

A HISTORY OF FIJI.

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IV

THE Fijians had a well-organized social system which recognized six classes of society. (1) Kings and queens (Tuis and Andis). (2) Chiefs of districts (Rokos). (3) Chiefs of villages, priests (Betes), and land owners (Mata-ni-vanuas). (4) Distinguished warriors of low birth, chiefs of the carpenter caste (Rokolas), and chiefs of the turtle fishermen. (5) Common people (Kai-si). (6) Slaves taken in battle.

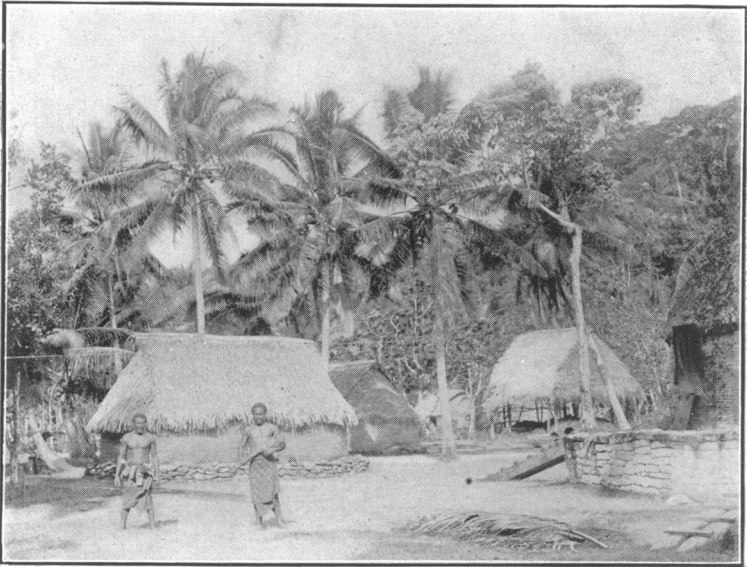
The high chiefs still inspire great respect, and indeed it has been the policy of the British government to maintain a large measure of their former authority. Thus of the 17 provinces into which the group was divided, 11 are governed by high chiefs entitled Roko Tui, and there are about 176 inferior chiefs who are the head men of districts, and 31 native magistrates. In so far as may be consistent with order and civilization these chiefs are permitted to govern in the old paternal manner, and they are veritably patriarchs of their people. The district chiefs are still elected by the land owners, mata-ni-vanuas, by a showing of hands as of old.

Independent of respect paid to those in authority, rank is still revered in Fiji. Once acting under the kind permission and advice of our generous friend Mr. Allardyce, the colonial secretary, and accompanied by my ship-mates Drs. Charles H. Townsend, and H. F. Moore, I went upon a journey of some days into the interior of Viti Levu, our guide and companion being Ratu Pope Seniloli, a grandson of king Thakombau, and one of the high chiefs of Mbau. Upon meeting Ratu Pope every native dropped his burdens, stepped to the side of the wood-path and crouched down, softly chanting the words of the tama, *muduo! wo!* No one ever stepped upon his shadow, and if desirous of crossing his path they passed in front, never behind him. Clubs were lowered in his presence, and no man stood fully erect when he was near. The very language addressed to high chiefs is different from that used in conversation between ordinary men, these customs being such that the inferior places himself in a defenceless position with respect to his superior.

It is a chief's privilege to demand service from his subjects; which was fortunate for us, for when we started down the Waidina River from Nabukaluka our canoes were so small and overloaded that the ripples were constantly lapping in over the gunwale, threatening momentarily to swamp us. Soon, however, we came upon a party of natives in a



RATU POPE SENILOLI, GRANDSON OF KING THAKOMBAU OF FIJI.



A FIJIAN VILLAGE, KAMBARA ISLAND, FIJI.

fine large canoe, and after receiving their *tama* Ratu Pope demanded: "Where are you going"? The men, who seemed somewhat awestricken, answered that it had been their intention to travel up the river. Whereupon Ratu Pope told them that this they might do, but we would take their canoe and permit them to continue in ours. To this they acceded with the utmost cheerfulness, although our noble guide would neither heed our protests nor permit us to reward them for their service, saying simply, "I am a chief. You may if you choose pay me." In this manner we continued to improve our situation by "exchanging" with every canoe we met which happened to be better than our own, until finally our princely friend ordered a gay party of merry-makers out of a fine large skiff, which they cheerfully "exchanged" for our leaky canoes and departed singing happily, feeling honored indeed that this opportunity had come to them to serve the great chief Ratu Pope Seniloli; and thus suffering qualms of conscience, we sailed to our destination leaving a wake of confusion behind us. Moreover I forgot to mention that many natives had by Ratu Pope's orders been diverted from their intended paths and sent forward to announce the coming of himself and the "American chiefs." Thus does one of the Royal house of Mbau proceed through Fiji.

At first sight such behavior must appear autocratic, to say the least, but it should be remembered that a high chief has it in his power fully to recompense those about him, and this without the payment of a penny. Indeed, many intelligent natives still regret the introduction of

money into their land, saying that all the white man's selfishness had been developed through its omnipotence. In Fiji to-day there are *no poor*, for such would be fed and given a house by those who lived beside them. The white man's callous brutality in ignoring the appeal of misery is incomprehensible to the natives of Fiji. "Progress" they have not in the sense that one man possesses vast wealth and many around him struggle helplessly, doomed to life-long poverty; nor have they ambition to toil beyond that occasional employment required to satisfy immediate wants. Yet if life be happy in proportion as the summation of its moments be contented, the Fijians are far happier than we. Old men and women rest beneath the shade of cocoa-palms and sing with the youths and maidens, and the care-worn faces and bent bodies of "civilization" are still unknown in Fiji. They still have something we have lost and never can regain.

It is impossible to draw a line between personal service such as was rendered to Ratu Pope and a regular tax (*lala*) for the benefit of the entire community or the support of the communal government; and the recognition of this fact actuated the English to preserve much of the old system and to command the payment of taxes in produce, rather than in money.

Land tenure in Fiji is a subject so complex that heavy volumes might be written upon it. In general it may be said that the chief can sell no land without the consent of his tribe. Cultivated land



THE CHIEF'S HOUSE AT NABUKALUKA, VITI LEVU ISLAND, FIJI. The white cowrie shells studding the projecting ridge pole and hanging pendant from the roof-beam indicate that the house is the residence of a chief.



THE STRANGER'S HOUSE AT MBAU IN 1899.

belonged to the man who originally farmed it, and is passed undivided to all his heirs. Waste land is held in common. Native settlers who have been taken into the tribes from time to time have been permitted to farm some of the waste land, and for this privilege they and their heirs must pay a yearly tribute to the chief either in produce or in service. Thus this form of personal lala is simply rent. The whole subject of land-ownership has given the poor English a world of trouble, as one may see who cares to read the official reports of the numerous intricate cases that have come before the courts.

For example, one party based their claims to land on the historic fact that their ancestors had eaten the chief of the original owners, and the solemn British court allowed the claim.

Basil Thomson in his interesting work upon "The Fijians; a Study of the Decline of Custom," has given an authoritative summary of the present status of taxation and land tenure, land being registered under a modification of the Australian Torrens system.

In order to protect these child-like people from the avarice of our own race they are not permitted to sell their lands, and the greater portion of the area of Fiji is still held by the natives. The Hawaiian Islands now under our own rule furnish a sad contrast, for here the natives are reduced by poverty to a degraded state but little above that of peonage. The Fijians, on the other hand, may not sell, but may with the consent of the commissioner of native affairs lease their lands for a period of not more than twenty years.

The Fijians appear never to have been wholly without a medium of exchange, for sperm-whale's teeth have always had a recognized purchasing power, but are more especially regarded as a means of expressing good will and honesty of purpose. A whale's tooth is as effective to secure compliance with the terms of a bargain as an elaborately engraved bond would be with us. More commonly, however, exchanges are direct, each man bringing to the village green his taro, yaqona, yams or fish and exchanging with his neighbors; the rare disputes being settled by the village chief.

In traveling you will discover no hotels, but will be entertained in the stranger's houses, and in return for your host's hospitality you should make presents to the chief. Indeed to journey in good fashion you should be accompanied by a train of bearers carrying heavy bags full of purposed gifts, and nowhere in the world is the "rate per mile" higher than in Polynesia.

As in all communities, including our own world of finance, a man's wealth consists not only in what he possesses but even more so in the number of people from whom he can beg or borrow. Wilkes records an interesting example of this, for he found that the rifle and other costly presents he had presented to King Tanoa were being seized upon by his (Tanoa's) nephew who as his *vasu* had a right to take whatever he might select from the king's possessions. Indeed, in order to keep his property in sight, Tanoa was forced to give it to his own sons, thus escaping the rapacity of his nephew. The construction of the British law is such that a *vasu* who thus appropriates property to himself could



END OF THE STRANGER'S HOUSE, MBAU, FIJI.

be sued and forced to restore it, but not a single Fijian has yet been so mean as to bring such a matter into court.

An individual as such can hardly be said to own property, for nearly all things belong to his family or clan, and are shared among cousins. This condition is responsible for that absence of personal ambition and that fatal contentment with existing conditions, which strikes the white man as so illogical, but which is nevertheless the dominant feature of the social fabric of the Polynesians, and which has hitherto prevented the introduction of "ideals of modern progress." The natives are happy; why work when every reasonable want is already supplied? None are rich in material things, but none are beggars excepting in the sense that all are such. No one can be a miser, a capitalist, a banker, or a "promoter" in such a community, and thieves are almost unknown. Indeed, the honesty of the Fijians is one of those virtues which has excited the comment of travelers. Wilkes, who loathed them as "condor-eyed savages," admits that the only thing which any native attempted to steal from the *Peacock* was a hatchet, and upon being detected the chief requested the privilege of taking the man ashore in order that he might be roasted and eaten. Theft was always severely punished by the chief; Maafu beating a thief with the stout stalk of a cocoonut leaf until the culprit's life was despaired of, and Tui Thakau wrapping one in a tightly wound rope so that not a muscle could move while the wretch remained exposed for an entire day to the heat of the sun.

During Professor Alexander Agassiz's cruises in which he visited nearly every island of the Fijis, and the natives came on board by hundreds, not a single object was stolen, although things almost priceless in native estimation lay loosely upon the deck. Once, indeed, when the deck was deserted by both officers and crew and fully a hundred natives were on board, we found a man who had been gazing wistfully for half an hour at a bottle which lay upon the laboratory table. Somehow he had managed to acquire a shilling, a large coin in Fiji, and this he offered in exchange for the coveted bottle. One can never forget his shout of joy and the radiance of his honest face as he leaped into his canoe after having received it as a gift.

Even the great chief Ratu Epele of Mbau beamed with joy when presented with a screw-capped glass tobacco jar, and Tui Thakau of Somo somo had a veritable weakness for bottles and possessed a large collection of these treasures.

Intelligent and well-educated natives who know whereof they speak have told me that they desire not the white man's system, entailing as it does untold privation and heart-burnings to the many that the few may enjoy a surfeit of mere material things. As the natives say, "The white man possesses more than we, but his life is full of toil and sorrow, while our days are happy as they pass."

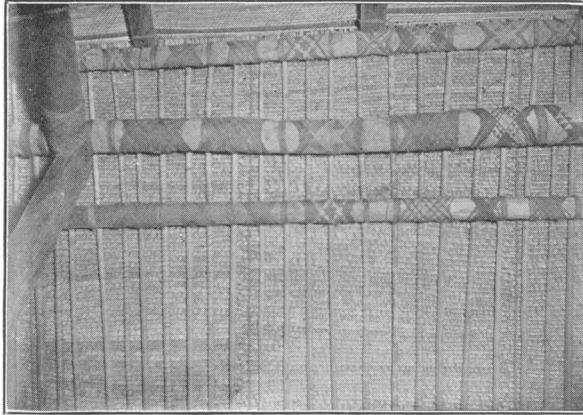
Thus in the Pacific life is of to-day; the past is dead, and the future when it comes will pass as to-day is passing. Life is a dream, an evanescent thing, all but meaningless, and real only as is the murmur of the surf when the sea-breeze comes in the morning, and man awakens from the oblivion of night.

Hoarded wealth inspires no respect in the Pacific, and indeed, were it discovered, its possession would justify immediate confiscation. Yet man must raise idols to satisfy his instinct to worship things above his acquisition, and thus rank is the more revered because respect for property is low. Even to-day there is something god-like in the presence of the high chiefs, and none will cross the shadow of the king's house. Even in war did a common man kill a chief he himself was killed by men of his own tribe.

As it is with property so with relationships. The family ties seem loosened; every child has two sets of parents, the adopted and the real, and relationships founded upon adoption are more respected than the real. Rank descends mainly through the mother. The son of a high chief by a common woman is a low chief, or even a commoner, but the son of a chieftainess by a common man is a chief. Curiously, there are no words in Fijian which are the exact equivalent of widow and widower. In the Marshall group the chief is actually the husband of all the women of his tribe, and as Lorimer Fison has said in his "Tales from Old Fiji," their designation and understanding of relationships suggests that there was once a time when "all the women were the wives of every man, and all the men were the husbands of every woman," as indeed was almost the case in Tahiti at the time of Captain Cook's visit to this island.

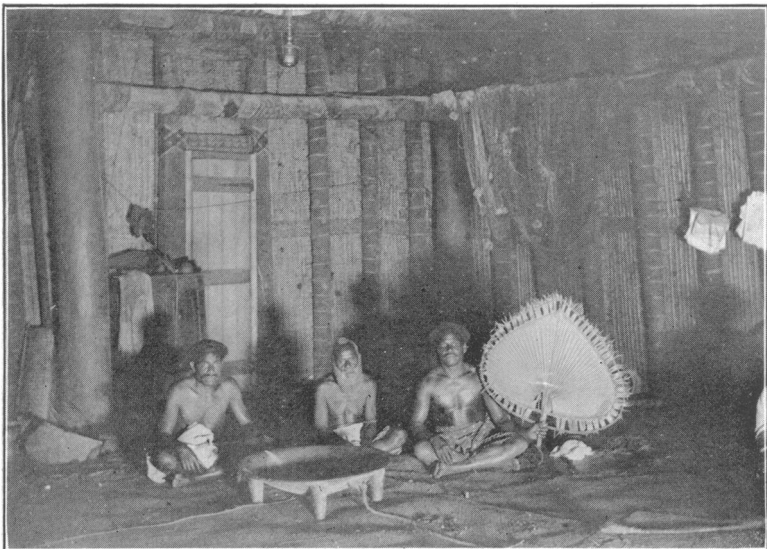
The social customs of Fiji are rarely peculiar to Fiji itself, but commonly show their relationship or identity with those of the Polynesians or Papuans. Curiously indeed, while the original stock of the Fijians was probably pure Papuan, their social and economic systems are now dominated by Polynesian ideas, and only among the mountain tribes do we find a clear expression of the crude Papuan systems of life and thought. This in itself shows that under stimulation the Fijians are capable of advancement in cultural ideals.

This superposition of a Polynesian admixture upon a barbarous negroid stock may account for the anomalous character of the Fijians, for in the arts they equalled or in some things excelled the other island peoples of the Pacific, and some of their customs approached closely to the cultural level of the Polynesians, but in certain fundamental things they remained the most fiendish savages upon earth. Indeed we should expect that contact with a somewhat high culture would introduce new wants, and thus affect their arts more profoundly than their customs.



COCOANUT FIBER SENNIT WOUND AROUND THE ROOT-BEAMS OF A CHIEF'S HOUSE AT MBAU, FIJI.

In common with all primitive peoples, their names of men and women are descriptive of some peculiarity or circumstance associated with the person named. Indeed, names were often changed after important events in a person's life, thus our old friend Thakombau began life as Seru, then after the *coup d'état* in which he slaughtered his father's enemies and reestablished Tanoa's rule in Mbau he was called Thakombau (evil to Mbau). At the time he also received another name Thikinovu (centipede) in allusion to his stealthiness in approaching to bite his enemy, but this designation, together with his "mis-



INTERIOR OF THE CHIEF'S HOUSE AT NABUKALUKA, FIJI, SHOWING THE YAGONA BOWL AND CEREMONIAL FAN.

sionary" name "Ebenezer," did not survive the test of usage. Miss Gordon Cumming gives an interesting list of Fijian names translated into English. For women they were such as Spray of the Coral Reef, Queen of Parrot's Land, Queen of Strangers, Smooth Water, Wife of the Morning Star, Mother of Her Grandchildren, Ten Whale's Teeth, Mother of Cockroaches, Lady Nettle, Drinker of Blood, Waited For, Rose of Rewa, Lady Thakombau, Lady Flag, etc. The men's names were such as The Stone (eternal) God, Great Shark, Bad Earth, Bad Stranger, New Child, More Dead Man's Flesh, Abode of Treachery,

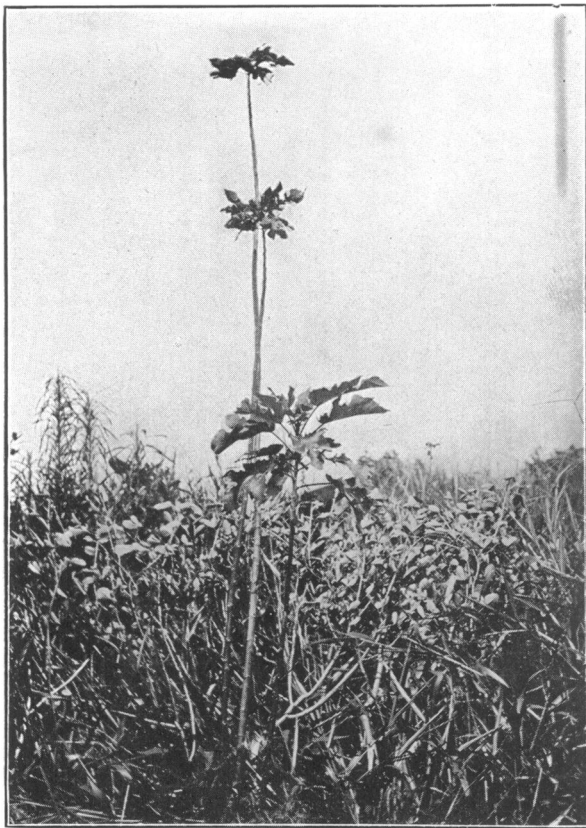


A MEKE IN THE CHIEF'S HOUSE AT KAMBARA, FIJI.

Not Quite Cooked, Die Out of Doors, Empty Fire, Fire in the Bush, Eats Like a God, King of Gluttony, Ill Cooked, Dead Man, Revenge, etc.

In the religion of a people we have the most reliable clue to the history of their progress in culture and intelligence, for religions even when unwritten are potent to conserve old conceptions, and thus their followers advance beyond them, as does the intelligence of the twentieth century look pityingly upon the conception of the cruel and jealous God of the Old Testament, whose praises are nevertheless still sung in every Christian church. Thus in Tahiti the people were not cannibals, but the gods still appeared in the forms of birds that fed upon the bodies of the sacrificed. The eye of the victim was, indeed, offered to the chief, who raised it to his lips but did not eat it. In Samoa also

where the practise of cannibalism was very rare and indulged in only under great provocation, some of the gods remained cannibals, and the surest way of appeasing any god was to be laid upon the stones of a cold oven. In Tahiti and Samoa, while most of the gods were malevolent, a few were kindly disposed towards mortals; in Fiji, however, they were all dreaded as the most powerful, sordid, cruel and vicious



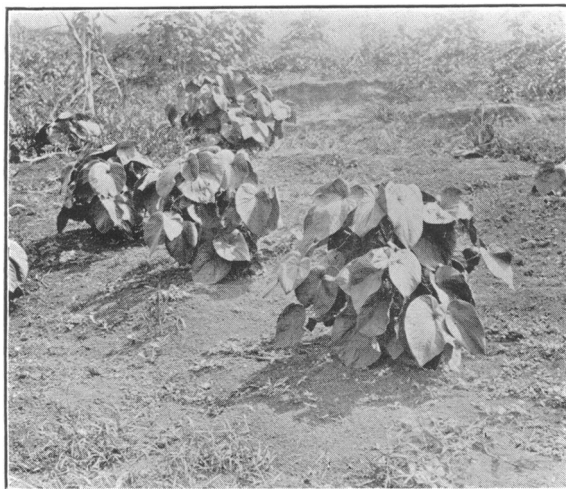
THE PAPER MULBERRY FROM THE INNER BARK OF WHICH TAPA IS MADE.

cannibal ghosts that have ever been conjured into being in the realm of thought.

All over the Pacific from New Zealand to Japan, and from New Guinea to Hawaii, ancestor-worship forms the backbone of every religion as clearly as it did in Greece or Rome. There are everywhere one or more very ancient gods who may always have existed and from whom all others are descended. Next in order of reverence, although not always in power, come their children, and finally the much more numerous grandchildren and remote descendants of these oldest and highest gods. Finally, after many generations, men of chieftain's rank

were born to the gods. Thus a common man could never attain the rank of a high chief, for such were the descendants of the gods, while commoners were created out of other clay and designed to be servants to the chiefs.

But the process of god-making did not end with the appearance of men, for great chiefs and warriors after death became kalou yalo, or spirits, and often remained upon earth a menace to the unwary who might offend them. Curiously, these deified mortals might suffer a second death which would result in their utter annihilation, and while in Fiji we heard a tale of an old chief who had met with the ghost of



YAQUONA, OR KAVA, PLANTS GROWING IN A FIJIAN'S GARDEN. The roots are used in brewing the drink called yaquona in Fiji, and kava in Samoa.

his dead enemy and had killed him for the second and last time; the club which served in this miraculous victory having been hung up in the Mbure as an object of veneration.

Of a still lower order were the ghosts of common men or of animals, and most dreaded of all was the vengeful spirit of the man who had been devoured. The ghosts of savage Fiji appear all to have been malevolent and fearful beings, whereas those of the more cultured Polynesians were some of them benevolent. As Ellis says of the Tahitian mythology:

Each lovely island was made a sort of fairyland and the spells of enchantment were thrown over its varied scenes. The sentiment of the poet that

“Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth,
Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep”

was one familiar to their minds, and it is impossible not to feel interested in a people who were accustomed to consider themselves surrounded by invisible

intelligences, and who recognized in the rising sun, the mild and silver moon, the shooting star, the meteor's transient flame, the ocean's roar, the tempest's blast, or the evening breeze the movements of mighty spirits.

The gods and ghosts of Fiji often entered into the bodies of animals or men, especially idiots.

Thus when the Carnegie Institution Expedition arrived at the Murray Islands in Torres Straits, the scientific staff were much pleased at the decided evidences of respect shown by the natives until it came out that the Islanders considered their white guests to be semi-idiots, and hence powerful sorcerers to be placated. Fijian religion had developed into the oracular stage, and the priest after receiving prayers and offerings would on occasions be entered into by the god. Tremors would overspread his body, the flesh of which would creep horribly. His veins would swell, his eyeballs protrude with excitement and his voice, becoming quavering and unnatural, would whine out strange words, words spoken by the god himself and unknown to the priest who as his unconscious agent was overcome by violent convulsions. Slowly the contortions grew less and with a start the priest would awaken, dash his club upon the ground and the god would leave him. It may well be imagined that the priests were the most powerful agents of the chiefs in forwarding the interests of their masters, for, as in ancient Greece or Rome, nothing of importance was undertaken without first consulting the oracle.

Surrounded by multitudes of demons, ghosts, and genii who were personified in everything about him, religion was the most powerful factor in controlling Fijian life and politics. In fact, it entered deeply into every act the native performed. The gods were more monstrous in every way than man, but in all attributes only the exaggerated counterparts of Fijian chiefs.

War was constantly occurring among these gods and spirits, and even high gods could die by accident or be killed by those of equal rank so that at least one god, Samu, was thus dropped out of the mythology in 1847.

Ndengei was the oldest and greatest, but not the most universally revered god. He lived in a cavern in the northeastern end of Viti Levu, and usually appeared as a snake, or as a snake's head with a body of stone symbolizing eternal life. Among the sons and grandsons of Ndengei were Roko Mbatindua, the one-toothed lord; a fiend with a huge tooth projecting from his lower jaw and curving over the top of his head. He had bat's wings armed with claws and was usually regarded as a harbinger of pestilence. The mechanic's god was eight-handed, gluttony had eighty stomachs, wisdom possessed eight eyes. Other gods were the adulterer, the abductor of women of rank and beauty, the rioter, the brain-eater, the killer of men, the slaughter god,

the god of leprosy, the giant, the spitter of miracles, the gods of fishermen and of carpenters, etc. One god hated mosquitoes and drove them away from the place where he lived. The names and stations of the gods are described by Thomas Williams, who has given the most detailed account of the old religion.

As with all peoples whose religion is barbarous, there were ways of obtaining sanctuary and many a man has saved his life by taking advantage of the tabus which secured their operation. No matter how desirous your host might be of murdering you, as long as you remained a guest under his roof you were safe, although were you only a few yards away from his door he would eagerly attack you.

But not only did the Fijians live in a world peopled by witches, wizards, prophets, seers and fortune-tellers, but there was a perfect army of fairies which overran the whole land, and the myths concerning which would have filled volumes could they ever have been gathered. The gnome-like spirits of the mountains had peaked heads, and were of a vicious, impish disposition, but were powerless to injure any one who carried a fern leaf in his hand.

Sacred relics such as famous clubs, stones possessing miraculous powers, etc., were sometimes kept in Fijian temples, but there were no idols such as were prayed to by the Polynesians.

The fearful alternatives of heaven and hell were unknown to the Fijians. They believed in an eternal existence for men, animals, and even canoes and other inanimate things, but the future life held forth no prospect either of reward for virtues or punishment for evil acts committed while alive. So certain were they of a future life that they always referred to the dead as "the absent ones," and their land of shades (Mbulu) was not essentially different from the world they lived in. Indeed, their chief idea of death was that of rest, for as William's states, they have an adage: "Death is easy: Of what use is life? To die is rest."

There were, however, certain precautions the Fijian felt it advisable to take before entering the world to come. If he had been so unfortunate as not to have killed a man, woman or child, his duty would be the dismal one of pounding filth throughout eternity, and disgraceful careers awaited those whose ears were not bored or women who were not tattooed upon parts covered by the liku. Moreover, should a wife not accompany him (be strangled at the time of his death) his condition would be the dismal one of a spirit without a cook. Thirdly, as one was at the time of death so would the spirit be in the next world. It was therefore an advantage to die young, and people often preferred to be buried alive, or strangled, than to survive into old age. Lastly and most important, one must not die a bachelor, for such are invariably dashed to pieces by Nanggananga, even if they should succeed in elud-

ing the grasp of the Great Woman, Lewa-levu, who haunts the path of the departed spirits and searches for the ghosts of good-looking men. Let us imagine, however, that our shade departs this life in the best of form, young, married, with the lobes of his ears pierced, not dangerously handsome and a slayer of at least one human being. He starts upon the long journey to the Valhalla of Fiji. Soon he comes to a spiritual Pandanus at which he must throw the ghost of the whale's tooth which was placed in his hand at time of burial. If he succeeds in hitting the Pandanus, he may then wait until the spirit of his strangled wife comes to join him, after which he boards the canoe of the Fijian Charon and proceeds to Nambangatai, where until 1847 there dwelt the god Samu, and after his death Samuyalo "the killer of souls."

This god remains in ambush in some spiritual mangrove bushes and thrusts a reed within the ground upon the path of the ghost as a warning not to pass the spot. Should the ghost be brave he raises his club in defiance, whereupon Samuyalo appears, club in hand, and gives battle. If killed in this combat, the ghost is cooked and eaten by the soul killer, and if wounded he must wander forever among the mountains, but if the ghost be victorious over the god he may pass on to be questioned by Ndengei, who may consign him either to Mburotu, the highest heaven, or drop him over a precipice into a somewhat inferior but still tolerable abode, Murimuria. This Ndengei does in accordance with the caprice of the moment and without reference either to the virtues or the faults of the deceased. Thus of those who die only a few can enter the higher heaven for the Great Woman and the Soul destroyer overcome the greater number of those who dare to face them. As for the victims of cannibal feasts, their souls are devoured by the gods when their bodies are eaten by man.

In temperament and ambitions the spirits of the dead remained as they were upon earth, but of more monstrous growth in all respects, resembling giants greater and more vicious than man. War and cannibalism still prevailed in heaven, and the character of the inhabitants seems to have been fiendish or contemptible as on earth; for the spirits of women who were not tattooed were unceasingly pursued by their more fortunate sisters, who tore their bodies with sharp shells, often making mince-meat of them for the gods to eat. Also the shade of any one whose ears had not been pierced was condemned to carry a masi log over his shoulder and submit to the eternal ridicule of his fellow spirits.

Altogether, this religion seems to have been as sordid, brutal and vicious as was the ancestral negroid stock of the Fijians. Connected with it there was, however, a rude mythology, clumsy but romantic, too much of which has been lost; for the natives of to-day have largely forgotten its stories or are ashamed to repeat it to the whites. In recent

times the natives have tended to make their folk-lore conform to Biblical stories, or to adapt them to conditions of the present day. The interesting subject of the lingering influence of old beliefs upon the life of the natives of to-day has engaged the attention of Basil Thomson in "The Fijians, a Study of the Decay of Custom."

As in every British colony, the people are taught to respect the law. Sentences of imprisonment are meted out to natives for personal offences which if committed by white men would be punished by small fines, but the reason for this is that in the old native days such acts were avenged by murder, and it is to prevent crime that a prison term has been ordained. The natives take their imprisonment precisely as boys in boarding school regard a flogging, the victim commonly becoming quite a hero and losing no caste among his fellows. Indeed it is a common sight to see bands of from four to eight stalwart "convicts" a mile or more from the prison marching unguarded through the woods as they sing merrily on their way "home" to the jail. Once I recall seeing two hundred prisoners, all armed with long knives, engaged in cutting weeds along the roadside, chanting happily as they slashed, while a solitary native dressed only in a waist-cloth and armed only with a club stood guard at one end of the line, and this not near the prison, but in a lonely wood fully a mile from the nearest house.

In 1874, the British undertook the unique task of civilizing without exploiting a barbarous and degraded race which was drifting hopelessly into ruin. They began the solution of this complex problem by arresting the entire race and immuring them within the protecting walls of a system which recognized as its cardinal principle that the natives were unfit to think or act for themselves. For a generation the Fijians have been in a prison wherein they have become the happiest and best behaved captives upon earth. During this time they have become reconciled to a life of peace, and have forgotten the taste of human flesh; and while they cherish no love for the white man, they feel the might of his law and know that his decrees are as finalities of fate. All are serving life sentences to the white man's will, and the fire of their old ambition has cooled into the dull embers of resignation and then died into the apathy of contentment with things that are. Worse still, they have grown fond of their prison world, and the most pessimistic feature in the Fijian situation of to-day is the evident fact that there is almost no discontent among the natives. Old things have withered and decayed, but new ambition has not been born.

It is in no spirit of criticism of British policy that I have written the above paragraph for it was absolutely necessary that the race should "calm down" for a generation at least before it could be trusted to arise. Now, however, there are no more old chiefs whose memories hark back to days of savagery, and now for the first and only time has

come the critical period in the unique governmental experiment the British have undertaken to perform, for now is the time when the child must learn to walk alone and the support of guardian arms must in kindness be withdrawn, else there must be nurtured but a cripple, not a man.

Among the generation of to-day the light of a new ambition must appear in Fiji or the race shall dwindle to its death. No *real progress* has been made by the Fijians; they have received much from their teachers, but have given nothing in return. They are in the position of a youth whose schooling has just been finished, life and action lie before him; will he awaken to his responsibility, develop his latent talent, character and power, and recompense his teachers by achievement, or will he sink into the apathy of a vile content?

The situation in Fiji is one of peculiar delicacy for the desire for better things must arise among the Fijians themselves, and should it once appear, the paternalism of the present government must be wisely withdrawn to permit of more and more freedom in proportion as the natives may become competent to think and act rightly for themselves. A cardinal difficulty is the unfortunate fact that the natives *desire* no change, and even if individually discontented and ambitious, they know of no profession, arts or trades to which they might turn with hope of fortune. The establishment of manual training schools wherein money-making trades should be taught, if possible *by native* teachers, is sorely needed in Fiji.

At present there is too little freedom of thought in Fiji; fear of the chief and of Samuyalo's club has been replaced by fear of the European and his hell. Free, fearless thought is the father of high action, and while their minds remain steeped in an apathy of dread there can be no soil in which the seed of independence can germinate.

Yet it is still *possible* that the Fijians may attain civilization. Of all the archipelagoes of Polynesia, Fiji alone may still be called the "Isles of Hope." As one who has known and grown to love these honest, hospitable, simple people, I can only hope that the day is not far distant when a leader may arise among them who will turn their faces toward the light of a brighter sky, and their hands to a worthier task than has ever yet been performed in Polynesia.

Yet why civilize them? Often does one ask oneself this question, but the answer comes as the voice of fate, "they must attain civilization, or they must die." Should the population continue to decline at its present rate, the time is imminent when the dark-skinned men of Fiji will be not the natives, but the swarming progeny of the coolies of Calcutta.

Nowhere over all the wide Pacific have the natives been more wisely or unselfishly ruled than in Fiji, yet even here native life seems to be

growing less and less purposeful year by year. In time it is hoped a reaction may set in and that with the decline of communism new ambitions may replace the old, but then will come the problem of the rich and the poor—a thing unknown in Fijian life to-day.

Hardly the first lessons in civilization have been taught in Polynesia, yet who can predict the noon day, should even the faintest glow appear in native hope. In former ages the Japanese were a barbarous insular people, and as in our own civilization the traditions and habits of rude Aryan ancestors still color our fundamental thoughts so in Japan we find evidences of a culture essentially similar to that of the Pacific Islands of to-day. The ancient ancestor worship of Japan is strangely like that of the tropical Pacific with its gods, the ghosts of long departed chiefs, and its high chief a living god to-day. Moreover in the Pacific Islands the house consists of but a single room, and such to-day is essentially the case in Japan, save only that delicate paper screens divide its originally unitary floor-space into temporary compartments. As in the South Seas, matting still covers the floor of the Japanese house, its roof is thatched, and is constructed before the sides are made, there is no chimney, the fire-place is an earthen space upon the floor or is sustained within an artistically molded bronze brazier, the refined descendant of the cruder hearth. In Polynesia as in Japan one seats oneself anywhere in tailor-fashion upon the floor, and upon this floor the meals are served, and here one sleeps at night, nor will the women partake of food in the presence of the men. In essential fundamental things of life the Japanese show their kinship in custom and tradition to the insular peoples of Asiatic origin now occupying the Pacific, and if Japan has attained to so great a height in culture and civilization, why may we not hope for better days for the South Sea Islanders?