

Jottings during the cruise of H.M.S. Curacoa among the South Sea Islands in 1865.

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MBAU AND VITI-LEVU.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

1 Erskine, p. 186.

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

3 Erskine, p. 292.

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

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

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

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



'THE GREAT KAVA BOWL OF FIJI.' See "Ethnophotos Not Owned".

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

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

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

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

There is a hillock in the centre of the island, on which is the mission house, and below is the dancing-ground, where in the old time were held war and licentious dances, accompanied by the murder of prisoners and by cannibal feasts. The ground, smooth and hard from the tread of thousands of feet, is overshadowed by a great banyan tree, into the thick trunk of which a slab of stone four or five feet square is sunk, and forms a sort of table. This tree is the *Akau-tabu*, the sacred tree, or, the tree with the forbidden fruit.¹ Before cooking the victims, sometimes even before their death, certain parts of the bodies of both sexes used to be cut off, and hung in the branches of this tree, which was sometimes perfectly loaded with this singular and repulsive fruit. Behind this is a row of slabs of stone erect, with their lower ends embedded in the ground, one of which was used for dashing out the brains of the victims. Thakumbau, before his conversion, has been known to amuse himself by catching up by the heels the children of his enemies, and flinging them at the slabs with his own hands. The same sportive old fellow, on one occasion, cut out the tongue of a captive chief, who had used it to beg for a speedy death, and jocosely ate it before his face. Some officers of our ships were shown another braining stone situated in a different

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

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

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

¹ 'Viti' by Dr. Seemann, p. 179.

me to intercede for him. I did so ; when the chief dismissed the case briefly, saying, ' Tell him that no one hate

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 Seemann, p. 247.

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

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

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

The cultivation of cotton has now become the principal

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

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

Cocoa-nut fibre can be supplied in any quantity.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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