LOLÓMA,

OR

TWO YEARS

IN

CANNIBAL-LAND:

A STORY OF OLD FIJI,

BY

HENRY BRITTON

(AUTHOR OF "FIJI IN 1870.")

MELBOURNE:
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1883.

THIS STORY

IS

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

TO THE HON. J. B. THURSTON, C.M.G

AN OLD SETTLER,

AND

THE FIRST COLONIAL SECRETARY OF FIJI,

IN MEMORY OF

PLEASANT RECOLLECTIONS OF OLD TIMES.

PREFACE.

THE object of this romance is to preserve in a readable form some record of the ancient manners and customs, traditions and superstitions of the Fijians, the most numerous and the most interesting race of savages in the South Pacific, who are rapidly disappearing before the terrible push and civilisation of the white man. The opportunity of acquiring information on these subjects is fast slipping away with the older aboriginal inhabitants, and if not now seized upon it will be gone for ever. I have endeavoured to bring before the reader a picture of life in Fiji as it was before that portion of the New World "stretched its dusk hand to the Old." To be of any value to the ethnologist, it is the first requisite of such a work that its details, so far as they relate to the country and its people, should be strictly accurate. In this respect the sources from which I derived my information render the book, I believe, thoroughly trustworthy. I desire to acknowledge my obligations to the Rev. Jesse Carey, for many years a missionary in the Fiji Islands, for his valuable assistance in translating legends and songs, and in placing at my disposal a quantity of other important material. Hearing of the progress of the story, Mr Carey furnished me with a bundle of manuscript, accompanied by the following remarks :—

With a view to the more intelligent discharge of my daily duties in Fiji, I added to other necessary studies the antiquities of that country. The more I examined the subject, the more I was assured that it was one of greater extent and interest than had been supposed. This belief led me to issue circular letters, addressed to the most intelligent native men in the islands. These letters put forth a long list of questions bearing on Fiji's

past, and concluded with an offer of prizes for the three best works thereon by native authors. Twelve months afterwards this call was nobly responded to by fifty competitors, and the result was as many essays, some of which were remarkably able and exhaustive, besides a large number of papers from non-competing writers. I now forward to you the pith of this cannibal literature, a literature which it was possible to secure only while the oldest inhabitants were still on this side of the spirit world.

In the construction of this tale I have made use of the interesting manuscript here referred to, though of course a very large portion of it was not suited to my purposes. For the rest I have relied upon my own acquaintance with the scenery of the country, and my own recollections of the manners and customs of its people, which I had opportunities of observing during my residence among them.

Some portions of the first half of this book have appeared in the "*Australasian*" in the form of short stories.

YORICK CLUB,

Melbourne, 30th November, 1883.

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INTRODUCTION.

IT has often occurred to me that I ought to write the story of my adventures in Fiji in the old times, when, to the great bulk of the inhabitants, the white man was little more than a myth ; when the people were as yet uncontaminated by contact with civilized races, many of whose vices they have since acquired ; when they were dutifully following their long established customs, and faithfully adhering to the religions of their fathers. My acquaintance with kings, chiefs, priests, poets, ambassadors, soldiers, artisans, turtle-fishermen, and other classes of Fijians, made me familiar with many legends in prose and verse, containing ideas and pictures which must vanish for ever if not now preserved, for they belong to times which have long since faded into the thick darkness of the past.

If, in my old age, I can place on record some facts which may be received as a historical memento of the most numerous and interesting race of men in the South Pacific—a race which is rapidly disappearing under the dominion of the white man—I may not only afford some food for the speculation of ethnologists, but even amuse the present generation. To look into the mind and heart of the cannibal as that mind and heart thought and beat within him—while he lived his tropical life in his own land, climbing his own hills, sailing his own canoes, fighting his own battles with his own weapons, building and planting, courting and marrying in his own way, training up his children to tread in his own steps, and, finally, after a few dreamy yet not inactive years, passing away by the blue light of his own religion to his own Heaven—shall be the object of these reminiscences of a strange experience in my life, which seems to me now, as the events crowd upon me, like a dream ; but not a half-forgotten one ; for in early life the mind is highly receptive, and there are no impressions so deep and lasting as those of our youth.

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LOLOMA:

OR, TWO YEARS IN CANNIBAL LAND.

CHAPTER I.

OLD SYDNEY.

I WAS a boy in Sydney, the son of a Commissariat officer of the Imperial establishment, when New South Wales was a penal colony, during the time of the despotic rule of the military governors. We had as an assigned servant a young man, Joe Whitley, who, at 18 years of age, was transported from his native English village for poaching. He was but two years my senior, and we were great friends. On Saturday afternoons we often set forth on pleasant bush excursions of our own arranging, and we even contemplated exploring the Blue Mountains, beyond which the ignorant people said China lay, and in whose picturesque ravines there were whitening in the sun the bones of many an unhappy bondsman who had escaped his chains to perish of hunger and thirst while vainly hoping to be able to tramp to the Flowery Land.

Sometimes we went boating in the romantic coves of Port Jackson, which, with the same attractive natural scenery they now possess, had then the additional charm of solitude. It was a pleasure to get away from the rum-shanties of the infant city of Sydney, and the foul language of a large part of its brutalised convict population, to the calm waters of the harbour with its

numerous prospects of wood-crowned heights, and the soft airs perfumed by the wild bush flowers of the virgin forest or untilled plain. One could not see the procession of stately ships which are now for ever passing under the windows of one-half of Sydney, calling to the mind's eye of him who has learned to read in their appearance the varied businesses of these white-winged messengers of commerce, something like a panorama of the world. Nor was there a fleet of yachts to glide past with graceful sweep. But there were the same charming points and eminences on which villa residences have since been built, commanding views which on bright sunny mornings were of rare beauty. And we had the romance of the sea to ourselves. We listened to its many voices alone. There were none to interrupt our contemplation of its sublime mystery, and we never tired of its fascinating companionship.

These pleasant trips had an abrupt termination. My companion had the misfortune to gain the ill-will of a fellow servant, who made interest with the police, and had him unjustly sent back to prison for an alleged breach of one of the regulations controlling the bond servants.

In those days even free persons were subject to the lash for very trivial offences. What chance had a man, opposed to the false swearing of convict constables, with an offended officer of the law for his judge? Flogging was administered to the extent of 1,000 lashes, and sometimes a magistrate would order a witness to be taken out of court and subjected to the shameful indignity of a public flagellation, in the hope of getting more satisfactory information out of him.

Whitley, in addition to a term of imprisonment, was sentenced to undergo the lash for an offence of which he was not guilty. I was incensed. It was the period of my hot youth, in which I had more enterprise than discretion. I determined to procure his escape at all hazards.

The old Sydney prison in which Whitley was confined was situated near Hospital Creek, in which private vessels unloaded

their cargoes, and where a barque, whose owner I was well acquainted with, was moored. The gaol was surrounded by a strong high wall, and a numerous guard was mounted day and night. By bribing a turnkey I gained access to my friend's cell one cloudy night, and forced open the lock with implements I had brought for the purpose, for the turnkey had only bargained to admit me and raise no alarm. A wheelbarrow and a couple of tubs piled on top of each other brought me near enough to the iron *chevaux-de-frise* of the wall to fasten a stout rope to one of the spikes. We were soon astride of the awkward obstruction, and then, casting the rope on the other side, we slid down to the ground, and congratulated ourselves that we were out of danger. The whizz of a bullet over our heads, followed immediately by the sharp report of a musket, soon undeceived us on that point. A treacherous cloud had for a moment disclosed the previously hidden moon. We were observed by the guard, a shot was fired, and chase was immediately given. We soon outran our pursuers, and all would have been well, but I was unfortunately recognised by the serjeant of the guard, for, immediately after the report of his weapon, he called upon Whitley and myself by name to stand.

The boom of a cannon from the signal battery at the north point of Sydney Cove announced to the sleeping town that a prisoner had escaped. The tramp of feet and the flickering of lights from point to point told us that we must be away. As I had previously arranged, we made straight for my friend's barque in Hospital Creek. He had promised a place of concealment in the hold; but, thinking the pursuit would be too hot for that, he put us in a dingy, and we rowed over to Pinchgut, a small islet a mile and a half from Sydney. This place was a mere rock, whose clefts Joe and I had often searched for oysters (which grew abundantly there) during our holiday rambles. It was occasionally used by the Government for drying powder, but the place was avoided by the townspeople, because upon the summit there stood a gibbet, on which a mis-

creant who had murdered a colonist in return for half a pint of rum had paid the penalty of his crime. The island was named Pinchgut by some irreclaimable convicts who had been put there on short commons as a punishment. Yet this place of sinister renown was sheeted with the fragrant gold of the feathery mimosa, and was garlanded with bright red creepers, as though nature mutely protested against the vileness of man.

Aided by our friends, it was easy for us to remain in concealment until a good opportunity for getting away from the officers of the law presented itself. I had succeeded in securing my companion's liberty, but I had not only broken the law and made myself liable to the same cruel punishment from which I had saved him—I had compromised my father, whose name I had used in the transaction with the turnkey. I determined that, if possible, I would leave the colony. Whitely preferred making his way to a relation in the country.

As luck would have it, while I was in concealment a sandalwood trafficker from the South Seas put into Port Jackson to refit and provision. I met her captain one night at a well-known locality of dubious reputation called The Rocks, and had no difficulty in shipping under the name of Thomas Whimpey as a common seaman before the mast. Great was my grief that I could not take with me the sharer of my youthful frolics. He was in hiding 20 miles inland from Sydney, and was in a fair way to become a bushranger.

As I shall not have occasion to refer to my friend again, I may as well state here what befell him. There came a time when so many prisoners were at large, and the means of getting them in were so utterly inadequate, that the Governor issued a proclamation *inviting* them to return before a certain date, with the assurance that all who had not been guilty of murder or highway robbery should receive free pardons. My escapee accepted a free pardon, and going into business not long afterwards, became a highly-prosperous man.

CHAPTER II.

AT SEA.

ON a hot summer morning the Molly Asthore, a topsail schooner of 120 tons, tripped her anchor in Watson's Bay, where she had been snugly moored during the previous night. Her square sails hung from the yards in graceful festoons, waiting to be sheeted home by her not very active crew, and under a light wind she slowly glided through Port Jackson Heads, where the swell of the lonely Southern Ocean was making itself heard in measured cadence.

The rich perfume of the wattle trees was slowly wafted to us by the lagging breeze. The shrill sounds of the garrulous cicadæ animated the thick bush which sheltered them on the shore. The wild flowers drooped under the heat. A lizard ventured forth upon the trunk of a dead tree for a moment, but quickly retired before the universal glare; and an occasional bright-winged parrot or lemon-crested cockatoo flashed through the palpitating atmosphere in search of a more leafy neighbourhood. A glimmering haze overspread the distant little straggling town of Sydney, and we left port under the gaze of but one man—a swarthy aboriginal, who brandished a spear at us from a neighbouring cluster of mia-mias lying in the shadow of a rock.

As we cleared the South Head the wind freshened, the gaff-topsails were run up, and soon the long line of Australian coast faded into dim perspective.

The Molly Asthore was a roughly-built vessel. She had not the sharp, yacht-like bows of the island traders of to-day. Her decks where neither white nor well-kept; rope ends usually trailed about instead of being Flemish-coiled, and she was innocent of brass work or ornamentation of any kind. The cuddy, to which access was obtained by a short perpendicular ladder, was furnished with two rude bunks for the master and

mate, and a little square table, round which there was barely room to walk. The schooner had carried cocoanut oil, a commodity whose penetrating scent is never eradicated from ships in which it has once been stored, and the offensive odour of rancid oil and bilge-water was almost overpowering in this little room. The men who slept forward were not so well off, but they counted on a fine weather voyage, which would admit of lying on deck through the nights. The provisions consisted chiefly of weevily biscuits and bad salt meat, and the cockroaches which abounded in all parts of the schooner showed a shocking tameness.

But a sailor bound for the South Seas in those days was not over particular about his personal comfort. He had the romance of adventure before him. Little was known of these seas, and all vessels which sailed on them were more or less ships of discovery. The fate of La Perouse, whose visit to Port Jackson, where he last saw the home of the white man, I had often heard my father speak of, was still shrouded in mystery, and we might even come upon the survivors of his unfortunate expedition, who were believed to be imprisoned in some of the island groups we purposed visiting. With all the interest of a new world opening before me I was disposed to think lightly of the hardships in store.

The ship's company consisted of the master, Jacob Turner, an old weatherbeaten tar, of mahogany complexion, with short, thick whiskers like tufts of cocoanut fibre, who had many strange experiences of lawless regions to tell; the mate, Silas Cobb, a Yankee who had served in an American whaler and knew much of the adventurous life of the whale fisheries; two English sailors who had run away from their last ship in Hobart Town; an escaped New South Wales convict, a cabin boy, and myself. We were short-handed, but that was no unusual occurence.

We gave the dreary convict-home of Norfolk Ireland a wide berth for obvious reasons, and entered the tropics when ten days out from Sydney without having sighted land since leaving port.

For a whole fortnight an almost vertical sun blazed upon our crawling ship. Idle days dawned in soft rose colour, swooned through languid airs, and melted away in golden sunsets. Sapphire seas shimmered beneath the sun across limitless fields of azure. One day a gentle regular breeze came down upon us. It was the refreshing trade wind, which rippled the ocean with tiny wavelets, and carried us along without the sense of motion. We were in the Elysian Fields of Neptune's empire.

The silver sheen of the flying-fish now added to the dream-like splendour of the view as they skipped through the pearly atmosphere to fall with a faint rippling splash in the cool waters. I watched them through the lazy hours from the ship's side, and saw that the shower of brilliants which entertained us was due to the keen pursuit of the dolphins and bonitos. When the silvern cloud arose and took its arrow-like series of flights and dips, like an imitation on a small scale of the ricochet of a cannon-ball in the water, the relentless pursuers would describe the chord of an arc, judging accurately where the spoil would fall when the last drop of water on their wings had dried, and the poor little things that escaped the gulls and frigate-birds in the air were often devoured on touching the other element, though the smallest sprinkling of water seemed to be sufficient to give the fish strength for another aerial rebound.

The dolphins were not free from the vicissitudes of life. The sailors amused themselves by spearing them from the forechains, and a fish was often transfixed with jaws extended in the moment of an expected banquet. Then the death of the dolphin was a picture—a beautiful dissolving view. He always made a good end. "Nothing in his life became him like the leaving of it." The fleeting shades of green, yellow, and gold which shot through him as he lay quivering on the deck, arrayed in all the enchantments of colour, made a fascinating transformation scene. He died emitting a flood of exquisite hues, as the swan is said to sing his sweetest note at the moment of death. Rainbows served for his apotheosis as his spirit ascended to the

happy hunting grounds of all good fishes, where there are no wicked sailors to annoy.

All that is bright must fade. Fair weather does not last for ever, even in the Pacific. For a time we had heavy tropical showers, repulsive mists, and short, fierce squalls which blew with hurricane force for a few minutes.

The weather cleared again. We knew that we were very near the Fijian archipelago, and we were expecting to sight land every moment, when a great peace fell upon the ocean. It was an ominous calm. The barometer indicated some startling change. As yet there was not a ripple on the water, but heavy clouds hung motionless in the sultry air, and gradually grew more lowering. The face of nature turned livid. The oppressive silence communicated itself to all on board. We waited for the coming storm, wondering from which direction we should feel it first. The atmosphere was hot, lurid, obscure.

In a moment there was a perceptible chill. Turning round I noticed a movement in a pillar of cloud on the far horizon astern of us, which had become as black as ink. The whole mass seemed to be bearing down upon us, and gathering volume as it progressed, till what was originally a black spot filled half the heavens. Then we caught the sound of an angry wind rapidly increasing in force. The water was lashed into fury, and was being driven towards us in a compact body, which rose several feet above the level of the smooth sea that lay between us and the blast. We could hear the coming whirlwind screeching along the surface of the water. Then it was upon us with a prolonged relentless shriek, and we knew that we should soon be in the vortex of a South Sea hurricane.

The wind caught the schooner astern. She had been luckily brought under easy sail, or she would have been dismasted. The canvas she carried lifted her forward with one tremendous bound, and then every inch of it was furiously torn from her and hurried away on the wings of the gale. The vessel was now fairly enveloped in the tempest, running with it under bare

poles—a skeleton ship engaged in a terrible race with Death. Her shrouds and stays rang responsive to the wind, like the strings of a harp, furnishing a weird musical accompaniment to the howling of the storm.

The noise was terrific. The sound was that of air travelling with the highest attainable velocity, and carrying with it the ocean spray. It was as if we were actually enclosed by a great body of water rapidly in motion, forming part of a concrete moving mass, and as though every particle of the element was endowed with the power of shrieking demoniacally. No man's voice could by any possibility be heard, nor could anyone stand on deck without holding on to something. It was appalling. We felt that the Angel of Death had encompassed us with his wings.

In the course of the night the wind changed its direction several times. Towards morning the fury of the storm had abated a little, but hoisting sail was still out of the question. The two sailors who manfully stood lashed to the wheel in an exposed position during the night had had their jackets and shirts blown off their backs. With great difficulty a bit of tarpaulin was made fast to the bowsprit to do duty as a storm-jib, but the vessel was practically beyond control.

To add to the dismal terror of the time, a fearful thunderstorm broke upon us. The vivid lightning flashes which lit up the whole of the inky vault above brought the sweltering desert of water into view with a weird effect which dazed us. The air was charged with electricity, and our vessel became the subject of the phenomenon known as St. Elmo's light. Each mast was crowned with a baleful fire which shed a ghastly bluish light upon the men on deck, imparting a corpse-like hue to their faces. It was many hours since I had eaten or slept, and this gruesome sight so held my fancy that I could not divest myself of the idea that I was with the terrible crew of the spectral ship of old Vanderdecken, to look upon whose fleshless heads was death to all respectable seafarers. We sped along under those fearful

candles, while the thunder with its claps and peals and long-reverberating roll seemed to form the mad music of a wild funeral march.

Day broke upon a woeful scene of desolation. The struggling dawn showed through the gray mirk a canopy of clouds torn and mangled by the wind into every conceivable shape, and a seething sea which boiled away to a dismal horizon, where the broken surface was tinged with a wan light, which added to the feeling of isolation and mystery that gathered round the scene. On our lee was a great misty dome, which we were rapidly approaching. It might be a cloud-form, or it might be an island, for all that we could see in the neutral-tinted gloom.

It seemed to me that our captain, who had lashed himself to the mizzen shrouds, was listening most intently to the thunder peals, which were now rapidly dying away. Suddenly he started and shrieked in my ear. "Did you not hear it?"

"I hear nothing but the distant roll of the thunder," said I. "Let us hope we are now through the worst of it."

"I am not mistaken," he continued. "No one who has once heard the sullen roar of the South Sea reef with a lee shore before him ever forgets the sound. And see you not the big island rising right before us through the haze? Say all the prayers you know, boys, for to-night we sup with Davy Jones."

I gazed through the chilly light which was gradually spreading itself around, and there was the clear outline of what seemed precipitous high land coming out of the sea to meet us. I could not distinguish the break upon the reef amid the circumambient foam driven in clouds before the wind; but I could hear a low rumbling sound, gradually gaining in force and then dying away again, which had a cadence of its own.

The sun rose like a molten globe shorn of his beams and powerless to outstare a man, but giving a pale effulgence like that of the moon. As the spectral light crept up towards the zenith it disclosed a sight which has often appalled stout hearts, though forming in itself a magnificent spectacle—a storm-tossed

sea breaking in mad fury upon the South Sea reef—one of those mighty fabrics of coral which myriads of tiny architects, the conquerors of the ocean surge, have raised as natural breakwaters for all the islands of the Fijian archipelago.

The gale was hurrying us with uncontrollable power upon Viti Levu, the largest island of the group, and its girdle of coral, on which the furious sea was breaking in magnificent desolation. The sound came to us now like a roar of fierce anger, now with a measured dirge-like tone, and now in melancholy strains mellowed by distance, tristfully surgent like those of an Æolian harp. These reefs usually encircle the islands at a distance of from half a mile to two miles. Within the barrier the water is as smooth as a lake, but the trade winds, which blow for nine months in the year upon the shore, send the long rollers of the Pacific against the reef, which varies from 5ft. to 30ft. in width. Dashing upon this impregnable barrier, they rise in columns of rosy foam often to a height of from 20ft. to 50ft., and, glittering in the rays of the tropical sun, fall like obelisks of diamonds. A long line of silent ripples is often at first the only indication of the presence of one of these spines of coral and volcanic rock ; then the rollers come against them with a sound like a thunder-clap, and the waters, broken into milk-white foam, hurry along the side with wonderful impetuosity, like an immense jet of vapour, until, meeting with a greater obstruction, a column is thrown high into the air, and forming an aqueous arch, bursts suddenly into spray.

As we neared what we felt to be our doom—for it was impossible to alter the course of the schooner, which continued to be driven before the wind under a storm-jib—the captain told us we had two chances, though very small ones. One was to be driven in at the reef-opening, which is usually found opposite a river or creek, and where the water is generally of sufficient depth to admit of the largest vessel entering. The other was to jump the barrier. If the vessel took the reef in a narrow place it was possible for her, by great good fortune, to

ride clear over it on the back of a wave into smooth water, but the chances were ten thousand to one that she would be caught on the obstruction, or perhaps be dropped by a receding billow on a pointed coral patch and be shivered to fragments.

The members of the ship's company prepared themselves for the crisis of their fate in the manner which seemed best to them. The skipper descended to the cuddy, and occupied himself in gazing fondly upon a miniature painting of a young woman which he took from his sea-chest. The mate found some relief in turning up at hazard passages of Scripture in an old Bible, opening the page by inserting a pin at random in the closed leaves. The sailors discovered some rum in the hold, and my mind was busy with a hundred plans, rejected as soon as conceived, for buoying myself up until I could float into the smooth water on the landward side of the reef; for that the schooner would go to pieces and leave me like a bit of drift-wood in the spray I had not the slightest doubt.

As the wind slackened the sea rose. The hurricane no longer flattened its surface. We were thrown up to dizzy heights and slid down fearful green valleys with the sickening sense of a fall from a pinnacle in some horrid nightmare. While buried in these terrible ravines we saw nothing but the mountainous sides of imprisoning watery hills. As we shot to the summit of one of these ranges I looked out wearily into the world of throbbing ocean, and saw with a thrill which I can recall at this moment that we were within a few hundred yards of a white wrath—the broad belt of gleaming surge, the stupendous rampart of water, seething and boiling in a vast chaos of foam—which marked the break on the reef.

In a moment we are thrown between two gigantic pillars in this leaping and thundering aqueous gallery. It is the narrow opening in the reef, where the flux and reflux of the sea form a miniature maelström of sufficient power to engulf the largest ship afloat. We are wrapped in mist and spray. We are being drawn into the boiling cauldron. The schooner has a

gyratory motion for some seconds as she is sucked by the vortices, and it is doubtful which way she will be carried. Suddenly, with a roar and a bellow which made me shake in every limb, we are upborne on a mighty wave, which ascends like a waterspout, tapering to a pyramidal point. Clinging desperately to a belaying cleat, I was blinded and deafened by the drenching spray, and strangled by the wind.

For a moment we are poised on the watery apex in mid air. At that instant I suffered a syncope of all my faculties. I did not lose consciousness, but was spell-bound with the fascination of the rabbit under the gaze of the rattlesnake. I even noticed without shuddering in that terrible sixtieth part of a minute, during which our vessel trembled at this dizzy height, that the sides of the column of malachite-green had a ghastly radiance caught from the sickly sun, that the interior rolled with the gleam of a sapphire, and that there were faint rainbow tints on the outermost edge of spray, while below the sea was churned into a thundering abyss in which it was impossible to distinguish the coral bank from deep water.

I involuntarily shut my eyes. I gasp for breath as the closing waters ring in my ears, crashing, and roaring, and booming with the voice of a thousand cannon. Now we are falling with incredible velocity. Falling! Falling! Oh God! Will the end never come?

. . . . . .

My next recollection was that of being awakened by a hot sun playing on my face. To my amazement I found that I was lying with my head on a crown of cocoanut leaves, and that the deck of the schooner, which was quite uninjured, was half-buried in the thick green foliage of a tropical island. During the prolonged horror of the descent from the starry-pointing sea I had swooned. It was not all descent, for the vessel had been carried right through the avalanche of falling waters before she reached the natural level of the sea, and she had been driven on a tidal wave clear over the reef, high and dry on shore, and into

a grove of bread-fruits and cocoa-nuts.* All hands—with the exception of the master, the mate, and myself—had been swept away in the tumult of waters, and we never saw a trace of them again. Turner had been lashed to the rigging, and Cobb having got jammed between the rudder and the displaced binnacle, they outlived the adventure, though all but drowned in the hail of salt sea which had fallen on them.

CHAPTER III.

AN INHOSPITABLE RECEPTION.

WE were cast ashore on the coast of Viti Levu. It was not a desert island, but a land of tropical luxuriance, which supported 80,000 natives with very little labour; and these natives, as far as the coast tribes (the only part of the population the white man had any knowledge of) were concerned, were known to be the most bloodthirsty and treacherous savages in the world, who carried on heathen abominations to an extent unknown in any other part of the globe, while they were privileged to live on a portion of the earth's surface which was marked by singular beauty.

The master and mate, who survived the wreck with me, had made a former visit to the sandalwood coast, and knew something of the language and ways of the natives, whose acquaintance with the white man was of comparatively recent date. The captain expressed the opinion that our prospects of escape from a cruel death were very small.

"The customs of this country," said he, "oblige the natives to kill castaways. They look upon all such people—whom they

* In the year 1871 this also happened to an iron ship, the Ellesmere, on the island of Kandavu. She was purchased by a Levuka storekeeper for a small sum and successfully launched.

describe as persons with 'salt-water in their eyes'—as being delivered to them by the gods to be eaten, and if they neglected the practice they would be fearful of some terrible calamity befalling them."

"To be killed and eaten," added the mate, "is not the worst there is to fear, either. These wretches sometimes torture their helpless victims in a fiendish way. Only a year ago an English sailor, who had been hospitably received on one island, got wrecked on another in a canoe while endeavouring to reach a ship in the offing, and he had not the good fortune to be clubbed outright. His eyelids were cut away by the sharpened shell of the pearl-oyster, and he was then bound to a tree with his exposed orbs turned to the full glare of the sun. When the poor fellow was perfectly blind they skinned the soles of his feet, and then tormented him with firebrands to make him jump about in that wretched condition."

For the present we were safe, however. The hurricane and the tidal wave had destroyed the villages on the coast where we were driven ashore, and the terrified inhabitants had fled inland, leaving the strand strewn with their household gods, and littered with uprooted trees and fragments torn from the dense vegetation.

Soon the storm-wrack cleared away, the heavens were a vault of blue faintly laced with thin transparencies of clouds, the sun appeared in all his splendour, playing on the still waters within the reef with a myriad flashing colours, while the rainbow-tinted coral forest seemed to wave gracefully in the shades and gleams as some bright-coloured fish lazily stirred the thick subaqueous undergrowths. A soft pearly haze rested on the purpling ocean, and it was difficult to believe that an awful tempest had so recently swept over the peaceful scene. When night came, the full moon rose radiantly in the east, throwing a broad track of silver across the crisp wavelets, and shedding a soft halo round the sad wreck of the Molly Asthore, so plainly doomed no more through rolling seas to ride again.

The neighbouring thicket in which we had made some slight timorous explorations, skirted a tropical forest in which the trees and tangled undergrowth were so closely packed that the hurricane had done but little damage except upon the seaward edge. The cocoanut trees, which are not very firmly rooted, and have at the top of their high cylindrical stems a heavy plume of leaves, among which the nuts nestle in luscious clusters, had suffered severely wherever they were exposed to the fury of the gale. The bread-fruit trees, which are of sturdy growth and well-balanced with thickly-fruited branches, were not much injured.

As we advanced into the depths of the forest, amidst the sombre foliage, the rank matted grasses, and the festooned canopy of interlacing parasites, the balmy air of the beach gave place to a hot, moist, and sickly atmosphere that was very oppressive. But the luxuriant vegetation of the jungle was of transcendant beauty. Sometimes there was a plot of grass of a delicate green, wonderfully soft and fragrant, and illuminated at intervals by the flaming blossoms of the hibiscus and cactus. The kowrie or dakua grew intermingled with wild nutmegs, which exhaled a pleasant aroma. An enormous yevu-yevu tree formed a complete bower in itself. The small white flowers of the ivi emitted a delicious perfume, and the kavika or malay apple-trees, had densely strewn the ground beneath their branches with petals and stamens, giving the turf the appearance of a tesselated pavement. Innumerable creepers and trailing plants depended from trunk and bough, interlaced with each other in endless coils, which turned and twisted from the roots of the large trees, and ascended to the highest branches to fall again in leafy steps of glossy green, or assume some new fantastic shape, and so shut out the sun that in some of the shady dells it was impossible to avoid a chill. The whole neighbourhood was fragrant with the scent of the lemon, the jasmine, the pine apple, and the orange. It was only necessary to stretch forth one's arm to secure a delightful repast.

We knew that the savages would not be long absent from their fishing grounds on the reef, and we were very circumspect in our movements, always retiring to the stranded schooner at nightfall, and keeping careful watch.

On the third day after our almost miraculous landing on the island the air was rent by the yells of a hundred Fijians, who had doubtless been watching us for some time previously, and who had now determined to take us and our fortress, the wrecked vessel, by assault.

On they came, under cover of the trees, launching at us volley after volley of arrows, and, what were more formidable, stones from slings. There was a breeze blowing which diverted the course of the former missiles to some extent, and many fell short. But the stones rattled about our ears in very uncomfortable proximity. We had a few guns, but there were not more than half-a-dozen rounds of ammunition that had not been hopelessly damaged by the salt water. However, we kept the savages at bay by occasionally dropping a man. Firearms were not unknown to them, having been introduced in another part of the group some years previously, but they were still very scarce, and our munitions of war would be considered a great prize, could they be taken.

Towards evening our last shot had been expended, and the enemy held off, waiting for the cover of darkness to make a grand rush and finish us with the club. Ovens were already being prepared for the approaching cannibal feast, so sure were they of the result. The captain remarked that among the insulting fire of words the natives kept up he could distinguish that they were bespeaking the three of us joint by joint. They were also preparing the three kinds of vegetables always eaten with bokola, as baked human flesh is called. These I afterwards learned were the leaves of the malawathi, the tudano, and the borodina. The two former are middle-sized trees, growing wild. The borodina is cultivated; it is a bushy shrub, seldom higher than 6ft., with a dark, glossy foliage, and berries very much like

tomatoes, which have a faint aromatic smell, and are sometimes prepared like tomato sauce. These plants are wrapped round the several joints of the prepared human body, and baked with them on the hot stones of the cannibal oven.

When it became apparent that our capture by club and spear was only a question of an hour or two if we remained on the schooner, we determined to make good our retreat to the friendly shelter of the forest. As soon as night fell we quietly slid down a rope at the stern into the sand, and wading some distance into the sea, travelled along the coast line until we were well out of reach of the cannibal horde. Then we struck into the woods and concealed ourselves in a vast cabin formed by the roots of a baka.

This tree resembles the famous banyan of India. Its branches are propped up by aerial roots which run along the ground, assuming strange shapes, and forming a fantastic maze, which is perfectly indescribable in its convolutions. At first a parasite on other trees, it soon acquires such dimensions that it sucks all their sap, when they die, and it then has to draw its nourishment from the soil. The crown of the giant baka, upborne on air roots, expands into a cloud of foliage frequently 150ft. in diameter, or 450ft. in circumference. This hanging garden of vegetation is decorated with pendant cacti and brilliant orchids. Gorgeously-plumaged parrots hang among the boughs nibbling at the blosoms, gem-like lizards bask on the trunk, and innumerable insects hum in chorus in the foliage. Bush-ropes of every size and degree of pliancy climb and twist about, running from tree to tree. Some stately trunks, supported by these natural stays and braces, looked like the masts of a fleet at anchor. The mighty baka forms an awe-inspiring object, and is frequently made sacred to priestly incantations. Such a tree having this character is never approached by Fijians not in the priestly office, so that our place of concealment seemed very secure.

Presently we heard the demoniac yells of the savages. They

had leaped upon the schooner, club in hand, and found that the birds had flown. They searched the vessel diligently, pilfering every article that could be easily removed. It was then determined that we were hidden in some part of the hold. They set fire to our craft, and soon the hulk, which lay exposed on the sand, a hundred yards from the water-line, was reduced to ashes. In the lurid light of the conflagration we could see from our leafy cavern the forms of the all but naked Fijians dancing in hideous glee, and anxiously watching for some sign of their expected victims in the flames. As soon as they were satisfied that the white men had escaped, the beach and the forest were scoured in all directions. Numerous search parties passed close to us, but did not enter the sacred precincts of the baka tree.

When daylight came, and we were able to see distinctly the sable forms flitting about the wood, the captain said he thought he recognised a chief with whom he had had transactions on his former visit to the Sandalwood coast. He believed now, that with his slight knowledge of the language and his acquaintance with this chief, we could deliver ourselves up with safety, and hope to live in comfort until the arrival of some European vessel. I was opposed to this scheme, having no confidence whatever in the natives. But I was overruled by my two companions.

We had each a cutlass and a gun, but no ammunition fit for use. When the skipper called out that we surrendered, we emerged from our hiding-place, and walked boldly towards one of the wrecked villages, which was rapidly being set in order again, threatening the common people around us with instant death if they offered to molest us. The head chief of the district, Waikatakata (Hot Water), who had been apprised of our coming, awaited us, seated on a large stone at the door of his roofless house, with his counsellors and a large assemblage around him.

The captain presented a whale's tooth, which was one of a number stowed in the schooner for the purpose of trade,

and asked the protection of the tribe for the white men.

The important personage he addressed, called the Turanga Levu by his vassals, had, it seemed, had no previous personal acquaintance with foreigners.

Waikatakata said—"Welcome to the men with shark's eyes. The people from beyond where the ocean carries the sky can bring us guns and hatchets, and help us to punish the insolent foe. We have heard of their prowess in the kingdom of Bau, and desire that they should make this land their home."

Then rose an old priest of uncanny aspect. "Not so," quoth he, "or evil days will assuredly fall upon the land. When we first saw the gleam of a foreign sail, like a spirit walking on the waters, at the meeting place of sea and sky, where the sun is daily drowned,* we said, 'These are god-ships,' and we longed for a visit from those divine navigators. The white man came, as we have heard, and was believed to be a god. With his arms of might he has done wonders for Naulivou of Bau. But when for his oppression he fell under the avenging club of his former friends, it was seen that he bled and was no god, but mortal as ourselves. The white man's gods are not the gods of Fiji. If they are to be set up here the wrath of the great Dengeh will be aroused; he will shake with anger in his cave, and the whole earth will be barren. It is he who has sent us these castaways. They must die. The customs of our country and our religion not only sanction but demand and sanctify the deed."

As the priest ended, it was clear that the populace sided with him. Had it not been so he would not have spoken so boldly. The chief wavered. He feared to arouse the ill will of his conservative people, and at the same time he ardently desired the power which he believed the presence of white men could bring him.

After a brief address, in which he insinuated his own views without appearing to express them, he concluded, "The priest

* The Fijian expression for horizon.

has spoken with words of earthly wisdom, but not with inspiration. Let the oracle be consulted, and I will abide the result."

The priest anointed himself with scented cocoanut oil, and became absorbed in thought. The assemblage waited in breathless silence. We watched him with a fearful interest, for our fate hung upon the end of this strange scene.

In a few minutes a perceptible tremor agitated the old man's frame. His limbs twitched, and faint, rapid distortions passed over his face, like shadows chasing each other on the water. These gradually increased till a violent muscular action set in; foam appeared upon his lips, and he gasped and sobbed in strong convulsions. He shouted, gnashed his teeth, clenched his hands, swayed himself backwards and forward. He shook from head to foot; his veins swelled till they seemed just about to burst, and his muscles tightened till they threatened to snap. He seemed to be lashed and torn by hurricanes of racking torture.

"Now he is possessed by his god," it was whispered round, and every ear was strained to catch the first words of the supernatural deliverance.

The excitement was intensified by the priest jerking forth at intervals sundry exclamations about his god, or himself, or both of them together, thus:—"I! I! I! It is I! The god! The god! It is we! We two!" Then, still writhing, trembling, groaning, looking like a mad paralytic kneeling on ground shaken by an earthquake, the people, unable to remain quiet any longer, shouted deliriously, "That is it! See! see! Wonderful! True! There they are! Both of them!"

The climax had now been reached. The priest, with rolling eyes and frenzied voice, screamed, "It is I! It is I! Listen to Dengeh! Trust not the white men. They grow slowly like the nut, and abide—the Fijians like the plaintain, and wither in a few days. Hear not the words of the religion they bring. It is the lie of a far away path."

The divination was clearly against us. We gathered from

the satisfied grunts and expressive gestures of our neighbours that we should shortly be clubbed and consigned to the oven.

Meanwhile the priest was gradually recovering from his paroxysm. He looked round with a vacant stare, as though waking from a trance, and as the god uttered the words, "I depart," violently flung himself down on the ground. He remained quivering for some time, but shortly sat up, took a draught of water, and was himself again.

The chief had been a deeply-interested spectator of the scene, but it seemed to us that he was more moved by the attitude of the people than by the vaticinations of the priest, in whose inspiration it is doubtful if he believed. After some minutes of reflection he remarked, "The god has spoken, but the fate of the white men is not decreed. The priest shall visit the cave of the great Dengeh and show us an omen before the club falls."

That evening costly offerings of food, clubs, spears, native cloth, &c., were prepared and presented at the mouth of a cave in a neighbouring hill, the road to which was known only to the priest. These valuable articles were afterwards appropriated by the servant of Dengeh. Before the offerings could be presented and the ear of the oracle gained, the priests on these occasions must draw slowly near the holy places in a manner that is most painfully reverential. This they do kneeling, not crawling on all fours, as serfs do when approaching their chiefs—in this country, a process far too easy and pleasant—but "walking" on their knees only, without letting their hands share the burden, and without steadying help from the toes, which dare not touch the ground, however gently, at the peril of their owner. If, unhappily, they flagged in this weary and painful progression, and but once allowed their feet to touch the sacred soil, the god would turn those feet white; while if they ventured to rest or move forward at a quicker pace, by putting their hands on the ground, the incensed Dengeh would cause the land to be stricken with famine.

When the god was consulted as to a declaration of war, the priest bent his ear over the cave and listened attentively for the reply. If there came up from the divine hiding-place a noise like the clash of arms in battle, the priest was bound to declare that war must be the order of the day ; but if no sound broke the silence of the god's retreat he had as plainly to say that for the present at least the tribes might continue in the prosperity and gladness of unbroken peace. If blood were found on the path the following morning it was a sure indication that the god was favourable to war, or demanded human sacrifices. If the priest was desired to pray for rain, and to ask if the time was near when it would be poured down on their thirsty and parched-up lands, bending his ear again towards the Oracle he listens. Should the answer be given in sounds like the gurgling of water streams, he has simply to say, "The drought is at an end my friends, and the land is saved." The priest was generally an elderly and experienced man, with his "weather eye," always open, and perhaps also with a somewhat rheumatic body. If the experienced eye could detect in the change of wind or the state of the atmosphere that the rain was not far off, or if the sensitive nerves from sundry twitchings and pains proclaimed it near, it is not difficult to imagine how easily the prophetic ear of the owner of such nerves and eye could hear the gurgling of water streams, and, if need were, even the thunder of mighty falls.

In the present instance our ecclesiastical friend, on his way to the cave in the screwpine hills, took a fowl with him, and decapitated it *en route*. It so happened that on the following morning there was blood upon the path. We were condemned to die.

CHAPTER IV.

A RACE FOR LIFE.

DURING the night all three of us had been securely bound with sinnet, and vigilantly guarded to prevent any attempt at escape. Preparations for the cannibal feast were also industriously prosecuted in our presence. A hideous blear-eyed savage, sitting cross-legged on the grass, superintended the construction of the oven and the placing of the fires to thoroughly heat the layers of hot stones. He occasionally directed our attention to the proceedings with a self-satisfied leer, remarking that we should soon have the salt-water taken out of our eyes. He also felt my limbs, which were well fleshed, and pronounced them to be good.

The word was secretly given to club us. The captain and the mate fell prostrate under two thwacking blows delivered from behind. Instinctively feeling that the same fate was overtaking me, I made a vigorous bound forward, burst asunder the fastenings of my wrists and ancles, and saw the club which was intended to alight on my head sink in the turf at my side.

I was fleet of foot, and very lightly clad, having nothing on but boots, white duck trousers, and a shirt. I sprang like a deer into the jungle and ran for the hills like the wind. A number of the natives darted after me, but I soon saw that the only one who was likely to overtake me was the objectionable individual who had charge of the cooking preparations. He was a well-formed man of about 25, but had some loathsome sores on his body, which did not, however, affect his health. He had the advantage of knowing the country, and of carrying nothing in the way of clothes but a slight loin-cloth of tapa, worn in the form of a T bandage, while his well-oiled body enabled him to bear exposure to the sun, and helped him to glide through opposing brambles.

In threading the luxuriant tropical forest with the matted net-

work of the tangled undergrowths which impeded me at every turn, my pursuer rapidly gained upon me, but whenever it was a question of open ground, as sometimes happened for a time, as I began to ascend one of the numerous ravines which radiate from the highest point of the island to the sea, I saw that I fully held my own. My enemy, nevertheless, showed no sign of flagging. It was a race for life, and I was not likely to give in while there was a breath left in my body.

In the woods I could hear the crackling of breaking branches in my rear, and in the open there was always the dusky form pressing eagerly on with a relentless stride, his chest well expanded, the head well up, and the clenched hands in measured motion at his sides, one of them grasping by the middle a short club curiously knotted at the end—a weapon capable of being thrown a considerable distance, or of being used effectively in a hand-to-hand encounter.

At length, after the best part of an hour's running, with occasional rests, I got into a sort of labyrinthine canebrake which lined the banks of a small stream trending to the coast, hoping that I might here effectually baffle my pursuer. I knew that he dare not follow me far from the coast-line for fear of the inland tribes—the landsmen, who were never on friendly terms with the mariners who lived on the shore. This was also a difficulty with me. I had a dread of momentarily rushing into the arms of some anthropophagistical mountaineer. Occasionally in my flight I had caught sight of a small native village perched on a castled crag, or half hidden in a distant ravine, and I had carefully avoided approaching those places.

But now an altogether unexpected source of anxiety beset me. I found that I was fairly entrapped in this dense patch of vethos. The reeds reached such a height that they shut out all surrounding objects. In their gloomy shade I could distinguish nothing clearly. As I passed through these prison bars they closed upon me from behind with a snap like so many spring doors, preventing the air from circulating and making the at-

mosphere close and sultry beyond expression; while the sickly graveyard smell emitted by the fermenting vegetable matter was almost overpowering. After some 20 minutes of plunging about over a flooring honeycombed with pitfalls concealed by undergrowths—frequently sprawling full length over thong-like creepers and tendrils which it was impossible to break—I reached a nerveless state of exhaustion, in which I saw that I put forth my arm without making the smallest impression upon the stubborn wires of my thickset cage. On the one hand I feared that I should never find my way out of this maze, and on the other that if my strength returned I should as likely as not work down to the coast and the dangerous locality I had fled from, while the noise of every breaking twig caused me to look round for my pursuer. Were he to come upon me now I should be helpless. I already pictured myself prostrate with the glowering eyes of the horrid savage upon me.

Having rested awhile I made a supreme effort, and clambered up the gnarled trunk of a withered old tree, about 12ft. high. From this elevation I could see no end to the labyrinth. As I descended, the night mist began to steam and wreath in loathy forms. As I viewed the stems and withes, with their endless webs of roots, choking out air and sky, I became a prey to the depressing influence of the horrid place. The premonitory symptoms of malarious fever were shuddering through my frame. I again lay down, reflecting that it was impossible to make a way in a straight line, even though I knew the proper direction, or had vigour enough remaining to advance at all. Turning my head wearily round, to my delight I caught a glimpse of blue sky through a little break in the vethos. Following this direction a few steps, I discovered that the reeds suddenly thinned down at this point, and in a few minutes I was out on lightly-timbered land, breathing the pure air of heaven once more.

The sun set all aglow on the sea-girt horizon, bathing the hill tops in a ruddy light, which lasted but a few seconds. Dark-

ness followed almost instantly, and heavy dews began to fall, compelling me to seek some sort of shelter. I crept back into the edge of the cover I had just left, and there slept the sleep of exhaustion.

I awoke shortly before daybreak, shivering with the cold. Glancing to the top of the hill in front of me I was startled by seeing the trees and shrubs shining in a bright light, and looking as though they had been worked by a skilful artificer in frosted silver, while the birds flitted about in a cloud of white sparks. I thought at first that there must be a conflagration in the valley beyond; but shortly the strange illumination faded, and I knew that the phenomenon was due to the rising sun. Not daring to delay longer, I resumed my journey up hill, hoping to find a secure hiding-place on some prominence commanding the ocean, so that I might watch for the arrival of an English sail.

Emerging from the patch of reeds upon a stretch of comparatively level ground, I felt greatly fatigued, for my night's rest was taken in a mephitic atmosphere of rank decaying vegetable matter. I noticed a thousand yards ahead a craggy solitude on the hill-side, shaded by thickly clustering ivi and wi trees, and I determined to rest there for a time.

At that moment my enemy shot out from the reeds in my rear. He must have passed the night quite close to me. Animated by his nearness to the quarry, he doubled his speed. I could no longer outrun him. Soon his footfalls on the turf were distinct in my ears. I counted them as I ran, and found he made three paces to my two. Then I heard his labored breathing. I felt his hot breath on my shoulder—the scented oil from his beastly person was in my nostrils. The blood burst from my ears and mouth and bubbled up in my boots (which had been torn and mangled out of all shape) with the exertions I made to reach the cover in view, and I was sure that I should be in the grasp of the foe in a few seconds. Suddenly stooping, on the instinctive impulse of a moment, I seized a pointed

stick used for digging yams, which had been left in my path by some agricultural laborer. I dropped on one knee, facing about instantly, and, holding the yam stick as an infantry soldier prepares to receive cavalry with his bayonet, the Fijian ran upon my weapon and impaled himself. With one convulsive gasp, when the shaft entered his breast, he fell dead; and I rolled over by his side, panting, bleeding, and thoroughly exhausted.

CHAPTER V.

THE ISLAND-WORLD.

ON recovering myself I plunged into the leafy grove which clothed the mountain side. Being now increasingly fearful of being seen by the inhabitants of some inland town, I moved warily. Afflicted with a raging thirst, I climbed a high tree, on which I observed a parasitical plant, the leaves of which acting as a kind of rain-gauge, supplied me with cups of the most beautifully pure water, that sparkled like dew in these elegant green vessels. Never was mortal drought more gratefully slaked. A shaddock plucked from its nest of green completed a light and refreshing breakfast. Turning round to descend, I discovered on a level with myself, in the umbrageous shade of the tree-top, the entrance to a cave, which was not visible from the open. The locality was well guarded from view, for close by the grotto a venerable vutu rakaraka reared its stately form to a height of 60ft. The huge arch-like branches it threw out were clasped by the twining roots of epiphytical fig-trees, and a number of climbing plants, interlaced with wax flowers, formed a mass of diverse greenery, shaping a wild fantastic scene in which the light of day was only dimly perceptible. Entering the cavern, I found it of considerable dimensions. The water dripping through the limestone roof had formed, as I could see when my eyes became accustomed to the faint light, the most

beautiful stalactites, which depended in elegant forms, fashioning crystal draperies worthy to form the hangings for a Temple of Nature.

It seemed that the foot of man had never before entered the gloomy chamber. This abode was admirably suited to me; I was always sure of a safe retreat when the natives appeared in view, for the cave was only to be discoved by climbing a high tree, and the dainties of the primeval orchard, with an occasional wild yam, would always suffice for the necessaries of life. (My yams I roasted at a small fire, which I kindled with sparks produced by laboriously rubbing the point of one stick in the grooved side of another, in the manner copied from the method of the South Sea Islanders, which had often been shown to me on the schooner. My cooked esculent was equal to the best floury potato I had ever tasted.) For the rest, I could walk to the hill-tops every day and keep a careful look-out for the arrival of some European ship on the coast, when I would stealthily descend and once more regain my liberty.

I made frequent excursions from my subterranean dwelling. As I ascended the high peaks of Viti Levu I noticed that the forests differed greatly in appearance from those of the lowlands. The trees were densely covered with mosses, lichens, and deep orange-coloured orchids. Some of the ferns were of vast dimensions, and the deep silence and repose which reigned in these sylvan retreats gave to them an air of impressive solemnity. Sometimes on topping an eminence a large part of the archipelago came into view. The sea was gemmed with islands and islets, which lay on its bosom, adding beauty to beauty, like pearls strung on a lovely woman's neck, and the refreshing trade wind came across the spangled mirror of the ocean, fanning the heights with its delicious coolness, which was especially grateful after the steaming heat of some of the valleys and air-excluded copses.

The strange view of scores of islands and islets scattered over the ocean interested me greatly. In many instances the en-

circling reef was visible, sending jets of milk-white foam high into the air, where they burst like rockets, and glittered in the sun like columns of shattered diamonds.

Occasionally a fleet of large sailing canoes appeared in sight, bound on some pleasure excursion or war-like expedition. Sitting on a rocky prominence on a fine day, I could see these summer islets floating on bright spheres of tropic sea, stretching from point to point like a beautiful panorama, and I thought the world had no fairer spectacle to show. The canoes glided past with a stately sweep. They gradually became mere dots in the distance, and I began to think of the nautilus spreading its purpled wings to the wind, and coquetting in the enchanted gulfs of the fable, till I involuntarily looked to see "the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair." The return of the canoes to port was as magnificent a spectacle as their departure and gradual fading from sight. Nothing could be more beautiful than to see them, one by one, fold their coloured wings and come to anchor with the dainty grace of a sea-bird settling on the crest of a wave.

When I took my lonely bird's-eye views of what was visible of this small island-world, it often occurred to me that I was looking upon fragments which were but remnants of a vast continent in past times—rafts with men upon them anchored out at at sea, to tell us where the giant forces of Nature tore asunder great countries, now broken into a thousand pieces. The knowledge acquired in subsequent years confirmed my first impressions.

A glance at the map of Polynesia is enough to show the fitness of the name given to the myriad islands and islets that stud the whole western half of the vast Pacific. Group after group, island after island, reef everywhere stretching out to embrace reef, north and south of the line for thousands of miles, keeping the mariner ever anxious by day and sleepless by night, seem to tell us, in language that cannot well be mistaken, of mighty continents that once were, and, for anything we know to the contrary, are again to be.

Who could look down as from a bird's eyrie on this great island-world, and still adhere to some of the old theories which profess to deal with the question of how these homes became inhabited. Turn again to the map. Beginning at Behring's Strait, across which the old and new worlds might almost shake hands, we pass southward to the Aleutian islands, which form a well-nigh unbroken semi-circular chain from the Kamschatkan to the Alaskan Peninsula. With the help of a body of fabled giants these islands might easily be changed into a substantial bar which should at once block up the "North-West Passage," and provide the foundations for a road over which the engines of Russia and America might rush to and fro, between the two worlds. From Cape Lopatka to the southernmost point of Japan, a similar highway would be possible to like able workmen. Thus on, preceded by these god-like navvies, filling up comparatively narrow spaces between countless islands and reefs, we might travel from Japan to the Loochoos, from the Loochoos to Formosa, from Formosa to the Phillipines, from these to the massive island of New Guinea, southerly to Australia; thence easterly to New Britain, to the Solomons, the New Hebrides, the Fijis, the Friendlies, the Navigators, and out beyond mid-ocean to the Society Islands, the Low Archipelago and the Marquesas.

With this picture of Pacific highways before us, it is barely possible to arrive at any other conclusion, than that the continent of Asia, in vastly remote ages it may be, was spread out over the greater portions, if not the whole, of what is now known as the North, North-West, and South Central Pacific. We may reasonably suppose it to have been inhabited by those races who in the first ages of their history sought the Rising Sun. Volcanic action, and oceanic erosion were early at work at their great engineering task of sinking and wearing away all the lower and less protected foundations; but man lived on, taking and keeping possession of the isolated higher lands to which by very gradual, perhaps almost imperceptible degrees, he had been driven.

Does not this seem a better theory with respect to these Polynesians, than one which would have us believe that, in miserable little canoes, they must at different times have drifted away from Asia, for thousands of miles against a whole army of opposing elements—tides, ocean currents, trade winds, &c.

From such a theory as this it may not be wrong further to presume, at least till some better theory arises out of scientific investigation, that, just as these countless islands stand decked in orient beauty, as so many broken monuments to show us where Eastern Asia once stretched forth her arms, so the red, brown, and black Polynesian tribes remain to tell us how the teeming populations of that great continent once flowed eastward, even until they reached the American world, and were stayed in their course only by the Atlantic. Every separate group seems to strengthen this view by its geological character, its geographical position, and its legendary lore.

Fiji is the largest group of Islands in the Western Pacific. In looking at its chart the thought at once strikes us, that the 200 islands which compose it must, at some remote period, have been connected by lands which the sea has since engulfed. One cannot escape the suspicion that what is now broken up into a thousand pieces, must once have been a country of large proportions, and of surpassing richness and beauty. And further, if Fiji had not at one time a continental connexion, was it not in itself one vast island instead of many small ones.

Imagine such an island extending far beyond the limits of the present group of remnants, say, some 600 miles from east to west, and 500 miles from north to south, and we have before us a picture of what was, not unlikely, ancient Fiji—a land of high mountains and far-stretching plains, of rivers, lakes, and springs of water, of shores thrown out here and there into bold and rocky prominence, or stretching away in long lines of shingle and sand.

Once again, let our imagination conjure up pictures of deeds of might,—deeds such as Fijian mythology is full of,—"shak-

ing," "breaking down," "kicking out of the way," "undermining," and "sinking," all the lower lands, and, it may be, not those alone, and it will no longer seem strange, how that of the once magnificent whole, there remain to-day only these 200 abrupt mountainous fragments, ranging in size from 300 miles in circumference, to a single rock, with room for nought upon it but a solitary cocoa-nut palm; or lower yet, to a mound of sand only big enough for a mother turtle to lay her eggs in without grumbling. From these islands and islets, reefs of every size and form may be seen spreading out their claws, as if to mark where the ancient lands stood before their subsidence, and, perhaps, further intended for the more useful work of reconstruction, by linking together in the course of long ages these scattered yet valuable and beautifully luxuriant fragments.

However all this may be, one thing seems certain, that these lands would be utterly unable to hold their own, but for the prodigious work of that silent little builder, who, upon the sunken *débris* of sunny plains that were, has piled up and cemented together those grand and unique breakwaters, in comparison with which the defensive and aggressive works of man are but as paper walls. Against the coral-reef barrier, erosive equatorial currents, tidal waves, and all the battalions of ocean may charge in vain.

The natives call their country Viti (pronounced Veety.) It is to be regretted that the harsher sounding word "Fiji," applied by the Tongans from the Friendly Islands, has been adopted in its stead by us, inasmuch as "Viti" is a good representative word of the euphonious characteristic of the language, in the most perfect and widely-known dialect, in which there is hardly a harsh sound to be heard.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRINCESS LOLÓMA.

AS I rambled about the mountain solitudes, the sound of the lali, or native drum, beaten in celebration of some heathen rite, and faint echoes from the shrill blast of the conch-shell, blown in honour of some chiefly observance, not infrequently floated up from an extensive valley lying in the centre of the hill country. Occasionally I had seen men moving in the distance, but I was always careful to keep out of view.

One day a party of village maidens, searching for the gay flowers of the forest, with which to decorate themselves for some festival, approached my hiding-place. I observed their gambols on a wooded slope, as they laughed, and danced, and sang with gladsome air, and I would willingly have joined the merry throng had not prudence forbidden. The queen of the company, to whom a certain deference was always paid, was a handsome girl of fifteen. Her dress and mien proclaimed her to be a lady in the land.

The elegant simplicity of her attire was well calculated to heighten the charm of her fine figure. She wore a cincture of hibiscus fibres a few inches broad, forming a girdle of beautifully variegated braidwork, from which depended a fringe of coloured grasses ten inches deep, ornamented with small shells and berries. The long fringe playing on her softly-rounded limbs had a most graceful appearance. Her ears were decorated with the brilliant blossom of the Chinese rose; garlands of bright flowers were hung on her neck, and a chaplet of pure white ivi blossoms lay on her brow, emitting a delicious perfume, and contrasting well with the glow of her dusk bosom. The likus or petticoats worn by her handmaidens were much scantier. They were of a bright, jet black colour, made from the stem of a parasite called waloa. They did not meet by

several inches at the hip, and they were put on in such a coquettish way that they gave the idea that they must fall off every moment.

I could not but watch with interest the lovely forms of these gentle savages of the wild as they capered in the shade of the tropic afternoon. Soon they tired for a while of their innocent sports. The queen sank luxuriously into a crown of fern leaves, and lay like Aphrodite in her shell, with all her dimpled loves around her.

The whole party slept for a time in careless abandonment upon the leaves and grass, their floral treasures thrown around them in picturesque disorder. In the cool of the evening they awoke from refreshing slumbers and regaled themselves on the luscious fruits which hung around. The full moon arose, filling the dell with a soft splendour, and the maidens looked timorously at the shimmering trees, for the woods of Fiji are filled with diminutive fairies and elves, whose delight it is to plague poor mortals, who are no match for the trickeries of these little folks, who people the tangled grass and bushes, spring from hollows of the pine trees, tread softly as the lizards, and will eat the banquet spread for others when the feasters' backs are turned, laughing merrily the while, and then retire to the branches of the trees, where anyone may hear them chattering together, and singing their little songs with the multitudinous voices of the cicadæ.

Breaking into a wild dance, full of animation and graceful movements, the girls, with rustling leaves and streamers of green about them, imitated the ebb and flow of the tide, counterfeiting the rippling and soft sighing of the water on some sandy beach with wonderful accuracy. After this they performed the flying-fox dance, mimicking with equal cleverness the gyrations of that animal as it lazily hangs from the branch of a tree, or, suddenly spreading its wings, takes its dive-like flight from some monarch of the wood to the lowest branch of

a bread-fruit. The girls tripped as lightly over the grass as their fabled fairy elves, singing the while in merry measure—

"Away, away, away to the trees,
To dance, and dance as long as you please,
To sing and dance all night in the breeze,
As from trees the flying foxes!"

"Away to dance, the yellow-flow'r dance,
The white flow'r dance, the scarlet-flow'r dance!
Come dance and sing, and merrily dance.
For the world will soon be empty!"

While I was the unobserved witness of these pretty dramas of gesture I could not but think of the fabled dead dancing maidens whom the Germans call "The Willeis." They are young brides who died the day before their happiness was to be consummated, but who, their passion for dancing still living within them, leave their graves at midnight, and give themselves up to the wildest measures, while the nearer the approach of the hour which recalls them to the silence of the tomb, the more deliriously they abandon themselves to the enjoyment of the fast-fleeting moments.

But I had no feeling that the mysterious rites of which I was the privileged beholder were fraught with perdition to man. The twittering prattle of voices low and sweet, and the vigorous gambols of these merry lassies, seemed full of the palpitating passion of life; while the dances of the fairies, the pirouettes of the elves, and the gambadoes of the earth-spirits, could not have had more of dainty grace. As for the queen herself, when she danced, like Perdita's admirer, I wished her a wave of the sea that she might never do anything but that.

The evening's madcap revels over, the frolicsome party prepared to return to their village. They ran down the green slopes, waking the echoes with their wild laughter. I followed at a distance, and saw that they gradually became divided into small knots, often walking in twos and threes linked in each other's arms.

The queen, while roaming alone, struck her foot on a sharp

twig, and stayed to bathe the injured member in a transparent pool into which a miniature cascade, lacing a bank like a thread of silver, fell. She sat looking at her reflection in the water with the innocent delight of a flower enjoying its own perfume.

Her companions passed on, and I confronted her. She was speechless with terror. She thought at first, as I afterwards learned, that I was either the departed spirit of some ancestor who had undergone a strange metamorphosis in the other world, or else that I was a goblin of a kind that she had never before heard of. Then she recollected the fables of the Kalou vulavula or white God, she had heard the court minstrel relate, and determined in her own mind that I must belong to that species of deity.

I reassured her by making use of a few Fijian phrases I had at command, and she soon felt satisfied that my intentions were friendly. I contrived to make her understand that I was tambu, and that my presence in the woods must be kept a profound secret. I also gained enough of her good will to feel sure that we should meet again. The event justified that belief. Whenever the Princess and her companions visited the locality I managed to have a secret interview with her.

In course of time I was able to explain to her that I had been cast ashore in the recent hurricane, and had wandered into the hills after the death of my companions. All she knew of white men was that they were god-like beings who lived in a far country beyond the seas, and who voyaged in ships as large as islands. Much that she had heard on this subject from the tribal minstrel she had always regarded as an idle tale invented for the amusement of the populace.

I said that I feared to surrender myself to her people, told her I was living in a cave which was difficult of access, and obtained from her a promise that she would come back alone some day, and advise me whether it would be safe for me to enter the town. I learned that her name was Lolóma, and that she was

the daughter of Tui Thangi-Levu (King Big-Wind), who lived in Koroivónu (Turtle Town), in the neighbouring valley, and was sovereign of the inland tribes for many miles around.

One day the Princess sought me out alone. She brought me a welcome addition to my fare—some native puddings made of ripe bananas, served with a sauce compounded of the milky juice expressed from the cocoanut, and sweetened with rasped sugar-cane.

I showed her the mysterious entrance to the cave. She ascended the tree with the infinite grace of her nation. As she glided through the leaves into the darkened cavern, I thought she must be a veritable wood nymph or sylvan goddess. The sun penetrating through the thick-leaved trees' glossy veil of green, dimly showed the fretted buttresses, the aisles, the naves, and the fantastic columns and architraves of our sparry bower.

Lolóma was not darker than a Spanish-born gipsy. Though a child in years, as judged in colder climes, she had the rounded form of perfect womanhood. Short curly hair set off a bright and laughiug face, in which a pair of dark eyes danced like twin stars in the first shade of night. The soft caressing fingers and daintily-turned feet, the arched neck and the dimpled knee, were as perfect as statuary. The voice so sweet, and untaught smile so flattering, proclaimed the unsophisticated *naturelle*. And there was that which no sculptor's art could copy—the heightened color which shone in her face and neck as her bosom heaved with some fresh emotion of joy or fear, and showed on her nut-brown skin like the red coral of the still lagoon seen blushing through the shadowed wave, or the warm glow of the young leaves of the dawa, which often makes a whole forest look in the distance as if it were in bloom.

She was as natural as the plants and flowers among which she lived, and as joyous as a waterfall. She was subject to none of the distractions of her compeers of civilisation. No sorrow had as yet fallen on her young life, and she knew not passion's desolating joy."

Under the instruction of my teacher I made rapid progress in the Fijian language, that soft labial tongue,

> "Which melts like kisses from a female mouth,"
> And sounds as if it should be writ on satin."

The meaning of her name in Fijian I found to be love or pity. My home in the grotto soon ceased to be a hermit's cell. A supply of elegantly-worked mats and printed tapa gave one nook in it an air of comfort. When illuminated with flambeaux of resinous wood, and liberally furnished with all the delicacies of the Fijian cuisine, it was a dwelling-place which an epicure need not have despised.

Lolóma pitied me for my loneliness and complete severance from kith and kin. Our daily conversation turned on the advisability of adopting some plan by which I could join her tribe and have full liberty among her people.

The Princess's frequent unexplained absences from the village green of Koroivónu had been noticed. On several occasions she was followed up the mountain steep, but whenever she approached the tree which guarded the entrance to the cave she disappeared as if she had been swallowed up in the earth, and the mystery remained unsolved. The report in the village was that she was in secret communion with the spirits of the departed. One day Lolóma suggested that she should announce to her friends her discovery of a hobgoblin in the woods, whose acquaintance was worth making. I knew that the superstitions of the common people would induce them to believe anything, but I was not so sure of passing muster with the more intelligent chiefs in the character of an elf. However, the experiment seemed to be worth trying, and as I had escaped the cannibal pot of the coast tribe, I was not likely to be treated as flotsam and jetsam here, where the people were milder-mannered, and rarely indulged in human sacrifices, except in time of war, which but seldom visited their peaceful vale. The interest the account of the hobgoblin would excite would at

least cause some search to be made, and I should have the opportunity of disclosing myself if the circumstances seemed favorable.

CHAPTER VII.

FAIRY FOLK.

LOLOMA was full of wild dreaming imaginations. Her airy fancy had fed upon the romantic legends and ballads of her native land, and her belief in pixies, dreams, omens, and a whole world of Fijian impossibilities was as profound as her belief in the existence of the sun.

The fairy folk of Fiji are never so happy as when engaged in some sort of mischief. It has happened more than once, tradition says, that some of their number have been captured and detained as objects of worship by their captors, but everyone admits that to entrap them is one of the most difficult things in the world. Every wood, valley, hill, and mountain of Cannibal-land is alive with fairies, elves, imps, hobgoblins, and other children of the imagination. They are always represented as miniature creatures in the image of human beings. Some wear their hair hanging down their backs and trailing on the ground. Others have it lying over and completely veiling their faces, while not a few prefer it short, and keep it well oiled and powdered in imitation of an animal of a higher order than they. Many of these mannikins are exceedingly ugly-looking dwarfs of a remarkably ancient and shrivelled appearance. The country has its Titanias and Oberons and Robin Goodfellows in great numbers ; but they never seem to be beautiful or attractive creatures. They present themselves only as ill-favoured, "shrewd, and knavish sprites." They dress in leaves and flowers, and speak a language of their own. A large part of the lives of these fairies is spent in preparing and playing off all

sorts of mischievous tricks. Their whole enjoyment, and perhaps their very existence, depends on

> "Those things
> That befall preposterously."

Once, so at least Lolóma told me, some wags took it into their heads to entrap a noted "Puck," and if possible bake and eat him. The trap succeeded admirably. Puck was caught and covered up in a well-heated oven, made, as all Fijian ovens are, in the ground. When it was time to open the oven, a man, looking like the head cook of the party, came up, carrying in his hand a bamboo knife. This movement of the cook's made it quite clear that everything was now ready for making a feast off the poor elf. So at least thought our wags, but not exactly so thought Robin himself. In his view, he was the last who should be served in that way. He hated cannibalism, as every real cannibal hated it, when it was to become a matter of personal experience, and he was doomed to be the eaten instead of the eater. When, therefore, the party began to uncover the oven, and the cook to flourish his bamboo knife, Puck's voice was heard from the hollow of an adjacent tree, singing ironically, yet most jubilantly, what has ever since been known as one of the songs of Elfland :—

> "What is that in thy hand, Master Cook?
> Carver! Carver for what, Master Cook?
> For the little chap, Puck, Master Cook?
> Then carve away at his Ma, Master Cook!
> For the son has made off, Master Cook!"

Nothing comes amiss to these troublesome little imps when pilfering is the work to be done. The fruit trees are stripped, the ladies' reticules and other depositories of valuables are emptied of their contents; the hot yams just ready for the evening meal are snapped out of the crock, and the fish off the rack, to the utter heartbreaking of the poor women and the irrepressible wrath of their savage lords on their return from their planting, building, fighting, or games. The only explanation is, "'Twas done by the elves!"

On the occasion of a family gathering one evening round the festive *kava-bowl, Lolóma undertook to relate a mysterious experience which had recently happened to her. "As I wandered with my playmates in the valley," said she, "where the palm-tree bowls of nectar yields to quench the thirst of Koroivónu's, warriors and the sacred vesi sheds its solemn shade, we heard the fairies mocking our speech. If we greeted each other with the daily salutation of 'Good morning,' we were sure to hear out of some tree close by 'morning!' Then, getting frightened, we shouted 'The elves are coming,' and they added to our terror by a quick, short call of 'coming'! Following what I thought was the voice of one of my companions, I was led by the elfin tribe in roundabout ways until at last I was helplessly lost in the midst of thick forests and the blackness of night, and I heard the elfin choir merrily chanting—

"Up and down, up and down;
We will lead them up and down.
We are feared in field and town;
Goblin, lead them up and down." †

Suddenly a strange apparition appeared before me. Its form was that of a full-grown man, its aspect that of the ‡papalangis whom the minstrels fable. The creature looked kindly upon me, spoke a few words I could not understand, and vanished. Often have I visited the spot since, drawn by an irresistible fascination, but only once again did I catch a glimpse of the figure, which ascended a tree and disappeared."

When the Princess had finished her recital there was hardly one of her superstitious auditory who did not believe that she had seen either the departed spirit of some mortal lingering about the scene of his earthly labours, as is the wont of Fijian

* Kava, or yangona, is the Fiji grog expressed from the masticated fibres of a root. Kava is an introduced Tongan word.

† The words of the Fijian poet are so near to those of Shakespeare, that I have preferred this quotation to my own translation.

‡ Foreigners. Vavalangi is the Fijian word. Papalangi, the introduced Tongan word, is now more commonly known

spirits for some days before taking their flight to Hades, or else that the sprites had played her a trick and bewitched her senses.

The wise men, nevertheless, determined that it was a matter which must be seen to. It was arranged that on the following evening a few of Big-Wind's courtiers should accompany her to the spot on which the apparition last appeared.

Lolóma duly communicated the plan to me, and I determined to declare myself a white man and trust to the friendship of the tribe, knowing that I should always have the good word of the chief's daughter.

The eventful time arrived. Lolóma and a party of friends approached my hidden cave. I descended the tree unobserved, and suddenly broke upon their startled sight. They were surprised beyond measure at my appearance, but were delighted on finding that I could make myself understood in their language. I explained to them how I became an inhabitant of the country. They determined that I was a Kalou vulavula. They all expressed a strong desire to have a papalangi in the tribe, and I was hurried away to the town for the purpose of being presented to the King with as little delay as possible.

Crossing the ridge which commanded a view of the Tivóli valley, just after sunset, I came in view of the *locale* of the town.

I observed that the grove in which it was embosomed was all aglow with dancing lights. My first thought was that the inhabitants were coming out to meet me with lighted fire-sticks, and that the warlike demonstration boded me no good. My companions laughed heartily at my startled expression, for the illumination was that of fire-flies, a common enough sight to them. Now I saw that the whole forest sparkled with myriads of winged starlets. Conducted by this gorgeous torchlight procession, whose glittering cohorts seemed to be as numerous as the sands of the sea, I cheerfully advanced, feeling assured tha their bright companionship was a good omen.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE VALLEY OF TIVÓLI.

I WAS conducted by my newly-found friends into the valley where the chief town of the district was situated, and from which I had often heard sounds denoting the presence of a numerous population. The valley was called Tivóli, the Fijian word for wild yam. The thick-eaved houses were clustered together in the shade of an extensive grove of bread-fruit trees. The buildings formed in a somewhat irregular way three sides of a square. The central space was the village green, on which the sports of the inhabitants and the friendly tournaments they often engaged in were enacted.

Entering the chief's house, I found him reclining in the midst of his wives and concubines on a pile of coloured masi or tapa*. Three sides of a mosquito-net made of the same material, only much finer in texture, hung in festoons around him. Some fathoms of native cloth wrapped round his waist lay in graceful folds upon his brawny limbs. In his hand he held a neatly-made fan of palm leaves ; and close by was his wooden pillow, shaped like an office-ruler fixed on two low stands. His hair was worn like an enormous ball of jetty frizz, which projected an equal distance on all sides, and added greatly to the appearance of his stature. He was not more than 6ft. 1in. in height, but he seemed to be several inches taller. Regular features, a pointed beard, dark-brown skin, and luminous black eyes, which glowed when they lighted up with some hidden feeling of savage joy like a piece of charcoal when the slumbering fire is blown upon, completed the external marks of a distinguished personage of far from unprepossessing appearance.

The house in which I found myself was about 30ft. long and 15ft. broad. The structure was externally not handsomer than

* Native cloth. Masi is the Fijian word ; tapa, a Tongan word, is also now in common use.

a hayrick, which it closely resembled, with the exception that there were holes in the side, over which mats were hung, for windows. The projecting end of the ridgepole was ornamented with cowrie shells. The walls were about 5ft. high, but the ridgepole was a good 25ft. from the ground. The doorway was cunningly contrived to be so low that the most exalted personage could not gain audience of the master without stooping almost with his hands to the ground. The walls had a thickness of three reeds. The outer and inner rows of reeds being arranged perpendicularly and the middle horizontally, the builders had been enabled to produce a handsome and artistic effect by a pattern in sinnet worked with great regularity and neatness. The most prominent object in the middle of the floor was a sunken fireplace, protected by a wooden kerb. Here a large earthenware pot was simmering, and a thin smoke curled up from a slow fire, slightly obscuring the light in the room. An elevation at one end of the dwelling, where the chief reclined, had dividing curtains of masi, which showed that it was a divan by day and a place of repose by night.

The walls were as plentifully hung with useful articles as an English farmer's kitchen. The most noticeable was the kava-bowl, with strainer and cup. Ornamental baskets, gourds and bottles, fans, sunshades, and oil and food dishes of strong wood, attracted immediate attention. Wooden bowls, earthen pans, and glazed water-vessels rested at the base of the walls. Near the hearth I noticed a knife—made, as I afterwards learned, from some human bone—for cutting bread (decayed breadfruit) from the pit in which it is kept buried till it is in a putrescent state, highly relished by Fijian *bon vivants;* a kneading board for the bread, some cocoanut cups, a bamboo drinking vessel plugged with grass, and a soup dish. Several earthen pots, capable of holding three or four gallons each, were propped against the kerbing of the fireplace. The Fijians have no mean skill in the potter's art. In most of their water-vessels they have taken for their model the nest of the mason bee, which

builds its little round dwelling with an opening at one side, terminating in a narrow neck with a turned-back lip, in the precise form of a common Fijian pot. A skewer for trying cooked food, and a wooden fork or two, were also among the things which a hasty glance round disclosed to me, and encouraged me to believe that my daily fare was likely to be of a far from contemptible kind in a place where the culinary appliances were so good.

The company included a liberally-provided harem and some important minor chiefs and councillors. There was Qio (shark), the priest; Thikinovu (the centipede), King Big-Wind's brother; Na Ulu (the head), the King's herald; Kuila (the flag), the chief ambassador; Davui (trumpet shell), the tribal minstrel; Mat-auloki (bent-axe), half-brother to the King, a crooked-backed individual of sinister aspect, who eyed me in no friendly way; and Lalabalavu (long-emptiness), the court fool. Among the ladies the most distinguished in appearance was Lolóma, the chief's favourite daughter. There were two fine stout women, his favourite wives—Randivanua and Watina; and two pretty little girls—Ko Sena (the flower), and Sénimóli (orange blossom), Lolóma's youngest sisters.

King Big-Wind received me with great solemnity, directing that I should be treated with divine honours. He bestowed on me the name of Ratu Thava, or Sir Hurricane, telling me that I had come with the storm, and must be its spirit. The herald proclaimed my appellation at the palace door, and three fearful blasts on the conch-shell announced to the distant townsfolk that the Child of the Hurricane, a white God from the unknown countries, had been adopted by the tribe as their papalangi.

The King told me to make myself quite at home in his family, remarking that the coast tribes would not dare to attack him, as they had threatened, now that he had a white God with him. Kava and food in abundance were offered me, and I was soon on friendly terms with my neighbours, some of whom had a

difficulty at first in satisfying themselves that I was really a human being. It was, indeed, many days before any of the children could be induced to come within a stone's throw of me.

After I had given the company some description of the vessel in which I was wrecked, in whose construction they took an intense interest, Big-Wind reminded them of a legend in the tribe which said that a priest, under the inspiration of his God, had predicted that one day an "outriggerless canoe" would arrive at the islands from some foreign land. The natives could not conceive of a vessel being at sea without an outrigger, which is the mainstay of their own canoes, and the prophecy was disbelieved, notwithstanding that the old priest successfully launched a wooden dish on a pool of water in proof of the possibility of his idea being carried out. After hearing my description of the Molly Asthore the company one and all asserted that the prediction had been fulfilled,

There was a tradition in the tribe of a further prediction that after the arrival of a canoe without an outrigger a vessel without ropes or cordage would come. Some of the young Fijians of Big-Wind's court lived to see, nearly half a century later, a steamship in Levuka harbour, which they considered verified this prediction also.

In the evening, sports were celebrated by the light of the moon on the village green in honour of the new arrival. The dancers numbered over 100, and there was an orchestra of 20 persons. The musical instruments of the Fijians are the conch-shell, a flute played by blowing through the nose, pandean-pipes, a sort of jew's harp (which consists of a strip of bamboo), drums made of hollowed logs or bamboos with cross-pieces near the ends, and a long stick, from which clear notes are produced by striking it with a shorter one.

The shadowy ballroom is at length prepared. It is bounded by groves of thick-leaved trees in which the fireflies have set their lamps, and it is canopied by the moon-lit firmament,

which sheds a silvery light over all. The night is radiant as the day, and infinitely more ethereal.

The dancers are all in gala attire. The women are profusely decorated with flowers and green garlands, or red ribands made of the fine membrane of a leaf. Their hair is tricked out to an immense size, their lissom bodies are scented with sandalwood, and they wear likus dyed all manner of colours. The men's faces are painted in grotesque patterns, and they sport ornamental garters and armlets of shells and coloured grasses. The step begins slowly to the accompaniment of a low chanting and clapping of hands, the striking of bamboos on the ground producing a sound like that of the tambourine. The speed is gradually accelerated, but the inflections of the body and every movement are done by the company in exact time. The violence of the stamping increases, the measure becomes inconceivably animated and wild—for the Fijians dance with their whole bodies, eyes and all—till at length, the climax reached, there is a grand shout of "Woi!" by the whole party at the top of their voices, and the task of the exhausted performers is ended for a time.

There were several kinds of dances, and among them the Flying Fox Dance and the Waves of the Sea Dance. These, of which I had seen a mere indication from my leafy retreat in the hills, were now performed with the elaborateness proper to a state occasion.

A large company stood up for the Flying Fox Dance, and began by singing a soft air, to which responses were made by a chorus, the women accompanying the music with graceful motions of the hands, making a step forward and back again with one foot, while the other remained fixed. Presently there was a quicker measure, the dancers made a half-turn, leaping and clapping their hands. Then the company broke into two parties, which advanced towards each other and went through some evolutions, which terminated the introduction. The next part depicted the robbing of a banana-tree by flying foxes. The

banana-tree was represented by a pole set up in the middle of the square, with a bunch of fruit at the top. The *ballet d'action* then proceeded. The foxes met in consultation, determined on a robbery, sent out skirmishers to guard against a surprise, and then made the attack. One old fox climbed the tree, and the little foxes clusrered under it crying with delight at the prospect of ripe fruit. While the fox in the tree hung by his legs and flapped his arms, another climbed after him, and there was a great deal of fighting, scratching, and squalling, after the manner of these animals, until one obtained the mastery. All the evolutions of the dancers were in imitation of the motions of the flying foxes, and their cry was also accurately imitated.

The dance representing the waves of the sea was equally graceful. There was the advance of a long wave and its little shoots running up the beach, the band representing the roar of the surf. The ocean ebbed and flowed, low waves sighed upon the shore and advanced in merry laughing ripples, throwing here and there a fringe of spray. The winsome prattling lasses assumed a graver mood. The sea was lashed into fury, surges vast as hills roared to the sound of rhythmic feet, and, breaking on some rocky prominence, clove the air with milk-white jets. The dancers flung their arms above their white masi-covered heads as they met, and when they bounded high above the ground, like the white foam of the sea when it hurls its columns of spray and surges of beaded water in the face of the sun, the spectators, no longer able to control themselves, fairly shouted with delight.

Every movement was performed in the most exact time; and, as in the case of the Flying Fox Dance, the performance seemed like a poetic drama represented by the perfection of pantomime.

The scene is a singularly wild one. The flash of dark eyes, the gleam of white teeth, and the spectacle of bosoms, arms, and ankles glancing bare in utter abandonment to the enjoyment of the moment, with the dark forms of the savages sitting

around make a picture not readily to be forgotten. The weird music of the drum and fluttering pipes adds to the wonder, glow, and tumult. As the girls shout, stamp, and reel in maddest ecstacies, their eyes aglow under their short curly hair, and sparkling with the grace and glitter of the movement, strangely mixing with the mass of blending hues, it is intoxicating.

The evening closes with laughter and endless chatter. Presently the love-chirp ceases. The village sleeps, silvery and still.

In a few days I was fully initiated in the mysteries of the native *menu*. The Fijians usually take two meals in the day. I soon got used to their bill of fare, which is a liberal one. The bread-fruit was served up in an infinite variety of ways; there are a score of different kinds of puddings, and of soups there are at least a dozen sorts, including turtle soup—though they prefer roast turtle. The juice of the cocoanut, the ti-root, and the sugar-cane, make excellent pudding sauces.

The Fijians' life in the good old times was largely made up of eating and sleeping. If a man keeps at work till midday, he likes to bathe a little after that hour, then to take a rather 'ong siesta, hard as his pillow is. Towards evening you may see him strolling in his garden, or along the beach if he lives on the coast, cooling himself in the pleasant breeze. Presently he returns to his snug and well-matted hut to enjoy the warm evening meal. If the song, the dance, and the moonlight do not allure him, the soft cool mat, the wooden pillow, and somebody present to talk, may occupy him even till morning. Wanting the song or the tale, hard sleep is his sole refuge.

The men usually collect in the bures or strangers' houses, which serve the purposes of an English club, at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon to talk. The married men sleep there till dawn, and then return to their wives. The Fijian in the thinly-peopled hill districts does not sleep with his consort. The nuptial bower is in some secluded part of the woods,

known only to the pair, where, as with our first parents, a soft downy bank, damasked with flowers, invites to amorous dalliance. Boys, until they have been publicly recognised as adults, have a sleeping bure to themselves.

Among the occupations of the villagers which interested me greatly was the art of native-cloth making. Strips of the bark of the malo tree, which have been steeped in water, are beaten by women on a log with a grooved mallet. The masi or tapa is pieced together with the starch of the taro. The cloth is then printed in divers patterns with strips of bamboo, several kinds of dye being used. The rhythm of tapa-beating has as cheerful and industrious a sound as that of threshing corn in an English village.

In a very short time I was a familiar friend in all the houses in the valley. Sometimes I extended my walks to a neighboring village, and was always received as an honoured guest. I often felt disposed to say with the poet—

> "Among the hills a hundred homes have I,
> My table in the wilderness is spread;
> In these lone spots one honest smile can buy
> Plain fare, warm welcome, and a rushy bed."

The tropical forest was an unending source of admiration to me. The palm, rearing its polished shafts, stately as a Corinthian column, with its coronal of sighing plumes through which the golden clusters of nuts appear dangling so temptingly far up in the sunshine, is in itself a beautiful object, worthy of imitation in architecture. The Fijians ascend these smooth pillars, with no other aid than that of their hands and feet, with surprising rapidity. Tapping the nuts with their fingers, they know by the sound those which are fit for food. They prefer the young nuts, in which the milk is as clear as spring water, and the flesh of the consistency of cream. When a cocoanut has lain on the ground a short time, a shoot emerges from one of its three eyes and enters the ground. A cord connects it with the nut, and supplies half the nourishment of the young plant till it is

strong enough to draw all it requires from the ground. The tree and its products are put to such an infinite variety of uses that without it the natives would be badly off.

A delightful object in the landscape, full of repose, and restful for the eye to light upon, is the banana, with its lush fat green stem rising from 10ft. to 15ft., and sometimes as much as 2ft. in diameter. The sheath-like stalks end in vast green blades, often 12ft. long and 4ft. broad, which serve the natives for dishes and sunshades. The whorls of fruit hang below the curving fronds, with a heart of deep-red flowers forming a brilliant bouquet behind them.

But the true glory of the Polynesian forest is the bread-fruit, crowning the dewy grove with its ample form and luxuriant foliage, and showing itself a beneficent providence to the races it supports without demanding any attention in return. The fruit of this tree is the staple article of food of the Fijians. The imposing figure, with horizontal branches and cone-shaped head, rises to a height of from 30ft. to 40ft. Its broad spreading branches are covered with large oblong glossy leaves, which, during the progress of decay, assume the most beautiful tints. The fruit, weighing from 4lb. to 5lb., is about the size of a rock-melon, which it also somewhat resembles in shape, and when ripe is of a rich yellow colour. The surface of the rough rind is reticulated, and has small square or lozenge-shaped divisions, which rise like little conical prominences. The inside is a white pulp, all of which is eaten except a small core containing the seeds. In taste it is insipid, with a slight sweetness. When roasted, or when eaten with a preparation of cocoanut, like batter-pudding with melted butter and sugar, it is very palatable. The natives are fond of the sour paste they make of the fermented bread, baked, and eaten both hot and cold. The bread is allowed to ferment in pits lined with grass. It is often kept in this way for months. In this putrescent state, however, it is disgusting to white men. The bread-fruit trees, which are always a prominent object in the landscape, have a picturesque

appearance peculiar to themselves, which no description can convey.

In my walks I was occasionally accompanied by Lolóma. Our friendship was not viewed with a favourable eye by Bent-Axé, who had been betrothed to her from her infancy, but she lost no opportunity of showing her disinclination for his society.

The happiest time, however, was in the long silvery nights, when the valley was filled with the mild splendour of the regent of the sky, and the people turned with glee to joys which tire not. When the moonlight, falling softly, lighted with sheen the little village of Koroivónu, Lolóma and her handmaidens were always ready for the song and dance. They were as merry as a sisterhood of parakeets who cannot sleep in the trees for the exhilarating play of the moon. There seemed to be nothing to dim the brightness of those lightsome hours.

As time wore on, and I explained to my friends something of the history of the white man and his mode of life, the more intelligent of them ceased to regard me as a supernatural being. I did many things which seemed very wonderful to them, and explained some natural phenomena in a manner which they regarded as marvellous, but they gradually discovered what I always impressed on them, that my powers were limited. The common people, nevertheless, continued to regard me as one divinely endowed.

CHAPTER IX.

CANNIBAL CHIEFS.

BIG-WIND took a great fancy to me. He was always pleased to have me talk to him as he lay on his mats, or accompany him in his walks abroad. Seen standing erect, he was a magnificent savage. His head of hair, from which a comb projected over his forehead, measured some forty inches

round. A long train of white masi trailed behind him like a comet's tail. A massive club rested on his shoulder, and he walked with a proud and haughty step which proclaimed his chiefly rank.

Cannibal chiefs are mostly men of fine build with naturally intelligent minds, not infrequently well-furnished with local knowledge of that practical sort so much needed by the lower classes of their subjects. They are the brains of the nation. All beneath them are the bones and muscles of it. The governing work they have to do places them high up in intellectual ability above the common people, just as the care and attention they receive, when children, in matters of diet, exercise, and rest, make them physically superior to their neglected serfs.

The heads of some of these men would be pronounced by phrenologists, fine specimens of cranial architecture; and here and there may be seen a magnificent encasement of a more than commonly vigorous brain. But the eye, though often large and beautiful, spoils the man. As with Big-Wind, its ever-restless activity tells of an undisciplined and suspicious mind; of the daily waste of mental power in constant thought about everything, and effective concentration of thought on nothing. The true chief is, notwithstanding, wonderfully calm and self-possessed. Ruffle his temper if you can! If the test of good breeding is what Euripides says it is, that "A well-bred man may feel angry, but never show it," the cannibal chief may be called the best bred man in the world. He will sit and listen to news of the most dreadful and melancholy nature, just brought, it may be, frem various parts of his dominions; or he will witness some sudden and startling occurrence; or submit to be addressed by an impulsive foreigner in language the most offensive without shedding a tear, blinking an eye, or twitching a single nerve of his inexpressive countenance.

One day, while talking with Big-Wind, I observed that a messenger, burdened, evidently with weighty intelligence, came

up, and seating himself on the ground, finished the respectful greeting due from him as the manner of Fijians is, by clapping his hands in slow and solemn style. Then, addressing his royal master, he said "Sir, I am come to inform you that death has fallen upon us, and your sister is gone." I eyed the lordly savage scrutinizingly, but without discovering any emotion in his face. He coolly clapped his leg with his right hand. Then, turning to me, he continued the conversation he had previously been engaged in. This is characteristic of the race, but particularly so of the chiefs. To an Englishman their coolness is something distressing. At times, however, it displays itself to great advantage.

Once we were assembled on the public court ground of Turtle Town, 2000 strong, the occasion being the reception of an ambassador from a neighbouring tribe. We were all comfortably seated on the green sward, and the duties of the day were proceeding in a regular and orderly way, when suddenly, as if thrilled by an electric shock, a group of 200 persons sprang to their feet, uttering, as they did so, loud cries of "ah! ah! ah!" in rapid *staccato*, and accompanied with looks and gestures indicative of imminent danger. This was too much for the majority, who were ignorant of the cause, and the whole crowd rose in wild excitement to rush helter skelter into uncontrollable confusion, and perhaps a needless fight. One glance, however, at a little knoll which could not well be hid, turned aside this calamity. There sat a body of chiefs, perfectly cool and self-possessed, though equally in darkness with all but the 200 as to the cause of the stir. This act of the chiefs was an instantaneous and mighty rebuke; for it is an almost unpardonable offence in cannibal-land to stand in the presence of great chiefs at any time without leave, but more especially so when those chiefs themselves are seated. The calmless of the chiefs, therefore, with a shout or two from a sentorian voice of "down! down! your chiefs are sitting down," brought the heaving mass of humanity to itself again. Whereupon the cause of all the dis-

turbance was found to be that the 200 people who were seated opposite a grove of banana trees, had observed a man with a bow and arrows quietly trying to pass on his way under cover of those trees. The crowd, as in duty bound by its characteristically suspicious nature, rushed to the conclusion that what they saw must be the first act of some tragic and savage plot.

A chief seldom laughs—never in the presence of strangers or in counsel assembled. It would be unchiefly to do so. This virtue of not laughing is both well illustrated and encouraged by a tale of one Keelai, a spirit guarding one of the ways to the interior of the spirit-world. He is in truth an armed constable, a kind of Cerberus, though not of the canine species, whose duty it is to see that none but the spirits of chiefs of great distinction pass along that sacred road. But how shall he know a chief from a common man? for there are fine-looking men among the lower orders of Cannibal-land as elsewhere. According to Fijian reasoning, therefore, it would not be wrong to suppose that the spirits of such men are at least as fine as their bodies were, and for this reason not much inferior to the spirits of men of higher rank.

Keelai, however, is at no loss for an easy and eminently successful test. He is armed with a club, which, to the cannibal soldier, is of the most laughable shape imaginable. Who, that is acquainted with the arms of war, can look on that club and not split his sides with laughter? Thus armed, the boneless watcher is ever ready for duty.

Nor has he long to wait for the sound of a fresh footfall. It is the tramp of a spirit just freed from fleshy bonds. As the stranger draws near, Keelai steps out into the middle of the path to give the challenge. The paths in Fiji's spirit-land are like those in Fiji itself, very narrow, and fit only for marching in single file, so that when two travellers meet, one must stand aside to let the other pass. Holding up in warlike attitude his ridiculous club, Keelai utters a wild laugh like the neighing of a spirited horse, and fixes his steady but fire-flashing eye on

that of the new arrival. Should this candidate for immortality laugh, Keelai smites him down with a blow

> "That leaveth him
> A corse most vilely shatter'd."

But, if he presses boldly on, with a straight, stern face, and princely bearing, the officer steps out of his way and subsides.

The high-born chief is a perfect study. Whether you see him stretched on his cool, scarlet-fringed mat in dreamy and tropical laziness, smoking his cigarette, or out working in his garden planting taro and trimming banana trees, like one of his serfs; or strolling through the village or along the beach; or sailing in his favourite clipper canoe, often with the outrigger dangerously balanced just above the water, and scudding along like a flying fish on nothing, to show you how cleverly he can sail without capsizing her; or in the presence of his subjects on some state occasion—in comparison with most of his countrymen you are bound to declare him every inch a chief. In national gatherings particularly it is impossible to mistake him, and almost equally impossible to counterfeit him. Good-looking, when out of their coating of red and black paint, good-tempered and chief-like as were many of these first-rank men, they nevertheless had in an exaggerated degree all the vices of feudal lords in general.

One of the most curious social customs of the country is that of the Vasu, or Nephew, who has the right of "requisitioning" the property of all to whom he is related. His influence is in proportion to the height of his position, which is fixedly his mother's rank. If she were a lady of high station in her husband's tribe, her children would be vasus of the highest order, but their power would be limited to that tribe. Whereas, if the mother were a lady of another tribe or kingdom, her chiidren, though a shade lower as vasus, would yet have far more influence there than in their father's tribe. According to the Fijian idea, the Prince Royal of Prussia, having taken to wife the Princess Royal of England, the children of the marriage are vasus to

England; and the Prince of Wales, having married the Princess Alexandria of Denmark, the young princes and princesses are vasus to Denmark. This custom was a terrible tax on the people, as the following illustration will show.

Suppose a young lord of London marries a daughter of an old lord of Manchester, the children being vasus to Manchester, the eldest son takes the train one fine morning for the great northern city, and, after spending a few pleasant days there, goes back laden with any amount of wealth obtained from the rich manufacturers. How did he get it? *Ex officio*, by the simple exercise of his rights and privileges as their vasu. He went in and out boldly among his mother's kinsfolk and townsfolk, putting his hands on this, that, and the other, taking the trouble to say as he did so, "mine, and mine, and mine." When he reappeared at the West End, he was looked upon as not much inferior to Sindbad, the rich and lucky sailor. This state of things naturally ended in Manchester insisting on having vasus to London. Marriages were arranged with that view, and the evil was intensified.

A faint idea of how banefully this system worked in Fiji, may be got from the fact, that, of two great tribes, which, to avoid the use of savage names, may still be called London and Manchester, who tested this plan as completely as they were able, consistently with their absolutely selfish political economy, London, by hook or by crook, by diplomatic intrigue and quiet scheming, in which Fijian politicians are masters, succeeded in getting ten vasus to Manchester's one.

It will thus be seen that this must have been one of the most destructive and savage instruments ever wielded in a savage land. There was not a man in the country who was the *bona-fide* owner of anything he presumed to call his own. This institution threw its meshes over every kingdom, tribe, family, and individual, and was often the fruitful source of deep-laid plots, dark assassinations, wholesale massacres, and prolonged wars, together with all their concomitants and consequences—fresh

roots of bitterness, new wounds to carry the corruption forward, and wrath treasured up for other days of wrath.

It happened, however, that the institution of the vasu proved of signal service to me in time of need.

CHAPTER X.

WISDOM OF CANNIBAL-LAND.

WHEN outdoor amusements were not attractive, the warm house, though smoky, and the comfortable mat never failed to bring together a goodly company of young and old, who, sitting around the man of best memory and talking powers, would listen hour after hour to stories of bygone days, the miraculous doings of gods, the marvellous exploits of great heroes, theories, proverbs, omens, &c.

Often as I have sat listening to a Fijian talking of omens, tokens, auguries, &c., in his dark hut, where flashes of light ever and again flare through the gloom and smoke, like spirits rushing to and fro between this and the other world, have I thought of the words of our own poet—

> "Now the wasted brands do glow,
> Whilst the screech-owl screeching low
> Puts the wretch that lies in woe
> In remembrance of a shroud."

Presages of all kinds of events and of fortune's endless changes are to be met with in great numbers in every part of cannibal-land. What with sounds heard in the night—soft, ghostly hands touching sensitive bodies during sleep—animals running about in a wild and excited state—birds coming out of the woods at unusual seasons—fish springing out of the water and striking a canoe, or any of its passengers—dreams—strange lights hovering over graves—a *first* failure in any new enter-

prise—shooting stars—comets—various appearances in the western sky at sunset, and, as with other races,

"In the eastern sky the rainbow,"

one never need be at a loss to find something clearly ominous of something else.

Riddles, enigmas, and verbal conceits were always forthcoming when asked for in the cannibal hut, where the inmates would often chat long and pleasantly to while away the time. Now an old grey-headed man, glorying, as almost all old men do glory, in the golden days that have been, would open his mouth in parables, or tell long tales of great chiefs, who ruled the land as only they could rule it, and sailed fast canoes as none but they ever sailed them before or since. Or, if such subjects were thought too long and tedious, someone else would produce from his fruitful brain a lighter literature—a sort of "after-dinner talk."

One evening I was lying full length among a number of dusky forms in the chief ambassador's cottage. The subject of a recent village scandal had been well threshed out, and the silence which followed had been much too long. At last there was a stir, and an evident waking desire for talk, so a voice began—

"There's a path that leads to no home. What is it?" Everybody tried, and of course, if only for courtesy's sake, everybody "gave it up." "It is the path of the traveller travelling, a stranger in strange lands!"

"The longing eye—whose is it?" Answer.—"The dog's, looking and longing while we eat."

"There is a wind that blows for many years without stopping, but at last there comes a lull—it stops—and a world falls. What wind is it that blows? and what is the world that falls when that wind ceases to blow?" Answer.—"The wind is the breath of man, and the world that falls is man himself." A thought like this picked out of a savage mind is a poetic gem.

"We have just buried some old men, who, however, will ere long come back to us again, fresh and youthful. If you cannot

unravel the matter, I will." It was Long-Emptiness, the Court fool, who proved to be the intellectual Samson of the evening, who spoke. "Do you not know," said he, with an air of triumph, "that we are just back from burying a lot of old yams, which six months hence will come to us again as young ones?"

Cannibal-land is not over rich in proverbs, or, if they can be said to abound in it, they are, for the most part, either far-fetched or unclean. One or two will suffice to show the character of this class of cannibal literature.

"Scratch, but do not cry, said the cat to the dog, who was getting the worst of it." The meaning of which is, Do not be such a coward as to call others to help you, thereby involving them in your squabbles.

"Eat but drink not,—drink but eat not." Good advice at meals, well attended to by the Fijians.

"Rest is better than food." The over-worked man declines to eat until he has rested.

"Our greatest earthly treasures—what are they? Food and sleep." True cannibal philosophy for both worlds.

"The source of all chopping power is the stomach." This is one of the greatest articles in the creed of all canoe-builders and cannibal carpenters in general. The carpenters have the credit of invariably talking about being well fed. This must be a well understood clause in every contract made with them. Often, when the employer happens to be present, the artisan may be heard talking quite philosophically with his comrades on the great question of the "origin of power," and the answer is as given above. The more civilised artisan of other countries will probably feel little inclination to find fault with philosophy of this practical and commonsense character, although it comes from a dark-skinned and savage "brother-chip" in the South Seas. For who could work in a tropical sun, or out of it either, without food, and plenty of it? Not, certainly, the vegetarian "brown man" of Polynesia, who has not strength of spirit enough to force himself to any lengthened physical endurance.

The conversation, of which the foregoing is the substance, had aroused the drowsy company to a little more intellectual activity, and Shark, the priest, struck in with some remarks on a more abstruse subject—the question of the eternity or non-eternity of the universe. This is what he said thereanent :—

"The land is waiting for the water ; both the land and the water are waiting for the sky ; one cannot pass away without the other. Therefore, when one goes, all the others go with it."

For savage philosophy this is not so bad. The next remark of the priest's is not so good ; but it will help to show how imagination in the cannibal brain employed itself on objects which it could not understand.

"When the sun is drowned (*i.e.* set), he goes down to the spirit world to enlighten the lands and people there. So, when it is day there it is night here, and *vice versa.*"

The following theory, propounded by the same authority, will have to be revised or thrown away as false science—as false as that of the ancients which taught that the earth was firmly planted on the back of an elephant, &c.

The tides are caused by a great fish in mid-ocean, alternately drinking and vomiting up the water. While he drinks the tide ebbs, even till all the flats and reefs are dry, at which crisis the converse operation begins. The fish ejects from his mouth all the water that has passed through it. The tide is now turned, the reefs gradually become covered, the rivers rise, it is high tide ; or, as our ecclesiastical friend put it, "the lagoons on the giant's back are full of water, and the fishermen may sail up and down here in their double canoes." Thus for ever does this wonderful fish keep at the post of duty.

In respect of tides there is a belief among the natives that the wood-pigeon is never heard cooing at either high or low tide ; nor is any human being ever known to die, but at one or the other of those times. In cases of sickness where the patient is sinking, and all hope of recovery has died out in the hearts of watching friends, it is quite common to hear the announcement

that "the spirit will depart at the next low tide;" that passed and the person still alive, "he will not die till the high tide." And so on, a crisis happening at each change of tide, until death closes the scene or hope revives.

Some of the fables of cannibal-land are not mere useless compositions without point or moral in them, but often teach, in their rough and inelegant way, valuable lessons. The following from the lips of Centipede, who, on this particular night, had the monopoly of this part of the conversational entertainment, teaches practical benevolence as clearly and forcibly as our own "Love me—love my dog."

"Our teeth will be covered with blood to-day," said a lean and hungry dog in a *tete-à-tete* with an equally gaunt and hungry cat. "Why?" asked puss, probably thinking there was a prospect of a good meal of flesh. "Because," said her canine friend, "although there is plenty of fish, those *long posts* will be sure to eat it all up, leaving you and me nothing but the bones." The long posts are the human masters and mistresses, who on hearing this fable ought never again to treat their dogs or servants as though they never had any appetite, or enjoyed only the leavings of others.

"I'll stay and take care of the foundation," said the snake who would gladly have escaped from the burning house, but could not because the flames were too fast for him. This is our "fox and the grapes" over again, but with this important difference, that the snake was burnt, whereas the fox had only to walk off without the grapes.

In the following we come upon resurrection gleams:—"The Moon and the Rat talked together of death. 'Let us all die like me,' said the Rat, 'run our course, die therein, and have done with it.' 'Nay,' answered the Moon, 'let us all die like me—run our course, and die in it, but after a little while appear again!'" Unhappily the rat's proposal was adopted. In this fable the cannibal notion as to a resurrection is briefly dealt with and dismissed. There is, indeed, little or nothing in any

of the mythologies pointing to a belief in a bodily resurrection.

Here we have a fable which points at the numerous class of persons who would have us "do as they tell us—not as they do."

"The great and little fish once called a monster meeting to consider the best thing to be done to escape or get rid of the new danger which had lately made its appearance below water, and snatched away so many of their friends and kinsfolk. The new danger complained of was a baited fish-hook* which a fish of another sort was always letting down from above. After many large and small fry had told their minds, one Rakasalah, who must have been a very important fish in his own eyes if no where else, darted forward and delivered himself thus:—'Fellow fishes! let me tell you a bit of my mind. When the hook comes down be sure you never bite it; swim wide of it, and your lives will never be snatched away!' The words were hardly out of his mouth when down came a bait, which Rakasalah darted at with the swiftness of lightning, and, without even the slightest precautionary nibble, bolted hook and all. Of course he was hooked up into another world—one much less conducive to his health than that in which he delivered his last oration. The last thing he ever heard from his own land was, not the deafening applause of his fellow-fishes, which would have charmed his ear had he been consistent, but their angry scoffing shout—'Behold the fish that told us not to bite the bait, and was the first to swallow it all himself!'" From this fable is derived the proverb "He preaches like Rakasalah, the fish."

As I listened to the following tale given with some others of a similar character by Flag, the King's herald, I thought involuntarily of the "Green Isle," and the "Blessed St. Patrick." There are neither parrots nor pine trees on the island of Ono. This Ono was once the abode of a powerful hero who was great in arms and in jealousy. One day a parrot, in a pine tree near his house, kept up a continual chatter, chattering away as only

* Made of tortoise shell.

parrots can. The jealous god, influenced by but one idea, and that as "cruel as the grave," rashly concluded the voice to be that of some hero like himself, come perhaps from another island to pay his addresses to the lady whose heart was already bestowed on him. This thought overpowered him and forced him to an act of folly. Dashing furiously at the pine tree he tore off one of its branches, and chased therewith the beautiful bird, shouting as he drove him from the shores of the island, "Begone! flee! avaunt! and never show your colours again this side of the water!" Since that fatal day the soil and air of Ono have been unfriendly alike to pine trees and parrots. No sooner are they landed there than they die.

Conjurors' tricks formed a common source of amusement when idlers were gathered together, though in the minds of the priesthood they were regarded as powers to excite the fears and command the homage and obedience of the simple and weak-minded. Nearly all the priests gained and kept public patronage by juggling tricks, many of which were akin to those performed at English fairs and by street conjurors. One cannibal juggler would drink large draughts of cocoanut oil, swallow uncooked giant beans, eat fire, and chew the ends of trumpet-shells, while the astonished lookers-on shouted their plaudits or sat trembling in every limb at what to them appeared to be horrible realities. One great magician lives in the poetry of his country, because he possessed a spear that would spring into life at his bidding. With this living spear, glowing as if on fire with the life that was in it, he would go forth and hush the roaring of the waterfalls!

The cannibal poets, though unacquainted with anything like the "Seven Ages" of human life as pictured for us by our own Shakspeare, have nevertheless sketched fairly enough "Four Ages" in the following enigmatic and pictorial way, as I gathered from my garrulous friend Long-Emptiness, who always contributed largely to the general amusement at social gatherings.

"There is a little animal which at sunrise, and for a short

while afterwards, has but one leg. As, however, the sun climbs upward, he gains four legs. Presently, when the sun is a little higher, and begins in good earnest his course towards mid-heavens and the west, this strange creature returns to the use of two legs! This may be said to be the longest and best stage of all. Then—

'Last scene of all,
That ends this strange, eventful history,'

when the sun, or 'Eye of Day,' as the language poetically calls it, prepares to go down to enlighten the inhabitants of the spirit-world, and the wind spoken of before is abating, and a world is about to fall, this wonderful animal may be seen hobbling along on three legs."

Though Englishmen would be ashamed to give this up, our cannibal fire-side company of minds more opaque, or hurrying off to dreamland, did so without a single mental effort; whereupon Long-Emptiness, assuming the air of the only wise savage present, ended the night's amusements by thus untying the knot:—

"The little animal I have been telling you of is man, who for some time after his birth cannot move—he does nothing but lie still on the mat. This is the one-leg stage in man's life. After a while the infant begins to crawl on all fours. This, clearly enough, is the four-leg era. But when the sun rises higher in the sky, the being which a few weeks ago could only travel by means of hands and knees, finds, after many falls and hair-breadth escapes, that he can stand sublimely on his feet. He has now entered on the two-leg stage. As, however, the sun goes to his setting, *i.e.*, as man's life wanes, 'two-legs' begin to tremble;—they can do duty no longer without the help of a third leg. 'Give me my walking-stick,' says the tottering old man, who now feels that he is come to the last stage of his earthly existence, even that of three legs. All beyond

'Is second childishness and mere oblivion.'"

The close resemblance of the foregoing to the riddle the Sphinx propounded to Œdipus will be noticed. The Fijian author, however, had no inspiration from the white man. The similarity is another item in support of the theory that all these mythologies have a common origin, and that the Fijians were once in communication with Asiatic races.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FIJIAN NIGHTS' ENTERTAINMENTS. FIRST NIGHT—THE WONDER OF CANNIBAL-LAND.

YOU may talk till doomsday to a genuine old cannibal about the greatness of your country and the littleness of his, before he will show the slightest sign of yielding any credence to your story. However truthful and astonishing may be your tales, he soon recovers from the effects they have produced on his imagination, and turns to say something of his own land, of which he is truly proud, and in which he thinks there will be no difficulty in finding things as great and surprising as you have found in yours. Tell him all you know, show him everything you have brought with you, do something which in his eyes shall appear to be, what he will not hesitate to call it, the work of a God ; but having done all this, you will find him obstinately clinging to the one simple, yet natural enough idea, that his land is not to be despised after all, nor, indeed, is it to be thought second to that of any curious foreigners who may find pleasure in interviewing him. Tell him of one of the many wonders of civilisation, and, if it strike his fancy, or if he has some hidden object in view for doing so, he will become quite demonstrative as you proceed ; he will clap his hands, snap and bite his fingers, shake them as if he had just burnt them in the fire, make clicking noises with the tongue and roof of the mouth,

pour forth a shower of interjections, in which his language is rich, and finally declare himself dumb in your presence, and be careful to remain so, as if your tale had suddenly benumbed his brains, and paralyzed his tongue. This is the impression he gives you, but it is not the correct one, for presently awakening as from a dream or reverie, in which his memory had been at work, recalling something learnt in younger days, and coming to the conclusion that you have no more "lions" to show, he will begin to conjure up one, at whose proportions, as they slowly emerge from the mist of his wordy speech, your own quickly subsides.

Assembled one evening with a large company in Big-Wind's house, the conversation had flagged. The dull light from a wick in a pan of cocoanut oil shed a faint sickly glare on the prostrate forms of the King's courtiers, many of whom were already asleep, when Lolóma begged me to tell them the story of Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp, with which I had greatly interested her on a former occasion. I recited the Arabian legend to the best of my ability, drawing on my imagination for some details of the original which I had forgotten, and when I had finished there were loud approving calls of "Vinaka! Vinaka!"* The King was so pleased that he directed three pigs to be presented to me.

This put on his mettle Trumpet Shell, the tribal minstrel, who considered that he was entitled to a monopoly of this line of business, and he proposed to relate the story of Prince Hightide and his Leviathan Canoe, an ever-welcome legend in verse, which the company were never tired of hearing.

The tribal minstrel in Fiji is a remarkable character. He is at once the historian and poet of his people. Every clan can boast a bard of some sort, and the office is held in high honour. On subsequently comparing three versions of Prince Hightide in their different dialects, I regarded their remarkable agreement as matter for surprise, especially when it is remembered

* Good! Good!

that they were never reduced to writing by the natives, but were preserved only in the memories of a few old poets or teachers of poetry. Such old men are very scarce in the present day. Here and there one may yet be found, but not many days hence the "Lay of the last Minstrel" will be sung for the last time. Already it has become a rare thing to hear a really old song. That simple race who in Fiji wasted "their toil"

"For the vain tribute of a smile—"

though not, perhaps, so often or with as much intellectual enjoyment as Scotia's bards—in a few more years will have passed away for ever.

The poets of Fiji were not necessarily either chiefs or common men. The really popular poets were doubtless "poets born." Such men were greatly appreciated by all ranks of society, but were patronised mostly by great chieftains, who were able to pay for the luxury of poetry and the honour of encouraging it. There were poetesses too, but they were never a numerous class.

The poet was not a man to be neglected or treated with contempt. He was a being possessed of far higher abilities than those of ordinary men. The poet of the day in any tribe required at least a house which was always to be considered as sacredly set apart for his own particular use. This abode was regarded in a very special sense as the "poet's corner." His turbans and ornaments were hung here; and in no other place in the land did he ever expect to get such gracious visitations from the muses. When required to compose a poem and teach it—for his duty not infrequently included both—those demanding of him a song never came to his temple empty-handed, but laden with gifts of various sorts, and wearing sweet-smelling garlands. The interview with his patronising visitors over, he would fix a time for beginning the arduous task. As soon as the appointed season arrived, he would enter his sacred room to sleep and dream, and dream and sleep, until the song, or principal parts of it, had dawned on his internal consciousness. At this stage

he would rise and go forth to some solitary spot where, all alone, he would train his "imagination to body forth," more clearly, "the forms of things unknown," then

> "Turn them to shapes, and give to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name."

Having accomplished this, he had yet to compose a tune for the words that were soon to move his countrymen to tears or laughter.

It was held by some sagacious cannibals that while the poet slept, his spirit, freeing itself from the flesh, wandered abroad to find and court the muses. Others believed that the gods sometimes suggested pictures, and dictated to the poet's mind the words to paint them with, the poet himself making hardly any effort at composition. If any part of a poem thus divinely whispered, proved too difficult for the comprehension of poet or people, the bard was sure to lay the blame on his god who was the real author, and therefore the only party responsible. If we accept the poet's decision, the gods of Cannibal-land have an enormous weight of such responsibility to bear, inasmuch as great numbers of the old compositions are, of all the mysteries of cannibal poetic art, the most mysterious. Not a few of Fiji's verse-makers did their work by dint of, for them, long-sustained and arduous mental effort. The author of the song of Prince Hightide and his Monster Canoe, must be ranked with this number of laborious workers. Others depended very much on fasting for the more easy production of what they were pledged to supply. Perhaps, however, the notion having the strongest hold on the popular mind, was that the spirits of great poets were permitted to visit that State of the spirit-world known to the people as the "State of Music and Song," and to bring to earth some of the choicest things sung in that delightful place. To the poet it mattered little where or by what means the song was obtained, so long as it gained the public favour, and its supposed author the public pay. In the best days of the cannibal poets there were songs which so won their way,

and gained for themselves such a wide popularity, that voyages were made from the most distant places to obtain them. Trumpet Shell was a very good specimen of his class, and he delivered his lay,—the theme of which was this wonderful canoe and her still more wonderful captain,—with excellent effect.

It being impossible to give the reader anything like an intelligible translation in verse, of the song referred to, it must take the form of a tale in prose. Without doubt it is Cannibal land's greatest story, if not its best poetic composition.

I gathered from the poet's few first words, that the Ebbtide was a monster canoe, in fact, the greatest ever known ; and that her captain, Prince Hightide, was a mighty giant and hero-god. The poet, unfortunately I think, tells us not one word about the building of this enormous vessel, but begins her history at the moment when her builders declare her to be ready for launching. This is a great point with the poet, who forthwith proceeds to show that those wise and wonderful builders have, for certain, either woefully over-calculated the needful degree of human muscle and bone power, or under-calculated the size and weight of their big ship. It is quite possible, and even probable that they did both, for such calculations are entirely outside of the range of Fiji's mathematical science.

This much, however, is clear, that when the day arrived for launching the Ebbtide, she could not be moved from the stocks or rollers, notwithstanding the application to every part of her at once, of

"A blood-power stronger than steam,"

In this fix a whole tribe of soldiers was brought up to add its strength to that of the people now weary with trying. These united forces all tugged and pushed and shouted, and pushed and tugged again and again, but to no purpose. After these repeated failures, another tribe was added to the human engine, and more rollers were placed under the vessel , but in spite

of everything, she remained like a rock, planted where she was. This was quite beyond endurance ; and the humiliating and piteous cry arose that, for once, men had built a canoe they could not launch,—doomed not to be wrecked at sea, or laid up to decay on land after long and honourable service, but to rot on the very spot where her builders laid her down, and whence they had no power to make her budge an inch.

In this dilemma it was proposed to report progress, or non-progress rather, to the god-descended hero, Prince Hightide, for whom this monster of the deep was built. With this suggestion, ends the first act.

While the reporters are gone to picture this unpleasant state of things to the Prince, a word or two may be said about this great personage.

Prince Hightide was a son of Dengeh, king of gods and men. He has, therefore, always stood very near the top of the line of aristocratic deities. His courage was thought to be many degrees above that of earth's bravest sons ; nothing could daunt it ; while the resources of his massive mind, being vastly superior both in number and power to those of all his rivals, placed him well nigh beyond the possibility of being defeated by any difficulty. At the mere waving of his right hand all puny tribes would stand aghast ! If he could not accomplish his designs in one way, he would in another. Now, he would assume the form of a goddess, anon, that of some animal, or even fruit or vegetable, sooner than give up what he had set his mind on doing. In the legends he is spoken of as the great patron of song, and is sometimes called The Singer. But his monster canoes, more especially the one now to be launched, and his own gigantic strength, have placed his fame high up out of the reach of every other aspirant after greatness in Cannibal-land.

At the time of the departure of the builders' messengers to report the failure of all their attempts to launch this latest wonder, the Prince was living in easy style a little distance inland, but there was no keeping him there now that he knew the

true position of things. Up he rose, and went down calmly, but determinedly, to the scene of action, where he surveyed with a sneer the ponderous thing that had balked the world. Then he stepped forward, and, after giving the canoe a few smart raps with his broad hand, as the manner is when getting canoes into the water, causing her to sound like a drum, or Chinese gong of unheard-of size—he put his own "shoulder to the wheel," and shouting the usual shout, "ee!—oh!—yah!—eh!" as if expecting all to help on hearing the last syllable, he, of his own strength, sent the Ebbtide at full speed over the rollers, dashing and splashing into the sea,

"While all the world wondered!"

Here the poet drops the curtain on the second act in the history of the Ebbtide.

The largest canoes of modern Cannibal-land, *i.e.*, Cannibal-land as known by the white man, had but one mast, which consisted of two parts spliced, or bound together with sinnet. But the Ebbtide, as the poet goes on to say, had three masts, namely, a "main," a "main-top," and a "main-top-gallant." The first was made of a wood commonly known in Fiji as the "Fiji pine;" * the second of a harder and darker wood; † and the third of the most highly valued wood in the country. ‡ Now the mainmast was so high that from its top the land near which the canoe lay at anchor looked somewhat hazy. From the "main-top," a spectator could look right over the mountains of Viti Levu (Great Fiji), and see, eighty miles away, the island of Kandavu looming darkly up in the south. While, stranger yet, from the "main-top-gallant-mast," all the flats and lowlands, that before lay hid immediately behind the above-named mountains, came into full view.

Before a canoe-sail can be hoisted to its proper place, a sailor must climb the mast, carrying with him the halliard, which he

* Dammava Vitiensis, Seem. Vulgo 'Dakua.' † C. Burmanni Whight; Vulgo 'Damanu.' ‡ Afzelia bijuga, A. Gray; Vulgo 'Vesi.'

passes through or over the mast-head. To do this on the Ebb-tide would be a thing utterly beyond the power of the weakling climbers of modern times. And even in those days, when giants and god-strengthened men were by no means few, Prince Hightide, believing that for such a task one free man was worth two pressed men, thought it prudent to appeal for a volunteer. "Who will climb to the main-top-mast-top?" shouted the noble prince, and paused for a reply.

"Not I,"—said one of the small-canoe men, aside,—"I know only work on deck, my lads, and there I can serve ten bows." Meaning by this last statement that he could keep ten of the enemy armed with bows and arrows, pretty fully employed.

The climbing had to be done, however; thus much was settled in the Prince's brain beyond a doubt; as was this also, that as difficulties arise the men to battle with, and overcome them, will always be forthcoming. The numerous crowds of powerful sailors that now were gathered on the deck of the Ebbtide could not be without a man equal to the emergency of the hour. The poet here introduces us to that man. He was but a stripling, when compared with his great captain; but, in comparison with ordinary men, he was a man of might, being a "chip of the old block," and brother of the Prince. He was known on board as the "Bat-o'-the-top-mast-head," on account of his wonderful climbing powers, and his prehensile ability, which placed him side by side with the flying-fox, with whose habits and flesh the natives are perfectly familiar.

When this god-possessed giant sailor sprang from the crowd and clasped the mast with his hands, at the same time pressing the soles of his feet firmly against it, and curving his back outwards from it, in the true Fijian climbing attitude, quite a scene took place. The climber's mother rushed forward to stop him from his fool-hardy attempt, which she looked upon as the act of a madman. When her maternal fury was at its sublimest height she discharged at him volley after volley of the hardest epithets to be found in cannibal vocabularies. Such epithets

are neither few nor weak. Then, as, a blighting climax, she told him that he was but a "baby," in proof whereof she called all present to witness that the eruptive disease, which almost without exception afflicts young Fiji from 1 to 3 years old, was not yet dry on him!

Few minds could have stood this without recoiling. But the woman's eloquence and impassioned manner failed utterly. She could not convince him that youth was incompatible with climbing ability. Indeed, he did not stay to ask whether it were or no; "for," says the bard, "while his mother was yet speaking, he was gone; not climbing, but literally running up the mast!" And there was every reason why he should run, for the journey was not to be done in a day, as we shall presently see. The poet would have us not forget that this brother of Prince Hightide was distinguished by the possession of many powers besides that of climbing, one of which was a marvellous keenness of sight. His eyes could discover small objects hundreds of miles away! But let us follow the climber up the mast; or, better still, remain while he climbs, with the sailors on deck, who, in the meantime will continue sculling the vessel out to sea.

At the close of his first day's work, the "Bat-o'-the-top-mast-head," says, "I climbed, and climbed, and climbed all day. When at last I halted to rest and look about me, I saw that, far down on the tops of the screw pine hills, and lower yet, it was blowing furiously. The iron-wood trees were bowing and falling before the wind, which, to our canoe, was only as a calm."

At sea, and in a storm, there is nothing like cheerfulness, except calmness. These two should always go together at such times. Who does not like to hear the cheery song of our own jolly English tars, mingling with the noise of many waters and the roar of the hurtling gale? The cannibal sailor had his sea songs too, numbers of them.

Our model climber, now a day's journey up, hidden in the thick darkness, with the storm howling beneath him, would not

allow himself to feel lonely, but sang out into the night one of the cannibal-seaman's songs, the chorus of which, delivered of course as a solo, was clearly heard on deck; as, indeed, it was intended to be, for the purpose of encouraging the hard-worked men who were kept propelling this floating island of a canoe, with their heavy sculls. He sang this chorus over and over again, without weariness, as Fijians only can sing a couplet, for half a night and longer, at a sitting, enjoying it more the last time than when they began. Why, a foreigner can hardly guess, for often the words seem to him to contain no meaning. But hark to the "Bat-o'-the-top-mast-head:"

"Scull away with a mighty hand;
Great is the calm on all the land!"

Whereas, it was blowing half a hurricane at the time. But what was that to a big ship and brave hearts? "Only a calm!" The "land is calm," is the true Fijian nautical way of saying the "sea is calm" and "there is no wind."

The second day our young hero continued his journey upward. Likewise the third day, and thus on for ten days! At intervals he would stay his climbing, and directing his telescopic eye toward some remote part of the Archipelago, report what he saw. Once he appeared to lose some of his calmness. It was on discovering far away an assembly of chieftains feasting delightfully on the fat of the land! "Oh," said he, "how much I longed to be there"! At other such rests, he would declare himself able to see places which we now know to have been at least 250 miles off; out where, as other two lines of his express it,

"The ocean breaks in frightful form,
And none can stand before the storm."

It was all but as bad where the Ebbtide was, but what matter? What sea could make her roll or pitch? So his unfaltering voice would come down again from the clouds, refreshing the weary hearts on deck, with a

"Scull away with a mighty hand,
Great is the calm on all the land!'

At length, on the tenth day, he reached the "top-mast-head," where, as the poet puts him before our imagination, he is somewhat nearer the moon and stars than he had ever been before. Now he passed the halliard over the mast-head, and at once announced his intention of dining with those heavenly bodies before beginning his downward trip to join his captain and comrades on deck. Here the poet once more drops the curtain, and leaves us to picture for ourselves this banquet in the celestial sphere.

As the curtain lifts, we see that the climbing and sculling have ceased. The poet now proceeds to show that, when the order to hoist sail was given, all hands on board, giants though they were, failed in every attempt. And so again when men's hearts began to lose all hope, Prince Hightide came to the rescue; and with one Samsonian pull of his prodigious arm, sheeted home that sail of measureless expanse; thus giving to the world another proof of his god-like strength, and making more than ever clear his claim to a high position in the first rank of the aristocratic gods of Cannibal-land.

No sooner was the sail up than into the water went a hundred steering oars at one splash. This is the only steering apparatus the Fijian was practically acquainted with. The number of steering oars, or long, heavy blades, which they resemble, necessary for canoes of these later and puny days, varies from one to six, but seldom more than two are needed.

But the Ebbtide would not answer her helm with a hundred at work. So down went another hundred; but with no better result. Then a third hundred, but the vessel was still in the wind. Now was the order given for hundred after hundred to be added to the number, which soon rose to one thousand; and still the awful sail was shaking and flapping against the mast! At this juncture it was no small comfort to know that the Prince had always some power in reserve, equal to any and every emergency that might arise. And it is interesting to note how our unknown poet displays his skill, both in the creation

of emergencies for the exercise of the Prince's wisdom and power, and in making him 'bide his time,' till the moment when he is most wanted at the front. A thousand rudders in the water, and the unwieldy craft is as disobedient and unanswering as ever! Here his Royal Highness rose—his countenance all aglow with unwavering confidence in the omnipotence of mechanical power—"Bring aft the rudder with a thousand oars;" shouted the god. The order was no sooner given than executed. The instant this most mysterous piece of machinery splashed into the sea, the sail filled; and away swept the glorious Ebbtide on her first voyage to the Friendly Islands, where we must follow her. Now the curtain falls, until we discover her in the land of the red man.

Where the poet got his idea from, of a "rudder with a thousand oars," branches, tongues, divisions, or whatever they may be called, no native mind has been able to tell us. No steering machine like it has ever been heard of by Fijian sailors of modern days anywhere but in this great song.

We are driven therefore to the conclusion, that it must have had its origin in the imagination of the poet, who, thinking of the divisions in fishes' tails, invented a rudder with a thousand such divisions.

Arrived off Tongatabu, in the Friendly Islands, all the islanders gathered on the shore to see this wonder from Fiji. "But,"—says our historical bard, in order to give us a notion of the canoe's carrying capacity,—"the whole population of Tonga was small in comparison with the number of passengers and crew on the Ebbtide."

The noble prince remained on board till the great Tongan chieftains came off to pay their respects, which they soon did, and gave him a hearty invite to become their guest. Some difficulties now occurred on the question of accomodation on shore for the giant captain, and his countless company of giant attendants. The Tongan Chiefs were asked what number of "strangers' houses," or as we should term them, "hotels," were

ready. On being told that twelve commodious places were waiting for occupants, the visitors were bold enough to advise that these should be pulled down, and that with the materials, and others in addition, an immense palace should be erected for the sole use of Prince Hightide, the giant-god and wonder worker from the Kingdoms of Fiji. The suggestion was at once acted upon, but to the infinite amazement and awe of the Friendly Islanders, the palace was far too small for its intended tenant. Now the poet rises to his highest efforts in exaggerated description. It is this very exaggeration which leads to the discovery that the poet's hero is, in all probability, some great natural phenomenon.

In further sketching the terrible captain, the bard says that he was in the habit of going down on his hands and knees, and placing his head only in the palace for shelter.

With no better hotel accommodation than this, the rest of his body was, of course, exposed to sun and storm. While in this position during wet weather, the rains that fell collecting in the hollow of his back and between his shoulders, formed an extensive lagoon, where the people went to catch fish and turtle, and double canoes went sailing up and down.

As the day drew near for the departure of these awful visitors, the Friendly Islanders made such a farewell festival as had never before been known throughout the length and breadth of their land. Among many things too numerous to be named, not fewer than 2000 pigs were served up, but only to be laughed at aside by the guests, who knew too well that the eating capabilities of their captain were in proportion to everything else done by him, which was always on a scale so large as to utterly dwarf the greatest achievements of lesser mortals. The parting came at last, however, and by no means too soon for the generous Friendly Islanders, who, as the last act of courtesy, and to save the credit of their nation, filed out by hundreds, headed by their chief, and presented their parting offerings, which, in Cannibal-land, are called "The-sending-away." These presents

consisted of two monster bales of native cloth, each containing 20,000 yards. This cloth was for the princely captain, who, on being dressed therein, in Fijian fashion, took the whole 40,000 yards round him, and, even then, was declared to be but poorly dressed, for as yet he had no train. More, however, was not to be had of the good people of the Eastern Isles; so the god and his people and monster canoe returned to Cannibal-land, the canoe to fall into other hands for a brief season, and her captain to learn, from his temporary loss, the useful lesson that there were other heroes in the world besides himself.

Many points in this tale will have been observed by the reader, which seem pretty conclusively to show that the author intended his composition to be understood as an allegory, wherein he has represented two great natural powers, or, to speak more correctly, one such power in its two regular fluctuations, namely the tide—as the names imply—the prince being the high-tide, and the monster canoe the ebb-tide. When man's power failed to launch the big canoe, in came the tide and lifted her off the land with the greatest ease. The outgoing tide carried her to sea. Fijians hardly ever think of putting their large canoes in the water except at the time of the high tide. The reason is obvious. Then, when at Tonga the water filled the hollow places on the prince's back, we have a picture of the inflow of the tide over the reefs into the smooth lagoons formed by those coral walls—lagoons, where daily may be seen the large canoes "sailing up and down, and the people catching fish and turtle."

But in the execution of his work, the poet does more than this, for he brings repeatedly before us many of the manners and customs, with some of the more prominent characteristics, of his country and countrymen. That he should tell us of a chief devouring 2000 pigs, and wrapping about his body 40,000 yards of native fabrics, yet complaining still of scarce provisions and a want of clothes, can only be accounted for by the fact

that the cannibal is a hungry and covetous personage, according to his own estimate of himself.

The poet, though often hiding his meaning by overdrawing, as is always the case with savage poets, had evidently no intention that students of his song should interpret literally its numerous pictures, which, so interpreted, would be nothing less than frightful exaggerations.

If everything else in the performance could be interpreted as readily as that portion which exhibits the power and usefulness of the "full tide" in lifting weights, such as canoes, and the force of the out-going tide in floating them to sea, the whole would become clothed with truth. There is little doubt that the poet himself, and the more intelligent men of the heroic days of Fiji, were well able to find the exact counterpart of every figure and exaggerated picture in the song, the entire drift and meaning of which they well understood.

In those parts which paint the eating propensities and capabilities, together with the characteristic greed and generosity of the race, there is little more—making every allowance for the savage brain that produced it—than a well-charged caricature; just as another cannibal poet, wishing to represent the almost unlimited extent to which polygamy was carried in his time, asks, respecting a chief of great renown, and after whom many chiefs have since been named—

> Who is like the great Ritóva,
> The chief with a million wives?
> I'm weary with asking—"Who?"

CHAPTER XII.

THE FIJIAN NIGHTS' ENTERTAINMENTS.—SECOND NIGHT.—CAPTURE OF THE EBBTIDE.

ON the next occasion on which the company assembled in Big-Wind's house disposed themselves to story-telling, I gave them "Ali Baba, or the Forty Thieves," which was quite to the taste of my audience.

Trumpet Shell responded with a continuation of "Prince Hightide," in which is recorded the wonderful capture of the leviathan canoe.

The people of Cannibal-land are a selfish and jealous race, as, likewise, are all their gods. Each tribe likes to be thought first in everything. If a tribe in the North has a great and wonderful god, who, by many miraculous deeds has clearly established his reputation, and made his name a household word, a tribe in the South must place itself in a position to be able to boast such another, or it will never rest. If the former can talk of its monster canoe, with her god-like captain and giant crew, sweeping gloriously over the waters of the Pacific, the latter will fume and fret till it also can tell to future generations, that its god was one of no second-rate powers, inasmuch as he captured that very canoe, in a way that put into the shade every other capture ever made on the high seas, and, by many other deeds of might, utterly astonished both the world of men and the world of gods.

The Prince Hightide was indeed a powerful god—a worthy son of him who shakes the world! As for his canoe, the Ebbtide, who can measure her proportions? But Tanóva, a god of Kandávu, claimed to be as high and mighty as the Prince. A poet says that this Tanóva used often to ask: "What will the world say of me, if, to prove my equality with Prince Hightide, I capture his beautiful craft? Let the world decide the question—'which is the greater god, he that builds a monster canoe, or he that captures her when she is built?'" The capture of the Ebbtide now became the object of Tanóva's ambition, and he determined to take advantage of every opportunity for completing and carrying out his plans. The scheme was in his brain, and there he kept it for a time to ripen. One day Ratúva, another god of Kandávu, sailed away on a visit to the great northern deity, Prince Hightide, whom he found on board his canoe of world-wide renown. The Prince having been informed of the distinguished visitor's arrival along-

side, looked down from the deck and very graciously invited him to climb the vessel's side. The invitation was, of course, accepted ; and Ratúva set about climbing ; but the distance was so great that it took him a whole day to reach the deck, and what astonished him still more, another day to reach the Prince's quarters amidships. In the course of conversation between these two important personages, Ratúva took occasion to inform the Prince that he should shortly be in need of all the canoes he had left at home, but the worst of it was that most of them were out of repair, and must be re-lashed before they could be sent again to sea. He being therefore greatly in want of sinnet for this work, had come over the ocean to beg some of that most necessary article of His Highness. The Prince replied, "It is well! It is good! There is sinnet enough and to spare ; far more than you can take in your canoe ; so in a few days I will send my sons in the Ebbtide with a good cargo of the 'pith of your petition.'" This is quite a Fijian phrase, and a very pretty one it is. With this princely promise, Ratúva returned to his own land more than satisfied with the result of his mission. On his way he called on the Hero-god Tanóva, to pay his respects and to give him the good news. "I have been," he began, "to the gates of the Spirit-land, even to the home of the noble Prince Hightide." "Oh, you have, have you?" said Tanóva, "and what is the news?" "Why, that I begged sinnet of him, and he not only gave a large quantity, but promised to send his sons in the Ebbtide with more." "And what else?" asked Tanóva. "Well, all about the Prince himself, to be sure, and his miracle of a canoe!" "Pshaw! What canoe?" asked the envious Tanòva, with a sneer. "Well all I know is," replied the successful sinnet-beggar, "we may live for ten generations and never set our eyes on such another wonder! Why just think, I climbed, and climbed, and was a whole day in getting on board, then I walked, and walked, and walked, and was another day in making my way to the Prince's cabin." These cabins, or canoe-houses, are

always placed in the middle of the canoe, and on deck, there being no accommodation whatever between-decks on these rough ocean coaches.

Here the conversation stopped; but it had gone far enough to fan into a flame Tanóva's desire to capture this unique canoe. "Now," said he to himself, "is my time! How shall I take her when she comes this way with the promised sinnet?" Now, just about the time for expecting the Ebb-tide, Tanóva took down, from the place where it usually hung in the house, a cocoa-nut water-bottle, with which he went out to fetch, as he said, a bottleful of sea-water to season his vegetable soup with. This is often done by Fijian cooks, who, for all in-door cookery, are women. It is not usual for men to fetch water; but this was a special case, with a special object in view. The ordinary cocoa-nut water-bottle holds from half a pint to a pint; extra-ordinary ones would hold a quart. This kind of bottle is in very common use for holding drinking-water, and sea-water for cooking purposes. But the water-bottle of the poet's imagination was, of course, one that in every way became a hero-giant and god. Tanóva first let down his capacious bottle in seas near home, but found them much too shallow. He could not get water enough, for his object, to flow into its enormous mouth. Wherefore, after trying in two or three other places, which were all too shallow, he proceeded in an Easterly course from his own island, and, with a little leaning to the North, was able presently to plant his right foot on the beautiful island of Moála, at the same time raising his left, and putting it firmly down on Ono, in the West. Here he again let down his cocoa-nut shell in deep water, taking care to turn its mouth towards the North, from which point the Ebbtide would steer her course. Let every voyager to Fiji imagine the figure of this god standing as described in that part of the group pointed out by the poet! The island of Moála is situated in 179° 50' E., and 18° 35' S. Ono is in 178° 30' E., and 18° 50' S. The two islands are, therefore, about 80 miles apart, which distance of ocean is

spanned by Tanóva's legs of wondrous length, while his enormous body, topped by a head of prodigious size, towers upward towards the sky! In his hands he grasps a cord, to the other end of which is attached the water-bottle in the position already described, and now holding within it quite a sea of water. That portion of the ocean thus arched over by the great god, is the highway for steamers and sailing vessels bound for central Fiji. It is, in truth, the great and grand gate of entrance for all foreign vessels making for the now well-known port of Levúka.

Tanóva had not been long in his elevated position,

"Bestriding the narrow world like a Colossus,"

when, to his unbounded delight, the Ebbtide hove in sight. Coming swiftly up, she pressed, full sail, right through the mouth of the partly sunken bottle, and on inside, where she continued sailing to and fro, tacking about whenever she came near the bottle's side. Having thus clearly and fairly entrapped the greatest canoe of that or any age, the god drew up his bottle, and hastening home, quietly hung it up in its place,—the glorious prize being all safe inside.

Many days had passed away since this miraculous capture; when one morning a fine large canoe, the admiration of all who saw her, sailed into Tanóva's bay. The stranger proved to be no other than the second great canoe of Prince Hightide, with the anxious prince himself on board,—come in search of his renowned ship, and missing sons. On entering Tanóva's palace he reported himself, as the manner of all visitors is, and as the etiquette of Cannibal-land requires. "Having waited a long time at home," said he, "looking and hoping for the return of my sons and my big canoe, but receiving no tidings of either it or them, I am here to day in search of both." Ratúva the successful sinnet-beggar, being present, was the first to reply.—"We know nothing of either your canoe or your sons. I have been wondering why they did not come with the sinnet!" The words were hardly out of his mouth when the whole house-

hold, together with the Prince and his company, were startled by a great noise, as of sailors putting their canoe about.—" ee ! —oh !—yah !—eh ! "—There was a pause in the house for an instant, and only for an instant,—such a pause as might be caused by the sudden rushing into the hearts of the assemblage of unexpected fear or joy,—which, passed, Prince Hightide shouted in a fit of irrepressible gladness,—" That's my Ebbtide ! There she is ! ! Here she comes ! ! ! " There was an immediate rush to the doors, and even to the beach, to look at her coming into harbour ;—but not a speck could be seen on the blue waters. This surely must have been one of Tanóva's moments of highest enjoyment, when he saw the chagrin of the great and loudly talked of Prince of Northern Fiji.

After remaining some little time longer, the prince said he must be going ; but Tanóva pressed him to stay, saying, " Don't go yet, some vegetable soup is getting ready ; wait and take some." So he waited ; for neither man, nor hero-god could have been so unpolite as to decline such hospitality. Tanóva presently rose, and taking down the water-bottle, made as if he were going to pour its contents into the soup, when, behold ! while he was in the very act of doing this, out fell the monster canoe and her hardy crew ! As might be supposed, the astonishment of all the assembled gods was great beyond the power of tongue to tell. Dumbness was the only proper expression of it. But on none were the signs of mingled wonder and joy more visible than on the noble prince himself.

As soon as the panic occasioned by these mysterious doings had in part subsided, Ratúva, who could not forget his promised sinnet, addressing the prince, said, " Of course you will now go on with me with the sinnet ? " but the wary old aristocrat replied, " Don't you wish you may get it ! You won't catch me sailing into any more of your Kandávu water-bottles." Thereupon he and his sons returned home, intensely disgusted with all the gods and vegetable soups and cocoa-nut bottles of that island.

Now this is how the cannibal poet has shown in his song that Prince Hightide was taught a lesson of humility ; and how, too, the Northern tribes of that age came to understand that there were gods in the South, as mighty as their own.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FIJIAN NIGHTS' ENTERTAINMENTS—THIRD NIGHT.—ELOPEMENT OF A GODDESS.

WE had yet a third story-telling entertainment, the leading points of which I well remember. On this occasion Lolóma was the chief narrator. I had drawn largely on my recollections of Lempriere's classical dictionary, and thought I had fairly distanced the efforts of the cannibal poets, with the loves of the Olympian gods and goddesses, but I found that the company had local legends of equal interest. Lolóma discoursed eloquently on a love theme with an elopement for its central incident, and I was bound to confess that the conduct of the hero was worthy of Paris himself.

This love-song of Lolóma's is now done into English for the first time.

The author's style is imitated more closely, and the lines are more literally translated than was possible, or desirable, with other compositions which have been worked into these pages. The poet's theme is the "Elopement of a Hero-god with a Goddess." The artist's laconic, business-like and elliptical lines, necessitate an introduction to these high personages, and a few words explaining what, by some readers, may be accepted as an addition to their knowledge of the manners and customs of Cannibal-land.

Bulitaundúa the "first-crowned," or "sole-crowned," or "chief one," was a hero-god of comparatively small importance,

but great pretensions. The tribe acknowledging him as its tutelar god called him "Chief of Gods," a title which none but the tribe in question could show that he had any claim to. By all the legendary accounts, he must have been a sort of Beelzebub, for, when the gods assembled in council, he sat on an elevated seat or dais, above them all—

"By merit raised
To that bad eminence."

His food was the wind. As a god, he was far from being wholly given to wrong-doing. He used to promise—or his priests did for him—that the trees should yield their fruit in great abundance. When the season came, he was in the habit of taking these ripe fruits, which he called his "play-things," and tossing them hither and thither for his amusement, over all the lands of his people. Thus sketched by the poet, we may imagine him standing by an inexhaustible pile of fruits, into which, ever and anon, he plunges his hands, awful in their wondrous breadth and capacity, with which, like a giant sower sowing seed, he scatters broadcast on all the trees, his ripe and luscious gifts.

Such a god as this could not but gain a place in the poetry of Cannibal-land. But the poet who has enshrined his memory in verse, has chosen no such theme as that of "Universal fruit-scattering," to perpetuate his name with, but has simply placed him before his country as a great love-making hero, seeking, wooing, winning, and carrying off a goddess of matchless beauty.

From the oldest traditions of the place, it appears that at Vúya—once the head town of an ancient kingdom of power—there lived a lovely lady, so lovely indeed, and beautiful, that her name was named on every island. She was in truth a goddess, but all the gods of note, except Bulitaundúa, had sought her hand, and sought in vain.

Now Bulitaundúa lived a long way off on another island, the largest of the group; and unfortunately too, he was a landsman,

knowing little or nothing of sailing. He was, however, an expert rower, in the long, narrow canoes used for river work. But who would venture to sea in a craft of that sort.

Certainly none but Bulitaundúa, who determined at all risks to cross the ocean to Vúya, distant some 80 miles, and there, should he ever reach the place alive, to offer his hand and heart to the goddess of world-wide renown. His ability to eat the wind may account for the total absence of fear in this, to all seafaring men, foolhardy attempt. At the time of his leaving home, a stiff breeze was blowing from the East, but whether he ate it all up or not, the bard does not tell us ; he only says that when the hero reached the sea there was a great calm. But he says this in such a way as to leave the impression on our minds that the wonderful and necessary deed was actually and instantaneously done.

In the first stanza Bulitaundúa is represented as talking to himself. Coming out of his house, and looking round, he finds that the usual "trade" breeze is blowing, and hopes it may prove just the breeze to help him over to the fair lady's land. In the second stanza he is in his canoe, paddling away down the river, and singing, as he glides along, a song in which are mentioned the most prominent points of land as they come in sight ahead. In the third stanza he reaches the ocean, where, as we are led to infer, finding the wind too strong, he causes a great calm, and then, dashing bravely out, he pulls away for the "Great Land," where lives the object of all his hopes. The difficulties and dangers of ocean passed, the undaunted hero joyfully prepares to land. As he poles his canoe towards the beach, over what in that part of Fiji is a shore-reef, and draws nearer and nearer to the home of the illustrious goddess, he descries in the hills that form the immediate background of the picture before him, a silvery waterfall, the dancing glories of which greatly gladden his heart, especially as the thought impresses itself strongly in his mind that such a fall can be no other than the bathing-place of the "World's Attraction." In

the fourth stanza, the princess, hearing that a canoe has arrived, sends her maid in great haste to see who the stranger can be. The girl, in wild astonishment at the truly princely bearing of Bulitaundúa, bites her fingers and claps her hands, which is one of the ways in which Fijian young ladies let people know that they are exceedingly filled with wonder! On being addressed by this maiden as "Lord o' the Lands," the princely sailor-god, enquires naturally enough, and with a proper eye to business, if what she says is true, "how would it be for him to be crowned in that land also?" Whereupon the maiden's surprise rushes suddenly to a climax, and away she runs to her mistress to report the stranger's most astounding proposal. Now, the goddess goes to the beach and interviews the newly-arrived hero, who, presently discovering that he has given the inquisitive lady satisfactory answers to her queries, "pops" the all-important question without further delay. The battle is fought and won. It was a "bloodless victory." And the poet deemed it as fit a subject for the efforts of his genius as those victories which, if he knew the way to write at all, he would have had to write with blood. The goddess being now the hero's own, he tells her to take her place, where the lady's place always is when rowing with her lord, namely, "forward." The short oars, or more correctly, paddles, in general use in Cannibal-land, are in shape like flattened hearts, with small, round smooth handles, about 4 feet in length. The wood of which they are made is a very valuable one, known among the natives by the name of "vesi," and said to resemble the "green-heart" of India. It was a paddle of this sort, the poet tells us, which the goddess used on the morning of her elopement. The loving pair having been placed by the bard fairly on their way home, the song concludes.

From other compositions which refer to this conquest, I subsequently learned that a large family of gods and goddesses arose out of the happy union. The names of some of these personages are worth recording for their poetic character. They

are:—"Parrakeet-Lord," "Eight-Eyes," "Grass-flower-skirt," *i.e.* the goddess whose skirt was made of the flowers of grass;—and, last and most wonderful of all—"Spirit-skirt," or the goddess whose skirt was composed of spirits!

THE SONG.

"The easterly breeze is blowing fair,"—
Said Bulitaundúa * with gladsome air,
"My breeze, mayhap, for the Land o' the fair!"
"Pull away from side to side,
Rolling below is the river-tide.
Hung out ahead is Screw-pine strand;
Pull away with a steady hand.
The other shore is the haunted land!
Pull away with a steady hand.
Pumice-stone isle looms up from the sea,
And the 'Isle-of-Work' is on the lee;
Pull away with a steady hand."

Through the open reef to the great outside,
Rowed the god as he merrily cried,
"There's a wondrous calm on all the land!
Pull away with a steady hand."—
"Arrived at last at Vúya's town,
Where the beautiful falls are leaping down!
The falls I ween, of Vúya's Queen!"

"Maiden-in-waiting, go down to the reef,
A canoe is in, 'tis the voice of a chief!"
Biting her fingers, and clapping her hands,
The maid hail'd the chief as "Lord-o'-the-Lands!"
"Then what would you say, "—asked the fine grandee,
If on this shore I crowned be?"
The maid ran back without further ado,
And the lady sped to the Lord's canoe!
"What is the name of thy land?" she cried.
"Mine is a very long land!"—he replied,—
"Enquire of the flood and the ebbing tide!
Away from the sea, inland I abide.
My palace is called the Great Foundation!
And the houses are all like those of thy nation.
Then tell me at once, O child of the sea,
Wilt thou stay where thou art, or go with me?"
"In thy canoe I'll go with thee!
My home at the dawn shall deserted be!"
"Then over the bow, "—said the god-like rower,
"Pull away with thy 'Green-heart' oar."

* Pronounced Boo-ly-town-doo-ah.

CHAPTER XIV.

A RIVAL'S STRATEGY.

A YEAR passed away, and I was still the guest of Big-Wind, in the valley of Tivóli. I had carefully kept count of the time, by making a notch on a tree for every week. The days I recorded by means of seven pebbles, dropping one into my pocket each morning until the week was ended, and then beginning again. My wardrobe had long since been hopelessly ruined, and I was reduced to the comfortable Fijian sulu and turban, but I still preserved the European luxury of a pocket in the folds of my tapa.

The period of my indulgent captivity had been far from unpleasant to me. I did not omit to ascend the hills occasionally and scan the horizon for an English ship, but I had begun to think with less bitterness of having to pass the remainder of my life among the Fijians. As time wore on it seemed less and less likely that I should be rescued by some passing ship, as the only vessels which visited the country at this time went to Bau, and the Sandalwood coast on the island of Vanua Levu. However, a change in my circumstances was in store for me which I could not foresee.

Lolóma was now sixteen years of age, and she was claimed in marriage by Bent-Axe, to whom she had been affianced almost from her birth. The man was repulsive; the girl had the greatest possible aversion to him; and she had given abundant proofs of her attachment to me. Often had she in conversation with me wished that she lived in the white man's country, where, as she expressed it, a girl may wed "the man to whom her spirit flies." (She had learned that from me, and I may remark that in speaking to the savages of the institutions of my own country, I always represented them as superior to theirs, though sometimes at the sacrifice of strict accuracy.) I had not the slightest intention of surrendering her to my rival,

who had treated me with ill-will from the first day of my arrival in the valley, and Lolóma said she would fly with me to another tribe to which she was vasu,* and where we could live in peace, if I were willing. I was quite willing, in the absence of any better plan for settling the difficulty, but I preferred defeating my hated adversary on his own ground. I accordingly made a formal proposition to Big-Wind for his daughter's hand. The old king was pleased, but feared that the customs of his country would make our marriage an impossibility, as the girl had been publicly pledged to Bent-Axe, who was his half-brother, and there was no precedent for breaking such an engagement. I was popular with the inhabitants of the valley, and knew that if the matter were put to the vote it would be decided in my favor, as Bent-Axe was universally detested for his cruel and overbearing disposition. But there was a great difficulty in my way. Shark, the priest, looked with high disfavor upon some innovations on native custom I had attempted to introduce, and he knew that I had spoken disrespectfully of his religion, calling the whole priesthood of the country impostors. He would naturally strain every nerve to prevent me from being established with official rank at the court of Big-Wind. The proposed marriage was made the subject of many grave deliberations in council. Shark and Bent-Axe exerted all their eloquence against me, but the chief secretly leaned towards me, and he was importuned in my behalf by Lolóma, his favorite daughter, and also her mother and sisters. At length it was decided by straining an abstruse point of native etiquette, that Bent-Axe had committed an act which nullified the engagement. The day of the marriage, after many busy preparations in the village, now arrived. The previous evening the deformed suitor had had an interview with Lolóma. He had sweetened his breath with the grayish clay which Fijian swains use to make themselves attractive, and he urged his cause with all the persuasiveness of which he was capable, but without avail.

* A relationship which carries with it remarkable privileges. *Vide* p. 65.

Marriage in Fiji is a civil contract with which the priest officially has nothing to do. The customs observed on these occasions, some of which are very pretty, vary in different parts of the group. The leading idea, however, is an interchange of presents, a great feast, and a public acceptance of the woman by the man after the formal presentation. Popular opinion in the valley of Tivóli was in favor of a full-dress affair, on the pattern of a grand marriage in the family of King Finau of Tonga, in regard to which a fabulous acount in a metrical form had gained currency.

The assembled multitude accordingly appeared on the village green in gala attire. All that paint, powder, oil, and floral decorations could do for the company, was done. The most striking picture in the group was old Big-Wind himself, as he advanced, erect on the green sward within the quadrangular mass of human beings sitting cross-legged, to present the bride.

His voice, gait, eyes, and dress, not to speak of his tall person and powerful limbs, singly and together proclaimed his superiority over the crowd, who, crouching at his feet, clapped their hands and uttered deep bass groans of salutation in token at once of their recognition of his high station, of their admiration of his person, and of their loyal submission to his rule. Rather more than six feet high—without shoes, of course, and exclusive of the hair which covered his head like a knoll with tall reed-grass, and which was dressed in the latest and most artistic style possible to the barbers of highest note—there he stood. Left cheek, right half of forehead, upper part of nose, and right eye surroundings deeply vermillioned; other bare portions of the face painted with lamp-black; lateral and lower features enveloped in bushy whiskers, beard, and moustache; frill of wild-boar's tusks about his neck, making a formidable, defensive *chevaux-de-frise* for the throat, as well as a chiefly ornament and emblem of royal courage; ponderous pine-apple club mounted on right shoulder; aloft, and carried in left hand over all, a large sunshade made of the leaf of that most beautiful of palms,

the fan-palm ; those muscular arms so well able to put forth destructive might in the hour of battle ; a profusely-decorated native dress fastened round the body with a sash sweeping off behind in a long train of snow-white gauzy fabric, made by the ladies of his harem—a subject fit for poet's verse, and painter's brush and pallet.

The bride, having previously been anointed with cocoanut oil scented with sandalwood, was swathed in choice mats of fine texture and masi of the silkiest softness. She wore so many yards of this material, which hid her pretty limbs in a shameful way, that she could neither sit down nor rise up without assistance from her maids. She had on her forehead a coronet of pearly-white beads, made of the inside of nautilus shells ; there lay on her bosom a necklace composed of the white-scented flowers of the vasa, and her wrists and upper-arms were decorated with curiously-wrought shell bracelets and armlets. Her ornaments glimmered bravely on her brown throat and arms. She stood radiant in the sun—a gay, glad child of Nature—beautiful as the flushed flower of the hibiscus as it flames at noon, and fresh as roses washed by rain.

The six bridesmaids were similarly attired, but with less magnificence, and each was distinguished by a red riband, made of the membrane of a fine leaf. The lady and her attendants having walked in procession to the front of the Royal house, which faced one side of the quadrangle, the King delivered a brief address, at the end of which the first bridesmaid advanced to cut off the front lock of the bride, the woolly fringe which is only worn by maidens, when the priest, accompanied by Bent-Axe, suddenly appeared upon the scene.

"I forbid this marriage in the name of the gods," said Shark. "Last night in the temple it was revealed to me that it is not for the good of the land. Forbear, or fear the just wrath of Dengeh."

The King demanded an omen in proof of the divine displeasure.

Shark stood up before the people, and in accordance with a practice they were familiar with, poured a few drops of water on the front of his right arm near the shoulder. Then, gently inclining his arm, the course of the water was watched. If it found its way down to the wrist, the god was favourable to the marriage; if it ran off and fell on the ground, the decision would be the other way. None of the water reached the rascal's wrist, for he had well oiled it for the occasion.

"I fear neither Dengeh nor his priest," I interposed. "It is a lying omen. I am not of Shark's religion, and his priestly oracle cannot answer for me."

Big-Wind and his chieftains, after consultation, regarded this objection to the jurisdiction as a good one, and judgment was given accordingly.

"There is another reason why this marriage cannot proceed," shouted Bent-Axe, glaring defiantly at me. "Will the white man maintain that a chief's daughter should be given to a leper?"

I laughed aloud. I knew that leprosy was not uncommon in the country, and elephantiasis was prevalent, but I had never so much as seen a case of the former disease, and I knew that I was in perfect health.

"Let the papalangi be examined," continued Bent-Axe. "On his right ankle you will see the mark of the doomed."

Then I remembered, with a start, that I had that about me, known only to Bent-Axe, Lolóma, and myself, which would betray me into the skilfully-laid trap of this relentless savage. The previous day, in cutting a kau karo or itchwood tree, a few drops of the sap, which is just like scalding water, fell upon my right ankle. I thought nothing of it, but soon afterwards severe itching pustules arose, and Bent-Axe saw me bathing the inflamed parts at a streamlet in the evening.

Big-Wind noticed my look of dismay and hesitation, and demanded an immediate explanation. I related the circumstance and was corroborated by Lolóma; but the priest examined the

marks on my leg, and pronounced it a well-defined case of leprosy. It was determined that I should submit to be cured in the Fijian fashion, or that the marriage should not be consummated.

CHAPTER XV.

ORDEAL BY SMOKE.

THE Fijian cure for leprosy is submission to the ordeal by smoke. It is like the old English ordeal by water in cases of suspected witchcraft. If the subject survived the experiment she was no witch ; if she were drowned, as generally happened, she was a witch well got rid of.

Lepers in Fiji are cured or killed by smoke from the wood of the sinu ganga. This tree attains a height of 60ft., and is generally found in mangrove swamps. It bears minute green flowers arranged in catkins. When the tree is pierced, a white milk flows which is burning to the skin. The suspected leper is taken to a small empty house. Having been stripped naked, his body is rubbed all over with green leaves, and then buried in them. A small fire is lighted, and a few pieces of the sinu ganga are laid on it. Soon a thick black smoke begins to ascend. The patient is bound hand and foot, and drawn up over the fire by a rope fastened to his heels, leaving his head some 18in. from the ground, in the midst of the poisonous exhalations. The door is closed, the victim's friends retire to a little distance, while he shouts and screams in the agony caused by the suffocating heat. The unfortunate wretch sometimes faints after a few minutes of this treatment. When the man is considered to be sufficiently smoked, the fire is put out, the slime is scraped from his body, and deep gashes are cut in his flesh with sharpened pearl-oyster shells, until the blood flows freely. He is then taken down and laid on the mats to await

the result, which is sometimes death, and sometimes, strange to say, complete recovery.

I protested vehemently that I was no leper, and Lolóma joined her weeping remonstrances to mine, but without effect. The suspicion was too grave.

"I shall be avenged for this," I cried, as I was hurried away, though I believed my hours were numbered. "I will come with the front of battle and the thunder of Britain, and Bent-Axe shall see if a white man can be tortured with impunity."

"Every man is a wind in his own bay," laughed the savage. "You are not in the land of the white man now, and your words are as idle as the sea-foam. To-morrow's sun will see the fair Lolóma at rest in these arms."

Smarting with rage, I was borne away to a native house, in which preparations for the ordeal I was to be subjected to had been made by the cunning priest and his friend the previous night. I was satisfied that it would not be their fault if I left the chamber alive. Soon the whole room was filled with smoke. I was triced up by the heels with my head dangling over the fire, and my two enemies and their assistants, being unable to bear the fumes any longer, left me. I knew that if possible, Lolóma would contrive my escape, but it took her a long time to divest herself of her gala trappings, in which she could not move, and the demons who plotted my destruction had laid their plans so well that I was in a fair way to be suffocated before a friendly hand could reach me.

The sun had just set when I found myself swinging in the accursed smoke, a prey to reflections which assumed the form of a horrid phantasmagoria, owing to the blood rushing to my head, and the stifling heat of the baleful exhalations. After the lapse of a few seconds I became incapable of clear thought. My brain thumped and bounded, and I shrieked aloud. Once, after terrible struggling, I reached the rope with my hands, and endeavoured to haul myself into an endurable position, but my nerveless fingers lost their hold, and I fell back in a swoon—

an inert mass swinging to and fro in the smoky glare. I must have fainted when I had been suspended two or three minutes, though it seemed as many hours, for I felt as if my head were bursting all the time.

When I recovered consciousness I was lying on the ground in the hut, a few paces from the fire. Lolóma stood by, emptying a pipkin of water over me.

On my way to the place of torture I had learned from the conversation of Shark and Bent-Axe that its locality had been kept secret. Lolóma, watched by her relatives, had great difficulty in getting away until it was thought that sufficient time had elapsed for the ordeal by smoke to be accomplished. Then she tracked my executioners to the house. With her light step and lithe figure she was able to elude them in the gloom, and enter the building through a small aperture in the side, used as a window, and which was only closed by a mat. To cut the rope of sinnet with a bamboo-knife was the work of a moment, and I fell to the ground in her arms.

"Run for your life," were her first words to me as soon as she saw that I had regained consciousness.

I recovered myself quickly. My eyes were blinded and smarting with the smoke, but I snatched up a club which lay on the floor, and ran, as near as I could guess, after the retreating form of the girl through the doorway. Outside the hut a man emerged from the smoke and gloom and seized me by the left shoulder. It was Bent-Axe. With one blow from the club I felled him, and darted up a ravine towards the hills. In an hour's time I was safe in my old cave, where there was some food, for Lolóma and I had kept up the habit of making festival excursions there, and the existence of the bower was still known only to us two.

The trees and shrubs around the entrance to the cave were spangled with a cloud of dancing fireflies, though I had never seen these insects in the locality before. Capturing three or four, I contrived an excellent lantern by placing them in a cocoanut

cup, covering the top with a film of fine masi, through which the light shone. I found that by shaking the bowl violently I could excite these interesting insects to increase the light they emit from the luminous discs on each side of their bodies. Subsequent experience proved to me that with a little sugar-cane for food they would live in captivity for weeks. Furnished with my new-made lamp, I explored at leisure the long aisles and fretted vaults of my picturesque cell, which was beautiful beyond the dreams of architecture.

CHAPTER XVI.

OLD FRIENDS WITH NEW FACES.

IN the course of an hour's time I was rejoined by Lolóma, who told me that any thought of return to the town was out of the question, and that, as search would certainly be made for us, we must gain the protection of another tribe. There was a powerful chief on the coast, she added, to whose family she was vasu, and whose protection she would be sure of if she could once reach his dominions.

We set out in the moonlight, hand in hand, like another Adam and Eve, leaving our garden of Eden behind us, and not feeling very confident in regard to the adventures in store.

As we rambled on in the direction of the coast, Lolóma, whose natural gaiety of heart had returned, prattled of many things, but was often beguiled into silence by the splendour of the firmament. It is not surprising when one calls to mind the wondrous beauty of the calm, cloudless nights in Fiji, and the length of time the natives spend in the open air after the sun has set, that they pay some attention to the Heavenly bodies, and have names for them, and theories in regard to them, though bearing no resemblance to those of Copernicus or Galileo.

I learned from Lolóma's astronomical discourses that when two stars are observed near the moon they are called "the moon's wives;" the moon is therefore a masculine noun, a point which the language does not settle. What with us is superstitiously called the "man-in-the-moon" is by the Fijian spoken of as "The man and his wife." The man is plaiting cocoa-nut fibre into sinnet, while the woman, mallet in hand, is beating out the bark of which she is going to make native cloth. Emblematic this, of the two great industries, for, food excepted, to the Fijian there is nothing like cordage and cloth—the former is used in building houses, lashing canoes, &c., and the latter, if not much used on the person, is valuable property for exchange or barter.

When a star is seen preceding the moon, as is often the case, the Fiji observer would be heard to say, "That star is the tug, towing the moon through the skies." This is not a borrowed figure either, for the Fijian sailors on a large craft will often take small ones in tow.

The Southern Cross is called "Nga," *i.e.*, the "duck constellation." The Fiji imagination sees in this constellation a resemblance to a flying duck. Popular belief says: the two "pointers" are two men; that nearest the cross is a blind man, the other can see. They were both after the duck to throw at it. The blind man threw first, and, as might be expected, missed. Off goes the duck, giving the man who can see, no chance. Our Fiji proverb-maker and moral philosopher has added this good moral lesson to the fable, "Let him that can see throw first." Sometimes the "pointers" are referred to as viz., a slave and a chief. The slave shoots first and misses, thereby greatly disappointing his chief. Moral—"Never precede your superiors." Mothers will sometimes try to quiet their peevish little ones by pointing to the "Nga," in the Southern sky, and saying to "baby," "Look up there at your duck."

Orion and his belt are called Iri, *i.e.*, the "Fan," from their resemblance to a Bau fan. This is said to be the fan of the

great god Dengeh. An accident happened to it once upon a time, when the god had fallen asleep near the fire. The fan dropping out of his hand got burnt on one side ; hence the blank —the apparent absence of stars on one side. Another tale is, that the fan is that of a local god at a place called Nakasaleka, where, it is reported, mosquitoes never bite, for the simple reason, there are none there to bite, and there are none there to bite because the god with his big fan swept them all away.

One of the first stars, or, rather, the first star seen in the evening, is called "Dingodingo," *i.e.*, "One who eats in another's house," because he comes out to shine so close on the heels of day ; in other words he enters into Day's house, when, in fact, he himself belongs to Night. Another meaning of the same word is "the inspector." This star, therefore, is out having a look at things before his companions.

A superstition with regard to comets, says : "Whichever way the flag (*i.e.*, the luminous tail) flies or streams, from that quarter we may expect to hear the news of the death of a great chief."

A fable of the sun's setting says: "A big fish swallows him, but in a little while will cast him up again in the East, *i.e.*, he will rise in the morning. The usual way of saying the "sun has risen" is "the sun has climbed." The Fijian speaks of the sun as still climbing the sky, till he reaches the meridian. After that the expression is, "he goes to his drowning."

An hour before daybreak, which is always the coldest part of the night in Fiji, we took shelter in a thicket, and rested till the sun was well up in the Heavens. We had scarcely any provisions with us, and there was little occasion for that. A piece of sugar-cane, easily carried, and renewable at many places, as we walked along, furnished a sweet and nourishing juice which appeased at once both thirst and hunger.

The heavy dew of tropical countries lies long upon the ground, the valleys are often filled with vapour until several hours after sunrise, and the steamy billows are frequently seen

ascending after the bright glare of the sun has made itself felt severely in exposed places.

As we went on our course, the grass was spangled with mountain dew. The carpets of bright green in the thick glassy glades of the forest glistened. The bosky landscape was for a time half veiled in the thin vapouries of the early morning. Soon the atmosphere became as lucid as crystal, pure as an opal, and a sky of pale turquoise blue, free as yet from the mid-day sheen, lent a softening splendour to the view. Sometimes the eye took in at a glance, orange and lemon trees bending under the weight of their golden spheres, the umbrageous bread fruit with its scolloped and variegated leaves, the green tops of the palm, the tapioca, guava, ginger, turmeric, arrow-root, and croton oil plants, the luscious pineapple, and banks covered with the wild chili, brilliant with a rare combination of colours, and gay with the fresh verdure of eternal spring. Little rivulets glided from the base of one hill to the other, bubbling round grassy knolls, glancing from beneath low tree-fringed rocks, and singing in soft tones of the cool green woods through which they came. Huge cloud-clapped hills rose to a height of 2,000 feet on either hand like a vast natural amphi-theatre, their sides often perforated by peaceful valleys radiating down to the sea, and the crannies and crags of their summits ringing with the sound of the wind.

On the banks of the rivulets were groves of Tahitian chest-nuts, with their grooved trunks and knobby roots, affording a re-freshing shade. After the monotonous grass and isolated screw-pines of the open plain the eye was often refreshed by the varie-gated leaves of the deciduous tavola, which, preparatory to fall-ing off, assumes a variety of tints, in which brown, red, yellow, and scarlet are the most prominent. The balsamic odours of fragrant shrubs accompanied us on our way, and our road was tapestried with ferns and flowers, the graceful form of the wild plantain giving dignity to the landscape. The forest silence was broken only by the rustling of the leaves and the chattering of

the cicadæ, and we saw no living object save that indicated by the occasional flash of a bright-winged parrakeet as it flew from tree to tree, startled by our approach. Gaining an eminence, the sedgy hollows below seemed covered with a veil of vapoury tissue.

Late in the afternoon we rested in a clump of sago palms on the verge of a pretty waterfall descending like a rainbow flash in a wildly romantic mountain gorge, above which towered a conical rock of great height. The approach was through tangled masses of diverse greenery which almost shut out the sunlight from this fairy dell. The water fell some 20ft. in a triple cascade down into a transparent pool formed in a rocky bed, and the three little jets there uniting made two more similar leaps to add their small volume to a pebbly brook which flowed on to the coast. As we sat in the shade of over-arching boughs, munching bananas and sugar-cane, and listening to the music of the waterfall, we were startled for a moment by a sudden splash, which resounded in the solemn stillness of the place. It was only a large shaddock, grown too heavy for its stem to bear, dropping into the stream.

Of all the flowers that gemmed the mead there were none more fair than Lolóma. Her rounded limbs, unmarked by vein or muscle, the small hand, and well-kept nails of her tapering fingers, bore testimony to the life of ease she led. Her complexion, the tender peach colour which lingers in the western sky for awhile after the disappearance of the great luminary, was in itself a proof that she had been carefully guarded from the sun. Her short but pliant neck, gently swelling shoulders, and moderately slender waist, her well-shaped feet with slightly-spreading toes, and her frank laughing eyes which knew no doubt, made her a fit subject for an artist. How piquantly she poised as she lingered on some grassy knoll, her small head resting on the neck buoyant as a flower on its stem! Replace her chaplet of dewy blooms by a crescent diadem, her simple liku by a light classical tunic, and there is the chaste huntress of ancient fable,

of a darker hue, lacking only the thinness of the nose, the longer neck, the fuller eyes, and the compressed toes of the Grecian ideal. Vigorous in youthful blooming beauty, the unadorned charm of her flowing figure was a lovelier vesture than that of the lilies of the field. Full of passionate and impulsive affections, the soft smile of the south now played on her sun-kissed face, partly disclosing twin rows of fairy pearl.

We rioted in the mere physical enjoyment of life. We were happy with the happiness of the child who neither questions the wisdom of the moment, nor its hereafter. Her easy, unstudied abandonment, gave to Lolóma the grace of a fawn. It was enough for me in those idle moments to watch the shadows play on her soft wanton limbs, or to listen to her merry rippling laugh, showing her teeth white as the core of the fresh bread fruit, as she told some romantic or humourous story learnt in the village.

Sometimes the forest seemed an enchanted garden, in which we were encanopied by a chaos of creepers which threw their garlands of gay flowers over all, adorning the scene with the varying enchantments of color. The primeval orchard was hung with luminous fruits like those stolen from Aladdin's garden, and a curious dreamy golden hue rested on leaf and bough. From elevated spots we could see valley opening into valley in oft repeated succession; and beyond, the ocean, studded with islands, whose outlying reefs carded the waters into foam, while in the sky was reflected the soft blue of the sea.

We went on through dell and dingle, where intercepting boughs made sunny chequers on the green sward; on through mountain passes, where miniature cascades shook their loosened silver in the sun; on through thickets of flags and bamboos; and on through wide-reaching seas of verdure, till at last we sighted, from easy walking distance, the heaving ocean, flecked with constantly changing cloud-shadows, and glistening with the reflected radiance of the westering sun.

Casting her eye along the coast line, Lolóma declared that she

saw the chief town of the tribe to which she was vasu, though I could discern nothing but tree-tops. The name of the town, she said, was Ramáka, which means, "shining from a distance," and its chief was the great Waikatakata whom she had visited three years previously.

I remembered the name Waikatakata. It was Hot-Water, whose people wished to make a hash of me, and from whom I had escaped in so marvellous a way, leaving my two companions, as I believed, to a terrible death. I knew, however, that on introducing myself as the husband of Lolóma, we should both be received with the honours due to vasus, and that the past would be entirely forgotten.

We made the shore line some two miles from the town. The sand was still luminous with the ebbed tide, and strewn with shells in glittering profusion. In one place these spoils of the ocean, were collected in a huge bank. When stirred with a stick, the shells ran down in rainbow streams. Lolóma gathered enough of vari-colored pieces for a new necklace, and I secured a magnificent orange cowrie, as a present for Waikatakata. As we threw ourselves down among the sea-born treasures of scarlet and gold, and yellow and saffron, which made a gorgeous mosaic pavement on the white sand, Lolóma's shapely hands idly played with the brillant shells, and a shade of sadness stole over her at the thought that we should soon be among strangers.

Towards evening we reached the outskirts of the town and intercepted a young slave, who told us that two white men were living with the chief, but he either could not or would not give us any particulars in regard to them. Could it be that an English ship had called there since the wreck of the Molly Asthore, and that I had missed the opportunity of returning to civilisation? Even if it were so, I felt at the moment that I hardly regretted it.

Our approach was duly heralded, and fitting preparations were made for the reception of the vasus. Once more I stood in the

square fronting the chief's house, where a year ago I had lain, bound hand and foot, and expecting immediate death. I thought of my unhappy companions, cut off in the prime of life, of the vile use to which their bodies had been converted, and of the probability that their friends and relatives would never learn their fate. At that moment what I took for two singularly light colored natives, wearing the ordinary malo, and naked otherwise, approached me.

"By all that's wonderful," said one of them.

"Jeerusalem! Tom Whimpy, is that you?" shrieked the other.

The recognition was mutual. To my infinite delight I saw before me in perfect health, Jacob Turner and Silas Cobb, the master and mate of the Molly Asthore, whom I had mourned as dead.

They had much to tell me of their adventures among the natives. I gathered from them in subsequent conversations that the body of the man who pursued me so closely after I had burst my fetters, and whom I had killed, was found and buried by his friends, and that the general opinion was that I had either died in the woods or been eaten by the kai tholos, or mountaineers.

The return to life of Turner and Cobb was more wonderful than my escape. It seemed that when they fell under the clubs, having good thick skulls, they were only stunned. On regaining consciousness, the cannibal oven was ready to receive them. They had been stripped, and were just about to be thrust in, when the captain, recalling his previous slight knowledge of the country, remembered the words of the prayer which is said by the priest, before the final act of sacrifice. The man who has used those words is sacred, and must not be eaten. He repeated the brief formula, and taught it to the mate who said it after him. They accordingly escaped death, and were adopted by the tribe, all of whom had behaved well to them since. Hot-Water had from the first desired that the

white men should live, and the success of the *ruse* adopted gave him great pleasure.

As I entered the square with Lolóma and was formally presented to Hot-Water, who said he was glad I had come to join his tribe, I was no longer glared upon by a defiant crowd, but was waited upon by a cringing and obsequious populace. We were received with the homage due to vasus.

Two Matas* were sent to us by the King, holding by either end a mat. They crawled up to us, and having spread the mat, we sat upon it. An official, whose rank was that of an ambassador, now shouted in a high key, the proper greeting, "Sa tiko!" (They sit.) "Sa tiko! Sa tiko! Sa tiko!" repeating the cry with increasing rapidity, and in descending tones for about a dozen times. Having rested long enough to recover breath, the man shouted again, "Sa tawa!" (Inhabited.) This was a compliment implied in the graceful insinuation that the place was empty before our arrival, but that it was now inhabited, the presence of such august personages being in itself security against social retrogression. "Sa tawa! Sa tawa!" was repeated many times quickly. Then half a dozen Matas advanced slowly towards us in sitting posture. When within a few feet of us, they bowed till their beards swept the ground. Rising, and clasping their beards with their hands, they cried, "Sa uru!" (Furled are your sails) "Sa uru! Woi! Woi!" Then they returned to the positions they had formerly occupied near their master.

I made a short speech to the chief, the people clapped their hands several times in the way peculiar to the Fijians, and the ceremony ended. Henceforth, this formal homage having been done us, we were honored guests, and at liberty to do almost as we chose. Such is the power of the vasu lévu, or great privileged.

* Ambassadors.

CHAPTER XVII.

A CANOE VOYAGE.

OUR life in the town of Ramáka was for a time very much as it had been in the valley of Tivóli, except that the inhabitants were of a more active and warlike character, and their amusements were often of a more robust nature, canoe-sailing on the open sea, which was often attended with danger, being especially a favorite pastime. There were also torchlight fishing excursions to the reef at low tide. These sporting parties were full of life and animation, and the women, who played a prominent part in them, found abundant opportunity on these occasions to indulge their taste for gossip and scandal.

After a time, we heard of what was going on in Turtle Town, in the valley of Tivóli, the news coming filtered through intervening tribes. It was known that Lolóma and I had taken up our abode in Ramáka, and it seemed that Bent-Axe, who had great influence with Big-Wind, was determined that war should be made upon our city of refuge. We learned that since our departure from the valley, my rival had not only rigidly abstained from the dance, but had kept the exact half of his great head of hair cropped to remind him of his revenge, and had taken an oath never to drink the milk of the cocoanut out of the shell until he had compassed the death of the papalangi who had robbed him of his bride.

There was a general belief in Ramáka that war was imminent, and the townspeople were desirous of being first in the field. The priest having been consulted, found that war was near at hand, for during the last thunderstorm the lightning split many trees ; and fruit trees, long known as barren, had lately been seen with ripe fruit on them, a phenomenon never heard of before without its having been speedily followed by the beating of the war drums and the clash of arms.

It was well known that there were other white men living at

the little island of Bau, under the protection of Naulivou.* These white men were the first to introduce fire-arms into the country, and already, by virtue of this circumstance, the foundations of the future greatness of the kingdom of Bau had been laid. King Hot-Water was very anxious to obtain the aid of these white gods, or their weapons. Being very desirous of visiting Bau, which was two days sail by canoe from Ramáka, I undertook to accompany Hot-Water to that island, and assist him in the negotiation he had in view. We accordingly set sail one morning in Hot-Water's best double canoe, with seventy natives as a retinue.

A Fijian double canoe is a very wonderful piece of naval architecture. The single canoes are composed of two pieces hollowed out of the trunk of a tree, and joined together in the centre with marvellous exactness and security, considering the roughness of the Fijians' tools, and that they have nothing stronger than sinnet to bind the wood with. The small single canoes, some of which are only 10 feet or 12 feet long, are propelled by sculling, but the large ones carry an immense mat sail. A double canoe is built by placing two large single canoes side by side, and bridging over the middle third of the hulk with a deck twice its own width, and raised on a deep plank built edgeways on each gunwale. The single canoe is balanced by a wooden frame or outrigger on one side, nearly as broad as the deck. All between the edge of the deck and the outrigger is open. The projecting ends of the canoe are boxed up, but the water washes in in the centre, and it is necessary when at sea to be constantly baling.

In large canoes there is a house built on deck, with a sloping roof, under which the chief and the women of the party seek shelter in bad weather. The mat sail, which is very large in proportion to the canoe, is shaped something like a leg of mutton. It is hoisted on a mast by means of ropes, and when it is taken in, the mast comes down with it, and is laid hori-

* Grandfather of the late ex-King Thakombau.

zontally on the deck. The mast is stepped in a chock at one end of the deck, and in order to 'bout ship it is necessary to unstep it and carry it to the other end, for the canoes cannot turn round. This is a very awkward arrangement, and men are often knocked overboard in unstepping the mast and attempting to carry it on their shoulders. If the man who has charge of the sheet does not slack away at once, when a sudden gust of wind takes the sail, the thama, or outrigger, is raised in the air, and the canoe capsizes; and unless the steersmen are careful to keep the sail on the weather side, the canoe will be swamped by the wind driving the sail against the mast, and forcing the outrigger under the water. The canoe is steered by a long oar, and when the sail is not up the vessel is propelled by vertical sculling, two men standing at one end of the deck and two at the other, throwing the full weight of their bodies on the sculls in a swinging motion from side to side.

The extreme length of one of these canoes is about 100 feet. A canoe that length would have a deck 46 feet long and 20 feet wide. The mast woul be 62 feet high, the height from the keel to the house top 14 feet, and the draught of water 2 feet. Such a canoe would carry 100 persons and several tons of goods. The best of these canoes under a stiff breeze will travel over 10 miles an hour.

The construction of a canoe 60ft. or 70ft. long, occupies several years, and the completion of one is the occasion of great public rejoicings. It was the custom to launch new canoes upon the bodies of men used as rollers, and at every place which they visited upon their first voyage, fresh sacrifices took place, the victims being always eaten. The canoe builders are an hereditary caste, called "king's carpenters." These canoes, from their light draught of water, are well adapted to insular navigation, but they are not safe, for if a strong wind or heavy sea should suddenly arise, they become unmanageable, and are swamped. The natives never put to sea in them in bad weather, but they are often overtaken by it, and when out of swimming distance of the land, are drowned.

The little canoes used for inside reef passages and on the rivers, are extremely dangerous. The smallest jerk is sufficient to upset them. They do not sink, however, when this occurs, and the natives will sometimes, while supporting themselves in the water, bail a canoe out and right it. The duties in connection with the sailing of a canoe are not performed in a perfunctory manner. The sail is raised with a great shout; every manœuvre is executed with an accompaniment of laughter and singing, varied by playful addresses to the wind, while the scullers are also referred to in frequent expressions of thanks for their labours. Everyone exerts himself to make the whole affair a pleasure jaunt, and the labour is very much lightened by the jocoseness and good humour with which all the work is done.

We left the shore of Viti Lévu with a light breeze on a mildly ruffled sea. As the canoe, named the Marama, or Lady, gently made her liquid way, fresh headlands or islets came into view, and as we glided through the soft sunlight, we seemed to form a part of some magnificent mirage of a painter's dream.

The Fijian sailors, like those of other countries, have their superstitions. When there is a calm they whistle to the wind, or say sweet things to it, using every art of verbal cajolery to lure it to their craft. The shark is one of their gods. By every sailor tribe he is regarded as a deadly enemy, and extraordinary efforts are made to propitiate him when at sea. When sailing in their canoes the people often throw him roots of kava, and make all sorts of covenants with him, promising that if they only get on shore again alive and well, they will treat him to a feast of fat things, and always be willing to give him the best they have without stint. With these and other fair promises, they comfort one another in times of danger, hoping all the while that their canoe may outride the storm; but if it should not, that the shark-god may have no power to touch them when swimming to land. The savage prowler of the deep is, however, but seldom satisfied with prayers, promises, or gifts from

his fearing, and therefore worshipping, children, many of whom on their way to Hades, pass yearly through his horrible jaws. At certain seasons he is said to be more than usually wrathful and voracious. This is perhaps when tribes of smaller fish on which he loves to prey, frequent the bays, harbours, and rivers of the islands. At these times many natives are afraid to bathe in the sea till the shark's priests have declared his anger to have cooled down. There are many wild traditions about this god, one of which is that should the king of the sharks, who is the greatest god among them, unfortunately happen to be near when a canoe is capsized, he will swallow the whole lot—men, ropes, paddles, oars, mast, spars, and canoe! "So," says a priest, who may happen to be a passenger in a canoe that as yet is only in danger of capsizing, "Be very careful my brave tars, be very careful!" As he watches the labouring craft, he continues—"Bale away, boys! Stand by the sheet! Luff, luff! Steady! Be men! It is for your lives! Ah, that's the way! Bravo! Bravo! Your wives and children are at home, looking for your return! The shark, the god of sharks is at hand!"

Various portions of the ocean are consecrated like the most sacred places on shore, and the greatest possible marks of respect are shown to the spirits of such waters by all sea-going people when sailing near or over them. When passing over these marine spirit abodes, the sailor must remove his turban, neck ornaments, and armlets, take his comb and "head-scratcher" out of his big head of hair, wash the paint from his face, give the groan or grunt of respect as to a high chief, and in every other way, however high his own rank may happen to be, make himself in all things of no account.

Nearing the capital of Naulivou's kingdom, an exquisite panorama unfolded itself to our view. We were in the magic circle of a fairy ring of islands. The curious illusion of the mirage fell upon the scene. Headlands basked and glittered in the distance; lofty mountain cones hung in the air with their

inverted images reflected below; sunny peaks were now draped with opalescent clouds, now flushed with purpling red, as we entered the realms of the enchanted land. It was a brilliantly radiating spectacle, seen through an undulating curtain of rosy muslin.

Our voyage to Bau was a highly successful one. Naulivou received us graciously, and promised a contingent of warriors with muskets for Turner, Cobb, and myself. Among the Europeans the old king had living with him, were Charles Savage, a Swedish sailor, who, having been wrecked in an American brig, was the first white man who landed in Fiji. Three of the others were convicts who had escaped in an open boat from New South Wales, and there were two English sailors who had run away from trading ships. They told me that an occasional sandalwood trafficker visited Bau, and that I should certainly before long get the opportunity of a passage to India or China if I wished it; for themselves, they were content to remain in the country. After a week's feasting, Hot-Water set sail again for his home on the coast of Viti Lévu, it being understood that a party lent by our allies would follow in a few days.

The return voyage was begun under the most auspicious circumstances. Our huge mat sail was hoisted in the early morning. The lightly clouded East was marked with great crimson bars. Though there was wind enough to move our craft, the water was so smooth that every object was reflected in sharp outline, while the horizon glittered like a band of steel. Then the equable trade wind reached us, corrugating the sea with furrows as regular as those of a ploughed field. Not a breath seemed to be lost on the sensitive surface. This continued until we were in sight of Ramáka again.

Quite suddenly the whole aspect changed. Heavy dark clouds, charged with electricity, massed in mountainous folds to windward, a violent tropical squall bore down upon us, and the humid air became oppressively stifling. The sail was

lowered with great difficulty before the full force of the wind reached us, but the deck-house had been loosened, and the canoe, which had been severely strained, labored helplessly in a cauldron-like sea, and was drifting at the mercy of the waves.

We were gradually nearing the land, however, and the water must get smooth as we progressed. In a short time the squall had passed, the dark pall was lifted from the Heavens, and the native sailors, who had been greatly alarmed, had begun to assume their wonted alacrity, when a sharp cry of terror from the bows of the canoe attracted the attention of all to that quarter. Two waterspouts, which seemed to be rapidly approaching us, were in full view. Many of the natives threw themselves down, covered their faces with their hands, and appeared to give up all hope.

The movement of these terrible columns was so rapid that there seemed to be no chance of escape. Waterspouts are formed by the sucking up of the foam of the waves by an ærial eddy, the water ascending with a whirling motion. Of the two magnificent objects before us, one seemed like a pillar supporting the clouds, and the other like an inverted cone connected with the clouds. The water at the base was terribly agitated. The aqueous cylinders appeared to be enveloped in a mist, caused by the action of the wind on the small particles of water, but the spiral twisting of the interior could be vaguely seen, and the action of these bodies was accompanied by a tempestuous sound which was awe-inspiring.

King Hot-Water disdained to show any fear of the monstrous apparition, but calmly divested himself of his personal adornments, metaphorically sat in sackcloth and ashes, and devoutly made the tama to his God. The crew were prostrate with terror. As the waterspouts approached, the snow-white flashes of foam became blinding. I abandoned all hope, and prepared myself for the end with such calmness as I could command. Casting a last shuddering glance towards the impending horror, I saw that by a slight change in their course, directed by the

shifting wind, they would not overwhelm us. But already I felt the throbbing pulsation they imparted to the sea, and two great waves, which they raised in their passage by our bows, sundered the timbers of the ill-fated Marama. In a moment the whole company, men, women, and children, numbering 70 in all, were struggling in the cruel sea.

The turbulence of the waters soon subsided, and in a short time the ship-wrecked party had the advantage of a comparatively smooth sea. The disaster had not been observed at Ramáka, and the wrecked canoe-load had no hope of reaching their homes except by swimming. The distance being only six miles, this was easy of accomplishment by the natives, but that which made the position so alarming was the well-known fact that this particular locality was infested by numbers of sharks of the most ravenous kind, against whose attacks the unhappy people knew they could not hope successfully to cope.

The King's companions had no great love for him, but they feared him and his Government, and they knew that it would be as well to be eaten by a shark as to return home without him. The 69 unfortunates, including the women and children, accordingly formed themselves into a circle, having a diameter of about 60ft., round the King and myself, whom they regarded with superstitious reverence. As they swam, they shouted and splashed with their feet, until they produced the miniature resemblance of an annular reef endowed with locomotive powers. The King occupied the central space, and swam serenely on, in that diagonal, half-sitting posture in which Polynesians can get so comfortably through the water. I was a good swimmer, but had no hope of being able to support myself till we reached the shore. Hot-Water, however, was quite at his ease, and he told me to rest on his shoulder whenever I felt tired.

The shark is a timid creature in some respects, and His Majesty knew that no such monster would break through the charmed ring unless it should be one with tattoo marks on its belly, when it would be a god come to console him in his trouble,

and show him an easier mode of deliverance. Feeling that he was of divine origin himself, it was only natural to his mind that some such incident should occur, and he thought that, whatever might happen to his attendants, the divinity which hedged him would preserve him at all hazards.

The villainous footpads of the sea, which give an especial terror to Polynesian waters, were not long in making their appearance. When the first straight back-fin appeared above the water, gliding steadily on, a howl of terror went up from the devoted band which surrounded the royal personage.

The sharks came prowling round, one or two at a time, occasionally thrusting out of the water their great brown shagreened heads, without daring to touch the ring. When they received a large accession of numbers and became bolder, they darted about, sometimes coming close up and then retreating, as though making a deliberate selection of some particular victim. Then they lingered near to the living fence, rubbing their cold, horny noses against the bare bodies of the Fijians, who yelled woefully, beseeching Dakuwaqa, their Neptune, to protect them. One of the children was the first sacrifice offered for the lives of the king and his white friend.

The taste of the blood which floated on the water at once aroused the dormant appetites of the sharks, and they made a terrific onslaught, never daring, however, to penetrate the circle. Their horrid rows of saw teeth now gleamed frequently in the sun, as they turned on their sides to bite. Some of the men were armed with bamboo knives, and fought boldly. When a shark turned on his side to make a good mouthful, these often gave him a fatal stab; but they were no match for an enemy so numerous and so insidious in their mode of attack.

The women and children were the first links missed from the chain. Then men began to drop out, but those who remained, constantly closed up, and preserved an unbroken circle round us, the onward motion never being stayed.

The sharks now surrounded the whole party, and feasted pretty

much at will. When a man fell out, there was a lull in the attack until his body was devoured. But the appetites of these rapacious fishes seemed to grow by what they fed on. Many of the men who still swam on had lost a leg or an arm. The foam raised in beating the water to scare the sharks from penetrating the protecting band, was crimson with blood.

To those who now began to notice the strange appearance from the shore, however, the water had only that rose colour which it has in the tropics when thrown up between the sunlight and the spectator, and little attention was paid to a disturbance which might have been caused by a shoal of fish. Meanwhile the unhappy swimmers were in sight of their homes. They could see the stilted roots of the mangroves skirting their shores, the stony beach, the houses in the town, and the temples on the rising ground. To not a few of them it was a farewell glance. The remorseless monsters who had them at their command, ceased not their attentions, and with a despairing cry many poor fellows continued falling out of their places, notwithstanding their assiduity in shouting the tama to their god.

The chain was at length reduced to very narrow dimensions. It consisted of only 30 men, and Hot-Water was less easy in his mind than he had been, for there was another mile of swimming to be done before that blood-red circle could tinge the waters which rippled on the shores of Ramáka.

Assuming an upright position in the water, the King took off his turban. The long thin folds of fine white tapa were floated by the wind in the direction of the island. The waving cloth was seen, and at the same time the heads of the men in the water were discerned. A small canoe was speedily manned, and the 30 shipwrecked mariners with their chief and myself were taken on board and landed in safety.

The custom of the loloku was duly observed to propitiate the manes of the departed sailors. That night was one of wailing in Ramáka, for the households already desolated had each to give up a life in honour of the dead.

Had I been among the drowned, Lolóma would have been strangled in order that her spirit might accompany mine in the the next world, where, according to the Fijian belief, it would have a variety of experiences in the various "circles" of Hades.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE TEMPLE IS SET IN ORDER.

IN the course of a few months, the interval having been employed in the valley of Tivóli in making preparations for war, ambassadors were received from King Big-Wind, at the instigation of Bent Axe, demanding the restoration of Lolóma and myself. The reply was an emphatic refusal, Hot-Water being desirous of keeping all the white men who came within his influence about him; and it was understood on both sides that war was inevitable.

The time was now one of stirring interest to all the tribes under the dominion of Hot-Water. Every village and hamlet was on the move. The great chieftains and their warriors of all ranks, with blackened faces and ornamented clubs and spears, were in readiness to march for the enemy's land. Their last offerings to the gods must, however, be first presented, and words of encouragement and blessing be received in return from the soothsaying and shaking priests.

The old temple of Ramáka was rebuilt to propitiate the deities. The frames of this spirit-house were composed of rough hardwood posts, chopped from the vesi, one of the most sacred trees in cannibal mythology. The rafters were made of lighter wood or bamboos, and the walls were reed-work. The roof was thatched with long grass; the interior was lined with a beautiful net of sinnet-work.

There were some singular ceremonies in connection with the erection of the temple, which only occupied a few days. When

everything was ready for planting the first post, or, as we should say, "laying the foundation stone," the priest took a bunch of cocoanuts, and shook them lustily over each hole that had been dug for the principal posts or pillars of the building. This shaking loosened some of the riper nuts from the stalk. The first hole into which a nut dropped was chosen for the first, or foundation post, which was thenceforward called the "god-pillar," and the part of the temple where it stood was "holy ground"—a charmed spot, where the oracle delighted to dwell, and the priest to sleep and dream. It was in truth his *sanctum sanctorum*. There was a tradition in the tribe that on the erection of the first temple in Ramáka, living human bodies were put into the holes with the posts, and buried with them. It was a common practice to kill men for the occasion, and place them standing on their feet in the holes with the temple pillars.

When the edifice was ready for "opening," or "consecration," a fast of four days was proclaimed and strictly observed. While it lasted, work of every description, and conversation, as well as eating and drinking, were tabooed, and the large town remained as still and silent as death. At the end of the fourth day the silence was broken by the blast of trumpets and the roll of drums; the people burst forth from their houses as from so many graves, and gave themselves up to the wildest revelry. The night was kept awake with noise. The disturbed parrots in the trees hard by, joined in the chaos of sounds, which lasted till dawn, when, suddenly, the scene changed to one of hearty industry in preparing puddings, killing pigs, and making and heating ovens for a great feast. Four days of fasting had whetted the people's appetites; their feelings may, therefore, be imagined, when they sat down to a dinner consisting of 200 pigs, and untold quantities of yams, taro, vegetable puddings, bananas, cocoanuts, &c.

The temple furniture was as sacred as the temple itself. The edifice contained a stone dressed up in white native cloth, on which libations were poured. A small "wooden-face," or

idol, a trumpet shell or two, some cups and bowls for the priest's own use in kava-drinking,—a few wooden forks for eating human flesh with,—a rack for spears and clubs, which had taken part in some horrible tragedy, and, being defiled with blood, were regarded as god-favored arms, against which no enemy would be able to stand,—some turmeric and cocoanut-oil, a few turbans, smoked and oiled,—a string or two of white cowrie shells,—a couple of wooden pillows, some ornamental mats on the floor, two or three bundles of new mats on the beams overhead for future use, and a few bleached skulls, together with a long strip of white native cloth, reaching from the roof to the floor, forming the path down which the god passes to enter the priest, concluded the inventory of the sacred utensils and trappings of the new temple.

Simple as were the temple, its furniture, and all its surroundings, the pretensions of the place and its inhabitant (the priest, Katonivére, which means basket for plots, or box of tricks) were by no means of a character in keeping. You could not become acquainted with the priest, whose scheming heart was a bottomless deep, or with the laws and superstitions of his abode, without feeling that you had got within the circle of darkness and mystery, hypocrisy, and spiritual jugglery.

Many were the prohibitions that guarded the place. No native dared to enter with his turban on. Women and children were not admitted. It was not a place for worshipping assemblies, and those who came on religious business with the priest sat down on the grass plot outside. No eating was permitted within the walls, except to the priest and a favored few. No animal that was believed to be the shrine* of a god worshipped by any person serving the temple, was accepted as an offering. On entering, the visitor had to pass the threshold on his hands and knees, to show his respect for the place, its priest, and its god. If repairs were ordered, an offering of food

*Some Fijian gods dwell in objects both animate and inanimate, which, when so occupied, are called the shrine of the god.

was required by the gods before the workmen could begin their work. If anyone passing the temple pointed at it, if children played in front of it, if, in a word, anything at all was done which the priest had said was not to be done, the offender or offenders were sure to be punished sooner or later by cruel anathemas. The ban of the angry priest would rest upon the objects of his displeasure, not unfrequently till it had wrought its work of death.

One afternoon the bulk of the warrior bands were seated on and around the lawn in front of their god's house. The usual gifts of food and whale's teeth were presented and accepted according to the formal custom, and short speeches were made both by petitioners and petitioned. The war being a popular one, the priest's address and invocation, offered in the same breath, were favourable and inspiriting to the soldiers.

Then the yangona or kava-drinking party was formed. The liquor being ready, the chief men gathered round to pay their respects to the spiritual powers, and to hear from the old man representing those powers, the various oracular sayings he had to deliver, the influence of all of which on the warrior was to make him sleep soundly on that, his last night at home, and dream of fighting and victory, of a safe and glorious return to his wives and children; of the pleasure of eating the unholy meal of human flesh, and, having washed the paint, and sweat, and dust of battle from his face, of the peaceful and still more victorious work of planting yams and sugar cane.

The first bowl of kava was handed to the priest—Box of-Tricks—that venerable and wily man, who had been oiled up for the occasion. The drink was quaffed by him to the last drop, and the vessel was returned to the cup-bearer amidst a great clapping of hands. Now came the moment of chief interest in listening to the deliverance of the people's "guide, philosopher, and friend."

With a whining, sing-song, and rapid utterance, old Box-of-Tricks spoke as follows:—"In the presence of our great chiefs,

the chiefs of the land, the 'Eyes-of-the-Country,' the chiefs of tribes, the chiefs of towns great and small, in the presence of the 'Strength-of-the-Country,' the 'Fruit-of-the-Screwpine,' let me be bold to speak. Our land is in evil plight, my chiefs! We are at war with our enemies! You are going to fight! Go! Club the impudent foe and burn his towns! May the 'Teeth-of-the-Yangona' fight bravely, and all come back alive. May none of them be clubbed! May every arrow of the enemy fly wide of the mark! May the young men live and be strong to kill in the battle! May they beat back all our foes, spoil all their plots, and fill our ovens with flesh that the gods may have plenty to eat, and once more bring us peace and rest."

Here, though somewhat exhausted by this mental effort, yet proceeding more rapidly than ever, and speaking as if he were the god he represented, the old priest, after referring to the offerings made and accepted, concluded with the cheering words :—"Hereby is my wrath appeased. I will no longer be angry with the Teeth-of-the-Yangona?" At which most gracious announcement the people shouted with remarkable emphasis "Mana endeena!" wonderful and true!

After a few more formalities, and a little more drinking, the ceremony concluded, and stern faces relaxed.

The "Eyes-of-the-Country" named by the priest are the ambassadors, who, as their name suggests, are supposed to be wide awake enough to see everything going on in and out of the land. They are universal spies, the bearers of royal messages to other tribes, clever mischief makers, and generally notorious for negotiating political affairs in any way but according to their instructions. In all fairness, however, it must be added that they were without doubt as a class, the first and only genuine orators in Cannibal-land. Three other poetical expressions used by Box-of-Tricks deserve a passing notice. They are the Teeth-of-the-Yangona," the "Fruit-of-the-Screw-Pine," and the "Strength-of-the-Country." These figures of speech mean the strong young men, and experienced warriors going forth in the

conscious pride and might of their youth and manhood's prime, to meet the foe. Young men are employed to masticate the kava-root, so that when put into water it may the more readily give out its intoxicating juices. These young men are therefore called the "Teeth-of-the-Yangona," or the "kava-root chewers." The best portion of the army is spoken of as the "Fruit-of-the-Screw-Pine" or Pandanus,—the most sacred and popular tree in the mythologies of Fiji. The fruit when ripe resembles the pine-apple, but is of a deeper and richer colour. Used by our cannibal orator, it represented the ripeness of manly strength, and was another name for the men whom he also called the "Strength-of-the-Land," or as we should say, the "Flower of the Army." The "plenty of flesh to eat" referred to, meant human flesh, the word used having no other signification.

CHAPTER XIX.

GRIM-VISAGED WAR.

AT length the day of conflict arrived. The enemy had been seen clustering on the heights, two miles distant from Ramáka, the bolebole or public review of the soldiers had been held, and Hot-Water's forces marched forth, led by their chief, redolent of oil, turmeric, and sandalwood preparations, and his great head of hair glistening like dew in the sunlight. The priest bore before the host a sacred stone, which was said to have fallen from the sky, and was venerated and feared as a representative of the God of War. Hot-Water delivered a spirit-stirring harangue to his troops, in which he bid them roll on like the multitudinous sea, break on the enemy with the roar and irresistible force of ocean waves, and drive them to their fastnesses like the receding tide.

The head-dresses were of a most elaborate and grotesque kind.

The Fijians exhaust their ingenuity in arranging striking coiffures. Sometimes the hair was black, sometimes white with lime obtained from the coral, or powdered ashes of the bread-fruit leaf, and sometimes marked with different shades of red. Many had their hair frizzed out with a comb till it resembled a wig 8 or 9 inches thick, being of an equal height at the top, back, and sides. I noticed one man with whitened hair from which black tufts arose in regular order. Another appeared to be enveloped in a thick hood. A third presented a wall-like front a few inches back from his forehead, the carving appearing to have been done on a solid substance. A fourth wore his hair in corded tassels behind; the hirsute ornamentation of a fifth took the form of tiers arranged with geometrical accuracy, while a sixth presented alternate cones and flat spaces. In short, the variety of styles was infinite, and these dandies were as vain of the figure they cut as any ball-room *belle*. There were faces painted in stripes, circles, and spots; faces like clowns, and faces with only a brilliantly red nose glaring from a wide surface of jet black. To produce these effects the seeds of the vermilion tree, charcoal, fungus, and coral lime are used. When the lime has been washed off, the hair is left a set tawny colour.

Big-Wind must have had under his command altogether 2,000 men, but they were not so well skilled in war as the redoubtable foes they had to meet. Hot-Water's army did not number more than 1,500 effectives, but they had a tower of strength in their three white men, Turner, Cobb, and myself, each armed with a brown bess and 12 rounds of ammunition.

As we advanced up hill I thought of the following words which the warriors chanted the previous evening as a stimulus to the brave, and in ridicule of renegades:

Where is he our fearless hero,
He who led us forth so bravely?
Fall'n in battle, fall'n in charging,
Fall'n and dragged away to vict'ry.
Vict'ry found in burning oven!
Where is he, the coward turncoat?
He who ran at sight of foeman!

Ran ere ever glanced an arrow!
Ran with glee to tell his clansmen
How he bravely brought the message,
Bravely turned his back on fighting!

The first engagement took place on the wooded slope of a hill. Big-Wind's picked men descended boldly from the crest to the attack. None of the combatants carried either shield or target. With their athletic figures and polished weapons glinting in the sun, they made an imposing and formidable appearance. Clubs were always directed against heads, and spears against the body. The conch-shell sounded the onset, and soon the wood rang with the clash of these lustily wielded weapons. Spears armed with the thorns of the sting-ray, were burst into shivers up to the very grasp, and sharp-edged clubs, sometimes thrown, and sometimes used like a battle-axe, were occasionally buried fast in the skulls at which they were aimed. I more than once distinguished the exquisitely symmetrical form of Big-Wind, his turban of white masi floating in the wind as he laid about him in the eddy and whirl of the fight, the markings on his painted skin shining like diamonds embossed upon a black velvet ground. I also saw Bent-Axe leading another wing of the attacking party in all the splendour of savage raiment, and with the habitual look of dissolute audacity on his ill-favoured visage.

The battle raged fiercely and without advantage to either side. A shout of exultation from the Tivóli people told us that they had been the first to secure a body, which was immediately tied with sinnet and carried off on a pole rove through the corpse. The obtaining of the first offering for the temple, was considered a good omen for Big-Wind. Believing that the tide of fortune was turning against him, Hot-Water called upon the white men to bring their foreign weapons into play.

The rattle of musketry was heard in the hills of Viti Lévu for the first time. The people saw the flash, heard the report, and soon learned that a terrible messenger of death was among

them. Recognising me, they shouted that the Child of the Hurricane was a god after all, and that it was useless to attempt to prevail against the enemy for whom he fought.

Bent-Axe, the King's Lieutenant, was furious when he found his soldiers deserting him. He reminded them that he was born in the daytime, and was therefore a great warrior; and, moreover, that he was invulnerable, not only against white men, but against gods, being the possessor of god-armour.

It will be as well to explain here that one of the most wonderful elfin tribes of Cannibal-land is a marine tribe, remarkable for two things—its population, which defies arithmetic, and the depth of mystery, which, as the Fijian imagines, inwraps it. Its people are a sort of demi-gods, known in many places as "Children of Water," or "Water Babies." Some of the poets and legend-mongers speak of them as the "People of the Plain," and "God-soldiers," *i.e.*, soldiers, who, on great occasions, are specially favoured by the gods, and in their turn are able to help landsmen in their battles with their own species. They are believed to be more nearly related to gods than men; and the former, in consequence of that nearer relationship, have made them war-proof—living fortifications in fact—against which no weapon whatever can prevail. From this belief arose numbers of professional men who gave it forth to the world that they likewise were favoured with this close connexion with the gods, and had thereby gained possession of the grand secret by which any hero going out to meet his foe, might be so clothed with "god-armour," as to cause arrows to glance aside, clubs to fall harmlessly, and spears to lose their piercing power.

Turner and Cobb blazed away, and the enemy rapidly melted in presence of the sulphurous charm. Bent-Axe, however, advanced, club in hand, to the spot where I stood, perfectly drunk with passion; his heavy brow was corrugated with anger; his large nostrils were distended, and fairly smoking; his eyeballs blazed red like a lighted coal when blown upon; and his foam-covered mouth wore a murderous and contemptuous grin.

I raised my musket, and called on him to surrender.

"When the shell of the giant-oyster shall have perished by reason of years, still will my hatred of you be hot," roared the savage.

"The white man," said I "is merciful. He knows his power, but does not wish to exercise it."

"You are like the kaka,"* tauntingly responded Bent-Axe, "you only speak to shout your own name."

He swung his massive club aloft to fell me, and I discharged my weapon at his breast. When the smoke cleared away, the savage was gone, but his club lay at my feet, and it was stained with blood.

Big-Wind withdrew his forces behind a rampart of brushwood six feet thick, and his men, with renewed courage, waving long streamers from the battlements, shouted defiance to the foe. Under the direction of Hot-Water, a huge fascine of boughs and dried leaves tied together with sinnet, was constructed. His soldiers rolled it before them in the complete security of its shelter. When it reached the rampart, a light was applied. The fascine burst into flames, and in a few minutes the brushwood fence had disappeared with it. A volley from the white mens' muskets completed the discomfiture of the enemy.

The fortune of war was all with us. Hot Water's troops followed up their advantage, and a fearful scene of carnage ensued. The women of Ramáka came out to meet the victorious soldiers on their return, laden with hopelessly wounded prisoners and dead bodies. Nameless indignities were put upon the slain, and songs were chanted which will not bear translating.

In the impromptu triumphal chants, allusion was made to the men who had most distinguished themselves in the contest. I heard frequent reference to myself as the slayer of the redoubtable Bent-Axe, and also to the might of the white man's matchless arms.

* The onomatopoetic name for parrot in Fiji.

CHAPTER XX.

THE CANNIBAL BANQUET.

WHAT Homer says of the Cyclops, and Herodotus of the Scythians, and what moreover we are loth to believe of the ancient Britons, must be written against the Fijians as matters of history unmixed with myth or poetic fiction. They were cannibals.

No cup was so highly prized by a Fiji chieftain for drinking the chiefly drink—kava—out of, as that made from a human skull, the value of which would be increased a hundred per cent. by its being the skull of his greatest enemy.

If there is any reason for doubting that the ancient Scots preferred a "ham of herdsman" to a piece of beef, or that Richard Coeur de Lion enjoyed a Saracen's head more than a leg of pork, there is none whatever to doubt that to a Fijian's taste there was nothing so delicious as the flesh of one of his countrymen, the more so if that countryman were in any sense his own or his country's foe. And of the many desirable portions, there was none he so much longed for, or ate with such gusto, as the heart. Query? is it not highly probable that the passion of revenge when at its height of savage success, produces an effect on the conqueror's appetite, whetting it to ungovernable sharpness, and giving it a keener relish for the flesh of the victim than could ever be felt under the influence of other passions? How else can we account for an act like that of Sir Ewan Cameron, who declared the flesh of an English trooper whom he had killed after a desperate struggle, to be the "sweetest morsel he had ever tasted?" or, for the deed of one of the French revolutionists, who ate the heart of the Princess Lamballe? or, for the still more horrible deeds of every day life in Cannibal-land?

Be this as it may, the acts themselves are unquestionable. No war, however insignificant, was ever waged without enemy

eating enemy. The word in general use to express the practice, is a compound of two words, one of which means the "eating," while the other adds to it the idea of reciprocity. The name of the vile thing, therefore, is the "eating-of-one-another," even as by a similar compound the language tells how, in battle, the work of the soldiers is the "killing-of-one-another."

Of the institutions peculiar to Fiji, cannibalism stood at the head. The revolting epithet to which the practice has given rise, has been, and will again be, applied in this work to this country of lovely isles, for the simple reason that no other country on the face of the earth so well deserves it. It would, however, be unfair to argue therefrom that the Fijian race ought in consequence to be placed in the lowest rank of the human family. So far from this being so, they are, when compared with some other uncivilised races not cannibal, a highly civilised people. Cannibalism amongst them is an evidence of that religious fanaticism which originated and perpetuated it, rather than of their own high or low position in the scale of uncivilised nations. It was a part of his religion for the Fijian to be a man-eater, whether his victims were slain in battle, or cast helpless shipwrecks on shore. This was but poor cheer for the experienced and noble swimmer to strike out boldy for dear life. Deprived of his canoe by the cruel storm, he had yet before him many a long furlong of rough sea ; shoals of hungry sharks set on tearing him in pieces ere his feet could reach the strand; and last, and more to be dreaded than tempest, sea or sharks, men like himself, waiting to rob him of the life which, in spite of the leaden weight at his heart, he had struggled so hard to keep. As he wades feebly towards the land, he knows there is no hope, for he sees the smoke curling upwards from the oven that is ready to receive him, and he hears the voices of men coming from behind the bushes to greet him,—to slay and eat him; and he knows them to be impelled to the deed, not alone by a liking for human flesh, but also by the unsparing requirements of an inveterate religious superstition. That this was

even so there is abundant evidence to prove. The names of gods, priests, and temples, as likewise the character and themes of various imprecations, prayers, benedictions, legends, songs, and witnesses of every description, lead to no other conclusion.

The clear connection of Fiji canibalism with religion, discovers its relation to the cannibalism practised by the Goands of India, and the Aborigines of America, who believed that the eating of human flesh was a thing in which the gods delighted. Revenge, approved and even instigated by the gods, was the great motive power which enabled the Fijian to engage in the horrible work with zest and freedom from all conscience-pangs. While, however, revenge was in most instances the father of the thought to kill and eat, it should be borne in mind that in cases of shipwreck, revenge could have little or no part in the business, except in so far as it was mixed up in the belief of the eaters of the shipwrecked ones, which belief taught that the gods had taken revenge for offences committed by the castaway sailors.

It will thus appear that the cannibal of Fiji was rarely guilty of hunting up the innocent and those who never did him any wrong, merely to gratify his appetite for this kind of food. Such cannibalism may have been common enough among the Kookees of India, but was not so with Fijians.

Finally, whatever the immediate or remoter causes of individual acts of cannibalism may have been, this much seems clear, that the strength of the whole evil lay in the religious belief, propagated by the priests, encouraged by the poets, and practised by the chiefs and people, that it was an institution founded and patronized by the gods of Cannibal-land. The Fijian man-eater was taught from early childhood, that the gods would often punish a crime by forsaking the objects of their care, whether on the battle-field or the briny deep, and leaving them in the hands of other and strange gods, who, in war, were those of the enemy, and in shipwreck, those of the tribe on whose shores they were thrown. Everything of an untoward nature that happens to a man is, according to the Fijian's creed,

punishment for some known or unknown sin. It was, therefore, a most binding religious duty for the people to eat what the gods provided, seeing that by so doing they were at most, only willing instruments of punishment in the hands of incensed and dreadful spirits.

If in war the oven was the only grave for the fallen soldier, and in shipwreck the only life-boat for the cast-away sailor, and this, moreover, by order of the gods, we need not be surprised at the countless works of darkness, for which these people, in many things the highest of uncivilised races, have made themselves notorious ; for, what will not men do when goaded on by the irresistible force of religious superstition, and the conscientious belief that their religion not only sanctions, but also demands and sanctifies the deed ?

It was now my lot to be the witness of a cannibal orgie, the abominations of which will never be erased from my memory.

An important preliminary to the feast was the convivial yangona or kava ring, in which the king and the leading chiefs joined. This intoxicating beverage, to which the Fijians are largely addicted, is an infusion of the root of the piper methysticum, which is chewed by young men or girls, and then strained through a handful of hibiscus fibres. A large bowl having been filled, the process being accompanied by some set ceremonies, the cup-bearer in a stooping attitude presented the first cup to the king. His Majesty passed it on to the priest, who poured a few drops as a libation on the sacred stone in his charge, called the Fallen-from-Heaven, which preceded the army in the last engagement.

There remained a large cocoanut bowl nearly full of the liquor, and Box-of-Tricks availed himself of the opportunity to show the young men how well he could quaff the draught without once removing the vessel from his lips. Taking the bowl in his hands he said : " This is the libation to the great temple. Know that the mind of all here is that thy people may live, and that the trees may bear abundant fruit. This is the first offering of

thy children. May our land be established, and may the fish continue to rise up out of the sea. Then shall we live, and all those who plot against us be clubbed."

Raising his voice to a sort of recitative, the priest continued his prayer :

"O ye gods whom now we honor,
Let your minds be undivided.
Give us treasure, life and pleasure.
Let our women and our children
In our houses live and prosper.
Sweep diseases from amongst us.
In the race with ev'ry evil,
Make the distance far between us.
Spare the hands that make your kava,
Spare the feet that carry water. *
Lead our foes astray in fighting,
Lead them where our clubs may fell them.
O ye gods who once our chiefs were,
Break the teeth of evil speakers,
Headlong cast them into ditches ;
Kill our foes, but spare thy servants."

When the priest finished drinking, all the company clapped their hands together quickly in time, ending abruptly with a loud shout, which was caught up by those outside the ring, and was carried to the most distant outskirt of the town.

This part of the ceremony reminded me of the scene in "Hamlet."

"And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
The cannons to the Heavens, the Heavens to earth,
Now the king drinks to Hamlet."

When the King drank, and those next of high rank in their proper order, the same formulas were observed. After each draught, the string of the kava bowl was always thrown towards the man next in rank, whose turn it now was. Each cup, which generally measured a pint and a half, was drained without pausing.

The male portion of the company entered the rara or square, in procession, with spears advanced, and strips of white masi

* The women, who are the drawers of water.

flowing from them like pennons. They were headed by Hot-Water, whose appearance was magnificent. This comely savage was in the flower of his age, and he advanced with the proud step of a conqueror. His body was powdered a glossy jet, saving his face, which was painted in diamond patterns of the deepest red. He wore tortoise-shell armlets; his knees were bossed with colored grasses; his brow was adorned with a frontlet of scarlet cock's feathers fixed on a palm leaf; and there lay on the upper portion of his breast a large boar's tusk suspended from his neck by a cord braided from the ornamental tufts of hair taken from his deadliest foe's head. His brawny shoulder sustained his favorite club, known as "The-Priest-is-Too-Late." His train of native cloth, flowing from his waist, and borne by obsequious pages, was upwards of 100 yards in length. It was carried at the side of the following phalanx, and did not keep the warriors in the front rank more than a few yards apart from him.

Those who followed were in the proper order of precedence according to the laws of Fijian chivalry. First came kings and chiefs of large islands or districts; then chiefs of towns and districts, and ambassadors; next were distinguished warriors of lower birth than those who went before them, together with carpenters and chiefs of the turtle fishermen; then the kai sis or common people, the slaves captured in the war, and whose lives had been spared, bringing up the rear. The gay and glittering procession marched round the square, their heads a sea of waving tapa, and finally squatted on the turf in the form of a semi-circle. All the women in the district, arranged in the order of their rank, sat behind the men, having been waiting for the arrival of the procession. The ground having a slight ascent from the inner point of the semi-circle, the appearance presented was that of a crowded amphiteatre. Hot-Water occupied a post of honor, reclining on a heap of printed tapa, piled along a low platform. I was placed next the King, and drained the kava-bowl after him.

Lolóma sat with the king's favorite wife on an elevated point at the right wing of the company. I was near her as a spectator, taking no part in the martial display. She was radiant with sunny smiles, her dark eyelashes quivering with delight in the spectacle, and her round limbs aglow with youthful blood and passionate life. As the wild barbaric music of conch shells, bamboo pandean pipes, and wooden drums, awoke the echoes in the neighboring hills, I could not help wishing that this were a field of tourney in which all the bravery of the isle were about to contend; that Lolóma was the elected queen of love and beauty, crowning a noble spectacle by her presence, and whose delicate hand would award the palm of conquest; and that the blast of conch shells which now pierced the air with its shrill sound were the bray of challenging trumpets from knights of princely mien, instead of the prelude to the ghastly formulas and the hideous banquet I was about to witness, the thought of which, notwithstanding that I had all a young man's taste for the strange and horrible, filled me with loathing for the people by whom I was surrounded, and made me sick at heart. There was one drop of comfort in the debasing ordeal. Lolóma enjoyed the spectacle with a woman's fondness for display, but she was not a cannibal. No member of her tribe ate human flesh, because the shrine of their god was human. She would take no part in the Saturnalian rites. She would do nothing that would revolt me.

Ovens on a large scale had been prepared. They were from 10 to 12ft. deep, and 60ft. in circumference. These receptacles having been filled with wood, large stones were laid in layers on the fuel, and were covered up until thoroughly heated. Then the joints of the human bodies were placed on the hot stones, and covered with leaves, a layer of earth enclosing all. While the process of cooking was proceeding, green baskets to carry the bokola were plaited; the vegetables to be eaten were boiled in earthen pots, and taro-paste and sauce were prepared.

The steam penetrating the covering of leaves and earth,

showed that the cooking was done. The ovens were formally opened. The Tui Rara, or master of the feast, called out in order of precedence the names of the great personages to whom the meat was to be alloted, and their attendants received at his hands their several portions. When a portion was alloted to a distinguished chief, there was a loud shout from the multitude, followed by an approving clapping of hands. The sub-division of the meat to heads of families was made after the alloted parcels had been received at the hands of the Tui Rara.

There were 20 bodies prepared for the feast, all the seriously wounded prisoners having been killed to add to the number of the slain. These miserable remains, which had been subjected to every conceivable species of indignity, were formally presented at the temple, and accepted by the priest as a peace offering to his god. Then they were carried on slight hurdles (the head lolling on one side, and the legs dangling over the other) to the public square, and set up in a row in a sitting posture. Their faces were gaily painted with vermilion and soot, to give them a life-like appearance as in time of war.

Next a herald advanced in presence of the multitude, and touching each ghastly corpse in turn in a friendly way, the profoundest silence being preserved by the spectators, harangued it in a jocular manner, expressing his extreme regret at seeing such a fine fellow in so sorry a plight, asking if he did not feel ashamed of himself after his recent loud boasting from behind the fortress, and wondering why he should have ventured so far down the hill, unless it was to see his dear friends of Ramáka. Finally the herald addressed them in more excited strains, and wound up by knocking the bodies down like so many ninepins, amid shouts of laughter from the bystanders.

At length the corpses were ignominiously dragged into the hade of a clump of ironwood trees which skirted the temple. A sacrificial stone marked the spot where hundreds of prisoners of war in past times had been killed, a heap of whitening skulls attesting their number.

Here the dissecting began. It was performed with sharpened shells and split bamboos by the dautava tamata, or cutter-up of men, who handled his instruments skilfully. The bodies having been disembowelled, and the head removed, the feet were cut off at the ancles, and the legs from the knees; the thighs were dissevered from the hip joints, the hands from the wrists; the fore arms were cut off at the elbows, and the shoulders were taken out of the sockets—the operator, who was watched with great interest by a crowd of onlookers, displaying no mean surgical skill. Each of these divisions was treated as a separate joint. Having been enclosed in green plantain leaves, the several pieces were placed in the oven. When the stones became red hot, green leaves were put on them to slacken the heat.

Some of the septs or families received their portion of the horrible repast on large wooden dishes covered with a cloth of fresh leaves. I noticed one dish 12ft. long, 4ft. wide, and 3ft. deep. It would almost have held an ox roasted whole. Vast heaps of yams, and walls of taro and other vegetables had been prepared to accompany the meat. This portion of the feast alone must have weighed several tons. I noticed that several of the chiefs were linga tambu—not allowed to touch food with their hands for a certain time. These were fed by one of their wives, or a herald.

My attention was so particularly attracted to one blear-eyed old savage, who sat cross-legged, blinking demoniacally as he cleverly picked with his teeth the flesh from a human hand, that I asked his name. I was told that he was the head chief of a neighbouring town, who was known by the nickname of "Turtle Pond," conferred upon him because of his enormous capacity for eating bokola. The turtle pond is a pool of water fenced or walled in to receive captured turtles, until the butcher is ready for them. This old reprobate was said to have eaten in his time 800 men, most of whose skulls formed a ghastly obelisk near his house. Truly, in Shaksperian phrase, "he was a man of an unbounded stomach."

When the banquet was at its height, a sudden commotion and loud shouting in the direction from which the company had first entered the square, attracted my attention to that quarter. I saw that a procession had been formed, and that what appeared to be a chief of distinction was being borne aloft on a bamboo-litter by four men, while a large crowd circled round, dancing and singing in a high state of delight. The chief was in a sitting posture. His face was painted in four diamond shapes of alternate red and black; what I afterwards discovered to be a huge wig was upon his head; and he bore in his hand the well-known club of Bent-Axe, called "The Disperser," which had so nearly sent me to my last account, and on which still remained the blood-stains I noticed when it fell at my feet. It was my enemy in full dress, sure enough. What could this mummery mean? Had he surrendered and made his peace with the tribe?

The procession approached me, and I gazed intently at the figure. I was within a few feet of it, and I now saw, horror of horrors! that there were cracks in the face like the fissures in the crackling of baked pork, and that the eyes had disappeared, their places being taken by a clumsy representation in paint and clay! The case was clear. Bent-Axe had been baked whole, and was now being paraded for the amusement of the company preparatory to being eaten! The great chief of yesterday was to-day a scapegoat in grimmest ironic symbol of revelry!

I turned away from the sickening spectacle. There was another wild tatoo beaten on the lali, followed by a shrill scream from the conch shells, and I knew that the body was about to be divided as a *bonne bouche* for a few of the leading personages.

I learned afterwards that Bent-Axe was taken prisoner while trying to escape. The gunshot wound I inflicted on him made him an easy prey, however. He was put into the oven while still living.

At the close of the banquet there was a scramble among the common people for the shin bones, which are valued for sail needles. The debauch ended for the greater part of the company in a helpless lethargy, which it took them days to recover from. I was given to understand, however, that this carouse would always be treasured in their minds for all future time as a great and memorable feast, just as the participants in the brilliant tournament of feudal days rejoiced to remember "the gentle and joyous passage of arms at Ashby."

As I moved away from the revolting picture, the western sky was still suffused with the sun's last rays ; a crimson haze illuminated the sylvan cloisters at the back of the town, and as the colour gradually faded from the gay dracœnas and croton shrubs, and the innumerable laughing ripples of the sea made answer to the murmurings of the dreamy palms, I could not but wonder that a country which seemed suited by nature to be the abode of the highest forms of civilisation should be inhabited by a race of what I could only at that moment regard as the most debased and hopeless savages; nor could I help contrasting the magnificent pageant of the tranquil tropic evening, whose beauty is calculated to elevate the soul of man, with the horrible orgie of which I had just been a witness.

CHAPTER XXI.

A FISHING ADVENTURE.

HIGH noon in the tropics! The giant bakas twist and flicker in the mirage, as though they were floating on the sultry air. The glaring slopes roll and welter in the sun, whose convex gleams build up the pearly dome of air. The landscape, viewed through the luminous atmosphere, is adorned with all the enchantments of colour. A hanging rock is clothed with luxuriant masses of the deeply blue clitoria. Tufts and

rosy tassels flutter from the dilo trees, and showers of pink stamens illuminate the shadows cast by the boughs. The small grey-green leaflets of the sensitive plant contract in quivering circles over a rood of ground, as I set the nearest one in motion with my foot.

As the sun climbs to the zenith, a great silence reigns. There is a lull in the almost ceaseless buzz and chirp of insect life. The bronze lizards, with bright blue tails and sparkling diamond eyes, lie motionless with heads raised, gasping in the heated air The coloured tree-snakes, which are hardly distinguishable from the foliage in which they seek their prey, ensconce themselves in cool leafy wrappings. The butterflies—the rare pale yellow, the small white silvery one resembling the silkworm moth, and the richly coloured dark beauty with spots on its wings like those in a peacock's tail—which so bravely unfolded their charms to the morning sun, have retired from the mid-day glare, and are lying exhausted with outspread wings on glossy leaves. The cooing of the wood-pigeon and the ring-dove is hushed. The hardy hawk no longer skims the upper air. The parrots of splendid garb which animate and adorn the woods—the winged gems which illuminate the atmosphere at every turn —are lazily swinging in the sheltered foliage. The soil appears to undulate with the flickering exhalations of heat. The tree-ferns lean aside in langour. Not even the shrill trumpet of the mosquito is now heard.

The sun sinks towards the west, and soon the palpitating life of the tropics is in full flow again. The chorus of innumerable insects is deafening. Every tree, shrub, and blade of grass seems to live and to breathe at every pore. The great heart of Nature with its teeming life throbs around.

Lying lazily in the dark shadow of a bread-fruit tree, I watched through the veil of leaves the strange procession of cloud-forms, following their capricious imagery and their monstrous and curiously changing shapes. Lolóma, playing in the leafy folds of a shaddock tree which scented the neighborhood, was fancifully

decorating herself with its fragrant flowers, which resemble the orange blossom. When I told her that was the bridal flower of English people, nothing would satisfy her but a full description of the wedding ceremonies of the kai papalangis. Disporting herself in the glories of a new parti-coloured liku, which shone like shot silk in the sun, she tripped lightly on the sward, courting my admiration of some fresh artistic arrangement of flowers. So the hours fled away with childish prattle, the dreamy melody of merry words, and the low soft laughter of perfect happiness.

When the sun had lost his power, the more vivid colours in the landscape died out, and were succeeded by rich purple tints, and the long woodland reaches assumed a tint of pale emerald beneath the indigo blue of the sky. Then the populace came out to amuse themselves with the sport of reed-throwing on the level turf, swimming in the surf on the coral beach, engaging in loud-voiced fishing parties, or searching the shell-strewn sand for decorative ornaments. There were bleaching on the sand, volutes, harps, marginelles, cones, and every variety of exquisitely colored shells, which, being daily washed by the sea, retained their beauty for a long time. The orange cowrie is here the costliest gift of the sea. This beautiful shell, once quite plentiful, is now extremely rare. Wading out to the reef, which separates the lagoon waters from the dark purple of the outer ocean, we enter on the wonderfully beautiful submarine rainbow produced by the sun gleaming on the sunken coral. The colors of the solar prism are marvellously blended. The parrot fishes which glide about—the tiny fishes of pale blue and bright green, with bands of black, white, and gold, and sky-blue collars, which dart in and out of the sub-aqueous growths—give an indescribable charm to the picture. It was Lolóma's delight to watch her own supple reflection gleaming in these tranquil depths. She was bright as the sunshine, and wild as the sea-spray with which she sported. As she rose from the waves, her limbs glistening, after a dive in the surf, she was a veritable sea-nymph.

As the sun went down, the little town of Ramáka was en-

veloped in an ethereal golden mist, that rose from the water and the shore. The buildings floated on a lake of rose-hued radiance ;—the mountaintops in the back-ground, bathed in a brief flush of crimson, seemed to flicker with flame. When the great Eye of Day, as the Fijians poetically name the sun, was closed behind the watery horizon, the rosy cones of the hills faded to a duller hue. But soon the stars rushed out, for there is no twilight in the tropics ; the moon illuminated the sea with long lines of rippling light ; the reef, the ocean, the coral strand and the hills above, shone like a sparkling garland of jewels, and the long cool night was welcomed after the blazing heat of the day. Then the inhabitants gave themselves up to evening amusements, prominent among which were the fishing parties.

There were various methods adopted for catching fish. Fish-hooks of wood, shell, or bone, were used ; and sometimes the craftsmen relied on the glare of the torch made of bunches of dried reeds, when the finny spoils were to be secured by spearing. Occasionally fish were temporarily stupefied, and made easy of capture with the hand, by throwing into the water the pointed fruit of the vutu rakaraka, and the stem and leaves of the duvu ganga, which were also on some occasions drawn through the water by a long vine or creeper. The favourite method, however, was the construction of a fence of bark, leaves, and sticks, which enclosed the fish in the middle of the circle. The space in the middle was gradually contracted by hauling on both ends of the fence. Soon the space became so small that the fish were forced to jump over the barrier on every side. Then the fun commenced. Some caught the scaly creatures in their hands, others speared them, and not a few scooped them up in hand-nets. The babel of sounds with the shouting, prancing, splashing, and laughter which all this gave rise to, as the merry people gathered in the silvern harvest of the sea, it would be impossible to describe. Not infrequently a single canoe was brought into requisition in the sport. The frail skiff often got swamped in deep water. Nothing damaged, the

occupants would jump out, and pressing down one end until the greater part of the water had run out, they let go suddenly; then swimming along by the side, they baled out the remainder and jumped in again.

But the most curious fishing incident is that of the arrival of the balolo—the Fijian whitebait season. The balolo is a strange annelidan, which comes into these waters regularly each November, just after the first quarter of the moon. Its periodical appearance is always predicted with unerring certainty. The worm-like creature, with its cylindrical jointed body, coloured green, red, brown, or white, is found floating on the surface in millions in the early morning. The water becomes thick with wriggling balolos, and they are scooped up by the hand. The Fijians carry their vermicelli away in leaves, and bake them in ovens, afterwards going in for a "diet of worms."

I often joined in the fishing excursions. One evening, some hours after the sun had sunk like a globe of fire beyond the watery horizon, and the moon had risen high in the Heavens,—lured by the beauty of the silver-shining sea, I had remained out on the reef, unmindful that the prattling fishing parties had trooped home. Enchained by the magic beauty of the spectacle, and lulled by the monotonus booming of the heaving ocean, as it rolled against the great natural breakwater, I hardly noticed that the tide was rapidly coming in, and that the water on the highest point of the reef was already above my ancles. Turning shorewards, my right foot sunk into a depression in the coral formation, and I immediately felt that I was in the grip of a vice. My foot had entered the expanded jaws of an enormous clam-shell, which instantly shut upon it. These bi-valves, in shape like an oyster, have a terrible power of holding whatever comes within their grip, though I was not aware of it at the time. A good wrench failing to give me liberty, I stooped and sought to disengage my foot with my hand. I might as well have tried to tear a rock in two. The shell was firmly fixed in the coral, which seemed to have grown

round it, and no mortal fingers could dislodge it from its position.

Now for the first time the desperate peril of my situation dawned upon me. I was paralysed for a few moments with the thought that entered my mind like a flash, that I had no chance of escape from death—a slow and lingering death—death in its most agonising form—dying by inches while in the full flow of health. My recent companions were all out of hail, the town was two miles distant, and I should remain bound to this rock till the flowing tide drowned me. The water rose with each succeeding wave, and chilled me with the terror of the prospect. I shouted aloud for help, though knowing none could come. My puny voice was lost in the hollow murmuring of the sea, as it rambled among the branching coral and cavernous ledges. Straggling members of the fishing parties were still visible a thousand yards from me, but they were rapidly widening the distance. Faint echoes of their jocund songs borne on the light wind, added another pang to the thought that I should never rejoin them. They would soon regain the town. I should probably not be missed for several hours, and then no one would know where to search for me. Even now, with the water up to my waist, and the sea breaking on the reef, I was not an object that could be discerned more than a few paces off.

A long roller passed over my head. When it receded, I remained shoulder-deep in the water. I shouted again, aimlessly. I tugged with desperation at the trap which held me, and sickened at the sense of the utter hopelessnes of my position. I wondered how long I should live after it became a question of holding my breath while the waters passed over me. The feeling of fearful loneliness that crept over me was intensified by the wild uproar of the waves as they dashed upon the barrier, sounding in the broken spaces with a terrible bellowing and hissing, which seemed to my excited fancy demoniacally malignant, as though evil spirits were rejoicing in the prey so soon to be delivered up to them, and were now sporting around it with

malicious glee. The moon threw down her soft light, striking with silvery sheen the familiar peaks and headlands, and lacing the sea with paths of glittering quicksilver. The stars were twinkling above like so many fire-flies. The beauty of the night only added to my misery.

The level water reached to my chin. I strained my neck to keep it from gurgling in my throat. I shrieked again, and was answered by the deep moaning of the sea. A heavy bank of clouds sailed over the moon and obscured her light. There was nothing visible but the long stretch of dusky waters. My death, thought I, is near at hand, and my last moments are to be shrouded in pitying darkness. I could no longer bear the frightful situation. With a wild despairing cry, I closed my eyes, determined to end my life at once, and make no fresh struggle to keep my lips above the salt flood. My voice was answered by an excited question in Fijian: "Ah thava?" "What is that?" Could I be dreaming, or had I already passed into the world of spirits? I felt my head seized by a friendly hand, and then I sunk into unconsciousness.

Three men were poling along in their canoe from a point lower down the coast, to which they had been to fetch firewood, and the prow of the wanqua had almost run against me. These sailors took in the situation at once. Their long sharp-pointed poles were brought to bear in detaching the clam from the rock, one of their number sinking in the water and directing the operation with his hands. Then I was lifted into the canoe, the shell adhering bodily to my foot. I presently revived. After I had been deposited in the town, one half of the shell was pulverised by a hardwood club. The flesh on my ancle was a good deal torn by the frantic exertions I had made to free myself. I was not long in recovering from these injuries, but the incident itself made a lasting impression on me, and ever afterwards I was very careful about wandering on the reef alone.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE BIG FISH.

HALF a mile from Ramáka, a small stream which had its source in the mountains found its way to the beach and discharged itself into the sea. The banks of this stream, within the tidal influence, were skirted with mangroves, an encroaching growth well fitted to secure a footing on the uncertain brink of the ocean. These strange semi-aquatic plants hold in their meshes a vast quantity of decaying animal and vegetable matter deposited by the tides, which alternately cover and uncover their roots and part of the trunks. The remains of dead leaves, molluscs, and sea-weed, ferment in the sun, forming a noisome mass in the black mud and ooze. The pendulous roots of the mangrove take the shape of loops and arches from 6 to 10ft. high, supporting the body of the tree. These mazy arcades and thickets maintain an unequal strife with the ocean, but the matted roots holding the soil, often promote the growth of land, and gradually appropriate portions of Neptune's domain. The receding waters disclose an immense variety of festering life. Sea-urchins, crabs, and many nameless things struggle in the slime. Mussels, barnacles, and oysters, cling to the branches, passing half their time in the water and half out, as the tide flows and ebbs. Crabs and worms, sea-centipedes, and strange limbless forms, wriggle and scuttle together in the fierce sun, like maggots rioting in carrion. The sea birds here find dainty banquets, and they love to visit these localities.

The banks of this stream had of late acquired an evil name. They were said to be haunted by an enormous fish, or marine monstrosity, which swallowed up men, women, and children who came within its reach. Those Fijians who had seen the creature, and had lived to tell the tale, were too terrified at the sight to be able to give anything like an accurate description. It

was a fact that in the course of a few weeks, nine people who had gone to bathe in the river or draw water, had disappeared. It was believed that they had been gobbled up by what some called "the big fish," and others a marine deity.

I determined to solve the mystery if possible ; so one evening, wading through the mangrove swamp, I gained the shelter of a cavern which the sea had hollowed out of the rocky face of the rising shore, and there waited patiently for the appearance of the monster. That it was no myth was certain, for I saw in the ooze beneath the mangroves, the marks of dentated feet that belonged to some animal which was, I believed, unknown to me. As I sat in my dismal place of watching, the sombre bats, which figure in many a gruesome Fijian story, flapped their wings against me, giant nocturnal moths and beetles joined black Vesper's pageant, and the melancholy hoot of the owl took part in the nightly revels. I could dimly see the flying foxes hanging by their unwebbed thumbs from creviced rocks, till it suited them to spread the umbrella-like membrane which covers their slim fingers, and dive into the sable night. Screeching sea-birds, just going to rest, mingled their hoarse voices with the sighing of the breakers near at hand, and the saddened tone of the wind as it sang through the crags and crannies of the rocks.

Presently I heard a rustling sound among the mangrove roots close by. The noise seemed to me like that of some creature whose scales rubbed against each other. Then there was a splash in the river, and all was silent. I stole cautiously from my hiding-place, and gained a position which commanded a view of the river's banks for some short distance. In a few minutes there emerged from the stream a creature nearly 20 feet in length. It stretched itself, and remained motionless on the muddy bank. I saw it clearly in the bright light of the moon, which now emerged from a heavy pall of clouds which had long obscured it. There was no mistaking the creature—it was a crocodile. I was as much surprised as an English gentleman would be at finding his favourite trout stream filled with

crocodiles, for they are as foreign to Fiji as to Great Britain. It was an inexplicable puzzle.

I made my way back to the town cautiously, and narrated my discovery. After I had told the leading chiefs assembled in Hot-Water's house all I knew about crocodiles, which was that they were good swimmers, but could not turn very rapidly either in the water or on land, it was proposed that a man should be placed in the river as a bait, and that when the crocodile had seized him, a large party of Fijians should be at hand to kill it with their long spears. I would not consent, however, to the cruelty they wished to practice on a human being. It was eventually agreed that a rope of sinnet, with a running noose at the end, should be passed over the bough of a tree near the lurking place of the unwelcome visitor; that a man should sit in the loop where it trailed on the ground; that he should run off as soon as he had enticed the creature into the proper position; and that then 14 men, concealed at a distance, should haul on the rope, and hoist the crocodile into a secure position in which he could be killed at leisure. The trap was laid on the following day, and it answered admirably. No one volunteered to act as the bait, but a Fijian, being ordered by his chief to undertake the duty, discharged it with so much address that the moment the crocodile extended his jaws to seize him, he slipped away, and the noose was tightly drawn. When the crocodile, dangling helplessly from the tree, had been killed with spears, its body, which measured about 18ft. in length from the nose to the tip of the tail, was cut up, baked, and eaten, the bones being preserved for the making of spear-heads and needles.

The capture of the crocodile was made the occasion of a great holiday festival. The incident was witnessed from a distance by the greater part of the townspeople, and the wild shouts of delighted laughter which went up as the creature rose in the noose, struggling vainly, could have heen heard a mile off. No other crocodile* or alligator has ever been seen in Fiji. I be-

* The destruction of a crocodile in Fiji about the beginning of the century is a well-attested fact.

lieved until quite recently that this one had been drifted by currents from the East Indies. Explorations within the last year or two in New Britain and New Ireland, islands on the east coast of New Guinea, however, show that the rivers of those countries abound with alligators. It is therefore much more probable that the unwelcome visitor found its way from one of those islands. Had there been a pair of them, they would probably have succeeded in establishing their race in Fiji.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE DEATH OF HOT-WATER.

A WEEK or so after the incident of the capture and death of the crocodile, Hot-Water, who had been in indifferent health for some time, was attacked by a violent cold, which settled on his chest, and it was apparent that he would not live long. One evening he sent for me to his house to say farewell. A large company were assembled, silently expecting his death. It was known that his end was very near, for the town had recently been enveloped in a dense fog, and there was an eclipse of the moon that night,—certain forerunners of the death of a great chief.

Hot-Water was greatly exhausted, but he raised himself as I entered the gloomy chamber, lighted only by the flickering flame of a wick floating in a pan of oil placed near the chief. Addressing the assemblage, though speaking with difficulty, he told them in symbolic language that as the musket and axe of the white man were truthful, so was his religion true—that as the foe fell before his firing and the tree before his chopping, so should fall their old religion smitten by the new and truthful one —that in a few more years they would set aside their gods of darkness and conform in many respects to the habits of the papalangis. Commending me to the protection of the tribe

when he was gone, he lay back and became incapable of further speech.

Glancing round the company, I saw that these remarks had been received with anything but favour. It was well known that the King's successor, his brother, Ratu Bolatha (ill-omened canoe), would be no friend to me for personal reasons; also, that he was opposed to the settlement of white men in the country, and the minor chiefs and people were preparing to follow the views of the new *régime*, under which white men would be regarded as no better than themselves, while I had always been looked upon as a sort of God.

On the following day I went to the King's house, to enquire after Hot-Water again. Entering the building, I found the floor occupied by three groups of men and women, the middle figure of each group being held in a sitting posture and covered by a large veil of masi. On either side of each veiled figure there stood in line, seven or eight men, one company hauling against the other on a cord of sinnet passed twice round the neck of the central figure, which was in each case one of the old chief's wives. All were motionless as wax figures. I had arrived during a strange hush—a haunted silence—it was the moment of death with the victims. Accustomed as I was to barbarous scenes, I could not but feel a thrill of horror. I was told that ten widows had now been strangled to accompany their lord to Hades.

Turning to the body of the King, I found, to my great surprise, that he was not dead. He raised his hand feebly and tried to speak, but without articulate utterance. At that moment the dolorous wail of two conch-shells, like a passing knell, published his death to the community. I remonstrated with the by-standers; they replied that his spirit was gone, and that he was dead;—his body might move, but that it did unconsciously. The body was already dressed for the grave. It was covered all over with a coat of black powder; the turban was secured by a chaplet of white cowries, and the flowing folds of a new sulu lay at the feet. An attendant approached, and laid in the hollow of the King's

arm his famous war club. It was an ushering in of Death with all the etiquette and observance of a punctilious court—a grim masquerading of the King of Terrors, in which there was no real sorrow or feeling displayed. And yet Hot-Water was a chief, distinguished by a few of the rarer Fijian virtues as well as by personal attractions.

At the sound of the conch-shells announcing the demise of the King, the chief priest turned towards the King elect and saluted him with the words "Peace, Sir, the King is dead; but his successor lives." Then a loud flourish of trumpet-shells from the door of the royal residence informed the people that they owed allegiance to Bolatha, Tui Ramáka.

The bodies of the women, whose lives had been so cruelly sacrificed, were dressed in gala attire with vermilion powder spread on their faces and bosoms, as though they were being decked for the bride-bed rather than the grave. Then they were laid by the side of the dead chief. Visitors came in large parties to weep over the bodies, after the manner of the keening at an Irish wake. The corpses were watched during the night, the watchers singing a succession of dirges.

The burial of the late King was accompanied by many strange observances. The grave was lined with mats on which the bodies of the wives selected to accompany their husband to the spirit world were laid, the King being placed on them. He had with him his club to help him in making his way through the difficulties which beset the paths of Hades. A strong man was also killed and buried with him in order that he might go before and hold the Fijian Cerberus when he attempted to prevent His Majesty from entering any of the spiritual Kingdoms. The old King was heard to moan after the soil had been heaped on him, but that was not regarded as a sign that his spirit was still in its earthly tenement, and the grave closed over him. The grave was only three feet deep, and its place was well indicated by the deceased's long train of masi, some yards of which, being left above ground, were festooned on the branches of a neighbouring tree.

Many mourning ceremonies followed on the death of the King. His children prepared a feast in honor of his spirit, which was now to them a god, and made wreaths and necklaces of sweet-smelling flowers and leaves, which were called "garlands for the departing spirit." Many near relations each cut off a finger, and the digits were stuck in rows along the eaves of the late King's house. The coast, for several miles, was made tambu, which meant that no one might fish there. Vast groves of cocoanuts were also declared to be sacred. One mourning custom observed, called Vakavindiulo, "jumping-of-maggots," was a public lamentation in which the mourners pictured to themselves the corruption which had taken place in the body of the departed, the fourth day after burial. Another was called the Vakandrendre, "causing-to-laugh." It consisted in the performance of comic games to help the friends of the deceased to forget their grief.

At length the funeral banquetings were over, all necessary usages had been fully complied with, the old King was gathered to his fathers, and Ratu Bolatha reigned in his stead. The passing of the chiefdom into the hands of a ruler who was not friendly to the white man, would, I was fully aware, lead to disagreeable consequences to me. However, it was not in accordance with Fijian custom to do anything hurriedly, and I knew that I should have time to look about me. So I continued the even tenor of my way, secretly revolving in my mind, however, various methods of protecting myself from an impending blow.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A DISEMBODIED SPIRIT.

IN the hope of keeping on good terms with the bete or priest, Box-of-Tricks, I called upon that sagacious individual, taking with me a suitable present—a necklace made of pieces of whales' teeth, which were very valuable in Fiji, and equivalent to diamonds with us.

The Temple to which I directed my steps lay in the deep shadow of upas trees, from which the priests obtain a kind of poison for the sorcerer's work. At the base of a huge vesi was the great sacrificial stone, indented with blows, which told of the the many victims who had been there offered to the gods, and notches in the trunk of the tree accurately attested their number. The dark foliage of the upas trees shed a funereal gloom around, which well suited this weird spot. The grass seemed to have withered where the priest's shadow fell.

I found the old man seated inside the Temple, his long white beard flowing over a table made of human bones. His glittering, snake-like eyes, rested upon fearful decorations which were the remnants of slain bodies; and one of his long bony hands clutched a skull used for drinking yangona. Strips of tapa trailing from the roof to the floor, forming veil-like curtains, were the steps down which the gods came when invoked by their powerful servant. It was impossible to enter this place of baleful emanations, with its sombre surroundings and sinister tenant, without an involuntary shudder. The occasional glimmer of the ocean, momentarily seen through the open door and thick leaves, was the only thing that recalled the mind from the supernatural to the natural.

I desired to discourse with the priest on the subject of our recent bereavement. I extolled the virtues and wisdom of the departed.

"Aye," answered the ecclesiastic, "he was indeed a master of words and the salt of language. Capsized is the land we live in; capsized is our stricken country."

At the same time his evil heart gave the lie to his words, for he was secretly pledged to the retrogressive policy of Bolatha, the banishment of white men, and the restoration of all the old heathen customs, some of which the dead chief had allowed to fall into desuetude.

"The noble Hot-Water," continued Box-of-Tricks, "is in the land of shadows, now to dwell forever with immortals, for have I not seen him pass successfully through all the portals of Hades?"

Fixing his eyes straight before him, they assumed a strange dull glare, and the priest had evidently passed into the world of visions. He proceeded, speaking like one in a trance:

"Methinks I see great Hot-Water now, with chiefly bearing, in his habit as he lived. He is at the Place-of-Dying, overlooking the sea, where the human spirits of our tribe take their departure for the other world. See! He is looking with his large earnest eyes towards the beach just in front of the village! His gaze is fixed upon his favorite canoe, drawn up on the sand and partly shaded by that clump of palms. Day after day, for a week or more, he has come to look at that little craft, the father of delightful reminiscences to him. Hark! He speaks! He is saying to himself 'Oh, that canoe! Why don't they put it on my grave! Oh, that fast little sailer! If it were only here, shouldn't I be able to hoist sail, and away to those who await my coming!' But, alas! his friends have been unmindful of their duty. The spirit of the canoe cannot therefore depart to its late owner and captain, who must now proceed on the inevitable sub-marine passage as best he may.

"Now he takes the dreadful dive into the Great Passage. The waters have not overwhelmed him—he emerges in the Place of Refuge. I see him with other spirits at the Face-Washing-Water, where they are washed with boiling water, which

removes their outward and worldly appearance. One of Hot-Water's companions is a bachelor. May the gods befriend him! This is no place for single spirits. Already the officers of the place are putting him under a large rock which will press him as a beetle is pressed under the foot of mortals! Bear up, brave heart! The utmost limit of thy fortitude must be fully ascertained by those who are now thy spiritual chiefs. According to thy endurance and chiefly bearing under trial shall their future treatment of thee be.

"Behold, a beautiful tree appears in view. Have a care, good spirits, for here lurks a grim monster, the King of the state you are now traversing. The lake hard by is the Face-Washing-Water. Speed on, but beware the fence guarded by King Spirit-Smiter. Dash on bravely now, and heed not the ghostly figure, or dreadful will be your doom. On, great Hot-Water presses, with club upraised—the spirit of the very club he used in the wars of earth, and which his weeping friends put into his hands just as he was coming away. Uplifted also is the club of the great Smiter; and now, crash! crash! crash! To right and left flies the flimsy fence. Well done, great chief. The horrible Smiter's hands are paralysed, and he himself stands aside in blank wonderment at the uncommon daring of the hero, whose spirit, he now sees, is that of no ordinary child of earth, but one of the bravest of the brave.

"Now the great chief looks seaward, expecting some one from out the briny deep from which he himself but lately emerged. He pauses in front of a screw-pine, and throws whales' teeth at it. Once, twice, three times, twenty times! and struck the mark ten times! He has twenty wives, and ten of them are being strangled that they may have the privilege of accompanying their lord through all the kingdoms of this mysterious world. How the prospect has lifted the cloud which a few minutes ago rested on his chiefly features! How quickly now he turns with cheerful face and beaming eye towards the beach, remarking as he does so, 'They cannot be long in coming! They will soon be

here!' True, indeed. Even as he speaks, the ten wives arrive by the old and well-beaten submarine road. The water is dripping from their hair, and the mark of the strangling cord is still about their necks, which, but yesterday, sweet-smelling flowers bedecked. Oh! beneficent customs of our fatherland, long may they survive, and may the people never turn from the instructions of their priests.

"Again, I see Hot-Water in the Third State. Being a man of arms, he bears a club upon his shoulder. Here the country is well planted with food for the benefit of new arrivals. Hot-Water was not cut off untimely, for see! his bananas in Hades are ripe. Yonder wretched spirit is that of a poor man who committed suicide in his youth, and he is obliged to live on green fruit.

"Hark! Do you not hear sounds as from a multitude of voices chanting. We are in the Fourth State of the Spirit World—the Land of Song. The great King of the country is also its music-master. There is no place so joyous and gleesome as this. Great Hot-Water seems himself again. His moonlight nights are all come back to him, and he enjoys them as heartily as he used to do in the old world.

"Slowly and reluctantly the spirits are gliding away to the Fifth State. Their eyes are drooping and fireless, and their faces are pale with the paint of Death, who, for the fifth time, is already touching them with his icy hand. Even now they are in the country where reigns and rules with iron will the hideous despot, King Back-Chopper. The song is hushed, and the dance is done. No more are there any sweet-smelling flowers, or cool breezes, or moonlight walks under the village trees! Nothing but the awful King, stalking abroad to chop, with his spiritual tomahawk, the backs of his spiritual subjects! Hot-Water bears the torture bravely. He knows that it cannot last for ever, and that with none but himself to thank, King Back-Chopper has hourly to behold, to his infinite chagrin, spirits whom he has long victimised, bolting at last through the very gate of which he is himself the porter, to

"The Sixth and Last State—'the Place-of-Everlasting-Standing.' Hot-Water is in the land of shadows. I see his noble spirit moving through space in the care of the gods. It is enough. Great is Dengeh, and the priests are his prophets.'

I learned from this semi-visionary deliverance of the wily Box-of-Tricks more than I had ever known before of the future state the Fijians believe in. The old priest was now too excited to talk to me on any other subject, so I left him to his mummeries.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE SPIRIT-WORLD.

TO while away idle hours, I had many conversations with the old priest on the subject of the religion of his countrymen. The cannibal, I found from him, as, indeed I had had many previous opportunities of observing, was a most fanatical believer in spirits and the spirit-world. His creed taught him that everything in nature and art was a duality in unity. In other words, that everything had two kinds of life, physical and spiritual. These two were but one in this visible existence, but at death the physical nature returned to earth, while the spiritual, retaining the form of the physical, lived on in another world. According to this teaching, animals, plants, stones, and in brief, all things in creation, and every work of man's hand, had inner and spiritual selves. And just as there were starting places and paths for human spirits bound from this world to another, so also were there the same conveniences for the spirits of pigs, rats, snakes, bananas, taro, yams, canoes, clubs, spears, etc.

The Hades of the cannibal is both physical and spiritual, but its physical character is so only in appearance. The spirit of

the body goes to the other world, retaining the likeness of the living man in an impalpable form. This belief has sometimes proved a stumbling-block to Fijians, particularly the older men, in their attempts to become acquainted with one of the main doctrines of the Christian religion. When examining candidates for baptism, missionaries have frequently been struck with the answer to their question, "Do you believe in the resurrection?" "Yes, I believe that my spirit will rise from the grave, and that my body will go to ruin." The cannibal had no notion of a resurrection of the body until he learned it from Christianity. But he was no materialist, for he not only held that every material thing had a spirit of its own, but that when done with in this world, it would send to the invisible one its spiritual counterpart.

As departed spirits approach the shores of the new land, they are not unfrequently met by kindred spirits who have gone before. Among the first things which these friends are anxious to learn from the fresh arrivals, is the cause of separation between their spirits and their bodies. Was it the weakness of old age, the diseases of childhood, an epidemic, the wreck of a canoe, the wrath of a chief, the club of an assassin, the spear of a foe in fight, or a wilful leap from a precipice? The persons thus met, and greeted with earnest enquiries like these, are generally of some standing in society. No one takes any interest in the spirits of serfs. They have to tramp the weary road to the hidden country all alone, and introduce themselves on reaching it. Their liberated spirits pass into Hades to be again crushed with heavy burdens—to be tried and persecuted in a thousand ways, to be slain over and over again, and driven to other "states,"—but only to go through like trials, and be for ever hammered about for the sole crime of not being chiefs.

The spirit-world of the cannibal, as revealed to us in his mythologies, is certainly a very wonderful one. It is a vast country in the interior and on the outside of our earth. That it begins on the surface there is no doubt, but how far down its

boundaries reach has not been determined. There are not fewer than six provinces or states. Dante would call these divisions of the spirit-world, "circles." To be nearer the Fijian's idea, it is better to regard them as lands or countries, which, if we saw them, we should look upon as duplicates of the islands forming the Fiji group. The future life of human spirits is occupied in travelling through all these states; the last of which, in the course of ages, admits the wandering ones to an unmistakeable immortality; or, if that be too much for them, to a kind of half-and-half annihilation, the true nature of which the philosophers of this religion have failed to explain. Each of these spiritual states is inhabited by aboriginal spirits, the real owners of the spiritual soil, who are governed by a king or great chieftain. In poetry the aborigines are spoken of as "the people who sprung up in Hades," or "the people who arose out of the taro-beds of Hades." Immigrants from earth have to be very careful that they respect the people and laws, and obey the chiefs of these mysterious realms. There is in each state a class of aboriginal chiefs called "Ambassadors to Earth." Their duty is one of the utmost importance. They are expected to keep open communication with mortals, to whom they are required to make known the excellencies of the spirit-world, and the character of its government. We will now enter the region itself, and with the reader and our cannibal guides, pass at a good walking-pace through each of its six divisions.

The first of these is on the earth's surface, and in the air about us. It is named the "Place of Dying." It is the locality and its neighborhood where a human spirit leaves the body at death. For the convenience, as it would appear, of being able to think of the departed, congregated in one or two spots instead of in many, each village in Fiji has its one or two "Places of Dying" in or near it. Such a place may be regarded as the spirit-village of the real and visible one. At death, spirits go to this place and abide there for a season. It is from this sacred and most dreaded waiting place, that they watch the movements of the

living; observe how they grieve at their bereavement, and how they show their grief by fulfilling all funeral rites and ceremonies.

The spirit does not take its departure till after some flitting and fluttering around old scenes,—as though, like the butterfly just burst forth from its cocoon, and taking short flights to prepare itself for greater efforts, he were anxious by shaking off the stiffness of his bodily life to be ready for some grand achievement. With some spirits the object of thus waiting about is to fall in with other spirits, whose company will lessen the dreariness of the untravelled way. Company is a delightful thing to the cannibal, whether his road lie on this or the other side of the dividing line between the two worlds. When spirits prefer remaining for kindred spirits, they must keep themselves well employed in the meantime. The spirits of old men take great pleasure in plaiting sinnet. The art they know so well in this world will not be forgotten in the other. The spirits of houses, canoes, &c., must be tied with spiritual sinnet; the demand for workmen will therefore never cease. But the day comes, sooner or later, when there can be no more lingering of departed spirits near the dear old village, with its groves of cocoa-nut palms and bread-fruit trees. The dreadful dive must be taken, and every spiritual shark and other enemy infesting the watery way, be fought and overcome, or the second state of the cannibal's Hades will never be reached. The said dive is mostly made after rough and smooth journeys of various distances by land, to some place on the sea coast, or to islands and reefs near it. These places, whence the spirits start for a new sphere, are known by different names, more or less appropriate, as the "Leaf," the "Bath," the "Distant Reef," "the Great Passage," &c. It was strongly asserted, and by many almost as stoutly believed, that spirit-canoes used to arrive at these stations, to convey the spirits of great chieftains to the spirit-shore. But whether passengers by canoes, or brave swimmers trusting solely to the might of their own spiritual muscles, all, or nearly all, come up

in due time on the beach leading to the grand entrance of the second state.

This may be known as the "Rocks" or "Place of Refuge." It is on the western end of Vanua Levu. Here is the universal gathering place—the much talked of rendezvous of human spirits. It is from here that, after numerous crucial tests, the spiritual immigrants are permitted to pass on to further trials, hardships, and pleasures. That company of spirits you see yonder, coming from the beach, is a party of warriors whose bodies not long since licked the dust. The war-paint is still upon them, and in their present condition they cannot be allowed to proceed much further. No newly-arrived spirit can, until he has been exhibited four successive days to the aboriginal dwellers. Their exhibition over, they are removed to a place called the "Face-Washing-Water," where they are washed with boiling water, which removes their outward and worldly appearance,—the very epidermis of their spirits,—after which their true spiritual skin shines forth. But here comes a spirit who has evidently had some attention given to his *toilette de mort* ere he came here. He will surely pass without the application of boiling water. Perhaps! but he has to find a lake somewhere in this neighbourhood called "Reflecting-Water," which is the great looking-glass for spirits. If the oil, turmeric, and sandal-wood preparations, with other cosmetics used upon him by his mourning friends for the purpose of improving his make-up and rendering his personal appearance as perfect as possible, shall be seen in this mirror to have effected that most desirable object, well and good; he shall pass without having to submit to the scalding trial experienced by the soldiers; but if not, why then there is nothing for him but the "Face-Washing-Water," which will not fail to wash out every trace of the art known in other parts of the world as Madame Rachel's, and, by a virtue and process pecular to itself, make him "beautiful for ever." Now there enters the spirit of a bachelor, who is much to be pitied, not so much because of his "single

blessedness" when in the world, as for the long and intensely painful solitude that is before him, not to speak of other miseries, which, see! are already beginning! The officers of the place are putting him under a huge rock, which will press him as a cheese is pressed. He has but lately shuffled off his mortal coil, and, judging from our limited knowledge and experience, it seems not unlikely that this process will make him shuffle off his spiritual one. Honours are heaped upon the married, but the unmarried are greeted from all sides with the taunting words, "Most miserable of men!" Old maids receive no better treatment. If it could be avoided, it should at any expense, for this is no place for spinsters and bachelors. Let the living take timely warning, and never venture here, if men, without their "better halves;" if, women, without the sign of marriage, viz: the absence in their hair of certain curls or locks, which will exempt them from these tortures. The laws of cannibal-land and its spirit-world are very plain on this important business. He is no hero who has not a wife, and but a very little one who has not many. No more is a woman a heroine who has not a husband, or who has more than one.

Let us now seek the shade of that beautiful tree, which, of course, is a spiritual one, for we are still in spirit-land, where things and people of every name and character are but

"Shadows vain!
Except in outward semblance."

A grim monster abides in the vicinity of this tree. He is an aboriginal spirit, and the King of the state. That lake hard by is the Face-Washing-Water; and there, coming along the narrow path by that clump of banana trees, is a stranger with blackened face. He is making for the lake, but there is in his way a fence well guarded by the King, whose title of office for this particular duty is "Spirit-Smiter." Our friend will not be able to pass him without a challenge. But if he be a chieftan of high rank, he may succeed in dashing bravely through the fence in spite of its ghastly guardian. If, on the contrary, he be a man of low de-

gree, a turncoat or a coward, or one of the "uncircumcised," he will make for the woods to avoid the hurdles and their awful guard, even as Bunyan's pilgrim turned aside into "Bye-path Meadow," to escape the roughness of the right road. Woe betide the poor wretch if the "Clubber" or any of his tribe catch him anywhere out there. He will be eaten by the cannibal aborigines of the state as sure as he is a spirit. On, the warrior presses, wielding his club right dexterously. The fence is smashed, and the Smiter is vanquished. Had the dreaded Spirit-Smiter prevailed, instead of the glorious son of Mars, the inhabitants of Fiji would have been made aware of the melancholy event by a great calm, which to them is always a sign that the Smiter has smitten a spirit.

The spirit of another man is busily picking up stones to throw at the fruit of a screw-pine, standing some 40 or 50 yards from his right hand. Count the stones as he throws them, and you will learn both the number of his widows and how many of them are being strangled and hurried off with the utmost despatch to follow and wait upon their lord throughout his future career in the land of spirits. Unfortunate wretch! He has thrown ten times, and never once hit the object of his aim. He left ten wives behind, not one of whom is coming to alleviate the miseries of his solitude, in whose face he discovers no charms; and he therefore sits down to moan and howl over his lonely and pitiful lot, or to address himself upbraidingly to his yet unstrangled wives, and their thoughtless and hardhearted friends. "Oh, I am weary of waiting here," he exclaims. "Once I was weary with collecting many riches for you and your kinsfolk, and this is their love to me for all my pains." The state of morals among his countrymen is growing worse and worse. The greatest and most dearly cherished institutions of the land are falling into neglect; and so this disconsolate spirit has nothing before him but wailing and weeping to tramp his lonely way.

But here is another spirit of far more chiefly bearing than the last. He is too rich to throw stones at the screw-pine, and uses

whales' teeth instead. Out of 20 shots he has struck the mark 7 times. He has 20 wives, and 7 of them are being strangled, that they may have the unspeakable privilege of accompanying their lord through all the kingdoms of this mysterious world.

The love of cannibal women for their husbands was not the outcome of the heart's deepest and tenderest affections, but a compound made up of one part of something akin to love, and nine parts of fear; the whole leading to a hero-worship which enslaved both body and mind here and spirit hereafter. While he lived, the woman was the hero's beast of burden, not his loving or beloved companion; and when he died the mesmeric power of his tyrannic will, sweeping once more over and through her spirit, like the last and fiercest gust of a hurricane, bent all her nature to one idea, which, inspired by superstition, led her to court death for his sake.

> "But still they come!
> Such a long train of spirits, I should ne'er
> Have thought that death so many had despoil'd."

Some in the crowd have never had their ears bored; their future life will in consequence be one of much misery. An officer, whose duty it is to punish such unprepared immigrants, will presently come along, and, piercing every unbored ear with his ponderous spear, will thrust into the hole thus made the heavy log of wood from 2 to 3 yards long, used by the women of Fiji for beating native cloth or tapa on. The merciless judge condemns each offender to carry this burden in his ear forever; *i.e.*, during the unknown period of his stay in this state. How great must be the necessity for having one's ears bored while in this life. Men used to bore the lobes of their ears, and stretch them so much afterwards, that in the course of a few years they would hang dangling on their shoulders.

State the Third, like all the other States, has its "Spirit-Smiter," who is distingnished by peculiar and special characteristics of his own. He of this State is its King. It is said that he keeps a cock which crows without fail on the approach of a

human spirit. When once the Smiter strikes with his club, the effect is as though the very bones of the smitten child of earth crumbled away from his less material substance. This bone dust, the old dogmas tell us, is saved, and afterwards passed forward to another state in the Cannibal Hades, where it serves as fuel for the household fires of that country. The most remarkable feature of spiritual existence here, is that each earth-born spirit carries about with him an appropriate mark by which the work he was most distinguished for before leaving the body is published to all who meet him. The spirit now passing up the hill to the right was a great yam-planter, for his forehead bears upon it the figure of a yam. On another you will see the impress of sugar-cane, or breadfruit, or taro, or whatever sort of vegetable he was in the habit of cultivating most abundantly. Here and there we shall meet some fine old men having their foreheads branded with figures of various vegetables, and carrying firesticks in their hands. They were men reported in their day as noted planters, the real producers of their country's wealth—men who would not let the tall reeds grow where the yam-vine ought to creep, for want of fire to burn them off the ground. It is one of the first duties of the chief of this state to see that his country is well planted for the benefit of expected arrivals from earth. He has gardens for the spirit of each inhabitant of Fiji. The disembodied spirit on arrival hurries away to the banana plantation. Should no ripe bananas be found, he will have to put up with unripe ones; whence it will be known by the people of the place that he left the earth before his time. If he committed suicide, or was drowned or murdered, or if in any other unnatural way he met his death, his friends will say, "He died before his bananas in Hades were ripe."

Sounds of music strike upon the ear. We are in the Fourth State—the land of song. The subjects of this mirthful state, sing again and again the natural songs of the aboriginal race without weariness. It were well if they could abide here for ever. But

the spirit world of the cannibal is too like his old one, for that, in its countless alternations between pleasure and pain. There are some even now, whose time being up, are gliding away to the Fifth State.

The indescribable delights they so lately experienced are in this state all unknown. Death comes at last to their relief, and grim King Back-Chopper loses his prey. Spirits whom he has long tortured are hourly escaping him and passing to the Sixth and Last State, which is known in the old legends as "The place of Everlasting Standing."

Here, for ever, the spirits remain in a standing posture. They may never walk, sit, or lie down. It is the state of upright, motionless, absolute immortality, for every spirit that can bear it. But restless spirits who hate so monotonous and statue-like a life, are taken in hand by the King of the realm, and reduced to something akin to annihilation! Hence, perhaps, the opinion that chiefs alone are heirs of immortality; all others being unable to pass the trials which thicken around them, in the several states through which we have hastened our tour of inspection. If, however, they should succeed in outliving the dangers and deaths encountered there, they can surely never survive the last and greatest test of all, with which King Lothea never fails to try every spirit that comes within the circle of his jurisdiction. All who cannot stand, Fakir-like, for ever, and without any sign of unrest or discontent whatsoever, must at last submit to have their spiritual legs taken from under them. Every leg thus removed is forthwith converted into spiritual mould, for the spiritual taro-beds of the great Spirit-King. The annihilation here indicated is, to say the most, but very partial; for, if nothing but the extremities of human spirits are destroyed, we may safely infer that our cannibal philosopher's doctrine of annihilation is one of milder form than that contended for by learned "destructionists" of other lands.

I have now gone the round of the "Circles," having faithfully followed my native guides into the very heart of the land.

of shadows and out again. Nothing remains but to note two or three general characteristics of the cannibals' future home, and then to take our leave of the Spirit-World—a world which, in whatever light we may view it, to the Fijian is a very matter-of-fact one after all.

Spirits dwell a long time in each state unless they fail of endurance, when they are at once removed by a process akin to, and in Cannibal-land called, another death. The doctrine therefore that a man can die but once, is not to be found in the cannibals' creed. Transmigration is an article in it, but it is only a spiritual migration from place to place, not from one body to another, except in the case of high-class gods, who have the power of passing from body to body when necessary, in order to effect more readily and perfectly their deep designs, either for or against the cannibal portion of the human race. The popular notion in Cannibal-land and times about these future homes of departed spirits, was that on the whole more happiness could be found in them than in this, the first stage of man's existence. The least pleasant thing connected with it was the difficulty of getting there in safety; and when there, in passing the several tests in such a manner as to be entitled to be let alone to a full enjoyment of whatever was enjoyable. All things considered, it is a fine country, where the spirits of chiefs live with chiefs, and those of common men with spirits of their own order. Youth is seldom or never renewed, for old folks are seen there in great numbers, trusting to their walking-sticks in all their feeble attempts to shamble along the public walks of the place. There is work to be done, but it is always pretty easy, special trials excepted. There is no lack of what the Fijian would call fine houses and good gardens. There is, moreover, no scarcity of food, for the spirits feast *ad libitum* on the fat of the land. And there will always be enough of sailing and fighting to satisfy the characteristic craving of cannibal-spirits for the "spice of life."

The cannibal was taught not to dread the thought of going to this Spirit-World, but on the contrary to long rather for the

change. It was such beliefs as are now before us, and such teaching of them, that doubtless nerved many a widow to follow her departed husband with cheerful obedience to the wishes of his friends, and kept her from shrinking at the sight of the rope which was to end her miseries in this life. Bodily life was valued at a low price,—at no price at all in fact, and nowhere, either in the philosophy or poetry of Cannibal-land, were the people taught to consider

> "That the dread of something after death,—
> The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
> No traveller returns,—puzzles the will,
> And makes us rather bear those ills we have
> Than fly to others that we know not of."

CHAPTER XXVI.

A TREACHEROUS CHIEF.

TURNER and Cobb, the two companions who survived with me the wreck of the Molly Asthore, were absent from Ramáka when Hot-Water died. They were away on a visit to the sandalwood coast, on the island of Vanua Levu, with a party of natives. About three weeks had elapsed from the date of the consignment of our friendly old chief to the earth when they returned in a large double canoe, bringing the joyful intelligence that an English-manned barque from the East Indies, named the Sarah Jane, was at Bua, trading with the natives, her chief object being to obtain a cargo of sandalwood for the China market. Captain Jackson, of the Sarah Jane, having lost two men in a skirmish with the natives in Natewa Bay, was short-handed, and he had expressed his desire to ship Turner, Cobb, and myself for the voyage to China.

I had now been two years in the country. I spoke the language fluently, and had become thoroughly accustomed to

the native mode of life. The intense desire to return to a civilised land, and the fellowship of white people, which afflicted me during the first few weeks of my enforced residence in the islands, had gradually worn off. I had not only become reconciled to my fate—I liked it. And what would become of Lolóma if I said farewell to Fiji? She could not accompany me to the home of the white man, and to part from her was impossible. When I listened to her beguiling voice, looked into her frank and tender eyes, and watched the gay, pretty toss of her head, in fresh, unconscious coquetry, or gazed upon the fiery langour of her embrowned limbs, the idea of separation became intolerable.

A few days after the return of Turner and Cobb from Vanua Levu, the Sarah Jane put into the port of Ramáka to take on board a quantity of yams, which had been promised in a message sent to her captain by Bolatha. I stepped once more on an English ship. As I listened to brief, fragmentary accounts of the most striking events that had occurred in Europe during the past two years, and to some items of Sydney news (for the vessel had called there only two months back), strange reflections crowded upon my mind, and I felt that the spirit of civilisation was strong within me. However, the authorities against whom I had transgressed in Sydney were still in power, and it would not do for me to return there at present.

The delight Lolóma felt in inspecting the cordage and fittings, the hold, the forecastle, and the cuddy of a real ship, was unbounded. Her sunny-natured disposition was all aglow with happiness. Life never seemed to her to be more a merry and gladsome frolic than it did that day. It was pleasure enough to be in the sun and laugh like the rippling torrent as it leaps from stone to stone.

Bolatha paid a visit of state to the Sarah Jane, accompanied by a large number of his retainers, and exchanged presents with the captain. As he carefully inspected the various quar-

ters of the vessel, I noticed the covetous gleam which fired his eye, and boded no good to the Englishmen.

On the following day, Captain Jackson was invited by Bolatha to a grand meke (song and dance) given in his honour. He had been treated with a great show of friendliness, and, nothing doubting, he went ashore unarmed, accompanied by two of his sailors. The barque was left in charge of the mate and the remainder of the crew. Turner and Cobb, who had already taken up their abode on the vessel, were also on board.

In the midst of the shore festivities, of which I was an idle spectator, Lolóma ran to me in intense excitement, saying she had overheard the chiefs talking, and that the ship was to be captured, and all the white men, including myself, slain. I started to my feet with the intention of secretly giving warning to Jackson, but I was too late. Before I had gone three paces, Jackson, and the two sailors who accompanied him, were clubbed from behind, and I was near enough to see that the blows were fatal. At the same moment, by a preconcerted signal, the ship was attacked. She was surrounded with canoes, whose occupants had been trading with the sailors in a friendly way. Her decks were also covered with natives. Suddenly an onslaught was made with clubs, spears, and bows and arrows. The white men were taken unawares, but they were prompt in resistance. Turner and Cobb were luckily below at dinner, and sitting within reach of the arm-rack. The sailors on deck had vigorously laid about them with belaying pins, sheath-knives, and capstan-bars; and Turner and Cobb's steady firing of musketry through the skylight soon cleared the decks of Fijians, with the exception of seven who lay dead. As soon as Turner and Cobb gained the deck, and fired upon the canoes, the whole flotilla retreated in disorder. The well-planned attempt to capture the vessel had failed. The casualties on the side of the Europeans were two sailors badly wounded.

At this time I was running my fleetest with Lolóma to the cavernous retreat in which I had waited for the crocodile to

make his appearance. Pausing on rising ground to take breath, I was overjoyed to see that the attack on the barque, which lay half a mile from the shore, had aborted. I now believed that by making a detour, and gaining possession of a small canoe, I could paddle on board in the night time without much difficulty.

In the evening we were imprisoned by an unexpected event—a sudden thunderstorm of great violence. There was a premonitory hollow uproar in the higher regions of the air, and then the storm broke with magnificent fury on the flank of the mountain range which backed the town. Monarchs of the wood, held in the python-folds of enormous creepers, were levelled. The atmosphere was filled with branches driven before the wind, and they added to the noise of the sweeping ruin. Then the gloom was pierced with vivid flashes of forked lightning, tracing deep fissures in the clouds; the thunder leaped from peak to peak with its salvos of flying artillery; and the storm plunged through space, enacting a direful tragedy. No wonder that at such a time the Fijians picture to themselves their war-god riding on the whirlwind and directing the storm. Lolóma clung to me in wild affright.

The sea rolled mountainously towards my hiding place. As it hurled itself against the crags, the concussion was terriffic—the tumult deafening. The earth seemed to tremble beneath me. After nightfall the storm abated, leaving the atmosphere filled with electricity. Streams of electric fire exploded in every direction. The fretting and churning sea was filled with a dazzling blaze of phosphorescence; rocks in this mysterious realm were bathed with strange splendours, forming dancing phantoms in a scene of weird revelry. The kelps and sea-weeds were stars and comets—the waters cast up on the hill side were gleaming rivulets in their return. Away to the horizon stretched an ocean of molten metal, changing with lambent flames of green, blue, and white; and on this ghastly welter of coloured fire was projected the shadow of the hulk of the Sarah Jane, whose silent spars

reeled among the sheafs of vivid flame. On the shore the subsiding waves rippled beneath the mangrove bushes, flooding them with an unearthly pale light. More than once a globe of fire descended from the inky clouds, and on reaching the sea burst into a shower of sparks. Whenever I caught sight of the ship on which my fortunes depended, she was dragging heavily at her anchor chains; and she often seemed, from the constant play of the lightning upon her spars, to be on fire in a dozen different places at once. Slowly the strange and terrifying aspect of the lava-sea faded away, giving place to the blackness of night.

It was long, however, before the electrical disturbance of the atmosphere completely subsided. With the first streak of day, I clambered up the irregular face of the rocky promontory which had given me shelter, and gained the table-land at its summit. The trees occasionally emitted livid wavering flames, similar to those of St. Elmo's light. Their appearance was accompanied by a crackling sound, like that of the burning of wet powder. I found that when I touched these flames, the light clung to me without causing any sensation. Marvelling much at this phenomenon, I turned my face to the ocean, being anxious about the safety of the barque. At that moment a party of Bolatha's men, lying in ambush to take me prisoner, rushed upon me. I was too quick for them, and rapidly gained the summit of a small rocky eminence from which I could look down upon them. Carrying my flame-tipped fingers to my head, which was uncovered, I was suddenly illuminated by an electric aureola, and presented the appearance of a glorified saint. On beholding this strange transformation, the Fijians ran off, screaming with terror. Before they were out of ear-shot I heard them shout, partly from conviction, and partly with the view of propitiating the newly-found deity, "The Child of the Hurricane is a God indeed!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

FAREWELL TO CANNIBAL LAND.

AS soon as the natives were well out of sight, I made my way to the coast, accompanied by Lolóma. Reaching the beach in the rear of a narrow headland, which shut out the town from view, we took possession of a small canoe, which was lying unoccupied on the sand, and, launching the frail skiff, we were soon on our way to the ship, which would be within half a mile as soon as we rounded the headland referred to. When we reached the point, a double canoe, with its huge mat sail, and full of armed men, shot out from the river side, and gave chase. It seemed that Bolatha had taken extraordinary precautions to prevent my escape. The sea was smooth, with a light breeze blowing, and Lolóma and I, paddling vigorously, were making good headway. Had the double canoe got the wind on her quarter, she would have overhauled us in a very short time, but fortunately she was obliged to make "boards," and the tacking manœuvre being slowly executed, we forged ahead. The light wind shifting a couple of points, however, the double canoe gained a distinct advantage. Our only chance now was to be observed by the barque, and to get within the protection of her muskets. We strained every nerve. The prow of our light skiff cut through the vari-coloured surface of the water like a knife ripping up a piece of silk. The occupants of the large canoe were within thirty yards, and I saw them stringing their bows. I also saw, to my unspeakable satisfaction, that we were observed from the Sarah Jane. Another three minutes, and her fire would send the miscreants to the right-about. I rose in the little canoe, and shouted derisively at our pursuers. They saw the situation, and saluted us with a flight of arrows. At the same moment three musket-shots from the barque laid low two of the cannibals, and the big canoe was put about.

The tension of the moment was so great that I had not noticed that several of the arrows struck our canoe, though most of them fell short. Turning my head (for in paddling I sat with my back to my companion) to cheer Lolóma with the prospect of speedy safety, I saw that the paddle had fallen from her hand, and that, with an expression of intense pain in her usually merry face, she was endeavouring to pull from her bosom a bone-headed arrow which had pierced her. I drew out the envenomed shaft, and she fainted. The life stream flowed from her side, in spite of all that I could do to stanch the wound, which was clearly mortal. Seeing our distress, three of the sailors in the barque put off in a boat to our assistance. Lolóma was tenderly lifted into it, and I followed, hardly knowing what I did. The canoe was allowed to drift away.

Laid on a mattrass on the deck of the barque, Lolóma revived for a few minutes. Her eyelids opened, quivering with a sweet surprise, as of one not knowing what had happened, and what was the meaning of the saddened group around her. They closed again, and she lay dreaming soft and warm, and smiling in her dream as I had so often seen her in happy days. Once more she moved. The tear-drops gemmed her eyes dark fringes; her lips parted, and, bending low, I heard the faintly whispered words which to the Fijian mind convey a whole world of pathos which cannot be reproduced in English: "Au sa lako! Dou sa tiko!" (Literally, "I go! You remain!") Her necklace of pink shells, fresh from the ebbing wave, burst asunder with the last movement which shuddered through her frame, and her little sea-born treasures rolled upon the deck. They would never be strung together again. So also was the silver cord of her life for ever broken. Her spirit had flown like that of a flower, whose existence is all too short. I turned my face seaward, and looked out into the gray moaning world of waters. The gulls were solemnly rocking on the heaving billows of the barren, dreary, ever-restless main, and all the light seemed to have gone out of the heavens.

Lolóma was buried next day in deep water, just inside the reef. The ship's carpenter made a coffin, which was heavily shotted, and her remains were lovingly decorated with gay flowers which the maidens of Ramáka had brought on board two days before. As her body was committed to the deep, to find its resting place among the branching coral and brilliant marine growths, the sky was draped in sables—its changing splendours were gone; the monotonous lap of the water was a dirge, the screech of the sea-bird was a knell. The cocoanut tufts on the beach were waving dismally like funereal plumes, when an immense wave dashed upon the barrier with the roar of a thunder-clap, sending a vast column of foam into the air. The sun showed himself with sudden brightness through the clouds, and the sifted spray was shot with all the prismatic hues. Now I remembered the Fijian belief that when the reef roars louder than usual it is a sign that the newly departed spirit has been borne to the future world on a rainbow.

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All our ammunition being exhausted, it was impossible to punish Bolatha and his abettors for the murder of Jackson and the two sailors; but, by threatening to take the ship close in shore and destroy the town, we obtained possession of the bodies and buried them at sea. They were thus saved from the cannibal oven, and from the disinterment and indignities they would have suffered had we committed them to the earth.

Turner navigated the ship to Calcutta, where her owners gave him the command, and he completed the voyage to China to dispose of the sandalwood on board, Cobb and myself accompanying him as second and third officers. Years elapsed before I again saw my old home in Sydney. I wrote to my father from Calcutta, but the letter miscarried, and I had long been mourned as dead. My youthful escapade had been forgotten,

and there was no more respected merchant in the city than Joe Whitley, whose liberation from gaol I secured in so illegal a way.

Since the time of my two years residence in Fiji, great changes have come over the country. The prophecy of Hot-Water in regard to the acceptance of the new religion has been fully verified, and the islands have been given up to the rule of the white man. That this beautiful archipelago is destined to become a valuable British possession there can be no doubt. It is equally true that the native race is doomed to extinction, so that the words of the sable goodess of Vuya to her successful lover may be taken prophetically as the piteous wail of a people,

"Whose home at the dawn shall deserted be."

The dawn for the new heroes is already falling on our eyes. For the aboriginal heroes it is the twilight of evening. They will pass, to be remembered only as an intelligent race of savages who wisely changed their religion, but foolishly sold their country. They will soon be seen paddling swiftly away in their own canoes, through the mists and shadows of their closing history,

"To the islands of the blessed,
To the kingdom of Ponemah,
To the land of the hereafter."

But it is not with such thoughts that I prefer to think of Fiji and its people. Memory will always carry me back to the days when their many virtues and vices were their own, and a dignity of character was theirs which could not co-exist with the white settlements. I think of a land bright with flowers, and gay with the bloom of perpetual spring; of a little brown figure coquettishly braided with colored grasses, of her merry ways and words, of the delight I took in her simple stories of fairies and pixies, of the charm of her lithe form as she danced in the moonlight with her handmaidens, the fireflies like diamonds in

her hair, while I was intoxicated with the beauty and wonder of the scene; of the ripple of a low laugh, of the musical sound of words that died in a caress; and of the fresh fragrance of sea and mountain wafted on cool winds in the land of malua, where the people sat, "every man under his vine and under his fig-tree," and reaped the fruits of the earth almost without toil.

THE END.

APPENDIX.

I.

THE RELIGION OF OLD FIJI.

WITHIN the last 45 years more than 100,000 persons, or two-thirds of the whole population of Fiji, have abandoned their old gods, in obedience to new influences to which their country has been subjected during that period. Some account of the now rapidly departing religious beliefs of this people, supplementary to the information conveyed in the story, will be interesting to those who are curious in such matters.

GODS AND THEIR SHRINES.

The history of the higher class gods of Cannibal-land is the history, painted by poets and exaggerated by garrulous retailers of old traditions, of kings and chieftains, heroes and heroines, who, no less human than their worshippers, once walked this earth, fretting and fuming away their lives in it, though not without leaving behind some claim to be remembered by the generations of men, women, and children who were to come after them.

The study of Fijian mythology suggests that in past ages one great master-mind threw its influence over the untamed elements of destruction then at work upon the human race in this country, and subjected them to its will. Such a hero as the possessor of this power must have been, would before his death glory in having reached a position which enabled him to send out his sons and minions to represent him in all the conquered districts and islands of his empire. These deputy governors or chiefs in the course of time would grow as ambitious and heroic as their great and now deified ancestor. What he had laboriously worked up into one great whole, would at this point turn again towards disunion. The breaking-up process would have to be perpetuated in order to satisfy and satiate the wild and savage ambition of an ever-multiplying host of ungovernable aspirants after dominion. The ever-remembered "Great Father" would from the moment of his apotheosis continue to rise in the minds of each succeeding generation from mere

humanity to divinity, until at last he would be found, as he has been by us, in the throne of another but now unknown God, who preceded him. His sons and sons' sons, who had divided and subdivided every divisible part of the original kingdom among them, would at death ascend to godlike ranks in the spirit-world, and be regarded thereafter by the people they had governed as among their chief deities. As this god-creating work proceeded through each succeeding generation, the world of gods ere long came to be an almost perfect copy of the world of men, and followed all the vicissitudes of its fortune. So long as the nation continued to recede from unity, so long did its gods continue to increase, until the tribes, burning with an enthusiastic desire for divinities of every class and name, at length started on a furious race to see which at last should be able to boast the greatest number. The breaking-up of the nation produced new gods for each province. The division of the provinces called into the divine circles hosts who but just before, being only human, were both little and unknown. New gods sprang up with every slight addition to a tribe; a god was called into being with each new-born child, and every death added a god to the long since countless number.

Such was the character of Fiji's religion before the presence of the white man began to turn the current another way. While, politically, the nation was as a vessel shivered into a thousand pieces, religiously it was like one that had been dashed into a million atoms, which, though found without cohesion, were not without marks of having once cohered. Polytheism then was, and in many places still is, the religion of cannibal-land. But the term fails to express the thing to which by general consent it is applied, so infinitely numerous are the deities which have been crowded into the vast pantheon of the Fijian's imagination. Every nation, tribe, clan, and individual in Fiji vied one with another in making the most of their gods, and in seeking to hold them up as mighty and terrible facts. From a study of the attributes assigned to them by priests and people, it soon became evident that great and almost numberless differences existed. These, however, were not of such a nature as to prevent a classification of the gods. As the work of investigation proceeded these divinities arranged themselves in three interminably long and deep columns. The first may

be called aristocratic gods, the second middle-class gods, and the third democratic gods; not, however, meaning thereby that they are the gods of the several orders of people which these terms represent, but that among themselves they stand in these relative positions to each other.

Advancing to the phalanx of aristocratic gods, it is observable that it is composed of different ranks. Standing apart from it, yet looking towards it with dignified admiration, in serpent shrine, is the Great Father of the host, whose title to deity of the highest degree is universally acknowledged, and whose right to which no rival has ever risen throughout the heathen era powerful enough to wrest from him. So high above all others was this god, and so important were the many works he did for his cannibal children, that it will be necessary to devote some future space to him individually.

In the second but not much inferior rank of these nobles of the god-world, standing by themselves, are the sons of this Great Father. They are his own sons, who for unknown periods were his chief assistants and the generals of his armies; but in the onward flow of ages they climbed up, some by patient waiting and endurance, others by rebellious ambition, to thrones of power equal in their own eyes in everything but its extent to that of their grand-parent. Of this rank is the "Scrutinizer," variously know as the "Shiner," "Lord One-tooth," the "Seer," and the "Immovable." Temples were reared to him in every tribe for he was greatly to be feared. He was believed to be the cleverest of his class in the manipulation of that metamorphosing power which more or less distinguished these high divinities. At one time and place he would be seen as an enormous giant, awing the people by the ponderousness of his limbs and his heaven-towering head. The cloud-capped mountains were mole-hills to him, and the race of men who feared his nod, ants scrambling awkwardly up their sides. At another place and time he would be reported by his priests as an ugly dwarf, all head, aided in his miserable attempts to crawl about by thin long hands and arms and twisted trailing legs. To-day he would be met as a black man of the ordinary height, and to morrow as a red one. The next day he might be seen with a head of hair black, crisp, and shiny, like that worn by a great chief in the heyday of youth, and the day following with one crowned with the snows

of many years. Like the "enchanted horse," he could travel with wondrous swiftness, often transporting himself from the Windward to the Leeward Islands and back again in a time and manner utterly incomprehensible by the human mind. Were he only half as popular now as he used to be, he would challenge for speed that modern and infinitly more useful god of the white man—electricity. Great, however, as was his power to assume any form he pleased, it was nothing to that with which, as his first name implies, he looked into the minds of men, and made himself acquainted with all their doings.

The third and last order of this divine aristocracy includes all gods descended from the sons of the "great source" down to the third, fourth, fifth, and last generation. As time swept by, these gods scattered themselves like locusts over all the islands, eating up everything where they or their priests, which is the same thing, alighted, leaving their worshippers poor indeed. They insinuated themselves into every place which had not yet named them with reverence.

In the first rank of "middle class" deities are gods of no parentage. They have neither come down from the class above nor ascended from the one below them, but are an entirely unique and original order sprung from trees and from what the wise men of the land call their "mother earth." Numerically they are as formidable as any other army of gods whose history the poets and priests have handed down to us. To give an idea of the popular belief as to the origin of these powers, it will be enough to name a single example.

One day a man went off to his garden to dig some yams. Yams are grown in little cone-shaped hillocks from one to three feet high. On opening one of these mounds, expecting to find therein three or four fine yams, the man was struck dumb at seeing not yams, but a living being, who rose straight up out of the ground, and stood before him. What could the poor fellow do but at once adopt this genius as his God? and if he had an eye to business, as most Fijians have, when the business affects their own interests, what less would he be likely to do than to declare himself henceforth this earth-sprung God's duly appointed priest? All of which, whether predetermined or not, was accordingly done. In this way thousands of new Gods

have come to light, and as many cunning priests been self-ordained.

In the second rank of this "middle class" we have hero-gods. These are the deified spirits of generally acknowledged heroes. They take up their places of honour according to their earthly rank as chiefs and the deeds of valour they are believed to have done. Besides these, but far back in the shade behind them, are vast multitudes of human spirits, who, though far from being heroes in the highest meaning of that title, were nevertheless heroes in the limited circles in which they once moved, and to their own kinsfolk, by whom they were raised to the ranks of demigods, of no mean influence. These gods, while yet men in the world we live in, were heads of families or guardians, and only attained to the position they now adorn by complying with the condition which alone entitles them to it. This condition is that, after death, they visit the earth, and make such visit most unmistakably clear to their old friends.

In this middle class are also to be found goddesses. These do not appear to be so numerous as deities of the sterner sex, nor are they so often brought on the stage where cannibal divinities "have their exits and their entrances." Like their humbler sisters of human birth and mien, they are made to follow on behind, never coming to the front, except when placed there through the irresistible influence of surpassing beauty, or that law which, in cannibal land, brings a lady before the world in order to fix, by her own nobility, the precise legal degree of that of some chief of whom she is the honoured mother.

Coming now to the third and last great class, it may be noted that democratic gods are by far the most numerous, and the most difficult to arrange. These gods are everywhere and in everything. Each inhabits some favourite shrine, from the human body in all its stages and conditions before and after death down to the mosquito, which, by the way, is one of the most annoying and sanguinary little gods in Fiji. With regard to what the cannibal says about these gods there is a greater confusion of ideas and contradictory statements than are to be found clinging to the gods of the other classes. Our cannibal theologist tells us there is no object, animate or inanimate, which has not a spirit of its own. But this spirit, according to some, is not *the* God, for, say they, "every object is the shrine

of something more than its own spirit, even that of a genuine god." Here we enter further into the sphere of confusion and darkness, inasmuch as when we ask the old mythologies if every object has two spirits, its own and a god, or whether its own spirit is the god, their answers agree not. It may be either that the spirit of the object is the god, or that the god, being independent of both the object and its spirit, has only taken up his abode with them. This portion of the cannibal's creed leads to the conclusion that Fijian mythology points to a kind of pantheistic doctrine of this peculiar type, which, while it recognises god in everything, does not seem to recognise everything as a "part or particle of god."

Great respect was paid to shrines, which the people called the god's "covering." Indeed, the respect shown to the "covering" or "shell" often exceeded that given to the "covered," or the god in possession. From the chaos of opinions which the Fijian brain has cast up, it seems impossible to discover where the priests and people drew the line of demarcation, if they drew it at all, between the shrine and the enshrined. Whenever one met with the shrine of one of his gods he would offer it all the honours in his power, as if it were the actual god himself. He would, moreover, call the object his god. The Fijian was not a worshipper of idols of his own making, but of spirits which had taken up their abode in natural objects. Such worship was not, therefore, of the basest sort, seeing that while the apparent objects of it were shrines for the purpose of bringing divinity near and making it palpable, the real object was that divinity. Thus we see that, although the cannibal may in some sense be said to have lived by faith, inasmuch as he believed in the existence of spirit-gods, he did so through the medium of what was tangible, and which could not deprive him of the happiness of living by sight.

If, on the sudden appearance of his god, a devotee was not in a position to make a proper offering, he would not fail as the next best thing to make the "shout of respect" due to a great chief. Turbaned heads in respectful acknowledgment of their gods, would quickly uncover, and all ornaments would be removed from the person. Very pious men on finding a shrine would take it up, and carefully carry it home. Here they would deposit it in some part of the house, or in one of the

village temples: and, often stealing away to the spot where it lay, would address it in these or like words—"Oh, Sirs, great is our joy that you two," meaning the god and his shrine, "have been of so good a mind as to make your appearance in this gracious and unlooked for way to us, your unworthy and useless servants."

It is a crime to be visited with death for anyone to eat the shrine of his god. He, whose god is enshrined in a shark, turtle, duck, or what not, must for ever abstain, however pressed by hunger, from the sacrilegious deed. This is the reason why, in every kingdom, there were to be found persons to whom the eating of human flesh was an abomination. The shrine of their god was human. Funeral honours were not unfrequently paid to deceased shrines, which, whatever might be asserted or proved of the divinity within them, were themselves far from being immortal. The last remains of a divinely-honoured vase would be interred with every formality. Festivals would be held and offerings made *in memoriam* of the shrine which death had conquered, perhaps through the god deserting it, and sacred to the memory of the god himself, who, whether by his own act or not, was now shrineless.

Not only do shrines cease to be shrines, but gods to be gods, for some are said to be gods only so long as their popularity lasts. When this goes, divinity goes with it, but not immortality. The Fijians' belief in the immortality of spirit, whether that of a man or of a god, is, with some slight qualifications, a cardinal one. But "once a god, always a god," is not so, except as regards the "aristocratic gods," who are not easily thrown down from the pedestal of their divinity. All sorts of demigods, however, cease to be gods whenever the tribes serving them happen to be conquered in war and become the slaves of their conquerors. The gods of the victor thereupon take the place of those whose names were for ages "household words" ever on the lips of men, women, and children, who had suffered so much and fought so long to keep their independence, but who at last had helplessly failed.

Strange things are told of the way in which condign punishment overtakes those who slight, injure, or kill the shrines of their gods. The cock is the shrine of a god called by the natives who paid him homage "Fire-face," or "Fire-eye."

Should any worshipper of this god kill any of these sacred fowls, the avenger will some day suddenly appear before him in the shape of a real game bird, with awful spurs and wrathful eye, the departed spirit of the veritable fire-eyed chanticleer against whom the offence was committed. Flying full and furiously at his victim, he will leap upon his head and leave him hairless. The culprit's feet will also become divided and twisted, so as to assume the appearance of chicken's feet, claws and all included. No wonder that, not so very long ago, old priests might have been seen sitting at the low doorways of every spirit-house in the country, cautioning all and sundry, saying, "Oh ye chiefs and people, be sure you respect your gods, and never harm their shrines."

The patronage of all the gods was a thing most anxiously desired and sought by the people, who believed that these superior beings encouraged and governed their wars, made the yam crops good or bad, loaded the trees with fruit or blighted them, brought fish to their nets and human flesh to their ovens, and did a thousand and one other important things, but always on the clearly advertised condition that every divine command must be obeyed, the temples be kept in good repair, and the priests revered, feared, and well-cared for. The last part of the contract was by no means the least important, for between the gods and their priests there was believed to be the closest connection—hence the necessity to treat the priest with no less attention than that due to his god.

While it would seem to be quite true that certain of the lower-class gods are continually passing away into oblivion, as their popularity wanes or the people paying their homage die out, it is said to be no less true that gods of the first-class neither pass away nor change, but, strangers alike to the greenness of youth and the decay of age, are ever hale and strong. If such is the case with the aristocratic gods themselves, they certainly have not allowed it to be so with surrounding nature, upon which, as it would appear from the oldest traditions, they have played some most "fantastic tricks." The legends are full of exaggerated tales of great physical changes, which in the silent ages came again and again, gradually or suddenly, over the face of the country. At one period fields of pumice-stone are said to have been swept by

winds and ocean currents into the group from the south-east, and, settling at the foot of the hills of Eastern Great Fiji, helped in forming the foundation of the present extensive flats and deltas of rich alluvial soil, which, after feeding many generations of cannibals with yams and taro, are at last destined to put gold into the pockets of industrious sugar-growing settlers.

All the geological changes alluded to in the country's legends are attributed to the miraculous power of the old gods. Here some mighty divinity, influenced by the spirit of revenge, has dug down the tops of cone-shaped hills that were carrying their heads too high. In the laborious undertaking he conveyed away the earth in enormous baskets slung at the ends of a long pole resting on his Herculean shoulders, as the manner of bearing heavy burdens sometimes is in Fiji. Dropping portions of this earth as he passed along the shores of the larger islands, he caused to grow up therefrom many of those lovely islets which add charm to charm, and give to scenery in the South Seas such enchantment. In this and that place, reefs and portions of reefs that were in the way, roaring too loud, or offering too many advantages to an enemy, have been kicked further off, broken down, had gaps knocked in them where gaps were dreaded, or stopped up where they were most prized, while rocks and points of land have been altogether submerged; and all by the passionate, capricious, miracle-working gods of this people, who, more perhaps than any other savage race on the earth's face, were "in all things eminently religious."

Tortuous and dark as all this of necessity is, it helps us to increase our knowledge of the cannibal and his religion; while the fractions of scientific truth, though conveyed in broken echoes from dark and unexplorable caverns, tell us of changes which the forces of nature have made in this southern world—changes so stupendous that the unphilosophising brain of the cannibal could not allow them to be forgotten, but must needs report them in the history of every god, interlace them with the inventions of every legend, and embalm them in the wild effusions of every poet.

II.

CHIEF OF GODS AND MEN.

DENGEH (spelt Degei in Fijian) is chief of gods and men. The tops of the "Screw-pine Hills" on the north side of Viti Levu are his abode, and a serpent is his shrine. Two of the most sacred and prominent objects in cannibal mythology are the screw-pine or pandanus tree and the snake. The best emblems of the old religion of the country would be a fine screw-pine with red, ripe fruit at its top, a large snake coiled up asleep under its supporting roots, and a fine bright-feathered cock, its legs decorated with pure white cowrie shells, close by, crowing away with all his might to wake the dreaded sleeper. Fiji adds another to the already long list of countries in which the serpent was either worshipped or regarded in various degrees with reverential awe.

Dengeh was the acknowledged father of all gods next in rank to himself, and, through these, of other ranks. He was likewise the creator of men. We are told in some of the legends that although he was the generally admitted father of all, yet he himself had an ancestor. But this seems very much like an afterthought of some of our cannibal historians, who can never rest till they succeed in tracing the precise ancestral line of everybody worthy of notice. While the priests of inferior and more modern deities told the people that the fathers of their gods were such and such great heroes, the priests of Dengeh made reply on his behalf by pointing triumphantly to a rock which lay in the bed of a stream in the immediate neighborhood of the god's mountain. "That stone," said they, "is his father." This, doubtless, was symbolical, and the symbols, a snake and a rock (in their interpretation) are one and the same. If the serpent is the universal emblem of eternity, not less so of uninterrupted duration is the rock. The name Dengeh has been defined to mean immortal. The Fijians have been heard to say of an old man distinguished for his extreme age and undiminished strength, "He is as immortal as Dengeh." Others have maintained that the original meaning of the word is "to shake," as when an eggshell is shaken. This is backed up by the statement that whenever the god turns about or trembles in his cave the earth shakes

and quakes exceedingly. His priests imitated him in this habit of shaking. The Fiji world was, no doubt, very "shaky" at one time—so much so that Dengeh, in all likelihood, never turned or shook without causing an earthquake. There are slight shocks even now, especially on the western end of what is called the "great land," but their force is not what it was when Fiji was less of an island country than it is to-day, and Dengeh was without a rival. The Fijian believed that the shaking of his serpent-enshrined god was as much a fact as the shaking of the ground under his feet, and he believed that the latter was but one of the many natural effects of the former. To him, therefore, Dengeh was inferior in nothing to a god of greater pretensions and far greater race, the

"Mighty Poseidon . . .
Who shakes the world with his earthquakes."

There was a periodical shaking of the god which was anything but calamitous, for a whole train of blessings followed it, and its non-occurrence, while always deprecated, had sometimes to be most deeply deplored. The cannibal was sure that when Dengeh shook the earth by shaking himself, the rains descended in their season; when he shook it again the fruit trees became laden with luscious fruit; and yet again, behold the yam crops grew to be the finest ever seen. When, unhappily, Dengeh stopped shaking there came a change over the face of the earth, and its people began to fade and perish. By these teachings we are able to enter the cannibal mind, and to read therein his recognition of the kindly revolution of the seasons, and of the wakeful presence of some hidden but competent power to keep those seasons ever moving round.

But there is a nearer approach to the true signification of this god's name in a word found in one of the older and now almost obsolete dialects, the dialect of the land of poetry, where most of the songs and other compositions were produced, and whence they were issued from a Fijian Grub-street or Paternoster-row, though in oral publications instead of printed volumes. The discovered word is—as pronounced—Dengehah. This word is a verb, meaning "to plant, to stick firmly in the ground." The god's name, Dengeh, is the passive participle of the verb, and signifies "planted," &c. After hearing all that the priests had to declare about the attributes of their ancient deity, we see at

once the clear appropriateness of this hitherto unexplained name —"The Planted One," "He That is Set Up," "The Established." On this point there is more agreement than is usually discoverable in the legends of savage races.

One explanation teaches us to regard Dengeh as the great shaker, shaking the earth to cause certain natural and periodical results. A second explanation connects this shaking with the god's serpentine shrine, in which we see the emblem of eternity. A third requires us to believe that the god had a great father, whom we are directed to see in a rock, the symbol of that which is everlasting; while a fourth leads us to gaze on what is immovably set up. Such consistency in the mythology of a savage race is somewhat remarkable. It forces us to the admission that the cannibal mind had a pretty fair notion, considering how absolutely that mind was shut up within itself, of what the work and attributes of a god ought to be.

Dengeh was not always what he now is. He has undergone a change of form and abode. The reason given in the biographical legends for the first change is that in very ancient times, when living on the beach as a great chief, in human shrine, of course, another god made war upon him; whereupon, in order to teach his enemy a lesson he should never forget, he let in the ocean from the north over all the lower lands, and, Dutchman-like, swamped the impudent invader, he himself taking refuge in the hills that form the immediate background to that part of the country, and which became his permanent dwelling-place. It was at this time that he changed his appearance. "Once upon a time," so goes the tale, "when viewing himself in Nature's own looking-glass, clear water, he was unfortunate enough to discover for the first time, and much to his disgust, that he was repulsively ugly. Talking to himself, he said, "Lest I be hated by all men for my ugliness I will retire to the hollow places on the mountain tops." He did so, and thenceforward lived in a serpent shrine; "For," added he, continuing the soliloquy, "if I remain in the form of a man I shall be despised, but if I assume that of a snake, everybody will fear and obey me." The inundation from the sea named in this legend may be the grain of truth which at the time was thought to be worth preserving. The other parts of the story suggest that the cannibals' ideal of a superior deity was once far higher

and nearer perfection than it has since grown to be. At one time it was a purer hero-worship, which, instead of gradually ascending to something still higher, began at some undiscoverable turning-point to take a downward course, deteriorating from its great ideal—a glorious conqueror—first to an invaded and retreating warrior, then to a miserable craven, and last of all to a crawling reptile, seeking to do by the terror which his outward shape inspired what in better days he had accomplished by heroic wisdom and courage. In pointing out the changes said to have come over the people's god, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that these changes were rather in the people themselves than in their god. Hence, much that is attributed to him, while purely fabulous, will, if interpreted as concerning them, be simply historical.

Dengeh is a god of wrath. His ire burns at times with dire effect. He often punishes his offending people, one year by blighting their crops, another by floods that carry everything before them, and a third by hurricanes, which not only strip the trees of their fruits, but utterly destroy the trees themselves, and blow away houses and temples and everything else capable of being blown away. Such a god would surely find it an easy thing to destroy man from off the face of the earth. The legends tell us that he actually attempted something of the sort on a small scale when his two mischievous sons once so successfully tried their eye and hand on their father's sacred bird, which every morning was in the habit of waking the god by its crowing. For the never-forgiven crime of shooting this pet-bird, the old god visited the country with a flood, which washed away every place where the refugees sought shelter. The criminal twin-brothers drifted at last into the Rewa district, where they became the patron deities of that most important branch of industry in Fiji, canoe-building, which, from the date of the catastrophe that brought it such high patronage, has flourished amazingly, and outstripped every other industry for which the country is noted.

Some have regarded this legend as a traditionary account of Noah's flood, but there is nothing to support that view. The tradition itself is not one of the oldest productions of the Fijian brain. The flood was a local one, and many places not more than 60ft. above the usual river level remained untouched by

it. The Bau kingdom was already a power in Fiji, yet it is well-known that this power did not begin to rise in importance till towards the end of the last century. Floods in some districts are also almost of yearly occurrence, and they form the subject of a torrent of legends. The nature of the sacred bird to revenge whose death the flood was sent has been wrapped in a good deal of mystery. In the old legends the bird has what is clearly an onomatopoetic name. It is spelt "Turukawa," and pronounced "Toorookawwah." Now let anyone pronounce it thus in a somewhat drawling manner, and see if he cannot recognise in the tones a resemblance to the voice of the bird that wakes the village before the dawn. It is plain from other legends that the bird was a bright-colored cock. His legs are represented as being covered with large white cowrie shells, and his feathers as being so abundant that when one wing only was plucked they rose up and covered the mountain tops like a dense fog. In times of drought and famine Dengeh was supplicated with costly offerings. The priests would beseech him to send forth his greatest ambassador and foreman of works, Breadfruit by name, to mass up the clouds for rain, or cause the yam plantations to flourish, or ripen the fruits, or do any other good work to meet the most widely-pressing want of the times.

The demi-gods were the offspring of later and corrupter ages. How corrupt may be imagined from legends which tell us that men were not wanting who, dissatisfied with the god or gods that were, would start on god-hunting expeditions, hoping to find something nearer their notions of what a god should be —a being more worthy of their homage, and more likely to bestow upon them his favors. There was a chief named King of the Little Water. One day, after due thought on the subject, this chief became convinced that the gods his fathers had told him about were not only too few, but they were not the kind of gods he needed and must have. Moreover, he had a selfish object in view in seeking an additional master. Impelled by these motives, he one day made a rush to the hills, on reaching which he began to run hither and thither, shouting wildly as he ran, "Who will be my god? Who will be my god? Ho! ho! Who lives here? Who will be my god? Ho!" But no voice answered. The king of the Little Water rushed down again to the beach, where, repeating the cries, he was at last answered

by a snake. Uncoiling from sleep, this snake replied, "Why are you calling me? I will be thy god. I! I! I will be thy god!" Whereupon the indefatigable god-hunter ceased his ravings, adopted the common snake as his god, and, which was the chief object he had in view, was in his turn appointed priest.

In Dengeh's most flourishing days his priests were a numerous and wealthy body. Pilgrims from all parts of the group were in the habit of visiting them during important crises, in order to consult the greatest known oracle in Cannibal-land. The canoes of these pilgrims were generally well laden with every kind of Fijian property, such as clubs, spears, sacred shells, kava-root, native cloth, and, in later times, whales' teeth, and other riches from the ships of the white man. It was the custom for the priests to throw many of these offerings into Dengeh's caves on the Screw-pine Hills, some to remain there for ever, and others to be taken out again no doubt as soon as possible after the visitors were fairly out of sight. Whether this was done in every case or not it is certain that the greater portion of the gifts were never taken up to the hills at all, being the undisputed fees and perquisites of the priestly office. Those articles that were thrown to the god and not subsequently abstracted from the sacred treasury, were left either to rot or to remain in undisturbed quiet till the foot of the white man crashed in upon the tall reed grass, and his native guides brought them once more into the light in various stages of decay.

In some of the sayings reported by poets and priests as Dengeh's own, resurrection gleams appear here and there, but only very dimly, as in this one:—"In far back times when a certain corpse had lain a long period in the grave, Dengeh gave orders for it to be disinterred, but the people refused to obey. He commanded again and again, but only to be disobeyed. Whereupon he said, "Very well; do it not. Had you done what I desired, the dead body would have been restored to life, and all flesh should thereafter have taken part in a resurrection. But since you have refused to disinter this one body, all your bodies shall die once and for ever." In this death of the body the cannibal philosopher firmly believes.

From all that is discoverable to the contrary in the mythical

accounts of Dengeh, it would seem that this god, in whose existence the Fijian had such strong faith, did at some unknown period of that existence become enshrined in the person of a great and powerful chief, probably the most wonderful man and greatest hero ever known in cannibal-land. From the time of this enshrinement till the kingdom began to decline, the interests of god and chief were one; but afterwards, when men began to regard this union as less powerful than formerly, and something which they might even venture to disregard, Dengeh left the human for the serpent form, in order to retain his influence over them and, if possible, stay the work of ruin. Of course these changes are the inventions of the priests, and not the result of any action or revelation on the part of the god himself. The lowering of the god to a hero and the raising of the hero to be one with the god, are acts perfectly consistent with cannibal mythology, in which we discover a religion that, if on its upward path of improvement, compels us to wonder greatly at its progress, seeing it has climbed to where the object of the people's best thoughts and worship is seen clothed in god-like attributes and widely spoken of as the "Model Inventor," the "Creator and True Appreciator of Beauty," the "Giver of Good Things for Man's Good and Evil Things for his Correction," the "Great Earth-shaker" for the earth's special benefit, and the "Rock" that knows no decay. But if, as is more probable, this religion when found by us, was on its road to ruin, our astonishment need be none the less, for then we see the soul of it struggling hard against ever-growing corruption to hold fast its first possession, or at least the next best representative of it as developed in the highest models among the worshippers themselves—the worship of Genius and Power.

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