.

After passing through the hands of doctors, passport agents, etc., we got ashore just before dark. We were in French waters, so a rigorous formality was the order of the day. The wind had now died away, and as the ship grew intolerably hot, we decided to look for food ashore. Near the head of the wharf was a Chinese shop where one could get a large basin of coffee and a "Kanakan sandwich," that is, a loaf of French bread split in half, buttered and stuck together again, making a dainty morsel a foot long, five inches wide and four inches thick. The natives like it this way, and, as they are the principal customers, their tastes are catered for. This, however, did not appeal to us, and, as we heard of a restaurant kept by a Frenchman farther down the beach, we went in search of it. The word "restaurant" was rather misleading, as it turned out to be a drinking shop patronised by the ships' firemen and some French half-castes. The proprietor, after being addressed by B. in fluent French, took us to his bosom and

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promised omelettes and pork chops. While we awaited their arrival, we carried on a conversation with the other customers over glasses of orange beer, made locally and rather fearsome.

Accompanying us was a nice girl, travelling with her father, who had announced that he would stay on the ship, as he did not fancy the thought of the local restaurant. Unfortunately for him he did not know just where the restaurant was, and, as we descended the front steps, who should walk into the ray of light cast across the road by the open door, but father and the ornamental stewardess. Poor father! All he could do was to right about turn, and accompany daughter back to the ship.

The ship left at daylight next morning on the last leg of her trip. Our destination was now only 130 miles away, and we were due to arrive that evening. Just before lunch a vessel was sighted some miles away, apparently in distress, so our course was altered, and in half an hour we had her close abeam. She turned out to be a barquentine, timber laden, which had been abandoned by her crew about four months previously. The crew had been rescued from the lifeboats, and the derelict had drifted over 600 miles through waters literally

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studded with coral islands. Some curious chance of winds and currents had carried her safely through and placed her in our path.

Every local vessel had been watching for such a prize, and here we were, a British ship, literally falling over it almost within sight of port.

Great excitement prevailed, a boat was lowered away, and the mate went over to make an inspection. He came back, reporting that it would be possible to put a prize crew aboard and tow the vessel into port. She was awash amidships, but the top-gallant forecastle and poop were clear of water, and a great deal of the deck load of timber was still intact, which made a convenient bridge between the two. A wire warp was resurrected from our ship's hold, and, after some trouble, it was passed and made fast to the wreck. We started dead slow ahead. By now it was dark, and we realised that there was no chance of making port before the next afternoon, as we could only proceed at about two knots in order to avoid breaking the tow-line. About midnight it did break, and the prize crew had a lonely night on the wreck, while we steamed slowly about, waiting for daylight, before getting fast again and proceeding with the towing. The following

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day was spent in towing and breaking lines, until finally the captain of the ship decided to make for Tahiti to land the passengers and get some necessary gear for towing, in the meantime leaving the crew on the wreck to chivvy off any interlopers.

We landed at Papeete and made for the consul's office, where we received our first shock. The consular marriage warrant was in the name of the previous consul, so the present acting one could not marry us. This was a nasty blow indeed. The consul did everything possible to overcome the difficulty, but in vain. The next step was to arrange to be married under French law, which would mean a three weeks' residence in the town in the first place. The consul's secretary took us to interview, first, the mayor, second, the notary, third, the acting procureur (apparently the French equivalent for attorney-general); but each and every one of them talked at a great length, flapped their fins continuously, and finally said, "Impossible." First and foremost J. could not prove himself to be a bachelor. They pooh-poohed the suggestion that his passport, which, of course, said "unmarried," was correct, and said, "Prove it." J. replied, "How the devil can I?" They could not believe

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that all nations did not force their subjects to possess "carnets," official books in which every event in the life of a man that concerned the State was carefully recorded, without which it was impossible to get married, and doubtless without which it is impossible to be acknowledged dead.

Then also we were asked to produce our birth certificates, and the written consent of B.'s parents, as she was under thirty.

The officials were convinced that there must be something very queer about two people who wished to get married without making a family affair of it, considering the matter for months, and then accepting the decisions of the respective parents.

After a strenuous and unfruitful day, the Doctor came to the rescue. He said, "Just go back on board the ship when she leaves, and as soon as she arrives at Mangaia (our second port of call, and the nearest British territory), we will go ashore, and the Government agent will marry you in five minutes, or, if he makes any objection, I shall do it myself, as I am a marriage officer for the islands, and we shall be in British waters."

That was the easiest way out of the difficulty. In the meantime the ship had towed the wreck

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into port, and was to sail the following day. Of course, our secret was now out with a vengeance, and our fame flew round the town like wildfire. Everyone took an enormous interest in us. We went to get accommodation at the hotel, and had our eyes opened to the habits of the country by the proprietor asking us, quite as a matter of course, "Do you want one room or two?" and looking quite surprised when we said "Two."

The next day we rejoined the ship, and four days later arrived at Mangaia early in the morning. The Government Agent came aboard to breakfast, and agreed to take us ashore and fix us up about 10 a.m. As we were leaving the ship, our musical cook and the second steward appeared armed with a large package of corned-beef sandwiches and a bottle of whisky, as a wedding breakfast. The day was gorgeous, and the reef good, so we got ashore dry. While the ship was being loaded with the cases of oranges that had been packed during the ten days which had elapsed since our previous visit, the wedding party, consisting of the Doctor, the Agent, the representative of a New Zealand trading company, and ourselves, went into the Post Office, where amongst mail bags and bundles

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of papers we signed the book : and the trick was done. We were presented with a certificate of respectability in two languages, Maori and English (cost 7s.), with the assurance of the Agent that he could divorce us for 26s.

We were the first white couple to be married on that island, and, in all probability, the last for many years to come.

We were decorated with native flowers and shell wreaths, some snapshots were taken, and then we repaired to the Agent's house to lunch, at which the sandwiches and whisky played their part.

In the afternoon, just as the ship had finished loading and the passengers were about to leave the shore, a heavy swell suddenly made the reef very bad. We embarked in the big canoe and paddled to the outside reef to try to get over. It looked very nasty, and the natives shook their heads. After waiting for half an hour hoping for an opportunity, which didn't come, the natives said we should have to go some distance round the island and try again. Accordingly we paddled round the shallow lagoon, the ship steaming slowly along outside after us, until we came to a place where there was a chance of getting over. After we had waited fifteen minutes, watching big seas



Us

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ANNUAL

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breaking within about twenty feet of our noses, the natives suddenly saw the opportunity and, with a shout and much paddling and splashing, we bumped over the shelf of coral into deep water, just as the wave broke under the stern of the canoe. It was a breathless two minutes, as, had we been caught by the sea, we should have capsized on the reef and then have been pounded on the jagged coral by the breaking waves. However, we escaped with a drenching, which we did not mind: it was, at any rate, better than having to stay on the island for perhaps two months without clothes or luggage.

After all our efforts, we did not escape the "Wedding March," as some humorist was waiting at the piano to greet us as we went into dinner.

The following day we left the ship at Rarotonga where we were to be the Doctor's guests until the arrival of the mail boat in five days' time. We sent off our delayed wireless messages to our relatives, and withstood the chaff from our several friends in the place about getting married "on the quiet."

The Doctor's house was native-built of coral concrete, mostly verandah and open air. The wooden partitions only went up seven feet and then stopped, either from lack of timber or from

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a desire for more air—probably the former. B. took it all like a hero, but the bathroom, which consisted of a tap in the garden, surrounded by a barricade of galvanised iron about five feet high, and without a door, nearly finished her. However, the whole thing had been such a joke from beginning to end that nothing mattered much.

We spent a happy time pottering about in the sun, swimming in the warm blue water and lazing on the white beaches, or doing the rounds with the Doctor in a wheezy old Ford that rattled considerably, but kept going.

When we joined the mail-boat, we fell into the arms of friends, who were filled with surprise, chaff, and congratulations on hearing of our adventures.

In two days' time we were back once more in Papeete, this time safely married and respectable, to the vast disappointment of one funny little man, who had travelled on the same ship as B. some months before, and who had had a most enjoyable time going round the town, saying: "Do you remember Miss X. who passed through here last year? She has come back with a young man. Isn't it dreadful? I would never have thought she was that kind of a girl!"



WE took up our quarters at the hotel, which was a ramshackle, two-storied, wooden building. Its construction and age were a clear proof that what is called a hurricane here can only be a very poor imitation of the real thing, or else there would have been a new hotel long ago.

Our room was furnished by a bed, the mattress of which had been stuffed with somebody's old boots, a chest of drawers, one glance into which decided B. to keep her clothes in her trunk, a table with a jug and basin, a rickety chair, and that was all.

J.'s shaving mirror was the only means of watching one's toilet, and that naturally only showed a very small portion of one's anatomy. What the *tout ensemble* was like, one could only surmise.

Under our window was a grape-vine trellis (which never bore any fruit) on which at night three wretched

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turkeys slept—or rather discussed the events of the day in loud voices and snatched a few moments' sleep between sentences. Shooing had no effect on them, nor had a jug of water. At last J. became desperate and, seizing a length of rope that happened to be in the room, he began to play at being a cowboy. After a few attempts he got his hand in and away went the turkeys, with indignant squawks, to inflict their nocturnal conversations on someone else.

The dining-room was a large verandah, which was haunted by the hotel chickens, several cats, and all the dogs of the neighbourhood. It was decorated with calendars for years past, advertising various firms and depicting such unpleasant subjects as horrid smug little boys, in velvet suits and lace collars, presenting stiff bunches of flowers to equally smug little girls, with yellow curls and large pink sashes. There was one lithograph which particularly fascinated us—Grace Darling, apparently at twelve years of age, with her hair flowing, rowing a dingy over an enormous breaking sea, such as was never seen by any living man!

We were surprised to find the town lit by electricity, and apparently possessing a sewerage system. That the latter was but an illusion we

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discovered later, when we found out that the very objectionable smell in the dining-room came not from dead rats, but from a large open pit just outside the door, into which emptied all the drains of the house. That was all right so long as the weather was dry, but after heavy rains the water table rose and then the result was awful. We had read of wonderful perfumes that could be smelt for miles off shore, and we found that there was indeed a powerful odour along the water-front at night, but, far from seeming to rival the products of Coty or Piver, it was rather one to give hysterics to an American health officer.

The correct thing for all visitors to do is to visit the market-place at 5 a.m. to see the fish and native food stuffs. Here the servants of the town and the natives gather to buy fresh provisions for the day. If they arrive late, then the household must go without fresh meat and vegetables, as there are no shops for the sale of these commodities. Here also is the clearing house for the gossip that is just as much a necessity to the various families as fresh food, and the servants glean all the tit-bits they can with which to regale their mistresses. No happening is too insignificant to be discussed in all its aspects,

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and no one's affairs are sacred ; the whole town knows of any peccadillo almost before it has been committed. Since it is a small community, local society is divided into cliques, harbouring very bitter feelings towards each other, and in the cliques themselves the families quarrel in a most confusing manner ; many of these quarrels would die out from sheer inanition were it not for the morning gossip in the market-place, where the servants give them new life by retailing the remarks of their respective households.

One day we thought we would like to go to a nearby beach for an all-day picnic, to sit under the palms and to have a swim. So we arranged with the hotel keeper to put up a lunch and find us a horse and trap so that we could come back early or late as we pleased.

The hat-rack that was supposed to be a horse was attached to a four-wheeled vehicle which looked most unsafe. The wheels were of very independent temperaments, each sloped from the axle at the angle which pleased it best, and in various places, where one generally sees tightly-screwed nuts, there were pieces of fencing wire. However, we judged by the appearance of the animal that even though the trap

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fell to pieces around it, it would stand still and merely look resigned. The harness was chiefly gaps where the most essential straps and buckles should have been. Fortunately the road we were to follow was flat, so the lack of breeching did not matter.

We started and, to our surprise, the horse actually managed to trot, so perhaps it was thin from choice and not from starvation. Our destination was only five miles away, but we had to stop at least once a mile to re-fasten various bits of string and wire which held the harness together. After the first two stops, we decided that it would be wiser to go the rest of the way at a walk, much to the horse's surprise. It, poor brute, was accustomed to being driven by natives, who, without exception, are most abominably inconsiderate and cruel to animals. They go at full gallop until their beasts cannot gallop any more.

The road, with the mountains on each side, was beautiful to the eyes; at first little houses, each embowered in a garden of brightly-coloured plants; then occasional glimpses of the sea through the cocoa-nut groves, while on every side grew enormous trees, casting a welcome shadow over the hot and dusty road; and every few hundred yards we crossed

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tumbling streams over which were flung rickety wooden bridges.

At last we arrived at a lovely bay, with a steep cliff rising from the sea at one horn, cutting off the view on that side, while on the other we saw a succession of bays sweeping in towards the road we had followed.

The beach was black—a curious thing in a land of coral sand—and on it broke big, slow combers, which, fringing the deep blue waters of the bay, made a happy contrast with the sand.

After untying many knots, we managed to unharness Bellerophon, and tied him to a handy tree. We then betook ourselves into the warm water.

We had driven along so slowly that by this time we knew by that infallible clock which everyone possesses, that lunch-time had arrived, so we dressed ourselves and investigated the luncheon baskets with appetites like those of crocodiles.

Naturally we expected to find a packet of sandwiches and, perhaps, some cold ham, and we were staggered at what we saw as we unwrapped plate after plate of eatables.

First of all, we came upon FRIED EGGS AND BACON!! As these had been cooked two hours

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before, imagine how appetising the plateful looked, especially as the eggs had burst ! Then came string beans (*very* stringy ones). These were followed by fried steak, with tomatoes and potato chips. We then discovered a salad, which raised our drooping spirits, only to tumble us deeper into despair when we discovered that train oil was evidently the favourite salad dressing. Lastly came a *paw paw* pie, and if it had only been four times as large we should not have returned so hungry as we did.

To wash all this down there were two bottles of wine and two of lager beer. We imagined that it was supposed we would have cursed the horse and trap so much that we would need to see life in a roseate alcoholic glow before we could face the drive home.

We found the town very hot and not particularly interesting, so we decided to try to hire a small sailing boat and pay a visit to Moorea, the island where we now live, which rises from the sea in such a strange line of mountains and with such marvellous play of light and shade that one cannot believe that it is real and will not gradually recede as one advances towards it. More unbelievable still, the closer one gets the more lovely it appears.

SOUTH SEA SETTLERS—

We found that there were no yachts or suitable boats to be bought or chartered, so we ordered a small centre-board sailing boat to be built for us, and managed to get delivery of her in three weeks, which was considered a record for this slow-moving country. We haunted the builders' yards from morn till eve, helping the job along and seeing that the workman was not taken off on other work, until the builder must have hated the sight of us. At last we got her launched and rigged, and went for a trial spin.

While we were waiting for the boat to be finished, we had arranged for a house on Moorea, which lies fifteen miles away from the capital. J. would have liked to have sailed the little boat across the strait, but, to the great thankfulness of B., he was repeatedly warned not to attempt it, as, when there is a strong breeze, a nasty short sea soon gets up. We arranged with a motor cutter to tow us across the strait in the early morning before the wind made. B. was so rash as to believe J. when he assured her that she would be far more comfortable on a rug and cushions in the bottom of the little boat than among the native passengers on the cutter. How she regretted her blind confidence before we had been out half an hour! The waves looked like



Our first boat

70 1941
1941 1941

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mountains, and when the tow-line tightened up with a jerk, as it did every few minutes, the awful void under the diaphragm was like nothing that she had ever experienced before. She soon gave up the struggle and was frankly sick, then subsided limply on the bottom boards, with the awful knowledge in her heart that if we shipped a sea she would have to sit up and bail. Three-quarters of the way over we ran into a nasty rip, and it did not add to her peace of mind to hear J., who was steering, talking to himself in this strain :

“ Holy Smoke, that ’s a nasty curly one ! Why don’t those blighters slow up ? They ’ll tow us under. Thunder, that ’s a big one ! ”

And then came the rain. However, by that time she did not care what happened. When we arrived, a poor bedraggled figure crept ashore, longing for some food, a hot bath and a comfortable bed. Alas for her hopes ! The food offered was curry, which she loathes above all else. There was not a single bath in the village, the stream serving for ablutionary purposes for the whole population ; and as for the bed, the key of our house could not be found, so B. sat in a woebegone attitude on the steps and felt she would like to weep, while J. and another

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man made enquiries through the village as to the whereabouts of the key. It was never found, and eventually we had to break in through a window. What an introduction to the so-called romantic South Seas!

We had been told that our house was only furnished to the extent of beds, chairs, tables, and a few cooking utensils, so before leaving the capital we had obtained what we thought would be necessary. We had bought four of everything: cups, spoons, plates, etc., all of different patterns. Our idea was to stay, say, three months, pottering about with our boat and enjoying a restful time, to see if the climate and life generally suited us, and, if so, to buy a piece of land and build a small house.

Arrangements had been made for a native woman to look after us. Mahini, a native who spoke good French and fair English, brought her along to be inspected, assuring us that she was a good cook, and was the only woman in the group who not only lived in perfect respectability, but was not even suspected of a past. We naturally christened her "Katherine of Aragon." After this recommendation we got rather a shock when one day she spoke of her baby. However, we found that it was an adopted

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one. In this country there is hardly a woman who keeps her own children, adoption being the general custom. The natives adore children as children, but apparently have no greater feeling for their own offspring than for those of other people. There are several eager applicants for every child that is born, which is a very fine thing, as most of the children are illegitimate and would, of course, be more or less outcasts in any other country: whereas here they will never feel that they are not as others. Another result is that there is no need for any girl to try to destroy her child, either before or after its birth, as she knows someone will be only too glad to take charge and possession of it.

Katherine was a good old soul, but, as B.'s previous housekeeping experiences had consisted of occasional orders to the stores, tinned beef stew and fish were the main part of our diet. One red-letter day we caught a wild chicken, under Mahini's supervision we must confess, and were thrilled to the marrow, though it certainly was slightly tough.

Katherine stayed two months, and then departed to a neighbouring island to look after some property she had there. She was replaced by Ah He, who was an excellent cook, and scoured the country for

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chickens and ducks, and fed us really well. He knew about fifty English words, many of them unprintable, and about six French ones. B.'s orders were wonderful, as can be judged from the following :

“ Ah He you boilu ess allee same caillaux,” the translation being “hard boiled eggs.” If soft boiled eggs were wanted, then it was necessary to say, “Boilu ess no allee same caillaux.”

The finest sentence of the collection was this : “Makee potato allee same salmon sauce no puttee salmon,” which means “potato croquettes.” Sauce was the nearest he could get to rissoles.

Our house was built according to the popular plan, which was to have two stuffy little rooms opening into one another by a doorway without any door. A seven-foot verandah ran all round, so that the rooms should be as dark as possible : the whole surrounded closely by high ornamental shrubs to encourage mosquitoes and keep out the air. The verandah at the back of the house was extended into a dining-place, the sides of which were filled by movable lattices. It was a very unpleasant place on wet, windy days, when the rain drove half-way across the floor. The cook-house was about ten feet away at the side of the house, so that all the food was

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cold before it could reach the table. Of course, this would not trouble the native owner, even if he lived in his house, as food hot or food cold is all the same to him. The sides of the cook-house were built of slats, just far enough apart to allow a cat to enter easily, a fact which we did not realise until we lost a beautiful fish which was destined for next day's lunch. Then we grasped the fact that all the cats in the neighbourhood were making our cook-house a meeting-place, so J. vowed vengeance. He made a cat trap out of a kerosene case, and in it we caught seven cats in ten days. R.I.P.

Having got rid of the cats, we hoped for a little peace. But that was before we made the acquaintance of the minahs, birds which were introduced to eat the wasps, of which we shall speak further on. These wretches had a passion for butter, and would come and dab at the dish right under our noses. We could not leave a jug of milk or a banana on the verandah without hearing a most infernal screaming, and finding at least half a dozen birds fighting over it. J. kept a pile of handy little stones just inside the door, and at the first sound rushed to give battle.

This is a country of few pests, but there is one

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that we met for the first time in this house. WASPS. Big, yellow fellows that hibernate by thousands in any quiet place, behind a picture, in a drawer, and especially in any place where the timbers of the house do not fit well—and in a house built by native carpenters there are lots of gaps. During the hot sunny days from June to August, which is their mating season, these insects come out of their hiding-places and fly about the house in swarms. If they would only keep flying it would not be so bad, but they drop to the floor and crawl about, and then fly again. If, by any chance, one happens to step over a wasp as it rises, well—

There was a young woman called Myrtle
Who waddled along like a turtle,
She skipped like a ram,
When stung on the ham
By a wasp that crept under her kyrtle.

They are horrible creatures with long dangly legs, and make a beastly row when they fly. They made our lives a misery from one till three o'clock every sunny windless day for weeks. We started a campaign against them, and smoked out all the hiding-places we could find, which meant that they merely retired to rest elsewhere and came back to the house during the afternoon.

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We then decided to try to get some amusement out of them, so we instituted wasp tennis. J. made two ping-pong racquets, and we tried who could swat the most on the wing. We stood about ten feet apart and slammed the wasps at each other, and whoever squashed the most under foot won the set.

There were two sewing machines on the verandah, and one day B., being naturally inquisitive, started to examine them. She lifted the cover, then dropped it with a yell; it was just solidly filled with wasps. Then we looked in all the machine drawers and found the same state of affairs. We looked at one another and realised that the great moment had arrived. It was night. We brought the bath tub on to the verandah, lit a fire in it, then very gingerly drew out the drawers and emptied the sleeping wasps on to their funeral pyre, and danced in triumph around it. After the holocaust, we gathered up seven shovelfuls of roast wasps.



THE village consisted of about fifty houses, spread along either side of the road. They were wooden houses of varying sizes, but all built on the same plan as the one we inhabited. Behind each house of European style was a native hut in which the proud proprietors lived, the real house being for show, and not to be desecrated by use. They all contained beds with enormous kapok mattresses, large gilt-framed mirrors, generally several wardrobes, and at least one sewing machine that would not sew.

We went to one sale of household goods, and were amazed to see the china and glass that had been bought by the late owner. He had built a large house, furnished it, then, deciding that it was far too fine to dream of using, had shut it up: and now the contents were being sold by his heirs.

It was most amusing to watch the eager crowd

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of bidders, all natives or Chinamen. The former paid ridiculous prices for such articles as champagne glasses, but despised plain, white plates, which we bought very cheaply to eke out our scanty stock.

Katherine of Aragon bought a large cruet: a horrible nightmare of tortured glass and gilt, for which she paid a month's wages. We afterwards saw it standing in solitary grandeur on the table in her house, which stood with doors and windows open all day, so that passers-by could admire her new possession, while she squatted in a cocoa-nut hut at the back and watched her neighbours pass.

A road encircles the island, generally running parallel to the sea. A few yards distant from the water, following the foot of the steep hills which rise close to the beach, palms and trees grow thickly, with the result that, where the shore sweeps out in a low-lying promontory and the road still clings to the foot of the hills, the thick vegetation cuts off the breeze from the sea and the heat becomes suffocating. Unfortunately for us, our house was situated on one of these inland bends, with thick bush between us and the sea, and, as the roof of the verandah was of unlined galvanised iron, it

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became almost untenable in the afternoon. In the evening a cool breeze swept down from a large valley at the back, so the nights were beautiful.

All along the road grew beautiful trees and shrubs. Every little house had a garden planted with hibiscus and cadiums. Here and there frangipanni trees scattered a carpet of fragrant yellow flowers, then a little farther on a poinciana shaded the road and caught the eye with its marvellous mass of scarlet blooms.

Everywhere grew cocoa-nut palms, and bread-fruit trees spread their large, deeply-divided leaves and dropped over-ripe fruit—the size of small melons—at the foot of the unsuspecting passer-by, while kapok trees in many places spread their spindly arms.

If one wandered a mile or so from the village, a great cool mango grove bordered the road, in the summer making it horrible with a carpet of rotten fruit, needless to say to the great satisfaction of the pigs and fowls for far around.

Near our house ran a pretty stream, crossed by a bridge, under which was the village bathing and laundry place. There one would see women all day long squatting on their haunches, while they

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gossiped and occasionally soaped a garment, which they proceeded to beat with a stick, and then to scrub with a coarse fibre brush, to the utter destruction of any fine lace or embroidery.

Every evening the whole population came in groups to wash off the fatigues of the day, and, though the water was cold, there everyone would sit exchanging the latest news.

This stream was full of prawns, enormous things. Sometimes at night we would take a lamp and a small spear and, wading in the cold water, turning our ankles on the slippery rounded stones, we would lure them to their deaths in the following manner :— We walked slowly in the bed of the stream, keeping the lantern near the water, so as to illuminate the bottom. Suddenly we would see two emeralds lying by a stone—the eyes of a prawn gleaming in the lantern light. Cautiously, J. would grasp the spear and, while the unsuspecting animal gazed fascinated at the light, would treacherously stab him in the back.

The first sight of the natives had been very disappointing, the European clothes masking the really fine physique of the men, while the unwieldy bulk and dreadful teeth of the women distracted

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our eyes from their sometimes really handsome, heavy features.

We had heard so much about the beauty of the women that it was a shock to see them as they were in their shapeless clothes and stiff-brimmed native hats, and it was not until we saw them bathing in the stream, with a piece of cloth draped carelessly around them, that we could see any comeliness at all. Among the half-caste families we later knew many pretty girls, the white blood refining the coarse features of the native, though as they grow older even the fair types become gradually darker in complexion and lose much of their refinement of feature.

Morally, the native blood is much stronger than the white, and, even when in so slight an amount as physically to be practically imperceptible, it still causes the possessor to "go native" at the earliest opportunity.

Our first realisation of this came when we saw a girl we knew, three weeks after her return from Australia, where she had been living for eight or nine years. This girl had about one quarter native blood, although physically it was hardly noticeable, and she was apparently purely white in all her

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thoughts and habits. When we saw her again she was barefooted, dressed in the modification of the Mother Hubbard that all the native women wear, squatting on her heels, eating her food with her fingers, and perfectly happy. Afterwards we found that this reversion to native habits was practically universal, except in a few rare cases where the women had married white men who insisted on having European households.

The men are rarely handsome in the face, the features being too coarse and heavy, but physically they are magnificent, with enormous shoulders, chests like barrels, and fine legs. They are very hairless people, except for a thick growth on their heads. The muscles are not prominent as they are in a powerful white man, but ripple under the smooth skin like those of some fine animal. They are nearly all disfigured by the scars left by old sores, and many are blotched with white patches of tinea.

What a tragedy it is that the missionaries have no eye for beauty, and, thinking of the body only as an incitement to sin, have forced the natives into white men's clothes, which to them are most unbecoming and are also unhealthy! If a native

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gets wet through at the beginning of the day's work he does not change into dry clothes, but keeps on the wet ones all day, and in this way many fall victims to consumption. Had the missionaries only left them their native garment, which would dry on their bodies in a short time, how much sickness they would have been spared !

Fortunately, not even the missionaries have been able to induce them to wear pyjamas at night ! Or perhaps it is that the missionaries disapprove of pyjamas and wear nightshirts themselves, and so tolerate the wearing of the more nightshirt-like *pareu*. Whatever the reason, two yards of printed cotton, hitched round the waist and hanging to the knees, is fashionable dress from 5 p.m. to 5 a.m., and this garment, at any rate, displays the fine points of the native to advantage.

They are a cleanly people, in that they bathe themselves every day ; but their heads are infested by parasites and their houses by fleas and lice. They are quite indifferent as to what their feet touch, and will cheerfully walk through any filth.

They have a smile and a cheerful greeting for all the world, and during all the months we lived in the village we only saw one fight. They are not

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a quarrelsome people unless they have been drinking, and then everyone fights everyone else, and the village is full of men with black eyes and broken heads.

New-comers are objects of great interest, and stray natives used to drift up to the house with a bunch of fish or a reef lobster (for which they would refuse to take any money), grin cheerfully and drift away again. Later, of course, we were expected to make a return gift, such as a tin of salmon or beef; and so the advantage of giving and receiving presents became very one-sided, the native bringing something which had cost him nothing, and the poor white man having to put his hand in his pocket and buy presents at the Chinese store: with the result that the gifts received cost him at least five times as much as if he had bought the things himself in the market. The native is a wily bird, and it was quite a long time before the true state of affairs dawned on us. He brought his gift with such an air of pleasure and such a happy look that one was quite taken in, in spite of the words of the old-timers: "The native only gives a present because he thinks he'll get something better in return."

Like all new-comers to the islands, we were

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overcome with liking and admiration for the physique of the natives, their good temper, and their remarkable abilities where any dealings with the sea are concerned. This admiration applied only to the men, as, from the beginning, we regarded the women as lazy slatterns. Probably, if the whole male population were suddenly to disappear, the women would die from starvation through sheer inability to exert themselves. It is true that they do the family washing, and plait baskets and hats from the leaves of the pandanus, cocoa-nut, etc., but the results are all of very inferior workmanship compared with those of other Pacific islands. In many homes the men not only catch the dinner, but cook it too.

The men are expert fishermen, and it is great fun to go on a fishing party with the big nets, which are shot from canoes, while other canoes paddle wildly back and forth with the occupants splashing the water with their paddles to frighten the fish. Gradually the net is drawn around the school, and then all hands jump overboard to seize those fish which have not already leapt like silver streaks over the top of the net. There is one fish in particular (a trevally probably) which it is a beautiful sight

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to see surrounded by the net. As the circle narrows, first one big fellow will leap a couple of feet into the air and dive into safety on the other side of the net, then like a flock of sheep his companions will follow, until perhaps only a third of the original school will fall into the hands of the fishermen.

Fishing with a line is not a very appealing method of catching one's dinner. It generally means sitting in the hot sun and re-baiting the hook as the little reef fish with tiny mouths nibble off the prawn, or whatever bait one is using. Fly-fishing with a bamboo rod in the surf on the outer reef is better, as there one is at least cool, the in-waves keeping one constantly wet.

A fancy method J. once tried is this: Take three white feathers and tie them on a hook like the Prince of Wales's feathers, tie a knot in the line about fifty feet from the hook, hold this knot in your teeth with the rest of the line lying in the bottom of the canoe, then paddle like blazes along the edge of the reef at four o'clock in the morning. Perhaps a big fish will be deceived by the feathers and think his breakfast is ready; in which case the knot is jerked from between the paddler's teeth and he seizes the line and lands his fish: or perhaps

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you will do as J. did—paddle until exhausted and come home with nothing but a pain in your temper and an enormous appetite for breakfast.

Some of the fish are supposed to be poisonous, but after one experience we are inclined to be sceptical. A large piece of fish was sent to us one day, which when duly cooked proved to be most delicious. We thoroughly enjoyed it. About two hours after lunch was finished we received a note from the donor, sent round post haste, telling us that we must not eat the fish on any account, as the natives had told him it was poisonous, and that he had tried it on the cats and a pig, all of whom at once became seriously affected. This was a nice state of things, and we felt very nervous for about another hour. Then, as no unwonted symptoms had declared themselves, we felt happy once more.

On making enquiries we found that it had been the entrails that had been given to the animals, not the flesh. This probably accounts for the poisonous effects of certain fish on the natives, who adore all those rich, oily, internal organs, which we never eat.

Towing a line behind the schooners on the way

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to and from Papeete is seldom wasted effort. We have seen many fine fish landed in this manner. The local captains nearly always tow a line. One day we were talking to one of them. "Well, Jack, did you catch any fish to-day?" Jack is almost white and speaks very good English. "Well, you know, I caught one, but it looked like one of those poisonous fish, so I gave it to a native." We never heard what the native thought of his generosity.

There is one delicious crustacean here, which is known to English-speaking people by the unpleasant name of "sea centipede." It is really a squilla, and is without exception the most delicious sea food that we have ever tasted. It inhabits shallow, sandy-muddy bays, living in deep holes in the sand. To catch it is quite a labour. First of all a series of hooks is arranged on a stick about eight inches long, around which is securely wrapped a piece of rotten fish. The burrow of the animal is then located, and the piece of stick, which has been attached to a short line, is lowered into it, the other end of the line being made fast to another stick, which is stuck in the sand beside the entrance. Burrows to the number of the baited sticks available are thus dealt with, and then the procedure is to pass from one

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to the other, flipping the surface of the water with the fingers in order to make the squilla think that there is a fish passing, so that he will come high enough up his burrow to discover the piece of fish around the hooks: as soon as he seizes it, a sharp jerk at the line hooks him and up he comes to meet his death. First the dangerous razor-sharp claws are broken off; then the animal is harmless. These animals are not numerous. There is only one place that we know of within easy reach of the village where they are to be found, and then, of course, the tide must be consulted, as if there are more than a few inches of water over the burrow, the animal will not hear the flipping of one's finger on the water. The squilla live in pairs in the burrow, but, if one is caught, it is useless to leave the bait hoping to catch the other as well, for he (or she, as the case may be) takes warning by the fate of the first victim.

Another delicious animal which the natives are very expert at catching is the clawless rock lobster. These live on the outer reef, and the natives dive down and either spear them with a special single-pronged, unbarbed spear, or else pull them out with their hands. It is a strange sight to see two

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feet waving in the air as the native crawls about head downwards under the water, seeking the wily crayfish.

The natives are incredibly at home in the water, and perform, as a matter of course, what are to us the most marvellous feats; and yet curiously enough they hate salt water, and would never go into it just for pleasure as our people do—in fact, they think that white people are crazy to go swimming in the sea when they could just as well wash themselves clean in a stream!



ONE evening, just before dark, there appeared in our garden a dreadful object in the shape of a half-grown pup. It had evidently gone astray, or been dropped out of a passing cart. It was in the last stages of starvation: it looked like a diseased rat, and was not much bigger. We could do one of only two things—kill it or feed it, and we chose the latter course. The creature was so weak that it could not even scratch the fleas with which it was infested. It was the most terrified animal imaginable, and would not allow us to approach near it; but evidently realising that our intentions were good, it drank the milk we offered, although it was not strong enough to eat anything. A couple of days later we saw a shape crawl up the steps, and this time we were allowed to touch it with the tips of our fingers. That night after the light was out we heard a gentle pattering, and the Rat, as she was now christened,

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crept into the room and scratched fleas all night. We decided that that was not an ideal place for the animal to sleep, so the following evening we managed to lure her into a chicken coop that was under the house. All was well until about midnight, when the air was suddenly rent by the most blood-curdling screams imaginable, those of a creature in great physical agony and apparently overwhelmed by the thought that the agony would probably increase. We rushed out to the coop, and opened it, expecting to find a mangled body; but her ladyship came out wagging her tail. She had got tired of being shut up!

The next day we gave her a bath and, when the covering of fleas was removed, discovered that her hindquarters were quite hairless. However, frequent massage with cocoa-nut oil soon put that right.

A little later another mongrel arrived with a jet black coat, amber eyes, a tail like an upraised sickle, and ears that first stuck out and then drooped over. A truly terrific animal, but full of friendliness and go. It adopted us, and insisted on sharing the Rat's kerosene-box kennel. They were so happy together that we decided that, if the pup would take a bath in good part, we would buy, provided the

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owner would sell. One day Mahini arrived, and the new pup rushed furiously at him, barking and growling. We asked to whom the dog belonged, and found it was his. J. asked if he would sell it, but Mahini refused, saying no one ever bought dogs, but that he would give it to us. J. gave him in return a bundle of locally-bought cigars, which pleased Mahini, although they would have asphixiated a rhinoceros. We christened our new possession Snooper, and never was a dog better named. He was always right on the spot, especially if there was anything doing in the eating line.

In spite of their dreadful appearance as puppies, both dogs grew up as quite respectable-looking plain dogs. From what breeds they had sprung Heaven alone knows. We called them Heinz hounds — fifty-seven varieties.

By the time Snooper was six months old he was a marvel at killing rats and land-crabs. The latter are the equivalent of rabbits in Australia and gophers in California, but fortunately they can only live on flat, low-lying land, where their burrows can go down to the water-table. They are dirty-looking animals, with enormous claws, and make burrows quite as large as rabbit-holes. It is impossible to grow



Two dreadful pups

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any tender plants in their neighbourhood, unless surrounded by a narrow collar of wire netting until tall enough to have the leaves out of the land-crab's reach. Should the collar be too wide, the crabs dig down and come up inside it.

After several painful experiences, Snooper realised just where lay the weakness of these creatures. When attacked, the crab pivots around on its legs, facing its opponent, with its claws raised over its head ready to defend itself. Snooper would feint to one side, and then, as the crab swung round, he would rush in and seize it by one of its legs and shake it, with the result that the leg remained in the dog's mouth. He would continue in this manner until all the legs were off, then seize the smaller claw with the same result. He knew that the enemy was now powerless, so he would boldly take the other claw in his mouth and run proudly along for a few yards with a real smile on his face before he gave the *coup de grace* by crunching his teeth through the body.

Later, when he was full grown, he became a very fine pig hunter. On these islands there are many wild pigs, ugly-looking, razor-backed brutes that put up a very nasty fight when attacked. The natives hunt them with dogs, and when the

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dogs have brought a pig to a standstill, often with several casualties, finish the animal off with a knife. Hound-like mongrels of the same type as our two are the best for this work, as they are heavy enough to be able to kill.

Some of the natives are the proud possessors of rifles, and when such is the case, hunt with fewer dogs, who are only expected to start the pig, not to pull it down. When we bought a property later on, there were quite a lot of pigs up the mountain, and as soon as Snooper heard dogs giving the hunting call he would rush off to help. One day, unfortunately for him, the hunter had a rifle, and in the gloom of the forest mistook Snooper for the pig and shot him. The bullet went in at his shoulder-blade, glanced along his ribs under the skin, and came out at the middle of his back. That cured him of hunting with a pack, and ever afterwards he hunted alone.

We made daily expeditions from the village, either in the boat or on foot, and always accompanied by the hounds. One favourite walk was along a path that wound through mango groves and vanilla plantations, crossing the little stream every few hundred yards, and then gradually climbing the mountain-side through thick forest, until finally it

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reached a wild orange grove. It did not end here, but we must confess that we never got beyond the oranges. We always meant to go on to a bamboo clump that we could see far above our heads ; but, unfortunately, as soon as we got to the oranges J. would be smitten with a sudden thirst, and, of course, when anyone has eaten seventeen oranges, especially in the tropics, all desire to emulate Longfellow's youth has become sodden with orange juice.

With the boat there was one special beach to which we used to go almost every day : a perfect little sandy beach where the cocoa-nuts leaned out over the sea, giving a grateful shade against the hot morning sun, and where the sand sloped gradually into deep blue water. In the cove there was one coral clump which seemed to be formed just to show how many varieties of coral there were. In the water the little fish played in a kaleidoscopic jumble, little blue fish with yellow tails chasing larger golden fish with blue eyes, while living dominoes shyly hid themselves in the branches of the coral from imagined danger. They were all quite tame and swam out to inspect us. We gave them some bread, and found that it was appreciated. After two or three days they would nibble it from our hands, and if

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we came to the reef empty handed, would nibble our arms and legs reproachfully.

The dogs loved the boat, and would not be left behind on any account. Snooper's pet place was right in the bow, where he stood on the little fore-castle like a mascot on a motor-car. He soon became very clever at balancing himself against the motion and heeling of the boat, and dodged under the jib very neatly when we tacked ship. Only once did he go overboard, and it certainly was a beautiful, though unexpected, dive. He came to the surface, honked out some unwanted sea-water, saw that we were laughing at him, gave us one disgusted look and made for the shore.

Near our favourite cove was a small hut occupied by a most friendly native, a magnificent specimen of humanity and a perfect Hercules. He always presented us with cocoa-nuts to drink, and also gave us *carte blanche* to help ourselves if he were not there. We, of course, returned the compliment with cigars, etc. Later we found out that the cocoa-nuts did not belong to him at all ; but that did not seem to matter !

We generally left the village at about 9 a.m., when the daily breeze had made. The wind was steady and from the same direction (east-south-



A lovely bathing beach

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east) week after week—the steady trade wind of the winter season. Sailing was a real pleasure out on the open lagoon, but up the deep bays, under the high mountains, the wind was very puffy and treacherous. One had to handle the boat with great care, and on several occasions we had to lower away in a hurry to avoid capsizing.

We always took lunch and tea with us, and it must be confessed the day was spent very lazily; a little sailing, swimming, then lunch; then a lazy two hours in the shade, with lots of cushions and our books; another swim and, perhaps, some fishing, usually with very poor luck, then tea, and a lovely sail home before the slowly-dying breeze. The sunsets were usually beautiful, and the shadows on the high mountain too wonderful to be described.

By the time we had been leading this life for about four months, we were as much in love with the island as ever, but we both felt that a little work would be good for us. The question was what to do. After serious consideration we thought that we might buy a piece of land, build a small house, and try our hand at growing cocoa-nuts and other things. J. knew nothing whatever about plantation work: he had not even read any books about cocoa-nuts or

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vanilla, but we thought that in buying quite a small place and using common sense we could not come to much harm. Accordingly we began to look for a suitable property. We set our hearts on one place, half-way up a deep bay about two miles from the village. Almost every day we would sail there, anchor the boat, have lunch on the beach, and admire the wonderful view from the site we had chosen for the house. However, unfortunately for us, natives are always very reluctant to sell land, even in small pieces, the return from which would not keep them in cigarettes. This particular property—about fifteen acres in area—had eight owners, though only about half a ton of copra a year came off it, which meant from £6 to £8 a year to be divided among them. We offered the equivalent of £100, but without avail.

Our friend Mahini came along one day to say he had heard that the property next door to the one we wanted was for sale, and, if we liked, he would take us over to inspect it and show us the boundaries. Next morning we sailed over and found it a very desirable little place, although it had been much neglected. It was about forty acres, half of which, however, was up a steep mountain-side, and so was only of value from an ornamental standpoint. On

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it were some eight hundred cocoa-nut palms of all ages, from one year to trees that were in full bearing, many hundreds of vanilla vines running wild, bananas, bread-fruit, mangoes, coffee, etc. It had a water front of over two hundred yards, on which was a nice house site right on the water's edge, with a beautiful view and with fresh water close by.

We at once decided that if we could come to an agreement as to price with the owner we would buy. Mahini volunteered to go over to Papeete to find the owner and ask his price. He arrived back in a very festive condition, just sober enough to say that the man would sell at what we considered a reasonable price. He then collapsed, and had to be carried home to sleep it off. Next morning he appeared and explained more fully. The owner was a French-Chinese-Native quarter-caste, with a name in each language, who had plenty of land on Tahiti, but he had a bill to meet quite soon, and so wished to sell this particular property, which was the only one he had on our island. We packed our bags in a great hurry and went over to Papeete by the next boat. When we arrived we set off to find the man. We arrived at his house, to be told by his wife that he was away for the day and that it

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was her property as well as his, and that she wouldn't sell. This damped our spirits, but they rose next day when the man arrived at the hotel to see us and arrange matters. We went off to a lawyer together to be sure that his title-deeds were clear. We found that, as we were living under French law, a little detail such as the wife's name on a title-deed did not prevent the husband from disposing of the property as he liked, whether she wished to sell or not.

The land was ours, and now we began to consider the house. We planned one of four rooms and a verandah, with another small shanty at a little distance for the cook. We did not wish to sink a lot of money in it, as we did not yet know whether the climate would suit us, whether the plantation would pay, or whether we might not get tired of living on a lonely island with very few white men, most of whom were undesirable acquaintances, and no white woman at all. We drew a plan of the proposed mansion, which we supposed would cost about £300. When we showed it to the local builder, he, after figuring for a few minutes, gave us an estimate of 50,000 francs (the equivalent of £1,000) and a further 5,000 francs for painting. We nearly fell backwards out of his office. As we hadn't got

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a thousand pounds to spend on a four-roomed cottage we felt rather flattened, and wondered what we were going to do about it.

A friend suggested that we could probably buy an old house, tear it down, and re-build it on our property.

A few years before there had been a great boom in vanilla, and all the natives became very rich, though of course only temporarily. They built houses and bought furniture on a grand scale, and, if there was not enough money to pay for it all, they borrowed. That is where the trouble begins for the natives, as they are utterly incapable of saving money against the repayment of a loan. Consequently, as the loans fell due the houses were sold for anything they would fetch.

We returned to our island and made enquiries about houses for sale. We had not long to wait. In the course of a few days we bought two, neither of which had been lived in since they were built some years before. These houses provided all the timber and iron required for our proposed palace at a cost of about £225. The next job was to have them broken and transported to our property. We made a deal with some native carpenters to do this, and a few days later the houses appeared in the shape of large rafts

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being paddled up the bay. One of these rafts had been poled and paddled something over twenty miles, the other only about three.

In the meantime, our old friend, the chief, had agreed to rent us a cottage which he owned on the opposite side of the bay, which meant that we had only a half mile now to sail in the boat to get to the scene of our operations.

Moving from our village house to the new cottage was a great affair. Ah He chartered the Chinese baker's cart for the afternoon, and some truly wondrous-looking cargoes were carried, one consisting of several tins of water, as it had been very dry and the small tank at the new cottage was empty. The road was very rough, and the tins rattled and banged and the water slopped, but finally the last load was carried, and by five o'clock we were installed in our new, and again temporary, home. This time it was very tiny: two small rooms with a narrow verandah front and back, and a dog box where Ah He slept. The cook-house, which was as usual detached, was far larger than the house, and had hanging as an ornament on its wall the skull of a large boar which years before had mauled the chief rather badly.

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There was a fine pineapple patch higher up the hill, cocoa-nuts growing all around the house, and some large bread-fruit trees. The chief told us that these all belonged to us, and that we were to take anything we wanted off them. He did not speak French very well, and was afraid that perhaps we did not understand, so the next day he sent Mahini to tell us the same thing ; and the following day we received a call from his daughter, the village schoolmistress, to repeat it. In spite of the fact that we thanked him and said we would help ourselves, he mistrusted us, and every week would send one of his boys to pick pineapples, etc., and heap them in the kitchen.

We also had some half wild fowls living about the house. We were invited to kill these whenever we wanted chicken for dinner. However, we did not do that, as we felt that this would be taking advantage of his kindness. After we had been living there a few weeks Ah He told him that we had given orders that he was not to kill any of the fowls ; so one day, hearing a loud squawking, we looked out of the window and saw the old man himself wildly throwing stones at fleeing hens until he knocked one over, which he brought in triumph to us. We realised that this would probably be a weekly

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performance unless we assured him that we really would eat one of his chickens whenever we felt inclined, and so we reassured his hospitable heart on the subject.

The morning after moving in, an unshaven ruffian of uncertain age made his appearance. He spoke a little English, and said that he had come to work for us on our new property. He looked such a hard case that J. was rather doubtful about taking him on, but the fact of his speaking English was a great advantage, as J. could talk to him direct without having to call on B. as French interpreter, and we thought we would risk it.

We gave Mahini 100 francs as a present for having helped us so greatly in the search for a property, and he immediately bought a beautiful pony stallion, one of the few nice beasts we had seen here. He was very proud of his purchase, and rode about in great style. One day, when he came round to see how we were getting on, we saw with surprise that he was riding a mare, which was an inferior beast to the one he had bought. We asked him what had happened, and he replied: "Oh, the other was a bull horse, so I changed it for this one." With an eye to future increase, we supposed!



THE first thing to do was to get our land into some sort of order. It was a mass of weeds along the sea front, and farther up the plantation the bush had grown twenty feet high over the young cocoa-nuts. Timi, our new hand, said he would get a gang of men to clear up the whole place. The next morning at six o'clock J. and Timi paddled across the bay in a canoe, with better fortune than we had had the day before. Then we had taken a dreadful old canoe, composed mainly of holes stuffed up with rags, put our kerosene tins on board, and set off to get water from a stream about a mile away. When we were within about 100 yards of our destination J. commented on the wonderful stability that the outrigger gave. The words were no sooner out of his mouth than the piece of bark which was holding together the outrigger forks broke, and we were taking an unexpected bath. We managed

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to rescue the tins, and swam for the shore, pushing the canoe ahead of us, to the great joy of a passing native, who promptly got another piece of bark and repaired the damage.

The workmen were waiting to start when J. and Timi arrived, and soon all hands were hard at it, going at a pace that J. did not think could last an hour. He was wrong. It continued until the job was finished, nearly two weeks later. It was a treat to see the way these men worked; as we afterwards discovered from experience with the Kanaka, they worked at that time because they felt workish; but for weeks, or perhaps months, afterwards, those same men would lie about their houses, and not lift a finger until the spirit moved them again. All the men in this district (about 150), except Timi and perhaps three others, work for short spells and then loaf for months. It is very rarely that any of these natives will work regularly on one particular job, except perhaps at a place where the boss is away a good deal and much tobacco can be consumed.

Timi was not a local native. He came from the island on which we had been married, though he had been here for many years. He turned out

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to be a first-class man, hard-working, trustworthy, and absolutely invaluable to J., who learned almost everything he now knows about plantations from him.

The ground now being clear, we began erecting the house. Fortunately, we had been warned that it sometimes blew very hard at this spot; we therefore put down a cement foundation and embedded the house piles therein. It was fortunate we did so, as we were soon to learn. It took some three weeks to finish the house and three days to knock together a one-room-and-verandah effect about fifty yards distant for Ah He.

There were still cupboards and book-shelves to be built, so we kept on one of the carpenters to do these, and over this carpenter we had our first experience of the lying of the native. The carpenter was getting thirty-five francs a day, which was, unknown to us, ten francs a day in excess of the current local wage for carpenters. These people never dream of telling one if they are not coming to work for the next day or two—they simply don't show up. We did not know this at the time, and so when Pae did not appear for two days, we wondered what was the matter. Timi came to us

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and said that Pae was very ill and couldn't work for a long time, but that there was another carpenter (whom he produced) who would work for twenty-five francs a day. We, unsuspecting any plot, at once agreed to take the new man, as we were in a hurry to get our shelves up.

Two days later Pae turned up again, and was hunted by Timi with apparently opprobrious epithets. The whole thing had been a little plot for our benefit, instigated by the chief, who was annoyed with the first man for exploiting us.

We did not feel inclined to invest 5,000 francs in paint, so the two erections remained paintless as long as they stood, with other people's initials in black paint here and there. Neither of the buildings was ornamental, but their respective occupants thought them quite palatial after the previous habitations. Ah He papered his with old illustrated papers, and the beauties of many years ago gazed at him from the walls side by side with the latest movie stars.

The upper floor of the house consisted of one room, with a verandah, the end of which was boxed in to form a dining-room. Downstairs were a small bedroom for guests, a kitchen used only as a



Our new home

TO THE
ASSOCIATION

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pantry (as we decided that the stove would make the house too hot, and so built a cook-house in the garden), a laboratory for B. with a very large window and a sink with running water, and a bathroom. The sides of the bathroom were only of plaited cocoa-nut leaves and so not really opaque, as the drying of the leaves causes small holes everywhere. This generally put consternation in the hearts of our guests, who were convinced that as they could see out through the interstices, other people could see in. When B.'s mother came to stay, she voted for a tub of water in her room, so every morning Ah He carried the tub and a jug of hot water to her door, and, knocking, said in a loud voice: "Mother, the bath's ready."

The rest of the ground floor consisted of an open space, where all the old boxes, pieces of wire, etc., which J. could not bear to throw away gradually accumulated. Hens laid their eggs in stray cases, and one of the cats even had her kittens there—not to mention the many families of young rats we found. Whenever the mess grew too awful, we simply had to have a field day and tidy up.

Our second moving day was a great event, and

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more wondrous cargoes were transported, this time across the bay in the boat. Cases, a stove, a pig, bedding, all surmounted by some fowls tied by the legs but quite unconcerned, to say nothing of the dogs, made a wondrous picture. The boat could hardly be sailed with this load, so the boom was topped up and J., sitting between two islands of gear, rowed her over. She made many trips, but at last everything was across and settled in its new home.

We were now well into the rainy season, but, fortunately for us, there had been very little rain. We congratulated ourselves upon the wonderful climate of the place in which we had chosen to reside, but the rainy seasons of the three following years soon came to make up for lost time. Four days after we settled into the house the glass fell three-tenths in the course of twelve hours, and the weather began to look very threatening. By 9 a.m. a strong breeze came from N.N.E., gradually increasing to about moderate gale force outside the reef; but our bay, lying between high mountains, was like a funnel through which the wind swept with greatly increased velocity. By now the surface of the bay was a mass of foam, and

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a succession of white squalls, perhaps one hundred feet high, swept past. Our boat was riding bows under at her mooring, and it was evident she would have to be moved. J. and Timi half waded and half swam to her, and, waiting for a chance, slipped the mooring and ran her before the gale, under jib only, to a little cove higher up the bay where she could lie safely at anchor until the wind and sea abated. Our house got an excellent test: it certainly shook and rattled a good deal, but, thanks to the cemented-in piles, it held. The blow lasted two days, and during all this time cocoa-nut leaves fifteen feet long and weighing perhaps fifty pounds were blowing about like feathers; bunches of nuts were also falling about a good deal, so walking near the palms was tinged with risk.

It is a curious fact that there are so few injuries incurred on cocoa-nut plantations from falling leaves and nuts. In our five years of residence here we have only heard of three or four persons being hurt. A cocoa-nut weighing four or five pounds falling from a height of perhaps seventy feet would cause severe injury or even death if it made a direct hit.

Our house and servant's hut with furniture, such as it was, cost us less than half of the price

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estimated by the builder whom we had interviewed six weeks previously. We began to feel rather pleased with ourselves. Our little plantation was now in good order, and the young cocoa-nut palms could once more see the sun and get a chance to grow.

The boom in vanilla, which we have mentioned, was followed by a great blight, which practically ruined all the plantations in these islands. The cause was as follows:—

Vanilla vines should be replanted every seven years. If they are not, the old vines become worn out and susceptible to the disease which is apparently always present on the islands. Here, the vanilla is almost all owned by natives, who, of course, will not trouble to replant, nor will they destroy the first vines on which the disease appears (which would probably control it), with the result that the malady gets a strong grip, and in a few months sweeps through the country destroying every plantation. Before the War these islands produced more than half of the world's vanilla. When we arrived the output was almost nil. After the disease has swept through the country, the vines are all shrivelled and apparently dead, but, if left alone,

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many of them very often re-sprout from the roots and, in two years' time, will have developed sufficiently for cuttings to be made from them and planted in a fresh place.

The vanilla on our ground was in this state, and we carefully considered the question of planting before deciding to do so. The price of vanilla was at that time very low (five francs per kilogramme green), and anyone to whom we spoke regarding the future prospects was rather pessimistic. However, as there was such a quantity of good cuttings going to waste on our land, we thought it a pity not to plant. Accordingly J. and Timi spent several days in the bush, cutting hundreds of green saplings about five feet long from a tree called piti; these were tied into bundles and carried down to the site of the vanilla plantation. Holes were made in the ground, with crowbars, at intervals of six feet, and the ends of the green sticks thrust in and the earth trodden firmly around them.

In about ten days the sticks would sprout, and six weeks later they would have sufficient leaves on them to afford shade for the vanilla vines. There are three things that vanilla cannot stand—sunshine, dryness and strong winds. The correct way to

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plant vanilla here is to only half clear forest land, leaving the largest trees for overhead shade, and to plant under them the shade sticks on which the vine is to grow. In our case, we planted the shade sticks amongst the young cocoa-nuts from round which the bush had lately been cleared, but, to ensure ample shade for the vines, we did not plant them until the piti sticks had attained a strong growth of leaves. We planted them in this manner instead of in the correct one because our plantation was a cocoa-nut plantation, and we did not feel inclined to leave any of the bush standing and so deprive our palms of their needed sunlight for the sake of such an uncertain and low-priced crop as vanilla was at that moment.

The procedure of planting the vines is as follows :—

The best and healthiest of the old vines are selected and cut into approximate six-foot lengths. These are coiled in a ring like rope on a ship's deck until the coil contains about thirty cuttings ; it is tied together with several pieces of flexible bark, and is then ready to be carried to the plantation, with other coils, on a stick across someone's shoulder. The best time for planting is, of course, after heavy rain or during cloudy and damp weather. The

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ground at the foot of the shade stick is slightly loosened with a cane knife and about six inches of the vanilla vine laid on it and covered with some dead leaves or grass, a flat stone or piece of dead wood being laid on top to prevent the covering blowing away. The vine is trained up the shade stick, the top end being hung over a small branch of shoot to keep it from falling to the ground. In a week or two the vine will sprout, and by the end of three months will probably have increased its length by twelve or fourteen inches.

If planted under suitable conditions, practically no vines will die, but, on the other hand, if there is insufficient shade and the ground is too dry, hardly any will grow. We were fortunate in having good weather and healthy vines. Seven or eight months after being planted most of ours were flowering, but we fertilised very few flowers, as we wished to give the young vines every chance of good growth before taking too much out of them.

By the time this work had been completed the weeds were five feet high again amongst the young palms, so J. and Timi had to put in several weeks of strenuous work with their cane knives, cutting everything down to ground level again. There was

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a patch of coffee bushes on the place which gave a crop of excellent beans, so we decided to plant out several hundred seedlings and increase our future output. This was done, with excellent results two years later. Coffee grows remarkably well in these parts, and the bean has an excellent flavour. The bushes bear about two years after being planted, and in three or four years give a very good return; but, strange to say, tons of coffee go to waste every year because the native will not trouble to pick it, quantities of expensive tinned coffee being imported annually from America! The limited quantity of local coffee is sold for about sixpence per pound, at which price there is a handsome profit to the grower: yet there is difficulty in going deeply into the venture, owing to the shortage of labour.

One can put absolutely no dependence on these natives. A man who is working gaily may suddenly feel tired of work at lunch-time and walk off, not to be seen again for weeks. To try and run a mixed plantation on a large scale would be heart-breaking. A small place of twenty or thirty acres is not so bad, as one or two men can generally be found who will condescend to work for a few days at least.

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We found by experience that if there is any big job to be done, such as clearing ten or twenty acres of heavy bush and weeding a large area of plantation, the cheapest and easiest way is to get it done by contract. If the same price is offered as would get the job done by day labour, several or perhaps a large number of natives will club together to do it. They will work like wild men, their one object being to see how quickly they can finish it so as to make a big daily wage and show the others how clever they have been. While the job lasts, they will work perhaps eleven hours a day at top speed, but when it is finished they will lie about and sleep for weeks. Here again it is impossible to rely on them to take on a contract unless they feel "workish."



FIRST in beauty and in usefulness among the many trees of the islands of Polynesia stands the cocoa-nut palm, *Cocus nucifera*.

All around the shores, the palms stand in serried masses, and here and there raise isolated crowns of feathery plumes high on the sides of the mountains, where they have been taken by the agency of man to mark some pass across a ridge or some memorial spot.

Without them the natives would be poor indeed ; they are their houses, food, drink, bank and medicine man. The uses to which the various parts are put are so many that it is hard to decide which to write of first, so let us begin by considering the trunk and then work our way upwards.

The trunk of the cocoa-nut palm is a curious wood. When first cut it is fairly soft, and is made into handsome canoe paddles, the grain being very

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beautiful, and into native drums, which are hollowed out of the trunk and then have the upper ends covered with skin, which is fastened down with *cinet*, another gift of the cocoa-nut, the drums being "tuned" by tightening or loosening the cords. A few days after cutting, the wood becomes astonishingly hard, so hard that it is almost impossible to drive a nail into it, and it is used as piles for wharves, for which purpose it is more satisfactory than any other local wood, as it is not so popular with the *Teredo*. If the stump of the palm is left with the cut end exposed to the rain, then the whole softens and falls to tinder in a comparatively short time.

The great leaves are used for a diversity of purposes, the most useful of which are the roofing and walling of houses. For a roof, about eight feet of the leaf is taken, the leaflets being plaited together; then the midribs are split, the two sides being laid one on the other, and used as a giant shingle, about eight feet long by two feet wide. Each is laid on the rafters overlapping the one below by all but four inches of its width: that is, if the house is to be really well built and meant to last a year or more, but if the shelter is only for temporary use, then the overlap will be very much less, with the result that

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the rain will penetrate the roof in about six months. For the sides of the house the shingles are either arranged as a wall in the same fashion as for the roof, or if economy is being considered they are placed on end, and the leaves, instead of being split down the middle and used double, are arranged like an open book with the edges of the leaves just touching. Walls thus constructed soon become very open-work, as the individual leaflets contract while drying, a difficulty that is overcome by duplicating the wall.

If the builder of the house has consideration for his palms and plenty of time to spare—and time has less value here than in any other place—then, instead of cutting the living leaves, which is supposed to be bad for the trees, he gathers the dead ones which have fallen, soaks them in water and then plaits them. If a roof built of these dead leaves has a steep pitch and is in an exposed position where the sun can shine upon it, it will last several years. Generally, however, the native does not re-roof his house until the rain is pouring in, so he cannot wait for the leaves to fall, and therefore builds with the living leaves. We think if circumstances bade us live in a native house we should deliberately choose

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the uneconomical method for the pleasure of watching our green roof turn brown. The fading of the plaited leaf is one of the most beautiful sights we know. Every shade of green and brown that exists is displayed, and, as the leaves are generally of different ages, there is no uniformity in the fading, and even in the individual shingles the whole range of the colours is sometimes seen.

The exterior of a new roof, when it has been built with care, looks like an irritated hedgehog, the point of each leaflet sticking out from the slope of the roof at an angle of about thirty degrees ; but, alas! the first rain beats down the points and the roof begins to look like a roof.

The leaves also make beautiful baskets : green ones, which are coarsely woven, and only intended for temporary use, to carry fruits, etc., and others which last for a long time, being carefully plaited from the leaflets folded double along their midrib.

So much for lodging and luggage. Now we will consider the leaves as actual aids in the struggle—really too strong a word to use in these islands of the blessed—for existence.

A very dry dead leaf being taken, the leaflets are bent back along the midrib and tied there. When

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night comes and a match is applied, who could ask for a more effective lure to the hundreds of inquisitive fish that lurk along the reef? It is indeed a striking sight to see a canoe come drifting silently in the night with a statuesque, half-naked figure standing in the bow (when the darkness falls the Tahitian forgets what the missionaries have taught him during the day), with a flaming torch in one hand, gazing eagerly into the water, indifferent to the glowing sparks which fall on his bare shoulders and chest, his bronze body and scarlet and white *pareu* lit up by the bright glare, while in the other hand he holds his spear, barbed nowadays by the blacksmith's art; then, as the fish come to see what has caused the false dawn, to see him strike, while the sparks shaken from the torch by his sudden motion sizzle on the water, and the shadowy figure in the stern seems suddenly to come to life and with vigorous strokes to drive the graceful craft after the shaft of the spear which betrays the position of the poor victim of curiosity!

Again as an aid to the fisherman, an ingenious contrivance is made of the leaves, for use against a small sprat-like fish which comes to spawn along the beaches, truly delicious to eat, fried hard so that one

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eats even the heads. To catch these the whole row of leaflets is split from each side of the midrib, still adhering to a small flexible strip. Three or four of these strips of leaflets are tied together, then two boys each take one end of the bundle and they twist in opposite directions until the leaves look like a spiral bottle washer; then more leaves are joined to the end of the first bundle and the "rope" is again twisted. This process is repeated until a great rope fifteen fathoms long or more is lying on the beach. Now all is ready for the fishing. Several people take hold of the "net" and into the water they go, walking parallel to the beach, the foremost end of the net about thirty feet away from the shore and the other curved around almost on to dry land. After a short time both ends are carried on to the beach, the thick, twisted leaflets dragging along the sand, and thus the "net" is hauled, while ahead of it swim the little fish, being swept from their translucent, many-coloured home towards the ubiquitous kerosene tin.

Now that we have caught our fish, still the leaf is useful. Pieces of the midrib about two feet long by an inch thick are split off and arranged on top of the hot stones as a gridiron, this method

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being specially employed when coral is used as cooking stones instead of the ordinary igneous rocks, as otherwise the fish gets a distinctly iodic flavour.

The young leaf bud which is not yet expanded is used in some islands, especially in Manahiki, in the Cook group, to make hats, which are very fine, almost rivalling panama. The thin transparent membrane is stripped off the young leaves to make an ornament called *reva reva*, which looks like inch-wide strips of tissue paper, and is worn on the dancing head-dress.

What a comfort three or four leaves can be when piled as a couch on ground that was beginning to be decidedly unsympathetic ! On that yielding, slippery green bed one lies at ease and watches the tropic birds sailing lazily against the blue sky, with its soft trade wind clouds. Or, if when in one's canoe there is a following wind, then a leaf lashed upright to the forward outrigger bar will send the vessel along at an exhilarating speed.

Do you wish your garden to be swept, or the cobwebs brushed from the corners of the house ? Then strip some leaflets from their midribs, and those ribs tied in a bundle make a broom as good as any birch, and no doubt would be as effective if applied

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to another purpose for which the birch has always been famous.

The great butts make most excellent skids for canoes or boats, or a few laid on the sandy beach will lighten the labour as effectively as the most elaborate rollers.

The nut consists of a large oblong or nearly spherical shell, hard or soft according to its age, which contains a white meat and a liquid, colourless and tasteless when very young, but becoming slightly less transparent and developing a characteristic flavour and sometimes even sparkling like aerated water as the nut ripens. Outside this shell is a fibrous covering, several inches thick in the mature nut, which protects the whole fruit.

To the inhabitants of the islands these nuts are meat, drink, money and medicine. From the fibre is made *cinet*, a plaited cord which is used for many purposes, one of these being to lash the outriggers of the canoes — an expert work understood by only a few men in each district.

There are six varieties of cocoa-nuts recognised by the natives, and named by them according to the colour of the outer husk, the variety which they consider the wild cocoa-nut being green, others yellow

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and brown. The hard internal shell of the nut varies in colour according to the colour of the outer husk, and in lesser degree to the age of the fruit ; thus one finds shells of all shades of brown from the darkest to pale cream, and, when stripped of their fibre and polished, they make very beautiful bowls, which are used for drinking and feeding cups as well as for receptacles for small articles.

The meat of the cocoa-nut is the principal product of the islands, the value of the copra being always gold value, which is a very important fact in the French possessions, while the exchange is so unfavourable to the franc.

This meat varies with the age of the nut, from a thin, soft, translucent jelly, which is given to babies as a food and seems to agree with them, to a firm opaque white layer half an inch in thickness. The latter condition is the raw form of the copra of commerce, and the native turns out the valuable finished article with less labour than any other product, as, once the palms are in bearing, two or three visits a year of a week each to clean the ground of fallen leaves and a few weeds and to make the copra, is all that is necessary. This, of course, applies to a small plantation, say of a thousand palms. The

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nuts are gathered, split in half and placed so that the sun will fall on the meat. The next day, if the weather has been favourable, the meat is rimed out of the shell with a special knife and the pieces are placed in the sun ; the day after, these pieces are cut smaller and still exposed ; then the following day the copra goes into sacks and is sold to some white or Chinese trader. The native gets his money and goes back to his fishing and loafing, for three or four months, when there will be enough nuts on the ground to give him another three tons of copra.

A man with a thousand palms will get about five tons of copra per annum—the rats destroy enough young nuts to have given him another five tons—and that is worth from £18 to £20 per ton in Papeete according to the San Francisco price. During the War the price went to over £30 per ton. So you can see a man gets a very high return for his two or three weeks' work a year. Most of the copra one sees is very poor stuff, as the same price is given for good or bad, and the native has no incentive to make it carefully. In some other parts of the world, notably the Philippines and Guam, strict laws have been passed with regard to the quality of copra offered for sale ; but here the general slackness of life has infected

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even the merchants, and they will buy anything that is offered to them, while the Government does not care how poor a reputation the produce of the country gets, the export tax being paid on weight and not on quality.

The meat of the cocoa-nut also plays an important part in the dietary of the native. At every meal there is some sauce made from it. The meat is grated, damped with water, squeezed in a cloth or a handful of grass, and the result is a thick, white cream, an excellent substitute for milk in tea or coffee or with fruit. Several sauces are made from this cream, salt or sour, and eaten with all foods, pig, fish, taro (*Colocasia macrorrhiza*), umeru (*Impomea balatus*), uru (*Artocarpus digitata*), meia (*Musca*), uhi (*Dioscoria transversa*). Some of these sauces are very delicious.

The husk, meat and milk of the cocoa-nut are all three used medicinally, alone or in conjunction with various other plants, and some of the remedies are effective. Cocoa-nut oil is made by the natives for their own use, and strongly perfumed with some of the many sweetly-scented native flowers and herbs. An extremely powerful purgative is also made from this oil.



Rat-eaten nuts

TO VISIT
ABRAMS BOOKS

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The growing heart of the palm makes a salad of surpassingly delicate flavour, when dressed either with olive oil and vinegar, or the cream of the cocoa-nut and the juice of fresh limes ; and it can appear as an equally good vegetable, cooked like a marrow. Alas! the salad cannot be eaten as often as one would wish, because the cutting of the heart causes the death of the palm.

The greatest and apparently the only serious enemy that the cocoa-nut planter has to contend with here is the rat. They are here in countless millions, and quite half the cocoa-nuts the trees produce are devoured by them. On a plantation where the trees are of more or less uniform growth and the underbush is kept cut, it is easy enough to combat them. This is done very simply by nailing strips of zinc, about fifteen inches wide, around the trunks, but even then one cannot say that the work is over. Occasionally a falling leaf will catch on some small projection of the tin and strip it from the tree. The rats must have a most extraordinary system of scouts, for the very next day there will be eaten nuts lying on the ground, not only under the tree that has lost its piece of tin, but under many of the surrounding trees whose leaves touch it. On a plantation such as ours

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where trees of all ages are jumbled together, the problem is unsolvable. Along the shores, where the palms were nearly all in full bearing, we tinned them, but as the palms farther up the mountain came into bearing we could only curse impotently. Not even the music of the Pied Piper could draw a rat from a cocoa-nut palm. Traps catch them, but frequently the rat catches the trap. Cats catch them, but one night a large evil-looking rat came into the room where we were sitting, and when we rushed for one of the cats and showed the rat to it, the rat rose in its wrath and marched towards the cat on its hind legs, clawing at her nose, while the tabby backed hurriedly away ; so we had to kill the brute ourselves—the rat, not the cat, though after such a display of pallid liver we felt inclined to make her the victim. Poison kills them, but what 's the use when there are countless thousands living in the bush and on the rock-strewn hill-side ?

We started a poultry yard, and then every rat within miles licked his whiskers at the thought of the tasty chickens and ducklings that would soon be ready for him. Timi had presented us with a cat, and we, in our innocence, thought that all would be well ; but, like the man who wore braces and a



The happy results of tinning the palms

TO THE
LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

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belt, we thought we would make doubly sure, and so built large runs of rat-proof wire, which was embedded several inches in the ground and rammed with stones. All went well until our first hatch was a week old, then one by one the chickens disappeared. We wondered how they could possibly be taken by rats until Snooper showed us. The brutes had simply made burrows under the wire and stones. We put more stones, only to be flouted in the same manner. At last we gave the rats best as far as the rat-proof cages were concerned, and made little individual boxes for hens with chickens, and shut them up every night, which was a great nuisance in wet weather, as then, through sheer perversity, the chicks would decide to stay up a little longer than usual. They were bad enough, but oh, the little ducklings! They never wanted to go to bed at all, and sometimes we would have to go and chase the little wretches at intervals of half an hour, trying to get them home, until eight o'clock at night, and generally some wise rat would manage to get one of them. We started with eleven ducklings and ended up with two ducks!

We used to buy old grain and rice for the poultry, and the storage of the sacks was a serious problem. We built a covered platform five feet from the ground

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and nailed tins around the legs. Our time and labour was almost wasted, as occasionally some Douglas Fairbanks of a rat would manage to get up; however, a trap usually settled his hash.

Our house had an air space between the ceiling and the iron, and here the rats held all their balls, descending on to the dining verandah for supper, when they ate such dainties as the rope by which the hammocks were swung. One day, glancing casually at the eaves, B. saw a piece of cloth sticking out. Our curiosity was aroused, and we got the ladder to investigate. By the aid of a hook on a stick a nest was dislodged. It was made of the following articles :—

Six pieces of kindling wood.

Two table napkins (rather a commentary on B.'s housekeeping that she had not missed them).

Three small tea napkins.

Many pieces of rope from the hammock, cut into neat six-inch lengths.

A piece of red cloth.

Three young rats.

After this we put mosquito screen all around the eaves, leaving a small swinging door so that any rat that happened to be up there still could escape

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but could not return. In this way we got rid of our undesirable tenants for good, we thought, but we had underrated their persistence. We could hear them running around the outside of the wire, clawing at it, but it was well nailed and withstood their attempts. Unfortunately, one day a wasp built a mud nest under the rim of the little trap door, which we had foolishly neglected to nail up, and as the nest was gradually increased in size the door was lifted away from the side of the house, and Mr. Rat was on the spot. So the parties began again. We removed the nest and nailed tin on the wood around the door so that no rat could go out and then, perhaps, be clever enough to open the door for himself on his return. All left except one timid one (the first intimation we had had that a rat could suffer from nerves), which was afraid of the fifteen-foot drop. It must have suffered from thirst just under the hot iron roof, but not even that would make it jump. For the sake of our noses we couldn't let it die in the roof, so had the idea of standing a sloping bamboo from the ground to the door. At last it took its courage in all four feet and we heard it begin to slither down one night just after dinner. Snooper heard it too, and was waiting at

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the bottom of the pole. So died another of our enemies.

Rock melons are a very favourite dish of theirs ; so we find that wire cages are most necessary if we want any for ourselves at all. Sweet corn goes into their stomachs as soon as the grain begins to form, while they do not even despise tomatoes and beans, if these are available.

Kapok seeds left in the kapok (which is generally the case in native-picked stuff) means that one morning one wakes up to find large holes in the pillows and mattresses and one's very best sheets in shreds.

In fact, the only thing that they will not eat (so far as our experience goes) is a special poison prepared with yeast. The poison is probably barium sulphide, as this particular preparation is supposed to be harmless to domestic animals. Whether it is deadly to rats we have been unable to discover, as, although we have tried it many times, the baits have never even been nibbled at, and, to add insult to injury, when for several days we laid the pellets in the kitchen, the cook, who had no faith in our remedies, caught the rat in a trap with a piece of stale bread !



WE thought we would keep pigs, as we found that the local cocoanut-fed pork was the most delicious that we had ever tasted.

Well, "Pigs is Pigs" except in the South Seas; here they are more likely to turn out to be imitation antelopes or seals.

Henrietta was the start of our pig farm. She was a priceless little pig, with a pink skin, white hair, large black spots and a curly tail. She arrived tied by the feet, squealing with indignation, accompanied by the chief and his wife, who brought her to us as a New Year present.

We received her with acclamations and untied her feet, leaving a rope around one leg in case the lady decided she did not like her new home. However, our doubts did her an injustice, for, after a few wild leaps to the full length of her tether, she decided that the opened cocoa-nut that was placed

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before her was pretty good, and also that having her back scratched by J. saved her a lot of trouble, as it was quite a labour for a little pig to go to the nearest tree and rub herself against it.

Ah He was delighted whenever anything eatable arrived at the house without the house having to pay over any money, never realising what it cost in return presents, so he came running out of the kitchen to look at the porker. After a close inspection, he turned to J. and said with a delighted grin: "Plenty good woman pig, no killem, Boss, byemby plenty little pig," which was certainly looking far into the future, as Henrietta was then only about two months old. The question arose as to where on earth we were going to keep the animal. We did not like to leave her tied up all the time, as a pig's leg is so much the same thickness all the way up and down that one has to tie the cord pretty tightly, or else in the morning a porker has gone to bush and left the rope behind it. We certainly did not wish to see our pig, as we had only too often seen natives' pigs, with their unfortunate legs so swollen round a tight rope that it was hidden in swollen flesh.

Timi said: "Leavee allee samee, byemby



Bliss !

THE
MUSEUM

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to-morrow she no go away noe," which meant, "Leave her tied up to-night, and to-morrow she will be accustomed to the place, and when you let her go she will stay near the house."

So we left her tied to a stake, and at intervals through the day took contributions of bananas, which were graciously received. We were also not only allowed to scratch her back, but were invited to do the same to her tummy, the lady expressing her desire by gradually rolling over during the back scratching operation until her tummy was uppermost, and then she would grunt in quite a different note to show her appreciation. Within a few days Henrietta was the tamiest little pig imaginable, and used to trot grunting after us whenever we left the house. She also became a dreadful nuisance in the garden. She only had to see us plant anything to be seized with a violent desire to grub at that very spot. However, this habit of hers was to do us a very good turn. One day B. rashly told Timi that she wanted Teina (his wife) to get her some plants for the garden, and told him the particular kind she wanted. These arrived and, for a wonder, Henrietta did not want to dig them up. Then we went over to Papeete

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for a few days, and when we arrived home, what was our horror to find that, as a great and pleasant surprise for us, Teina had spent a whole day planting roses, of all things, and a few other plants, in crooked rows right across the garden. We didn't know what to do. We couldn't deliberately pull them up and hurt the poor thing's feelings: the only thing was to pray for dry weather, so that most of them would die. Well, the weather was dry, but many of them grew all the same. We were in despair, when Henrietta came to the rescue. She deliberately removed those plants one by one. B. would hear wild cries from Ah He: "Missie, Missie, Henlett eatem the tallee." She would heave a sigh of relief, and watch him rush wildly out, take a rose-bush from Henrietta's mouth and tenderly replant it, while she hoped that it was too chewed to recover, which it always was, as Henrietta believed in doing things thoroughly. Eventually there were only two rose-bushes and half a dozen cadiums left, and we breathed freely once more, as we knew that no native would have sufficient perseverance to replant such things.

However, after this, we decided that Henrietta was getting altogether too "fresh," and so we built



The pigsty



Henrietta

THE
MUSEUM
OF
ARTS
AND
CRAFTS

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a pen for her, where she was supposed to remain shut up, though as a matter of fact she spent most of her time running loose, playing with the dogs. When she was fully grown we shut her up for good, as she was becoming very jealous of the dogs and, if we petted them too much when she was about, would attack them violently. Snooper had by this time distinguished himself by killing his first pig, and so we were afraid that one day Ah He's prophecy of "plenty little pig" would be falsified by Snooper and the Rat. By this time our pigs had increased to five, all of which had been given us by various natives, and all were sows, so we thought it would be a very sound idea to swop one of our sows for a boar. This we did, and, as they say in *The Arabian Nights*, in the fullness of time Henrietta produced five beautiful little pigs. It was at this time that we discovered her resemblance to an antelope. She had managed to get out of the pen and had produced her young in a banana grove near the house. The next day, when she came for food, J., not realising what had happened, shut her up. Just as he shut the gate he was knocked flying by a heavy body hurtling through the air over the gate—Henrietta returning to her family!

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We shut her up with her family in a small private pen, and there she stayed until all the piglets had gone into the pot. Then she decided that she was going to live at the house again, and though we built the pen two rails higher, she still managed to get out; so at last we put five rows of barbed wire around about half an acre of ground next to the garden and let her wander, hoping she would be happy there. She merely waded around the end of the fence and came up the front steps. We would not have minded her about the place, but she was getting savage and was dangerous to strangers. We didn't want to kill her, as she had been such a pet, and so as a last resort (and, as we thought, a certain barrier), we put a rail fence ten yards out into the sea, with the bottom rail touching the water. Still H. would appear up the steps, and we wondered how she was getting out, until one day we found out how it was. She just imagined that she was a seal, swam along the fence a little way, then ducked her head and dived under the bottom rail. After that we gave her away, and, as far as we know, she is still flourishing.

One day some natives came and told us that some pigs were being sold at auction about half a

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mile away. We were just having lunch, but the sale was to begin in five minutes, so off we started with a slice of fried bread and sardines in each hand, which we devoured as we walked along. Of course, as is usual in this lazy land, the sale did not begin until an hour after the stated hour, so we had plenty of time to examine the half-dozen fine beasts that were to be sold. We fancied one which we were assured was a lady of unspotted reputation. We bought her and took her home in triumph. After about a month we began to think that we had been misinformed regarding her virtues, and that she belonged to the ancient order of unresisting females. Timi shook his head over her, and Mahini was called in in consultation. He regarded her gravely, and said: "She makem the little pig," then knelt down, placed his ear to one of her teats, straightened himself and said: "Next Tuesday, I think." He was quite right!

We raised pigs solely for our own consumption, ate the sucklings, and tried our hands at ham and bacon; the latter was excellent, but the former was not very successful. They (the pigs) were an awful nuisance, and it took a lot of Timi's time preparing their meals. On one very rainy day,

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when Timi hadn't come to work, Ah He was on a holiday, and J. lay upon the sofa with a wretched ankle, so B. had to feed them. Not long before J. had suggested that perhaps it wasn't worth while raising them ourselves, but B. wouldn't listen to such an idea; but after that rainy day she sat down meekly with a paper and pencil, and discovered that we had only saved about £4 on what it would have cost us to have bought about the same amount of pork that we had raised.

So ended our pig farm.

There was one unpleasant pig that haunted the plantation and twice put B. to headlong flight. It was a tame pig belonging to one of our neighbours, which had gone into the bush and, having once been tame, had no fear of man.

The law of the land says that one may kill any pig, goat or chicken which trespasses, but, after the deed, the body must be placed on the road and the owner notified. Snooper evidently knew of this law, as when, at last, after several hunts he managed to kill that pig, he dragged the body down the hill-side to the road, then rushed wildly to Timi and barked until he induced him to follow him to the body.

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Snooper had a great range of barks. We could generally tell what he was hunting by the tone of his voice: one tone for pigs, one for cats, one to tell us that there was an intruder in the garden, and one to say he needed help. Land crabs he used to sing to instead of barking at them.

If he called for help we hardly ever ignored the appeal, though we would often find it was to move boulders so that he might catch a mouse about an inch long. On one of the few occasions when we did not go to see what the trouble was we bitterly regretted our laziness. All day, at intervals, he had gone a few hundred yards up the hill and called us. However, the grass was very long and wet and the hill-side covered with boulders and old logs, so we thought we could do without his rat. The second day when he began again we thought we had better go and see what the matter was. To our horror we found him standing over a ram we had got from New Zealand, which was just about at its last gasp. Four of us managed to carry the animal down to shelter and we dosed it, but it was too late. As you can imagine, that was the last time we ever ignored an appeal from Snooper.

Our dogs grew up to be what we thought very

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wonderful animals. Like so many mongrels, they were extremely intelligent. Snooper, in particular, was a constant surprise, and he was the easiest dog in the world to teach. Of course, as a pup, he got into much mischief and called down our wrath upon his head on several occasions, though we must admit that he frequently escaped well-deserved punishment because his escapades made us laugh.

Fortunately, he killed his first duck at an early age. We found him smiling in a heap of feathers, very pleased with himself. It was his first really serious whipping, and it cured him. Never again did he chase a bird unless he was told to do so. Sometimes the chicken for dinner would escape and, to avoid much chasing in the hot sun, we would tell him to catch it. He would pursue the bird, but when he had caught it, he just held it down until we came, never attempting to kill it.

Our verandah, like the rest of the house, was screened against mosquitoes, the doors having a string with a weight attached at the end to ensure their staying shut. The dogs could push these doors open and come on to the verandah, but, of course, they could not get out again. This was a



How the pups grew up

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great nuisance, as Snooper always wanted to rush out to investigate every sound, and being a dog of determined character he would give us no peace until the door was opened for him. At last we had the idea of nailing a short piece of rope on the door about a foot from the ground. The next time he wanted to go off the verandah we put the rope in his mouth and made him back away still holding it and so opening the door. He thought it was some new game, but wondered what it was all about. Three times we did this when he wanted to go out, and then the idea dawned on him. It took him another day to experiment and discover how far it was necessary to pull the door back in order to get through without getting caught, and after that he went in and out in the most casual manner possible.

We tried to teach the Rat to do the same thing, but she refused to learn. She was still highly nervous as a result of the treatment she had obviously experienced before she fell into our hands—it was impossible to touch her unexpectedly without her leaping terrified to one side—and also her ladyship was extremely obstinate and entertained grave suspicions of the intentions of that door. The

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easiest way out of the difficulty was to teach Snooper to play cavalier for her, and without difficulty we taught him to open the door whenever she wanted to go out. Sometimes we would be going for a walk and discover that the Rat was still on the verandah. All we had to do was to say "Snoops, go and open the door for the Rat," and he would trot off and get her.

We had one of the garden gates arranged in the same way, and the fence ran into the sea, so if the dogs were by any chance on the other side they had to wade round the end of the fence, which they hated doing. Snooper would frequently sit and howl until someone went and let him through, so we thought it would save a lot of annoyance to fix this gate in the same way as the verandah door. Some natives, who were working for us at that time, were sitting outside the garden eating their lunch, which Snooper was sharing with them (he would have coaxed money out of an Aberdeen Jew). J. thought it was a fine opportunity to show him off, so he went down and nailed a piece of rope to the gate, called Snooper and said, "Open the gate," which was promptly done with much grateful tail wagging. The natives' faces were a study.

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Great unhappiness came into the life of Snooper when Rat's first litter arrived. He innocently walked towards the door of the laboratory, where they had been born a few hours before, when, to his horror, Rat rushed out without warning and bit him. Poor fellow, he went about looking as though he had only a sixpence left in the world and knew that it was a bad one. His tail and ears drooped at a dejected angle, and he walked as though his legs were about to collapse under him. A black dog can look so much more miserable than one of any other colour.

His great ambition had always been to sleep in our room, but this was not allowed. Every morning he came running in at six o'clock, put his nose to J's. ear and wuffed at him to let him know that it was time to get up: then he had to go out again. This night he was so terribly unhappy that we told him that as a very great treat he might sleep on an old sofa in our room. His excitement was intense, and he made a perfect nuisance of himself bounding around to show his pleasure. Not long after the light was out we heard him go downstairs and then come in again. In the morning J. called to B. to come and look. On the sofa beside

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him was a ripe banana, which he had brought to bed with him in case he felt hungry during the night. He loved bananas, and used to steal them from the bunches we always had hanging up in the yard, but finding them an awful nuisance to peel he used to bring them to us and beg us to take off the skins for him. J. thought that he would like to know the dog's real capacity for bananas, and so one day started peeling them and giving them to him as quickly as he would take them, but after the thirteenth J. got tired of the work and we never knew how many he would have eaten.

Every animal seems to love this fruit, pigs, horses, chickens, dogs, and even sheep. We were unwise enough to think that it would be nice to grow our own mutton, and so spent a lot of money bringing some sheep up from New Zealand. We had great trouble with fences to keep them in, as the big cocoa-nut leaves had an untidy habit of falling down on the fences and, of course, when the weight hit the wire the staples pulled out, and the next thing would be a message to say that the sheep were wandering down the road. They were very tame and always came home without any protest, but it was very annoying all the same. Ethel was

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our favourite, a large ewe with an enormous fleece. We often let her come down to the house, where she used to pester everyone who appeared to give her bananas. It was an amusing sight to see her standing on her hind legs, trying to take the fruit off the bunch, especially after she had been shorn, as we were not experts and left frills of wool in all sorts of strange places. When we bought the beasts, the difficulty of shearing did not enter our heads. We had both seen shearing sheds, where everything goes along at top speed, and we had not realised what an awkward thing a big sheep is to handle unless one goes about it in just the right way. What we actually did was this:—

J. and Timi caught the sheep and held it firmly down on its side while B. got busy with the shears and gradually hacked the wool off the upper side. Then the animal was rolled over, and the same performance took place on the other side. The only creditable part of the operation was the fact that the skin was not cut, but that is simply explained—the wool was left so long in most places that it would have been impossible to have cut the sheep. There was generally a long beard left under the chin, like some old farmer's, graceful tufts

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around each knee and a bustle on the hindquarters, while a fringe of filthy wool dangled along the belly. Only one lamb was produced, and the poor thing's wondering horror the first time it saw its mother shorn was incredible. The mother ran towards it as soon as it was released, but the lamb gave her one look and then ran for its life. No wonder! There was never such an awful looking sheep before as that poor wretch when B. had finished with it!

Our disgust at only one lamb in two years from six fine healthy ewes was great. That and the trouble we were having with the fences made us decide that those sheep would be of more use to the butcher than to us, so one fine day we shipped them off with great thankfulness and swore: "Never again!"

We rather wanted to keep Ethel for a pet; she and Snooper were great pals and used to play together for hours, and we had thought that we would teach her to go swimming with us, like a sheep we saw one day in Papeete. A native came along the road leading a horse to the sea for its daily bath, and trotting along beside was a sheep, which obviously thought that horse was quite the most wonderful animal on earth. It kept

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as close as possible and occasionally got trodden on, but that did not discourage it. When they came to the beach, the sheep walked straight in and swam about like a dog, thoroughly enjoying itself. Then the horse went in and they had a lovely swim together.

Nevertheless, our plan to keep Ethel had to be abandoned. She was an omnivorous feeder and no plant was safe from her. Besides, she was discovered one day coming up the front stairs.

It was a pity that the sheep would not breed here, as the pasturage suited them very well, and they kept in good condition. It was not only ourselves that had had this trouble with them; two other planters, who got their sheep about the same time as we did, also got one lamb apiece, so it was evidently the climate.

Anyhow, we're not going to try again!



OUR island, like the rest of the group, is an old volcano. The crater walls still rise in an almost impassable ring, except on the north side, where they are breached in two places. Here two deep bays run to the low-lying centre of the island. This is composed of a series of small valleys combining to form one big one about four miles long by two miles wide. Round this the old wall still rises in abrupt cliffs, to the foot of which the land gradually slopes from sea level in a series of small hills. The circumference is about twelve miles and, except where the two bays run in, there are only four passes to the outer shores of the island. In the old days these were used by the natives, but they are now disused and overgrown. As would be expected, the mountains slope more gradually to the sea than they do to the centre of the island: many of them, however, are too steep ever to be of any use to man, though the soil is rich and forests grow to the summits.

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The major portion of the central valley was in the hands of a German company when war broke out. It was at once confiscated, and deteriorated very greatly. In the days when it was kept in good order it must have been a magnificent place.

Many streams run through its valleys, flowing out to the bays and forming one large stream in each. Our bay receives the larger of the two, which is navigable for canoes and small boats for about a quarter of a mile, after which the various streams are just little brooks, with deep pools here and there.

These streams are full of large prawns and eels, and we often went there with Timi and Teina, who waded in the water, scooping the prawns from under the overhanging banks in large cloths, the other ends of which were tied around their necks.

Not far from the sea, on the flat land before the hills begin to rise towards the surrounding mountains, there is a large marsh which is the haunt of wild duck and herons. One of our boys is a very good shot, and every little while we send him hunting for us. It is seldom that he does not return with a bird for every cartridge fired, not always duck, but sometimes sea-birds, or else wild chickens, or a very delicious small quail-like bird which lives

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on the grass-covered hills between the wooded valleys. The first time he came back with sea-gulls and herons B. turned up her nose at them, as she had always heard that they were uneatable owing to their very fishy flavour. The cook declared that they were very good to eat, so we decided to risk them. He skinned them and made a Chinese stew, and they were really delicious. Since then all is food that flies.

There are many groves of wild oranges on the place, also plenty of limes, Brazilian plums and guavas, so every now and then we take the whole establishment on a foraging expedition: someone to catch prawns, someone to shoot ducks, the cook to prepare lunch and collect fruit, while Timi dives in the river for oysters, which are abundant and sweet, although very small.

We return home with canoe-loads of provisions. The oysters are placed in the sea in cases, the prawns in the creek in wicker baskets to be drawn on during the next week or so as needed. The birds go into the pot at once, while the oranges become marmalade, and the guavas and Brazilian plums are made into jellies.

One day we went with Timi looking for oranges, which were nearing the end of the season. He led us

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about a mile into one of the side valleys ; we found no oranges, but we did find an adventure. The rain began to fall, real tropical rain which makes one gasp for breath. It began and it kept on. In three minutes we were soaked to the bone and very cold. B. had a dreadful time with her wet skirts clinging round her legs and trying to throw her at every step. At last we gave up the search for oranges and struggled up the steep sides of the valley with the branches whipping our faces, and reached one of the central hills which was covered with stunted guava about two feet high. Here we saw a magnificent sight. We were to the east of a sharp peak with precipitous sides, and down this tumbled two great waterfalls. They were only there for a few minutes after the rain had ceased, as there was no reservoir at the summit to keep them supplied, but we decided that the wetting was worth while, as we had seen such a spectacle.

We now headed for home. Two small streams had to be crossed, which had been only up to our ankles on the outward journey. When we arrived at the first of these it was a raging torrent about twelve feet wide. J. and Timi were both heavy-weights, and both over six feet, so they each took B. by a hand and we started across. The water was

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only a little above their waists, and their weight helped them to withstand the weight of the water that was tearing along, but B. weighs under eight stone and the water reached her armpits, so the situation was not a happy one. Fortunately, she was not swept completely from her feet until Timi had managed to clutch a root on the far bank. As her legs were swept from under her, she was thrown with such force against J., who had a precarious foothold on a rounded boulder, that he too lost his footing, and there we were with all our weight depending on the grip that Timi had of B.'s wrist. We hung there for a few anxious seconds, then the pressure of the water seemed to ease and we scrambled ashore rather shaken.

We had four dogs with us. Two of them got across without difficulty during a slight easing in the speed of the stream, but the third was caught by the current, and we saw him being turned head over heels and bumped against branches. This sight had not helped to cheer us during the few doubtful moments when we hung on Timi's arm. Snooper also saw his companion being swept down the stream, so he sat down and waited until we were safely over. We called to him to come along, and that wonderful

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dog flung himself in as far as he could with his nose pointing up-stream, and he swam diagonally against the current until he reached the opposite bank with his head still pointing up the current.

We then had to cross the low-lying flats between the foothills and the sea. They were covered with water which reached to our ankles and sometimes to our knees. The unfortunate dogs had to swim a good deal and were getting tired, which was a bad preparation for the second stream we had to cross, which we knew would be much wider than the last.

We came to the crossing place and saw a turbulent muddy stream about twenty-five yards wide, and not far below the crossing place a very unpleasant barbed wire fence. Timi started across to see what it was like, and when B. saw that it reached his armpits—though the force of the current was not so great—she said “No thanks,” as she had visions of losing her footing again and ending up on the barbed wire fence. Also the dogs would naturally enter the water where we did, and as they were tired there was a very good chance that they would get into difficulties. The one that had had the tumbling in the other stream was not at all anxious to be the first man in. We walked back up the stream, hoping to find a

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kindly tree that would lend us its aid at a narrower place, and at last we found one, the tips of whose branches reached our shore. B. was very much hampered by her dress and the heavy boots she was wearing, but her anthropoid ancestry came to her aid, and she scrambled like a monkey up a bending branch until Timi, who was waiting in the fork of the tree, grabbed her, and she was safely across. J. had more difficulty, as the branch broke under his weight and gently immersed him in the deep pool below. However, the limb held until he managed to haul himself into safety.

The dogs were swept away down-stream, but got over without any great difficulty, Snooper once more throwing himself in up-stream, showing that the first time it had not been chance, but reasoned action.

When these valley flats are flooded like this, all the cocoa-nuts that happen to be lying on the ground are swept into the streams and so into the bay, where they become the property of anyone who gathers them from the water. B. walked home to make more room in the canoes for nuts and J. and Timi waited near the mouth of the river for the harvest. They came back with seventy-five cocoa-nuts, the canoes just afloat under the weight, and that was all.

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The next morning we were awakened about 4 a.m. by a most thunderous downpour of rain on our roof; it was so terrific that we thought half an hour would see it out, but we were wrong. It went on and on until one would have thought that there could not be any more rain in the skies. By lunch-time all the surrounding flat country was inundated and the bay was the colour of pea soup from the dirty water of the flooded streams. About 10 a.m. the cocoa-nuts from the plantation at the head of the bay began to appear, and J., donning an elderly and tattered pair of shorts and a sou'wester, launched a canoe and spent a profitable, if strenuous, hour, bringing three or four loads of nuts ashore. He was not the only one engaged at this beachcombing job, as quite a number of natives also turned out and carried on the good work. Some three thousand nuts—worth perhaps £12—must have been harvested during the morning.

About 2 p.m. the rain lifted, leaving the hill-sides a mass of waterfalls—a very wonderful sight while it lasted. While we were admiring these from the verandah, a strange vessel was sighted coming in through the pass; she turned out to be an auxiliary yawl of about fifty tons, and was flying the American

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flag. She steamed slowly up the bay until near our house, when the captain hailed, asking us to go off and pilot him into an anchorage. The water still being like soup, the fringing coral reef was not visible, and the master felt a little uncertain about approaching the land. There being about seventeen fathoms of water in the middle of the bay, it does not make a good anchorage for small vessels as, owing to strong winds, a big scope of chain must be given, and it is no joke to heave up seventy or eighty fathoms with a hand windlass. Right opposite our house is a pretty little cove where an anchor can be let go in about seven fathoms, and with a stern line to a cocoa-nut palm ashore the ship may lie quietly and safely.

We boarded the yacht, and J. proceeded to pilot her to the cove. A hand was heaving the lead; he kept on getting "No bottom at twelve," and repeated this cry several times; then he thought he might as well give it a bit more line, so the next was "No bottom at fourteen." One of the deck hands standing by feelingly remarked to a shipmate, "Jesus! It's getting deeper!"

However, the soundings gradually became ten, nine and eight, until finally the order "Let go"

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was given in six-and-a-half fathoms. The yacht's after-guard proved to consist of several Americans making a voyage round the world, with the object of taking travel films. During the yacht's stay we fraternised with her company and enjoyed several picnics and short expeditions with them. One morning we went in the yacht's motor pinnace to some pretty little islets inside the reef, about five miles away, where several interesting hours were spent in watching a picture being made. That night we dined on board and were afterwards entertained with a cinema programme on deck, an appreciative audience of natives collecting on the shore to watch the free show. As some of the scenes had been condemned by the censors (there certainly were some diaphanous ladies), screams of appreciative delight came from the beach at short intervals. We certainly spent a most enjoyable evening.

This was the first strange vessel that had visited our bay while we had lived there, but she apparently set a fashion, as at short intervals ever since we have had visits from yachts and gunboats. One day, while entering the harbour of Papeete in a small motor schooner, J. spotted a large ketch, which he at once declared to be the *Cariad*, a one-time

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well-known English yacht. When we got ashore he eagerly walked along the quay to look at her name, but to his disappointment saw *Fidra* on her stern and a Swedish flag at her mizzen. That afternoon we were having tea at the Consul's, and met there the six young Swedish officers who were the after-guard of the yacht. J. was telling the captain that he could have sworn that his ship was an English yacht well known to him, when the captain replied: "She is the old *Cariad*, which we have bought and re-named." Registration of delight by J. These young men had had an interesting and successful trip, part of their travels being through the Magellan Straits on their way west, where they had picked up some fine furs and other things from the Tierra del Fuegians. We struck up a friendship with the yachtsmen, and J. enjoyed many yarns about ship with them. He was interested in the accounts of the old yacht's seaworthiness and turns of speed on her long ocean voyage. It was arranged for them to visit us on our island, and a few days after our return the yacht appeared outside the reef about 4 p.m. A light breeze was blowing out of the bay, but she made short work of beating in, even under her cruising rig, with main topmast housed and a considerably

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reduced sail area. We boarded her, and J. piloted her into the before-mentioned cove.

We learned that the yachtsmen had partaken of native food, but had never seen it prepared and cooked; accordingly we invited them to a native breakfast. They were not only most interested in the preparation, but were armed with mighty appetites by the time the feast was ready. First of all two pigs and several fowls were killed and dressed—but we did not inflict this part on them. The next thing was the lighting of a fire in a shallow hole in the ground, which had been lined with stones about the size of an orange. The wood was piled on these and fired. When the fire had died away the stones were almost red-hot, and the few embers that were left were carefully removed before the food was placed on the stones. Ah He came along with a rake to perform this job; but Timi, who was swelling with importance before his large audience, waved him grandly away and picked up the glowing coals in his fingers and flung them away with an air of assumed indifference, as though he were performing the most simple act in the world. The oven was now ready to receive the food. The pigs, split in half, fowls, bananas, yams, sweet potatoes and feis (large cooking

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plantains), were now placed on the stones and quickly covered with bread-fruit leaves, on top of which was heaped a mound of sand to keep in the heat.

While this feast was cooking, several native women were busily employed making cups and platters with the leaves of the *Hibiscus tiliaceous*, and arranging wreaths of sweetly-scented flowers and coloured leaves, uncrowned by which it is impossible to begin a native feast. When these important items were ready B. commandeered one of the women to help her squeeze oranges and cut up bananas for rum punch, a kerosene tin full of which was made. It was a most successful drink. Here is the recipe for anyone anxious to try it: Two bottles of rum, six bottles of white wine, one dozen bananas, one pineapple, the juice of twelve limes and enough orange juice to fill up the tin. At the last minute someone suggested that the ripe fruit of the pandanus (which has a delicious flavour) would put the finishing touch, so Timi commandeered a neighbour's horse and galloped off to a tree he knew of about a mile and a half away which was bearing fruit at the moment. By the time he returned the food was cooked, so the oven was opened in the presence of the guests. The sand and leaves were removed,

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exposing the beautifully-browned pork and chickens, surrounded by the several fruits and vegetables ; a delicious odour assailed our nostrils, and while the meal was being taken from the oven some fourteen of us seated ourselves on the grass round the table—which consisted of banana leaves spread on the ground and on which the various leaf cups and platters, and, best of all, pyramids of scarlet prawns, were laid at intervals down its length.

The correct native method of eating is to take everything in one's fingers, and, after dipping each mouthful in cocoa-nut sauce (of which each diner has his own bowl), convey it to the mouth. This sauce is made from grated cocoa-nut meat, moistened and then squeezed in a cloth to express the thick cream. To this is added sea water and lime-juice, and it is most delicious and piquant. Everything from fish to baked bananas is dipped into it. The sauce may also be imbibed by scooping it up with three fingers, from which it is sucked into the mouth, accompanied by a filthy noise which would put most people off their food !

As it was a proper native feast we ate with our hands, but, in consideration for each other, we left out the sucking up of the cocoa-nut sauce !



“ISLAND SCHOONERS.” What romance is contained in these two words ! What graceful vessels with lofty and tapering spars, snowy, well-cut sails, shining metal-work and polished decks, one pictures lying over to the trade wind and reeling off the knots at a rate rivalling that of a steamship.

In the many books we had read of island experiences the trading vessels had always been described as the yacht-like vessels of our imagination. Picture, then, our disappointment at our first sight of these trading vessels. Their hulls are far from graceful ; their masts are generally out of line, the standing gear usually badly set up and pretty shaky, the running gear and sails old and rotten, and last, but not least, the decks—far from being holy-stoned and white—are usually filthy and littered with anything and everything from odd ropes’ ends to rotting fruit, amongst which several burrowing pigs

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are usually to be seen and heard—and also smelt. The native crew lolls around, spitting at short intervals anywhere that happens to be handy but, very rarely over the rail. Another favourite occupation is the frequent blowing of noses (without the use of a handkerchief), so it is as well to look carefully before sitting down anywhere.

When we first arrived, there were two vessels in the port that were a joy to the eye—one a lovely yacht that was gutted to carry cargo, and the other an old pilot boat from San Francisco. To-day one of them is at the bottom of the sea, and all that remains of the other is a few rotting ribs on the shore. † She was left anchored in the harbour until the worms riddled her bottom and she sank at her moorings, after having been in the country three years.

There are some sixty vessels sailing from Papeete, ranging from about 25 to 125 tons. A few of them are able and well-found schooners which make regular and frequent voyages to different groups of islands, some as much as 800 miles distant. Outward bound, they are loaded with stores and trade goods, flour, kerosene, tinned meats, milk, butter, etc., which are in due course replaced by

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copra and mother-of-pearl shell. These few well-found vessels are for the most part commanded and supercargued by either white men or men three-quarters white who have had some kind of sea experience, usually in English ships. They may not be brilliant navigators or seamen, but they know enough to get along with, and have enough sense and judgment to keep out of trouble. The balance of the fleet is a rabble of badly-found, decrepit wrecks masquerading under the name of ships. In any British or American port quite 50 per cent. of them would be condemned, after a ten minutes' survey, as unseaworthy, but in this zone of fine weather and moderate breezes these wormy old craft get a chance to crawl about, though the first hour of a Cook Strait or English Channel gale would finish them off for a certainty.

These vessels are one and all sailed by natives who know just enough to steer within a point or two of a known compass course, and that is all. It is quite a common occurrence for a vessel sailing from island A. to island B. to arrive at island C. instead, or else to find herself back on the original island A. again. One amusing case of this sort happened a few months ago. A schooner set sail



A typical island schooner

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from the eastern side of a large atoll whose lagoon is about ten miles long and very wide, and headed for another atoll about 100 miles away. Of course, the captain and crew all went to sleep. When they awoke in the morning they saw their destination ahead of them, and were very pleased with themselves for having steered such a wonderful course. However, as they drew nearer, the atoll did not seem to look quite as it had last time they visited it. Presently they were close enough to send a boat ashore and ask where they were. Then the awful truth was revealed that they had merely circled round the original atoll and had landed back on its western side !

The gear on these small vessels is generally very bad, the sails in rags and the vessels themselves extremely filthy and crawling with vermin of all kinds. Some wonderful examples of the ship-rigger's art meet the eye. Nearly every vessel has an immense array of stud cable hanging slackly at her bow in the form of bobstay and bowsprit shrouds ; the chain, which is heavy enough to lift her out of the water, is usually set up with three parts of ancient ratline which has probably been there for ten years and only holds together from

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sheer force of habit. The backstays of ancient and well-rusted wire are often set up with very heavy and new turnbuckles ornamented with immense shackles at least three times too weighty for the job—they are there evidently as an offset to the bobstay lanyards! The sheets and halyards are a set of hairy and often stranded ropes, used more often to tie up pigs than for their proper purpose. We have actually seen a staysail halyard unrove for the purpose of tying up a pig just before the vessel left for sea! When the staysail was required to be hoisted half an hour later, the pig had to be liberated and one of the crew had to go aloft and reeve off the halyard again, while someone else refastened the pig, this time to the anchor warp.

We left our island just before dark to make a short trip of twenty miles in this ocean greyhound; she was about ten tons and yawl-rigged, with a motor engine capable of giving her about seven knots. The masts were rather tottery as their shrouds were as slack as skipping ropes; there was no mainsheet (some former pig passenger had evidently claimed it), but on the boom hung an enormous single block capable of taking a six-inch

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warp. When we got away from the land a strong breeze was encountered and our skipper thought that some sail would help: nobody could find the mainsheet, so a clothes-line was rove through the enormous block and then up went the mainsail. The mast trembled over our heads until 10 p.m., when we made our port of destination. At every minute we expected the whole lot to come down, but by some wonderful chance it held on and we got ashore intact.

This same vessel made a marvellous voyage to another island about fifty miles off, where there is no harbour, but only an indifferent anchorage on the lee side. She started away from our bay at midnight with the usual native crew and some friends of ours on board. We had been invited to go on this trip, which was supposed to be a mixture of pleasure and trading. After he had seen the vessel's gear, J. shied like a nervous horse at the very idea of it.

The island was reached about daylight and all hands went ashore, the trade goods were set out on the beach, and brisk business resulted. By nightfall the vessel had loaded several tons of copra in her hold, and the decks had an assortment of pigs,

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several fowls and two canoes. It now came on to blow pretty fresh, and the first thing that happened was that the anchor got foul of a coral head and was lost. Another was let go, but the vessel began to drag, so it was hove up and, after the ship had steamed up to windward, it was again let go. All through the night this business was repeated at short intervals until this anchor was also fouled and lost. After that some pigs of iron ballast were brought up from below, tied in a bundle, bent on to the throat halyards or something, and let go as an anchor!

After three days of trying to hold on, it was agreed that the best thing would be to start back, head wind or no head wind, so the party, augmented by several native passengers, many dogs, and baskets of crabs and lobsters, for which the island is locally famous, boarded the ship and away she started for home, with an eighteen-foot boat towing astern. After getting away from the land and into the full force of the wind and sea, things began to get very unpleasant. The boat towing astern began to fill, and the vessel was slowed down so that a man could jump into it and bail. Unfortunately, the man jumped into the sea, and was only recovered with

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difficulty. In the meantime the boat ran up under the ship's port quarter and gave her such a bang as to lift the covering board and start a crack in her, nine feet long. Eventually someone managed to jump into the small boat and bail her out, and the journey was resumed. An hour or so later the boat began to fill again, so once more speed was slackened for bailing out. Just as the operation was completed, the boat climbed on a sea and rammed the ship on the starboard quarter, putting a crack in her about seven feet long.

Things were now getting serious. The boat was cut adrift to save further damage to the ship, which was already leaking badly. After hours of plugging at the wind and sea, only very little progress had been made: the decks were continually washed by seas; and almost everyone was deadly sick besides being cold and wet. It was decided to keep the vessel away a couple of points and help her with the sails, but no sooner were they hoisted than they blew away, a not surprising circumstance when their age was considered. By now the fuel tank was nearly empty, but, although there was plenty of gasoline on board, a difficulty arose. The tank, which was in the engine-room, was filled by a

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plug in the deck. This was all right in harbour or during fine weather at sea, but just now there was so much seawater coming aboard that if the plug was unscrewed water could not be kept out of the tank. After due consideration, it was decided to make a hole in the tank with a tin opener, so that it could be filled from the engine-room. This was done, and when the operation was completed (by the light of a hurricane lamp) the hole was stuffed up with a rag! Imagine all this while the engine was running! It was repeated several times and no explosion took place, which was a very poor advertisement for the gasoline.

As the night wore on, and still the wind and sea showed no signs of abating, the little vessel pitched and rolled and shipped water, the wretched passengers, human, animal and crustaceous, holding on with every finger, hoof and claw. After some twenty hours of appalling discomfort and considerable danger, the vessel managed to crawl under the lee of our island and, just after daybreak, entered the bay and anchored with her ballast anchor in the cove opposite our house. The party of pleasure seekers and traders came across to seek food and warmth, and never did a more wretched-looking

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gang land on a beach. After coffee, we all went across the bay to inspect the ship. She certainly was a wreck : how she had ever lived through the preceding twenty-four hours was more than we could tell. The pigs and dogs had been landed, the fowls which had survived the night stood about in wretched groups looking like feather dusters that had been dipped in oil. Even the crabs and lobsters had most of them given up the ghost and were shedding upon the air their customary notification of the fact.

At three o'clock in the afternoon the ship was once more got under way bound for Papeete, twenty miles distant. She started off all right, but just at dark crawled back into the bay with broken steering gear. Had this happened the previous day it would have been the end of her ; she certainly was a lucky ship.

As a pleasure trip it was acknowledged to be a wash-out, and when the balance of the trade goods was opened up it was found to be ruined by sea water, so the financial aspect of the venture was also rather unsatisfactory. Apparently this world is still capable of producing a Columbus or a Drake, because this same little ship, manned by the same

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people, has made several trips to the same island since this first one of such horrible memories.

One travels in this kind of vessel, huddled up amongst a crowd of natives and Chinamen, with a collection of evil-smelling, and often bad tempered, pigs tied at intervals about the deck, and large baskets containing ducks bound for market, the baskets generously giving off the accumulated smells of years for the benefit of the passengers. A string of over-ripe fish frequently dangles from the boom above one's head, and the odour of these, combined with the odours of the pigs, ducks and motor engine, makes a mixture which will sometimes turn the most hardened stomach. Horrid sounds, which usually accompany spitting and native nose-blowing, assail the ears at frequent intervals, the pigs grunt and squeal, the ducks quack loudly, and all is merry. When we start for town, the boat calls for us at about 7 a.m. She is usually pretty full before we go on board but, the local vessels being elastic, there is always room for more. At this time of day the breeze has not yet made, unless an extra hard trade wind has been blowing, in which case there will have been a strong breeze all night, and, as a result, there will be a rough sea. We may then, of

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course, look forward to a very uncomfortable trip. As a rule we steam down the calm bay, and in ten minutes are outside the reef, where the vessel gently pitches at the easy swell left by yesterday's breeze.

About four miles away is our first stop: a small village on the edge of a perfect lagoon, which is reached by a narrow and rather nasty pass through the reef. Several baskets of ducks and plenty of Chinamen can always be relied on to come on board here, and odorous strings of fish seldom fail to appear, such oddments as bundles of firewood and long bamboos cluttering the deck still more. The stay is short, and off we go again. Within half an hour we may expect the day breeze and, if it is to blow strongly, plenty of spray, sea-sickness to most, and terrific discomfort to all. Hitherto, every native passenger will have been devouring oranges, coconuts or any old thing they happen to have had with them, all of which delicacies will in due course be rejected again on the deck! If one happens to be leeward of a sea-sick native one stands an excellent chance of being christened, as she (the men are not often sick) will just let it go, regardless of who may be in the line of fire! As a rule we go and sit on the hatch, which is not a popular spot with the

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natives, as, if there is any sea, one gets splashed : but we prefer to be splashed by clean sea-water.

We have about an hour's run along the coast to another village, which is usually the last stop before leaving the island to cross the strait on the way to Papeete. Here plenty of freight is usually loaded, and the decks are invaded by numerous fresh passengers, each accompanied by a bundle of clothes, some new town hats tied up in a handkerchief (apparently the only use there is for a handkerchief among these people), several bunches of bananas, fowls (also tied in bunches, poor wretches), etc. The clothes and hats are stowed safely down below, but the rest of the gear is simply chucked down on the deck, where it lies until claimed at the final port.

We have travelled on a small motor launch, fifty feet long by eleven foot beam, with twelve tons of copra, some three tons of timber on deck, ninety passengers and their assortment of gear, several pigs, and fowls and ducks galore. The vessel was so deep that she struck her bow under the first swell that we met in the pass and filled her deck full of water. There was so much truck lying about the deck that the water could not escape through

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the scuppers, so we carried that load of water all the way! Fortunately, the day was fine and there was no sea, only a lollipop left by the previous day's wind. Had we met any of the frequent hard rain squalls accompanied by short breaking seas, the vessel would most likely have foundered, leaving the passengers to swim for it. There are numerous accidents on these journeys, and it is only because of the mildness of the climate that there are not a great number of sea tragedies.

On fine days, when there are not many passengers, the passage from our island to Papeete can be three hours of real pleasure: but in stormy weather it very often means from six to twelve hours of unmitigated misery—and, alas! stormy weather is the usual thing.



NOW that we had our small property in good order, and the garden around the house looking pretty, J. began to feel that, as the financial aspect of our plantation looked so promising, it would be a pity not to go deeper into the venture. Accordingly we began to look for some more land in the vicinity.

About five miles away were the pretty little islands, inside the reef, already referred to. The smaller of these, about fifty acres in area, was almost entirely planted with young cocoa-nut palms, and, although it was in bad order owing to neglect, a few thousand francs spent in cleaning would have made it a delightful property.

It was owned by a brother and sister who had inherited it with other lands from their father. The brother was anxious to sell, and at once accepted our offer, providing his sister would agree. This was because, when the property was divided after

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the father's death, the whole family agreed that not one of them should sell an acre without the consent of the whole family. Unfortunately, the sister who owned the other half of the little island was determined that land that her father had planted should never pass into a stranger's hands, and she had already prevented the rest of the family from selling the entire estate for an enormous sum. We did not know this at the time, so we became most enthusiastic at the prospect of owning this pretty islet and made plans for a week-end fishing cottage.

Alas! our hopes were dashed when we found that the sister would neither sell her share nor allow her brother to sell his. He owed her some money, and when he became urgent for permission to sell his share, this fact was used as an unanswerable argument. After a lot of talk and several premature rejoicings, we realised that the isle was not to be bought, so we turned our eyes elsewhere.

A short time afterwards we were tentatively approached by one of the eight shareholders in Purehua, the property next door to us, which we had tried so hard to buy two years before. This woman said she would sell her share and thought

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that a sister of hers would also sell. We closed at once at the price offered by us two years before, but, as the franc had depreciated very greatly, we were the gainers by the delay.

We now owned one quarter of the land, and our lawyer said he would endeavour to buy out the other six shares. We knew the names of the various owners, but the difficulty was to find them ; however, letters were sent off to the agents of the islands where they were reported to live.

Buying land with more than one proprietor is a tedious and sometimes uncertain business. As a rule, when a family inherits a property, they do not divide the land among themselves, but act as a sort of private company, generally taking it in turns to make the copra, etc. Any individual can sell his or her share, and then the new owner of that share can either demand a division of the property, or, if it is only a small piece of land, can have the whole thing sold through the court, in which case he can either buy it in himself, or if it is auctioned to a higher price than he cares to pay, he gets his share of the price for which it is sold. As a rule, if one can only buy the first share, the other shareholders sell theirs too, as they realise that they would



Bringing home seedling nuts

(In the background is the fence under which Henrietta dived.)



Ten years later

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probably get less from an auction sale than from a private buyer. It frequently happens that a confiding stranger takes the natives' word for the ownership of the land he is buying, instead of going to a lawyer and making certain of the facts, and then he is surely buying trouble for himself. Suppose that a man buys a piece of land from two natives, who assure him that they are the sole owners. He pays them the price and settles down to enjoy his property, but before long another claimant will arrive, then another, and to each of these he will have to pay the price over again without any recourse whatever on the first two swindling natives. Sometimes the shareholders to a property number as many as forty, and on some islands the whole population has a share, so there are infinite possibilities in the game! Even when some of the shares have been bought it is occasionally necessary to wait for years before it is possible to put the land through the court, as every single shareholder must be communicated with before this can be done. Sometimes an owner will die before the matter is settled, and then affairs are even worse than before, as all his children at once become part-owners, and infinite delay results.

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We knew that we should have to possess our souls in patience, and were delighted to receive an invitation from some friends, the Consul and his wife, to spend a couple of months with them on their beautiful atoll about thirty miles away. They were taking over a large gang of workmen to erect some coral-cement houses on the plantation.

A vessel of about sixty feet over all was chartered to take us across. The enormous quantity of building material and stores was eventually got together. It looked a frightful load for so small a ship, so J., knowing native methods of stowing cargo, offered to be stevedore and superintend the job.

The sorting and loading began about 8 a.m., and by 4 p.m. the vessel looked about as deep as she should look. Shortly after this four tons of yams and sweet potatoes arrived, most of which had to go on deck. By the time they were stowed it was dark, and the vessel, which trimmed by the stern a good deal, had the deck just awash aft. J. had very little confidence in the situation, but as we were to tow a brand-new twenty-eight foot whaleboat, he said: "I put my faith in her if the ship meets any weather and begins to get nasty." At midnight thirty-two persons, to say nothing of the

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dog, embarked and we got under way. The ship was so deep that the man at the wheel was standing on a bag of yams to keep his feet out of the water!

It was a perfect night, and very smooth outside the pass. The vessel behaved better than J. had expected—she was evidently accustomed to being dangerously overloaded.

About half-way to our destination, at 2.30 a.m., the wind freshened, bringing a jumpy sea on our quarter. The whale-boat astern began to climb up over our counter, and looked like breaking her tow-line. J. suggested that it was time to do something about it; but our captain contented himself by saying: "Yes, I think we will lose that boat." Our host then dug out some of his workmen, whom J. took in hand. They bent on a second tow-line and gave the boat plenty of slack, so that she towed more easily. The ship's crew, with the exception of the native captain at the wheel, were all asleep, and so, when J. suggested that the pump should be tried, as the ship, being so deep, was sure to be making some water, the suggestion fell on unsympathetic ears. When he saw that there was no chance of the ship's company taking an interest in affairs he spoke to our host, who at once got

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some of his men and, after a confab with the captain, the pump was primed and work started. It was as well that this was done, as the vessel was leaking pretty badly, and we had two tons of flour low down in the hold. If this had got wet it would have been looked on as rather a good joke by the crew, but to the owner would have seemed the reverse of amusing. By the time the ship had been pumped dry the dawn was just breaking, and a sharp look-out was kept for our atoll. At about 5.30 some cocoa-nut palms were seen sticking up out of the sea, so we knew we were only a few miles away.

There is no entrance into the lagoon of this group of islands, but on the west side is a fairly good anchorage in about eight fathoms, close to the reef, which is steep-to. The prevailing wind is off shore, so a line was taken to the reef and the vessel was warped close in.

The new whaleboat now came into action : about twenty of us climbed into her and were rowed close to the coral shelf. At the right moment the oarsmen gave way, and over we went on the top of a sea and into the lagoon. Inside there was a narrow and tortuous channel, between the coral heads, which led to the site of the houses. Through

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this we threaded our way against a strong current. The water was only about five feet deep, and teemed with fish of every imaginable colour. We soon got ashore, and half an hour later were sitting down to a most welcome cup of coffee.

After a short smoke and a rest, we went to the beach to receive and sort out the miscellaneous cargoes which were being brought ashore : roofing-iron, flour, case goods, bedding, carpenters' tools, timber, fresh vegetables, ice, all in the most frightful conglomeration. We had a busy day.

About 4.30 p.m., when the ship was almost discharged, a chair was found to be missing, so J. took a small and very crazy canoe to go off to the ship and look for it. About three-quarters of the way down the channel the canoe had leaked herself half full, so J. landed on a coral mushroom and bailed her out before starting again. He got down to the reef and waited for a chance to go over on a sea, and fortunately (as there was a large and critical audience) went over all right. The chair was not to be found, and by the time the hunt was over a strong wind had come up, with heavy rain. J.'s crazy canoe had given up the ghost, the out-rigger had come adrift, and she was leaking so badly that

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he could not get back with her, so he made her fast to a large raft of timber and rode on it over the reef. It was the last load of the day, as the wind was soon so strong that the ship had to slip and clear out to a fresh anchorage for the night. By the next morning the weather had cleared and the ship returned, and after about an hour's work she finished discharging her cargo, and steamed away to Papeete.

The camp consisted of several houses with cocoa-nut roofs and sides, but wooden floors. Our host and hostess occupied one, we had another, there were several for the servants, a cook-house and a dining-room, all under the shade of some enormous old trees, which it was indeed strange to see growing on the poor soil of an atoll. About a hundred yards away the workmen and their families were housed in temporary buildings, outside the compound fence.

The only permanent residents on the island were the caretaker, his wife and family. They had lived there many years and apparently thrived, the wife being such an enormous woman that she had to be seen to be believed. Years ago our host was one day surprised to see the man walk into his

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office in Papeete and say he had come over in the whale-boat to get some milk.

“What do you want milk for?”

“My wife has had a baby, and she can't feed it.”

“Why didn't you tell me you might need milk when I was over a fortnight ago? You didn't say she was going to have a baby.”

“I didn't know she was going to have one.”

“But she must have known, why didn't she say so?”

“She didn't know either.”

When we saw the lady we realised that, at any rate, there could be no outward signs of such an event.

The great attractions of the place were the enormous quantities of easily caught fish, lobsters and crabs, all of which are dear to the natives' hearts, or rather stomachs.

After all the cargo had been sorted out and stored, the work began of building proper quarters for the labourers, several stores and copra sheds, as well as new houses in the compound.

Part of the gang laid out the sites for the houses, clearing brush and digging foundation trenches, etc. The rest were busy preparing to make lime from coral.

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First a large shallow pit was dug, into which was put a great quantity of heavy firewood. It was carefully laid end-on to the prevailing wind, so that the fire would run in between the logs as through the tubes of a boiler. Some of the logs being from a hardwood tree of great size, and weighing about half a ton, this was a slow and heavy job. When the pit was ready all hands went out into the lagoon, with crowbars and axes, to get the coral for burning. Only certain kinds of coral are good for lime-making, but there was an unlimited supply of the right sort close at hand. The channel to the reef was enlarged and the lime coral gathered in one action : so it was an excellent and satisfactory piece of work. As the great coral mushrooms were chopped into pieces, weighing, perhaps, eighty pounds, these were loaded into boats and canoes and taken ashore to be dumped on top of the firewood in the pit. After a day of hard work enough was gathered, and the pit was heaped about fourteen feet high above the ground.

A large quantity of dry leaves and small timber was pushed in between the logs on the weather side and the fire was started. After about three-quarters of an hour of firing up with small stuff, the flames



Heaping up the coral



The pit ready to fire

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roared in between the great logs and it was fairly under way.

That night after dinner everyone gathered round the fire to watch it. The great cone of coral was white-hot, with tongues of flame leaping from every chink. It was a wonderful sight, and would have caused great curiosity from any passing vessel, as from, say, five miles off it would have looked like a miniature volcano.

The fire burned for thirty-six hours, and as soon as the coral had cooled enough to work on, the only partially burnt top layers were dug away until the real lime was exposed. It takes three or four days for the lime to break down into powder, and a little rain is beneficial, but too much will spoil the whole pit-ful.

The lime was quickly got out, sifted, and placed in a great heap, under shelter, ready for use. This pit produced about 150 to 200 sacks of lime, at a total cost of about 500 francs. To have brought lime from Tahiti would have cost about twelve francs a sack, and it would not have been so fresh or so good.

The next business was to get together great heaps of sand from the beach, and also great heaps

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of dry coral, near the sites of the several proposed houses.

When this was done the real work of building began.

The mortar was mixed in a large, disused canoe, and consisted of one part lime (red-hot from the dump) to one and a half parts sand. The foundation trenches were lined with mortar, then a layer of dry coral was put in, then another layer of mortar, and so on, until the trench was filled. From ground level upwards long planks, one foot apart, held together by long screws, were used as moulds. When the plank-moulds were filled the screws were withdrawn and the planks carefully taken away, to be used on another part of the wall. The mortar set sufficiently fast for another layer to be placed on top the following day.

Unlike our method of building a concrete wall, the way in which these native workmen build their walls is in fleets of one foot at a time, and they keep raising the wall right round in foot-high layers. We could not find out why they worked in this way—they did not know themselves. However, as they built several houses in very quick time, under most trying conditions of rainy weather, one could hardly criticise.

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This atoll consists of thirteen islands, ranging from one about three miles long by half a mile wide to mere islets of forty acres in extent, all enclosed in a barrier reef of coral. The shape is almost that of a horseshoe. All around, between the islands and the reef, is shallow water. The inner lagoon is, in a great part of its area, deep water of twelve or fourteen fathoms, with an occasional coral-head showing, while the rest is shoal water with numerous coral heads. This inner lagoon is about five miles long by a mile and a half wide, and would be an ideal sailing-place for a small boat, as the breezes are strong and steady. The shoaler part of the lagoon is navigable by canoes and small boats, but a large boat containing, say, two tons of copra would be most awkward to handle in the narrow channels between the coral masses. Because of this the bringing of copra from some of the farther islets to the shipping point is a difficult and tedious business.

The greatest height of any of the islands above sea level is not more than fifteen feet, and it feels truly strange to be so close to the ocean without seeing any rising ground around one. However, on the home island one has only to walk a few yards along the beach to see Moorea (our island) and

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Tahiti rising from the sea about thirty miles away. These two islands, though only separated from one another by seven miles of sea, form a very strange contrast: Tahiti, still a graceful volcanic cone, rising in a great sweep to its highest point, which is seven thousand feet above sea level, with its sides dimpled into a thousand valleys by recent erosion, and generally cloud capped: while Moorea is several thousand feet less high, and is a silhouette of jagged peaks and tortured valleys.

We were told that Agassiz had made borings on the atoll and had obtained volcanic rock not very far below the surface. There is one curious feature on the home island which must be due to this underlying formation. Water is obtained by digging shallow holes, which gradually fill by seepage, but on one occasion a spring was discovered during the digging, and, so far as we know, it is still flowing. This water must come under the sea from one of the other islands. On the largest island of the group there is a fresh-water lake, several acres in extent. There is no permanent outlet, but the water is always fresh, so there must be a spring which compensates fully for the evaporation. On this island there is also a little humus, and some

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lime trees actually grow there and bear fruit, a rare thing on an atoll. This lack of humus, which makes it exceedingly difficult to grow any useful plants, except cocoa-nuts and *Tacca pinnatifida*, which gives the best arrowroot procurable, is one of the greatest drawbacks to atoll life. Bananas it is possible to keep alive, but they take a very long time to give fruit, and then the bunches are small. We had taken over lots of vegetables, and tried replanting the root crops, such as carrots and beetroot. Though they did not grow any bigger in the root, they were graciously pleased to put out fresh leaves and seemed quite satisfied with their new home, and so we were able to have fresh vegetables all the time. And later, our hostess told us that when she went back to the island, some time afterwards there were still some in good condition.

We did not lack variety in food. Of course, fish was the main dish, but there was great variety in the fish that we ate, both in size and flavour. One day we would have the tiny fish that are caught along the beach with the "net" of cocoa-nut leaves described in a previous chapter, fried crisply, and eaten head and all. Another day an enormous fish, *Pseudoscarus*, was caught. These

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fish lie in the deep water, just at the outer edge of the reef; they are very beautiful, of a vivid emerald green colour, with enormous scales, but as they are very sluggish, to persuade one to take a hook, it is necessary to dangle the bait over its very nose—and even then they are sometimes too lazy to make the necessary motion. The flesh is extraordinarily rich, very fatty, and does not taste like fish at all. Then, of course, we had plenty of rock lobster, and occasionally, as a great treat, “sea centipedes.” But the greatest treat of all was octopus, which, well cooked, is a dish for an epicurean.

On one or two of the smaller islands, where there are still some old trees, the boobies breed. The young sit in rows on the branches—how their parents ever pick out their own child at feeding-time is a mystery—and are easily caught. The natives enjoy eating these birds, but we did not try them. These young birds are most attractive, exactly like giant swansdown powder puffs, and their blue feet and beaks give a delightful note of contrast. They are easily tamed, and make amusing pets, though the amount they can eat is extraordinary. Two were brought to B. as a present. She was delighted, at once christened them

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"Romulus" and "Remus," and had them at least a week before she knew which was which. We put them on the branch of a tree near our house. They were, of course, unable to fly, but they could climb, and many times J. crawled, cursing, up the tree to bring them down to have their supper. They were very stupid, and apparently could only go ahead, with the result that they would get to the end of a branch and then sit there and squawk. We took them with us when we left the atoll, but the poor things died three days after we arrived back, on Moorea. They had become so tame that they would waddle slowly after us, and beg for food. We have since been told that these birds always die when they are brought to one of the mountainous islands.

In addition to the food out of the sea we had plenty of eggs from the fowls that were allowed to roam at their pleasure around the camp, and nice young chickens to eat, as well as an occasional sucking pig. The rats had been pretty well killed off the home island, so the hens managed to raise about four chickens in each clutch, the large hermit crabs (*Pagurus*) and the remaining rats getting the rest.

On this atoll were planted some 90,000 cocoa-nut

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palms, all in different stages of growth, from eighteen years old downwards. Perhaps half of them were bearing nuts, or would have been bearing if the rats, which infest these islands, had let them. Very successful poisoning operations had been carried out on two or three of the islands, and these were practically clear of rats and producing a good quantity of copra. On some of the others, not yet poisoned, there was nothing bigger than a walnut on the palms. The rats could be seen scampering up the trees in all directions and the ground was absolutely carpeted with eaten nuts. It would be safe to say that the rats were eating from two to three thousand pounds' worth of copra every year.

Lately another poisoning has been carried out, and it seems worth while to record the unexpected effect of the arsenic that was used. White arsenic was mixed with grated cocoa-nut meat which had been allowed to ferment. As soon as the baits were laid, the rats were seen to come in numbers, attracted by the smell of the cocoa-nut meat, and, to the surprise of all, many fell dead as soon as they had eaten the baits: surely a very strangely rapid effect for arsenic to have.

We made frequent trips to the other islets,

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both in the big whale-boat and in a small canoe which we had taken across with us. Unfortunately, the rainy season began early this year, and we had a great deal of wet weather, but on fine days we made many pleasant trips. We usually started early in the morning, before the sun was too high, and paddled or sailed across the beautiful lagoon. On reaching our destination, we had a swim while lunch was being prepared—our picnics were *picnics-de-luxe*, with lots of servants to do the work. After lunch and a smoke, we spent the hot hours lazing on rugs in the shade, reading or sleeping. About four o'clock we would have some tea, and then start for home across the lagoon, where the colours were indescribably beautiful, and could now be appreciated, as we could discard the dark glasses which the glare had rendered necessary during the day.

On several occasions we set out across the lagoon after tea to do some night fishing on another island. The fishing generally lasted until about 7.30 p.m., and, as a rule, was very successful. Then we would have a picnic supper of fried fish and pancakes, or something of the kind, round the fire. We would lie on the beach until about 10 p.m., and then paddle home in the moonlight.

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All this was very restful and very wonderful, but of course there were disadvantages, such as plenty of mosquitoes in the daytime (though, strangely enough, none at night) and also clouds of flies. At certain times of the year the flies are so bad as to be a perfect curse; they come in such countless thousands that it is necessary to eat under a mosquito net in order to avoid having the food snatched out of one's mouth.

Between spasms of work, helping with the houses, J. used to try his hand at spearing fish. Although the lagoon simply teemed with them, it was not by any means easy to get a really good shot: they were either too far away, or too deep below the surface. For the natives, who are experts, it was easy enough, but J. had many futile tries before he succeeded in getting his first fish.

Three hundred yards from the camp there was a lagoon of brackish water of about ten acres, and about four feet deep. In it were numbers of a fish called by the natives "Ava," a silvery fish growing to fifteen pounds in weight, and not unlike a salmon. The flesh is most delicious, in fact to our mind it is by far the finest fish in the islands. We used to spread a net partly across the lagoon and then drive



Off for a picnic

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the fish towards it, by walking in a line and splashing. Great hauls were made, and great feasts followed. There is also a lake on Moorea where these fish live. Both these bodies of water have small outlets to the sea, and occasionally, when there has been a high wind to drive the waters of the sea against the land, a large opening is made, and then the big "Ava" swim away to the deep sea, while the small fry stay where they are. It is not known whether the fish spawns in the sea and the young find their way to the fresh water like the young eels, or whether the parents themselves enter the fresh water and there lay their eggs. The first seems the most probable, as the big "Ava" in the lakes are always very good to eat, whereas those caught in the sea are not worth eating; which suggests that the young fish enter the fresh water, remain there until they reach maturity, and then, at the first opportunity, swim off to sea and continue the cycle.

In spite of the lack of humus, there are several different kinds of trees, which not only grow on the atolls, but grow even better than they do on the volcanic islands. Most of these grow only along the sandy beaches, the exception being the *Pandanus*, which flourishes from the seashore to

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considerable heights up the mountain. There are several different species, and probably each species has its own pet elevation. On the atolls the *Pandanus* is very much finer than on the richer soil, and is a very beautiful as well as a very useful tree.

The big trees in the compound are *Cordia subcordata*, and must be very old, as they are an enormous size. They were planted in four rows, and there must be at least fifty of them, giving a complete, though not dense, shade all over the compound. The largest must be at least twenty-five feet in circumference. Another large tree that flourishes there is the *Callophyllum inophyllum*, a beautiful wood for furniture. On one of the islands there are even some *Hibiscus tiliaceous*, which are greatly prized, as the bark makes excellent rope. Here and there one sees solitary specimens of such trees as *Thespesia populnea* and *Hernandia peltata*. The commonest, and, to our minds, the most delightful of all is *Guettarda speciosa*: this tree scented the whole atoll with the fragrance of its pretty white flowers. There is also a jasmine, of a creeping habit, with small sweetly-scented blooms, probably *Jasminum singuliflorum*. Fortunately for the natives, *Euasplenium nidus*, the bird's nest fern,

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is common, as they have to use its leaves to wrap around their food before placing it in the native oven, there being no *Cordyline*, the plant employed when it is procurable, growing on the atoll.

The building operations were going well. In five weeks three houses had been completed and others started, but suddenly our visit was cut short by the arrival, at daylight, one morning, of a motor schooner. She had been hurriedly sent off from Papeete to take us all off the island, as a frightful tidal-wave was expected that night. The news of the Chili earthquake and tidal - wave had been received by wireless, and everyone was frightened stiff. We were not alarmed, as the site of the camp was about ten feet above high-water mark, and, as we were four thousand miles from Chili, we reckoned that the wave would have lost most of its sting before it reached us. However, as the vessel had been sent specially for us, and the alarm was evidently very great, we thought we had better go. After a great bustling around, we were all embarked in an hour and a half, which was pretty good going.

We arrived at Papeete about one o'clock in the afternoon, having had a smooth trip, to find everything that ran on wheels busily carting flour

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and other perishable goods, from the numerous Chinese shops up into the hills. The wave was expected to arrive about midnight, and great preparations were being made to alarm the town from different parts of the island. If the wave came, bells were to be rung everywhere to warn people to take to the hills. We enjoyed an excellent night's sleep, as the wave did not arrive, and, for a wonder, there was no practical joker to ring a cow-bell and start a false alarm.

Two days before we left the atoll a large pig had been killed, and at the time of departure J. was making part of it into bacon. It was being salted down in a large tin dish, and J. had already erected a marvellous edifice, somewhat resembling the leaning tower of Pisa, of four sheets of roofing iron. This was to be the smoke house. In the rush of getting away the salt pig was left, forgotten, in the dish. We remembered it just after we sailed, and predicted a delightful perfume to greet the company on its return, after the tidal-wave scare was over. However, when the working party returned, ten days later, the meat was found to be quite sweet, and was duly eaten as it stood.



THE day after our arrival at Papeete, we called at our lawyer's office, and found that we were now the owners of six of the eight shares in Purehua, but one of the two remaining heirs was on Christmas Island, which is visited by ships only about twice a year, and the other was on a large atoll hundreds of miles distant. However, letters had already been sent off to them, and we could expect replies in a few months' time.

We had gone to the atoll for a two months' visit, but of course the tidal-wave scare had brought us back sooner than we were expected. It was fortunate for us that we did arrive back when we did, as the first woman who had sold us her share had played us a real Kanaka trick. She had gone to one of her relations and told him to cut all the copra on Purehua, sharing it with her. Our own Timi knew that we had bought some shares in the

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property, but did not know whose, and so he was unable to stop the collecting of the nuts. Luckily for us the weather had been very wet, and so they had been unable to cut the nuts open for drying. The very day after our return, of which he was unaware, the relation turned up to open the nuts, and was much downcast to see us waiting for him. He was perfectly well aware that the property was nearly all ours, but had hoped to get the copra sold before we returned, and then we could have whistled for our money.

As we were owners of six of the shares, with possession, we could now safely go ahead and clean up the place, which was badly in need of attention.

The property had 400 yards of sea frontage, and ran back some distance up a mountain, covered with heavy forest. On it were about 150 cocoa-nut palms, practically all of bearing age, but smothered in a dense growth of bush, and of course infested with rats.

J. and Timi started in at one boundary to clean up all the sea front, and a nice job they had. There were many large trees, and weeds and small brush galore. After several sweaty weeks they got everything cut down and burnt, and the place looked very nice.

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We began to walk round the site we had originally chosen for our house, and after much planning, and financial consideration, we agreed to tackle a large house, with coral cement walls and cement floors, doing the whole job ourselves, by day labour, without professional help.

Our original house was to be pulled down, as the timber would be required for the roof of the new one, on which we decided to put shingles, wooden ones, both for appearance sake and for coolness.

B. was the architect, and for weeks she drew and re-drew plans. As soon as she got one which was satisfactory, some brilliant idea would strike her, and the plan would have to be scrapped in favour of another.

Of course, we could not start building until we were the full owners of the property, but, fortunately for us, not very many months passed before the letters that had already been sent were received by the two last shareholders, who agreed to sell, and signed the transfers in time to return them to us by the same ships. In the meantime, we decided to clear and plant fifteen acres of land, and a contract was let to the natives of the village to fell all the bush.

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About thirty men took on the job, and they certainly worked at great speed. When the cutting was done, we had to wait about six weeks, until the small stuff had dried, and then, when a favourable wind blew, the whole hill-side was fired, and away she went. After this a lot more gathering and stacking and burning had to be done, before the ground was clear enough to plant the young, sprouted cocoa-nuts, but before very long we had 600 in the ground, and the place looking beautiful. Of course, a fine crop of weeds began to spring up on the cleared ground, and every few months more clearing had to be done, but gradually we got water-grass (*Chanæraphis spinescens?*) growing over most of the ground, which kept the weeds at bay.

At last all was ready for the house-building operations to begin. First, some magnificent palms had to be cut down, as they were growing either on the site itself or so close to it as to be a danger to the house if we ever got a high wind. Then the foundations had to be laid out, and great care had to be taken that the right-angles *were* right-angles. As neither the architect nor the builder had had any previous experience whatever, their efforts would, probably, have caused great amusement to

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any professional onlooker. J. used his sextant to get the angles, and, with a tape-line and a large T-square, the lines were at last laid down. They proved to be extraordinarily correct.

As we were tackling a house with a 3,000 square feet floor area, and a cook-house and another house for the servants about 100 yards away, we had a pretty big job in front of us. It meant over 4,000 cubic feet of concrete to mix, to say nothing of getting all the sand, gravel and stone necessary, as well as making our own lime.

We started gaily with five labourers, plantation hands, who knew nothing of this kind of work. They soon got the foundation trenches dug, and the pit ready for the burning of the lime. Then came the 14th of July, the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, a national holiday. This year a great fête was to be held in Papeete, with special efforts in the way of competitive native dancing and singing. Of course, practically the whole population of our island went over for this week of spree.

This is a yearly occurrence, and it is a real spree. The water-front is lined with booths of all sorts, but chiefly for drinking, champagne being the favourite beverage, even with the natives, chiefly because it

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is more expensive than any other, and they judge their enjoyment by the amount of money they spend. The dancing and singing continue day and night, and drunken brawls are of frequent occurrence. We went over for the last three days—the fête lasts a week—and were kept awake all night by the awful noise. It was almost impossible to see a sober native, and most of the white population was also the worse for wear. For a short time it is interesting and amusing to wander about through the crowds, all very happy and smiling and crowned with sweet-scented flowers, and the singing is enjoyable when one wants to hear it ; but when it is impossible to escape from it, it becomes maddening.

The amount of money wasted during this week, by the natives, is almost incredible. One of our boys, who earned 200 francs a month, spent 900 francs in seven days, on drinks, etc. !

After the spree was over nobody felt like work. They wanted to sit about and talk over the last week's enjoyment. Not a man but old Timi could we get to work. Then, when the effects of the spree had worn off, hundreds of fish came into the bay, and for weeks the whole district spent the time fishing, and then taking the catch over to Papeete,

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where they got big prices for the haul ; and so of course work was unnecessary. We knew that the fish would not stay in the bay for ever, and we hoped that soon it would be possible to get labour again. We kept on hoping for some time, and then we realised that the Kanakas had got one of their periodical lazy spells, which might last for months, and that we were fairly left.

We had expected to build our houses in about three months, and be comfortably settled in before the rainy season started.

We now realised that there was no chance whatever of finishing before then, or even of building the place at all, unless we personally did the whole job. To have built these houses by contract would have cost about £1,200, which we could not afford ; but by doing it with our own plantation labour, we had expected to finish the work for about one-third of that amount.

J., Timi and a guest, in the shape of an active young man who was putting in three weeks with us, made the first lime pit.

The nearest suitable coral was nearly two miles away, so it meant a great deal of hard labour to bring it to the scene of operations. As the boat

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and canoe had to be loaded right down to the rail to make the trip worth while, the coral could only be brought home during absolutely calm weather. By about nine o'clock the daily wind would set in, making just enough sea to stop the work of transportation.

At dawn J., Timi and our guest would go off to fill up the boat and canoe with coral that had been got ready the day before. Usually two, or sometimes three loads were brought before the wind made. We had had a very large canoe built for this purpose before starting the house job. The tree from which it was hollowed out was nearly eleven feet in girth, and very hard wood. The canoe, when finished, was twenty-four feet long, and capable of lifting three-quarters of a ton. Our little sailing boat would carry about the same amount. These were our principal transports.

When the sea was too rough to get coral, we carted firewood for the pit. We had a good supply of big logs within a radius of 150 yards. These had been left for this purpose after clearing the bush. Our great trouble was carrying them and getting them into the pit. With four or five men everything would have been easy, but three men, assisted by

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an eight-stone woman, had a devil of a time, to say the least of it.

At last one pit was ready to fire. We had a good wind and away she went. It was a most successful lot of lime, and we were extremely proud of our first effort. We now made some experimental bricks, to see what was the best mixture, as we did not want to be unduly extravagant with our lime. We found that one part of lime to two-and-a-half parts of coarse sand made a mortar that set like rock, but, unlike Portland cement, would not go hard in a few hours—taking several weeks really to set.

The water for the mixing had to be brought about 300 yards, from the old house to the site of the new one. It was carried in a canoe. The vessel was filled three-quarters full of water, paddled along the edge of the shore, and carefully beached near the mixing board.

As this was a tedious business, and as we had decided not to rely on rain water for the household supply for the new house, we searched for a suitable spot to build a reservoir on the mountain-side. We found a constant trickle of good water through a rock face at the edge of the bush, and set to work to build a small pool.

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This dam was about 150 feet above the house level, and 220 yards distant. We built a rock wall and faced it with cement, forming a pool ten feet long by two feet wide and two feet deep, from which we laid a pipe-line to the house site.

Our attempt at plumbing was amateurish, but successful, the constant supply of water, right on the spot, proving a great boon.

Our first lot of lime completed the foundations, and a bit over. It was a joyful day when we completed the long round, and we felt that the building had fairly begun.

Our willing guest had now left for his home in Australia, and to crown all, Timi began to ail and spend half his time at home.

Just as the natives began to show signs of getting over their lazy spell, vanilla, owing to a world shortage, began to rise steadily in price.

In one way, this did us a very good turn, as our vanilla, planted two and a half years earlier, was bearing well; but in another way, it did us a bad one, as every native in the islands went vanilla-mad, and they began to plant like maniacs.

Of course this killed any chance of getting labour.

We now realised to the full that we were up



The foundations begun

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against it. If we had not begun the house it would not have mattered, but, having started, we had to see the job through. We were fairly on our mettle, and were determined to show our "Job's comforters" that we could do it ourselves. We struggled along, and, by great efforts, made another lot of lime, but, before we could get it all out and sifted, a tremendous rain half-filled the pit, and spoilt a good deal of our work.

This was a real blow. We tried using the wet lime, which was a white paste, and found that it would set all right, but the labour of mixing it properly was twice that of using dry lime.

Timi now went to the hospital for six weeks, so the architect and builder became mason and mason's labourer respectively. We got along pretty well, but of course the work was extremely hard and slow. At dawn J. went off for supplies of sand and stones, coming back for seven o'clock coffee, after which he and B. struggled with moulds, mixed concrete and built wall, until they couldn't go on any more. Thirty-five cubic feet of wall per day was the average, and considering that we had to do everything ourselves, frequently under a glaring sun, it wasn't so bad.

We wished we had never started the infernal

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house, but having started we were determined to finish it.

Occasionally a native to two would give us a day's work—they just happened to want a few francs for cigarettes or something, and so condescended to work for a short time.

On these rare occasions we carted wood, and did other heavy jobs that were out of the question for our two selves alone.

We made, in all, five pits of lime, and had three of them greatly damaged by heavy rain just at the wrong moment. We realised that during the rainy season making lime without a proper kiln was impossible, so we made up our minds to buy enough to keep us going. The firm with which we did nearly all our business was most obliging. They arranged the supply of lime, and sent it by their own schooner to our place, at a most reasonable cost. It was a great relief to be clear of the absolute slavery of making lime without help, and our wall building went ahead with renewed vigour.

During the early part of December the weather was fairly kind to us, and, wonder of wonders, we got some labour, in the form of three Chinamen, who came looking for a job. They knew nothing

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of concrete work, but made up for it by having lots of muscle and being extraordinarily willing.

In three weeks we built about 1,000 cubic feet of wall, and were beginning to feel that the end of the job was in sight; but on December 23rd the glass fell three-tenths (a steep drop for this country), and the weather looked very threatening. We took all possible precautions, covering up our new parts of the walls with sacks and tin to keep the rain out. The tin was loaded with stones, which we thought no wind could possibly move.

About nine o'clock on the morning of Christmas Eve, a frightful squall of wind drove up the bay and our wall covers were blown away like paper. Before we could get them on again the most terrific downpour of rain began, and, with the squalls of wind behind it, it was like turning a fire hydrant on to our unfortunate concrete. We spent a miserable day watching different sections of our beautiful walls being washed down. In all we lost over 300 cubic feet during the twenty-four hours.

It was heart-breaking, after all our labours. We felt that the fates were against us, and that the house would never be finished. The rain went on for days and weeks, so we sacked our Chinamen,

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as it was impossible to work during such weather, and it did not look as if it were ever going to clear again.

For two months we had to leave all construction work alone, and just did odd jobs, such as carting stones, etc., between storms of rain.

During March the weather was more favourable, and we were lucky in securing the services of two Martinique negroes, most willing and cheerful workers. One was a full-blooded negro, a perfect specimen of humanity, with the strength of a bull.

We found that bringing all our stuff ashore from the schooner by canoe loads was a long and bothersome business, especially on windy days, so we decided to build a small wharf, alongside which a vessel of about sixty feet overall could berth.

There was a splendid place for it, within twenty yards of our new house, so work was commenced forthwith. We had to build two stone islands on the edge of a coral shelf. Later, these were joined to one another, and to the land, by a staging of cocoa-nut logs. The first stones had to be laid in six or seven feet of water, and, of course, the bigger the stones we could drop down the better. As we had no gear to handle them with, the work was

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slow and difficult. Luckily there was plenty of suitable stone within 300 yards, so the big canoe again came into use.

The heavier stones, weighing, perhaps, 500 pounds, could not be lifted into the canoe by three men without great risk to both canoe and men, so we lashed two canoes together with spars to form a catamaran, and, putting a sling round the stone, hove the canoes down until they floated the stone off the bottom of the sea. The canoes were paddled to the site of the wharf, with the stone dragging in the water between them. It was then carefully lowered into its place, and one of us dived down and pulled the sling clear.

This job took seven or eight days of hard labour, but in the end our little wharf paid for itself in time saved in boating operations, especially when landing eighty sacks of lime at a time, which, with a canoe, would have taken several hours.

We faced the outer stone island with a breastwork for the vessel to lie against. Long cocoa-nut logs were used as piles. They were pointed down into the sand, and our herculean negro drove them home about eighteen inches, with a stone weighing at least 250 pounds—some pile-driver!

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After the piles were in place, we wished to fasten some braces, under water, to hold them in place, so Joseph, the negro, took some six-inch nails in his mouth, and with a hammer in his hand dived down and calmly drove the nails home, only coming up to breathe once during the driving of each nail.

After working for months, building our walls in the manner we had seen adopted on the atoll a year before, we decided to adopt the ordinary method of building a section of wall up to its full height all at one time, and leaving the moulds on for a week or two, until it was safe to remove them. After doing the first section in the new way, we found it much more satisfactory : and also the surface of the wall was smoother and better. We completed the walls in this manner, and were sorry that we had not adopted it sooner. We had one accident and lost a piece of wall, but that was owing to bad luck, in the shape of a heavy rain squall at a critical moment.

The day that we finished the last bit of wall was a red-letter day, and a large, gold-topped bottle played its part at dinner that night.

We now had to tackle concrete floor laying, which is more or less of an expert business. Lime



The walls climb up



Our bathing beach



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mortar is not much good for floor work, as it wears away with constant sweeping, so we purchased several casks of Portland cement, and began our task. We turned up the *Encyclopædia*, and got some sailing directions from it. Getting the levels was a nasty job at first, but after a few days we became quite expert and could fire ahead at a great rate. Our two negroes mixed the concrete and carried it to the place required, while the architect and the builder did the actual floor laying. It was a back-breaking job, squatting for hours and plying a trowel, but the results justified the labours.

The land crabs were here a great nuisance. They would burrow up under the floor, and, if the concrete was still soft, would come right up through it. This was bad enough, but it was worse still if the concrete had set. Then they would excavate for inches around their burrows, under the floor, trying to make their escape, and, later on, pieces of floor would suddenly crack and collapse on these areas, which meant a lot of patching after we began to use the floors.

By the time the floors of six rooms had been laid, the walls were sufficiently seasoned to bear the roof. We had already bought a hundred bundles

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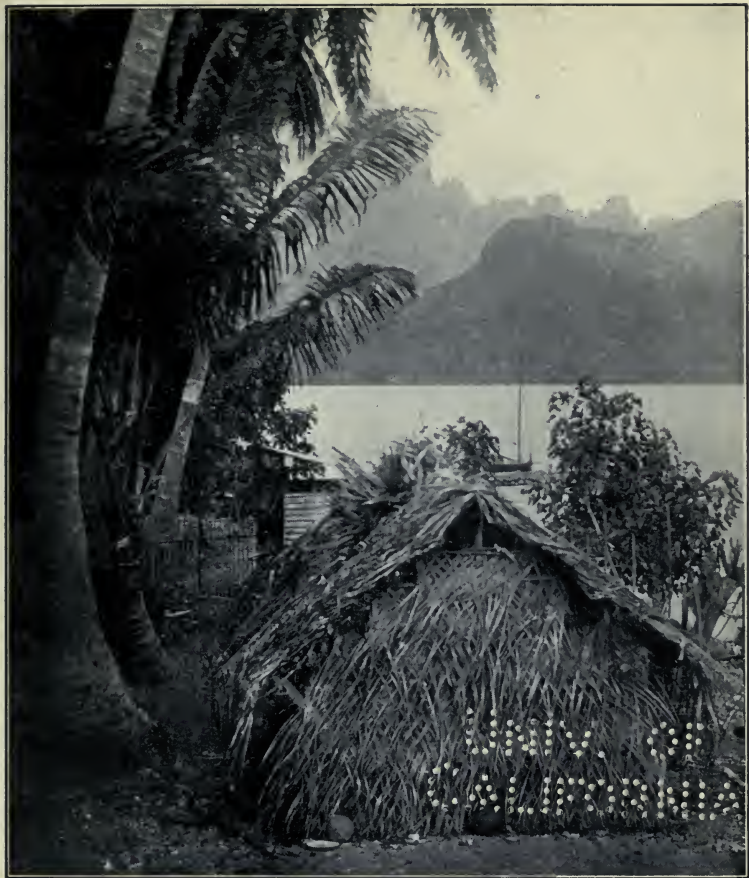
of redwood shingles. We were advised to give the roof a very steep pitch to ensure long life for the shingles. This meant a peak twenty-three feet high, and the more we thought about the job of putting it up the less we liked it. In the end we realised that it was a bit too much for two amateurs to tackle unaided, so we pocketed our pride, and arranged with a builder to tear down our old house and erect the square timber, rafters, beams, etc., of our new roof. The shingles and such jobs as windows and doors we would do ourselves.

We had built a native hut in the new garden, in which we were to live during the demolishing of the old house and the roofing of the new one.

We now moved into it.

The servants' house had been completed before the walls of the big house were finished, so they moved into their abode.

The first job was to roof the kitchen, so that cooking operations could be carried on. This was quickly done, part of the old house being torn down to supply the timber for it. Four days later our old house was no more, and the timber had all been transported to, and stacked on, the new property.



The cook-house

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For the next few weeks the elements were kind to us, and the work on the roof went ahead in grand style.

As soon as the intricate part of it was finished we dispensed with the professional carpenters, and went ahead with the shingling, ourselves. By the time the roof over the library, dining-room and bathroom had been completed we had a bad spell of heavy rain, during which we plastered and painted the inside walls of the house, made shelves, and placed thereon our 600 odd books.

Although we were still sleeping in the garden hut, it was nice to have a comfortable place in which to dine and sit, to say nothing of the bathroom. We had enquired about a bath, and the cheapest we could get, not a very nice one, was priced at fifteen pounds. Having by now gained confidence in ourselves as masons, plumbers and builders generally, we thought that a cement bath would about fill the bill. We stretched our heads over the exact method of constructing the thing, and then J. manufactured the mould for it—a truly wonderful piece of carpentry! We set it up and filled it in with cement.

Five days later the inside mould had to come out, but it did not want to move. After much

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futile tugging and prying J. got to work with a saw and a chisel, and, after an hour's labour, out it came in several pieces. The bath was first-rate, reasonably smooth, and the sloping back at exactly the right angle. It cost just twelve shillings, which was a happy contrast to fifteen pounds.

We had imported a patent bath-heater, so our prowess as plumbers was again brought into action. We quickly connected the bathroom with the reservoir, and as soon as the bath was sufficiently seasoned to stand it, we started up our heater and wallowed in the luxury of a real hot bath.

Sometimes when the southerly wind blew, bringing rain with it, we found it quite chilly, and decided to put a fire-place in the library, so that, instead of sitting shivering in woolly coats on damp evenings, we could be comfortable in front of a small fire, and listen contemptuously to the driving rain and howling wind. The books would also benefit by the drying of the air.

We carefully explained to the plumber just what we wanted. He seemed a bit dazed, as a fire-place is an unknown thing in these islands, as are chimneys for that matter, the kitchen stoves having galvanised iron funnels, which just go out



The house nearing completion

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through the roof. What we ordered was really a triangular box, with one face cut out, and the pyramid-shaped top joined to a funnel which was to go out through the roof. The plumber, evidently, did not realise in the least what we wanted. He made the sides of the fire-place five feet long, as we had said, but he cut an aperture for the escape of the smoke up the funnel that was only three inches in diameter. As we knew nothing whatever about the drawing powers of chimneys, we gaily went ahead and boxed the wretched thing in. Well, we found it an excellent smudge-pot to drive the mosquitoes out of the room, but unfortunately we had to retire also. Now that the house is screened, and smudges are no longer necessary, the chimney is waiting until we have time to tear the whole thing down, and it is very unlikely that we will ever try to build another one. We've each got a woolly jacket.



ONE perfect morning we left Papeete at seven o'clock. There was absolutely no wind, and the sea was like glass.

The motor-driven vessel on which we were travelling was fifteen tons register, and on her deck were fifty passengers, a large horse and a small pig.

We were not over-crowded, as over-crowding goes in these parts, so we were prepared for a comfortable, though rather long, trip. We were to call at several places *en route* to our home.

When fairly out into the strait, we ran into a long and lazy southerly swell, the tail end of some big blow, perhaps a thousand miles away. The seas were pretty high, but so long that we steamed up and over them with very little motion.

The pass through the reef at our first port of call has only eighteen feet of water in it, and any heavy sea from a southerly direction breaks there.

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We wondered what it would be like, and an hour later, when we were drawing near, J. anxiously scanned the pass. When we were, perhaps, a cable's length outside, a very heavy sea broke right across, and our captain turned the ship's head out to sea.

There is another pass about two miles away, which is narrow but always navigable. We naturally thought that the vessel would be taken in that way, without risk or trouble, and with only half an hour's loss of time.

To our horror, the ship was turned about and headed into the pass again. J. said: "Good Lord, we're in a mess now! Come on out of this crowd. Get hold of the back stay and hold on for all you're worth." We took hold of the main starboard backstay, as high up as we could reach, and hoped fervently that we might get through without being caught in a breaker.

When we were about half-way in, and almost out of danger, a heavy sea piled up astern, and broke, pooping our ship hopelessly, and filling the after cabin. She ran forward at great speed for a few seconds, in a smother of water and a deafening noise, then put her steamhead under, and broached to to starboard.

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All the passengers, with the exception of ourselves, were swept down to leeward, and several went overboard—including the horse. The ship was on her beam ends, and we clung on, looking over the side at her keel! B. was standing upright on the side of the hatch!

A third breaker hit us, and then, for some unknown reason, the ship righted herself, and her head paid off and pointed into the pass.

Fortunately, there was a quantity of timber on the vessel's deck, and some of this was thrown overboard to the people struggling in the water. They quickly got hold of it, and, being natives, were in no particular danger, as they are all practically amphibious. It was impossible to help them, and although a fleet of canoes came out as soon as they saw what was happening, the sea was too rough for them to go outside the pass.

Our engine had stopped, and we naturally assumed that the room was full of water.

We were now about thirty-five yards from the reef, and every wave that broke over us, as did one every few minutes, drove us a little nearer to certain destruction. If we had touched, the ship would have been matchwood in a very short time, and the

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passengers would have been dashed to pieces on the jagged coral.

The waves, as they piled up astern and broke, were a marvellous sight. It was a bright, sunny day, and the sea was at its bluest, then as the crests curled over, the sun, which was behind the waves, turned the blue to the green of a peacock's neck, and the white crests foamed against the blue sky. If only one could have seen them from safety! To hear the increasing roar as a wave rushed towards us, and then to see the stern of the ship buried under a white mass, while the water swirled along the deck to our feet, and swept us on the back of the comber, ever nearer to the reef, was a very dreadful thing.

With the engine stopped, practically nothing could be done for the safety of the passengers. The "life-boat" was a flat-bottomed punt, capable of carrying six passengers, and even though it had been launched, it could not have lived in the steep, breaking seas.

The natives were screaming with alarm for themselves and their friends in the water, and altogether the commotion was terrific.

The crew kept their heads, the engineer stuck

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by his engines, which certainly must have taken a lot of courage, and, as a light breeze sprang up from S.S.E., blowing directly into the pass, the staysail was set. The other sails were out of action, the mainsail was not bent, and before the awning could have been got down from over the mizzen boom and the sail hoisted, we would have been on the reef.

The horse, which had been standing on the deck, tied to the main-mast, had its head and one forefoot over the rail, the rest of its body being in the sea. The crew passed a rope around its buttocks, and hauled it aboard, when it promptly sat down on the small pig, whose screams of protest almost drowned the roaring of the breakers. B. relaxed her hold to look around to see if it was being crushed, and promptly lost her footing and went sliding on hands and knees across the deck. Fortunately J. did not realise that this had happened until she had managed to regain her place beside him. However, her mind was at rest about the pig, as she had seen that it was merely screaming from discomfort and indignation.

Just when we were wondering how it was all going to end, and hoping that the outset would carry us out to sea more quickly than the breakers

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could hurl us towards the reef, we suddenly noticed that the vessel was making way through the water, and realised that the engine was going, the noise of the breakers having prevented us from hearing it start.

In a few seconds we were through the pass, and out of danger. The mental relief was tremendous.

The wharf was only a few hundred yards distant, and quickly the ship was berthed alongside, and all passengers and the live stock and deck cargo landed.

The vessel then put out to sea again to pick up the people in the water, one of whom was a baby in arms. She got out through the pass safely, and steamed about slowly, looking for survivors, who had, of course, been carried out of the pass by the strong current and were now in the open sea, safer there, by far, than in the zone of the breakers.

All were got on board the vessel safely, and she returned to port by the safe pass two miles away, for the captain was not trying any more monkey tricks that day.

We had always heard that fright was a cure for sea-sickness, and that day we had clear proof of the fact. Nearly everyone had been sick coming over, especially one white man, who had been

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sitting near us. He continued his involuntary offerings to Neptune up to the moment that we were pooped, but from then on his cure was complete and absolute. It is always interesting to prove a popular superstition !

While we were standing on the wharf waiting for our ship to return, a small motor schooner appeared off the pass, and, notwithstanding the fact that her native captain had seen the mess our vessel had got into and knew the pass to be dangerous, he deliberately ran in, just to show what he could do ; by marvellous luck, he just missed a breaker, and came in, frightfully pleased with himself. The fact that he was taking a very serious risk with the ship, and all the lives on board, including his own, did not seem to enter his head. However, this same rash mariner did it once too often, as a few weeks later he put his vessel on a reef, a total loss.

When the ship came alongside, and the unfortunates who had had such an unpleasant experience were landed, touching scenes of reunion took place. The baby was calmly asleep, and not in the least the worse for its adventurous morning.

We went to the house of the official in charge of the island, to have a drink and something to eat,

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while the events of the past hour were being discussed, with great vivacity, on the foreshore, and the vessel made ready to resume her passage.

The drink was very comforting, as it must be confessed that our knees were a little inclined to be weak after our exciting half hour. J. described his feelings as: "The biggest funk I've ever been in, the War included."

We resumed our trip, going out through the safe pass, and had a pleasant run for the rest of the way home.

This experience, followed by another, during which we skirted the reef for five miles, at a distance of not more than thirty yards, with a strong on-shore wind blowing and the engine most of the time missing in two cylinders, made up our minds for us that the sooner we got a boat of our own the better it would be.

We wrote to New Zealand to ask if there were any yachts of the size and type we wanted, for sale, and a month or so later a passing native handed J. a wireless message. It was three weeks old, and offered the yacht *White Heather* for immediate sale, asking for an immediate reply. |

Two or three years previously J. had tried to buy this yacht, but the owner would not sell. Now,

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he had died suddenly, and the executors of his estate, knowing that J. was interested in her, made him the first offer.

As the message had been so long reaching us, owing to the casual method of delivery, we were afraid our reply would be too late and that the vessel would have been sold elsewhere. We left at once for Papeete, to enquire about freight from New Zealand, customs duties, etc., etc., before cabling: "Yes." We had to wait nearly a month before we knew whether she was ours or not, and were on tenterhooks all the time, as we were frightfully anxious to get her.

She is a thirty-eight-foot yawl, ten foot six inches beam, drawing six feet of water, with four tons of lead on her keel, the thought of which is a great comfort to B., as, since the experience described above, she suspects all vessels of a desire to turn turtle. She has a comfortable cabin, well fitted up, in which we sleep when visiting Papeete.

The boat is twenty years old, but in perfect condition, having been built by a first-class man, and of first-class materials. J. had known her for years, and had always admired her sailing qualities and general seaworthiness. She was just the boat



The "White Heather"

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for us two to handle without a crew, so that we could be independent of anyone to help.

Some delay occurred at the shipping port, owing to the ordinary mail ship not having sufficient deck space to hoist the yacht in, but at last a large cargo vessel was due to sail for these parts and we received notice that our little ship was on her way.

In the meantime a large American yacht, a four-masted schooner (an ex-timber drogher) came into the bay and anchored near our house. The owner was anxious to buy for his son the big German property at the head of the bay. As the auction was to come off in two weeks' time, the yachting party were just filling in the days until then. We struck up a great friendship with them, and a good deal of our time was spent together. They were very keen fishermen, and had a regular fleet of small motor boats. When we told them of the wonderful fishing to be had round the reef of the atoll belonging to our friend the Consul, they were all eagerness to go off with the yacht and try their luck. It was necessary for them to return to Papeete first for two or three days, so off they went. We were to meet them there, and be their guests on the yacht, for a week or so during the fishing trip.

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Three days later we started off in the usual small motor ketch that we patronised. She had five tons of copra below, and twelve head of cattle on deck! We occupied the top of the deck-house, between two rows of cows and bulls, and about two feet six inches from each row. Some of the beasts were quiet enough, but two young bulls were decidedly annoyed at being forced to travel, and in very nasty tempers; but fortunately they were made well fast.

These beasts were from the German property. When the place was taken over at the beginning of the War there had been about 300 head there. They were allowed to run wild, and during the succeeding years they multiplied exceedingly. They were now being sold off, and many of them were taken to Papeete to be auctioned. There was no wharf from which to get them on board the ship, so they had to be swum off. As they were all as wild as hawks, it was a lively job. First of all a mob had to be driven down to the beach, then one beast would be roped, and dragged and goaded into the sea until it was out of its depth. Strangely enough, when a beast found that it could not reach bottom, it never attempted to swim, but just floated on its side. When the animal was floating, the ship's small punt

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came alongside it, and a native boy clasped the bullock round the neck, to keep its head above water, another beast was driven in, and another boy did the same thing on the other side of the boat, while a third boy hauled the boat off to the ship's side, where the cattle were hoisted on board. It was a ludicrous sight, the two natives leaning over the gunwhale, with the bullocks' heads in their arms, while the beasts floated passively, just their rolling eyes showing that they were alive.

The trip over was fine, but we arrived at our destination very dishevelled, and J. covered with cow-hair. B. had remembered a former trip with the cows, and had taken a dust rug, under which she lay, extremely hot, all the way over, except for occasional peeps to see how much longer we were going to be, after which she dived hurriedly under the rug again, with a mouthful of cow-hair. The way those animals moulted was incredible.

The big yacht, 700 tons, was luxury itself. There was nothing fancy about her, but plain, solid comfort: large cabins, with bathrooms attached, and plenty of clothes-closets, etc. A deck-house had been built on the main deck, from the poop to just abaft the foremast, in which everyone lived.

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The top of this house formed a magnificent promenade deck, nearly the whole length of the ship. Her original rig of fore and aft schooner was left standing, but twin Diesel engines had been installed, having sufficient power to give her about six-and-a-half knots. She also had an electric plant and a very efficient freezing plant. We revelled in such treats as thick cream, and prime beef, which are unknown here, the milk being thin and island beef, for some reason, seldom seeming to have the same flavour and tenderness as in a cooler climate, even though the beast from which it is taken is apparently in excellent condition. Whether it is the fault of the butcher, who usually dissects the carcass with an axe, and cuts the most extraordinary looking joints, or whether it is the hotter weather, we cannot tell, but the fact remains.

We went aboard the yacht, and were to start about midnight for the atoll, to arrive there at daylight, but during the evening the glass fell steeply, and the wind backed round to N.W., bringing heavy rain. With a westerly wind it is impossible to land on the atoll near the home island; it is necessary to go around to the other side of the lagoon, and then, of course, boats are needed to

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cross the lagoon to the other island. This was out of the question for the present party, so all we could do was to stand by, to wait patiently until the wind changed.

We stood by for ten days, the wind blowing persistently from between N.N.W. and W.S.W., with heavy rain squalls at short intervals. By the time it lifted, the day of the auction sale of the land, and the arrival of our own yacht had come.

The sale was at two o'clock, and our friends bought the property at a price which caused them much pleasure, and at five o'clock the large cargo ship came into sight around the point, and our yacht could be seen, through the glasses, on her deck. We had a joint celebration over the purchase of the property and the yacht's arrival, and many corks were popped.

The ship anchored in the stream, and the *White Heather* was hoisted out and lowered successfully into the water, without a scratch on her.

Our friends had invited us to berth her alongside their vessel, where we could step our masts from their booms, and reeve off our gear at leisure. This was splendid for us. We took one of the numerous launches and towed the *White Heather* alongside

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and made her fast. After dinner, J. went ashore and spent a busy evening on board the cargo ship getting all the yacht's spars, sails, gear and dinghy together—and a frightful mixture of stuff it was.

The next morning all this was ferried off to the yacht, and the work of sorting began. Halyards, sheets and purchases were dragged out of sacks and spread into some kind of order, and the nine sails belonging to the vessel were opened out and inspected. She certainly was a well-found boat, and we had no cause for complaint.

Next day, before breakfast, we warped the *White Heather* under the big yacht's counter and, using one of the after davits, stepped the two masts. By the time the standing gear was set up, the blocks shackled to the mastheads, all the running gear rove off, and the sails bent, we felt satisfied that we had done a pretty good day's work.

That afternoon the Harbour Master came off to measure the yacht and inspect her on behalf of the Customs, and gave us permission to sail for our island whenever we chose.

The following morning we were busy doing odd jobs, and stowing away gear in the lockers, but by lunch-time we were ready for sea.

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At two o'clock we hauled our dinghy on deck, lashed her down, hoisted our mizzen and jib, and were ready to slip. As we let go, the owner of the big yacht broke a bottle of champagne over our bows, and wished us good luck, while his wife was busy with a "movie" camera, and an ice bucket containing another bottle of champagne and two of lager beer was passed aboard. B. was at the helm, and the new owner of the ex-German property, who was to be our neighbour, and J. were crew. B. wore the yacht around, then we hoisted mainsail and staysail, and headed for the pass.

Just in the entrance we picked up a strong easterly breeze, on our quarter, the yacht put her rail down to the water, and started to show what she could do. All the way across the strait the wind was steady as a rock, and we were doing about eight and a half knots.

The big yacht got under way right behind us and followed along under power, but could not pick up on us while the wind lasted; however, when two-thirds of our distance had been run, the wind began to taper off, so the big vessel began slowly to overhaul us. Just at the entrance to our bay she passed us.

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We sailed just twenty knots in two and a half hours, which was a pretty good average. Arriving off our house we downed mainsail, and berthed the yacht alongside our wharf for the night.

On the way over B. had declared that she felt sick, and went below and lay down, but as she dashed up on deck when she heard that we had sighted a shark, and was quite well enough to smoke a cigarette, she did not get much sympathy. The shark was a big one, and was chasing two porpoise, which were leaping out of the water to escape. This was a sight which none of us had ever seen before : unfortunately, we did not see the end of the combat.

About a quarter of a mile from our house, and on the same side of the bay, is a small sandy cove, with deep water close into shore. In this we proposed to lay a mooring for the *White Heather*. While in Papeete, J. had been snooping round the ship-yards, and acquiring various lengths of chain and two heavy iron castings for anchors : these had been tarred and shackled together, all ready for letting go. They had come over on our deck.

Next morning we let go from our wharf, and ran up the bay under mizzen and staysail. When we arrived at the desired spot we let go a small kedge



The "White Heather" reefed in a strong breeze

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to hold the yacht in place, and then hoisted our mooring up and over the rail with the throat halyards. Various stoppers were put on the chain so that it could be lowered gently to the bottom, for if it had gone with a run the chain would have torn the yacht's rail to pieces.

The operation was successfully carried out, and the mooring laid in seven fathoms. Later, another mooring was laid in the harbour of Papeete. The one great difficulty of handling a vessel without a crew is the anchor work. In these island lagoons the water is from eight to thirty fathoms deep in the bays and channels, which makes a very heavy lift on the anchor. In certain places one can let go in about nine feet of water, on the edge of the channel, but there is, as a rule, very little swinging room, and a shift of wind might put one ashore.

We stayed at home for about a week, doing some odd jobs to the house and plantation, and then prepared to set sail for Papeete, where the *White Heather* was due to go on the slip, to have her bottom copper painted. The marine worms are exceedingly active in these waters, and we were anxious to get the yacht attended to. At 10 a.m. we slipped from the mooring, and stood out of the

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bay, under all plain sail. There was a light northerly breeze, which was favourable for us. We sailed quietly along, about a quarter of a mile off the reef, and it promised to be a pleasant trip, but before we had gone four miles the wind began to die, and an ugly-looking cloud appeared from the north-west. As there was a pass through the reef close under our lee, we decided to run in and anchor, as the wind was so fluky. We crawled in before the dying wind and brought up in eight fathoms. Just as we got the sails down and furled, the north-west squall arrived. We hastily gave the anchor more scope, and when the full force of the wind hit us we were riding comfortably to forty fathoms. The glass began to fall, and heavy rain squalls blew up at intervals all the afternoon. We felt rather sorry we had left our moorings, as our anchorage was not very good in really heavy northerly weather, the sea piling in over the barrier reef, and making a nasty short jump for a small vessel.

However, there was nothing for it but to hold on all night, and see what the morning brought forth. We cooked ourselves a good supper and turned in early, reading comfortably in our bunks. All through the night nasty squalls came at intervals



In the bay

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of about two hours, and J. would anxiously stick his head out of the scuttle to see that the yacht had not started the anchor.

The next morning at six o'clock we turned out, and, after a hasty breakfast, prepared to sail. We double reefed the mainsail and bent the small jib, as the weather looked ugly and the north-west wind was pretty fresh. Realising that it would be impossible for the two of us to get the anchor without assistance, we commandeered a strong and willing negro, who was working for a friend of ours nearby. He came off in a canoe, and he and J. soon hove short, while B. set the mizzen. When the anchor broke out we set the staysail and jib and ran out of the narrow channel. Our helper departed in his canoe, with the promise of something in a bottle when he returned.

After getting clear of the narrows, we rounded to and hoisted our mainsail, then began to beat out of the pass, where there was a nasty short sea; however, the yacht handled like a bird, and we were soon in open water.

The wind was strong and puffy, and a nasty lump of a sea was running, but with both just abaft the beam we scudded along at a great rate. After leaving

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our island about six miles astern the wind fizzled out, leaving us rolling and banging about in the confused sea for nearly an hour. Then we saw a nasty-looking squall making from south-west and stood by to lower away, if necessary. When it came, the wind was not so strong as we had anticipated, but, worse still, a most terrific downpour of rain began. This lasted for three-quarters of an hour, and was so heavy that at times we could hardly see the bowsprit end. J.'s oilskin had seen its best days, and was about as much protection against the elements as a colander, while B. was clad in an oiled silk coat, which is excellent under ordinary circumstances, but quite useless in such conditions. The water ran in at our necks and out through our shoes (not an exaggeration, as we were wearing tennis shoes), and the wind, when it came again, chilled our wet bodies to the bone.

We kept the yacht's head east by south, and when the rain lifted a bit we saw our destination right ahead. Our course was dead to a lee shore, with a very narrow pass to navigate, through which flowed an outsetting current of about two knots. Our one fear was that the wind might take us close down to the reef and leave us becalmed, which would

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have been unpleasant, to say the least of it. However, the wind, though now rather light, took us along and through the pass, where there was a pretty steep sea, caused by the strong current setting out.

We had not got 200 yards inside when the wind fell flat. Luckily, our friends on the big yacht, which had come over the day before our departure, had been watching us, and when they saw us becalmed, sent one of their launches to tow us in, which was a godsend to us, as, if they had not done so, it would have meant anchoring where we were, or putting the dinghy over the side and trying to tow her against the tide.

The launch took us to a spot quite close to the slip, where we anchored and took stern lines ashore, making the yacht as snug as possible. The weather looked worse and worse, and we were very glad to be safely in harbour.

On the way across we had certainly had an uncomfortable time, and were extremely wet and cold, but we had comforted one another with sage reflections on how much worse it would have been with a deck-load of pigs and fifty sea-sick passengers crowded up with us!

We packed up our gear, and went ashore in the

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dinghy, borrowed a telephone, and ordered a car to take us to our diggings.

On the way over J. had been wearing blue dungaree trousers and an old navy singlet. He had split both legs of the pants while crawling forward to do some job, and, as the flapping remnants annoyed him, he sawed them off, well above the knee, so that he looked like the principal "boy" in a pantomime, when she is dressed in rags and tatters and wishes to display as much leg as possible. When we got ashore it was still raining hard, so he refused to clothe himself decently, saying, "I'm not going to change until we get to the pub. We don't owe any money, and we don't want to borrow any, so what does it matter?" So he got out of the car in this shocking raiment, crowned by a white bamboo hat which had been made for B., to the great merriment of the hotel servants, who knew us well.

There was a large schooner on the slip, but as she had only about four days' work to be completed, we expected to get out of the water quite soon. Alas! our hopes were shattered; for another ten days we had westerly winds and heavy rain. It was so bad that work on the schooner was out of the question, so there we had to stay, waiting our turn.

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The bad weather culminated in a very heavy squall from north-west, accompanied by terrific rain, thunder and lightning. This occurred at midnight, but the following day was much better, and the weather gradually cleared. It made up for its bad behaviour by smiling on us for several weeks afterwards. The schooner was soon finished, and launched down, and the following day the *White Heather* was hove up. She caused a lot of comment when out of the water, her beautiful lines showing to great advantage alongside some of the local vessels.

Next day she was soon painted and launched down. We put her on her moorings, where she looked very trim, with her sails well furled, and gear coiled down.

We stayed at Papeete three or four days longer as the wind was very light, but we usually had short sails each day.

One morning, about nine o'clock, a nice easterly breeze made, and we decided to set sail for home. A friend was coming to spend a few days with us, and was most anxious to make the trip in the yacht. He came aboard with his kit, and we set sail, and were away in a few minutes. The wind was steady, but not strong enough for us to make a record

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passage. We had a comfortable and enjoyable sail, but took four hours to reach home.

Our American friends had departed, with their beautiful yacht, for Honolulu, their home, where the yacht was to be docked, and the eldest son married before making his home in our bay. The owner of the vessel very kindly offered to choose an auxiliary engine, suitable for the *White Heather*. She could only have something compact, of about ten horse-power, without spoiling the cabin. It was splendid for us to have some interested person, with a knowledge of boats and engines, to buy it for us. Of course, we accepted the offer gladly.

The yachting party expected to be away about three months, and during this time J. was to keep a look-out on their big property for them.

We soon realised, from bitter experience, that enough engine to drive our boat at, say, five knots per hour, would be a great help to us, as, close under the high land, the winds are often very light and fluky, making sailing difficult and sometimes annoying. It is a great trial to the temper to see a good breeze half a mile away, and not be able to get to it. The power would also be most useful for trolling along the reef in the early morning and in



Fine weather at sea

1911

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the evening, when there is little or no wind, and when the fish bite best.

With an engine we would also have a better chance of catching bonita. Sometimes we see five or six schools on our way across the strait. In regard to the catching of this fish, the birds are a valuable ally to man. As soon as a school comes to the surface, the birds come from all directions, hundreds of them sometimes, and one sees and hears a plunging, screeching mob, seizing the little fish which the bonita are chasing. These fish nearly always travel to windward, so it is very aggravating to see a school a few hundred yards away when one is beating to windward, as they can travel very fast. If one gets in among a school the boat is loaded in no time at all. They are fished for with a bamboo rod, a heavy one, with about eight feet of strong fishing-line attached to it, at the end of which is a piece of mother-of-pearl, three inches long by less than half an inch wide, with an unbarbed hook arranged on the concave side of the shell, while two whiskers of the white hairs of a cow's tail ornament the end. This hook is dragged along the surface of the water and the fish strike hungrily. As there is no barb the fish must be struck at once :

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if the first strike misses, the animal is not frightened away, but bites again and again. They are excellent fish to salt and smoke.

We had often read controversies as to whether the flying fish uses its fins as gliders, or actually moves them to aid its flight through the air. Ever since we have lived here we have had exceptional opportunities of studying the question, particularly so since we have been making trips in the *White Heather*, where the eye is only about four feet above the water level. We can support both sides of the argument. So much depends on the angle from which the sun is shining on the fish that it is sometimes impossible to distinguish the fins in the general silvery glitter.

At first we were on the side of those who regard the fins as gliders. All the fish we saw used them only in that way, and what vibration was visible was, obviously, only what was to be expected by the rapid motion of a taut membrane through the air.

However, one day B. saw a very big flying fish leave the water just under the boat's bow. The sun was behind us and so there was no confusing glitter. When it left the water the fins were used as gliders, but, to B.'s surprise, during the latter

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part of its flight it actually moved its fins like a bird's wings. B. had drawn J.'s attention to the fish, and he also saw the movement, so it was not an optical delusion. As the day was very bright and the sea smooth, save for a long glassy swell, the observation was easy to make. The tips of the fins were raised to about an inch above the gliding position, and then correspondingly depressed below it, not very rapidly, so that the eye could easily follow the motion.

Since then we have frequently seen the fish move their fins, generally at the same moment that they touch the water with their tails to give themselves a fresh impetus. We saw one school of about twenty fish, all of whom used their fins in this manner.

There is, probably, some intimate connection between wind and sea conditions and the particular use of the fins. We have begun to make notes of the conditions during our trips and the behaviour of the fish.

B. thinks that the movement of the fins while the fish is in the air is, perhaps, an unconscious action. The fins are in rapid motion under the sea, as the fish is getting up speed to fly into the air, and so the association of ideas causes it to use its fins as though it was swimming when it strikes its tail into the sea to gain fresh impetus in its flight.

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The action of the first fish we noticed does not bear out her theory, but she says that there will of course be exceptions.

Another thing had struck us as being rather unusual, and that was the low flight of the fish ; as a rule they just skimmed along the surface, even when there was a strong wind, on which they could have sailed high. Then one day, when there was a strong easterly wind blowing and a nasty rough sea, we saw them sail twenty to thirty feet above the sea. They flew in a large arc, and for a considerable distance. The first one we mistook for a bird diving for a fish ; then as the bird did not come up again after the dive, we decided it was a flying fish, and almost immediately saw several more sail into the air.

Here is an extract from a well-known text-book of Zoology : “ *Exocoetus* Art., Flying Fish . . . pectoral fins elongated into organs for floating through the air (*parachute-like*) . . . flying fish do not fly, but leaving the water by a powerful tail movement they float rapidly through the air *in a straight line* supported by their pectoral fins.”

The italics are ours.



AT the head of the wharf are several very tall palms which, during the first few hours of the morning, throw a shadow over the end of the wharf, and there, during the winter months, when the water is calm and the wind does not blow up the bay until about ten o'clock, B. spends hours every morning, watching the life of the reef. The end of the wharf is built on a coral ledge, on which grow many living corals, and where live multitudes of fish.

All colours, and every imaginable shape, from that of the queer box-like *Ostracion* with its jewelled spots, to others with dull brown blotches on a cream background, which lie hidden in the sand, are adopted in the fishes' efforts to fool their enemies into thinking that it is not really a fish that they see, but a dead leaf, or a brightly-coloured piece of coral.

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Some put their trust in queer modifications of their shapes, such as wonderful fringes to their fins and tails. Others are marked in such a way that it is impossible to tell, without close observation, which is the head and which the tail. A hungry fish has not time to consider such details, and doubtless is often disappointed by getting a mouthful of useless, bony fin, instead of the succulent morsel that is expected.

The smaller reef-dwelling fish depend for safety on the closeness of their homes, and these seem to deck themselves in beauty for beauty's sake.

The commonest is an exquisite little sapphire-blue fish, about two inches long, whose tails and fins are yellow: they resemble *Labroides auropinna*, as figured by Saville Kent, but there are certain differences in the fins. As they turn in the clear water, and the sun shines on their sides, they look like a handful of enormous precious stones, flung carelessly into the water. In a few days these little beauties grow very tame, and now they come to feed on bread-crumbs when B. taps on the stones to let them know that breakfast is ready, and even eat out of her hand if she goes into the water. By degrees other small fish gained confidence when

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they saw the little blue ones enjoying their meal, and then the breakfast party became more jewel-like than ever, as a bright golden fish, with blue-edged fins and blue rings round its eyes, came to join the fun, and others came too, claret-coloured and cream, with bright ruby eyes. Soon, to B.'s great excitement, a quite large fish grew tame, a *Monocanthus*—and became a most horrible nuisance to the little ones. He would dash in among them and shoulder them roughly aside. Presently two of his friends came to join him, and then another fish of the same species, with whom Polonious, our fish, had a feud. As soon as his enemy appeared, Polonious would dash at him, with the solitary spine of his dorsal fin erect, to show that he was really mad, and would chase the unfortunate new-comer round and round the bathing pool, until at last he put him to flight.

Poor Polonious! His greed brought him to a sad end. The wharf was an excellent fishing-place. We gave orders that no one was to throw lines on the bathing pool side, thinking that thus our pets would be safe; but Polonious *would* go playing about over the other side, and so, of course, he was caught, though it seemed an impossibility that his small

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mouth could seize the hook. Twice he was put back into the sea, but alas! the third time a stranger caught him, and he came no more to feed on bread-crumbs.

Sometimes great bands of large trevally-like fish swim slowly past, with the edges of their fins gleaming blue, like peacock's feathers; or gaudy parrot-fish stay a little while to score the coral with their hard beaks, while their rainbow-coloured sides shine through the water, with a background of brown coral to throw them into relief.

Around the piles that face the wharf little black-and-white-striped fish play all day, with others that look as though they have dipped their tails in white paint, in order to give full value to the velvety purple-black of the rest of their bodies. Another little fish is a particular pet, in shape like the ace of spades, but tawny brown instead of black, with a sharp-pointed little nose, and black currants stuck in for eyes.

Sometimes, in the evening, the queerest fish of all appear. These are red-letter days, as these fish are very shy and seem to be nocturnal feeders, though the first time we saw them was in broad daylight on the lagoon, when we saw what was

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apparently a dead leaf lying suspended about two feet below the surface, rather curiously marked, certainly, with a strange white band near one edge ; after a few minutes, however, the leaf swam away. Several times B. has watched these creatures feeding on the piles in about six feet of water, but she is not yet sure as to their true shape ; when they swim it is on their side, and they are not, really, much thicker than a leaf.

A beauty that we sometimes see clinging to the coral is a *Pterois*. We always call it "the butterfly fish," though it is commonly known as "the fire fish." It is old rose and brown and cream, with a series of very sharp and venomous spines on its back and head, while the pectoral fins are enormously developed and, with their ornamental prolongations, are more than half as long as the creature's body. They cling to the rough surface of the coral with the ventral fins, and gently wave these beautiful, butterfly-like pectorals, with a rippling motion. The first time we saw one, we were in a canoe, skirting along the edge of the reef, and B., in her excitement, leant over too far and capsized us.

We caught two of these fish, slightly different from one another. One had two spines about an

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inch long on its head, decorated with little tufts of rose-coloured skin, reminding one of the angler fish's lure: the other had no spine at all. The appearance of the fish is a warning against incautious handling: though it is so beautiful, the spines of the dorsal fin project a long way, and they are needle sharp and almost transparent. After the two we caught had been in formalin for months, B. took them out one day, and though handling them cautiously, pricked her finger on one of the spines, and although the point barely touched her, she had rather an aching hand for the rest of the day.

Strangely enough, many of the larger fish seem to have a regular routine of feeding. About the same time every morning the parrot-fish come to the same spot on the reef, nibble for a few minutes, and then go on, to be replaced by others striped like American convicts, which also stay for a little while, and then they also seek fresh fields. Morning after morning B. watched for certain easily recognisable individuals, and their regularity was really remarkable, as was also the order in which the different species appeared. Even the little blue fish, which never venture far from their homes, feed in the morning on the beach side of the reef,

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but in the evening are always to be seen on the outer edge, where the shelf drops suddenly into the deep water of the bay.

During fifteen hours of watching, on different days, B. counted 113 different species of fish, that is, ones about which no mistake could be made, doubtful ones being ignored. Not many genera, certainly, and sometimes only one individual, but the diversity is extraordinary.

Among other interesting things to be seen from our wharf is a fishes' dental and massage parlour. There are certain small fish, some four inches long, very like *Labroides bincincta*, elongated, with very square tails, and longitudinal blue stripes on a black foundation. These small fish were often seen rushing up to larger ones, and swimming close to their sides, apparently trying to get in under the operculum, generally much to the annoyance of the larger fish, who as a rule swam rapidly away.

This seemed a very curious habit, so we watched carefully. Soon we discovered that two lived permanently at the wharf, and had a regular business in picking parasites off other fish. The fishes we had seen, who did not seem to appreciate their attentions, were evidently not troubled by parasites,

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and so rejected their services. All were not so clean, and we often saw quite large fish swim up to a certain stone, and lie there while one or two of the masseurs worked busily, going over them from head to tail, cleaning out the gills, the patients raising the operculum so that they could get well inside, and, finally, opening their mouths, while the busy little workers picked their teeth clean for them.

It was evidently a very enjoyable proceeding for the large fish, and they never wanted it to be finished. When the dentists considered that enough attention had been given to any one client, they would swim off to look for another, while the first still lay there, evidently hoping that the operation was not yet over.

In the part of the bathing pool where the water is about two feet six inches deep there were several small burrows, the entrance about an inch in diameter, and surrounded by small pieces of coral and small pebbles, very neatly arranged. Watching one of these with a water glass, B. soon saw a tiny fish lying at the entrance. Its protective colouring was so perfect in relation to the bottom that only its little black eyes betrayed it. It was about an inch and a half long, of a very pale fawn colour,

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with bands of slightly darker spots. Presently the other inhabitant of the burrow came up, with an armful of sand, which it carefully deposited about two inches away. This worker was a small crustacean, about two inches long, also of a pale fawn colour, but with a white band on its body, which helped one to see it.

These two live happily together, the fish acting as sentry for the crustacean. So long as the fish stays quietly at the entrance the shrimp works steadily on, carrying up armfuls of sand or stones; the stones it arranges with great care, while the sand is placed as far away as possible. Each stone is cleverly fitted to its neighbours to form an ornamental border round the entrance to the burrow.

If the fish gets frightened it darts down its home, and there both fish and shrimp remain until the watch-dog comes up to investigate. If the coast is clear it stays at the opening, and then the work goes on once more.

One burrow that B. watched had two fish and two shrimps living in it. In this case the fish took it in turns to guard the home. At first only one fish was seen. It, of course, never went more than two inches from the entrance, and then only to

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dash at some particularly inviting food particle ; most of the time it remained with its tail resting just inside the mouth of the burrow. Presently the second one stuck out his nose, and went on watch. The first guard went off, hunting food, and swam about, darting at various little organisms that looked savoury to him, but he was careful not to get so far away that a sudden dash would not carry him to safety.

The two shrimps, one larger than the other, worked together on the work of this burrow. When B. first noticed it the entrance faced north, but gradually a roof of mosaic work was built, until a few hours later the entrance faced west.

The shrimps are extremely clever workmen. B. never saw a pebble slip from place. Sometimes they have difficulty in getting the stones to fit, and will struggle for minutes to place one ; then they will deliberately tear down some of the work that is already done and rearrange it so that the new stone can fit into place satisfactorily.

One day a fairly large octopus, with a big body and short stout arms, came over the edge of the reef and alongside the wharf, among the fish B. was feeding. The fish showed no fear, in fact they

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clustered round the visitor to investigate. There was a good deal of hustling, and when the octopus moved on B. saw that it was accompanied, and guarded, by an unwholesome-looking black fish, with sickly yellow spots along its dorsal surface. This fish swam round the octopus all the time and chased the other fish away. When the octopus wished to go into a crevice among the stones of the wharf the fish went in first and investigated, while the octopus waited patiently outside. As the guide did not approve of that particular hiding-place it came out again, swam round its friend once or twice, and then led it off in another direction. This time it chose so well that when one of the men came running with a spear, in answer to B.'s call (she enjoys baked octopus), before he could strike our wished-for prey was in safety.

From May to October the octopus is common around the shores of the bay. They evidently come in for the breeding season, as we frequently find groups of baby ones under pieces of coral. The natives catch them by floating in their canoes over the shallow reef, and tapping with their paddles on the gunwhale; when the octopus comes to see what the sound is he is speared.

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About five miles along the coast there are two lovely little islands, both inside the barrier reef, and about 150 yards from it. We have spoken earlier of having tried to buy them. Though we know we never shall own them, we still go down to them for picnics, and sometimes, when the tide is low, wade out to the barrier reef. The water between the islands and the reef is in most parts only about four feet deep, and the whole is studded with coral mushrooms, while there are many giant clams (*Tridacna*), though to tell the truth we have never seen one more than a foot in length. The mushrooms are studded with the brightly-coloured *branchiæ* of coral-boring worms, blues, yellows, greys and rose, contrasting with the colour of the coral in which they live. These mushrooms are also the home of large octopus, and B. got a shock the first time she waded out. Later she saw in a native's canoe some very big ones which had been speared close to where she had passed.

As the rise and fall of the tide is very small, about eighteen inches, the reef is generally hardly exposed at all, but sometimes the tides here are very queer. One day we went down to the islands when there was very little sea and a light breeze

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off the land. The tide remained low from nine o'clock in the morning until three in the afternoon, and we had a few wonderful hours on the reef. The top was quite exposed (which is a very rare thing, as there is generally enough surf to send a wash over it all the time), and the coral could be fully appreciated. The various zones of reef life could be very clearly distinguished. Nearest to the land was the zone characterised by that most beautiful of sea-urchins, *Diadema*, which has long, fine spines of a lovely deep purple-red colour—a nasty beast to handle as the spines are very brittle and sharper than needles. On the summit of the reef was the zone of *Heterocentrotus*, the slate pencil urchin, while on the seaward side grew seaweed and a certain gastropod, *Turbo margaritaceus*, a very popular food with the natives, but, to our minds, extremely tough. A strange fact is that we have never seen an *Eupagurus*, the big hermit crab, in any other home than the shell of one of these gastropods, even when we have found them hundreds of feet up the mountain-side.

The islands are of typical atoll formation, formed of broken coral fragments, and covered with low vegetation, for the most part, though some portions

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were once covered with *Casuarinas*, which have nearly all fallen victim to the charcoal burner. All ironing is done with charcoal irons, clumsy things: Mrs. Potts has never been heard of.

On the larger of the two islands is a wonderful grove of *Pandanus* (screw pines), with great sheets of dead leaves hanging on every branch, and the ground carpeted with them. When the fruit is ripe the scent is almost overpowering, though very delicious.

All along the seaward side of the islands are rocky pools, which are the haunt of many fish, and lovely white anemones grow along their rocky sides. One pool is remarkable for the enormous *bêche-de-mer* which live there (*Synapta*), often, when fully stretched out, measuring more than six feet.

If one sits quietly by the side of one of the pools the little fish forget one is there and swim gaily about, while a fat eel will come wriggling out of its lair, to dart back again at the slightest movement one makes. The spider crabs scuttle rapidly over the scoria-like coral rocks, while perhaps a large *Pteroceras* will crawl slowly across the sandy bottom. This shell is used as a conch by the natives, the only preparation needed being to cut off a small



In the pandanus grove

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portion of the apex of the shell, after which a sonorous note is obtained by blowing through it.

The colours of the lagoon around these islands are marvellous : every shade of blue and green can be seen, and the water is so clear that where the bottom is sandy the ripples of the surface are turned by the sun into golden reflections on the bottom, even in twelve or fifteen feet of water. The blue is so intense that one day we thought that we had found the true "Blue Bird" : but it turned out to be a *Gygis candida*, which is a lovely white bird, with blue eyes, beak and feet.

To get to the islands one passes over shallows of from two to seven feet for about two miles. B.'s position was always in the bow of the boat, where she could watch the bottom before the passage of the boat destroyed the smooth surface of the water. Fish of all shapes and sizes live among the coral mushrooms. One lovely little jade-green one has a very keen sense of the beauty of contrast, and lives only among the branches of the yellow-brown stag-horn coral *Stylopora*.

Sometimes, frightened young sharks would dash wildly away as the boat came near, or a large ray, that had been basking on the surface, would shoot

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rapidly from the boat's side. Large pin-cushion star-fish, *Culcita*, lie on the bottom, or move slowly along in search of food or a more comfortable spot to lie in.

The great trouble is that there is so much to see that it is impossible to see anything really well, and fresh beauties or curiosities keep coming into view, making one forget the last.

The larger of the two islands is about half a mile across. We sometimes walk across and then go into the sea, where there is a current which carries one half-way around it. It is priceless to float idly in the warm, clear water and watch the land slip past ; and very much pleasanter than walking over the stony coral of which the island is composed.

Fish are very plentiful, and a day spent there with a net and a few natives with canoes is never wasted. We eat the freshly-caught fish for lunch, grilled on coral stones, a method which imparts a very individual flavour to the food, unpleasant to some palates, but very acceptable to ours.



THIS climate is a most astonishing one for the tropics! Hot and humid, of course, but never unbearably so, while sometimes it is, relatively speaking, chilly. It is quite unnecessary for white people to wear special clothes as a protection against the sun. The men wear white duck suits and, generally, native woven, light straw hats; and the women go about in the ordinary summer clothes that they would wear in any warm place, and if fashion has decreed that small hats are the thing, then small hats are worn, without any ill-effects from the sun.

The year is divided into the wet season and the dry season. Both terms are relative, as the dry season is not dry, but just a little less wet than the wet. During the dry season the temperature is a few degrees lower during the daytime than it is in the wet, and the night temperature, in many places, shows a very considerable difference. The dry season corresponds with the winter of the southern hemisphere, and the wet with

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the summer. The heat in Papeete itself is sometimes almost unendurable, as it is on the lee side of the island; but here, where we live, and indeed anywhere where the wind blows, the temperature is very agreeable, though if one is foolish enough to walk or work in the sun the effect is that of a Turkish bath.

Here is a set of figures that speak for themselves:—

<i>Month</i>	<i>Highest Temperature</i>	<i>Lowest Temperature</i>	<i>Month</i>	<i>Highest Temperature</i>	<i>Lowest Temperature</i>
September ..	86	64	February ..	87	71
October ..	86	66	March ..	85	71
November ..	83	69	April	85	70
December ..	83	70	May	82	67
January ..	86	70			

It will be noticed that these figures cover the so-called "hot" season, and the very slight difference will be noted. This record is taken from a dry bulb, self-recording, maximum and minimum thermometer that hangs in our "dining-room," which is really a part of the verandah. In the old wooden house the day temperatures were from ten to thirteen degrees higher, while the night ones remained about the same.

Rain falls pretty regularly all the year round. Four days without a shower is a surprise to us, but we live in a very wet part of the island, and frequently get showers which do not extend half a mile beyond us. The result of this is that the fertility at the head of this bay is wonderful, but one could wish for

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a little less rain—and fewer weeds. Last year rain fell on 192 days when we were at home and recorded it : probably over 200 days would be a more correct estimate. It was fairly evenly distributed over the year as follows :—

Jan., 19 days.	May, 14 days.	Sept., 9 days.
Feb., 12 „	June, 16 „	Oct., 18 „
Mar., 13 „	July, 11 „	Nov., 20 „
April, 22 „	Aug., 12 „	Dec., 26 „

This table is really rather misleading, as it does not differentiate between days on which rain fell all day long and those days when there would be a gentle shower for an hour or so and then bright sunshine again. The vegetation is so accustomed to plenty of water that the month of September, with only light showers on nine days, was a very disastrous one for the vanilla. We lost a number of vines, but our position under the mountain did at least give us those showers, while the unfortunate plantations across the bay got no rain at all for six weeks : an appalling drought for this country.

The proof of the heavy rain-fall is seen in the luxuriant forests which clothe the islands. Tahiti has barren flanks for the most part, but the valleys and the interior hills are richly clad with vegetation ; while on our island practically all the

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mountain peaks have forest growing to the summits, and large trees spring from the faces of sheer precipices, in a most incredible manner.

Most of the original forest is gone, and the big trees of to-day are secondary growth, though probably the inaccessible peaks are still clad in primeval forest. One wanders into the forest, far up the hill-side, and gazing up at some grand tree over one's head, thinks, "Here, at last, I see one of the ancient forest kings." Then one glances down and realises that the roots of the "forest king" spring from the foundations of an old house. It is very blighting. There used to be plenty of sandalwood on the mountains. We asked various natives whether there were still any of these trees on the island, and at last found one old man who said that there were still two up the mountain around the other side of the island. He did not know where they were, but there was a very old man living around there who did. We gave up our hopes of finding any sandalwood.

Another beautiful tree which is almost extinct is *Erythrina indica*. This extinction is not to be laid to man's handiwork, but to the larvæ of the *Sphinx* moth. This tree seems to be their favourite food. B. had two trees which she had brought from the

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bush, and treasured greatly, but after a two years' struggle against the caterpillars, she has reluctantly given them best, and cut the trees out, as, instead of being things of beauty, they were a mangy-looking collection of half-eaten leaves. Ellis speaks of these trees as being numerous, but now the specimens are rare. When we first came here there were about five trees around the bay, but last year we only saw two in bloom, and probably before long the *Sphinx* moth will find those two—and then good-bye to a beautiful blaze of colour on the hill-side.

Some of these same caterpillars have changed their pupal habits. Instead of descending to the ground to pupate, as is the rule in this genus, three have been found by B. curled in a leaf on the tree itself. To make sure of the facts she took the chrysalis to the house and allowed them to undergo their transformation there. All three were *Sphingidæ*. Probably they have no bird enemies here, and so are gradually losing the instinct which formerly drove them to the earth.

These larvæ gave us an interesting exhibition of the value of coloration to insects, and also demonstrated that it is experience and not instinct that warns birds against rash experiments in food.

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One day B. was busily collecting caterpillars off her unfortunate *Erythrina*, and thought that the fowls might like them. There were larvæ of several species of *Sphingidæ*, differing in coloration, but all marvellously marked. Some were small and brown and more or less inconspicuous, while the largest were green and white, with coloured spots: awesome looking beasts, with their "horrifying" attitude when alarmed.

A handful of these were thrown on the ground. The fowls came round, but there was much doubt in their minds as to the wisdom of devouring such strange creatures (they will seize and eat a six-inch centipede without hesitation): only the rooster was brave enough to try, and he would only touch the small brown ones. After he had eaten one and found that it was good some of the hens plucked up enough courage to try. The large green caterpillars were left untouched, but when all the small ones were gone then the rooster turned his attention to these. So long as they remained in their "terrifying" attitude he merely walked round and round them, but when they began to move he would peck at them, being very careful to peck short, never allowing his bill to come within half an inch of the larva, and then he would promptly peck the

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nearest hen, as though as to say it was her fault. At last he went away, evidently judging the food unsafe.

This rooster was a locally-bred bird who had been out of doors all his life, and had evidently learned from some unpleasant experience to leave brightly-coloured creatures alone.

We also had two buff-Orpington roosters, which had arrived from California a few weeks previously. These birds had never been in the open until they arrived here, having been kept on a chaff-covered cement floor, where, of course, the chance of finding large insects to eat would be very slight.

When the native rooster walked away from the caterpillars the other two rushed up, and without the slightest hesitation seized the green larvæ and gobbled them down. The native rooster then decided that he had been a fool, and helped to eat the rest, and he even managed to discover the tree where they lived, and did much good work there.

The mangrove tree is not found here, which is a surprise when one remembers what a feature it is of the Queensland coast, both tropical and sub-tropical. It is found in the Fiji Islands and on the coast of Ecuador, so it seems strange that these islands are without it. Naturally they are also lacking the

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interesting and varied fauna which is found in a mangrove swamp.

It is easy to grow most vegetables, and the extremely rich soil and the unlimited water supply make gardening a pleasure. Plants seem to grow about twice as fast as they do in a cooler climate, and though the fruit is not, perhaps, as abundant, it is ample. Beans, carrots, radishes, cucumbers, tomatoes, vegetable marrows, okra, egg-plant, sweet corn, rock and water melons all grow to perfection, though the two latter become rather insipid if there has been an excess of rain. Cabbages grow fairly well on the richer soils, but are generally small on the poorer ones. Lettuce grows well, but does not form a heart ; we have tried varieties which were advertised especially for the tropics, but, although the flavour was good, we might just as well have planted cos lettuce for all the head we got.

Peas are an utter failure. B. tried them once, and got no fruit, so she ordered seeds of a dwarf variety, which was supposed to stand hot climates well. The plants grew four inches high, each producing two pods with one or two peas in each. We got enough to cook and try, but they had hardly any flavour.

There are not many insect pests for the gardener

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to fight against: rats and mynahs are his worst enemies, once the seed is sprouted, and millipedes are very fond of beans while they are still below the surface—one sometimes sees a dozen with their heads buried in the earth, all devouring the same sprouting bean. The rats attack the melons just before they are old enough to pick and store for ripening, so the only thing to do is to poison as many as possible, and then to enclose each melon in a wire cage. If they cannot get at the melons they turn their attention to the cucumbers, but they are not so fond of these and the losses are not very considerable. So far, in our garden, they have not attacked the sweet corn, which is rather curious, for they eat maize to such an extent that it is impossible to grow it on our property at all. We hopefully planted an acre, for food for the fowls, and in a week every cob was eaten.

The mynahs have a particular liking for tomatoes, which therefore have to be picked as soon as the first tinge of red appears on the fruit; otherwise every one will have holes pecked in it. These birds are supposed to do a lot of good by devouring caterpillars, but it seems to us they live mainly on fruit, and that the most valuable insects' enemies are the spiders and the mud-nest-building wasps.

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They are an awful nuisance, but when a nest is broken and its provision of green caterpillars falls out one can forgive them. Unfortunately, there is another mud-builder which preys on the very valuable spiders—a regrettable carelessness on Nature's part. Cockroaches swarm everywhere. *Blatta*, which gives vent to an awful smell when disturbed, fortunately does not come into the houses very much, preferring old boxes and the bark of trees; and apparently, when it does decide to lead a civilised life, it does not do any damage to goods or books. The two species of *Periplaneta*, on the other hand, are a perfect curse. They love to eat good books, especially scientific ones. Paper backs are quite safe from them. But even these pests may have an excuse for living.

Although the houses in Papeete are dreadfully old wooden buildings, with wonderful breeding-places for *Cimex lectularius* (that offensive insect which makes the night a horror to travellers in many parts of the world), *it is not to be found in them!* We have been told that this insect has been known to come ashore in people's luggage, but has simply disappeared without breeding. We think that this is due to the innumerable cockroaches, which eat any young which may be produced by the strays which occasionally arrive.

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Thoughtful Nature has provided us with an ally in our war against the cockroaches in the form of a *Lycosa*, a hunting spider, which is very fond of eating them. We have seen one of these spiders leap upon a full-grown *Periplaneta* and drag it away. Unfortunately, the lizards and geckos do not like cockroach for dinner. They will often approach one, but we have never seen them eat it.

Books have to be carefully looked after. Borax must be kept on the shelves to keep away the cockroaches (that is, if the room is not screened), and the volumes must be fumigated at least once a year, or they become riddled by a borer. So far our books, in the house, have not been damaged, as they have been treated with carbon disulphide, but some, lent to other people, have been bored. If they are only lent for a short time it is all right, but, apparently, after about six months the effects begin to wear off. This same borer attacks cigars.

This is a country without dangerous inhabitants, man or animal. There are no indigenous mammals, except, perhaps, one small, blue-black bush rat. There are very few birds, only two of which interfere with man's activities, the mynah and a kite, which, of course, loves young chickens for lunch. Mosquitoes

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abound, certainly, but they are easily outwitted by screening the house ; legend says that these were imported by the white man, but the native likes to blame all evil on the white man. House flies on this island are practically unknown.

The only animals that can inflict a painful wound on man are the centipedes and the scorpions. Of the latter it is sufficient to remark that in five years we have seen three, not one of which was over an inch long, though we are told that there are some big ones to be found in the forest. Centipedes are more common, in fact we feel inclined to call our mansion "Cementipede Cottage," as, when we were getting shingle for the walls, every canoe load was crawling with them. Rather an unusual thing, surely, to find an animal that usually lives under rotting wood on the seashore, in among the shingle. Their bite is painful, but not dangerous, as J. knows from experience. His hand was swollen and sore for a few days after a bite from a big one.

The only representative of the reptiles are the nice little geckos, which help to keep the houses clear of insects, a few species of small lizards, and an occasional turtle.

Geckos love to live in houses : a strange taste

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to find in a shy class like the *Reptilia*. They become quite at home in a very short time, and occasionally leap on to one, which is rather startling for a second, as they feel something like wet india-rubber. There are some who have taken up their abode on the outside of the house, and at night, when the lamp is lit, they feast on the various insects that fly against the screen. They do not like poachers, and we often see battles when some intruder arrives. They try to seize each other by the throat, and apparently whoever manages to get this grip is the victor. They hang on like bull-dogs, and it is difficult to separate them. They cannot do one another any harm so long as the combatants are about the same size, but we have had to rescue small ones that were in danger of becoming a meal for their big brothers. They get really angry with one another, and all the time they fight they make ridiculous croaking noises. It is generally this noise that draws our attention to the battle. They are very casual about finding a suitable spot in which to lay their eggs. B. has even found them attached to her clothes, and when we lived in the old house we used to hear them roll down the ceiling, and bring up with a click against the wire that kept the rats out.

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Even the denizens of the deep seem to be less harmful than those of other seas. Although the natives are frequently in the sea, we have never seen one who has been mutilated by a shark, nor has any one been taken since we have lived here. The sharks that live in the lagoons are timid creatures, a little splashing frightens them away. Another factor in their respect for man is, probably, the abundance of fish. What shark with any sense would bother about a large, and probably tough, native when he can get all the tasty fish he needs? The harbour of Papeete is swarming with them, but people, both white and brown, are in the water all day long, without being troubled.

Not long ago we saw a proof of how well fed the local sharks are. When a beast dies near the town the owner is supposed to burn the body. This, of course, is an awful nuisance, so they are allowed to tie the body to a beacon marking the channel, and let the sharks do the rest. Two sheep were tied there on one occasion, and for the week we spent in Papeete they stayed there untouched, though the smell was enough to have brought all the hungry sharks from miles around. There were plenty about, but they were not hungry enough to bother.

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The coral is the most dangerous animal here. The slightest scratch becomes infected, unless it is at once disinfected. We have learnt to treat the slightest scratch, of any sort, coral or otherwise, as a serious wound, and consequently we have been free from the infections that come, generally through sheer carelessness, to most white people.

The natives get the most dreadful sores, and if the history is traced back, the origin is generally a scratch.

B. thoroughly enjoys messing about with horrible sores and wounds, and after she had treated a few of our own workmen her fame spread, and natives came to her from far and near. Tropical ulcers were the commonest complaint, some of them many months old. One woman had a terrible arm: from the wrist to the elbow the ulcers had merged and eaten almost to the bone. This was the most difficult case to cure, and it took months. Soon she had so many patients that three mornings a week were devoted to them. It was quite a social event, as each one generally brought a friend, and they all sat about in the garden chattering like so many paroquets.

The greatest difficulty was with small boys with sores on their legs. Rest was an essential part of

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the treatment, and anyone who has tried to keep a small boy quiet when he feels quite well will know how much effect B.'s advice had. At last she hit on a wonderful scheme. Of course, it was always obvious from the condition of the sore whether the youngster had kept more or less quiet. She threatened them that if she saw that they had been running about when she told them to stay as quiet as possible she would put iodine on them. They knew what iodine was, and hated it. The next day two of the worst cases had been running about, and had even gone into the sea, so on went the iodine. That settled the matter: no more trouble with those youngsters, and the sores got well very quickly.

Whether these people are stoics, or whether they really are insensible to pain that would be pretty acute to us, is a question in our minds. Often B. has probed an ugly wound and thoroughly cleansed it, while the patient looked on with great interest and without flinching. In the grown people this may be stocism, but it certainly could not have been in the case of one of B.'s first patients. A small boy, about six years old, was brought to her one day with his hand tied up in a gory rag. He had found a detonator, and had tried to hammer

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open a hermit crab's shell with it: naturally he lost the tops off two fingers and his thumb. The child stood with a smile while B. cleaned it up as best she could and applied iodine. The fingers were in such a mess that she thought that a doctor should do the trimming of the mangled flesh and shattered bones, so she sent him off to Papeete, with a note to our doctor to say that she would do the dressings, etc., when the child returned. A few days later back he came. The fingers had been trimmed without any anæsthetic, without pain to the patient. She had thought that the lack of pain when the child first came to her was due to numbing from the shock; but it evidently was not so, and during the weeks she dressed that hand, extracting stray splinters of bone that worked up, and probing for buried bits of brass that began to infect various parts of the hand, that youngster smiled at her and said, "No pain." It is incredible that a boy of that age could suffer with a smile, especially as the others squirmed under iodine.

B. only doctored the people for wounds, sores, or simple fevers. If there was anything strange about the complaint she ordered the sufferer to go to the hospital: advice which generally was refused. All

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sorts of queer complaints came under her notice, of strange parts of the anatomy, explained in words that are not generally used !

The natives heal in the most extraordinary manner. As long as a wound is attended to immediately, so that it does not become infected, it will be cured in about half the time it would take in a white man, at any rate in this country. Of course, the wound does generally become infected, as to them one bit of rag is as good as another. On the atoll there had been quite a lot of sickness of one sort and another. One native had a filarial abscess of the breast, which he asked J. to lance. J. did so, not very deeply, as he had not then realised that when dealing with these people one can go ahead. The native was not satisfied, and, taking the lancet from J.'s hand he stuck it in himself, twisted it around, and then squeezed, with splendid results. Then before we could stop him he picked up a filthy old piece of dungaree, which had been lying there for goodness knows how long, wiped the hole clean (?), grinned cheerfully, and said, "That 's all right." Strangely enough he did not reinfect that abscess.

It was also on the atoll that we saw a very drastic remedy for lumbago. One of the men had quite a bad

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attack, so François said he would cure him. The sick man was in ignorance of the remedy that was to be used, unfortunately for him. He was told to lie down on his face, while François took a stick, in which was embedded a large shark's tooth. With this fearsome weapon he stabbed his patient thirty-two times in the small of the back—and he stabbed with vigour! After the treatment the victim declared that he was quite cured! Of course, the tooth had not been sterilised, but no infection followed.

Some of the native remedies are very effective, but their preparation is sometimes rather a shock. On one occasion a friend of ours had a small abscess on his side. We poulticed it and lanced it, without result. An old native said he had a good native medicine, so our friend agreed to try it. The native poultice was brought in on a leaf, looking like half-cooked spinach. It seemed to start drawing the abscess immediately, so the next day another was to be put on. The native came into the room chewing vigorously, spat out a mouthful of the "spinach" and before any of us realised what he was about, clapped it on to our friend's side! The patient's face was a study, but he decided that as he had already had one prepared in the same way that he might as well leave

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it on. It cured the abscess. We found it was simply the chewed-up flower buds of *Hibiscus tileacous*.

We were always being assured by old residents that the native was absolutely without gratitude, but we refused to believe this, as B.'s first patients loaded her with chickens, fish, etc., as thanks for her help. We used to quote this as quite giving the lie to the old-timers' opinions of the natives, which we thought unjust. They would say that the presents were brought to us because the natives liked to give them, and had nothing to do with gratitude.

We still clung to our own opinion, but before long had to admit that we were wrong. By the time we began to build our house B. had doctored members of every family in the village, some of whom had brought her gifts of some sort (which she did not desire, as she was doing what she did to try to help the natives), but most of them hardly even said "Thank you." When we wanted labour to begin the house, not one of the men whom she had spent weeks in doctoring would stir off their haunches to give us even a day's work—at current wages, naturally, since we were not looking for something for nothing. We were astounded. It finished the doctoring, and convinced us that we had been very wrong in our estimate of the

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native's character. B. was wild when she thought of the many hours that she had put in, dressing stinking sores and tying up wounds, and realised that all her labour had been taken as a matter of course. Appreciation is a necessary food for good actions : without it they die of starvation.

Now, we share all the old residents' opinion of the natives. We are old residents ourselves, and we smile in a pitying manner when we hear new-comers raving about the " wonderful " natives. But we never try to correct their impressions, for we know from our own experience that it is useless. Tourists, of course, are not here long enough to learn, and go away again thinking that they have left a paradise where not even man is vile ; but those who stay here lose their rose-coloured spectacles, and then are rather apt to look at everything through smoked glasses, the disillusionment having been too great for them to be able to realise the many good points that the native has. Those people go away sadder and wiser men, and if they have been rash enough to believe in the probity of the native, they are poorer also.

Here and there one finds good, hard-working natives, and then no better servant could be wished for ; but alas ! how rare they are !



WE have now lived five years on our island, and can still be enthusiastic about its beauties. The wonderful bay, backed by the incredibly jagged outline of mountains, with ever-changing shadows as the clouds are blown across the sky, makes a scene of which the eye never tires.

For about seven or eight months in the year the weather can be depended on, fine bright days with moderate easterly winds being the usual order of things. Of course, there is occasional heavy rain and generally a shower once or twice a week, and so the hill-sides are always green and fresh.

The four or five months of the summer, or rainy season, are at times very trying, for occasionally the heavy rains go on for a week at a time, and, after an all too short spell of fine weather, come down again with renewed vigour. The winds are irregular and not to be depended on. Most of the bad weather

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commences with the wind at north-east and gradually backing to north-west. After blowing from this quarter for a day or so it backs to south-west, when the glass rises and the rain gradually lifts.

Our small property has proved itself to be an undoubted financial success, paying a steadily increasing dividend, besides increasing in value each year as the palms grow nearer to bearing age. The scarcity of labour has not worried us very much, as all our heavy work is over. One man working two or three days a week can keep the vegetable garden going, as B. takes charge of the planting of seeds, transplanting, etc., tidying up around the house, and the cutting of firewood, while about every nine months a contract is let for a thorough cleaning of the whole plantation, from boundary to boundary, which is the cheapest and easiest method of dealing with it.

After five years of pretty strenuous work, we feel that we have earned some leisure and, having the yacht, we can go off for short trips without having to worry about the property.

There is no "servant question" here! Think what that would mean to the women in many parts of the world. It is always possible to get people to do the

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house work : perhaps they won't be very efficient, but there they are to do the dirty work. As this is a country of paradoxes, it is much easier to get Chinese servants in the country districts, or to come to this island, than it is in Papeete. We now employ Chinese boys, a house boy and a cook, each of whom receives the enormous sum of 350 francs per month—about £3 5s. od. The washing is done by a native woman for £1 per month, including that for any guest we may have staying with us.

In the garden we have a native boy, one of the few good ones, who works by the day : he lives next door, and so sometimes works for weeks on end, and then will knock off for a week or so to look after his own place—an arrangement which suits us admirably. He is an excellent fisherman, uses our canoe, and then shares the catch with us ; also he is an excellent shot, and a great hand at spearing prawns. Unlike the majority of the natives, he is very intelligent, and we never have to explain a thing to him more than once ; moreover, he has lots of initiative, and can be left in charge while we go off on trips, knowing that he will find something useful to do. Like all the rest, he occasionally gets drunk, and then he comes to the house and tells us what a wonderful chap he is, and

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how much he loves us ; but he always turns up to work next morning with a smiling face, so it doesn't matter.

When a native works regularly for you, he feels that he is part of the property, and he is at your disposition at any hour of the day or night, and eager to do what you want, but you never know when something trivial happening may lose you your man. Etua, the native of whom we are speaking, used to work for us some time ago, but he disliked the head-boy, and used to appeal to B. against the orders, while Timi used to complain to J. about Etua. Eventually it came to a show-down, and Etua marched off in a huff, and for months we saw nothing of him. One day, just after we had put an engine into our sailing dinghy, which made it very useful for bonita fishing, a small girl came to B. with a string of fish for a present. Down the road we saw Etua's wife watching, so we knew at once that Etua had it in his mind to go bonita fishing in that boat. We thanked the child for the fish, and sat tight to see the next move. Two days later a large dish of prawns appeared on the kitchen table, and then one evening, as we were sitting on the verandah after dinner, a small voice called "Madame, Madame," and there was Etua, well

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primed with rum to give him courage. He recalled to our minds how he had worked for us before, said that we should not be angry with him for being drunk that night, reminded us what a fine worker he was, and what a noble heart he had, forcibly striking his chest above that organ. After a long talk he said he wanted to come back to us, at any wage we liked—which was, of course, a figure of speech. We took him back, and he has been a splendid boy ever since. He has now elevated us to the rank of his father and mother, which means that if he wants to use our canoe he just takes it, or if he wants to do some carpentering it is J.'s saw that gets blunted ; but on the other hand, his time and anything he possesses are ours. To have a " hanger-on " like this is the only way to get prawns and other native foods, which are not to be bought. It costs a few bottles of wine now and then, but that is a minor detail compared to being able to get bread-fruit, etc., when one wants it.

Much attention is being paid at present to the question of the possibility of white men, and more particularly white women, living in the tropics. We can only speak from our own experience, and it

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seems to us that temperament is a far more important factor than physical strength. Of course, there are certain types who are utterly unfitted to the rather demoralising tropical life—men, for instance, who are heavy drinkers, and women whose one idea in life is to put on beautiful clothes and display them to the green eyes of other women.

There is no possible social life for people who are above all interested in the arrival of the last baby and the cook's sins.

There is not a single shop in which it is possible to buy a book, and everything one reads must be ordered from France, England, or America. Of course, those people who are lucky enough to own books put them at the disposal of their friends, but as can be imagined, we are not as well up in the events of the literary world as we would be elsewhere. We ourselves get our knowledge of the world's events from *The Spectator*, *Punch*, *Time* (the good little American weekly), *Nature*, and a French periodical, so we manage to know pretty well what is going on, while we miss the murders and divorces of the daily papers, which is not regretted by us. We get a mail once a month from each side of the Pacific, and the latest copies of the papers are only three weeks old. There

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is a daily radio issued in the capital, but it is usually full of the latest baseball results, or news of the most recent trouble in the prize-fighting world.

We grow our own vegetables and fowls ; meat, except pork, we get from Papeete, and also ice. We slip over about once a week for these commodities ; it is possible to have them brought over at least twice a week by the schooners, but we like to go over ourselves, to see the movies and eat chop-suey.

The local fruit is very lacking in variety : bananas, melons and paw-paws all the year round ; oranges for nine months in the year, mangoes, and avocado pears for five, and occasionally custard apples, very poor ones, that would be unsaleable in any other country. Sometimes the stores in town feel enterprising and import apples and pears, or occasionally grapes. For household supplies we always keep a good supply of tinned fruits in the house.

Housekeeping is easy, so long as one does not accumulate too many ornaments, when it becomes a labour, as it is necessary to look after them with far more care than in a country where the various borers do not exist, and where the wasps are not looking for happy homes, though, of course, screening does away with that trouble.

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So many totally unsuitable people drift out here, misled by the romantic stories they have read. They think, poor things, that this is a place where two hours' work a day will keep them in comfort for the rest of their lives. Many of them spend their last cent coming here, and then find that they are in a country like any other, where the white man must work to live, unless he is a useless beach-comber and lives on some native girl who possesses a little land of her own.

Here is our advice to those who wish to come to these happy islands :—

DON'T unless you have a certain income of at least £200 per annum if you are a single man, £300 if you are married, in addition to several hundred pounds to buy a piece of land and build your house.

DON'T if you have children, unless you can afford to send them away to school. For their health there could be no better place, but the moral conditions are such that it is not a fit place in which to bring up children, especially girls.

DON'T unless you are prepared to take off your coat and work hard for a few years. Constant trips to the capital, and visits to the clubs do not go with plantation efficiency.

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DON'T if your wife loves parties and gossip. A woman to be happy here must have some interesting hobby, and if she is a fanatic about having a perfectly run house she'll go mad.

Above all, DON'T come unless you have a fully developed sense of humour. (This, unfortunately, is a thing that a person can never judge for himself!)

If you have that necessary sense of humour, private means, a small capital, an inclination to work, no children, and a wife who is a "good sport," then come! And here you will get more out of life on a microscopic income than in any other place we know. You will live your life as it pleases you, and when you are tired of "savagery" for a time, San Francisco, with its fine hotels and wonderful food, is only a week's journey.

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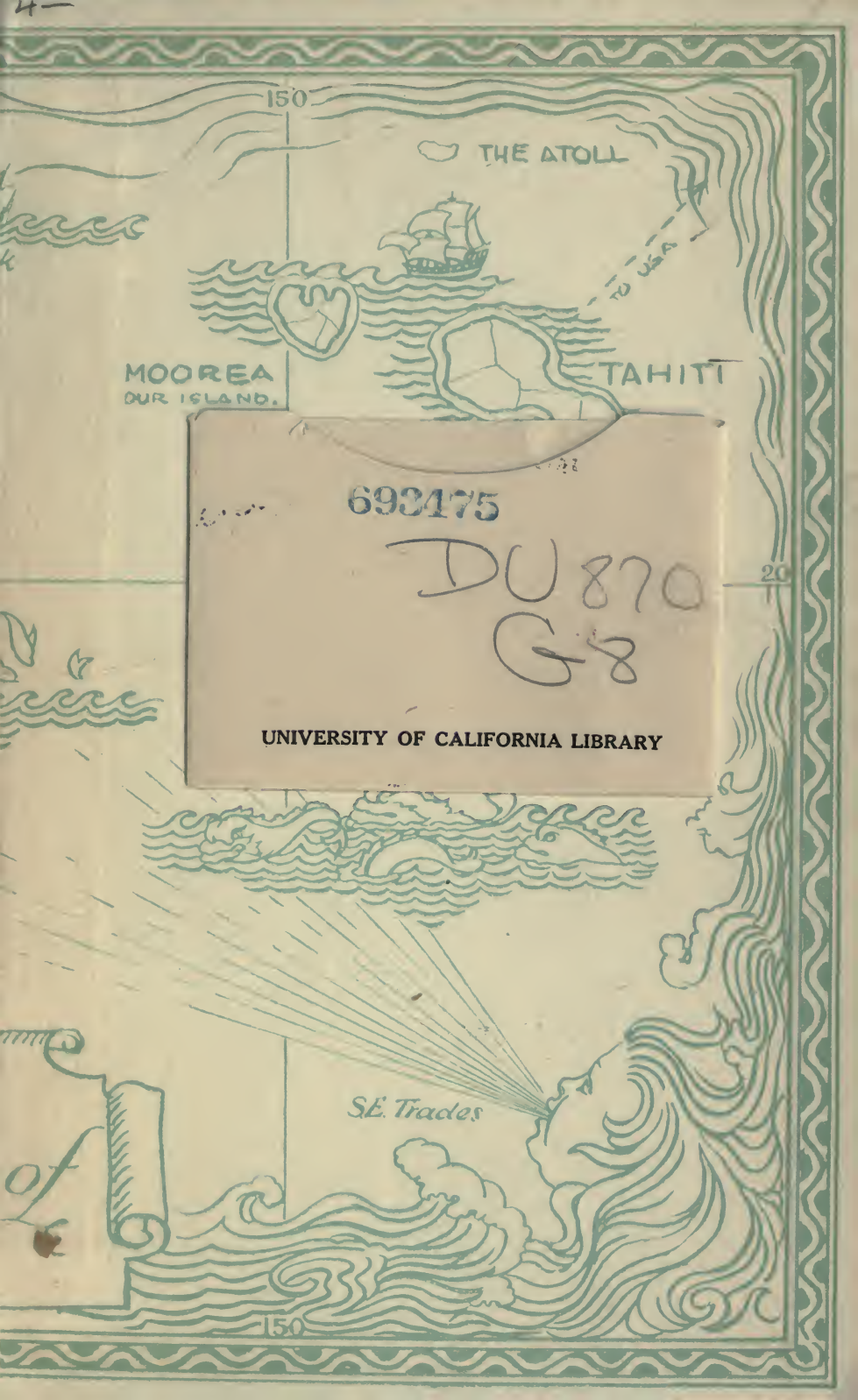
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