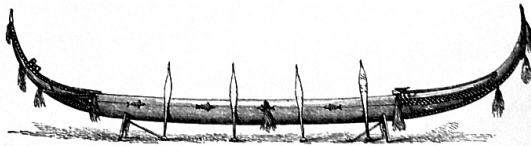


JOTTINGS
DURING THE
CRUISE OF H.M.S. CURAÇOA
AMONG
THE SOUTH SEA ISLANDS
IN
1865

BY
JULIUS L. BRENCHLEY, M.A., F.R.G.S.

With NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS and NATURAL HISTORY NOTICES



CANOE, ULAKUA

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Fiji Chapters 7-9, pp.143-192

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CHAPTER VII.

OVALAU — FIJI GROUP.

(JULY 26 To 29.)

The island of Neau—Anchorage at Levuka—A visit on shore—The consul and his clerk absent— Russell and his wares—A French lady and her turn for natural history—Excursion into the interior—Pools at the waterfall of Waitoba—Method of kindling wood—Appearance of the natives.

On July 22, a little before midday, the 'Curaçoa' weighed and stood off from Tongatabu in order to make for the Fiji Islands. The 'Falcon' which was going to New Zealand, left at the same time, having on board Commander Duff, whose wound, received more than a year before in a fight with the Maories, would not heal in the climate of these islands ; the commodore replaced him by Lieutenant Dent, who had already on several occasions acted in this capacity.

We had calculated upon taking with us the chief Maafu as our pilot and interpreter, but, at the last moment, King George objected to this, on the plausible ground that during a previous stay in the Fiji Islands the young chief had given himself up to drink.

A gentle breeze and a superb sea enabled its to go under sail all the way, On July 4. in the afternoon, we threaded our way through some twenty small islands of different sizes, all much more elevated than those of the Friendly Islands.

After having passed through the reef of Bocatatanoa (or of the great Argo) and the Reids Islands, we found ourselves in the waters of the island of Neau, in face of the anchorage of Lakemba, where the commodore had an idea of stopping, but at the moment of standing in, he changed his mind, and determined to bear off for the purpose of reaching Levuka in the island of Ovalau. The weather was very fine, though the heat and humidity were greater than at Tongatabu. Huge swarms of flying fish sported around our ship as we made our way between the reef of Mothe, at the southern extremity of the isle of Nairai, and the island of Ngau. All these islands and others which we sighted were surrounded by reefs and breakers. We saw in the distance a pretty little cutter, which was making its way in the direction of Tongatabu, having a number of natives on board, among whom we fancied we saw two white men.

On July 26, at dawn, the weather glorious, the 'Curaçoa' got up her steam to pass through a number of islands of considerable elevation, curious forms, and all of them surrounded by reefs. They had the appearance of being volcanic, some fertile, some barren, the highest of them attaining a clear elevation of more than 2000 feet. We were not long in coming upon the island of Mbau, while in the distance before us, the outline of the island of Viti-Levu, the largest of the Fiji group, began to disclose itself. We now bore down upon Levuka, the port of Ovalau, which pleased us exceedingly by the pretty configuration of its coast and uplands. Before reaching the reef, which bars the port, a boat-full of natives came out to meet us, and put on board one of its crew who spoke English well, and could act as our pilot. The channel is quite wide enough to be easily run into under sail in a fine wind, and of course was easy of access and without any danger under steam. The water within the reef was calm and smooth as glass.



LEVUKA.

A number of houses were visible on the shore, and the surrounding landscape was remarkably picturesque, with its valleys and deep gorges. We dropped anchor about half-past 12 p.m. in thirteen fathoms close to the shore, under a high cliff which comes down to the beach.

To lose no time I went ashore in the boat, which had brought the pilot, and made at once for the English consul's. The only person I found there was a clerk, a Mr. Scott, from whom I learnt that the consul, Captain Jones, who has received the Victoria Cross, had left a week before for the purpose of exploring the interior of Viti-Levu, a place quite unknown to the Whites, and of attempting to cross it at its greatest width which is fifty miles, its length being about eighty miles. Mr. Scott informed me that the Commodore would have had a good in any matters to settle had Captain Jones been upon the spot. This of course made our regret at his absence all the greater. I learnt from Mr. Scott that there are 60 Whites in the island, and 350 in the whole group; that it is in the three Fiji islands belonging to the

Tongans that these islanders come to build those large canoes on the construction of which the labour of years is employed; that cotton is cultivated in the island of Ovalau, and that at Rewa, on the island of Viti-Levu, several foreigners cultivate it on a certain scale; and that orange cowries are only to be found on the western coast of Viti-Levu, between the point of Rewa on the south-east and the island of Liku on the south-west. The Consul's secretary had a single specimen of this shell, but so handsome and perfect that he proposed selling it for not less than £3. I visited several vendors of curiosities who all set an exorbitant price on their articles; a notion of which may be derived from the sum asked me by an old sailor of the name of Russell for a root of sandalwood weighing twenty pounds, for which he wanted fifty dollars, or about ten shillings a pound, because, as he said, this kind of wood was selling at the port from £50 to £65 the ton; he also asked me £2 for a Pandanus mat from Rotuma, which I had to know was not worth more than ten shillings. I saw nothing in the business line could be done with this cunning, bronze-faced old tar, but when on the point of leaving him he asked me if I should like to see his two babies, to which paternal proposition I, of course, assented. He then, to my surprise, brought me two old wooden goddesses— native idols, dressed in long baby clothes, with very flat faces, mother-of-pearl eyes, with their sexual characteristics clearly defined and very remarkably developed, observing, as he handed them to me, 'Ain't it curious that these people should worship such things

as these; I can't make it out.' The costume of these divinities was an addition of his own.¹ Another salesman showed me a model of a *buru*, or Fijian temple, made entirely of sinnet, for which he would not take less than four guineas two specimens of these buris formed part of my collection.'

In the midst of a crowd which had gathered on the shore, on account of our appearance in port, I was very much surprised to see two white women, and to hear them speak French. One of them, an English Woman, was the schoolmistress, who had lived in France from six to seven years, the wife of a man that deserted her after the birth of a daughter married in the island to a Mr. Moakler, the owner of an estate on which he intends cultivating coffee. The other was a very nice-looking French woman from Montpellier, the wife of Dr. Graaffe, a German naturalist, in the employ of the house of Godefroy of Hamburg, then absent, having accompanied Captain Jones in his exploring visit to Viti-Levu. Madame Graaffe came with the greater part of the foreigners living in the island to pay a visit to the Commodore. On this occasion she requested to be introduced into my workshop; and there every thing she did and said proved to me that she was at least the assistant naturalist of

1. Williams, 'Fiji and the Fijians,' vol. i. p. 177, speaks of 'grim, immodest representations of the human figure about eighteen inches long, which are used on the larger islands to terrify the children into quietness.' My friend's goddesses may have belonged to this category. The probability is, that all such images have relation to that worship of the principle of generation everywhere diffused.

2 One of them has been presented to the Christy Museum.

her husband, and that she had hit upon her right vocation in marrying a collector. I saw her touch the most disagreeable objects which were in process of preparation, such as skins partly flayed, plunge her fingers into arsenical soap, smell at everything, try the strength of the forceps, handle dissecting instruments, none of which assuredly tended to perfume her hands; in a word, she was fond of her occupation, and not ashamed to show it. As a matter of course she invited me to visit her curiosity shop, which I took good care to do. I went there that very evening with Lieutenant Meade, an officer not only full of professional zeal, but anxious for every kind of information. Madame Graaffe lived in a very small wooden house, unpleasantly warm from all the windows being closed, and in which there was scarcely room to turn about, so crammed was it with objects belonging to the doctor's collection. Two women servants, natives of the Samoan Isles, were asleep on a mat in the first room with their mistress's baby between them. The collection being particularly rich in mollusks, I begged Madame Graaffe to make a selection of shells for me peculiar to the Fiji Islands. She was lively and communicative; what with her chat first about herself, then her shells, and then her husband, I began to think I should never get away. When the selection was made of shells and other things, then came the packing up; and, as there were a great many minute species of land-shells, they required careful packing; the consequence was, it was past 12 P.M. before all was ready. Now came another important part of the process, paying for the whole. I

asked what, she wanted for the lot, and she said she would leave it to me; a most objectionable way of proceeding.

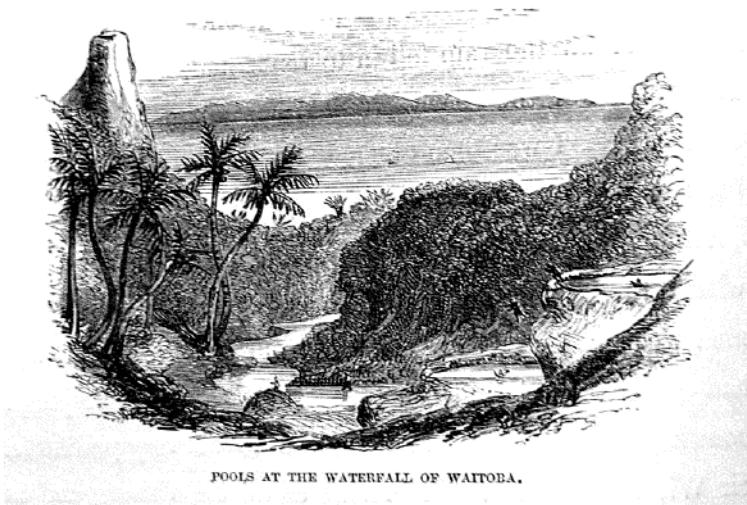
All I could say she would not name a price, laughing and talking all the time. So finding it useless to try any more, I said, three pounds, then four, and paused, and asked her if she were satisfied; and seeing clearly she was not, said five pounds, intending to go no further, and then asked if she were not satisfied now; she said she was; whereupon I laughingly took the liberty of suggesting to her she might as well have stated her price at once. While all this was going on the rain fell in torrents, and, what is unusual at this time of the year, there were from time to time claps of thunder. I was then obliged to face the storm, and got back to the ship about one in the morning.

Among the white men who visited the 'Curaçoa,' and whom the Commodore received in a friendly way, was a man wearing two silver medals, an old English soldier, who had come to the island I know not how, and was keeping a boarding-house, which did not seem to be very profitable. Sir William offered refreshments to all his visitors, and at the same time ordered the ship's band to play different pieces for their amusement.

There is but one missionary in the island, Mr. Moore, who lives with his wife on a slight eminence about half a mile from the sea. I paid him a flying visit one day as I was on my way into the interior of the island. He told me he was born in Sidney, and was obliging enough to procure me guides. I walked for two miles along the foot of a

high crag, which appeared to me composed of coarse conglomerate. I then went as far as a cascade, which had nothing remarkable in it, and clambered up its rocks in search of ferns.

Mr. Foljambe in his rambles was fortunate enough to meet with a fine waterfall, of which we have here his sketch, about a mile and a half from the settlement, which consisted of a succession of falls terminating in deep, narrow pools. Natives were found jumping down the falls from one pool

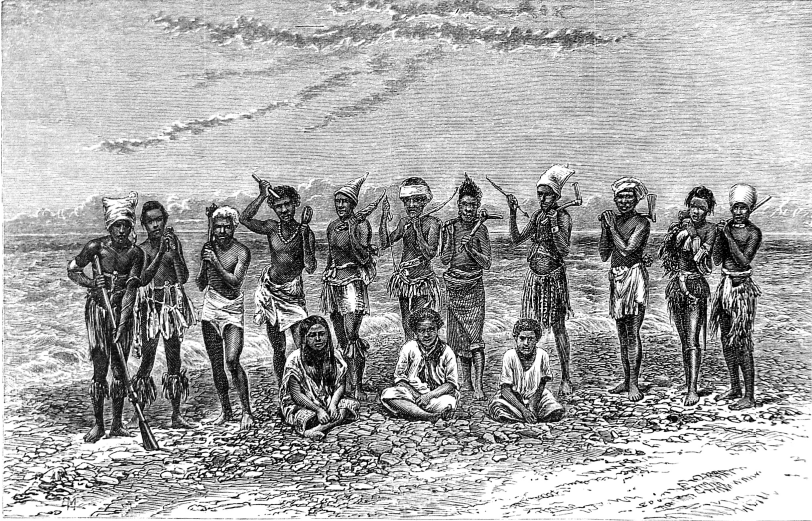


to another, the jumps varying from twenty to thirty feet in height. The sport seemed so attractive that Mr. Foljambe and his friends were tempted to join in it, and pleasant sport they found it.

In many places I saw plantations of taro watered by a rill which comes out of the cascade. Ro my great surprise, I saw no birds. The path I was following was stony and formed of lave. Gorges and valleys covered throughout with

a dense vegetation gave the country about a most picturesque aspect. On reaching the top of the ridge the heat became insupportable, especially as there was not a breath of air stirring. I gave up proceeding any further, and laid down under the shade of a banyan tree, beneath which several species of parasite plants were growing. During this halt my guides amused themselves with lighting a fire by a process I had often seen employed in the Hawaiian Islands, that is, by the friction of one stick upon another.

My halt over, I set out on my return to the ship. On my way I picked up some flat circular fruit, two inches in diameter and one in thickness, - enclosed in a thick fibrous bark - which I had boiled, and found to have a taste of chiesnut. I also saw some arborescent ferns. On nearing the coast, I entered a village overshadowed by cocoanut trees, and was soon surrounded by a crowd of natives, men, women, and children, who appeared to me very ugly with their immense mouths, and large prognathous jaws; in fact, in the lower part of their faces they resemble monkeys more than human beings; in general they wore, both men and women, a piece of tapa round their loins. Their hair, harsh to the touch, was more or less tinted red or yellow by chinam. They brought me several articles which they wanted me to buy, and among other things cocoanuts, at, as it seemed to me, an unreasonable price. I bought for shilling rather a fine root of *ava*; but it was with great difficulty that I could get them to give me, for anything like a fair sum, a little brackish water to quench my thirst. Most of the women had their



NATIVES OF OVALAU.

little finger amputated on one hand, and sometimes on both; I also saw a man with his little finger off. In the crowd I observed several persons tolerably robust and strong, but not one of them so well made as the natives of Niue, or of the Samoan or Tongan groups. Towards nightfall, just as I was going on board, I saw some small birds and a pretty green parroquet, but, unluckily, the dusk did not allow me to kill more than a couple of them.

CHAPTER VIII

MBAU AND VITI-LEVU.

(JULY 29 TO AUGUST 2)

Mbau Roadstead—Boat Expedition in Viti-Levu to Rewa up Wai—Levu River—Interview with Tui—Drakiti, King of Rewa—Courteous Reception—Hospitality of Rev. Mr. Carey, Wesleyan Missionary—The Natives and their huts—Return from Rewa to Mbau—King Thakumbau — Exchange of Civilities and Arms—The great Kava Bowl—Stranger's house—Cannibalism—Intellectual and Moral Characteristics of the Fijians—Singular Treatment of Somo-Somo Chiefs at Mbau—Interesting Picnic With the Queen of Somo-Somo.

The 'Curaçoa' left the excellent port of Levuka for the island of Mbau on July 29 at half-past eleven a.m., leaving behind a planter to whom the Commodore had promised a passage, and who was now seen coming in hot haste in a canoe, having exceeded by two hours the time appointed for him to be on board. We took with us as pilot, giving him two dollars a day, a half-white named Charley Wise, the son of a Fijian woman and an American who, deserting his wife and child, had returned to the United States, and had never since been heard of. When we had got out to sea some distance the breakers bursting over the reefs had a very fine effect, and we could at the same time see the picturesque outlines of Ovalau. Moturiki and other islands, surrounded by reefs and rocks, were in sight. A light

breeze soon permitted us to crowd on sail, for the purpose of making the twenty-five miles which separated the anchorage of Ovalau from that of Mbau, where we came to anchor at half-past three P.M., about three miles from the beach. Mbau is a low isle, very near the S.E. extremity of Viti-Levu, and has now the honour of being the capital of the Fijian group, from its being the residence of the Celebrated Thakumbau, formerly a great heathen warrior and cannibal, now a Christian king.

The day after our arrival the Commodore was apprised by a written deposition and formal complaint, that a white man, of the name of Creelman, a small cotton planter in the island of Viti-Levu, had been beaten and wrongfully used by some natives on the banks of the Wai-Levu. Being further informed from another source, that the offenders had escaped punishment owing to the protection of two petty chiefs of the interior, the one a heathen, the other a nominal convert to Christianity, Sir William thought proper to despatch an officer to the King of Rewa, the suzerain or liege-lord of these two chiefs, to call his attention to this matter, until he could send the Esk to sift it to the bottom. Accordingly, that very evening, a little before midnight, the cutter, well armed and provisioned, left the 'Curaçoa' on its way to the town of Rewa, in the island of Viti-Levu. The expedition was under the orders of Lieutenant Meade, with Chancy Wise as pilot and interpreter, and I got permission to accompany it. We had eight oars, which we reduced to six for the sake of room, and in order to give the

benefit of more frequent changes at the oars. The night being dark and rainy, we for some time could steer only by the lights of the 'Curaçoa,' and when we lost sight of these we had recourse to the spirit compass, which was so thick that we found it necessary to take out the screws, and clean the glass. We grounded for an instant on a reef, and were apprehensive that we should be obliged to remain in this very awkward position till the flood tide. We pushed back and got off the reef, and then took a large circuit round, after running aground several times. We at length reached a bay, which is the Wai-ni-ki or Kaba mouth of the Wai-Levu, or Great River of Viti-Levu. We then entered the Wai-ni-ki, both sides of which were covered with mangroves, and were rather flat. We met about 4 AM. a boat with six oars, and a number of people in it. They were under the bank of the river, and we did not see them at first. But they hailed us, and said they were ten white men going down to see the Commodore, for the purpose of presenting a petition to him, referring to the object of the expedition. Creelman, who had been beaten by the natives, was on board together with his witnesses. After a short parley they were desired to proceed on their course, and not return with us as they proposed. On our way we saw some ducks a little after daybreak, and, as they happened to be on Meade's side of the boat, he got all the shooting. These ducks appear to be the same as the common brown duck which is found in Australia. I shot a hawk, which fell in the cotton plantation of a white man, who had a

house upon the point of an island in the river, and who seemed ashamed or afraid to come near us. We landed in search of the victim of my gun, but could not find it, and the shy or sulky fellow would not assist, though it fell close by him. We passed a few native houses, and saw nothing agreeable in the way of scenery, the banks being flat, wooded, and uninteresting, The river grew narrower until we reached the Wai-Levu, or Big River, which was about 300 yards across. We saw a great many native houses on the banks of the latter which are muddy, and a great many canoes going up and down upon it mostly laden with yams. There are many islands in it, and also many shoal places, on which we often got aground. At length, about 10 A.M., We reached Rewa, where we came upon a small schooner, manned by some half whites, and having the King of Rewa, Tui-Drakiti, on board. His Majesty, who has the reputation of loving his glass when he can get it, was sitting, somewhat jolly, in the stern of the boat. He appeared to be about fifty years of age. He was just off to do homage to the memory of a Fiji chieftainess, recently deceased, taking with him a fine turtle as a tribute, which, on this account, he could not divert to another purpose, more agreeable and personal to ourselves. Meade gave him the official letters from the Commodore, addressed to the culprit chiefs in the interior, which the King consented to have forwarded at once by a messenger. The object of them was to rebuke the chiefs for allowing the people to take the law into their own hands, when there was a consul to ap-

peal to, from whom they might obtain redress. The King regretted he could not show us the hospitality, which it would have been his wish to do had he not been compelled to make his intended visit. After taking leave of him and his party we proceeded on our way, still observing a great number of native houses on both sides of the river thatched with wild sugar-cane leaves, winch plant has very thin stems, and grows in great abundance. Occasionally the houses were raised on piles, and sometimes rested on a bed of coral. They were not large, had two very small doorways, the inside very dark, a hole at top to let out the smoke, and mats on the ground generally; none of them are open round the sides, as in Samoa.

At length, about 11 A.M., we reached the house of Mr. Carey, the Wesleyan missionary, situate near the river, but raised considerably above it, and opposite to a point at which the river separates into two branches, which border it on each side, producing, as it were, the effect of its being at the junction of three streams. It was built of wood and reed, and surrounded by a verandah thatched with wild sugar-cane leaves. We were received very kindly by the missionary. The men were quartered at the King's palace, where, through Mr. Carey's kindness, they were well attended to. Immediately after our arrival, Mr. Foljambe, engaging a canoe, proceeded with the interpreter and a native up to Viria, passing by Mr. Baker's mission station, where they entered the mountain district, and made their way to Naitasiri, which Mr. Foljambe speaks of as a large native

settlement. He found a dense population on the banks of the river, which he says were well cultivated all the way up. He delivered the letters to the two chiefs to whom they were addressed, Tui-na-Viria and Koya-ma-kululu, whom he found at Viria, a settlement of scant size. His instructions were not to wait for replies, which were to be sent to the Missionaries. He therefore, after having been provided with something to eat, and exchanging a few presents, returned to Reva, which he reached at 2 a.m., and was not sorry to find a berth in Mr. Carey's house. The rest of the party were fast asleep.

In the course of the day natives brought us a number of things for sale, among them were clubs, spears, mats, pottery, &c. Some of the pottery was very curious, consisting principally of sangas or water vessels, with rather tasteful designs; some representing turtles; others a bunch of three cocoa-nuts, &c., with one handle, and all communicating internally with each other. The substance of this pottery is thin and friable. It is glazed, while hot, with the gum or resin from the Dakua, or Fijian Kauri-pine (*Dammara vitiensis*, *Seem.*), somewhat similar to the *Dammara Australis*, or Kauri-pine of New Zealand. Some of this gum I procured at Rewa, together with other objects of interest, which were not dear.¹ The natives were civil and obliging, and bore out in appearance the good character which Mr. Carey gave them.

1 Some of this pottery, &c., is to be found in the Christy and Maidstone Museums.

At six a.m. next day, after a welconie bathe in the river, we set off on our return to the ship. The river presented a lively scene, being full of natives, generally wading up or down along the banks, carrying loads upon their heads, or coming towards us to offer things for sale. The greater part of the men that we saw had their clubs with them. A fair wind carrying us down the stream rapidly we had little opportunity for sport. Meade killed a few waterfowl, and I brought, down a long-tailed parrot, with brilliant plumage. We reached the mouth of the river at half-past one p.m., with oars and sails, and got on board the ship two hours afterwards, which was waiting for us with steam up, ready for departure, by which we unfortunately lost the opportunity of a visit to Mbau.¹ We further paid the penalty of our expedition by missing the opportunity of seeing the monarch of the country, who, with his portly wife, had paid a visit to the Commodore during our absence. He was described to us as being a finer-looking man than most Fijians, as having some beard, and wearing a white shirt and

1 If instead of following the Wai-levu, or Rewa river, up its circuitous course to nearly its junction with the Wai-manu and then descending upon Rewa by another branch, the Wai-ni-Mbokasi, we had taken the Kele Musu Canal, about four miles from the Wai-ni-ki mouth, communicating in a direct line with the Wai-ni-Mbokasi, we should have materially shortened our course. This canal is figured in the map of the river Rewa and its tributaries attached to Mr. Macdonald's very interesting paper in vol. xxvii. of the 'Journal' of R.G.S., article XIII. p.232. According to Dr. Seemann the canal is two miles in length and sixty feet wide, and navigable for large canoes. Nothing appears to be known as to the time when, or any purpose for which, it was made.

tapa, or native cloth, rolled round his body, as will be seen by the woodcut copied from the photograph taken on board.



KING THAKUMBAU AND HIS SON. See "Ethnophotos Not Owned".

Captain Erskine, who saw him about fifteen years before our visit, appears to have been greatly struck with him. 'It was impossible,' he says, 'not to admire the appearance of this chief. Of large, almost gigantic size, his limbs were beautifully formed and proportioned, his countenance with far less of the negro cast than among the lower orders agreeable and intelligent, while his immense head of hair covered and concealed with gauze, smoke-dried and slightly tinged

with brown, gave him altogether the appearance of an Eastern sultan. No garments confined his magnificent chest and neck, or concealed the natural colour of the skin, a clear but decided black, and, in spite of this scantiness of attire, — the evident wealth which surrounded him showing it was a matter of choice and not of necessity — " he looked every inch a king."¹ But, as respects the gigantic size, thus and generally ascribed to him, Dr. Seemann² was surprised to find, on placing himself near him, that he was only six feet high, the doctor himself being six feet two inches. He attributes the exaggeration, however, partly to the fact that persons not accustomed to see people in a state of nudity are usually deceived about their size, and partly to the fact of his having worn, previous to his conversion, the large head of hair alluded to by Erskine, which must have added greatly to his apparent height.

The following notice of this remarkable person and his habits will not perhaps be thought superfluous. 'I visited,' says Lieut. Pollard,³ 'Thakumbau, or Tui Viii, soon after anchoring, and found him at dinner by himself, but with several chiefs sitting or crouching near him, which is the native posture of respect. I was struck with the remarkable cleanliness observed in serving his food; the

1 Erskine, p. 186.

2 'Viti: An Account of a Government Mission to the Vitian, or Fijian Islands in the years 1860-61, p. 73:' by Berthold Seemann, Ph.D., FL.S., F.R.G.S.; author of the 'Narrative and the Botany of H.M.S. "Herald;"' 'Popular History of Palms,' &c. &c.

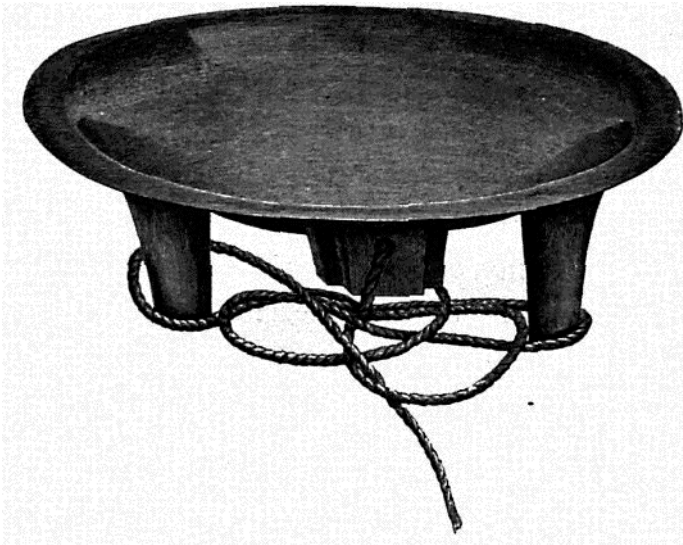
3 Erskine, p. 292.

The boards on which it was served, like small butcher's trays, were very clean, and covered with banana-leaves, and the food rolled up in small balls, and also covered with green leaves. He had several different dishes, each on its own tray, and each removed when finished by a little boy, who crawled up to it and crawled back again. Lastly, he had water brought to wash his hands and mouth, and when he had finished there was a general clapping of hands by all present.

With a countenance not only void of ferocity, but expressive of good humour, and with a character which has shown itself consistent with the requirements of civilisation, it is difficult to conceive that he should once have been a cannibal *à outrance*, and have been in the habit of indicating with his club the bodies suspended by their feet in the royal larder, which were to have the honour of being served up for his repast. There was an interchange of civilities between him and the Commodore and also of presents. The Commodore gave him his own rifle, a Westly-Richards, with which he was delighted, so delighted that in return he gave the Commodore his great kava bowl. In heathen times it was around this bowl that the great ceremonies and mysteries of the country were celebrated. It was in its presence that the ancestors of Thakumbau, and this chief himself, if not actually crowned, received and had confirmed to them the sovereignty of their dominions. Many a sad tale could doubtless be told of the frightful orgies committed, and of the scenes of carnage that were

enacted, when the legs of this bowl were seen steeped in human blood.

Happily these scenes have now passed away, a brighter day has dawned upon the land, and Thakumbau, once the terror of his countrymen, has now become a professing Christian, and it is to be hoped that 'the lion and the lamb' may 'lie down together.'



'THE GREAT KAVA BOWL OF FIJI.'

We had no time to go and see the principal town of Mbau, which is said to be very dirty.¹ We could see a small fort

1 Speaking of the open place at Mbau, where all the ordure of the sacred city was deposited (Erskine, p. 191), remarks that it was the only occasion on which he saw anything of the kind; the natives being scrupulously delicate in this respect. The explanation of this exception was the confined limits of the city, and the inaccessibility of the beach.

there, mounting four guns, from which Thakumbau saluted the Commodore on leaving.

Before we left, news arrived that Thakumbau's warriors had taken eleven villages or towns, which they waited his orders to burn.

There is a hillock in the centre of the island, on which is the mission house, and below is the dancing-ground, where in the old time were held war and licentious dances, accompanied by the murder of prisoners and by cannibal feasts. The ground, smooth and hard from the tread of thousands of feet, is overshadowed by a great banyan tree, into the thick trunk of which a slab of stone four or five feet square is sunk, and forms a sort of table. This tree is the *Akau-tabu*, the sacred tree, or, the tree with the forbidden fruit.' Before cooking the victims, sometimes even before their death, certain parts of the bodies of both sexes used to be cut off, and hung in the branches of this tree, which was sometimes perfectly loaded with this singular and repulsive fruit. Behind this is a row of slabs of stone erect, with their lower ends embedded in the ground, one of which was used for dashing out the brains of the victims. Thakumbau, before his conversion, has been known to amuse himself by catching up by the heels the children of his enemies, and flinging them at the slabs with his own hands. The same sportive old fellow, on one occasion, cut out the tongue of a captive chief, who had used it to beg for a speedy death, and jocosely ate it before his face. Some officers of our ships were shown another braining stone situated in a different

part of the town, used by the fishermen tribe, something like a milestone, but too sharp at the top to be used as a seat. The mode of braining was this: the victim was seized by two natives. one on each side grasping an arm and leg with the head foremost; they then run with him as hard as they could across the dancing ground, increasing their speed till his head was split against the stone, a part of which, two feet above the ground, has been worn smooth, it is said, by the thousands of heads that have been knocked against it. Near the stone is a double row of raised seats, or slabs of stone, where sat the chiefs to direct the massacres, and enjoy the spectacle. It is impossible to form an estimate of the number of those who have been put to death in this manner; but it is a common saying among the Fijians, that all the waters of the ocean could never wash away the blood with which that soil has been saturated.

There is unquestionable evidence that cannibalism will soon cease to disfigure any part of Fiji. Many places, it would seem, have strongly protested against it; as, for instance, Nakelo, on the Rewa river; and it is owing to the aid of this opposition that the missionaries and consuls have been, it is said, so successful in its general suppression.¹ It would appear, too, that it has always been tabu, or forbidden, to the common people and women of all classes, the chiefs alone having the monopoly.

The origin of this practice is uncertain. It was, of course,

¹ 'Viti' by Dr. Seemann, p. 179.

an act of supreme revenge upon a fallen enemy, and we are informed that the most violent exhibition of wrath one man can manifest to another is to say to a person, 'I will eat you. 'In any action,' observes Dr. Seemann, 'where the national honour had to be avenged, it was incumbent upon the King and principal chiefs—in fact a duty they owed to their exalted station—to avenge the insult offered to their country by eating the perpetrators of it.' But the same writer thinks it worth enquiry, if their practice of cannibal feasts did not in some degree partake of a religious ceremony. His supposition, he thinks, countenanced by a very singular fact. Not only are the ovens used for this purpose never appropriated to any other use; but, whereas, every other kind of food is eaten with the fingers, three or four pronged forks made of hard wood—generally of a species of *Casuarina*—are used for eating human flesh. 'Every one of these forks,' he says, 'is known by its particular—often obscene—name; and they are handed down front generation to generation; indeed, they are so much valued, that it required no slight persuasion, and a handsome equivalent, to obtain specimens of them for our ethnological collection; and, when they were afterwards shown to persons who did not know how we came by them, they always looked grave, and were especially anxious that they should not be displayed, especially before children.'¹ 'My handling of

1 'Viti,' by Seemann, p. 179, 182. See also p. 192 of the same work for an able comment on some of the charges against the character of these islanders based upon some of their most repugnant practices.

them seemed to give as much pain as if I had gone into a Christian church and used the chalice for drinking water.'

There has hitherto been a tendency to ascribe most of the revolting practices of the Fijians, such as launching their war canoes over the bodies of their captives, using them, in fact, as rollers, interring them at the base of the posts supporting the chief's houses, or boiling or baking them alive, to what is supposed to be an innate ferocity and love of cruelty in these islanders. But it is admitted, that the peculiar features of their religion, and the use made of them by their priests, must have tended to infuse a taste for these revolting practices. It requires, however, no great knowledge of the antecedents of European civilisation, to be aware that the greatest refinements of cruelty, and the most brutal disregard of human suffering, have been, at one time or other and in various places connected with religion at comparatively advanced periods of national progress. Baking and boiling alive have a terrific sound, and are regarded as indications of a very savage condition ; but the slow combustion by fire of the living heretic, the frightful tortures of the Inquisition, or the *peine dure et forte*, and other brutalities of the civil process, are facts equally remarkable for their cruelty, equally depreciatory of our nature, yet were not deformities belonging to our savage state. We must be careful, therefore, how we ascribe the ferocities of the Fijians to some radical imperfection in their character.

In truth, there is evidence to prove there is no lack in

them of the kindlier qualities. It is thus that a witness, who had great opportunity of observing, having lived among them, and who has thrown no veil over their defects, bears this testimony to their disposition

They are not deficient in courage, manliness, and even humanity, which some people foolishly assert they are entirely strangers to, judging from the long-maintained fashions of the country, instead of scrutinising their natural feelings, and making allowance for everything that has been created by example. I should say, instead of being deficient naturally, they have a greater share of those qualities than Europeans, as far as I can judge from my acquaintance with them.

There is one thing I am certain they possess, which, of course, must proceed from humanity, and that is universal hospitality, which some people erroneously attribute to the spontaneous growth and production of their articles of food, &c. I never saw any difference with respect to their good nature and liberality, not even when they were surrounded by the worst of 'privations, which was very often.¹

Captain Erskine indorses (sic) this favourable opinion of them

1. The witness here alluded to is an English sailor of the name of Jackson, who lived nearly two years in Fiji, and mastered the language. After acting as interpreter to Captain Oliver, of H.M.S. 'Fly,' he was engaged in the same capacity by Captain, now Admiral, Erskine, on board H.M.S. 'Havannah' who was so convinced of the trustworthiness of his statements as to induce him to have them committed to writing, and published at great length in the Appendix to his own very interesting work. See p. 273.

where he says, it is to be inferred that there must be much that is attractive in their character, 'not only for the esteem and respect they are held in by their Tongan neighbours, but from the voluntary choice, by many respectable English and Americans, of these islands as a permanent abode.' He deposes to one fact, which it were much to be wished were common among us, viz. 'that they are good-tempered in their cups, from which we may give them credit for naturally kind dispositions. When Thakumbau and Navinde departed from the "Havannah" in a half-drunken state, no one seemed to apprehend any cruel or outrageous act in consequence.'

They are accused of cowardice, though Jackson is evidently not of that opinion; and there is a Fijian saying, which certainly implies the sense of the dignity of courage. To the enquiries, 'Where is the brave man?' the answer is, 'Being dragged (i.e. to the oven) ;' and to 'Where is the coward,' the reply is, 'Talking of his deeds in the town.' They are a people of considerable intelligence and acuteness; but what we should hardly expect to find in them is a certain amount of literary capacity. Yet the missionary, Mr. Williams,¹ has given us some specimens of their metrical productions, which he says 'take the shape of dirges, serenades, wake songs, war songs, and hymns for the dance; the last class being the most numerous, and including much that might be termed heroic.' Of course, the merit of these productions is not very striking. Their proverbs are more

1. 'Fiji and Fijians, vol. i. p. 110.

interesting and as the proverbs of a nation are supposed to be illustrative of their character, they are well worthy of notice. I therefore cite specimens of them given by the same writer in his interesting account of this people. First, there is a couplet in which greediness is reproved

Your evil eye esteems your share too small,
And prompts you greedily to aim at all.

The next speaks for itself,

O what a valiant man you are, Who beat your wife, but
dare not go to war.

That with increased means comes increased care is noted thus,

If you have a great canoe,
Great will be your labour too.

Idleness and too much attention to personal ornament are warned that 'No food is cooked thereby.' Improvidence and want of forethought are thus censured : 'The Nakondo people cut the mast first,' that is, prepare the mast before securing the canoe. 'The saucy,' it is said, 'take reproof like water ;' that is, swallow it without thought. Again, it is said, 'An unimproved day is not to be counted.' These proverbial sayings are certainly proofs that good sense and wise purpose are not deficient in the intellectual qualifications of these islanders. Their remarkable addiction to fun and jest, and sensational exaggerations of a comic nature have exposed them to a character for trifling and untruthfulness which they do not entirely deserve. Mr. Williams speaks of their conversational powers, and adduces

the evidence of a witness on whom he can rely, who says, 'That in the course of much experience, the Fijians were the only " savage people " he had ever met with who could give reasons, and with whom it was possible to hold a connected conversation.' ¹

It may be as well to note that in this missionary's interesting and minute account of the Fijians, we find specimens of the same inconsistent statements and criticisms, which are so conspicuous in the writings of persons who describe the manners and customs of uncivilised people. Thus, at p.132, we find him dwelling upon the cowardice of the Fijians, and giving instances of it, which show that it is childish and effeminate to an excess, and yet five pages afterwards he says, ' Violent quarrels are not frequent; nor need they be, if those I have seen were specimens, ending, as they did, with the axe and club, wounded heads or broken arms,' certainly no decided proofs of poltroonery. In the same style, the label of gross falsehood is attached to them, and, immediately afterwards, he tells us that ' on matters most lied about by civilised people, the native is the readiest to speak the truth. Thus, when convicted of some offence, he rarely attempts to deny it, but will generally confess all to any one lie esteems.' Then he gives an illustration to prove that, 'lying, per se, is condemned and considered disreputable. A white man, notorious for falsehood, had displeased a powerful chief, and wrote asking

1. The person alluded to is Mr. Hadley of Wenham, cited by Dr. Pickering in his 'Races of Man,' p. 173.

me to intercede for him. I did so; when the chief dismissed the case briefly, saying, 'Tell him that no one hates a foreigner; but tell him that every one hates a liar.' It is certainly not easy to understand that, where lying is condoned and considered disreputable, it can also be considered permissible, venial, or reputable to lie. With respect to all or most of these charges, if our verdict cannot be 'Not guilty,' it must in fairness be 'Not proven.' I will just add that the observation of the chief cited above, 'Tell him that no one hates a foreigner,' indicates a fact of considerable interest in connection with these islanders, and that is, that they have been always ready to welcome foreigners.

The *strangers' house* in Mbau is a curious sight. It is the largest building in the group, lofty, with many doors, and divided inside into a great number of mess places, each with its own fire stoves, for the accommodation of the many other tribes who are continually visiting Mbau, either as tribute-bearers, or allies for a war party.

In connection with tribute-bearing, nothing is more curious than the extremely servile position of the Somo-Somo chiefs in their relations with Mbau, though otherwise persons of importance. When they come to pay their annual tribute to that city, they are not allowed to enter Mbau Bay until they have asked permission to do so; they are then obliged to wait three days before they can approach, and, in doing so, are not permitted 'either to use their sail, or stand up to scull, to evade which last prohibition they engage Tongans to work the sculls. On their arrival another humiliation

awaits them ; for three days they are not allowed to sleep in a house, or wear clothing, and, in going about the town, they must assume a crouching posture, stop when they meet anyone, be he who he may, holding their hands clasped between their knees, and crying out, 'Dwa, Wa, wa.'¹ They are, at the expiration of this ceremony, allowed to go into the 'strangers' house,' a large building, where they are well fed, each family being assessed in some particular way for the supply of their wants, whether in pigs, yams, firewood, &c. Thus, a part of the last-mentioned contribution was being brought by no less a person than his majesty Thakumbau, who, loaded with a bundle of firewood, and smoking a cigar, was the bearer of his family's assessment. The explanation of this was that, while his father old Tanoa lived Thakumbau was not one of the chiefs of Mbau to whom the tribute was due. The origin of this tribute, and the humiliating ceremonies connected with it, are traced to an old tradition that their principal spirit, a rat, having been wrecked in his canoe, and asked assistance in vain from some Somo-Somo men, was picked up by some Mbau people who took him to their town, where after three days' suffering he recovered. In consequence of this he made Somo-Somo tributary to Mbau, and prescribed the humiliations we have mentioned.²

1 The wail of the Sandwich islanders is much the same-'Auwé, auwé, auwé.'

2 The above facts are taken from Lieut. Pollard's 'Journal' of his visit to the Fiji Islands in H.M.S. 'Bramble' in 1850; Erskine, p. 294. Lieut. Pollard witnessed the curious ceremony of reception.

This ceremonial humiliation of Somo-Somo is the more curious because its chiefs were persons of importance. Thus Golea, the younger brother of the King, who had retired to Wariki, and left the sovereignty of Somo-Somo to him, was married to Eleanor (she had become a Christian), Thakumbau's niece, who was of superior rank to her uncle. Dr. Seemann, who saw her in 1860, speaks of her as being a fine woman, of dignified deportment, and manifestly intelligent as well. A party of gentlemen having made arrangements to ascend to the summit of Somo-Somo, the queen expressed her intention of joining it, which she did with a large suite. Girdled with a fold of white calico, her head wreathed with fern leaves, the purple blossom of the Chinese rose pendent from her ear, and a necklace made of shells, such was the total of her toilette. 'No other garment,' says the fascinated doctor, 'graced her stately person, and yet she looked truly majestic.' The ladies of her court, unencumbered with the girdle, and borrowing no superfluous covering from portions of banana and cocoa-nut leaves freshly cut, were sent forward as pioneers to make a track, and shake off the moisture from the over-lying branches. Alert, as light-footed as light-clothed, they soon distanced the heavy-dressed, and found their way to the top, where, en attendant, they amused themselves with opening cocoa-nuts, and smoking cigarettes made of dry banana leaves instead of paper. The view from the summit commanding the straits of Somo-Somo was very fine, but there was close at hand another charming tableau

which is worth describing. On reaching the top, the agile nymphs had kindled a fire, and made every thing ready for a picnic.

The queen was seated on the top of a rock, the maids of honour grouped around her. It was a pretty sight. The dark beauties, the really artistic effects of their ornamental leaves and flowers, the easy grace of their movements, made them look like so many nymphs that one reads of in classic story, but never seems to meet with nowadays.¹ One would be apt to suppose that the writer had warmed himself into a pardonable exaggeration, if the polish, engaging gracefulness, and dignity of carriage, which mark the highest classes of the natives of these islands was not attested by every competent observer who has recorded his impressions. It is to be regretted that her majesty's arguments in defence of polygamy, as seen from her point of view, have not been reported, as it would have been interesting to have compared them with those of the ingenious lady in support of the same cause whom I met at Deseret city, the well-known capital of the Mormons.²

1. Seemann, pp. 26, 27.

2. 'A Journey to Great Salt Lake City, by Jules Remy and Julius Brenchley, MA., with a Sketch of the History, Religion, and Customs of the Mormons, and an Introduction on the Religious Movement of the United States; by Jules Remy, 1861,' vol. ii. pp. 97-109). This work is a translation of the French edition published in Paris in 1860.

CHAPTER IX.

KADAVU—FIJI GROUP—continued.

(AUGUST 3)

Levuka Bay and Village—Peculiar Form of the Island—Mountain Cliff of Buke-Levu—Village of Yawe—Visit of H.M.S. 'Esk'—Letter of Canoe-men to her Commander—Notes on the Fiji Group—Chiefs—Languages—Their Mythology—Deification promised to a Missionary—'I am a God'—Character of their Gods and its Results—Impediments to Civilisation—Climate and Soil—European Population—Native Notions respecting Property and Land—Difficulties thrown in the way of its Acquisition—Improved Prospects for Settlers—Exports—Commerce—Future Resources.

STEAMED out of Mbau on August 2 at eleven A.M.; and directing our course towards the island of Kandavu, at half-past nine P.M. on the following day we dropt anchor in Levuka Bay. This is an open bay on the northern coast of the island, and has its southern point bounded by a mountain 3,800 feet high, being a precipitous cliff on its seaward side. Pleasantly situated on the bay is the village from which it takes its name, one of the neatest we have met with; and it is here that the Protestant mission is located, the resident missionaries being Messrs. White and Nettleton. Stretching from east to west the island is said to be about twenty-four miles long, and, at mid distance, narrows so much as to form an isthmus, over which canoes

are dragged for the purpose of effecting a direct passage between north and south, thus avoiding much circuitous coasting. The use to which it is put is denoted by its name, Yarabali, literally 'haul across.' The island has a population of between 10,000 and 11,000, the whole of which has been Christianized. Its surface is very hilly, but it is reported to be well cultivated. The great mountain cliff of Buke-Levu was ascended by Mr. Pritchard and Dr. Seemann in 1860 (the first white men who had ever visited it), who found patches of cultivation as high as 1,500 feet. Between Levuka and Buke-Levu is the village of Yawe, the place most famous in Fiji for its pottery.¹

At the end of the year 1866, more than a year after the Curaçoa's being there, H.M.S. 'Esk' went to make a longer stay in Kandavu than we did. Captain Luce, who commanded the corvette, and the Hon. Mr. Meade, who accompanied him as gunnery lieutenant, visited the mission-houses, with which they were highly satisfied, and of which they gave me a pleasing account. I may here insert, in reference to this visit, a translation of a letter which some native canoe-men addressed to the captain, thanking him for some small presents he had sent them as an acknowledgment of a slight service they had rendered him. This letter has struck me as noteworthy, if only as evidence of the present disposition of a people once so barbarous

1. Seemann, pp. 138, 215

‘Richmond, Kandavu, Fiji,
 ‘November 24, 1866

‘Sir, We write to inform you that the things which you kindly sent for us, the boatmen of Mr. Nettleton, arrived safely, and we have each received our share, for which we greatly thank you. We rejoice greatly that you thought of us kindly, and sent us things that will be very useful. We rejoiced much on the day that we pulled the missionary to Galoa, to see the man-of-war and its captain; when we got to the side of the ship, we saw the great land guns and admired them when we looked about we saw the officer standing at the gangway, and we said "Oh! that one would speak for us, that we might be allowed to look over the vessel!" Then I spoke to him, and he nodded his head, so we then got on board, and looked over the hold, and saw the men who were in great number, and very industrious at their work; we beheld them and respected them greatly. Then we looked around us and saw the very great guns and the swords in great number. We saw the chiefs of the ship and revered them greatly. Then we went again on deck and talked among ourselves and said 'We young men of this generation were born in blessed times to see such a ship as this; our fathers saw no such sight, we are living in better times, and we are very thankful for it.

‘My letter is finished.

‘We send our love to you, sir, all of us, the boatmen.

‘I am

‘Thomas Nathemba, your friend.’

‘To the chief of the man-of-war steamer, "Esk."'

Before taking a last farewell of the Fiji Islands, we will add some notices we were able to obtain in a hurried way from the Whites, with respect to this interesting group.

These islands are situate nearly half way between Australia and Tahiti. A sailing vessel takes about twenty days to go from Sydney to Levuka, their chief commercial port; the return voyage on an average does not occupy more than fourteen days, owing to the favourable winds which usually quicken their speed. The island of Vanua-Levu, or North Fijian island, contains about 3,000 square miles. The superficies of Viti-Levu, or South Fijian island, is about 3,750 square miles. The interior of this great island is entirely unknown; no one, either native or European, was able to say anything respecting the central districts, it not being even known whether or not they are inhabited. The surfaces of the other islands of the group range from ten to 400 square miles. The entire population of all the islands is estimated diversely at from 100,000 to 300,000 souls; but the former number is presumably nearest the truth. The island of Kandavu, the population of which exceeds 10,000 souls, is the most peopled in proportion to its surface, which is only 150,000 square miles; there are numerous villages, containing generally 200 souls, but rarely as many as 500.

There is no central or regular government; on the other hand, a very large number of small chiefs, whose influence varies respectively according to the power which each possesses. Sometimes one of them has been known to make himself so formidable to his neighbours, as to feed himself

and his whole retinue at their expense. But it is believed no attempt has ever been made to establish a single kingdom throughout the islands. Some thirty years before the visit of the 'Curaçoa,' an Mbau chief, assisted by some runaway sailors armed with muskets, succeeded in bringing a considerable number of chiefs under his dominion; but he soon saw this ephemeral ascendancy pass away, of which now-a-day remains but a sort of purely nominal presidency, which is acknowledged by the other chiefs.

The number of dialects in the island is so great, and the difference between them so marked, as to give rise to an impression at first that they were distinct languages. This diversity is probably due to the murderous wars continually waged between the petty chiefs, and which rendered any communication dangerous between one district and another, and even one village and another. Each tribe could only consider itself safe from its enemies while keeping within its own natural frontiers.

The mythology of the Fijians abounds in divinities. The special functions of some of them being, if correctly represented, somewhat singular. Thus one has the title of 'The God just returned from slaughter;' another, a professed miracle-worker, has the significant name of 'Spit-wonders;' one with eight eyes is the 'God of wisdom;' another is the 'God fond of turtles;' and another the 'God fond of human brains.' But the most curious feature of their religion is the preservation of that practice of deification which is to be found in the earlier stages of all religions. Mr. Hazlewood

has furnished interesting evidence of the fact in a speech at a missionary meeting in Hobart Town. After observing that any man who can distinguish himself by murdering his fellow-men (the missionary mode of describing *war* among *savages*, but among savages only) may be sure of deification, and that friends are sometimes deified and invoked, he says, 'Tuikilakila, the chief of Somo-Somo, offered Mr. Hunt a preferment of this sort, "If you die first," said he, "I shall make you my god." In fact, there seems to be no certain line of demarcation between departed spirits and *gods*, nor between *gods and living men*, for many of the priests and old chiefs are considered as sacred persons, and not a few of them will also claim for themselves the right of divinity. "I am a god," Tuikilakila would sometimes say, and *he believed it too. They were not merely the words of his lips; he believed he was something above a mere man.*'¹

Nothing of course is conceivable in this impression when in the common opinion of people the gods have like passions with themselves; when they love and hate, are proud and revengeful, make war and kill and eat each other, and are in fact savages like themselves. Philo, as has been already observed, conceived analogous ideas in the Old Testament to be a false colouring to meet the requirements of barbarous and uninstructed men. The mischief has been that such conceptions, the fruit of extreme ignorance, and the rudest possible appreciation of supernatural power, which

1. Seemann, p. 247.

would have passed away with increase of intelligence, have been artificially prolonged in all countries for the purpose of state-craft and priest-craft to the demoralisation and great injury of society. Hence religion is first moulded by barbarism, and is afterwards employed in perpetuating it. Such a result is well indicated by Erskine, where, after the passage from Hazlewood just cited, he says of the Fijians, 'With their deep religious convictions, therefore, it is not surprising that all indulgence of the gentler feelings of the heart, in which the Fijian nature is not deficient, is condemned as a weakness, and great pains are taken to instil into the youthful mind a contempt for passionate impulse, and an admiration for relentless cruelty.'¹ A striking illustration of the wrong which supernaturalism often does to nature.

The progress made by the islanders in the way of civilisation is by no means so great as has been generally represented.² In endeavouring to lead them on the path of progress, the chief difficulty is to find some motive to induce them to advance. It is not an easy matter to prove to them that it is to their advantage to adopt the civilisation of the Whites. The love of ease or indolence is the ruling passion, and anything discordant with it will find no flavour in their eyes. One great cause of the poverty of the natives is the habit that prevails throughout the South Seas of begging from each other whatever they may require, or strikes their

1. Pickering, 'Races of Man,' p -21,7.

2. The matter contained in this and the following pages of this chapter is slightly varied from Mr. Consul Jones's report to the Foreign Office, 'On the Present Condition of the Fiji and Tonga Islands. 1865.

fancy. There is no limit to these demands: a house, a boat, a new dress, even the food that a man has prepared for his family, is liable to be taken from him by any one his equal or superior; for it is considered disgraceful to refuse a request made in this manner, and for the lower classes who have so many superiors it is useless, it is said, to attempt to acquire anything.

If they require anything from the white traders, as for instance a waist-cloth, a knife, or a musket, they make coconut oil for the price asked. Notwithstanding the natural fertility of their lands, the people suffer severely from scarcity of food whenever the hurricanes injure their breadfruit trees. Pigs and fowls are by no means plentiful, and the lower orders seldom eat any animal food; the general custom is to collect together for a periodical feast all the surplus provisions in the district, when one-half is eaten and the other utterly wasted. Whenever usual food fails them, the natives support themselves on wild yams, wild beans, arrowroot, Tahiti chestnut, and the fruit of the mangrove.

The climate is healthy. The thermometer ranges during the year from 63° to 100° Fahr., the hottest months being January and February, the coldest June and July. Dysentery is the only prevalent disease. Notwithstanding the good climate, the population has not increased of late; if it has decreased, it is in an imperceptible degree. Various reasons are assigned for the depopulation of the South Sea Islands, which appears to have been simultaneous with the arrival of the Whites; but it is doubtful whether it should be attributed to the introduction of

spirituous liquors, the use of woollen clothing, and the spread of syphilitic diseases in many islands, where none of these exist, the inhabitants are still diminishing in numbers.

The soil is fertile and capable of producing everything that requires a tropical climate, together with many of the plants of the temperate zones. At present Fiji produces cotton, coffee, and tobacco, of the best quality; the nutmeg, indiarubber and gutta-percha trees are found in the forests, and excellent shipbuilding timber and valuable furniture woods abound throughout the islands of the group.¹

The European population of the group may be calculated at about 300. Civilisation has been but lately introduced into Fiji, and it is uncertain how far it may suit the temper of the natives; as they are ruder and more savage than their neighbours, they less readily adopt foreign customs. The class of settlers that has hitherto come to Fiji is dependent on manual labour for its livelihood; but the fertility of the soil and the salubrity of the climate will no doubt continue to attract others from the neighbouring colonies. The islander, nevertheless, gains little from his contact with Europeans. His hut, built of reeds, is well suited to the climate, and sufficiently commodious in his eyes. When he has exchanged his stone hatchet for an iron one, his club for

1. 'The rapidity of the vegetation as described by the Missionaries is remarkable. Turnips, radish, and mustard seed show themselves above ground in twenty-four hours. Melons, cucumbers, and pumpkins in three days; beans and peas in four; radish and lettuce fit for use in four weeks, marrow-fat peas in five.' Erskine, p. 268.

a musket, and his paper-cloth for calico, civilisation can offer him nothing farther which would compensate him for the labour required as an equivalent. The fancy or caprice of the head chiefs may give a spasmodic extension to trade,¹ as the purchase of a small vessel, or a hundred muskets, requires a large quantity of oil in payment; but wherever the authority or influence of the chief has declined, the trade of that district has likewise fallen away. In many places the natives, after having adopted some of the habits of civilisation, have voluntarily abandoned them, and returned to their national customs.

Before the arrival of European speculators, the natives never considered unoccupied land worth claiming. Wherever a man planted his yams, tobacco, or taro, that land was his so long as it was occupied by his crops; but, as soon as these were dug up, it was free for any one to make use of it for the same purpose. About the time² that the sovereignty of these islands was first proffered to Great Britain, many speculators from the Australian colonies purchased land in Fiji, seldom caring to enquire into the nature of the titles they obtained. A common practice was to draw up the deeds in English, to have them translated to the native chief by some one professing to understand the Fijian language, but generally as ignorant of it as the principal who employed him, and the

1. But, according to Captain Erskine, 'the Fijians have a decided turn for commerce, a constant internal trade being carried on in their own canoes, which we constantly saw either arriving or sailing, heavily laden with bales of cloth, rolls of cordage and quantities of earthen pots.' Seemann, p. 269. This is confirmed by what I myself saw on the Rewa river.

2. In 1862.

transaction was complete when it received the chief's mark, who was induced to sign it by threats or cajolery, but frequently by making him drunk beforehand. As the boundaries of these estates are generally very vaguely laid down, and as the class most interested in these lands have been seldom consulted in these sales, it is probable that many of the purchasers will find great opposition whenever they come to take possession of their property.

As each tribe for security confined itself to a certain tract of country, the White settlers have chosen now to recognise every such tract as the property of the tribe. This idea facilitated the purchase of land, and the natives were pleased to find that they possessed something to which the White traders attached a value. When payment came to be made for the purchased land, every one considered that he had a right to be separately dealt with, if he had ever been connected with any part of the land in question ; so the head chiefs, the minor chiefs, and each owner of a yam patch, or cocoa-nut tree, required compensation and a share of the purchase money. When unsuccessful, they endeavoured to throw every obstacle in the way of those who proposed to enjoy the purchased land.

The value of exports has shown an upward tendency lately, having increased from £13,000 in 1863 to £20,000 in 1864. This remarkable increase has occurred principally in cotton, cocoa-nut oil, and fibre; other exports are tortoise shell, Beche-de-Mer, and wool.

The cultivation of cotton has now become the principal

concern of both natives and settlers. Various kinds have been experimented upon. The variety known as 'Kidneyseed' is the most common, though very far from being the most profitable ; but as, until now, from the want of machinery, cotton is exported with the seed in it., and in this condition has always found buyers at eight cents a pound, the planters have come to the conclusion that the increase of weight caused by the seed was a compensation for other drawbacks. The most intelligent of the growers show the greatest preference for the variety known by the name of 'Sea-island' cotton, which flourishes luxuriantly, bears a far greater quality of pure fibre, in proportion to the age of the plant, than any other variety, and compared with the kidney cotton its value in that respect is as five to one. The cotton plant here is a perennial, and after the first outlay of clearing and planting, the subsequent expense is trifling. The island of Kandavu and the banks of the Rewa river, in the island of Viti-Levu, are the positions most in favour with European planters. The facilities that both these places offer for transport and communication have caused this selection. The Rewa river, so disproportionate to the size of the island in which it rises, is navigable for boats of twenty tons for more than forty miles from its mouth, and for seventy miles of its course rafts and flat-bottomed boats could be used to transport the cotton from the upper country without meeting any obstacle in the shape of rocks, cascades. &c. The fertility of the soil, the salubrity of the climate, and the supply of cheap labour that can be obtained, will enable

the cotton-grower of Fiji to compete successfully with any other in the market of Europe, as the quality of fibre that can be produced here is considered by competent judges to be equal to any that can be supplied by the Southern States of America. The high charges for freight to Sydney are the most serious drawback that the island traffic suffers for cotton. In the badly-pressed state in which it leaves Fiji, the freight is 9/- per ton. Until the quantity of cotton exported shall be sufficiently great to allow of a direct trade with Europe, there is no probability of any reduction in the charges. The supply of cocoa-nut oil will continue to increase for some years to come, if the demand is as brisk as heretofore. A thousand tons could be furnished by this group alone. To the natives it hardly prove a profitable article, as their process of manufacture is tedious and laborious. Machinery has been employed to extract the oil, but the result was not so profitable as was generally expected by the introducers, who frequently found their labours brought to a standstill by the refusal of the natives to supply them with nuts in sufficient quantity, as they looked with jealousy on an undertaking that threatened to deprive them of the means of purchasing cloth, knives, &c., from the traders, inasmuch as the oil that each could personally make was the only article of barter he possessed. Whenever the cultivation of cotton shall give them a better return for their labour than oil-making, they will of course have no further objection to supplying the oil-mills with any quantity of nuts they may require.

Cocoa-nut fibre can be supplied in any quantity.

The disputes which took place latterly between the fishermen on the coast of Macuata have diminished the yield of Beche-de-Mer; nevertheless, the price is good, being 1,200 dollars per picul of 140 pounds, and for inferior 1,000 dollars.

As to the sugar-cane, though it is to be found in all these islands, and is used as food by the natives, no attempt has yet been made to cultivate it on a large scale.

The coffee tree has been introduced from Tonga, and there are now more than 20,000 trees doing well. It was calculated in 1865 that two-thirds of these trees would fruit the year following. The berries hitherto produced have been used as seed, it being found that trees from seed produced on the spot yielded more abundantly than those grown from imported seed.

Arrowroot and tapioca are found as troublesome weeds throughout the South Sea Islands, but the tedious operations necessary to prepare these articles for European markets prevent the traders from exporting them. In all the islands the supply far exceeds the demand, and the price they fetch in the colonial markets seldom exceeds 2.5d. per pound.

Tobacco grows well, the leaves are large and fine ; but the European settlers are content to use it prepared in the native manner.

Throughout the year, but especially in the months of May, June, and July, large numbers of whales are found around the coasts of Fiji. Sperm and Humpback whales

especially abound. Before the civil war broke out in the United States, Fiji was a favourite station for American whalers, as many as nine calling here in one season.

As yet no other minerals than some specimens of malachite and graphite, both of fine quality, have been found.

The articles most in demand in the Fiji trade are the following: cotton prints (those known as navy blues being preferred to all others), blue dungaree, turkey reds, Unbleached calicoes, blue and red blankets, red serge shirts, red worsted, cotton thread, wedge axes, bench axes, hatchets, twelve and fifteen inches butchers' knives, razors, scissors, muskets, flints, powder, lead, fishhooks, needles, vermilion, beads, small white venetian.

At the time just alluded to, when there was a chance of these islands being recognised as a British possession, the horde of immigrants attracted by it having no requisites for success returned penniless. Their misfortune procured for Fiji an evil reputation, from which it is now freeing itself. Nevertheless there are few countries where one can live with less personal exertion than in Fiji, which recommendation caused it to be selected by the number of runaway seamen who composed the European population about eight years before. The natives growing impatient of their incessant demands forced them at length to labour for their own support, and at present few of this class are to be found in the group. The present settlers do not lack either industry or enterprise. The rapid progress that cotton cultivation has made in these islands during the

year 1864 is due, in a great measure, to the individual efforts of the settlers, for the most part men without any capital, who, having obtained some land from the natives, cultivate it by their own personal labour.

In former times, before European intercourse had reduced the natives of these islands to order, the sanguinary jealousy that made every village distrustful of its neighbours compelled the inhabitants to fortify themselves on the most inaccessible heights, and prevented them from cultivating any land beyond the few feet around each man's dwelling. If more was required, the cultivator, afraid to descend into the plain, discovered some spot in the recesses of the mountains, where he might plant his yams secure from molestation. This system of scanty cultivation has been so long followed by them, that it is still difficult to persuade a native to plant on an extensive scale. He still endeavours to procure all that he may require in the small patch of soil around his habitation, and in this manner they have hitherto planted cotton so close that the trees have no room for development., and the produce is proportionally checked.

Land is easily purchased in the group, and labour, up to the present time, has not been found wanting. The general salubrity of the climate is well attested, and a European can work in the open air throughout the year without inconvenience. Life and property are secure; a result due, in a great degree, to the labours and influence of the Missionaries. In the generality of cases where disputes arise between the natives and settlers, the latter will be found to be the aggressors.

On the northern shores of the Fiji Islands are extensive tracts free from timber, and admirably adapted for pasture lands. Large tracts have been already purchased for the purpose of sheep farming, and the prospects of success are encouraging. In many cases, however, the sheep, on arriving from Australia, have suffered severely from the effects of the long voyage. When acclimatised they do well. Dr. Brewer, the U.S. consul, after an experience of four years' sheep farming in Fiji, finds no sign of the wool degenerating into hair. The average weight of the fleece is—merino, three pounds; Leicester, four pounds; and it sells on the ground at eightpence per pound unwashed. There are in Fiji about 3,500 sheep and 70 head of horned cattle; the latter succeed remarkably well. The flocks increase rapidly, and good pasture land can be purchased at an average rate of £2 per acre. In addition, the abundant supply of water, and the fertility that everywhere characterises the soil, offer advantages to the settlers in Fiji not always to be found in the Australian colonies.¹

1. As this is passing through the press I find in a brief paper published in the November number of Fraser's Magazine for 1871 (the writer of which states that he has recently visited Fiji), that the settlers on the banks of the Rewa have come to the conclusion, that the sugarcane could be cultivated there to much greater advantage than cotton, and are prepared to substitute the former as soon as they can obtain a sufficiency of sugar-plants for that purpose; the incessant rain that falls being, it appears, as beneficial to the sugar-cane as it is unfavourable to the cotton plant.