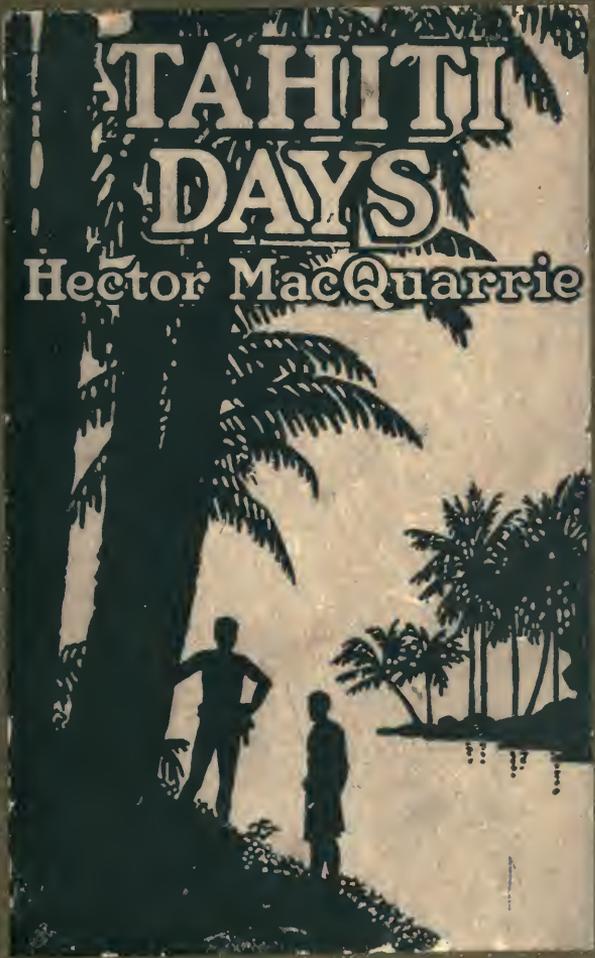


TAHITI DAYS

Hector MacQuarrie





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TAHITI DAYS

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BY

HECTOR MACQUARRIE

AUTHOR OF "HOW TO LIVE AT THE FRONT",

"OVER HERE", ETC.

ILLUSTRATED



NEW YORK

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TO
EVA ELLEN LAING
WITHOUT WHOM THIS BOOK
COULD NOT HAVE BEEN WRITTEN

1052044

FOREWORD

With an uncertain spot on one of my lungs, and feeling hopeless and ill, I went to the South Seas to get well. I did.

H. MACQ.

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YOU'RE NO LONGER ONE OF SIX MILLION; YOU'RE
 THE WHITE MAN—*THE WHITE MAN*
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TAHITI DAYS

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CHAPTER I

THE CARPET

COME step onto my carpet!

We're going to the South Seas, to the islands you've read about, sitting before the fire at night time, when the rain, beating on the window panes, and the sound of the wind, shrieking through the trees in the garden, have not prevented your mind from wandering to some "Island of Tranquil Delight," where in fancy you've lain 'neath the shade of a breadfruit tree, dozing to the soft chatter of natives. Or on the deck of some snowy-white schooner, lying at full length on the counter, a fair trade wind has driven you over a tropical sea to the palm-clad island on the horizon, where a warm welcome awaits you from the gentle Polynesians.

You're no longer one of six million; you're the white man—*the* white man.

Yes, you'll come with me; I know it, especially if you're a poor fellow condemned to spend your lifetime in a great city—to work, to eat, to sleep.

and then to work again. How I'd love to take you with me in reality across the Atlantic in the *Olympic* or the *Mauretania*, in a Pullman from New York to San Francisco, where we'd catch the old *Moana* or the *Paloona* for Tahiti—a gateway to the isles of the South.

But I cannot; you cannot spare the time; there's the wife and kiddies, your old age and their future, and the semi-detached house at Ealing or Wimbledon. It *can* be only a dream. But let's pretend; let's make the dream as real as possible. But don't forget that the fairy land of the South Seas, as the Kingdom of Heaven, is likened unto a little child.

So step onto my carpet! It isn't a magic carpet, really. But it's woven with the threads of sheer delight, manufactured with inexpert craftsmanship, but held up with the bands of love—love for you, my fellow traveller.

We'll not worry about geography, ethnology, nor geology—hard words—but we'll be distressingly casual and very lazy.

And you won't look at the carpet with the eyes of criticism—it is *strong*, you're quite safe—but, tempering your criticism with gentleness, you'll look through these eyes of mine at the things that I have seen and loved.

We won't see the defects of our hosts, the natives; we won't notice that some of the women have “loins to bear a world” or that sometimes

their arms are like “legs of mutton” and that their breasts are “like large cabbages.” No, we’ll be very polite, like our hosts, and see only the charming things.

Then I’ll pluck oranges from the trees near the wayside; I’ll send a few dark-skinned little boys running up cocoanut palms to get cocoanuts for you to drink, *poppihare*; I’ll give you flowers to place in your hair, for such is the fashion; I’ll place beads around your neck, red ones and yellow; and if you want bananas, not the cold hard sort you have always eaten, but soft, delicious bananas, creamy and white, you shall have them; and if you feel like a lime drink, for the climate is warm, if you’d like to make your face all sticky with a mango, and if you’d really like to try some breadfruit fresh from the earthen oven, just say the word and they’re yours.

I’m going to take you for a trip on a schooner—you’ll be dreadfully seasick—but we’ll see natives diving for pearls, and other unusual things, and when you return to the office tomorrow you’ll forget the seasickness.

So step onto my carpet! That’s right! Now we’re off.

We are in New Zealand, waiting for the old *Paloona* to get her cargo on board. There’s been a strike in Wellington, the seaport from which we must start for the Cook Islands, and the old ship has been delayed.

We're going to try Raratonga first; if we get bored we'll move off to some other island. We've got at least six months at our disposal, and if we don't feel absolutely fit at the end of six months we may have to stay longer.

Now for the *Paloona*.

CHAPTER II

THE *PALOONA*

ABOUT thirty years ago the *Paloóna* was a smart ship trading between Wellington and Melbourne. In those days people actually desired to travel on her; she was fast; she was a steady sea boat; her passenger accommodation was marked by a certain luxury and some beauty; she was new, and consequently free from cockroaches; and, above all, in those days she was considered large.

When I fell with a sickening thud on to her—I had meant to walk on board in a dignified manner, but the gangplank slipped, or did something peculiar—I decided then and there that she was an exceedingly old and very dirty ship. Even after a nine days' journey, during which time I made several good friends, my original impression remained. It still remains; so does the scent of the *Paloona's* past history, with which she was permeated from stem to stern.

Actually, the *Paloona* is a steamer of about fifteen hundred tons. The lines of her hull are pretty, but the arrangement of her funnel and masts is not good. They don't scan—like bad lines in a verse—for the funnel is too big, and

the masts are small. The war gave her a fresh lease of life, otherwise her cabins would have been torn out, her portholes blocked, and the old ship condemned to carrying coal from Westport to Wellington. There is something fine and magnificent in your typical cargo carrier, and even the collier may wear an air of prosperous efficiency, but the transformed passenger steamer merely moves one to pity. There's an impression of age, of blindness—of senility.

While travelling on a modern liner has many advantages, there is something to be said for sailing on a poor ship. Travel in a poor ship and you will generally travel alone. You will get to know the captain, the ship's officers, the engineers, and you may even attain a working friendship with the purser. Choose the largest ship on the line, whose great funnels fairly belch forth smoke and importance, but say good-bye to peace and quietness.

It is two-thirty; you're enjoying a short snooze before tea time; there's nothing to worry about, no telegrams nor letters; but what is that noise that disturbs your dreams? It's a voice, perhaps female, but it sounds raucous. "Is this your cabin, Mr. Jones?" it says. You curse, let us hope, under your breath, and murmur kindly, "Oh, yes, Miss Travers, this is—er—my cabin." "I hate to disturb you, but it's your turn to play off the deck billiards; the *others* are waiting."

She disappears and returns to three impatient young enthusiasts on deck, as you imagine. Then you fling yourself out of your berth, brush your hair a little, noting the pallor of your otherwise healthy face, you damn more than once, and then, running along the alleyway, you mount the stairs and find Miss Travers talking to a fat gentleman in flannels. The other lady is coming soon, and after a time she does come, and off you go with the deck billiards.

There are always certain leaders of men on big liners in the Pacific. They run the sports committee; they manage the concert, invariably leaving out some keen amateur artiste; they grow unpopular, and hit back; and on the whole they are excellent people, but, frankly, a nuisance.

Travelling on the Pacific is peculiar. It's all right from Vancouver to Honolulu, all goes cheerily from Honolulu to Fiji, but after Fiji, look out. Your liver is quite normal from Vancouver to Honolulu, it sleeps quietly in the warm sunshine from Honolulu to Fiji, but it wakes up with a sudden start in the cool waters of the Tasman Sea. Then things begin to happen. Miss Travers learns to hate Miss Jones, friends of each party join in, and there is sometimes much unpleasantness which reaches a climax when Mrs. Burlington-Riser asks all the handsome young men on the ship to dine at her table, and, after giving them cocktails, has a merry evening.

And you will surely call a New Zealander an Australian and he may become forcible and explain with a highly unnecessary amount of warmth that he is not. The Australian will tell you about "our harbour" and you won't want to see it. You will feel that God had little to do with its manufacture, but rather that your Australian friend made it himself. Still it is well to add here, that, if good fortune ever takes you to Sydney Harbour, you will realize that your Australian friend has done justice neither to himself nor Port Jackson. He has preserved it with loving care, refusing to allow commercial utility to ruin a single charming cove. His houses on the water front are like patches on the face of a beautiful woman; they point out beauty; they seldom mar it. And no one can describe Sydney Harbour adequately—the bluest of water, filling the daintiest little inlets fringed with the greenest of semi-tropical foliage, and above all the great cliffs of pink limestone which rise up behind the harbour. And even though I'm a New Zealander, and regard the Waitemata Harbour at Auckland as possessing even more possibilities of loveliness, if the Aucklanders thought more of beauty than they do of commerce, I must salute Port Jackson—the most beautiful harbour in the world—at present. The last two words are meant as a hint to my own city of Auckland.

But to return to the *Paloona*, upon whose

worn and soiled decks I paraded day after day until we reached Raratonga. There were few passengers, and these were good fellows. There were no women on board!

After a rough day off the New Zealand coast we came into quiet waters and it was possible to study the passengers, the officers, and the engineers who dined in the saloon.

The captain had found by experience that the people who usually travelled on the *Paloona* were inferior. Perhaps it was this that prompted him to have the two places on each side of him vacant. At any rate one had to talk to him across an arid waste of white table cloth.

As the journey progressed his chin grew darker and darker until he developed an excellent beard. There can be no objection to a man having a beard, but there is nevertheless something unfitting, profane and irreligious about its slow exuberance. This captain, like many another on the Pacific, writes; and it is well to warn you about this. If one of them asks you to his cabin to play chess, don't be deceived. He'll read you his manuscript, which may be quite good, or it may not; it will certainly be mixed; and you will be forced to lie. There are some fine merchant marine commanders in the Pacific, but it is difficult for them to keep a good perspective of men and things. For they consort with the great, and only the great satisfy

them. Hence there is some snobbishness in their point of view.

Like the mace to a Lord Mayor, so is a captain to a white linen fronted profiteer as he walks pompously into the dining saloon, taking his place on the right hand side of the captain. "Fine run today, captain," he says.

There are big moments in the lives of some people, and big cheques in the pockets of chief stewards, but never quite so big as they expect.

Mr. French sat on my left. Heaven only knows where he came from; but the devil will soon be hard at work preparing an oven for him if he isn't more careful. A circular saw in a timber mill removed very quickly the half of one of his fingers, and so mutilated the muscles actuating one of the others that it is compelled always to point. This, a low person remarked, was the only straight part of him. Mr. French winters at Raratonga, but on the whole prefers the Tongan girls. He is nearly seventy, but he delights in telling young men about all the sensual things he knows of in the Islands. Poor old fellow; he was trying to re-live his own life again.

Then there was Mr. Renton. Mr. Renton comes from Melbourne and can talk with some brilliance upon almost any subject; but high finance is his particular joy. Still, when he chatted about New Guinea and the Straits Settlements, one sat and listened while the hours went by very quickly.



AUCKLAND HARBOUR—THE WAITEMATA

The dim outline of land in the distance is Rangitoto, a comparatively recent, though now extinct volcanic island. From a spot near the garden in the foreground I watched the American fleet on its world-encircling tour, before the great War, slowly steam round the head in the middle distance. You, perhaps, can imagine the wonder of the scene. Few of us watching, dreamt that the mighty ships would outlive the beautiful point, jutting into the harbour, upon which we stood. Yet, it is rumoured, this park-like point, called Campbell's Point, is now already being removed, in order that a hideous railway line may have more convenient exit from the city!



SYDNEY HARBOUR FROM GOVERNMENT HOUSE

After seven days of storm and wind in the Tasman Sea; after seven days of enforced communion with two fat, elderly and weak sea-legged gentlemen who shared my cabin, I looked through a tiny port hole, and I saw Sydney Harbour. Having seen, its beauty is now a possession—a vision of rich green and blue, veiled in softest pink. I sigh for a better photograph, but no camera can do better than insult the gorgeous beauty of Port Jackson.

Still I wondered why he disguised, under a futile form of undeceptive bombast, the nature that God and a good mother had given him. He was apt to say occasionally that Australia would be there. "Australia will be there" often ends the highly patriotic verses sung in the Pantomimes in Australia. It is often heard, it is always felt, and we in New Zealand wonder unkindly what it means. But we decide that at some great climax of a successful nature, some great crisis, amongst the important persons present Australia will be well represented.

And seriously, she will "be there," for she is a wonderful, and in parts a beautiful, country, which is surely producing a nation that the future will have to take into account. For the Australian is a generous hearted man, young and sensitive it is true, but always lovable to those who understand him.

We will not discuss Mr. Renton any further except by saying that it was very easy to like him for he was an excellent fellow and a sociable liar.

On Mr. Renton's right sat an American boy who was strangely silent. He seldom uttered a word, but willingly passed nuts and other food when required to do so by the pressing needs of others.

Then there was Mr. Welch. Mr. Welch is a small, slightly built, good looking young New Zealander with a mole or beauty spot on his face.

He is very broad minded, and used to be the purser on the *Paloona*, when he had many romances, which he divulged shamelessly. He has now beaten a strategic retreat into commerce, being on his way to collect agencies. He will succeed in America, because he is a nice boy; he likes the Americans, and will possibly advertise this; and he will return to New Zealand a little wiser, not so nice, and I suspect he will become rich. He often talks about a person called his "pater" which is, I understand, the Latin for father. "Pater" is a man of means. I gathered that his mother is a large woman. She's none the worse for this.

Then at the very foot of the table, far from the captain, though not from choice, sits the fireman, and one is confronted by the extraordinary spectacle of a fireman sitting at the same table with the captain in the Union Steamship Company. "Shades of Trotsky and Lenine," you will shout, "How can this be!" It is peculiar, but there is an explanation.

At this time, towards the end of the war, firemen were scarce on the Pacific Coast of America, and a cargo ship of the Union Steamship Company was held up in San Francisco through the unwillingness of any American to take on the job. However, upon condition that he received a first-class passage back to America, this fellow, a Pennsylvania Dutchman, incidentally, volunteered. And so our fireman. He was a huge, magnifi-

cently built fellow, and it never occurred to him for a moment that his conversation, in broad Pennsylvanian Dutch-English, hurled from one end of the table into the unwilling ears of the captain, annoyed and distressed that gentleman. It did, however, for the captain's head, as he bent over his plate, denoted detachment. The last I heard of the fireman, and this describes him well, was that the American naval inspector boarding the *Paloona* asked him if he were a German, and woke up two days afterwards, seeing stars, and badly wounded between the eyes. If untactfulness were always rewarded in this manner, port authorities and their satellites would be a polite race of persons. I heard later that the fireman had been cast into gaol by civilian authority, and that after the honour of the civic authorities had been satisfied, the navy sought his blood. And I know that he did not care. He enjoyed a crisis, and was quite willing to take what was coming to him.

All the officers were decent fellows, but Joe, the chief mate, was the finest. He played bridge shockingly, with a recklessness that has destroyed the fortunes of many another man. But since we were merely playing for drinks, Joe generally succeeded in guessing what the hand of his partner contained. He must have liked the colour of hearts for he went two hearts without internal evidence to assist him. In big moments he dashed

into two no trumps, flung away a few tricks, but sometimes won.

But Joe smelt of the sea, not your civilized sea which merely lifts the haughty tail of a liner and then passes by conquered and beaten, but the sea which rises and fights the old wind jammer, or "wind bag" as Joe called her—the mighty sea, the wonder of the deep, that men fear when they "go down to the sea in ships," the sea that makes men "reel to and fro and stagger like a drunken man" that causes them to long for the haven, "where they would be," the sea that makes men rough, but gentle.

"I'll go two 'haarts'" he would say confidently while his opponents took courage and his partner feared greatly.

The chief engineer—a decent, quiet man—used to sit and chat, but, in newspaper parlance, he never succeeded in "putting his information across." Still his voice was soothing.

That chief had no tact. Let me tell you a story that happened months afterwards. I was in Papeete when the *Paloona*, after a stormy voyage, put into port. The engineers had had a trying time with useless, inefficient firemen and the third, a great strong youth from Westport, had found it difficult not to kill a few of them. He had been compelled to do some firing himself, and when the ship finally got into Papeete he became roaring drunk. He was not the sort of young man who



THE LANDING PLACE AT RARATONGA

The thin line of surf in the middle distance marks the reef. The shallow water in the foreground is the reef sheif. On many islands water in this relation to the shore is deep, forming a commodious harbour. The steamer on the right is the "Moana," that on the left the wrecked "Maitai".



RARATONGA

The white houses mark the outskirts of the main village of Awarua. The photograph is taken from the leaning decks over the rail of the wrecked "Maitai." The rock-like object upon which the surf is breaking is the bow of a great steel barque which came ashore some years ago.



*By Courtesy of the American Museum
of Natural History, New York*

A RARATONGAN WOMAN IN NATIVE DRESS OF BEATEN HIBISCUS BARK

This woman, in spite of her heavy lips and flattened nose, should give a fair impression of the kindness and benignity of the Raratongan native. If you were to step ashore at Raratonga, and if your appearance pleased her, she would promptly remove the coronet of tiny shells from her head, the beads would come clattering from around her neck, and with the gentlest smile in the world she would give them to you. If you were to express admiration for her robe of hibiscus, she would promptly run into the nearest house and returning arrayed in the conventional "mother hubbard," she would also offer you the hibiscus robe.

could get drunk gracefully; alcohol, villainous rum for the most part in Papeete, turned him into a wild beast.

I was sitting quietly in the room of the Chief when this tornado of angry emotions entered the little room. He loved the chief and consequently confided his firm intention of challenging the whole crew of firemen to mortal combat. "I'll fight the whole bloody lot," he said, "yes, the whole bloody lot." I felt convinced that several people would be in hospital that night if they were not laid out in the local morgue, so I determined to remain silent and inconspicuous.

The chief reasoned with him, and the second, a good fellow whom all loved and respected, tried to effect a compromise. Mad drunk men hate compromise. It is neck or nothing with them. Hell-fire, smoke, killing, murder-destruction alone satisfies them. Things looked bad when suddenly the chief thought of me. "Here's a fellow who has been fighting the Germans; aren't you ashamed to behave like this in front of him?" I looked mildly at the young man.

"Would he like to fight *me*?" he exclaimed with the joy of battle in his eyes.

I said never a word.

"Let me look at his face," he said, and coming over to my corner he gently drew my face under the light while I smiled stupidly. "Fair dinkum *

* Fair dinkum—an Australasian colloquialism for honest.

eyes," he remarked decidedly "but, my Gawd, what a mouth!" The crisis passed, the young man left the room, went out into the town, half killed an innocent Chinaman, kissed a native girl, and then fell into the arms of five gendarmes who placed him in gaol, much to the regret of the native girl.

And so the days passed, pleasant lazy days, so that it was with some regret that we saw a cone-like mountain rising out of the sea in the distance. It was Raratonga, and packing my bags I felt a little miserable at leaving my friends. For the only moss a rolling stone manages to gather he treasures—human friendship, of which there is more in the world than most people suspect.

CHAPTER III

RARATONGA

TO SIGHT an island on the horizon and to arrive sufficiently close to the reef to land are two very different things. It all depends upon the height of the island, and the degree of visibility obtaining.

We sighted Raratonga at noon, but it was not until sunset that we came to anchor on the edge of the fringing reef. Indeed we were fortunate in being able to land that night, for the captain was as doubtful about landing as the purser, the chief steward and the chief mate were convinced that he was much too careful, and, indeed, rather an old woman. It was easy to understand the captain's doubts, for it is a risky operation to anchor a steamer on the edge of a submerged reef at night time, when a false reading of the shore lights will land his steamer with a thud on the reef proper, where she will remain for years in the calm water long after he has been broken. For the powers that be in the merchant marine seldom forgive a mistake.

At Raratonga there is no decent reef-locked lagoon with a passage through which a steamer

may pass in the hands of a competent pilot. There is merely—on the leeward side—a fringing reef, bearing on its lip a wide expanse of shallow water. However, at the landing place, a stream rushing down from the mountain apparently prevents the coral insect from building up to the surface, and the reef is submerged for a space of about three hundred yards. A steamer, guided by signals, slowly steams onto the submerged reef and drops her anchor. If she doesn't get quite on to the reef, she loses her anchor and much cable; if she goes too far, a slight alteration in the wind or tide will swing her onto the reef, where she will join the remains of several other ships.

At the moment, the R. M. S. *Maitai* is on the reef. She has been there for two years, and it is expected that ten or fifteen will pass before she breaks up and joins the grinning bones of a steel barque just beside her. She arrived from San Francisco one night, and anchored on the reef. She had a large cheerful crowd of passengers, and others were joining her from Raratonga. The port doctor was enjoying refreshment with a few of the officers in the bar, when suddenly there were peculiar thuds heard, and the engine bells rang out. Her propellers churned up the water. They churned up the water for hours, but the *Maitai* is still there, looking perfectly whole and well, but her cylinders sub-

merged, and her hold full of motorcycles and other desirable things, but chiefly dirty water.

You can go on board her with some risk, for the ladder up her side is growing rotten, and you will see everything almost as it was left—bathrooms, bedrooms, the galley with pots and pans still sitting on the stove, but there is every now and then a deep, ominous sound as the great rollers thrash against her side and give a tanky boom. I roamed all over her, and removed some of the wood carving from her once beautiful saloon.

I think that the doubts of the *Paloona's* captain were justified.

However, carefully, gently, in deathlike silence, broken only by the ringing of the engine bell and occasional shouts from natives in canoes, we anchored.

Then commenced a period of mad excitement. With shrieks, hoarse ejaculations, yells, sobs, laughs—with a buoyant display of energy, a large crowd of natives clambered up the side of the ship. The place seemed to be possessed by mad happy children with the figures, and sometimes the profiles, of Greek athletes. They peeped into this door, gazed through that port, laughing, jeering, joking; it seemed a happy carnival.

It was too dark to see anything very distinctly, so I accepted the invitation of the purser to meet the port doctor in the little smoking room.

The doctor looked pale and worn; he informed me that life on the island was unbearable, and that I would hate it. However we had some refreshment, and after bidding farewell to the captain who had now shaved off his beard, I managed to scramble onto a small lighter and soon found myself on a small pier. I was placed in the hands of the manager of "*The Whare*," the Government accommodation house, and was given a white bedroom with a large bed swathed in white mosquito netting. I slept but poorly that first night, for the *Whare* is but a few yards from the pier and the natives were rolling a truck up and down on a small tram line. One native would apparently make a witty remark, and then the rest would shriek with delight. The great joke was to derail the trolley. This was irresistibly funny, and all would collapse with delight, and then with great labour put it back on the rails, while the women stood off and watched the performance with much enjoyment.

The next morning I breakfasted on the veranda, but everything I ate had come out of a can, there being no freezer on Raratonga at this time.

After breakfast I commenced to explore the village. It consists of one long beautiful avenue of palms, breadfruit and flamboyant trees. Respectable bungalows sit back comfortably amongst dainty gardens. The front door and windows are

invariably wide open, exposing to the astonished view of a white man a large bedstead with mosquito netting and a round table with a family bible and photograph album sitting on lace mats. The floor is polished a dark rich brown, and is covered in part by native mats. I learnt afterwards that every native possesses a house of this nature but that he never dreams of sleeping in the bed, or indeed, of occupying the house except upon occasions of ceremony. He has a small *whare* behind, in which he can spread himself in comfort. Beside every house is an open air bathroom, for most natives bathe at least three times a day.

As I walked along the avenue, children—sweet, little brown faced cherubs—yelled with triumph, “Goo’ bye!” Large females, clad in soft flowing gowns, greeted me with sweet smiles murmuring, “Keorana.” Quite a number of carriages with high wheels, drawn by small horses and occupied by huge persons, trotted past. Even “Henry Ford” was represented, and I took off my hat to that American when I realized his ubiquity.

Guided by a friend, I was led down to the beach where we found a family of natives plaiting cocoanut leaves into a thatch for a new *whare*. The head of the family, a nice old native called Ungene, greeted us kindly and finally offered a small house close by for thirty shillings a month. I decided to move in as quickly as possible, and

for a small sum the landlady of the *Whare* lent me towels, sheets and a few other necessary things.

The little *whare*, which I promptly called *Whare-noho*, the house of rest, consisted of four walls of upright poles painted white. The roof was of cocoanut thatching, and shade was supplied by two cocoanut palms not sufficiently old to drop nuts on the roof or my head. The floor was fine coral sand.

The landlady of the *Whare* hung blue curtains about, and she manufactured some golden coloured silk shades for the lamps. The result was pretty during the day, but at dawn, when the sun veils Raratonga with a vesture of rosy light, the effect was even more lovely. Can you imagine it all? You wake up in the morning to the soft chatter of natives; you look around; the interior of the house is still dark; but the long parallel lines of white poles forming the sides of your *whare* allow the sun to penetrate in shafts of pink light. You get up and take the cup of coffee that Ungene's pretty daughter has brought you; slowly and dreamily you walk outside and down to the lagoon where you sit in the warm water for a while; you return and make your toilet, such as it is. During your absence Ungene's daughter has swept up the house and has arranged quantities of pink roses around the room. She is still tidying the room; you feel awkward while dressing, but she doesn't mind whether you dress in front of her

or not. "Kare peka-peka" (it's all right), she thinks. Finally she goes off, and is followed by Ungene with an offering of oranges all nicely arranged for eating, Mahu-Mahu the old chief with an offering of eggs, and finally a few comfortable women, who sit and teach you the language. It's all very pleasant, very lazy, and utterly demoralizing. But who cares!

Only the white folk. They care tremendously, and they take a violent interest in your morals and commence to tear you to pieces. But we won't talk about them. Their souls have been cramped like their corset-begirt bodies, and, separated from all the things that really matter outside in the world, they study human nature in a malignant manner.

My landlord and his good lady soon adopted me, and if the young daughter showed any signs of neglect, if on her way to my *whare* in the morning she should stop to gossip about the movie the night before, Ungene's wife called her savage names. But Ungene's daughter was sweet and lovely. I can see her now, standing at my door in her long blue gown with a great bunch of pink roses. I hope, rather than expect, that she will find a good native husband. But she is too pretty, and will doubtlessly fall a victim to some white trader who, in exchange for her love and devotion, will give her his foul body, and her end will be obvious.

I found the presents of native fruits acceptable, but I grew to suspect the eggs. A native hates to rob a hen's nest; to him it is a species of child murder, for nothing delights him more than the sight of an important lady hen clucking about followed by little balls of fluff and feathers with legs sticking out of them. Hence a hen pursues her maternal ambition until the arrival of a white man causes her owner to rob her nest of a few eggs. She may have been sitting on them for a week!

Raratonga is apparently of volcanic origin, consisting of one main peak which near the top divides into smaller cones. Anything will grow on Raratonga—cocoanuts, oranges, bananas, mangoes, coffee, cocoa and even cotton. But the island is too small to cultivate cotton profitably, and cotton exhausts the soil. The chief product of the island consists of cocoanuts from which copra is made, but since New Zealand is merely eight or nine days distant, many oranges and bananas are exported.

New Zealand governs the island thoroughly and well, but the representative of the crown, called the Commissioner, often finds it difficult to satisfy the white population. For the object of the government is not to make Raratonga an important white settlement, but rather to assist the natives to live happily. Hence it is now difficult to obtain land except upon an unsatisfactory lease system,

which is so short that it is not a good idea to start a cocoanut plantation.

Unfortunately, the natives, not inoculated against diseases like measles, mumps and influenza which attack us with little hurt, are apt to die in hundreds when an epidemic strikes the island. Still there is rigid port inspection, and an excellent hospital with plenty of medical supplies has been established.

During the epidemic, which struck Tahiti some six months after my visit to Raratonga, a small Cook Island schooner was berthed alongside the breastwork of Papeete. The French, with a carelessness difficult to forgive or understand, allowed their own schooners to leave the town from whence they flew bearing the disease to many a lonely island; but the Raratongan government promptly wirelessly to the little schooner, ordering her to return at once to be quarantined, and forbidding her to call anywhere en route. The captain of the schooner knew better than to disobey.

There is one interesting law at Raratonga which compels the parent of every boy to plant cocoanuts from the year of the child's birth until he reaches an age when he can plant for himself. If the father neglects this he is forced to join a gang for certain hours during the day, when he mends roads or performs other heart-rending work. The father prefers to plant the cocoanuts,

since the work is easy, the nut being placed in the ground and forgotten, unless ground clearing becomes necessary.

Rigid prohibition prevails amongst the natives, although a white man is allowed to obtain liquor if he desires it. But the natives have learnt the joy of drinking, and finding it impossible to obtain whiskey, they sometimes retire into the mountains, and after making some orange rum, commence a wild orgy of drinking. They develop hilarity and sing at the top of their voices, and become so optimistic that they welcome the policeman, who, having heard the singing, has a drink himself perhaps, and then carts the revelers off to gaol.

They are gentle with prisoners at Raratonga. A learned judge from New Zealand, having sentenced a man to ten years' hard labour at Auckland, was astonished to find the prisoner sitting next to him at the Cinema the night before his departure for New Zealand. The native warders felt that, since the criminal was going off to have an unhappy time, he might as well have one pleasant night before he left.

There is a very fine road running around the island, a distance of twenty miles. One passes through many native villages and the roadway is lined with the white tombs of the departed. Often the dead members of a family are buried on the

veranda of the home. They are sealed with coral cement so there is no danger.

The natives are Christians on Raratonga, but a wholesome respect for the spirits of the departed prevails. It is believed that the spirits of the departed take a malignant interest in their best friends, so everything possible is done to keep them happy. Often sewing machines, bicycles, and any other well loved possession of a dead person are placed in the sepulchre, and the whole safely sealed down with coral cement.

I saw one peculiar tomb occupied by a white man. His wife, a wealthy native woman, knowing a white man's love for being buried with six feet of earth on top of him, satisfied this demand. But as a native she desired to be near him, so she arranged a little stairway down to the side of the tomb and here she sits every day. "It's rather funny," said the white lady who was driving me round the island, "he was a filthy, sodden brute, and used to thrash her. He was drunk when he died; it was when the news of the successful ending of the Boer War was brought to the islands—he was firing a rocket and it blew off his head." I wondered. "Filthy, sodden brute" said the white lady. She was possibly right. "He was my man, and I loved him," says the native woman, and each day she descends into the little tomb and prays.

We are not going to stay long at Raratonga, but before we go it might be an idea to tell you about babies on Raratonga.

If you don't like babies I would suggest your missing the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

BABIES

SOME years ago, during the earlier days of missionary effort, a young, good looking and reasonable missionary landed on one of the remote islands of the Cook Group. His presence was charming, as his personality was irresistible, so that but a few years passed before the population agreed to become Christians. This was pleasant for the missionary, but fraught with sorrow for the people, when they heard that their young teacher felt it his duty to carry on the good work further afield. Many openly regretted that they had become converted so quickly, and suggested at once falling back into idolatry, so that the missionary might stay to re-convert them. And although they were not serious upon this point, for the Polynesian readily takes to the Christian religion, they were indeed perturbed at the idea of losing their missionary. They pleaded with him not to go, but finding him obdurate they wept a great deal, while the chief called together a public assembly to discuss the farewell exercises. The business of this assembly had almost ended when an old chief stood up and made oration. "It is

sad," he said, "that this young man whom we love so well should depart. No matter how brightly the sun may shine, there will yet be bitter darkness over the island, for our spirits will weep greatly; though many turtle pass the island, and the young men be lucky with the hook, our stomachs will not be satisfied, for our souls will hunger for his gracious presence. It is sad; the women will weep always; and there will be no peace in the *whare*."

The audience, visibly affected, groaned, but the old man went on.

"What shall we do? I have thought of an idea! Let us revive the practice of our forefathers, and choosing the fairest damsel from amongst the maidens, let us present her to him during his remaining days with us. Perhaps a child will be born to such a maiden, and then, if God should be kind and it happen to be a boy—for such we must pray earnestly in the church—we will have a fitting reminder of his gracious presence."

The members of the assembly all said that they were going to suggest a similar idea, and the chief was requested to hand over to the missionary his own daughter Motu, who of all the maidens on the island, was the most lovely. Which is not saying much, for the natives of this island were notoriously ugly.



*By Courtesy of the American Museum
of Natural History, New York*

A RARATONGAN MAORI

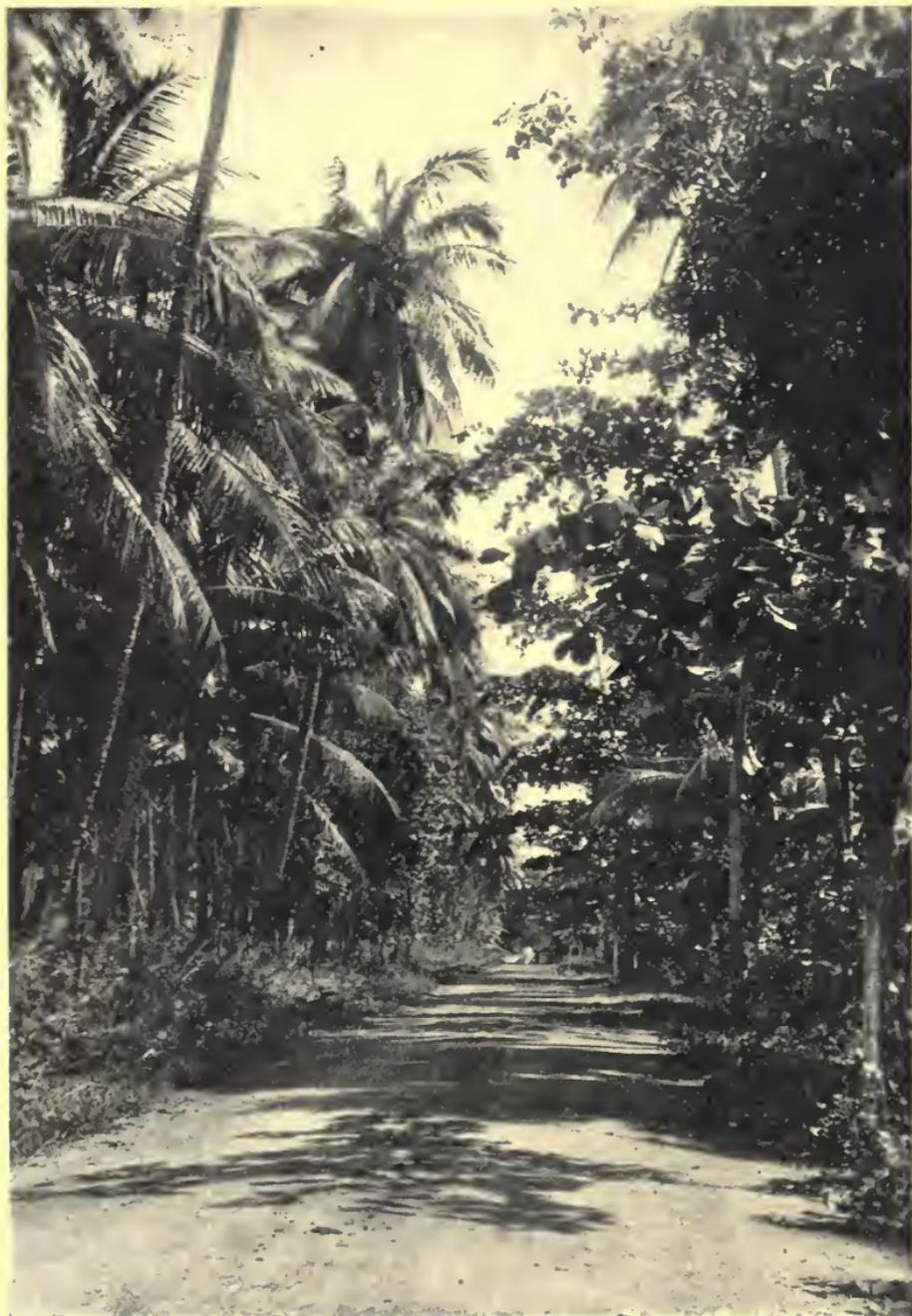
This man displays the close relationship between the Raratongan Maori and the New Zealand type. The face is a trifle heavy, and shows slightly the negroid strain which can be detected more in New Zealand and Raratonga than in Tahiti and the Marqueses.



*By Courtesy of the American Museum
of Natural History, New York*

A RARATONGAN IN FESTIVE ATTIRE

When leaving Raratonga the natives covered me with an even greater quantity of beads than this man wears. The effect was less interesting over European attire.



THE AVENUE WHICH ENCIRCLES THE ISLAND OF RARATONGA

This road is kept in order by convicts and those who neglect the surviving portions of the old missionary code which said, in effect, "The soul that sinneth, it shall make many rods of highway." The avenue is lined with coconuts, bananas, breadfruit trees, oranges, mock-coffee trees, cocoa and many other tropical plants too numerous to mention.

So the chief approached the missionary, and explained the scheme.

Imagine the feelings of the good man! He knew not whether to laugh or to cry, but the missionary of my story had a sense of humour, and he finally laughed, explaining that he already had a wife in England.

But knowing that this explanation was inadequate, he endeavoured to show that the idea, while flattering, could not be put into practice since the laws of the church forbade anything of the sort. And let me add quickly, he is not even now convinced that the native suggestion was wicked and immoral; indeed he believes that these simple men and women were no further off from the Kingdom of Heaven for believing that the presence of a little child could keep them steadfast to the faith.

There are not a few who will discredit my story; some will use it as a further proof of the notorious sensuality of the Polynesians. As a matter of fact, these children of nature have simply not learnt thoroughly the convenience and utility of married life. What we call their immorality they regard as a natural process, and they cannot see any harm or wickedness in it. They are babies themselves, and the most saintly Christian among them, truly saintly mark you, falls with the greatest of ease the moment he is tempted in this way. The missionaries have tried

hard to make them understand; they may succeed some day.

As it is, the white man finds no difficulty in obtaining a temporary wife from amongst the native women. The process of taking a wife of this nature is sometimes done openly. It all depends upon the white population. On Raratonga, except among hardened sinners, it is done secretly, so much so, in fact, that the saintly white women have sometimes got to question the natives in order to get the really exciting part of the gossip. The gossip of a saintly white woman on Raratonga is more interesting than the Decameron.

The white man is sometimes a bird of passage, and he goes off covered with beads and decorations, promising to come back. He tells a select few in the smoking room of the mail steamer all about the romance, and they rub their hands gleefully, desiring greatly to visit the island.

As for the lady, she *tangies* (weeps) for him several days, and then goes about her business, as cheerful as ever.

Perhaps a baby arrives; then there is wild excitement in the house of her father. It is a white baby—wonderful.

“Mother frightened by a white man a few days before its birth,” they tell the missionary.

“Just like its father,” they whisper to one another. “How perfectly splendid!”

The young mother, disgracefully unmarried,

becomes the envy of all her friends, who crowd round begging to be allowed to nurse the child for a time. Since it is her first baby she ought to give it up to her mother who will adopt it; if the second, the old widowed chief might want it; the third can go to her dear friend; she may keep her fourth. Chiefs, owing to their rank and influence, get their pick of the babies.

All babies are adopted by some one or other immediately after birth; hence a man has two mothers, his real mother and his mother by adoption, called his feeding mother.

This would seem at first sight to be harsh on the real mother, but, since she has been busily adopting other folks' babies, she doesn't seem to mind. It is a strange custom but I have never succeeded in getting a better explanation than, "Oh, it's the custom of the country."

So the father is forgotten, although his fame and greatness are duly chronicled to his offspring, who is convinced that he has merely to go to England or America to get "lands." Of course he is illegitimate, but that doesn't matter a cuss. The baby is much too valuable to be affected by such a word.

And so the disgraceful thing becomes a beautiful thing on Raratonga. No one is going to look at a child and say, "Poor boy—his father ye' know—a white man—used to drink a great deal—went off on the *Tofua* to Frisco—whatever would

his wife say if she knew—beautiful woman——” and all the other gossip of the whites. No, it is different in the South Seas. A baby begotten in sin is born midst love, and One said, “Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.” He meant illegitimate ones, too.

I did not find all this out on Raratonga. It is the result of long observation, and we may possibly refer to it again.

But the carpet is still waiting near Raratonga and we must be off. But before we go on board the *Moana* who is waiting on the reef, let me tell you of the good-bye ceremony which took place in my house at Raratonga.

Early that last morning, indeed before I had arisen, there arrived a solemn and heart rending procession consisting of Taraara, the chief of the district, followed by Ungene, his wife, their daughter, Teokotahi and numbers of other folk. I hopped out of bed feeling confused and miserable. They approached one by one, and solemnly covered me with beads and flowers. Ungene’s wife placed a hat with a wide brim and a small crown on the top of my head and murmured, “Beautiful!” I felt like a corpse at a funeral, but I didn’t see how I could shave and dress with all these things dangling round me. Ungene’s wife commenced to weep efficiently; I wanted to weep, too; but I also wanted to dress.

However, with beads rattling round me, and the

hat perched delicately on the top of my head, I rushed for the bathroom where I quickly shaved and dressed. When I returned, the people were still there, and more were coming including quite disinterested folk who also showered me with gifts. It was all very sad, sweetly melancholy, and—"the custom of the country!" However, the *Moana*, waiting on the reef surrounded by innumerable canoes, commenced making hoarse noises, so shaking hands with all again I rushed off making a noise like a freight train as the beads rattled, and finally reached the landing place, where a small tender took me off to the *Moana*.

So we say good-bye to Raratonga. It is a lovely island, but it gets on one's nerves after a few weeks.

CHAPTER V

THE *MOANA*

WHEN I was a small boy playing about the beach at Auckland I think I knew the lines, the size, the particular tilt of the funnel and the number of masts on every ship that entered the harbour. Being well primed up with information gleaned from the newspaper the night before, it was not difficult to assert superiority of knowledge over the other young beach combers when a signal appeared on Mount Victoria telling that a ship was passing Tiritiri light. An hour would pass before, with much fuss round her bows, the ship would come round the North Head into the Waitemata. "I told you so, see?" I would yell to the others who had taken the other side of the argument. Then we would watch as she gradually slowed up and finally anchored awaiting the attention of the port authorities.

Ships to me were gigantic personalities. The funnel was the head. If it were large and held erect, so much the better; if small, there was an element of humour, like the wit of a hunchback. The masts were the legs. If tall and sweeping she was a little old fashioned, but none the

worse for that—possibly built on the Clyde when they knew how to build ships there. If the masts were short and stocky, allied to a hull, firm and strong and surmounted by a good sized funnel, this showed strength and dignity. Then the port-holes; these had to be large with the brass lining well polished, and there had to be plenty of them, because this suggested a certain magnificence—a pleasing picture of thick red velvet upholstery, tables covered with serge and a few palms, and nice little bunks with a slight imitation of bedsteads, while smart young stewards dashed around ministering to the wants of the lucky passengers—people who could talk calmly about seeing Jones in Wellington, or Smith in Sydney last week.

Now in New Zealand there is an exceedingly smart line of steamers. I have wandered around the world a little, but for efficiency, beauty of design, comfort and general sea-worthiness, I have never found anything to beat the Union Steamship Company. There are larger ships on the Atlantic—they are magnificent and beautiful—but they just miss something which the Scotch directors of the Union Line understand.

Amongst my ship pals there was one whom I loved and admired most. She was the Sydney mail steamer, and used to appear every fortnight coming round the North Head with much foam round her bows. Emitting steam from her funnel, she would gradually slow up; and, after anchoring,

a small launch from the city, apparently bearing the doctor and the port officials, would rush out to her. She looked a giant. She had good solid masts, and the designers had put the finishing touch to her beauty by cutting the top of her funnel and making it parallel to her decks. This was perhaps exaggerated, but it gave her distinction, and a haughty air that appealed to me. She was called the *Moana*, pronounced "mourner" by those who know the Polynesian language. The word *Moana* means the deep still sea, not the ocean in ferment, but the great still ocean when the spirit of God is breathing upon the face of the waters.

But, alas, this was nearly twenty years ago and my old friend had come upon hard days. In fact, if it had not been for the war, when her younger and more beautiful sisters were sent off to carry troops, I am certain that she would not have been asked to occupy the position of Royal Mail Steamer between New Zealand and San Francisco.

Still, when I stepped on board the *Moana* at Raratonga my old love and admiration returned. It mattered not to me that she was arranged badly, that the first-class passengers were compelled to live right aft following the old custom of the sailing ships, when the after deck was the deck of honour; that she was slow—she could only churn out about twelve knots an hour—I admitted, but

during the war it was impossible to keep the engines in perfect condition; I refused to note the shabbiness of the upholstery, the worn carpets, the decks stained with age and discarded cigarettes; all I saw was the *Moana*, my old friend of boyhood days, and I was proud to be on board her.

I had no sooner stepped on the deck than I was led by a friend into the saloon where we were annexed by five good fellows averaging the age of about fifty, and taken into a curious little ante-room, just off the bar. Here every one placed a shilling on the table and one commenced throwing dice. After a time, when the dice box had been rattled many times, they all handed me their shillings and I was urged to pay for the drinks. This I did very readily, and received some change, which they assured me was my just due. This performance happened nearly every day before meals.

There was one young lady on board, and she might have had an amusing time; but, although she was pretty, she was not interesting.

I think the most distinguished person on board was the man from Dunedin. He was a member of the church session, consequently an elder, and a man of some repute in the Presbyterian congregation of a large town in New Zealand. He was on spiritual leave. His conduct was irreproachable, but a spirit of fun, of goodfellowship pos-

sessed him and we all found him amusing and delightful. His only offense was a determination to sing "Annie Laurie" which he invariably did after dinner, after breakfast and after lunch. He used to play bridge poorly, but a gambling spirit, also a conceit about his own bridge, made another passenger, George MacLein, insist upon having the elder for a partner. MacLein suffered mentally and financially.

MacLein was a huge, stout young man of forty with a good natured smile and a slow way of speaking. His father had been one of the early Island traders, and the son had inherited some wealth, and much business acumen. He liked the elder, and seemed to understand that the good man was on spiritual leave and that the inevitable reaction would follow. He treated him gently and tried to save him money at bridge.

The elder was a fur merchant with a belief in the possibilities of the New Zealand rabbit. And judging by the sample pelts of every shade which he carried, his belief would seem to be justified. One day, in his cabin, he showed me his photographs. "This is my wife," he said, showing the picture of a thin nervous looking woman with large bright anxious eyes. She was dressed in black, and seemed to fear the solemn eye of the camera, as if it were searching her soul. She might have been a condemned man facing a firing squad, trying to keep up, but in deadly fear. "She's dead,"

the elder went on, "about seven months ago—consumption. My son's got it too, but he's getting better." And then I understood the elder's holiday, although it seldom takes a man like that.

I saw him for the last time as the *Moana* slowly moved away from the dock at Papeete a few days after. He was leaning over the bulwarks singing in a bad tenor voice, "Annie Laurie."

The two days' journey to Tahiti was delightful. The sea was smooth, and one day we saw on the horizon Tahiti and Moorea. A few hours passed and we came into the broad channel between the two islands.

We had been signalling for a pilot, and after he had joined us, we passed between the two ends of the reef into the smooth waters of the lagoon, where a French doctor with much bustle and bristling came on board and examined our persons and our passports.

The little town of Papeete looked attractive from the lagoon. The breastwork was lined with numbers of white schooners, while the wharf was crowded with hundreds of men and women waiting to see the steamer berthed.

CHAPTER VI

TAHITI

TAHITI is the main island of the French Society group; Papeete is the largest town, with a population of four thousand inhabitants. When I first arrived in the little town these four thousand souls seemed the happiest and wickedest people it had ever been my fortune to meet. The thin, yellow, unclean looking Chinamen, who seemed to be lurking or crouching in the stores one passed, destroyed a charming picture, but after a time it became possible to ignore them.

When I left Papeete about eight months later I left a city of mourners and dead men and women. One third of the native population had died under frightful conditions, some of influenza, some of starvation, many of sheer fright. I, myself, had lost complete control and had become a weak species of idiot. But we are not going to talk of dead Papeete, but rather of the cheerful gay little Paris of the Pacific.

For although the French do not seem to succeed well as colonizers, although they allow open drains to run through the avenues of mango and bread-fruit trees, they yet have imprinted upon the

Tahitians their own personal charm. This is particularly noticeable amongst the half-caste population which today forms the bulk of the people. Someone said, I think it was Lord Pembroke in his amusing book "South Sea Bubbles," that if God made both the black and the white man, leaving the manufacture of the half-caste to the devil, his satanic majesty had made a good job of his work in Tahiti. It is impossible not to agree.

The captain of the *Moana* very kindly took me to lunch with him at the house of one Tati, an elderly half-caste, who, having been educated at the Charterhouse in England, had spent the rest of his life in careful study of cabbages, kings and copra. His education in England had given him a touch of our British snobbishness, which explains his love for kings, princes, and the blood-royal. He used to suggest that his own native blood was very blue, but some folks on the island laughed at his claims. However, by the judicious marriage of his family he had managed to put all doubts to rest regarding the blood of his descendants. His sister had married the king, his eldest son had married a Pomare princess called Matauera, while his nephew had married the queen of a neighbouring island.

While it is true that all these matrimonial adventures were not successful, since King Pomare of Tahiti divorced his queen who died socially,

in the odour of scandal, and his nephew was also divorced by his queen, yet his eldest son lived so happily with Princess Matauera that, upon becoming a widow, that lady promptly married another of Tati's sons and produced several children, including a fine boy.

We lunched in a long cool room at Tati's. I sat next to Madame la Princess Matauera who from that day until I left the island was my very good friend. She was large, but she had a poise, an air—something which marked her royal blood. She understood, but could not speak English. We therefore spoke French, and she congratulated me upon my French, remarking that I had a bon courage!

I told Tati of my intention of living for some months on Tahiti and I asked him if it would be possible to obtain a small house. He promptly put me into the hands of Ina and Hototu, two of his descendants, and after lunch we commenced a search, which had the usual success of house hunting expeditions.

However, after a time we found a shack, perched on high legs at the end of a small peninsula jutting out into the lagoon, but Ti-ti, the owner, wanted a dollar a day for it, which was an absurd price, so, in some anger we left her. However, further search proving fruitless, we returned and after much bullying, much joking, and even more threatening, she agreed to let me have the

house for four dollars a week. Until my house should be made ready I arranged to stay at Lavina's. Lavina is the lady whom the author of "The Moon and Sixpence" calls Tiare Johnson. Her real name, Louisa Chapman, is less interesting.

And although it is possible to object to Mr. Maughan's choice of such a name for dear old Lavina, his picture is wonderful, so wonderful indeed, that I can imagine her throwing up her hands in horror if anyone had been brave enough to lend her the book. Lavina was an extraordinary combination of saint and sinner. She sinned in French and Tahitian but was eminently respectable in English. She would have enjoyed a French translation of "The Moon and Sixpence."

The natives called her "Lu-vina." And the very word raises a vision of Tahiti. One sees her sitting in her ante-room near the dining veranda, clad in a long flowing robe which helped to hide her ample figure. Her name brings back to one's mind, thoughts of delicious pineapple tarts, rum punch and iced cake; it suggests restful conversation and dreamy stories of Robert Louis Stevenson and the old romantic island days; one remembers the wild nights of *hula-hulas*, and the scent of the Tiare Tahiti in the garden.

Lavina was like the rest of her race—a perfect Christian in everything except her inability to appreciate respectable morals. But her personality

was extraordinary. One simply had to love her, and the happiest hours many a man has spent on Tahiti have been passed listening to her commonplace conversation.

She had made a success of her hotel, but lacking a financial sense, she had fallen prey to the ubiquitous Chinamen, one of whom, called "Ileen," had bought her establishment and willingly paid Lavina a few hundred francs a month to sit and let loose her personality upon the guests.

If you were a saint, Lavina respected you; if you were a good-looking sinner, she loved you and gave you a cocktail with sugar round the top of the glass; if you were neither, you bored her. When the epidemic struck the island Lavina was the first to die, and one of her son's greatest disappointments was the smallness of her funeral.

"Maama would have had such a wonderful funeral had she died at any other time," he said, while he wept sadly.

Most of the people were ill and dying, although many managed to struggle out of bed to follow the hearse. Having been bidden to the funeral, I cycled into Papeete to attend the service. The French official was watching the sealing of the coffin, while a few people stood around quietly and reverently. Men and women alike were weeping.

Henry, her nephew, much overcome, had tried to drown his grief in rum. He lurched over to



THE R. M. S. "MOANA" IN THE LAGOON AT PAPEETE

The camera, alas, sees the "Moana" as she is—a rather old steamship, with little to recommend her when one thinks of the magnificent liners of today. Still, she's a mighty stout ship in a gale, and her accommodation is not uncomfortable.



THE BEACH AT PAPEETE

When you first arrive in Papeete, you see these schooners, and your soul is filled with romantic longings for adventure on the high seas, but—once you get outside the reef, and your schooner makes rapid and quick obeisance to every wave for ten days or so, you become entirely unconscious of your soul, but your body yearns with a great yearning for mother earth.



THE COMMUNITY WASH-HOUSE IN PAPEETE

In the old days, the natives lived in the valleys alongside streams of fresh water. Forced to live in the semi-European town of Papeete, they missed the fresh water of the country. The French established a large cement bath arrangement which, being sub-divided, made washing comparatively easy and delightful, since one met one's friends, passing a cheerful day gossiping and doing a little washing occasionally. Now that a decent water supply exists, merely a few old-fashioned souls come to the wash-house.



A "FARE," OR NATIVE HOUSE

Most native families possess two or three houses. Bored with one, they move off to another, bearing their personal impedimenta in parcels. The "fares" are invariably spotlessly clean, as are their occupants.

me and said, "Hello, Mac! Gee, it's a pity! But, Mon Dieu, she was as heavy as lead." I tried to ignore this remark, which was disturbing to the mourners, but, thinking I hadn't heard, he shouted with a gay laugh, "D'yer hear, Mac, she was as heavy as lead—a very good woman though; she's gone, but, my hat, she was heavy."

The French protestant clergyman having read the service, the coffin, with much effort, was carried to the hearse. We followed slowly behind, through the town that was then dying, until we reached the cemetery; but on the journey Henry continually upset the procession by shouting in everyone's ear, "A good woman, but, gosh, she was heavy!"

The road becomes steep leading to the cemetery at Papeete, and the horses found the load too heavy. Still they pulled willingly, until one of the traces broke. Everyone shouted, there was much excitement as the hearse threatened to topple over, but we managed to hold it, and then with a right good will we pushed it up to the graveside.

The service had finished, the padre had said, "Au revoir, Lavina, until we meet again," we had dropped roses on the coffin, desiring these emblems of our love to mix with her dust, when there was a curse of pain as Henry, leaning across the grave, crashed his huge fist into the face of one of the convict grave diggers, who had offended

him in some way. Then more shouting—more trouble, but finally there remained but five or six people who somehow found it difficult to leave the graveside. “I’ve lost a very good friend,” said the American, “a very good friend.”

Dear, sweet old Lavina, your arms were like “legs of mutton,” it is true your breasts were huge “like cabbages.” We never saw these things. We just saw you—a sweet, good woman. May you rest quietly in the arms of God, who gave you the soul of an angel, the mind of a child, and the body of a weak human like the rest of us.

But this digression, which I owe to Lavina, since I loved her, has taken us ahead of our story.

I lived at the Tiare Hotel for several days until the shack at Taunoa was ready. Ina and Hototu, having taken complete charge of my household arrangements, borrowed many ferns and flowering plants, and with these they succeeded in turning my little *fare* into a species of conservatory. Ti-ti, my landlady, had bought the necessary knives and forks for the house, and with some difficulty we succeeded in urging a certain humble-looking Chinaman, called Wong, to cook for sixteen dollars per month.

People say that the Japanese are notoriously dishonest, but that John Chinaman will never steal. It is of course always wrong to judge a nation by a single individual, but if all Chinamen are like Wong, then may the Lord preserve us

from Chinamen. I trusted and believed in Wong, but I clasped a dragon to my breast. Yet he was a pleasant man, always smiling, often singing in a falsetto voice, sometimes cooking, but never doing as much work as he might have done. To buy the necessary provisions for the household, I used to give him five francs every night before he left. During the first month he brought plenty, only spending one franc per night on fan-tan; during the second month he brought sufficient, spending two francs per night on fan-tan; during the third month it was necessary to give him two extra francs if I were entertaining the next day, for he was now spending three francs on fan-tan. Finally I gave him four dollars to pay a bill for some trousers, and Wong disappeared. But I was after him. I went to the "chief of the congregation," an elderly and respectable Chinese merchant, and told him my trouble.

"What's his name?" asked this worthy.

"Wong," I replied.

"All Chinamen called Wong," he said with a smile.

"But he comes from Hongkong; that ought to be a guide," I returned.

"All Chinamen come from Hongkong," he replied, still smiling, "but come look in the book." He thereupon showed me the pictures of one thousand Chinamen, for all Chinese give

their photographs to the chief of their congregation. But I merely saw a rogues' gallery of almond-eyed criminals looking precisely alike. However, I said to the old gentleman, "If Wong appears at my house tomorrow, all will be well. If he does not, then the gendarmes will get him."

Wong returned next day and agreed to work for two weeks without salary. But at this time I went off in a schooner, leaving my house to a Norwegian friend. Wong told him that I had paid him twenty-five dollars a month, and managed to steal four francs a day.

Still, life in the little shack was delightful, in spite of the pillaging instincts of Wong. Thinking, doubtlessly, of his alleged wife and five children in Hong Kong, he regarded his master as fair game; and his master was much too lazy to watch him.

Of course it is more than probable that the present "high cost of living" has affected Tahiti like the rest of the world, but a rough table of expenses prevailing during my visit may be of interest. Here follows the table:

Fare from San Francisco to Papeete	\$168.00	return
Rent of small house	4.00	per week
Market provisions including meat and fish	1.00	per day
Laundry (white linen clothes)	1.00	per dozen articles

Groceries, such as flour, sugar, butter, milk, ice, etc., cost practically the same on Tahiti as anywhere else. On the whole, a man could live with a servant at the rate of three dollars a day. Without a servant the amount is much less. It is, however, difficult to obtain a furnished house, and the hotel accommodation in the town of Papeete is not good. Also I would not advise an invalid person to stay long in Papeete. The drainage system is bad, and at night time the climate is damp. But a study of my usual day will show how it is possible to compensate for the dampness of the climate.

I got up at six o'clock, and, after flinging myself into the smooth warm water of the lagoon, I would swim about for a few minutes and then come to anchor a few yards from the shore, sitting on the soft sand with the warm water washing around me. Wong, having arrived, would call, "Sarve!" and I would then have a shower bath, and, clad simply in a dressing gown, sit on a veranda, drinking good rich coffee and eating a few warm rolls with honey.

After coffee, when the sun had attained some strength, I would remove the dressing gown, and, wrapping a wet towel around my head, and clad only in a native *pareu*, I would lie at full length in the sun. The sun used to bake me, and possibly removed all the moisture from my lungs. Of course I got sunburnt, but Ti-ti cured this

by rubbing *monoi*, scented cocoanut oil, all over me, and soon I was as brown as a native.

After the drying, another cold bath became necessary, but of course the water is never cold, just lukewarm. After the bath I would launch a canoe, and, once more clad in a pareu, I would paddle out to the reef or join some fishermen diving for fish.

You cannot tempt a South Sea Island fish to take a hook during the day time. The lagoon, however, is filled with great subterranean chasms, and alongside the great coral cliffs fish swim lazily about. The natives dive down alongside these cliffs, and the fish retreat into small caves, where they are jabbed by a many-pointed spear. Sometimes the fisherman is caught himself by a shark, but not often, for sharks of any size seldom come into the lagoon. In any case, a shark seldom attacks a lively object. He likes great hunks of meat, rubbish—any filth that comes his way. Still, if he meets a tempting morsel in the way of a stout old gentleman or a slow swimmer, he has no objection to doing justice to a meal so happily presented. Still it is inadvisable to take any chances with a shark. He is not a nice fish. Sometimes an octopus is found and brought to the surface easily, for those inside the lagoon are not large—about four feet over all.

If there were no fishermen about, much amuse-

ment could be obtained wandering about the reef.

At eleven o'clock it was necessary to return for breakfast, which would consist of fruit, meat, and potatoes, vegetable salad, fruit salad, coffee, and a glass of white wine. Smoking was forbidden. Which was trying.

After breakfast I would retire from the world and sleep until three, when Ina and Hototu, with their children and their retinue of servants, would arrive and spread themselves about the veranda. Ti-ti, my landlady, and her sister, Manu, would soon join us. Here we would sit and gossip in French, Tahitian, and English, a sort of compote. If the subject were shocking we would confine ourselves to Tahitian; if only naughty, French would do; if respectable, English met the case. You can be shocking in native without a blush. We would have tea at four o'clock, consisting of fresh bread and jam. After tea someone would shriek, "*Haere mai hapu ete miti.*" Which meant, Come, let's all go into the water.

So we would all go into the water. Hototu often refused, since she was lazy, but her children would persuade her, and in a few minutes we would be swimming and dashing around an old wrecked ship. It was great fun, but the great thing was to swim after Ti-ti, who was stout, and when near her dive down and pull her to the bottom. She really loved this, although she

objected strenuously. She would have her revenge. She could, of course, swim well, and she would commence pursuing the culprit, slowly but surely, until she got him, and then look out. I'm afraid that when she had finished with him he would be repentant and without a single shred of bathing suit left on him.

Then we would all return to the little house, sitting about for a time, until old Tina came to give me my massage of cocoanut oil. She would rub my chest and back for nearly an hour, telling delicious stories the while. Tina saved my life; I tried to save hers, but failed. For when the epidemic came she took everyone into her *fare* and nursed them. But later I found her alone with the sickness, but on her hands and knees she had crawled into the next *fare*, where an old woman—a friend of hers—lay dead. She was trying, sick and dying as she was, to dress the corpse in its grave clothes so that it would have a happy passage to the land of spirits. And I said, “*Aita, pea-pea*, it does not matter, Tina, come into your *fare*.” And I led her into her house. Her patients had died or had left her. A few days later I opened a hospital really for old Tina, but when in triumph I went to get her she was at the point of death and wouldn't come. She said, “*Eriana*,” (bye and bye).

Hototu, Ina, and their attendants left about

five o'clock, but there was still the sunset to be enjoyed.

Oh, those sunsets at Tahiti! Look through these eyes of mine carefully. See, the lagoon is now quite dark, losing its day dress of blue. But the wavelets that kiss the shore are becoming tipped with maroon. The red is getting lighter now; soon it will be pink. And see, further out, the sea is golden, variegated with pink between the waves. Now all is deep red and gold; slowly it becomes pink. Now again it's red. Look at far-distant Moorea; the peaks are tipped with gold. See, the sun is bidding good-bye; only half of him can be seen now. But the lagoon is still red; now it is becoming bronze. Now the sun has disappeared, and blackness has come upon the face of the waters. Only the afterglow is left, and soon this fades away and leaves the world to darkness.

And I turn away into my *fare* and feel sad. I want England; I want my friends; I want many things; but I don't want to go into Papeete to the movie show although I know that Ti-ti will be over in a moment to ask me to look after her son Bobbie. Ti-ti fears that a bad woman will get Bobbie.

From amidst the banana palms and breadfruit trees lights are twinkling as the natives trim their kerosene lamps and get ready to turn in. Some of them, especially those who have lost relations

recently, leave lights burning all night. It keeps the spirits away.

Along the main avenues strings of electric bulbs burst into light.

I am having supper, when sure enough Ti-ti comes over to ask me to look after Bobbie. Bobbie is Ti-ti's eldest son. His father is a Frenchman with an unpleasant temper, and Ti-ti hates bad tempered men as steady husbands. She prefers Moe, the father of her two youngest, but Moe is getting old and I fear that one day he will thrash Ti-ti so heavily that she will be compelled to send him off to his tribe. At least, with tears and sobbings, she will tell that to the Magistrate, and Moe won't deny it.

But Bobbie is the apple of Ti-ti's eye. He is a good-looking boy, strictly virtuous, but futile. Ti-ti's other son is more amusing. He looks a perfect native and indeed is three-quarters Tahitian. Ti-ti fears that he will shortly become immoral, but she keeps a firm eye on him. One night, this boy, who is sixteen, was forced to drink by some traders who were celebrating the signing of the armistice. The boy, being drunk, feared to return, and that night Ti-ti came to my *fare* and wept bitterly, cursing Moe heartily. She was convinced that a bad woman had taken off her son, and she was inconsolable. When the lad returned the next day, she brought him over to me and, forcing him onto his knees, made him swear in

my presence that he would never drink again, and never stay out at night time. She was virtuously indignant; her heart was broken; she cursed all bad females, and, having soundly thrashed the boy, went off to the movie show to meet a young man whom she liked. It is quite possible, though improbable, that she returned early.

Manu, her sister, was a handsome woman, a good mother to her three different coloured children and a husband hater. She liked men folk, but preferred not to have them about the house. Manu had a small son called Piko. Piko loved cats and invariably went about with a kitten which he habitually left at my house. Finally the cat adopted me and refused to follow him any longer. And so *Mi-mi* became a part of my household. She was a great climber, and could run up a cocoanut tree with the greatest of ease. But she enjoyed especially to sleep on the top of the house, and I expected her to fall through the light thatching any day or minute. She finally had kittens on the roof and one did drop through, much to her surprise. So she placed them all under the bed until they were old enough for Piko to carry about.

I used to find the hours between sunset and nine o'clock lonely, but one could sit outside quite happily. Somehow the wind did not seem to disturb the lamp and fortunately, on Tahiti, there are no long-legged monsters flying about to fling

themselves into your eyes and to disturb you.

Perhaps one of the prettiest sights from my house was the reef after dark. It used to be lined with fishermen, each with a great torch seeking fish for the morning market. I'll tell you about torch fishing when we get up to the Paumotus, where fish abound and where I often indulged in the slaughter myself.

Around my house were innumerable crab holes. From these during quiet moments great big land crabs would slowly emerge and work their way over to any leaves or fallen blossoms that were lying about. These crabs will eat anything. Once a big crab took one of my towels down into the bowels of the earth, but found it unpalatable, so returned it to the surface. Actually they are excellent scavengers and as such they are invaluable. They have great strong pincers but a slight kick will smash them into pieces. I understand that they are good to eat; but no one attempts to eat them if they are found within a mile or so of human habitation. They are really obnoxious, but fortunately, since no plant except the cocoanut and one or two shrubs are safe from them, they only thrive close to the sea.

Near my house there had once been a native *marai* or temple and it was alleged that the spirits of those who had been offered to the gods in sacrifice walked. Natives alleged that they had seen them. They were certain that they were

spirits, for they walked with their feet a few inches off the ground. Tahitian spirits always walk like that. These spirits are called "tupapau." The Maoris of New Zealand call them "tipos" and children sometimes place a candle inside a cleaned-out pumpkin and dangle it from a tree if a Maori is likely to pass.

One day on Tahiti was very much like another, although the arrival of the mail steamer used to make a pleasant break. Of course, one could always go to the movies at night time, and a movie show in the South Seas is intensely amusing. The natives respond very easily to any form of narrative. They are deeply sympathetic and it is almost unnecessary to watch the picture to get an idea of the story.

The man running the show sits in the gallery commenting upon, and translating the picture. His explanations of the strange habits of the white folk in movieland are funny. He is sad during pathetic moments; he is furious with the villain, acting indeed as the mouthpiece of the audience when he expresses his abhorrence of his wicked deeds. In fact, it is difficult to convey with mere words an impression of the movies in the South Seas. However, I'll try in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII

MOVIES IN THE SOUTH SEAS

It is seven thirty.

The tropical night is very dark.

Around the corrugated iron shack are many stalls, the hurricane lamps from which give a weak yellow light. The dim light is depressing. The stars, seen vaguely through the palms, look down with amusement. Each pin prick in the dome of heaven suggests a solemn eye.

Native men and women stand around in soft flowing robes of clean print. They eat oranges. The young women are coy. They jeer at the good-looking boys and arrange to meet afterwards—after the movie.

There is a noise as of a gas engine—quick, impudent, throbbing. There is much light—bright, hard light, as twenty electric globes become alive. The tropical night is conquered; the stars wink in vain; their amusement is futile.

There is much excitement. The movie is now going to commence.

We all enter the building, and there is at once the sweet smell of cocoanut oil and gardenia. The building is crowded, for tonight a great picture

will be presented. Tonight's the night! There will be another great picture tomorrow night, and the next night, and the night after that—every night. But tonight is the night. Let's be happy now. There is no tomorrow and no yesterday on our mental horizon. We live in the present; for God is good.

The picture commences and the conductor from the balcony sitting on a deck-chair explains the picture for we cannot read the writing of the *Paratane*. Also the white folk do such strange things. They start to do interesting things but they never finish. The white folk are strange. Perhaps they don't know. We could show them much.

The band plays. There is darkness. The picture commences. Soon the words will stop. There are many words and the pictures are dead; they are grey and white. Now they live.

The *vahine* appears. Oh, she is very lovely. See, her face is now big and of a strange whiteness. Much soap she has used, for her face is very white. See her hair, the light is shining on it; and her eyes are very big and beautiful. She smiles and we smile too. Why do the white men come and make love to us? We are black; yes, we are black—like the negro. The white man says we are not black, but just brown. We are black! It is true.

She lives in a beautiful *fare*. There are many

chairs and she sits on a chair. This is unnecessary, for are there not many carpets on the floor? An old man sits at a table. Like the missionary he speaks slowly, and his hair is white. What is he saying? We know not.

Now she is going to the house where white women dance. They dance with white men who wear black clothes. They look like beetles. You cannot see their legs. It is a pity.

There is one white man who looks strange. He has evil designs. He will surely be the cause of much trouble. There is another man. He is very beautiful. His face is like the face of an angel, but he is sad. His face is now big, it takes up the whole screen, and it is very lovely. See, he smiles, but sadly; his smile is like sunshine.

The people dance. They do not dance the *hula-hula*. But the men and women are close together. What will happen next? Is it proper to hold a man so close to you? Yes, it is proper; the white folk do not know.

The man with evil designs smiles on the lady of beauty. She is unhappy. It is terrible; surely he will thrash her. He holds her hand—tightly. They are alone in a small room. God, he is going to kill her! He is holding her hand. It is awful. We are all breathing heavily. The women surely will rise up and kill the man. It is awful. Where is the handsome young man?

“Sit down, Marfa. All will be well.”



A TAHITIAN BABY

The fare (house) has no windows. Light and air pass through the upright bamboo poles which form the sides.



HOTOTU

If you ever wanted to embark on a wild escapade; if you wanted to arrange a dance; if you wanted to do anything unusual and joyous, all you had to do was to discuss the matter with Hototu.



MADAME, LA PRINCESS MATAUERA

Almost I would apologise to Matauera for inserting this picture. To me she was the perfect princess—charming, gentle, vivacious, full of fun and kindly mischief, yet wifal dignified.



THE TIARE TAHITI (FLOWER OF TAHITI)

It is, of course, the gardenia, which the Tahitians claim as their own national flower. Actually it was brought to Tahiti by the missionaries. It is but seldom that a Tahitian, male or female, appears without a flower behind his or her ear. The gardenia has, however, a special significance, since worn behind the left ear at a party it advertises the fact that its wearer is looking for a partner. When a suitable partner has been found the flower is at once transferred to the right ear. The gardenia is also used in the manufacture of monoi, scented coconut oil.



THE LAGOON AT PAPEETE, WITH THE QUARANTINE ISLAND IN THE BACKGROUND

Tina wearing the scarlet pareu; her two friends are clad in a species of mother Hubbard; the small boys have done as much as they thought necessary with handkerchiefs.



TAHITIAN GIRLS IN A FISHING CANOE

One hundred years ago the girls would have worn a graceful costume of hibiscus bark; fifty years ago the scarlet pareu would have sufficed during the absence of the missionary; today the mother Hubbard, with a French suggestion (unnoticeable in the picture) answers the purpose. These young ladies, found by the dozens in the streets of Papeete, neither work nor spin, but they're invariably charming and often actually beautiful. As usual, the camera makes them look like negroes.



TINA RETURNING FROM HER DIP IN THE LAGOON

We are breathing heavily. The men are muttering, "Damn that man. Why he hurt the pretty *vahine*?" See, he is speaking firmly and she is weeping. We too are weeping. How the white folk suffer!

Would it not be better for her to kiss him—to pretend that she loves him and then to run away—quick. Her face is now large and from her big eyes tears are descending. *Aue! Aue!* The tears are descending like milk from a cracked coconut. Big tears. Perhaps her cousin is dead and there will be a *tangi*.

Now she is small again and the man can be seen. Oh, *Atua*, he has picked her up. He is running through the house. They are in a motorcar. Where *is* the lovely young man? He does not know, for he is sitting talking to another man. He does not know. *Aue! Aue!*

Things are terrible. There is no hope. The world is full of suffering. There is no fish to eat. We are old. There is a cyclone, for the heavens are dark and soon many will be dead. Let's now run up the coconut trees.

The beautiful *vahine* is now in the house of the man of evil designs. What will he do? Poor man, he has no *vahine* and he wants her. It would be better if she pretended. See, she is getting up. She speaks harshly but sweetly. She fights him. She is wrong, for men can fight better, and he

will thrash her; then she will love him, and the beautiful young man will be forgotten.

Still the young man is sitting in the house of many tables talking to another *tane*. Why he not get up and look? See, he is now looking. He searches, but in vain. The young man with the thin legs and the little round cap tells him something. He runs out; he gets in his motorcar. The motorcar goes quickly. Surely he will find the beautiful *vahine*.

She is still in the house, but she has not learnt to pretend. The conductor says that such is the way of white women. They will not be with men they do not love. Why? All men are good.

Now two very bad men come in. *Atua*, it is awful. What will they do? She is in great distress now. See, she is screaming. It is terrible.

“Sit down, Marfa. All will be well. If you tear the screen we will not see the picture.”

We are breathing heavily. Our hearts are pounding. They pound like hammers.

They carry the beautiful *vahine* into a room. They are going to kill her. See, they have bound her hands and her feet and over her mouth they have put a cloth. Soon she will die.

But see, the motor of the young man is rushing along the roads. Lights are twinkling. Will he be in time? We cannot breathe now. We must wait. See, he is getting near the house. But he

will be too late, for they are now going to kill the woman. They are going to drop her down a well. See, they are getting her ready and her beautiful eyes are closed.

All joy has left us. We can never be happy again. There is too much suffering in this world. Let's all go and throw ourselves over the reef where the sharks may eat us. We cannot breathe.

"Sit down, Marfa. You make too much noise. True, she may die. We too are unhappy. She is *not* like your daughter. Your daughter is black."

Aue! Aue!

But the young man is racing in his car; perhaps he may save her. See, he has entered the house. He takes a gun from his pocket. We cannot breathe. We are breathless. *Atua*, save that woman. It's awful, terrible. She is now being carried. She is perhaps dead. *Aue! Aue!*

The people in the shack are all breathless. Many are weeping.

But the young man runs up the stairs. With his revolver he enters the room. The man of evil designs sees him, but he holds up his hands. Why doesn't the beautiful young man kill him? No, he binds him with the table cloth. Now he will go into the room. But he is too late. The beautiful *vahine* is now in the water. No, not yet, but soon. The men holding her hear a noise. They wait. The door is opened and they too put up their hands. Then there is shooting. The young man

is down with a big man on top of him. There is more shooting. The beautiful *vahine* cannot help, for she is bound. See, her eyes are big and the whites can be seen. How can we stand it! See, the young man has thrown one of the bad men right over his head, but the other gets up. How strong he is, and she will love so strong a man!

See, now all the bad men are lying on the floor dead. Now we can breathe.

“Do not cry, Marfa. We too are crying—with joy.”

See, he has unbound her, and she is still lovely. See, he looks at her. She looks at him. They throw their arms round each other. The band has started, for it could not play during the suffering.

See, they place their lips together. Why? Is this clean? But always the white men place their lips close to the lips of their women. It is a strange custom.

Now for the comic. Now we can laugh. Now we can be happy. Truly, the white folk suffer much and do funny things as well.

The movie is over.

From the corrugated iron shack the people come out. They linger. The maidens meet the *tanés*. They walk midst the palms. The maidens no longer jeer. They are soft and kind. Their eyes are filled with tears. For men are brave, and they will suffer for their women.

It is dark. Our faces are not black. They are brown-golden. It is pleasant to walk in the palm trees with a *tane*.

The white people suffer much.

CHAPTER VIII

OFF TO THE PAUMOTUS

Now it happened one day that MacLein, whom I had met on the *Moana* when travelling from Raratonga to Tahiti, came out to Taunoa, and invited me to a feast at Taravao. The chiefess, an old sweetheart of his, had arranged to give him a farewell party.

I gladly accepted, and spent a wild, happy day, decorated with flowers, and dancing until a late hour.

At the party was a young man of pleasing appearance called Tenuaha, and Tenuaha told me so much about his home in the Paumotus that I desired greatly to see those islands. Tenuaha invited me to visit him on Fagatau, the island where he manages a store for a large French trading firm.

Desiring to hear more of this thing, I invited him to take dinner with me the following day, so that we might discuss plans.

And the discussion was so fruitful that I wanted to go off with him the following day. Unfortunately his schooner was already crowded, and I was unable to get passage, but Tenuaha, or

Arthur Estall, to give him his English name, suggested that I should follow in the *Kaeo*, a large schooner preparing to sail in a few days. This seemed satisfactory, so I took the necessary steps to arrange my passage.

If you desire to travel on an island schooner, you don't merely go to the shipping office, and, producing your pocket-book, ask politely for a berth. In old-fashioned countries like England one does that sort of thing, but not in Papeete. The objections of the owner, the captain, the "*chef mecanicien*" and even the supercargo have got to be overcome before you can think of sailing. I admit now humbly that I *did* approach the manager of the trading firm which believed it owned the *Kaeo*, and I found this gentleman charming, and whimsically amusing, but quite vague as to the date upon which the *Kaeo* would sail. In regard to my passage—well, he didn't quite know, but he thought it might be something like three or four dollars a day and, "Why on earth do you want to go to the Paumotus?" he asked.

"I'll tell you all about them—I've never been there; I *won't* go there," he continued as we finally sat down on that convenient seat just outside Maxwell and Company's office; "still I know all about the Paumotus."

But I gained little valuable information except the literal meaning of the word "Hikuero," the

famous pearl island of the group, which was diverting, but not respectable. However, he thought that perhaps the *Kaeo* might sail the following week—he devoutly hoped so—but then the *Kaeo* is always in a condition of sailing “next week.” In this she resembles Mr. Micawber’s bay window.

So I left him discouraged, and decided to move slowly. Fortunately, as I walked along the beach, I discerned the genial and insistent figure of Mac-Lein in the distance, and quickening my pace I easily overtook him. I told him of my troubles and he agreed to arrange everything for me.

It was done like this:—He asked the captain of the *Kaeo* and several others to lunch at Lavina’s and he placed me next to the captain. We discussed everything except the Paumotus, while I awaited my chance to broach the subject of my trip. I tried to make myself as agreeable as possible, being careful not to ask when the *Kaeo* would sail, and finally I expressed, very humbly, my desire to visit Fagatau.

Captain Winnifred Brander of the *Kaeo* looked surprised, and sitting back in his chair (how impressive a man of fifty looks when he has reached an agreeable state of embonpoint and he wears a large, kindly moustache!) expressed well-bred surprise at my desiring to visit the Paumotus, and especially Fagatau.

He said that possibly he might call at Fagatau during the next few months, but he was not at all

sure. Hence I had to strain myself to become agreeable to him and even mentioned that I would make the *Kaeo* immortal by writing about her. This was weak, for was not the *Kaeo* already immortal? However, Captain Brander, or, as he is more lovingly called, "Winny," agreed to take me, and his ship would sail "next week." I believed him and made my plans accordingly. I attended several farewell parties and while we are waiting for the *Kaeo* to sail, it might be a good idea to tell you about a modern Tahitian party or *hulahula*.

CHAPTER IX

THE HULA-HULA

IN the old days, before the dawn of uncivilization in the Cook and Society Islands, and before the "White Peril" became a grim reality, it was the custom amongst the people, who formed an eminently aristocratic society, to have feasts and entertainments. There were many excuses for such—the celebration of a victory, or the arrival of a guest of note at once caused a polite man to arrange an entertainment. And this did not consist in mere feeding as amongst more barbarous races; for Tahitian society boasted the existence of a weird society of dancing, acting, speechifying, and unmoral scoundrels who were called *Areois*. They were a species of court jester although their position in society was second only to the chief who himself was sometimes an *Areoi*. There were many rules regulating this society or caste, but chief amongst these was an absolute prohibition against a member having a living descendant. Hence the wives of *Areois* killed their babies the moment they were born. The *Areois* were tremendously fashionable; so plainer men followed their strange example, and but few

babies were allowed to live more than two or three seconds. I suppose nature took this strange course in order to prevent over-population—a very real danger on an island practically cut off from the rest of the world. The farmer class—the *raatiras*—hated the *Areois*, because they were compelled to supply all their food and were paid by not being used as human sacrifices. But we have not time to study the *Areois*.

An old Tahitian feast must have been highly interesting. The *Areois* produced plays consisting largely of monologues in which the leading actor jeered at the priests and religion being, it is alleged, quite amusing. There was no intoxicating drink, but before the end of the performance the audience would always be worked up to a high pitch of excitement and enjoyment. One has sometimes heard a young person at home remark that she laughed so much that she cried. The Tahitians used to weep with happiness also but in order to develop their joy to the crying-point they used neat little sticks fitted with sharks' teeth with which they scraped their faces. I dare say they groaned the next day.

For the feast many pigs were killed, and chickens for the women and lower classes. No Tahitian gentleman would eat a chicken. The wives of the *Areois* assisted in the performance which was often of an extremely immodest character. The missionaries did not dare to describe

the performance in English; but I believe they wrote a full detailed description in Latin. I have heard that this can be found in the British Museum. I haven't searched myself.

The women of course danced—the “*hula-hula*,” which one sees in a very mild form on the music hall stage of America, and which can be seen in Honolulu if you are willing to pay ten dollars. But the Honolulu performance differs considerably from the music hall performance. The former is very realistic and historically correct. Of course it is the old wriggling business which one cannot describe nicely without a knowledge of anatomy.

Still I am assured by my old friend Tati, the son of a converted *Areoi*, that there was a good deal that was dignified about the old Tahitian feast. He thought that it was very like a Highland Scotch dinner party; but he omitted to mention dates, so perhaps he is right. Incidentally, the upper classes, apart from the *Areois*, never joined in the performance. The aristocratic women, and there were such, thoroughly enjoyed the spectacle but never dreamt of dancing themselves. To a white man of virtue the whole thing must have looked inexpressibly vulgar, though not nearly so vulgar nor so irresistibly comic as a modern waltz or fox-trot appears to a native even today.

I don't think it is at all possible to get much

idea of old Tahitian customs by observation today. The old aristocratic blue blood has become hopelessly mixed with European blood of a vastly different hue, and the people that are left, though still very lovable, are a poor lot as compared with their ancestors. Sometimes one comes across a glorious old native, and perhaps a young one, beautiful as the gods, but not often. More frequently the native crouching in the Chinese store is as much like his ancestor as a modern Norwegian resembles a picture of a Viking.

Still an observer crammed with "Captain Cook's Voyages" and some old missionary journals can sometimes detect little points of resemblance, and today in Tahiti one often sees the survival of at least the dancing portion of the old native entertainment. There are many hundreds of girls and women who can dance just as their ancestresses danced. And there are scores of boys who can assist them efficiently.

But let me tell you about the *hula-hula* that formed part of my farewell party. I hope and pray that no ancient missionary shades were present; they'd have had to write in Latin if they wanted to describe it. Still, I will be truthful—up to a point.

Had the host been a native of rank I dare say the performance might have been different. Still, in his arrangements he was ably assisted by two half-caste women of great kindness of heart

and even more discernment. During the afternoon, these two, assisted by their husbands and descendants, had gathered large quantities of tropical blossoms. The graceful fronds of the coconut palms were also recruited, so that finally the little *ne-au* shack, with its two wide verandas, suggested a fairy bower.

The host ordered a large demijohn of white wine, six dancing girls, a pig, and large quantities of oranges, bananas, pineapples, and breadfruit, also various wines and liqueurs. He felt proud of his arrangements, and when darkness came, and the candles commenced to twinkle midst the blood-red hibiscus blossoms and delicate little pink roses, he felt that his pride was justified. On the verandas were hung great lamps with soft lemon-coloured shades shedding a gentle light on the baskets of deep green ferns that were suspended from the roof; and when a full moon commenced to shine on the lagoon around, the setting for a delightful party seemed complete. Even the two half-castes, accustomed to the beauty of Tahiti, expressed pleasure.

These two had been busily squeezing dozens of oranges into a great white basin until the golden fluid bore on its surface dozens of little white pips. They hung together in bunches. The two women sat at the table with their soft sweet faces framed in masses of coal-black hair and, when the last great yellow orange had been squeezed,

they called the host. They then watched with kindly interest while he poured into the basin two bottles of gin. It was very bad gin—it tasted like paraffin when taken neat—but it was the best to be obtained in Papeete. A large bottle of grenadine followed the gin, and several bottles of muscatel. Finally two blocks of ice were placed in the basin, and with a large spoon the two women stirred it up. There was still the large demijohn of white wine to be accounted for, but only a portion of this was placed with the mixture, since many guests were expected. Nevertheless, the punch was extremely potent—it tasted innocent enough—for two glasses made the host almost brilliant, he said.

This white man was very young and innocent for his age. He had never eaten of the lotus.

Having attended to the wine, the women commenced arranging the supper table, and very soon it was covered with all kinds of jolly things—cold portions of the pig, large cream-coloured breadfruit, *pohi* (native pudding), and some good-looking cakes that Lavina had made with her own hands. There were of course lots of other things too numerous and ordinary to mention.

The white man had not long to wait for his guests. He was alone when they arrived, for the two women had returned to their houses to see that their children were safely in bed. The

first sign of their approach was conveyed to him by the sound of male and female voices crooning native lullabys accompanied by a guitar. Finally an old chestnut horse, driven by Va-va, the deaf and dumb hired man from Lavina's, slowly plodded its weary way up the avenue of mock-coffee trees, bearing about six cheerful young men and women, all clothed in snowy white. The boys were dressed like Hawaiians, and looked almost as futile as those seen in New York and Philadelphia. Murmuring a native greeting, they shook hands with their host and after looking shyly around them they sat down and said nothing. They continued to sit like this until "Henry Ford" assisted by an accordion, produced more music and the six dancing girls piloted by Johnnie Lavina. They were followed by other guests including several aristocratic Tahitians. You can never mistake a Tahitian aristocrat, especially a woman. She has an air, a presence—something undefinable that marks her. I knew a princess once—but that is another story.

Finally the party looked complete, but the host thought it might be almost a funeral, judging by the solemnity of the guests. But soon one little girl—she was about sixteen—showed signs of cheerfulness. She commenced dancing, and a boy helped her with an accordion, but the others seemed hardly interested, so she had another drink much to the surprise of the white man. It was



MANU

Manu was Ti-ti's sister. She was one of the half-caste women described in the preparations for the Hula-Hula, squeezing dozens of oranges for the punch. She is wearing here a tafefa and an Indian head-dress given to me by an American Sioux Indian of Devil's Lake, North Dakota.



TI-TI, MY LANDLADY

Obviously, this is a studio portrait. I insert it, however, to show you the effect of French blood meeting that of Tahiti. I have seen Ti-ti look more beautiful, but never so steady.



THE LAGOON THIRTY MILES FROM PAPEETE

One of the picturesque spots in which the island abounds. Clouds, sea and mountains combine in a scene of impressive splendour.



Copyright, Kroepelin

THE SOURCE OF THE VAITUORU

The high mountains of Tahiti, often covered with rain clouds while the lowlands round the coast are basking in sunshine, supply the many valleys that wander down to the sea with a plentiful supply of water.



MAOU

There's nothing happens on Tahiti but what Maou knows all about it. There's absolutely nothing on the island from a dancing-girl to a schooner that Maou cannot procure for you. It's just a matter of asking. He is an interesting type, since he shows a combination of Spanish with Tahitian blood.



TENUAHA—ARTHUR ESTALL *filis*

Tenuaha was greatly interested in my uniform which he found inside my fare. It pleased him to be allowed to wear it, and was delighted when I offered to photograph him.



A GROUP OF TAHITIANS

Copyright, Kroepelein

Although these men look healthy enough, I insert this picture here since one of the men—the fellow on the extreme right front—shows what civilization can do. Such a man, hollow chested—pathetic in feature, could not have existed a hundred years ago.



ON THE REEF AT HAAPAAPE

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THE LEPER STATION ON TAHITI

This, the saddest portion of the Island, is situated on the road to Papenoo, some ten miles from Papeete. The building on the left is the Roman Catholic chapel, that on the right the Protestant. It must be admitted that the lepers don't seem greatly troubled about their state. An average of sixty or so inmates is maintained. They marry and have children. It is said that the children, taken away at once, show no signs of the disease.

her sixth! Still the guests sat looking shy and uncomfortable.

The host confided his fears as to the success of the party to the half-caste women, saying, "I say, don't you think we'd better give 'em a little food? It'll perk 'em up a bit—make 'em feel a little bit more sociable; what!"

The two half-castes merely smiled and handed around more and more punch.

"You've got to work 'em up; it's always like this to start with," offered Johnnie with an inimitable shake of his shoulders, and with an engaging smile, as he bustled about making wreaths for himself and friends from the decorations.

Finally the girl, whose visits to the punch bowl had been noted by the host, commenced the wriggling business again, and with much more success, but still most of the others looked a little solemn. Finally it dawned upon the consciousness of the white man that before things began to move really, all the dancing girls would have to be made drunk.

So this was done.

It was interesting to watch the little party and especially the aristocrats. With a haughty, yet friendly air they sat apart observing all and enjoying themselves apparently, but never dreaming of dancing themselves, or mixing in the slightest degree with the others.

The job of making the girls and young men

drunk was less difficult than was at first expected by the half-castes. The punch was deceptive and a few glasses each put the very devil into the performers.

Soon the little *fare* was a scene of liveliness and mad caperings. In every corner couples were dancing and always ending with a quick staccato movement which brought roars of laughter from every one.

In native dancing a couple does not embrace as we embrace when waltzing. They stand opposite each other and wriggle at one another. Sometimes they seem to compete—to see who can wriggle the fastest.

A peaceful young man may be sitting quietly, when suddenly a young lady will eye him, and dance at him, until amidst roars of laughter he accepts the challenge and dances at her. When a white man is challenged he generally gets up but invariably looks a perfect fool.

At the end of the first hour things began to look quite serious. A Swede, having threatened to get drunk, kept his promise and commenced making heavy love to a charming aristocratic half-caste girl who thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Everybody seemed happy, for all except the aristocrats and an old man called Moe had attained a state of "brilliance." Moe had been ordered to remain sober because his wife owned the house and she felt a little nervous about fire.

As the men and maidens grew drunker they covered themselves with more and more of the decorations. "Johnnie" imagined himself a Greek god, and commenced capering from room to room looking over his shoulder in quite an engaging manner. One stout girl with a little negro blood in her veins and two front teeth missing (her late husband) sat on a steamer chair and sang ribald French songs in an irresistibly comic manner. I believe she was sitting on a youth, but you could not see him. At any rate she was addressing some one hidden near her, very tenderly calling him, or it, "ma schweet 'art." The girls were all dressed in cool white flowing robes, but in order to dance more decently, or indecently, they hobbled their skirts with ribbons or strands of cocoanut palm.

The lady with the few teeth danced beautifully whenever she gained enough energy to rise from her chair but she looked a little bit horrible, I thought.

It may be stated to the host's credit that at this time his "brilliance" had completely worn off; and he hated seeing the girls so drunk.

"Let's have a bite to eat now, what!" he said, pointing to the table covered with good things. The girls were getting so *very* drunk, and he thought a little food might sober them up.

But this was an effect not desired by either the aristocrats nor the two half-caste women. In fact,

the desired condition of madness had been reached and it were a pity to spoil it. And so the *hula-hula* continued. And you who read this may say, "How very vulgar! But why write about these things." And I reply, "Because I get thoroughly tired of the 'lotus eating' sweet melancholy rubbish that is written about the South Seas." Of course I might have confined myself to a description of that lovely tropical night, the great big moon amidst the fleecy clouds, the lagoon, the reef in the distance with its dozens of twinkling fishermen's torches—or perhaps the soft voices of the girls and boys singing to the guitar. For amidst all there was much that was truly lovely.

But to me there was little really amusing about the entertainment—just a common drunken party made a little bearable by the setting and the natural charm of the characters; but a drunken party, nevertheless, at which the drunkest were six Tahitian girls.

The youngest and the drunkest was sixteen. She gabbled in Tahitian, French and English, and finally shrieked for water. "Gimme warter—gimme warter," she shouted. She had possibly been drinking for several years and would continue to drink until the end, which will perhaps be consumption, perhaps an impossible disease, or even a long drawn-out death of thirty or forty years in a little settlement about ten miles from Papeete on the way to Papenoo where there are

two white churches, and where the seventy or so odd souls lurk behind their houses when they hear the throb of a motor or the quick step of a horse, fearing to show themselves. It is called the Leper Station.

And yet native dancing can be interesting and beautiful and not at all indecent.

At about eleven-thirty the aristocrats decided that it was time to sup, but the dancers could eat but little. "Gimme warter—I want drink warter," they said mostly, for they were suffering with a great thirst. Some of the boys had fallen about the rooms and were sleeping. Moe, the man in charge of the lights, sat on the veranda rail looking amused and curious, as a native should look.

Finally at a little after twelve o'clock several automobiles arrived and the guests were bundled unwillingly into these. They all wanted to stay forever, they said; but the two half-caste women managed the business, and, singing and shouting, they were soon hurled back to Papeete.

The party was considered by all to be a great success. Lavina said next day with her kindly smile, "Johnnie says that the party was the best he has ever attended, no one drunk, plenty of good food and altogether jolly and nice."

But the host was not at all sure. Perhaps he thought a little as the last guest was bundled into the motors; perhaps he felt even ashamed.

And so the "White Peril" of the South Seas is a grim reality and slowly but surely we are eating them up. It is a pity really, for a more charming race of ladies and gentlemen it would be difficult to find. Some say the missionaries of the past made them hypocrites, but I have an insistent idea that the missionaries are responsible for much that is charming and delightful in their character.

It is, I suppose, a matter of values and muslin. White embroidered linen and coloured muslin are very desirable in the eyes of the Tahitian lady. The man of her own race will never give her much of these. "Good gracious! why should I?" he thinks. And at the bottom she loves him best; and will return to him.

I suppose it is now impossible to prevent the cold blooded murder of this fine race, for steamers trading through the Panama Canal to Australia make Papeete more and more a port of call for coal. Hence the little French town will become like Port Said, a sink of filthiness and horror.

Perhaps rigid education would help; perhaps the formation of a young Tahitian party with definite aims to save the race might do something; but then the natives are so agreeable. They will pray with you just as fervently as they will dance with you—but one never knows.

At the moment one sees drunken firemen and intoxicated sailors walking off with snowy robed

young girls. For her it is a matter of luck; she may have the captain the next day, and I wonder if he knows that we beach combers will hear all the details of the romance the next day, while he is steaming home to his loving wife and family.

And so this mad South Sea *hula-hula* continues—this mad dance of death goes on. Men despise the native, and eat his wife and daughter; and be it whispered gently, the native does not mind—very much—just a little, sometimes.

And my recollection of the party is perhaps summed up in the words of the poor native girl as she leant over the veranda railing, “You gimme warter—I warnt warter.”

Could we give them a little water—just a little pure water!

We white men!

CHAPTER X

BOARDING THE *TEREORA*

BEFORE I digressed into my impressions of a modern *hula-hula*, I think that I had commenced a period of waiting for the *Kaeo* to sail "next week." I used to visit her daily and I always found Captain Brander charming and polite, but just as confident that she would sail shortly as the supercargo, owner, and "chef mécanicien" were certain that many days would elapse before the *Kaeo* finally left Papeete.

The situation was trying and most people urged me to remain in Tahiti amongst my friends. If you go to the Paumotus, you'll have a horrid time; there's no water, no fruit except the cocoa-nut, and you may be stranded on a circular reef of coral for months," they said. But having promised Tenuaha, and feeling certain that I would have an instructive if not an amusing time I kept firmly to my intention.

But the days passed into weeks, and since it was essential that I should be back in Papeete to catch the *Moana* for San Francisco at the end of two months, I had little time to spare.

But one fine day there arrived from the Mar-

quesas and Paumotus the *Tereora*—a smart-looking schooner built by Charles Bailey in New Zealand—with Captain Joseph Winchester in command. I met him one day at the club, and hearing of my projected trip to the Paumotus, he at once offered to take me in his schooner. “I will be leaving in precisely ten days, and although ‘Winnie’ may get away before that time, I guarantee to get to Hikuero before him,” he said. The idea seemed attractive, but I expressed doubts about cancelling my passage with “Winnie.” I had managed to attain a stately friendship with that individual, and I shuddered at the idea of approaching his grand moustache and benevolent presence to mention that, under the circumstances, I had decided to sail on his rival ship, the *Tereora*. I expressed these doubts to Captain Joe, but he merely laughed, saying, “Oh, Winnie won’t mind, nothing worries him.” Nevertheless it was with diffidence that I approached Winnie. He put me at ease in a few seconds. “Don’t you worry,” he said; “you’ll be very comfortable with Joe, and he has forgotten more than I ever knew about the Paumotus; come and have a drink.”

And so it was arranged that I should travel on the *Tereora*; and, true to his word, Captain Joe was ready to sail precisely ten days from the date of his arrival.

He ordered me to be on board at ten-thirty A.M., and half an hour before that time, accom-

panied by Hototu, Ina, Te-te, Manu, Kroepilin, Olson, and a few others, I reached the breast-work where the *Tereora* was getting ready to depart. Ina had brought a huge bunch of flowers, Hototu had brought mangoes and pineapples, Te-te had brought limes, while Manu had carried, with some difficulty, a large string of oranges.

Having been assured that I had at least thirty minutes to spare, I took all the women on board to see my quarters. They spread themselves about the little cabin and compelled Willie, the supercargo, to procure a large kerosene tin to place the flowers in. Willie despised the flowers, and expressed some annoyance, with the result that all the women turned on him and commenced to assail him with epithets. It was an unequal contest.

The preliminary part of a native conversation of this nature consists in hurling quick comic remarks at one's opponents. These soon develop, until one's father, mother and ancestors, together with one's descendants down to the third and fourth generation come in for their share of abuse. Dreadful, comic, unprintable remarks flow from the lips of otherwise respectable women. Still remarks can be made in Tahitian, which in English are unprintable.

It was with some difficulty, therefore, that I managed to get the women ashore again. They all appeared miserable—that species of sadness that approaches happiness. A parting de-

velops emotion; in common with death, tragedies and weddings, a farewell always forms a ceremony to a Tahitian. In the old days one used the rod with shark's teeth, but the dawn of Christianity has banished this practice.

A hundred years or so ago a Spanish priest with one companion had been left alone on Tahiti. The idea had been, not only to convert the natives, but to establish Tahiti as a colony for the King of Spain. The priests hated the experiment, and remained inside their palisade in deadly fear, while watching through the chinks the heathen ceremonies which included, occasionally, a human sacrifice or two. One day a young chief died, and during the funeral ceremony his mother solemnly walked on to the *marai*, and baring her body, much to the admiration of her friends and relations, commenced to scratch her body with the shark's teeth. This was the supreme moment of the funeral ceremony, and the natives, numbering many thousands, knelt in solemn prayer, while the old lady did her normal duty. The congregation had attained a high state of sanctity, all were visibly affected, when the Spanish priest ran through the crowd, up onto the *marai*, and said: "You foolish woman, whatever are you doing? Your behaviour is neither seemly nor respectable."

They did not kill the priest, but having driven him back into his house, they commenced to pray that the mad spirit possessing him might be driven

out, and the ceremony ended to the satisfaction of all.

Finally the *Tereora* drew a few yards away from the breastwork, and while anchors were being hauled in and safely stowed, I watched my friends who were standing on the breastwork. Te-te, my landlady, seemed most affected. She wore a long flowing pink muslin gown; her beautiful dark hair was braided, being kept in place by a large bow of white ribbon which appeared behind her neck. In spite of her forty odd years she looked charming. But what disturbed me most about Te-te was that she wore corsets. This was a bad omen, for I had never known Te-te to wear corsets for anything less than a funeral, or perhaps high mass on Christmas Day.

The *Tereora* was just far enough away from the breastwork to make possible the utterance of that futile form of conversation which takes place between friends just before a train draws out of a station or when a liner moves from a dock. One shouts inane remarks—highly unnecessary—and one's friends reply in a similar strain. On the *Tereora* these moments were long and drawn out, for there is much to do before, free from her lines and hawsers, a schooner can pass across the lagoon, through the passage in the reef and out amongst the breakers where the sorrow of parting is drowned in the horror of seasickness, and one merely longs for dry land.

The departure of the *Tereora* created little sensation amongst the inhabitants of Papeete, and a heavy shower of rain drove my friends off to a nearby veranda from which conversation became impossible.

After a time my friends walked off waving good-byes and I descended into my state-room—the captain's—and commenced to arrange my personal effects. This was difficult, for it seemed to me that all the magazines in the world had been flung on to the bunk, and piled on the floor in every odd corner. I managed, however, to discover a pair of khaki shorts, and these with a silk shirt formed my only clothing. I went on deck to be greeted kindly by Captain Joe.

“Well, Lieutenant, make yourself at home, the ship's yours,” he remarked.

“We are in the hands of God,” I thought as I saw huge waves smashing themselves onto the reef.

Finally Willie, the supercargo, who up to the present had been performing a duet with the captain upon the auditory nerves of the crew, caused a shrill whistle to blow, the engine commenced making short childish puffs from the side of the schooner, and we were off across the smooth lagoon.

But before we get outside the reef—it promises to be difficult there—let me tell you about the captain.

CHAPTER XI

CAPTAIN JOE

CAPTAIN JOE WINCHESTER, addressed on his letters as "Monsieur le Capitaine Winchester," called by his friends and enemies (if any) plain Joe, was born near Birkenhead, Liverpool, about sixty years ago and found himself leading a trying existence as a shoeblick on the landing stage of that great seaport.

Naturally, so it seemed to Joe, this profession led him to sea, for after a time he shipped as cabin boy on a large sailing ship bound for the Californian coast. It seems that as a cabin boy he was a failure, for one day he found himself trying to explain away the badness of some coffee he had made for the captain. The coffee must have been bad—Joe says it was awful—for the captain called him an unpleasant group of words—that phrase which insults one's immediate maternal ancestress. This enraged Joe, for it is a code of honour amongst us men never to listen to a word said against our mothers. We may desert them, leave them to starve, kill them—anything; but we must not allow another man to call us the sons of unpleasant she animals.

So Joe picked up the pot of coffee, and being at close range, he succeeded in crashing it onto the captain's head and face. This action was unpopular with the captain. His dignity, his head and face had been assailed; so Joe hung by the thumbs to the rigging. He alleges that death might have relieved him from his agony, had not an Irish second mate saved him. This occurred about forty-three years ago—before the sun of civilization had dawned upon the mental horizon of both cabin boys and captains. Nowadays cabin boys are called stewards, those individuals that one detects upon liners. And hasn't the sun of civilization scorched the captains,—some of them! They are called "Commanders" now, and with gold lace they radiate importance and patronage. To sit beside the captain at dinner is to attain the very pinnacle of social importance at sea. Vaguely, I prefer the old savage cabin boy and the rough and ready captain; but they have gone now, and it is certain they will never return.

But to return to Captain Joe, who is neither savage nor magnificent—just a kindly, delightful old liar, suffering from literary indigestion, like a lighthouse keeper who reads *all* the magazines. Imagine eating all the brains of all the magazine writers.

After a time, and his history is vague, Joe found himself ashore on one of the Marquesan Islands well north of Tahiti. Here he was a

prince amongst the people and decided to stay. He was "fed up" with the sea he said, and if he could not be entertained by princesses and princes of his own blood, at least those of the Marquesan Islands were disposed to be friendly.

The Marquesan Islands are beautiful, and the inhabitants unmoral and hospitable. At home a man sufficiently prosperous supplies one with an attendant to fold one's clothes, and to attend to the room generally. Food is supplied freely; for the British heart is not niggardly, and except for the tips that one pays to servants, one lives on one's host. Now a Marquesan was likewise hospitable, but he did more than you or I would do for a guest.

He gave you his wife, and showed well-bred annoyance if you failed to take her. They have given up this practice now except to distinguished guests.

Joe was the only white man in the place, whether literally or metaphorically I am unable to state; but it might be well to add that upon our first meeting Joe said, "Lieutenant, they call me 'lying Joe'; and I'm proud of the title."

He doesn't look a liar; and yet his stories—— Nevertheless his method of dealing with his subordinates is effective. As a rule kindly, yet when occasion demands, he goes straight for the mark. Like an arrow shot by Robin Hood he slits the willow. He can drink with anyone ashore without



A TAHITIAN MAIDEN WITH A HEAD-DRESS OF TIARE TAHITI

One of the dancing girls in the hula-hula, vivacious, full of smiles and laughter, but before the end of the dance rebelled at the copious drinks of the native punch, calling, "Gimme warter—I wan' warter."



MARFA

The appearance of Marfa was not attractive; her voice was harsh and guttural; she was getting old, but she did what she could with her jew's harp. Without her the voyage from Tahiti to Hikuero would have been woefully dull.



GLORIANA

Except, when at night time, she placed her head on the deck somewhere, Gloriana spent fourteen days exactly as you see her here. Behind her—ropes and bunches of ripening bananas, around her—a heaving tropical head sea in the grip of a stiff trade wind.



ON BOARD THE "TEREORA" IN MID-OCEAN

The photograph is not clear. But some idea of the limited space occupied by the deck passengers can be obtained. Marfa can be seen in the immediate foreground. To her right is one of the deck boats in which we endeavoured to isolate the young native with the smallpox.

apparent effect, but at sea never, except when he sights land, when he has a tot of rum. His stories were disappointing, but then his mental food is fantastic and his appetite can only be satisfied by reading magazine stories. Living in great cities, or at least within easy postal service of great towns, you and I can hardly appreciate the dearth of decent literature in the South Seas. Not that one regards the magazine stories as indecent—they are decent—but their consumption when allied to no other firmer, stronger meat will produce a weird line of thought, just a little weak.

I wonder whether the following story is true or whether Joe read it in a magazine. It sounds like Euripides, but Joe's education on the landing stage at Liverpool was not classical.

A young Norwegian sailor slipped ashore from a whaler as she lay at anchor in one of the charming Marquesan bays, and like Joe, decided to stay. He found a charming little wife—the Marquesans are lightly built—and eating of the lotus he dwelt in sweet content for some time, in fact for two years. But the call of the sea proved irresistible, and having presented his wife with a promise to return, and his silver watch chain, he shipped on board the first whaler that appeared. On the watch chain dangled a silver locket with a portrait of his mother inside. You have only to gaze for a few minutes into the showcases of the local photographers in any seaport town, and you

will see many seamen wearing precisely the same sort of ornament. One hand in the trousers pocket draws aside the coat, and there, in the middle of him, hangs the locket. It is a fashion amongst seamen, and it gives an amiable touch of respectability.

The Marquesan woman found the ache at her heart difficult to understand, for love and animal passion are separate in the South Seas; and she loved the Norwegian. But the story ceases to encircle around her. She merely sat on the rocks near her house looking out towards the horizon, feeling very unhappy, much to the amusement of her friends. She died about six months afterwards. Which did not really matter; for what is a woman in the South Seas? Thrash her, make her work; treat her with as little consideration as possible; lend her to your friends when you're drunk, and she will cling to you with strength. Behave like a gentleman to her—well, I don't know; I wonder if the experiment has been tried. I must admit, gently, that she would find it difficult to understand. And she might play the devil.

Years passed, ten, fifteen—and a whaler once more appeared off the same islands and came to rest in the bay to hunt the sperm whale. She had hardly anchored, before a crowd of chattering, gossiping, vivacious maidens climbed up her side as an offering from the chief to the captain and crew. The captain was given the most hand-

some, and his choice fell upon a girl with a mass of yellow bleached hair that fell around her shoulders in unusual profusion. Her eyes had a vague suggestion of blue about them, and altogether she was desirable in the eyes of the captain. She might have been fifteen years old, but looked older, for women develop early in the South Seas. Her feet were small, and her face dainty and piquant—of a delicious brown colour; but not too brown. On her head she wore a wreath of white blossoms.

The captain congratulated himself and looked forward to a happy three months. Strangely enough, she displayed a distaste for the captain, and indeed would have nothing to do with him. She clung to the rigging and resisted his attempts at gallantry. During the struggle, she bit him so badly that he was forced to call the cabin boy for a piece of lint. The girl meanwhile gazed at him sullenly, while her friends roared with delight at a situation so unusual. Finally, as he stooped to bind his wounded wrist, the girl made a leap, and, before anyone could stop her, she was over the side. Diving deeply, she reappeared on the other side of the ship and commenced to swim for the shore.

“Lower away a boat,” shouted the captain, now determined to procure the girl. His manly blood was up. “Good hunting,” he thought.

The girl, like all her race, was at home in the

water, and indeed she might have escaped for a time if the ship had not been a whaler and discipline slacker. But a boat was soon lowered, and, with the captain in the stern, it soon came up with the little swimmer whose hair was flowing behind her like seaweed. When the boat reached her, she dived, as also did a large Marquesan shark who was also hunting. The captain held his hand out ready, hoping the boat would frighten the shark, and soon he could see her form coming rapidly to the surface. A few orders, and the boat stood out of her way, while the captain stretched out his hand. Finally he made a grab, grasped her by the neck, felt something like a chain in his hands and murmured, "I've got you now, you vixen," but the shark also, with terrific rapidity, made a quick motion; and the shark had the advantage. The captain got the silver chain, but the shark ate the maiden with the strange yellow hair.

On the chain was a square locket, and inside the locket was found the face of an old Norwegian lady.

"That's my mother," said the captain as he gave orders to return to the ship. And as he climbed the rope ladder he muttered thoughtfully, "Well, I'll be damned."

CHAPTER XII

THE SCHOONER

THE *Tereora* is a two-masted schooner of about one hundred tons. Her masts tend to be stumpy and the absence of top masts gives her a squat, respectable appearance. There is an entire absence of that sweeping graceful appearance which marks her more elegant sister, the yacht. But for a land-lubber, this is perhaps a good thing, since she carries less sail than she could with safety, since it is essential that the decks of a trading schooner should remain dry, not so much for the benefit of the numerous deck passengers as for the cargo carried on deck.

Aft there is a semi-deck cabin which subdivides itself into a main dining-room, the captain's small stateroom, a lavatory and a tiny pantry. Round the walls of the dining-room were innumerable shelves packed tightly with merchandise, including many rolls of desirable calicoes and muslins for trade purposes.

In the centre of the room stood a table close to an American leather settee, upon which the captain slept. A few chairs were dotted about the floor which also formed the bed of four saloon

passengers. A narrow passage led aft to the counter, from the rails of which hung many bunches of bananas.

Teta, the *chef mecanicien*, lived in a small cabin which one entered from the waist of the ship. Underneath the deck house stood the engine, or, as it was called, the "*machine*," and if you entered Teta's cabin hastily and thoughtlessly, in less than no time you found yourself staring at the clean green painted machine. That is, if you were capable of seeing anything, after falling through the trap door in Teta's cabin.

Willie, the supercargo, slept in a bunk inside the door of the main cabin, and underneath this dwelt Mimi, the cat, and her small family, together with the more highly ornamented hats of the deck passengers.

In the waist of the schooner were two large landing boats, much deck cargo, and fifteen deck passengers who hoped for a fair breeze, since every day at sea would cost them ten francs.

For'ard was another deck house which, with some economy of space, divided itself into a cook house, and a cabin for the chief mate and cook.

Amongst the passengers were two pumps, to one of which every day went a sailor, and he pumped, and, as the bilge water flowed over the deck, the passengers remarked, "*Noa noa*." But they were not thinking of Gauguin's look, and the sweet

atmosphere he desires to convey, since bilge water is not sweet smelling. Perhaps this is an unnecessary plunge into detail!

Willie, the supercargo, ignoring the decisive argument displayed by his olive skin, was determined to be a white man, and he succeeded in convincing the crew. He failed to convince anyone else however, for he looked precisely like a polite Hindu at Cambridge. He spoke much English and some French, and acted as a speaking tube for the captain. His mother was a half-caste something or other, probably Chilian, and his father aspired to Irish ancestry, but nothing regular nor English. Once I saw him embrace a dark man, seemingly to my inexperienced eye a full-blooded native. "Who's that?" I asked, noting the French embrace he gave the man. "The white man?" queried Willie. "Yes the white man," I answered tactfully. "Oh, that's my mother's brother."

And although I was not convinced, the sailors were, and they gave him the respect and obedience he needed. Of course, he was the *raatira's* representative, the captain's understudy, and as such he was supreme.

The sailors were a droll company. It is true that a sailor who goes to sea on a trading schooner can have little fear of an uncomfortable purgatory. As a matter of fact, going off in a schooner is the way of least resistance for many of them.

If they don't go, they tend to starve, and on a schooner they *do* get food.

I watched them as we slowly steered our way towards the passage in the reef ahead. They were all bewreathed and unhealthy looking, and had obviously had a wonderful time ashore. Their appearance was absurd, like Hawaiians in New York. I wondered how long the pink wreaths would last. One man looked like a pirate on the Spanish Main. He possessed a huge green and yellow striped scarf which he had bound around his Jewish looking head. Pirates all wear head-gear like that in pictures and on the stage. With large earrings, this man might have posed as a pirate.

We had fourteen deck passengers. They sat below the salt—definitely. One gazed upon them as from the heavens above and unconsciously regarded them as Neptune must regard the absurd people who inhabit liners at sea.

There were but two women deck passengers, and one lady promised to distinguish herself from the start. She accosted me at once, and remarked with a grin, in native and English:

“You go Hikuero?”

“No,” I replied; “I'm going to Fagatau.”

She displayed surprise.

“If you go to Hikuero I will give you pearl shells and some little pearls.”

I became friendly at once, so she sat down beside

me and played a Jewish harp in my ear. It is remarkable how seductive a Jewish harp can sound. Later I had more time to observe Marfa. She was accompanied by a charming curly-haired girl of five summers who was her baby by adoption. She gave me some unnecessary information about the child's father, which I dare not communicate to you.

Her personality was insistent in spite of her age, fifty-seven, getting close to the end of all things for a native woman. She was thin; she was ugly; the skin of her chin was tightly drawn and her mouth seemed designed for tearing live food to pieces. I saw her crawling about the deck with a small kitten in her mouth, like a cat. Her eyes were savage; her hair was lank and dreary looking, she was playful like a lioness, she could dance, she was cheerful, and horrible. Her remarks were filthy and funny. And yet to help others seemed always her aim. With great skill she made a small cabin or tabernacle with some tarpaulin, so that the fourteen deck passengers might shelter from the rain; and they would do nothing for her. I know the other woman refused to lend her a green enamel basin she possessed, and once a great stout native boy drove her off from him with something approaching a curse. And the other passengers roared with delight, in which Marfa joined.

She had had four boys of her own, but they had

died, so she adopted other folks' babies. Towards the curly-haired maiden she acted with a savage affection, and the baby wept if Marfa were distant from her more than a dozen yards. No selfish scheme ever came off for herself, and when the others laughed at her discomfiture, she would look comically savage, entirely for their amusement. She was too old, too ugly, and yet her progress around the deck was always marked by roars of laughter. Marfa would make the fortune of a Cinema firm, for she was a perfect actress and never missed an occasion nor a pose if it were amusing. I could understand but little of her language, but to see her imitate a Frenchman and to hear her sing a bad French song and a holy British one, would make a cat smile even more widely than a Cheshire cat. She proposed marriage to the sailors in turn, and often, placing her ugly face close beside theirs, she would call attention to the contrast—the soft, good looking Tahitian, and her own ape-like head.

I must admit that the captain and all the other folk who could speak English regarded her as mad, but I don't think she was any madder than other comedians. The captain disliked her intensely. He told me that the day before the *Tereora* left, she had called on his wife, and after a lengthy conversation during which the captain's wife expected money to be borrowed from her any minute, she remarked, "I hear that you are not

on speaking terms with your mother. That is very wicked." Marfa was compelled to leave *very* soon after that.

The captain had another grievance. The night before the *Tereora* left, Marfa appeared with twenty prospective passengers, whom she alleged were going with her to Hikuero to clean shell for her husband. Marfa's husband is but a poor diver and could not employ even one cleaner all day. Now these twenty potential pearl shell cleaners were maidens, under twenty, and their reputation was bad even for Papeete. Marfa had approached them and had arranged to pay their fares for them at Hikuero if they each gave her a certain amount on the spot. Having stated that her husband had influence with the schooner owners, the girls regarded the proposition as good.

Marfa gave a party with the money, and, becoming intoxicated, she led the maidens down to the *Tereora* to inspect the schooner. Here they met Willie, the supercargo, who informed them firmly that there was not the slightest chance of their travelling on the *Tereora*. Their feelings were jarred considerably, and these they displayed vulgarly—the twenty of them.

But if they felt unkindly towards Willie, imagine how they felt towards Marfa, who was executing a *hula-hula* on the breastwork. She said, "*aita pea-pea*," which means "It's all right! Don't worry! It'll be all the same a thousand

years hence!" In fact *aita pea-pea* has a composite irritating meaning when applied to those suffering from outrageous fortune. The twenty maidens threw her into the lagoon, but she bobbed up and jeered at them; so, laughing and crying, they returned to Papeete to see what sin and wickedness they could find there.

The other woman was ugly too, but she was slightly and beautifully built, and since facial beauty hardly affects the heart or mind of a Tahitian, she had little to worry about. Then she had two fine boys, her love for whom was wonderful to behold, for while nursing them—they were very seasick—her funny, pock-marked, wizened-up face became beautiful with the eternal loveliness of motherhood, which combines that of the sweetheart and the friend—an invincible combination.

This woman was quiet until Marfa told a lie about the number of sacks of shell her (Marfa's) husband could bring from the deep. This touched the woman on a tender spot, for her husband is one of the cleverest divers in the Paumotus, while Marfa's man is but a poor diver. So she spoke—hard. She screwed up her face hatefully and hissed at Marfa. She smote her, hip and thigh, verbally. But Marfa, quite in the wrong, got all the laughs from the crowd as she answered in broken French and English, Tahitian, Samoan (her native language), Paumotan, and even Mar-

quesan. Finally she sang a short hymn, and with such a pious expression that we all roared.

We had a cabin passenger, to whom, without success, I tried to give my stateroom. A more pathetic person it would be difficult to find. She was a white woman called *Gloriana*. She was thirty-five years old and looked fifty. Her father had been one of the wealthiest men in Tahiti, and had owned several fine schooners, the snowiest and finest of which was called "*Gloriana*." Things went wrong. *Gloriana*, possessing one-eighth Tahitian blood, met a "gentleman," a Cambridge man, who regarded marriage as much too permanent and definite, and with him she gladly lived, producing two fine boys. He left her or died, her father became poor, and some strange fortune led her to one of the outlying islands of the Paumotus, where she found a native glad to possess a white woman, and especially one with two boys. They married, and *Gloriana* found the native more a gentleman than the "gentleman." Unfortunately her digestive arrangements had gone wrong, and I found her returning from Tahiti with her two boys. She had gone to Papeete to get medical advice. The advice seemed humourous, since she was forbidden to eat almost anything, certainly anything to be obtained on the island except condensed milk. From a digestive point of view her future looked unpromising.

For ten days she lay on the counter of the

Tereora with her boys, one seasick all the time, and the other singing. Gloriana was seasick herself. She could have slept on the floor with M. LeRoy and M. LeRoy's concubine, but she preferred the extreme end of the *Tereora*, and here she was bounced up and down.

There was a Marquesan criminal on board, who had succeeded in forging a French authority's hand, gaining thereby three hundred francs, and a year's imprisonment in the Tahitian gaol. Finding themselves short of Government servants in the Marquesas, he was returning to be the doctor's servant, it was alleged. This boy, nineteen years old, was described by the natives as a *mahu*, which means an effeminate person—a droll combination that was astonishing. They alleged that he spent all his spare time with the girls. Many of us do that, but this fellow made hats and mats. Which is terrible. However, Marfa adopted him, since his love was cheap, nursing him, playing the Jew's harp at him and even feeding him while he was ill. He had a pleasing face, and if it were not for the drollness of his manner, he would not have been unattractive. He used to spend his time gossiping with the concubine of M. LeRoy, a handsome young lady of twenty-three, who sat outside the cabin with her basket of cigarette makings, perfectly happy, while her unofficial husband lay on his back for fifteen days quite seasick, and yet able to get up at meal times and to eat more

than all of us put together. M. LeRoy was a Frenchman with honest eyes, fragile body, but of a good courage.

The other passengers will hardly warrant description, but perhaps I had better tell you about Peeno.

Peeno had gone to Papeete several months before to get an official divorce from an unfaithful and undiscerning wife, and after several happy weeks in Papeete, the divorce was granted, but the sum of seventy-five francs was required to clinch the business. No one seemed willing to invest this sum in Peeno's happiness, and, since he possessed only enough money to take him back to his island, he decided to return and hope for the best. Normally, no one would have worried about the divorce, but the new young lady upon whom Peeno had designs, was three-quarters white. And she was an heiress likely to possess one thousand pounds a year, if the price of copra remained steady. However, he decided to return and marry the lady, which doubtlessly he has done by this time, but the priest may be angry if he decides to find out.

There is no doubt but what Peeno would have approached more nearly his salvation if he had not spent all his money before the divorce was finally granted, but "*aita pea-pea*," he said.

There were other characters on our little schooner and we may mention them as we proceed.

We are now slowly steaming towards the passage. We can see the two ends of the reef with the surf breaking upon them, and now we are outside.

CHAPTER XIII

OUTSIDE THE REEF

"WE'RE going to get it, Lieutenant," said Joe, looking towards the most northerly end of the island that could be seen.

"Are we?" I remarked carelessly.

We were bobbing along the coast just outside the reef. I felt splendid, not the faintest bit seasick. We had passed my little *fare*, and I had seen my villainous Chinese cook standing on the veranda amidst the hanging ferns and pot plants. It was about eleven o'clock, and, feeling hungry, I decided to have a drink of cocoanut water. Charlie, the Marquesan cabin boy, promptly prepared a cocoanut which I enjoyed. Then I went aft and stood by the captain. I was astonished at the vivacity the *Tereora* displayed as we sailed well up into a stiff trade breeze. A trading schooner must keep her decks as dry as possible, hence speed is sacrificed to dryness. The result is that instead of forging through the upper portion of a wave like a yacht, she climbs up the sea if it is a head sea, and descends the other side; then, after an irritating jerk, she commences to climb the next one. The result is horrible if you are not used to it.

Hardly ten minutes had passed before I began to regret that cocoanut, and another ten found me lying on my bunk very, very seasick. I retired from the world for eighteen hours. Once during this time I climbed on deck, and the point covered with cocoanut trees, whereon my house rests, could be faintly discerned. Oh, how I longed to be there! I smiled faintly at the captain, and then once more retired. But I will spare you details, while confessing humbly that the possession of a little courage would have caused me to offer the captain a cheque for a large sum in order that I might be landed anywhere, on a solitary rock in mid-ocean, I cared not. However, I stuck it out. The captain said I would be better in the morning, and I was, but then so was the sea—a little.

I had an ordinary deck chair, and upon this I sat watching the deck passengers and being watched by them. We were all amused and interested.

The activity, the liveliness of the *Tereora* was marvellous. She jumped stiffly, she planed gracefully, but refused to become monotonous. I had hoped to get to Hikuero in six days, but after the third day out this hope was abandoned since we experienced a head sea, possibly the remains of a storm we had missed. Upon the fourth day we sighted land, which was encouraging, though the land merely appeared as a few cocoanuts growing

out of the sea. A northerly tack took the schooner close to the island, which was Anau. Upon nearing the reef, we could see the blue lagoon looking desirable with its miles and miles of smooth water. Then we turned round on the other tack and left the island astern. I have not mentioned that from the time we had left Tahiti we had been tacking, which to a landlubber is a zig-zag business that never seems to get one anywhere. I was growing hopelessly bored. I used to sit with the natives and chat with them, though this was difficult since I could only smatter their language. "Mimi," the long, thin black cat, disliked me playing with her kittens, and used to sit near me and mew with so such melancholy that I had to give up the kittens. They were too young to be played with anyway.

On the fourth day out the captain said, "Sorry to report a case of smallpox on board, Lieutenant," and then seeing that my sense of humour had not altogether returned, he explained that the boy bound for Fakahina had developed large numbers of spots all over him. The captain didn't *think* it was smallpox. I groaned in the spirit, for during my melancholy days of "mal-de-mer" I had had dark forebodings. They were now going to be realized.

"It is fortunate that I have been but recently vaccinated," I thought, "if it is smallpox." Hence, after breakfast, I examined the boy from a distance, and felt more depressed, and even more

thankful for the scars of vaccination on my arm. He had been unwell from the commencement of the voyage, and now his face, arms and legs were covered with immense quantities of large inflamed pimples. I appealed to Willie, the supercargo, and he remarked kindly, "He got—what you call it—English-er-er 'petit pox'—yes, tha's right—'petit pox.'"

"Well, Willie, what are you going to do, you can't leave him mixed up with all these people?" I asked.

Willie at once wore that "what can you do" expression that a Frenchman signifies with a shrug. The boy could not be isolated, even if anyone wanted to isolate him, which was uncertain.

"If you land him at Fakahina, the two or three hundred people there will get the disease. Can't you land him tomorrow at Hikuero?" I enquired.

"Then all people at Hikuero get the sickness," Willie replied sweetly with another kindly smile and a "what can you do" expression.

I then discussed the matter with Peeno and he replied that he had suffered only a year before from a similar disease, and Peeno certainly had at least three pit marks on his handsome good natured face.

"If you get it, put your head in the sea water and you no get marks," he said, "I did that, I got no marks." I refused to argue with him.

Finally Willie agreed to attempt some sort of isolation and the patient was placed in one of the large surf boats amongst the bananas and fruit of the passengers. He lay mixed up with the oars and seats, and only poked his poor red covered head out occasionally.

“He’ll want a grindstone for his face—or some emery paper,” Joe said, when he saw the head.

I was actually the only person on board troubled. I thought that Gloriana, since she lived at Fakahina, ought to share my melancholy, but she merely lifted her draggled looking head from the mats and rugs and said dismally “All the people at Fakahina will get it”—then brightly, “the only thing is to give them a good dose of castor oil and then some starch.” Lilian changed the subject and I perforce treated the matter stoically and hoped for the best.

At lunch time the captain said, “How would you like to land on an uninhabited island, Lieutenant?”

I replied, “I’d love to.”

Who hasn’t read “The Coral Island?”

Joe placed the chart on the table and we bent over it. With his first finger he pointed out where we were, or rather where he *thought* we were. He was certain of the latitude, but the chronometer was either broken, or he did not have one, so the longitude was uncertain. This allowed us much latitude to choose from, an unsatisfactory situation

in navigation. However, Joe's instinct seldom failed him. Island schooners apparently reach their destination more by chance than design. Some captains navigate scientifically, especially if the owner travels with the schooner. An owner dislikes to see his schooner piled upon a reef.

But it would seem that the majority of schooner captains trust to instinct and their knowledge of the different islands. Cynical people laugh at this.

I remember hearing of an American arriving on one of the Cook Islands and promptly marrying the queen of one of the districts. A lady who writes the "lotus eating" rot about the South Sea tells the story of this romance. How the young American wooed and finally, in spite of the principal queen's opposition, won the blushing young princess. The story is pleasing, and filled with atmosphere—the atmosphere you believe exists in the South Seas, but which does not. Unfortunately, unkind truth tells that the lady, though rich, was large and fat and the proud mother of eight husky children from a former conjugal enterprise. Humorous truth goes on to state that after the queen's husband had settled down to his life in the district, he felt the necessity for some kind of business. He suggested therefore, to the queen, his wife, and to all the chiefs, that the district should own a schooner to trade with another island fifty miles distant. The idea was

favourably received by all, with the exception of one old man, who cautiously remarked that he did not see the use of a schooner without a captain to sail her. The young American looked at him pityingly and the queen snapped that her husband was the man to sail the schooner, "and that you weren't to talk nonsense." So the old man was convinced, the business of subtracting the necessary funds from the citizens went on apace, and finally resulted in the appearance inside the lagoon of a fine schooner.

Since the schooner was held in common by the district, it was decided that her first voyage should be something of an affair. The queen was a bad sailor so she did not venture upon the first voyage. She had been on schooners before, and hated them. However, the principal chiefs bearing many presents found themselves on board bound for the neighbouring island. The young American, and I call him the "young American" because the lotus-eating writer lady calls him that—he has been called other names, but the white people living on his island are notoriously uncharitable—took command and soon the schooner was bounding over the blue waves. They were due at the other island late on the following day, but the evening of the next, the next again, and the next again after that, found them still at sea and extremely uncomfortable. Fortunately, the following day land was sighted and the young American said to the

despondent chiefs, "There's your island for you."

The chiefs were much pleased and commenced to make ready for the reception. Each noble unpacked his presents and soon they were close to land. "It looks exactly like our own island," said one chief; "the mountains are the same but the beach is different." I hardly dare to continue the sad story, but I must relate that it *was* their own island—the other end of it. They gave up the schooner soon after that.

So South Sea navigation is erratic, but Captain Joe seldom misses an island. And navigating amongst the Paumotus is not easy. The islands are so low-lying that one can only detect them on a clear day at seven or eight miles or thereabouts from a schooner. Many a once-fair schooner lies rotting in the deep water beside the reef of many an atoll.

Therefore it was not unreasonable for us to hope that we might strike the uninhabited island the next day. "Today" was Sunday and Joe had rolled up the chart, taken off his spectacles and seated himself back on the settee looking comically at M. LeRoy who had seemed less seasick when hearing of a possible landing. LeRoy had even discussed the price of cartridges, and had agreed to shoot birds if Joe would supply the cartridges, which after some discussion Joe agreed to do. Willie, the supercargo, had taken his gun to

pieces so easily, and it was so rusty that I made a mental note to steer clear of him during his preliminary bombardments. We were all very excited about landing.

About ten o'clock the Chinese cook entered the cabin with a suggestive and humorous smile saying, "Today him Sunday."

To which Joe replied, "Yes, today him Sunday, make 'im a pie, eh!"

"Yes, make 'im a pie," said the cook.

So Willie, looking bored and pleased, got down from his bunk, took out his keys with an indulgent air, and produced five cans of peaches. The cook retired, saying sweetly to me, "Good morning, gentleman."

"How do you know?" said Joe rudely.

Captain Joe informed me that the island upon which we would possibly land was called Paraki. It had been planted with cocoanuts, the lagoon and the reef shelf contained many fish, and innumerable birds lived in obscurity and contentment amongst its scraggy trees.

During the afternoon M. LeRoy got up and crawled out on to the poop, but growing discouraged, he retired once more. His unofficial wife then continued her soft chattering with the Marquesan criminal.

That night I retired to the usual process of being hurled from one side to the other of my berth. I could not sleep. The lamp burning at one end

of my cabin, in order that the steersman might see the compass, was disturbing. Finally it was morning and I yelled to Joe, "Can you see land?" and he replied, "No, not yet, Lieutenant." So we had coffee.

Upon going on deck I discovered a perfect calm, and this pleased us all, for we could make at least six knots with our machine, which soon commenced to puff away.

Then commenced a trying five hours. We sighted land, reached within six miles of it, when the machine stopped. There was no wind and Teta could not make the engine work for nearly an hour. It went then, at irregular intervals, during which time we gave Teta advice about his engine. We murmured things about the carburetor, and finally M. LeRoy suggested that perhaps the gauze strainer between the oil tank and the engine had become blocked. Teta thought this humourous, but finally agreed to look. M. LeRoy was right, the strainer seemed filled with human hair. After cleaning the gauze, the engine went steadily, and soon we were abreast of the island. We steered for the leeward side and a boat was made ready for launching. Marfa, desirous of landing, had girded her skirts around her. Willie said, "No!" I begged for her, and Willie agreed. But Captain Joe refused permission and poor old Marfa was disappointed. The boy with the "petit pox" had been ordered to get out of

the landing boat, which thing he did willingly. His pimples were coming off bodily at this time.

They cast the boat overboard and a few sailors, with Willie, M. LeRoy and myself, cast ourselves into it. "Don't forget to bring plenty of *Poppi hari*," said Joe, "let go." The schooner went off with her tail in the air, and we were presently rowing towards what appeared to be an angry, wicked looking mass of rocks and surf.

CHAPTER XIV

OVER THE REEF

THE prospect of getting ashore alive seemed vague. "They have made a mistake in their choice of a landing place, but I dare say human cussedness will make them persevere," I thought. It looked dangerous, and M. LeRoy seized this chance to state that the last time he had gone over the reef the boat had capsized, and his money was slowly floating away in a wallet when a kindly *kanaka* went for it, and got it.

A shelf had formed around the island, and as the breakers rushed forward, this became submerged. Then, as the sea with a bitter sigh withdrew, the edge of this shelf became exposed, leaving a shallow pool beyond, about one hundred yards wide and a foot deep, extending actually to the main reef of the atoll, which, of course, was the island. One could also notice under the edge great subterranean caverns filled with blue water.

It was our duty and ambition, if we could land, to seize the right moment, when a big wave was submerging the coral shelf, to get our boat onto it, and to remain there; because if we did not remain there, all of us, our stern would sink while

our bow would remain in an attitude of supplication ready to be engulfed by the next breaker, in which case one would find oneself swimming among the caverns, soon to be grasped by a *kanaka*, and dragged onto the reef in a bloody condition. Or perhaps, unluckily, one might remain under the boat for a time, and they would have to stand one on one's head while the salt water came out. To be drowned was unlikely, but to be in an uncomfortable position seemed probable.

We slowly approached, and took up a hazardous position just before the waves broke on the rocks. Everybody seemed to be talking at once. Sometimes we would approach and then they would decide not to take the fatal leap. Finally a suitable wave was chosen, our sailors pulled with a mighty will, we grounded, but only one half of the boat. This seemed bad, but two men jumped forward and held her bows, the next wave approached, lifted our stern and took us well forward, right onto the shelf. We grounded in about one foot of water.

This shelf was literally filled with great fish. Spears commenced to fly, men shouted, fish of all colours died. The sailors were armed with great fish spears, and the accuracy with which they sent these flying through the air was wonderful to behold. Many of the rods had at least six barbed points, so that it was easier than at first appeared.

The idea was to disturb a shoal, and then as they darted off with terrific speed, a spear would fly through the air just above them and gradually plane down until, coming amidst them, its weight adding velocity, one or other of the fish would be killed. There were many kinds of fish, and of varying hues, but a certain bright blue fish seemed to be the favourite. Its upper lip is hard and bony, suggesting the beak of a parrot.

The natives, and indeed the whites generally, eat this fish raw, the process of preparation making its flesh digestible. The flesh is removed from the bones, and then bruised on the coral, until it becomes a pulp. It is then soaked in cocoanut cream, a little salad oil, some vinegar and lime juice. Being then served with fresh onions and crisp lettuce, it tastes rather better than lobster.

There are plenty of fish in the Paumotus, but to the stranger their consumption is attended with some danger since certain species are poisonous. A fish found in the enclosed waters of the lagoon, while perfectly safe to eat, may cause the most violent pains to get hold upon you if you eat him when found in the open sea. Other fish are safe when found outside the reef, and deadly poisonous during their sojourn in the lagoon. Apparently few varieties spend all their lifetime inside the lagoon. At certain times they commence to migrate out over the shallow submerged part of the reef, intent upon reaching the open sea. If the

island is inhabited, but few escape the nets of the natives if they attempt this migration during the day. They become hysterical and sometimes fling themselves onto sandbanks where they are easily caught. In any case it is not difficult to herd them into nets. The natives are very greedy and invariably catch many hundreds more than they can possibly eat. Certainly they place them in big pools, a useless practice, since they hardly live more than an hour.

Having assisted the sailors for some time in this sport or slaughter, whatever you like to call it, I decided to join M. LeRoy and Willie who had seized their guns and, judging by the bombardment that one heard, they had already commenced to have some sport. I paddled across the pool, climbed the great coral chunks, and found myself walking over difficult ground bearing scraggy trees and sweet smelling shrubs. The birds, some black, and others an adorable snowy white, flew around us shrieking their wonderment and displeasure. Steady females sat on their nests. These were shot. Very Hunnish it seemed. I climbed one tree to see what one poor lady had been sitting on, and found a solitary egg. I put it in my pocket, but it objected strenuously without redress, and finally decided to become a young baby bird. I placed the poor wee thing amongst some rocks, but I dare say the crabs got her.

The birds could be killed with a stick, which

made M. LeRoy's desire to shoot mothers on their nests seem strange. Fortunately the adorable white angel birds refused to sit on their nests, and they flitted about so energetically that M. Le Roy only shot two. Willie failed hopelessly with his antique weapon, and took to hunting crabs.

I decided to explore on my own account. Crossing the mainland, which is the actual reef upon which vegetation grows, I found it hard going, especially since I was garbed in short breeches. The decayed branches and stems of the low-lying scrub had formed into mounds through which one sank, with a crackling sound, waist deep, sometimes to find one's ankles mixed with unkindly coral chunks. Visions of large crabs were, insistent. I struggled on, however, and finally struck the lagoon looking blue and green in the fierce sunlight.

I suppose most people know what an atoll or coral formed island is. If you take an ordinary ship's life buoy, the sort of thing through which an old seaman advertises soap, and allow this to float on some water, you get a fair idea of an atoll. The water inside the buoy is the lagoon, and the white canvas of the life buoy appearing above the water is the land or reef. That is, of course, a perfect atoll. Often the ring of land is imperfect and is submerged at parts, allowing water to come in from the ocean around. Sometimes there is a deep wide cleft, and a passage



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THE TYPE OF NATIVE WHO ACCOMPANIED ME ASHORE ON HARAIKI

The central figure is Terueroo, the chief of Papenoo. I have met many charming Tahitian gentlemen, but never a one to equal Terueroo. He speaks French perfectly, and like many of his brother Tahitians, he combines French charm of manner with all the good-natured sincerity of the Polynesian.



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CLIMBING A COCOANUT TREE

The gentleman climbing the palm is obviously posing. If his object were the procuring of nuts the upper part of his body would be close against the tree. His feet are bound with a piece of tough bark. The bark bears against the trunk of the tree, and his motions, when climbing, are those of the conventional monkey on a stick. It is not difficult to climb a coconut palm, when one knows how, but the result to an amateur is a lacerated chest, suggesting the knee of a small boy after a bad fall on a rough pavement.



A POLYNESIAN BOY OF FOURTEEN

He had been riding a surf board, but finding the waves too small, he was returning when I caught him with the camera.



RUTU AND MYSELF ASHORE
ON PARAKI

Rutu carries a large cocoanut crab in his right hand, and a brace of uia birds in his left. My costume is more suitable for the climate than Rutu's.



A POLYNESIAN BOY OF NINETEEN YEARS

He is wearing the conventional pareu of scarlet calico.



A PORTION OF THE NURSERY OF GOLDEN BROWN BOYS AND GIRLS WHO WELCOMED ME ON HIKUERO

I had endeavoured to photograph these enthusiasts in their native costume—their golden-brown bodies but partially clad in scarlet parous, loin cloths. But noting my preparations, the multitude melted. They wanted to be photographed badly, but they felt it was due to themselves to be dressed more fashionably. This is the result. It might interest you to know that the child on the extreme right is the gentleman-in-waiting to the taller boy on the extreme left, who is a prince of the blood royal. He is paid adequately, and disobedience receives suitable punishment.



ONE OF THE LANDING PLACES AT HIKUERO

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The houses (fares) would seem to be in a shocking state of repair. But during most of the year the Paumotun lives on friendly terms with the elements. There's always friendly coconut palm around, from whom an effective and absolutely water-tight thatching can be obtained with little trouble and no expense.

through which boats may pass is therefore formed. Generally the greater part of the reef bears vegetation, but there are also wide flats of grey-white sand and shells with little or no scrub. Cocoanuts grow well, but bananas, oranges, breadfruit and such like refuse to flourish. With infinite pains the natives try to grow these, but seldom with success. On some islands breadfruit trees have been forced to bear, but a cyclone has come with the consequent immersion, and the trees have died. So that it is safe to say that, except for the uninteresting fruit of the *pendanis*, which grows luxuriantly, the cocconut is the only fruit entirely to be depended upon.

I commenced to stroll along the edge of the lagoon—sometimes wading into the water, finding the soft, white sand kindly to my feet. Upon the bottom lay great fat black things, like sausages, with but little muscular movement. I don't know what the natives call them, but all allege that the Chinese regard them as delicious. I offered one to my Chinese cook, but with disgust he murmured, "*aita maitai*" which means "no good." They are abominable things, anyway, and give a faint shudder when by chance one puts one's foot on them. They are called sea cucumbers in other parts of the world.

As I strolled along in the shelter of the scrub I saw a sweet wee baby bird—an offspring of the snowy-white angel bird—sitting seriously on a

roughly-made nest. I approached closely, and with its adorable baby eyes it looked at me kindly. So I placed it on my hand, a new experience which it failed to understand, but its mother, flying near, hardly approved. However, it sat there and then produced two little fish from its throat onto my hand, and felt more comfortable after that. Very gently I replaced it on the nest, and I hope that now it is flitting about making the balmy air of Paraki gay and cheerful and suggestive of a baby's dream of heaven.

Soon I came to a cocoanut plantation, but the ground underneath was covered with sprouting nuts and much rubbish, so that walking became again difficult.

I tramped about scratching my sun-burnt legs, but happy in a world of imagination. And I can whisper to any young folk who may read this that an uninhabited island is well up to all the story book descriptions. The climate, while scorching hot, yet seemed dry and invigorating, for a good strong breeze was blowing, lashing the lagoon into small white-topped waves.

Finally I found myself back on the beach from where I had started. The sailors were cleaning an immense quantity of fish with their fingers, eating raw the livers and hearts—those delicacies that nestle near a roast chicken, and which some people like immensely. They looked savage, so I photographed them.

Afterwards, once more roaming, and guided by shouts and execrations, I managed to find Willie and two of the sailors. Willie held two great cocoanut crabs, one of a reddish colour and the other a variegated shade of deep blue. They were both dead, but still moving their pincers wearily. Willie urged me to join them, for a large crab had rushed under a big coral rock with haste and deadly fear. By bending down I could see a portion of its abdomen. Willie prodded this and the crab passed on out of sight. The rock was about four feet high, and, being circular, its diameter measured at least eight feet. To me the crab seemed perfectly safe. Under so large a rock, a crab three feet long, with great hairy legs and efficient pincers, would have little difficulty in keeping both Willie and me at bay. So I remarked encouragingly:

“You can’t get that crab, Willie!”

“I will! I will!” he replied petulantly, looking at a sailor on the other side of the rock with a long stick.

The ground upon which the rock stood was uneven, and miniature caverns were formed underneath. To move the rock was impossible. But Willie knew his crab. He stuck a long thin stick into the suspected refuge of the crab, who cleverly, but foolishly, caught it. So Willie pulled, the crab advanced a little and then decided to cut the stick, which it did with ease. A larger stick

of stout tough wood was then thrust forward, and then, "*Coupez,*" said Willie, as with one pinch the stick was cut. But a continuous succession of annoying sticks drew the crab nearer and nearer, until the poor thing exposed its flank, on which was a huge beautiful blue hairy leg. Without a pause Willie seized this, keeping up a continuous bombardment of the crab's front, to keep the big pincers engaged. The end was near. Alas for the crab! Finally it so far exposed itself that, at a shriek from Willie, a sailor jabbed it in a vital spot, and the crab was merely a wriggling mass of claws and pincers with little hope of continuing the combat intelligently.

The crab measured about four feet over all. These cocoanut crabs are found in large quantities on the uninhabited islands of the Paumotus. M. LeRoy superintended the cooking of the four or five we caught. They differ from the ordinary land crab that lives a muddy existence on low-lying land edging an island, which is precisely like any other crab. The cocoanut crab has a long abdomen and an additional chestlike arrangement tacked on to the rear. In this it is alleged to store cocoanut oil. This oil, mixed with vinegar and things, makes an excellent salad dressing for the meat when cold. As food it is appreciated by both whites and natives, but I found the flesh too coarse, or the sea too rough, when finally we were ready to eat the few we caught.

At about four o'clock it was time to return to the schooner which had been keeping off and on during the day. Getting over the reef into the deep sea was less dangerous at this time, but once more a suitable wave had to be chosen, and then we were once more rowing slowly out to the *Tereora* who came gracefully round to meet us.

We showed Joe our spoil and he remarked, "What about the '*poppi hari*,' you red-haired son of a sea cook?"—this to Willie. Willie looked abashed and Joe turned to me and said, "If I'd let the old woman go, she'd have brought them all right." Which was very likely true and the only approach to a good word I had heard uttered on Marfa's behalf. *Poppi hari* is the liquid contained in the green cocoanut.

Finally, after supper, as we sat smoking in the cabin, M. LeRoy having returned to his lowly couch, Joe said, "Well, lieutenant, did you enjoy your desert island? How would you like to be left behind there?"

And I said, "Immensely."

"For how long?" he returned.

"For six hours, or perhaps eight, alone, but with a cheery party, a gun or two, some fishhooks and a few spears, six weeks would suit me fine. But no more!"

CHAPTER XV

HIKUERO, THE PEARL ISLAND

WE left Paraki at four-thirty, and for the first time a fair breeze helped us along, and as the distance between Paraki and Hikuero is but forty miles, we easily reached our destination at an early hour the next morning.

I had been told that more than two thousand people inhabit Hikuero during the pearl diving season, but a first glimpse of the island made me wonder where they all lived. It seemed but an attempt at an island, a sort of remnant of land which nature had intended to submerge altogether. However, this impression was modified when we drew close to the leeward side, where four other schooners were sailing off and on. Actually, Hikuero is but a poor atoll, and would hardly bear enough cocoanuts to keep twenty people clothed and fed. For long stretches, the reef is but coral sand. However, the lagoon is large and deep, and consequently the pearl shell are found in abundance.

Seven days had elapsed from the day we left Papeete, and it was impossible not to share the elation of Marfa and the other passengers when

we were at last ready to land. A deck passenger pays ten francs a day for his passage, and the shorter the voyage the less he has to pay. Sailing vessels are irritating under these circumstances.

I endeavoured to go ashore in *mufti*, knowing that otherwise a sensation would be created, and that all the small girls and boys would follow my footsteps with their attendant dogs, but I was forced to don uniform. However, I polished my belt and buttons and hoped we would go over the reef successfully. We did, but I was not allowed to wade across the pool on the reef shelf. Peeno was chosen to carry me, so I cast myself upon his great back, while he waded heavily over the sharp, pointed coral gravel. As we approached the landing, a crowd gathered and to these people Peeno communicated the news that a "*Raatira Paratane*," a British general, was about to place his foot upon the soil of Hikuero. A wild excitement took possession of the small crowd, and they stared with much interest. Poor dears, they had not received any Cox and Company cheques, neither had they been strolling down Piccadilly during the days of war. Otherwise their excitement would have been less intense.

When Peeno had finally deposited me on the coral gravel, I looked about and found myself at the approach to an avenue of cocoanut trees, down which a veritable nursery of brown babies of all

ages was approaching. Those who could speak rushed at me with cheerful "*Eoranas.*"

Finally, Willie and I commenced to walk along the avenue followed by many small boys and girls—and their dogs. I begged Willie to take some steps, which he did by speaking harshly to the young enthusiasts, while I made a mental decision to get back onto the vessel to change into *mufti*.

The village on Hikuero is sweetly pretty. Take a strip of land about one mile long and about one quarter of a mile wide; cover this with white coral sand and small stones; dot about as many tall cocoanut palms as you possibly can, leaving space for a long regular avenue in the centre; in the midst of these construct irregularly built palm leaf houses; supply numbers of white-dressed women and scarlet *pareued* men; have plenty of adorable brown boys and girls running about; make your sky as blue as it possibly can be, furnished with great white billowy clouds; on one side have a sandy white beach being kissed by a blue-green lagoon and the other side attacked with fury by great rollers; and you have the inhabited portion of Hikuero, and indeed the inhabited portion of most of the Paumotus.

As we strolled along the avenue I saw in the distance a majestic form as of a highland chief in white linen reviewing his troops. This turned itself into the dignified person of Captain W.

Brander of the *Kaeo*. He at once, to my great pleasure, assumed control of my movements during the rest of my stay on the pearl island. I have before told you about Captain Winnie but perhaps have not mentioned that he comes from an old Scotch family in Bamfshire, nor that he possesses an eighth of Tahitian blood. Which is an irresistible combination.

He introduced me to the celebrities of the place and we called at the French administrative office, and found a gendarme with a swollen jaw, the outward and visible sign of an inward gnawing toothache. There are no dentists living at Hikuero.

The gendarme was as charming as a Frenchman can be in spite of his swollen face, but, because of the strain put upon him, we soon withdrew. Captain Brander then led me to his house, the only two-storied building in Hikuero, and possessing two rooms and a kitchen. Here I confided to him that I must get back onto the schooner to change into mufti. The constant enthusiasm my uniform provoked was growing trying.

So once more braving the surf, I returned to the *Tereora* and had breakfast. We fed on the birds that M. LeRoy had shot badly and cooked wonderfully. He had superintended their skinning, had soaked them in vinegar and then stewed them. They were delicious. During the meal

a boat arrived with a note from M. LeRoy who had gone ashore. It ran:—

“Please supply the bearer with—

Two straws of rice.

Two sacks of flour.

Two dozen tins of salmon, and charge it to my account.”

“Good heavens!” said Captain Joe.

“He’s buying his baby,” I replied carelessly.

“You mean he thinks he is,” replied Joe. “He won’t get that baby.”

“Oh, yes he will,” I replied. “I was there when he landed, Joe. It was amusing. LeRoy stepped ashore and was greeted by a woman who was holding by the hand a charming, piquant faced, bright-eyed little boy. ‘Whose boy?’ he asked. ‘Yours’ said the woman, ‘I am his feeding mother.’ LeRoy then commenced a business discussion and he afterwards told me that he would take the baby to the Marquesas with him.”

“Still I am willing to bet you a fiver he won’t get that baby,” said Joe. But I refused the bet, for I knew something about babies in the Cook and Society Islands.

You see, women don’t fall in these islands as our poor women fall and decay. They rise.

Giving birth to a baby girl lends an added importance to a Kanaka woman, but when she produces a boy, her position is second to none.

As on Raratonga, so it was in the Paumotus, the same glorious love for babies.

I remember during the dark days of the epidemic on Tahiti receiving into the hospital two dying women, sisters, and both beautiful. With them was a thin little boy. Seeing that but a few minutes might elapse before the death of the women, I endeavoured to remove the small boy. But the attempt was met with so much opposition on the part of the dying women, that I had to leave him with them. After a time the mother of the small boy became unconscious, and the sister promptly and greedily clasped the boy to her breast, whispering words of comfort. She had always been jealous of her sister's treasure. At last he was going to be hers.

The mother died, and as we carried her body out to the room set apart for the dead, her beautiful hair touched the ground.

Hardly an hour passed before the sister showed signs of dying. Finally, she was unable to move her head, but with her great eyes turning towards the little mite, she begged us to look after him. We assured her that we would, and, with her hand holding that of the little boy, she passed away.

We then carried him into the main ward, but he commenced calling, "Maa-maa! Maa-maa!" At once every woman in the ward demanded him, and it was difficult, without causing heart burning, to choose a suitable mother.

However, we chose a woman who seemed to be convalescent, and in a few minutes the boy was peacefully sleeping in her arms. But unfortunately, the sister of the new mother, lying in the cot next to her, became very ill during the night and finally rushed out and died in delirium, with the result that the fever of the new mother developed, and she also died.

The small boy could not understand the situation. We placed him in a cot by himself.

This love for babies is so intense amongst the people inhabiting these islands that a white man has no chance of obtaining control of his children unless he has married their mother. By French law the mother has supreme control, and although she will often agree to give up the baby, when it comes to the actual moment of parting, she simply cannot.

Hence it was not safe to take Joe's bet, although LeRoy had been optimistic about getting his child. Incidentally, a native woman will look after a half-white baby with the greatest of care. She will clothe him, uncomfortably, in European clothing, and will even take pains to have him well educated if possible.

After breakfast, garbed in the more suitable white linen, I once more landed, and found myself again in the kindly hands of Captain Brander.

We strolled along to the small store representing his firm on Hikuero, and found gathered

here several trusty fellows with whom we gladly drunk weak American beer from San Francisco.

Outside the store, flopping about the ground, were many baby frigate birds. A schooner had visited a neighbouring atoll where these birds breed. They were immense and seemed savage, but were merely demanding food. Having been fed many times a day by their mothers, their suffering must have been great. The natives buy these birds for food, but are often too soft-hearted to kill them. They are easily tamed, and are quite willing to spend the rest of their lifetime attached to a native household. Here they are savagely affable to their friends, but a stranger desiring to stroke them should wear mailed gloves. A tame frigate bird is provided with a red streamer attached to his wings, so that when hunting on the lagoon he is safe from sportsmen.

The men in the store were all traders and their conversation was diverting.

The old axiom that two of a trade seldom agree does not apply on Hikuero where the most cordial relations exist between the traders.

It had better be explained here that the object of the trader is not to sell the natives merchandise for money, but rather to buy from the native the produce of the islands. Copra, the dried flesh of the cocoanut, is the principal product, and as the uses of the cocoanut have become more clearly understood, the cocoanut palm has been cultivated

extensively. An island trading store is little more than a collecting station for the copra although it displays to the native the many desirable things he can obtain for his copra. Unfortunately for him, it allows him to mortgage his crop a season ahead, for the French also regulate the making of copra, opening only one portion of an island at a time. It is presumed that most people know that the seasons do not affect the cocoanut palm. It continues to drop nuts week after week until the day comes when, tall and gaunt, and tired of giving everything that a man needs for clothing and sustenance, its rosette of green becomes brown, and it bids the world farewell. Although hundreds of people pass beneath its shade, although thousands of heavy nuts drop from a considerable height onto the ground below with a heavy thud, I have never heard of, and no one that I enquired from has heard of, a man or woman being hit by a nut. The natives explain that the cocoanut has two eyes, the windows of a soul not malignant.

The Chinese are ubiquitous in the Society group; there is no island, no matter how remote, that has not a Chinese store, and John Chinaman will undersell his white rival. To the native he is more restful, more delightful than a white man. A native can go into a Chinese store and, lolling over the counter, demand to be shown all the goods. He can call the Chinaman "Tinto," which

has a contemptible sound. He can spend hours in a Chinese store and the Chinaman never objects. Why should he? But the white trader stands no—what he calls—“nonsense.” “Why should I?” he says. Hence the disease, having no remedy away from Paris, continues, and will be fatal, finally.

“This is a regular mining camp,” said one man.

“Yes, I can see that,” I replied. “How many murders do you have a week?” Just a few months before I had spent a delightful day in an American oil town where the weekly average of murders was high.

However, my question was received with amazement. “None,” one man replied. “Why, last night a woman rolled over onto her baby by mistake, and a mighty wailing at once ensued, so that an entire district was kept awake. There will be no diving from that district for two days.” This trader went on to state that, a few days before, some mutton arrived for him from Tahiti in an impossible condition, so that his servant was forced to cast it into the sea. The following morning there was a great commotion on the beach. One woman shouted that she could see a dead man floating on the waves. Soon the whole population lined the beach. “A man! a man!” they shouted. They don’t like violent deaths at Hikuero.

It was a privilege to meet these men.

Here were the island traders that one had so often read about. Hikuero is a Mecca for them. They come chiefly to buy pearl shell, and sometimes, with any luck, to buy pearls; but these latter generally get into the hands of specialists who are willing to give the market price.

I had settled myself comfortably on a kerosene case, with my feet against a ledge on the wall, and my back against the table edge, when a native gendarme arrived, and with many smiles began a discussion with Captain Brander. At the end of this conversation, which consisted of combined French and English, and in which Captain Winnie seemed to be unwillingly, yet politely, granting a favour, I was informed that the women folk of one district had decided to give me a small official welcome, and indeed were even then met together at the *gendarmerie* awaiting our appearance.

At the *gendarmerie* we found the swollen-faced *gendarme* on duty, poor man, and a large crowd of native women dressed in their best clothes. They gazed upon us with obvious disappointment and Winnie muttered in my ear, "You'll have to get back into uniform, old chap."

Finally a young man of pleasing appearance stepped forward and read a pretty speech in French. I replied in English with Captain Winnie as interpreter. Two cases of pearl shell were presented to me while I wondered what I



"YOU'RE NO LONGER ONE OF SIX MILLION; YOU'RE THE
WHITE MAN—*the* WHITE MAN"



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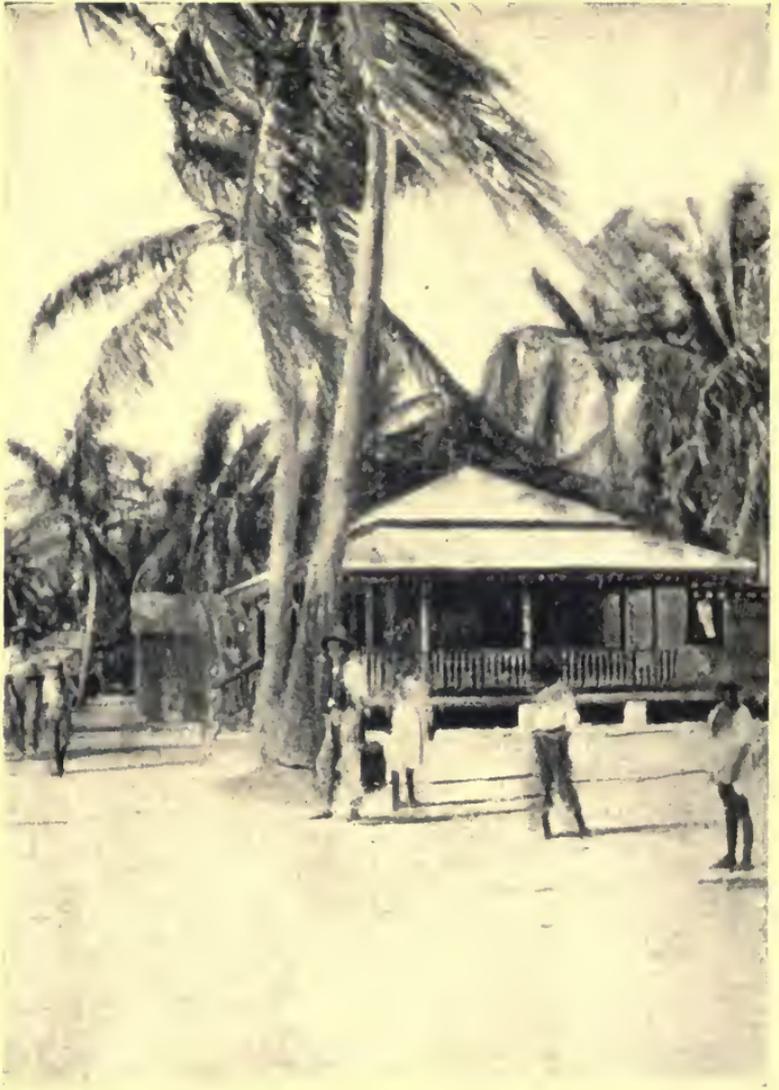
MAKING COPRA

The scene is not one of bustle and industry. No one in the South Seas is ever in a hurry. On the right are the husks of coconuts from which the white flesh of the nut has been removed. The man on the left is bringing in nuts which have been split for some days, and having been allowed to dry in the sun, stretched on a line between two stakes, the white flesh, seen just behind the man in the centre, is removed quite easily. The man in the centre is wearing the uniform which the French supply to the young natives during their time of military service. It was obviously designed in Paris with little thought of the Society Islands climate.



FISHERMEN RETURNING

The man on the extreme left, with his head hidden by the man with the hat, gives a good impression of the magnificent physique of the Polynesian. This physical standard is still general throughout the islands, but those signs of physical decadence which begin under civilization among native races are beginning to be discernible.



THE VILLAGE ON HIKUERO

The pretentious house in the foreground was occupied by a pearl buyer from Paris. This was the last photograph I managed to take with my camera after its immersion in the lagoon. I had cleared away the mechanism behind the lens, and had endeavoured to make exposures by using the brass head of a cartridge as a cap. I made many exposures, but this picture was my only result beyond cloudy effects.



By Courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History, New York

A NATIVE OF FAGATAU

He shows the splendid physique of the Polynesian. Like many of his race, now that civilization has made rigid physical development unnecessary, there is a certain softness discernible.



A TYPE OF POLYNESIAN DIVER

This man shows intelligence and perhaps potential cruelty. The camera may be to blame, since it invariably causes the Polynesian to spread over his otherwise kindly face a certain fierceness and rigid determination.



TENUAHA ON THE VERANDAH AT FAGATAU

The quilt hanging behind is called a tafefa. Native women spend much of their time making these. Sometimes the colours blend, sometimes they don't, and a startling battle of colour is the result. The only apparent objection the Tahitian woman had to the war was that the coloured material used for the tafefa and imported from America and England, had deteriorated in quality; the colours were apt to run. The bamboo walls of the house make windows unnecessary, since both light and ventilation is assured.



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AN OCTOPUS IMPALED ON A SPEAR

As described in the text, an octopus is not difficult to catch. Stretched out, this fellow was over six feet from tentacle to tentacle.

should do with them. I then shook hands with the ladies, and after they had arranged themselves around a wheelbarrow containing the shell, and had turned their usually sweet vivacious faces into solemn fierce death masks, I photographed them.

After this, everybody, including Willie, the supercargo, who had appeared towards the end of the little ceremony, demanded that I should once more get into uniform. I refused firmly, because I was getting bored with going over the reef, and, "Won't it do tomorrow? I want to swim now," I begged. But Winnie spoke native to the supercargo who disappeared, and after two hours reappeared with portions of my uniform which I was compelled to put on. Things grew serious.

Then I met Marfa with a wreath of coloured silk roses around her hat. She at once annexed me and asked me to come to her lair. I willingly accepted her invitation; there was a suggestion of peace here; but she made a point of walking me through every street and every avenue as a man walks a tame bear.

Everywhere crowds of men and women stepped forward, for the divers had now returned from their work and made me presents. Sometimes a pretty wreath of cleverly strung shells would be given, but more often a brace of particularly beautiful pearl shells formed the present. One man gave me solemnly, and quite naturally, six

pearls, two of which were as large as peas. To his consternation I endeavoured to return them, but without success. Meanwhile, Marfa ran about amongst the crowd returning to me every now and then, embracing me a little, and endeavouring to show off my points. I have a shrewd suspicion that she had arranged the whole thing, and had canvassed the people beforehand.

When at last I returned to the bosom of Captain Winnie, I possessed three cases of pearl shell, many wreaths, and a large number of small pearls.

Actually the matter was quite impersonal. The natives of the Society group love the British almost as much as they dislike the French, even when a fair percentage of French blood flows in their veins, and I was merely receiving the expression of their love for "*Paratane*"—Great Britain, which is a great love, and inexplicable.

At about six o'clock we had dinner in the open. The lamps tended to go out occasionally, but finally we settled down to an excellent meal. We ate young frigate bird well-cooked, turtle beef steak, and a few other things in addition to ordinary white wine or rum, if one desired it. Around us were hundreds of lamps burning amongst the palm trees, while from every district came the sound of weird native singing.

Hikuero would seem to be a cheerful place. Prices are high for most things, but not too

high, for are not the Chinese a reality? The "good old days" of trading have passed, and now a trader must be careful. He must sometimes be businesslike. I gathered that for a man to start trading on his own account would surely lead to his ruin. The thing to do is to attach oneself to one of the big firms and let *it* get ruined.

The sale of spirits is strictly prohibited, but the Chinese are alleged to sell perfumes to the natives for drink. Perfectly awful for the insides of the native!

The French, very wisely, control the pearl fishing industry. Diving machines are not used, for the license is so costly that their operation would be impracticable. Diving for pearl shells is permitted for a certain number of months in each year, and only one island is open at a time. Nowadays, the time set apart is approximately between the beginning of July and the end of November. In former days work was carried on during the very hot weather between December and April. This seems to have been found convenient until a great cyclone came upon the natives at Hikuero while the diving was in full swing. Nearly a thousand people were drowned.

It is said that a cyclone visits an island of the group once in every generation, when many, if not all, the people are swept either out to sea, or into the lagoon where they swim for a long time

before they are either drowned or broken on the rocks. There would seem to be but little warning given, although an intelligent man, possessing a barometer, can gain a forecast several hours before the cyclone arrives. This would allow him to reach the safer side of the atoll in time. Nowadays all the inhabited islands have barometers, and the loss of life will be less during future cyclones.

The first sign of a cyclone is given by the barometer dropping quickly and rapidly, accompanied by a leaden sky, and sometimes a heavy swell. This continues for several hours until the swell breaks into an angry sea which will commence breaking well up on the cocoanut-clad reef. Then is the time to take what steps there are left to be taken. Generally the cocoanut tree is the only hope. Its safety lies in the fact that it has plenty of give.

So imagine finding yourself clinging to a harsh circular trunk of a tree that is bending over to its extreme limit, while at your feet surf is breaking and smashing every human possession within eyesight.

You cling there desperately—the wind, having sprung into a fierce gale, is so strong that it keeps you in position against the trunk. You see other men and women up other trees. You wonder how they managed to climb so well. For during a cyclone quite elderly fat men will at least attempt to climb cocoanut trees. It is not very difficult to

climb a cocoanut tree, but if you examine your chest and legs afterwards you will see much blood, and soon you will feel pain, which will be but little relieved by the cocoanut oil that the native woman rushes to give you. Still, for a man past forty, climbing a cocoanut tree calls forth much effort.

The wind blows with great fury, and at your feet a mass of surf is gushing and smashing and a deadly fear possesses your mind as gradually your tree shows signs of bending too far. Are you going to join the men and women that you have watched being swallowed up? Actually you are in mid-ocean, out of sight of land except for the upper portions of the cocoanut palms that are being swirled about.

The danger lasts from three to six hours, and if you are fortunate, at the end of the storm you descend from your tree, incapable of going through a similar experience again. Then you may see a picture of horror, death and destruction all around you, from dead fish to dead women and children.

Owing to the number of people on the island at the time, the cyclone at Hikuero was particularly deadly. The cocoanut trees even today are still bent over, almost touching the ground, although they have started to ascend once more. But they have not recovered from the shock, and bear but badly.

It was difficult for the frightened survivors to remove the decayed matter. First, the corpses, some washed up on the further shore of the lagoon, had to be disposed of quickly, for the heat was intense. Then the dead animals and fish had to be buried or burnt. The whole island was covered with broken coral and this has an unpleasant odour when left for even a short time away from the sea. For in addition to the dead coral insects, amongst the coral branches there are innumerable shell-fish such as sea urchins and the like.

There are many hairbreadth escapes related of the last Hikuero cyclone, but the crowd of women and children placed on the Mormon church roof for safety did not escape, when traders safely clinging to cocoanut trees saw one gigantic sea sweep them all away. One of these women clung to her baby, and to her astonishment, found herself swimming out in the lagoon with what she regarded as a dead baby. She thought of abandoning it, but a canoe drifted near. Swimming to this she threw the wee body in and, joy of joy, it screamed! She got safely to shore all right.

Another woman, with less luck, was swept, evidently clinging to some wreckage, to an uninhabited island seventeen miles away called Tekokoto. Here she rested for a time, being regarded as dead by her surviving relatives at home. Finally she found a damaged canoe

washed up on the island, and in this she commenced to paddle home, but after she had travelled twelve miles the canoe became useless, and she was forced to swim the remaining five miles. Under normal conditions this would have been impossible, but it is probable that the cyclone had either destroyed or frightened the sharks out of the vicinity.

A well-known novelist wrote the story of the Hikuero cyclone, and found much to suit his love of the melodramatic and highly-coloured. That his description is vivid there can be no doubt, but his story about the red-haired Jew has always seemed to the traders a display of bad taste.

The red-haired Jew, Levy, is a well-known character in the Society group, but while many may find fault with his method of trading, no one can prove anything against his honour. His wife, Madame Levy, is particularly interesting and considered the most brilliant pearl buyer in the group. In her beautiful schooner, the *Hinano*, she goes to the pearl island every year. It is said that she bears with her many sacks of silver dollars to pay for any pearls that may be found. The other traders pay in French notes, but Madame Levy hands out a sack of silver dollars, and therefore often wins in the selling competition that ensues, the moment it is known that a good pearl has been found.

On the whole life for two or three days

in Hikuero was comfortable. There were millions of persistent flies which, however, disappeared with the sun, and but few mosquitoes. Fresh water is a difficulty, for that obtained from the water holes is brackish, although the natives drink it. The traders drink water carried from Tahiti. Usually, cocoanut-water forms the drink of the natives of these islands, but the two thousand inhabiting Hikuero, during the diving season, could drink all the cocoanuts on the island in a short time, making life for the local inhabitants uncomfortable during the rest of the year. Fruit has to be conveyed from either Papeete or the Marquesas, although sometimes a schooner will arrive with oranges from the Gambia group. Oranges are sold for ten cents each, and a banana, when it reaches Hikuero, costs even more. All the people are wealthy since there is plenty of well-paid work for every one. A woman cleaning shell, which consists in a process of chipping the outside and gossiping to all around, earns five dollars a day. The result is that a trader can sell expensive jewelry and frocks, and let me whisper—some of the fair ladies wear corsets on Sundays, which are very costly. I know, because I lived in the room where one firm sold them.

There is one motorcar on the island which a genius imported and it paid for itself in a month.

On Sundays, the ladies dress themselves gorgeously in tight-fitting silk costumes, and solemnly

ride for a mile along the avenue in the Ford car, much to the envy of their poorer friends.

It is all very cheerful, and if the big billowy clouds could see, a picture of joy and happiness would be presented to their benignant eyes.

CHAPTER XVI

PEARL DIVING

THE pen fails, where the brush succeeds; there is an opportunity for an artist, willing to ignore the *hula-hulas* and the sensuous things which French artists love to portray, if he would go to Hikuero, and paint the start for the pearl fields.

The whole thing seems a festive procession, a crusade of beauty, which perhaps is fitting, since these men are going forth to disobey nature's "thou shalt not," to brave the dangers of the deep in order that you and I may use pearl-handled knives, or that some pretty lady may add extra pearls to the necklet around her throat. Of course the divers are not interested in pearl-handled knives, and they are not concerned with pearl necklets. The pearl shell, as such, is interesting because its sale brings a surprising amount of money, with which much food may be purchased for the *fare*, and many clothes may be bought for the *vahine*. *Vahines* simply adore white embroidered muslin; they love to possess fierce corsets, and they will sell their souls for a *fare* decorated with a great bedstead, bright pictures and linoleum. The *vahines* don't wear the

corsets often, only on Sundays at Hikuero, when they ride in the Ford motorcar. Then they wear the corsets and suffer physical torture, but enjoy the feeling of being fashionable so dear to the heart of every female, whether she lives in Park Lane, Seven Dials, or the Cannibal Islands.

When the diving season opens it is unnecessary to go far from the village, but as the season progresses a diver must go well out into the lagoon if he would find plenty of good large shell. During my visit to Hikuero the diving season was drawing to a close; it was therefore necessary for the divers to make use of the motorboats placed at their disposal by the traders. The big trading firms supply the launches to those divers willing to pledge the sale of their pearl shell.

As I stood on the beach waiting to be carried out to the launch placed at my disposal by Captain Brander, five large motorboats took up positions about three-quarters of a mile out on the lagoon. To each of these was being attached a long line of canoes. A rope from the stern of the launch passed from canoe to canoe. At least fifty canoes were attached to a launch, and when finally a signal was given to start, the whole thing suggested a kite with a particularly long and gaily-decorated tail.

A good stiff trade wind was blowing from the other side of the lagoon, lashing the blue water

into white-tipped waves. The canoes, painted a shade of turquoise blue, were bobbing up and down, conquering each wave but threatening to submerge their bows almost any minute.

In each canoe were two persons, the diver and his assistant, who is sometimes his wife, but more often another man. The diver, now a very important person, lay at full length across the thwarts of the canoe, dressed merely in a scarlet *pareu* with yellow flowers printed on it. With his finely-shaped head covered with soft curly hair, his well-cut features, his magnificent chest and beautifully modelled limbs, he presented a picture not easily forgotten. He sometimes wore a pink rose behind one of his ears.

The five regular lines of bobbing, dancing canoes continued their progress across the lagoon—a flamboyant, cheerful, gorgeous mass of colour and happiness.

The lagoon at Hikuero is light green and blue for the most part, but in shallow portions the blue becomes more definite, through which the salmon-pink coral bottom can be seen. Across the sky of deepest blue, the trade wind was driving large fleecy clouds; the rosettes of deep green palm leaves, which topped the reckless, erratic trunks of the cocoanut, were shimmering in the sunlight, while the sand on the lagoon shore was whiter than snow on a prairie.

Having boarded the launch, we were soon dash-

ing up and down between the lines of canoes, while the women blew kisses and the divers waved greetings. After a time the canoes commenced to cut themselves adrift from the launches, and while the divers were getting ready to commence their day's work, we decided to bathe.

Choosing a place where an added fuss to the water suggested a shallow portion of the lagoon, for I desired to see the bottom where the pearl shell grows, we anchored the launch, and, in a few minutes, accompanied by a diver who felt it his duty to look after us, we were soon swimming about in the warm water. Incidentally on these occasions it is necessary to wear a bathing suit of sorts. Although there were no women within miles, the launch conductor insisted upon our wearing *pareus*. A native will as soon think of putting his head in a fire as of swimming or bathing naked.

Unfortunately the very shallowness of the water made diving difficult, for the choppy sea, even at some depth, affected the water in the caverns we desired to enter, so that when we returned to the surface our bodies were in a bloody condition.

Both the young New Zealand trader, who accompanied me, and I wore divers' spectacles, which fit so tightly around the eyes that a small water-tight chamber is formed. With these it was possible to see plainly under water. In fact, the

multi-coloured coral and the fish living in its branches were magnified to such an extent, and the beauty was so wonderful, that if it were not for the necessity of obtaining air, one might have wandered for ever in this garden of nature.

It was with some regret that we finally left the water, to find ourselves streaming with blood, where the harsh coral had wounded us. But the launch captain rubbed machine oil over our wounds with a piece of dirty waste, which made an interesting colour scheme, even if it failed to relieve the pain.

The launch once more got under way, dashing through the waves and soaking us with spray, until we came up with the divers who had now commenced their work. Around us the hundreds of canoes were bobbing and bowing to their moorings in a most frivolous and determined manner. We paused here and there and once a young diver came on board, and having greeted me kindly, solemnly handed me two small pink silvery pearls. "*Tera poi,*" these are pearls, he said. It was difficult to accept so valuable a present, but noting the anxious look in the eyes of the giver, I gathered that a refusal would indicate a lack of appreciation.

The launch captain said that he would take us to a "number one" diver, and after a short time we came up with this gentleman.

He was, like his brothers, a magnificent speci-

men of humanity, and my expression of admiration merely brought from the young New Zealander his ideas about the natives generally. "These men are finely built, it is true," he said; "but they have no stamina, they can't last out."

Our diver was sitting on the thwarts of his canoe taking deep breaths, making strange whistling sounds and long drawn-out cries. He would expand his huge chest until one expected it to burst, and then the air would be emitted in a long terrible breath, like the more impetuous breathing of a man suffering from asthma. This preparation of the chest for the long time spent under water is peculiar to the Paumotun divers. Captain Joe tells me that it is affectation; it possibly has a suggestive value.

Each diver has a method of his own, but a long dreary wailing noise, like a lost soul in agony, seemed general. Around us, midst the flop flop of the waves, midst the voice of the wind on the lagoon, the wailing could be heard.

Our diver had a clean-looking Swede for an assistant whose admiration for his master was great. He readily agreed to allowing us to sit in the canoe while the diver was working. I watched with great interest and some anxiety.

Having expanded his chest a few times, emitting the strange whistling noises, and giving a few muttered directions to the Swede, he placed between his toes a stout white cord to which a

heavy piece of lead was attached. Once more expanding his chest and adjusting his diving spectacles, he grasped the cord with one hand, while the other held his nose, and soon he disappeared, feet first. Looking over the side of the canoe he could be seen rapidly disappearing into space. Brown on the surface, he became green, then yellow and white, and finally disappeared from view.

An anxious two and a half minutes ensued, during which time I searched the depths until something white appeared, which gradually formed into the figure of our diver as he came up the rope of his basket, hand over hand, and finally grasped the gunwale of the canoe. He seemed completely exhausted, worn out and unable to speak for several minutes. He made three more dives before coming on board to rest for twenty minutes.

I looked at him closely—worn-out and fatigued—so that the words of the New Zealander seemed futile. “These men have no stamina, they can’t last out.”

I wonder what he calls the strength of will and purpose that permits a man to do this work. But he will go on making his futile remarks, for such is the fashion amongst white men, and returning to New Zealand, if drink and other things do not kill him, he will say that he made his money trading in the Paumotus, but it will never occur to

him that his money was gained primarily by the strength and stamina of the Paumotun divers.

Pearl diving is indeed a hazardous undertaking and requires a great amount of stamina. It is true that the divers are almost amphibious from birth, but it is also a fact that a diver is always within one minute, sometimes one second, of death. They told me at Hikuero that a diver fills his chest with air, and that during the minutes he is working, he slowly emits the carbon dioxide through his ears. I have been assured since by learned folk at Cambridge that this is impossible unless the ear drums are perforated. The Paumotun divers did not tell me whether they perforated their ear drums or not. They told me that three minutes was the limit of most men.

A diver always has a cord basket on the sea bottom beside him. A line passes from the basket to the canoe above. Much time is saved in the descent by placing a weight between the toes. At the bottom he finds his basket, and he must always work within sight of it, because the cord bearing the weight has been drawn up and properly stowed by the assistant in the canoe. If the shells are found clustering around small rocks, the operation is simple, and the basket is soon filled, but when they lie singly the job is more difficult. The diver must know to within a few seconds the time necessary for his reappearance on the surface, because if he does not reach the surface be-

fore all the air is emitted, he is unable to rise and will sink like a rock. Sometimes a diver has nearly reached the surface when the assistant, watching, will observe him disappear like an arrow. Then the assistant, often his wife, will dive over and get him. He may possibly never dive again if he is alive when she gets him on board. Generally, however, he is paralysed in some of his limbs for a year or so. If, by chance, he loses sight of his basket, he is practically a dead man; for to reach the surface he must climb hand over hand up the basket rope during the beginning of the ascent. This rope also shows him direction, for I gather that after leaving the sea bottom he cannot tell which direction to swim. A diver who had lost his basket has been seen swimming along near the surface of the water only just submerged and then sinking like a rock. They call the condition of collapse after the exhaustion of all the air in a diver's lungs, "*aniana*." This condition sometimes comes on the moment he emerges. If he is got on board safely he is like an extremely drunk man, limp and helpless. The divers told me too, that walking on the sea bottom seemed almost normal. There was no tendency to float to the surface.

They all wear a glove on the right hand in order to remove the shells quickly without pain. Strange-looking spectacles are worn by all. They fit tightly onto the eyes by means of gutta-percha

rims reinforced with thin brass, so that an airtight chamber is formed around each eye. All the spectacles worn by the Paumotu divers are made by an old Spanish lady called Mrs. Smith, who lives at Mangarewa. She has the complete monopoly, although she lives about ten days' schooner journey from the pearl-bearing lagoons of the Paumotu group.

The meat of the shell-fish tastes something like the ordinary clam that one eats in a restaurant in New York. The divers take home a pailful, but the French insist upon the fish being removed from the shell before they are brought ashore. For there is one comfortable word common to most of the dialects of the Society group—*eriana*—which means bye-and-bye, any old time will do. If this word should be applied to the removal of the flesh from the pearl-shell, Hikuero would be an evil-smelling place.

Before the diver hauls up his anchor and prepares to return, he opens every shell, searches carefully for pearls, scrapes the outside of the shell roughly, and throws overboard the meat he does not require for domestic consumption. Apart from the prevention of unpleasant odours on the island, this has the added advantage of scattering the shell spawn, and the pearl fields are kept healthy.

Arriving ashore, the diver at once sells his shell to his favourite trader, the man who has supplied

him towage, who in turn employs a dozen women who sit round a heap of shell gossiping, chipping, and receiving five dollars a day for their work. The trader ships the shell to Papeete, from where it is sent to America and Europe, and becomes the handles of fruit knives, buttons and many other articles more ornamental than useful.

An unfortunate accident happened when I was being carried ashore from the launch. My camera-case, containing much exposed film in addition to my camera, dropped from the pocket of my coat while it was being carried by a boy, and fell with a splash into the lagoon. An endeavour to clean the camera was unsuccessful, for the more intimate portions of the mechanism became coated with salt. The result is that I have no photographs of the diving.

CHAPTER XVII

BREAKFAST ON HIKUERO

IT was a dignified party that sat down to breakfast in the little *fare* that morning on Hikuero. Captain Brander occupied the position of honour at the head of the table. The party included one or two Frenchmen, an American, a New Zealander and a few half-castes of some prominence. We ate lobster, turtle soup, turtle beef steak, pork cutlets, salad, asparagus, and rice pudding. One could drink rum and white wine, or beer from San Francisco. As the meal progressed the conversation became more and more interesting. There was one charming man present called Pedro, whose Spanish blood was shown in his bright sparkling eyes. And although he possessed English blood, and absolutely no French, he had adopted all the French charm of manner and vivacity. He it was who owned and partially commanded the small schooner that arrived at the island of Mopelier to pick up the copra makers, only to find the German commerce destroyer *Seadila* sitting on the reef, and the island occupied by the German pirate's chief officer and the crews from many of the ships that had fallen a prey

to Von Lucknow. Von Lucknow himself had gone off in the ship's launch. Perhaps the story is so well known that it hardly bears repetition except that Pedro's story is more truthful than most of the records appearing in the magazines of that day.

The schooner, laden with much desirable merchandise, sighted the island one morning very early, and, as she approached, a ship could be seen piled up on the reef. This was interesting since it presented possibilities. But as the schooner drew nearer the island, a boat put off from the reef passage and came quickly towards them. Wrecked folk are invariably impatient, so this did not astonish Pedro, but as the boat drew nearer, the native captain remarked, "What's that in her bows? It looks like a machine-gun." "Rubbish," said Pedro, "it's a fishing rod."

"It *is* a machine-gun," said the captain.

"We are but dead men," said the crew as they jumped overboard.

"I can see men lying in the bottom of the boat with rifles," said the captain, as he joined the crew in the water.

All hope of life now left Pedro, and with fear and trembling he answered the questions of the German officer in charge of the boat, which had now come alongside. The schooner was taken without a blow being exchanged, and the Germans came on board, some with revolvers, others

with ordinary rifles. The crew swimming about were ordered to return to the schooner, which they did, begging for mercy.

Pedro himself was very frightened, but, mustering up some courage, he said, "Sir, if you are going to kill us, will you please do it quickly."

But the German officer laughed and said, "You have read the French and English papers; but we are not pirates; we are warriors."

And the "warrior" was courteous until he found some New Zealand papers in the cabin which annoyed him so much that he was compelled to make a long oration in English.

One of the German sailors, with a pathetic pleading look in his eyes, asked Pedro if he had any cigarette papers. Pedro gave him a packet, and offered him more, for the revolver in the hand of this seaman looked ominous.

The German officer gave a receipt for the schooner, and Pedro signed a declaration stating that the ship had been captured according to the rules of modern warfare.

Upon reaching the shore the Germans prepared a luncheon of turtle beef steak, but so great was the fear of both Pedro and his captain that they could eat nothing.

"Isn't the food good enough for you?" said the German.

Pedro remarked that he was unhappy about losing his schooner and its cargo.

“You should be glad to have your life,” said the German; “today there are many children in Germany who have but little to eat owing to the accursed English. I have been reading your papers,” he continued, “and they lie. Germany did not seek this war and she is in the right; you must know that, really.”

Pedro gained enough courage to remark that it seemed strange that all the world should be wrong, and Germany alone right.

So the captain took him outside and gave him an exhibition of revolver practice, which so startled him that he decided to remain as quiet as possible.

Six hours had hardly passed before the Germans were ready to depart. They had unloaded the schooner, and, having filled her with ammunition and stores, they destroyed the remaining boats and canoes and sailed off with the vain hope, it afterwards transpired, of reaching the South American coast.

But plenty of good food was left behind, and at this time the turtle were passing the island, and as Mopelier is noted for the quantity of fish living inside the lagoon, nobody could complain about food shortage. The magazines tell that the people on the island were left to starve, but Pedro says that this was far from true. In fact the castaways lived in great luxury but no contentment, and set about rebuilding one of the broken boats. An attempt was made to reach an in-

habited island, and after one abortive attempt, during which the crew suffered great hardship, a second attempt succeeded and the castaways were taken to Papeete.

There was one woman left on the island, and she must have had a difficult time, but Pedro said that she lived apart with her husband, being treated with great respect.

During this meal I told of my intention of leaving the *Tereora* at Fagatau, but my friends expressed doubts as to my being able to get away from that island. However, I arranged to charter a small schooner from one of them for the sum of seventy dollars—a very reasonable price. The schooner would call for me in three weeks' time. This arrangement was eminently satisfactory.

We discussed the French administration and they all admitted that in many respects it was excellent. But the free immigration of the Chinese was deplored. They regretted this, since it made trading annoying and difficult, but while I admit that they have a grievance, since they are honest men, I cannot help thinking that a greater wrong is being done to the Polynesian race.

For the Chinaman seldom brings his own women, but finds it more convenient to take a native wife. The result is that a population of half-Chinese is gradually swamping out the native. The half-caste native and Chinaman is not an unpleasant looking person. He seems to be more

like his mother than his father, and except a slight narrowness about the eyes, he is difficult to identify. The half-Chinese girl is exquisitely pretty. But whether handsome or homely, they invariably despise their fathers and treat the Chinese with contempt, and become annoyed if any one mentions their paternal origin.

The French, I understand, owing to some treaty obligation with China, are compelled to allow the Chinese to enter the group, hence another hundred years will find these islands inhabited by a Chinese race.

But as governors, the French are extremely unpopular, although their methods seem always very polite and gentle. The thing was inexplicable.

An extraordinary contrast was presented when one talked to a native about the British Empire. "*Ah! Paratane—maitai—maitai!*" was the invariable response, which means, "Britannia—very good." Always, as I travelled, elderly natives would ask me if I thought England would take over the islands after the war. Sometimes very forcible epithets would be used against France, and always the contrast between that country and England would be expressed—"*Paratane, maitai; Farane, aita-maitai; aita-maitai!*" Later I tried to get an explanation from Tenuaha but this was hardly satisfactory. He said, "Well, I dunno—the Frenchman he tork, tork all same the *vahine*, he

wave his arms much and look silly, but always plenty tork, but the Englishman he say, 'Gawd darm!'—and finish."

Perhaps a better explanation can be gained by watching a British native together with a Tahitian. The Briton at once affects a tremendous superiority which the Tahitian cannot gainsay. And I suppose the power of force is bred in the bones of these people. If it were possible to believe that the natives of the Cook Islands appreciated the careful attention they receive from New Zealand, the situation might be understood more easily.

Of course Captain Cook created a permanent impression during his short stay on Tahiti and "*Kukkiti*" stands for a very great chief, if not almost a god, in the eyes of the natives. This love which the Polynesians have for the British is real, and is not mixed with fear.

I was talking to a charming Roman Catholic priest who had been transferred from the Cook Islands to work at Hikuero. He, poor man, felt precisely the same, and with reason. For France, by disestablishing the monasteries, had thereby prevented the monks from educating the natives in the outlying islands. The New Zealand government, on the other hand, not only treated the priests kindly, but supplied them with drugs, school buildings and any assistance they required.

The British make a point of educating the native children thoroughly, but as far as I could judge, this important part of colonization was being neglected by France, certainly in the outlying islands.

There were rumours that France would hand over the islands to America, and many traders looked upon the idea as sound. The mother country is so far away, while America is near, and of course under the Stars and Stripes there is not the slightest doubt but what the natural resources of the islands would be better developed. From the point of view of the traveller, the islands would lose a great deal of their charm if they ceased to be under the French flag. For even the fiercest objector to French rule amongst the natives owes much of his irresistible charm to the very French influence to which he objects. I am not sure that England would do very much better than France, and on the whole I dare say it would be better for the Polynesian to work out his own salvation.

It would be a noble philanthropic work, however, for a few wealthy individuals to form a society having for its object the resuscitation of the Polynesians dwelling in these islands. It might be possible also to save the remnant of the Marquesans, alleged to be the most beautiful race of men in the world.

I parted from my friends of the breakfast table

with regret, and, followed by several men bearing presents, I went to the landing-place, out over the reef, to the *Tereora*, where I found Joe waiting for me, and M. LeRoy almost in tears because the woman had refused to give him his little boy.

CHAPTER XVIII

FAGATAU

WITH a fair breeze, and all in our favour, we left Hikuero at about four in the afternoon, firmly convinced that Fagatau would be reached within twenty-four hours. And if the breeze had held, there is no doubt but what our optimism would have been justified. But towards evening the wind changed, and the next morning found the *Tereora* in the complete possession of a malignant head sea and a lordly head wind. The *Tereora* stood up to it magnificently, but a stiff head wind on a schooner is not enjoyable. The only man who can enjoy a head sea is the fellow with his hand on the tiller, for as the seas roll by and the wind shrieks through the rigging, he can be as rude as he likes to the poor devils standing about ready to obey his slightest command.

A head wind alters the temper of people. It makes them argumentative, contrary, furious; it raises their moral standard; it develops determination or obstinacy; it makes people uncomfortably wet; it churns up the milk of human kindness; their minds reflect the turmoil around; and, as

there is little peace in the world of waters, so there seems little peace in the world of men. Still it's a fight—a glorious fight in some ways; and there is always the chance of turning around and running with it. Which is not the way of the best seamen who navigate either the waters of the deep or the waters of life.

Gloriana still sat out on the counter, one boy sick, the other singing lewd native songs. Lilian had not gone ashore at Hikuero, fearing to lose her weak sea legs. LeRoy had returned to his lowly couch on the floor of the cabin; his wife continued her conversation with the Marquesan criminal. Life continued much as usual except that the seas seemed to grow larger every day.

And this was the smooth tropical sea that you and I have read about. I don't advise you *not* to go to sea on a schooner. I'll go again, heaven help me, and so will you if you get the chance, but dispossess your mind of the idea that sailing on an island schooner is highly romantic and altogether delightful. It is not. It is the most boring experience imaginable. It is, of course, tremendously jolly landing on islands and all that sort of thing, and the stories about the natives and the tropical fruit are weak compared with the reality, but the actual time spent on the schooner is highly unpleasant.

“Let go the flying-jib,” Joe used to yell. “Let go the flying-jib, you sons of red-haired sea cooks.”

Then the bobbing, the bending, and the shaking would go on.

After three days of very heavy weather Joe felt that we might sight Fagatau any minute. He was not quite sure where we were, but with his thumb on the chart he worked out the probabilities; the possibilities were left to the imagination. On the fourth day the weather moderated and a constant succession of persons climbed the rigging, hoping to see the island. Finally at about three o'clock, there was a shout from a native up the mast, and land was sighted.

Joe doubted whether we would make the island before sunset. However, knowing our desire to reach land, he started the engine, and this held the schooner further up into the wind. Economically it is extravagant to use the engine during heavy weather, but Joe was a good fellow, and fortunately, just before sunset, a boat was lowered away, and we rowed towards the usual line of surf. Joe decided to keep off and on until the morning for it is impossible to work cargo after dusk in the Paumotus.

LeRoy, his wife, Peeno, and one or two natives also landed. The beach was deserted, for the village of Fagatau is nearly a mile distant from the landing-place. It was apparent that the schooner had not been sighted. However, we commenced to thread the long avenue of coconut palms which led to the other side of the island, but

before we reached the village it was quite dark. During the walk along the avenue, LeRoy stood on a huge land crab, and its death was accompanied by an unpleasant crackling sound.

Finally we could discern lights dotted about amidst the trees, and the barking of innumerable dogs warned the people that something extraordinary had happened. A few frightened voices challenged us, and soon a large number of children were following us. I was led to the house of Tenuaha, but that gentleman was not in. However, a few young people dashed off to tell him that a white man had arrived, and soon a young figure came dashing along towards us. It was Tenuaha. He gave me a French embrace that was startling though comforting after the schooner. "So you have come, my friend," he said. "Ah, it is very good. I waited a long time but decided that the journey would be too difficult; and I was very sad. The house is your house. I have nothing. I am now very poor; for all that I have is thine."

After this pretty speech we entered the house.

The father of Tenuaha, a decent Englishman, married a native woman of a neighbouring island, producing three sons. He grew wealthy, for his wife possessed much land, and he owned the only store on the island. Unfortunately a cyclone devastated the island and Tenuaha's father found himself penniless. For a cyclone not only destroys

buildings, but it removes every cocoanut from the trees and so disturbs the growth of the palms that they refuse to bear at all well for almost a decade. Hence in one day a man's entire property may be completely lost.

Tenuaha's father left the island with his family and managed to obtain a position in a large store, but his spirit was broken and I doubt if he will ever recover. I know little about his other sons, but to possess the friendship of Tenuaha is a privilege.

He is about six feet tall and has the appearance of a Greek athlete. Although his ideas are magnificent, his personality is such that his success in the small world of the Society Islands is well assured. He possesses wonderful business acumen combined with a sweet and gentle nature that is irresistible. His manners are invariably courteous to his friends. To the natives he is a *grande seigneur* and they like him all the better for it.

As the agent of a large French trading company he was sent to Fagatau to establish a store. There were several difficulties, not the least being the existence of four other stores. Two were kept by Chinamen, one by a native and the other by an Alsatian trader. While Fagatau is fairly large it was obvious to Tenuaha that the island could not support so many traders, but Tenuaha determined to survive. He made his store attractive, in fact his goods, all of the very best, were kept in the

most beautiful order. The store looked precisely like the house of an efficient trader in any large town. The floor was covered with a simple linoleum which was invariably well polished. At his store everything could be obtained, but it is doubtful whether the natives would have patronized him more than the others if he had not taken one or two steps that insured success.

He married the wealthiest girl on the island, who was also the prettiest, and he commenced to train her to be thoroughly clean and rigidly tidy. I don't know whether he loved his wife, but she adored him. She was well disciplined, and never dreamt of desiring to eat with him, or of regarding herself as his equal in any way. She was in a way a devoted slave, and at times suggested a beautiful dog with a kindly but firm master. That her marriage to Tenuaha had been of great advantage to that young man never occurred to her.

With the natives, Tenuaha maintained a condescending and haughty attitude. They were his inferiors, and they knew it. He was never familiar with them. To them he was an ornament to the community, and they treasured him as such.

The French very wisely have regulated the copra trade, only allowing the nuts to be taken from certain portions of the island at a time. The result is that when distant portions of the island are open, it is necessary for the people to travel some miles. Many of them have canoes, some of which

have sails, but with some courage Tenuaha ordered a large motor launch to be sent to Fagatau. The engine gave him some trouble, but the natives found the launch of great assistance. To be transported across the lagoon a fare of ten cocoanuts was charged—roughly one franc—and it allowed Tenuaha to be on the spot. It also added to his magnificence and made people glad to sell him their copra.

Most traders urge the natives to take payment for their copra in merchandise, but not so Tenuaha. He told them that he preferred to give them money, that his goods decorated his shop, but that to nice people he would be willing to give goods in exchange for copra. And his merchandise spoke with a seductive voice.

No one quite understood where he had got these ideas from, not even his father, who was interested, amused and somewhat frightened. For he feared that Tenuaha was trying to run before he could walk. I was also anxious, but my difficulty in making him understand anything subtle saved him from advice. In America, or Europe, Tenuaha would become a great man. Some one would surely marry him there, for a more beautiful or a more charming person it would be impossible to meet. Perhaps you will say, "But what about his wife at Fagatau?" Oh, she'll merely say, "*Aita pea-pea*," it does not matter.

But to return to the first night on Fagatau.

LeRoy was received with some courtesy by Tenuaha, and he and his little *vahine* promptly turned in on a mat on the veranda. In the living-room Marafa, Tenuaha's wife, was ordered to keep the gramophone going. The house was surrounded by natives who peered through the windows tremendously interested. The reaction from the tossing, heaving schooner created a desire to sleep on a mat on the cool veranda. But being a white man of rank, I simply had to sleep on a huge feather mattress with sheets and blankets in a modern bed. It was impossible to assure Tenuaha that I desired him to treat me as his brother, that ceremony would be boring, but this he failed to understand.

The next morning, dressed in white linen, I went out on to the veranda to find M. LeRoy waiting. Tenuaha had been up for some hours, but he had desired M. LeRoy to explain that he would return very soon. We sat down to coffee and warm rolls. The veranda was decorated with brightly coloured quilts, Chinese lanterns hung everywhere, and just off the veranda were two flag-staffs. A large Union Jack flew from one, while a French Tricolour hung from the other. The air seemed filled with excitement. "Is some one going to be married?" I asked LeRoy. "Oh dear, no," he replied, "all this is for you, and if you would like to give pleasure you will change into uniform at once." "The devil!" I thought,

“I’ve come here to see a remote island and to study the inhabitants; apparently the inhabitants are going to study me, and with a vengeance.” However, I changed into uniform and a few minutes afterwards Tenuaha returned. There was going to be a great reception, and it seemed that it would be a good idea to remain indoors as much as possible until the time came when, in full glory, I would burst upon the population.

It was about three-thirty in the afternoon that the exercises commenced. I had been sitting in the living-room with Tenuaha, when the sound of a band was heard, and when looking along the avenue, ten natives could be seen solemnly marching towards the house followed by the chief, the catechist and several of the elders of the island. The natives were playing accordions, tin cans, and guitars. The chief looked both anxious and solemn; his feelings might be likened unto a manager of a production the afternoon of a first night. At about twelve paces from the house a signal was given, and I solemnly descended the steps and approached with Tenuaha. This young man was dressed in a smartly cut light tweed suit, a small straw hat, and a silver-topped cane. I took up a position between the chief and the catechist, and, the band striking up, we solemnly marched towards the village green or the *place*. As we approached the chief’s house that gentleman grew more anxious. Occasionally we halted, and then some

one called out a direction from amidst the trees in the distance. The chief then advanced a few more steps so that we had a better view of the avenue where it opens out into the main portion of the village. From the palms in the distance a white-clad figure slowly approached bearing a large British flag. The flag-bearer halted a few yards from us and we solemnly saluted the flag of *Paratane*. The flag-bearer then took up a position with the British flag waving above our heads.

In a few minutes there was the sound of female voices singing a weird chant, and two long parallel lines of maidens, waving flowers, came from among the palm trees. They approached, performing a sort of Morris dance. Between them was the wide expanse of coral road. When they had advanced half-way down the avenue two more ladies emerged, taking up a position immediately in the rear of the others, dancing hand in hand. Finally about twenty young men appeared and their bass voices joined the *himine*. Two dancers had a roving commission. They danced here and there grotesquely—beautifully. One was dressed like a clown. He wore a weird mask, a long pair of white stockings that were drawn over his breeches, giving him a Prussian expression, while perched jauntily on his head was a chauffeur's cap. He was particularly proud of a bright pink silk scarf which had been bound around his body. He danced about and performed in a delightful man-

ner. In spite of the grotesqueness of his appearance he supplied just the necessary amount of *abandon* to the *ensemble*, which might have been too stiff—too classic without him. The other rover wore a hammer-tailed coat—the garment called in America a “Prince Albert”—and a pair of large goggles.

The dancing was truly beautiful. The wriggling movement or *hula-hula* was entirely absent—at this time. The scene was perfect—cocoanut palms, blue sky furnished with billowy clouds, and the lagoon in the background.

The dancers halted and solemnly sang a song, specially composed for the occasion. Like a church anthem it was repetitionary in character. The words were, “*Eorana Paratane. Eorana Paratane,*” and they meant, welcome Briton, welcome Briton. At the end of the song the two ladies, who had danced together, came from among their sisters (I had suspected them of some fell purpose) and approached me. They each took an arm, and I was solemnly led up the stairs on to the chief’s veranda. The two young ladies, the most beautiful on the island, sat on each side of me, while the white trader interpreted the oration of welcome given by the chief. I responded suitably, and then I was led to a pile of pigs, chickens, island mats and cocoanuts. These the chief offered me.

I thanked him; but while accepting the mats,

the cocoanuts and a brace of roosters, I suggested that the pigs and remaining chickens should be kept for a future feast. In this I was wise. Perhaps I had noted the air of dreary boredom worn by the pigs, perhaps it was obvious that they had gone through a similar ritual many times. Nevertheless, the chickens seemed fearful of death, and I understood afterwards that I had done the right thing.

Then we once more formed into a procession and commenced a dance home.

As we passed along the avenue I saw an old, old woman looking through bleary eyes at the procession. She was crouching beside the door of her *fare*. She looked terrible, witch-like.

But the happy junketing of the reception was not for her. She was too old, too hideous; she ought to have been dead years before.

As we passed her, I called out a native greeting, while the little boys roared with delight, thinking I was jeering at her, but she merely scowled and crawled into her hovel.

There's little use for an old woman in the South Seas.

And so we marched on to the house of Tenuaha, the band playing savagely, the children yelling with delight, "*Eorana Paratane eorana.*"

The reception over, I promptly changed into shorts and a silk shirt, hoping that I had played satisfactorily my part as a British officer and

representative of *Paratane*. I determined to be henceforth a boy of twelve let loose on a coral island. I intended to roam about the reef, to swim, to fish, in a word to do all the things that I had read of in the books—of Ballantyne and Kingston.

I succeeded to a certain extent, and would have been entirely successful if the temptation of the natives to have receptions had been weaker. But a stranger, not out for personal gain, but seldom if ever visits Fagatau, and the people decided to make the most of their opportunity. Tenuaha egged them on. It is difficult to be happy in field boots, Sam Brown belt, and ordinary service cap. They are highly uncomfortable on a tropical island not far from the equator. And so at regular intervals the receptions continued. This was the program often arranged:

- 4.30 P.M. The *papaa* will sit inside the *fare* of Tenuaha. The people will urge their small boys and girls not to approach the house.
- 4.45 P.M. The band will assemble outside the *fare* of the chief. The chief, attended by the catechist and two elders of the island, will march with the band to the *fare* of Tenuaha. At ten paces from the door they will halt.
- 4.50 P.M. The *Papaa Paratane*, attended by Tenuaha, will descend the veranda steps and, taking up a position be-

tween the chief and the catechist, he will march to the *place*. (It has been noticed that the men playing the tin cans are too energetic. They will moderate their zeal.)

- 5.00 P.M. The reception. The chief will make oration welcoming the *Paratane*, who will respond. Gifts will be presented.
- 5.15 P.M. The *Papaa Paratane* will return to the *fare* of Tenuaha.

Note.—People are urged to lend their chickens and pigs for the gifts. The *papaa* invariably refuses to take more than two chickens. The cost of these can be borne by Tenuaha. He would have to kill two chickens, anyway.

But you want to hear about the reef, the lagoon, the swimming and the boating. Of course the island itself is merely a reef, but around the edge there is much shallow water which ends in a raised lip before the island ends and the deep sea begins. Clad in a *pareu* and a soft shirt, for the heat is intense, I wandered for hours inspecting the deep pools and endeavouring to entice a fish to take my hook. But the intelligence and self-protective qualities of the fish of Fagatau is surprising. I used to break open large shell-fish, the *pahua*, and after spreading these about the bottom of a pool, numbers of gaily dressed fish, weighing about three or four pounds, would approach and thankfully clean the shell of all meat, but the moment a

thin line with a seductive piece of the same bait was dangled, their interest waned. The larger fish have retired to consult; they've returned to investigate; they have circled around and even smelt it, but as for eating it—oh, dear no! Small fish have devoured the bait, bit by bit, and when the naked hook would be drawn up to the surface they have followed it, asking for more.

The only chance lay in a newcomer making an unthinking dash from the lagoon outside to his destruction. Nevertheless the time was not wasted, for the pond would soon be filled with all manner of submarine life. Sometimes an octopus entered the pool, when the other fish promptly retired with watching briefs, and an exceedingly cunning look in their eyes. An octopus can be easily caught if he is not too large. Of course one has to be very still and silent if he is to be taken. At first I feared him greatly, until long familiarity with his habits removed any dread of his long tentacles. The moment he is disturbed he will rush into one of the many miniature caverns in the coral, where, if left alone, he will remain for a long time. And if the joy of hunting comes upon you with too great strength, so that you jab him fiercely with a spear or stick, he may die inside the hole, but your cook will not have the pleasure of making you some excellent soup that evening. No, you must perform the operation delicately. Quite quietly, you push the stick into the hole until

you feel his jelly-like body. You keep up a continuous succession of gentle jabs. This annoys him, so he emits a smoke screen to deceive you; it makes the water around dark and brown. But undismayed, and not deceived, you go on. Finally one tentacle comes out, and your heart is possessed with hope. A few more jabs—very gentle ones now—and several more appear. Finally his horrid-looking body emerges and you—yes, you—grab his main body, and, with the muscles of your fingers exerting their maximum amount of strength, you commence to squeeze the life out of him. His tentacles rush up your arm making clicking sounds, but gradually their strength gives out and you can pull them off quite easily. It might perhaps be better not to attempt this in deep water, or with a large octopus, but you will be safe with an octopus of three feet over all. His tentacles, when nicely cooked and chopped into rings, are not unsavory. They are served in clear soup and appear snowy white, floating about. It has been whispered by traders that a continuous diet of octopus is likely to give a man either leprosy or elephantiasis, but perhaps this is an old wives' tale, especially in regard to the former.

Octopi have for many years been useful to novelists weaving stories around the tropics, and in the northern part of New Zealand, where he abounds, he is regarded with great respect by boys bathing off the rocks where the seaweed is

dense, or off little-used piers, since he is alleged to hide behind the piles, a few tentacles gripping the struts, while the others wave about in the water ready for any young white legs that may come too near. The fish at Fagatau are precisely like those found everywhere in the group, just as beautiful, just as interesting to watch.

Clinging to the rocks are many sea-urchins. The species armed with porcupine-like quills are unpleasant, since their lance-like quills are extremely sharp and if one so much as touches you the quill enters the flesh and breaks. The pain is intense, rather worse than a nettle sting, and ammonia alone will relieve it. However, the irritation does not last more than an hour. There is another and less common species that has thick violet-coloured quills, as thick as an ordinary pencil. They are beautiful, and I have seen a Frenchman break them open and eat with much enjoyment the cream-coloured flesh. The quills are brittle, and may be used as slate pencils.

The edge of the reef was always fascinating. In many places one merely walks on the roof of huge subterranean caverns into which the water rushes with many weird noises, while occasionally a small hole will emit a great geyser of snowy foam and water. I walked about, peering into this hole, looking into that great crack in the coral, always happy and never feeling more than fifteen.

Sometimes, half a mile out at sea, could be seen canoes appearing and disappearing as the large rollers passed them by. They were natives on the eternal lookout for turtle. During my stay on Fagatau the turtle were plentiful and the people were very contented. For although food is now abundant in the Paumotus, the old times when life was divided between the days when turtle were plentiful and when they failed to appear, are still remembered with some horror. The turtle was regarded as a gift from the gods, and its non-appearance was looked upon as proof of divine displeasure. Hence around the preparation of the food, and even its eating, there was much religious ceremony; and one shudders to think what kind of sacrifices were offered when turtle failed to pass the island. The flesh was always eaten on the *marai*—the temple—and each man stood in front of a block of coral. The priests apparently served each man.

The turtle is easily captured. He does not swim quickly, and he must return to the surface to breathe, even in the face of danger. In many cases the natives dive for him, and looping a rope around his flappers, they tow him home. Sometimes, indeed, the hunter is caught himself by a shark—an ever-present danger. The turtle are generally stored in the shallow lagoon streams where they live anchored or attached to canoes. I have often seen one or two lying on the sand in a

pitiable condition. At intervals they give deep, heart-rending sighs which go straight to one's heart, poor fellows. They are merely breathing, of course, but they choose to breathe as you would breathe if you had just heard that your entire fortune had been embezzled by a dishonest banker. There is a suggestion of "Alice in Wonderland" here, but Alice seemed more than a reality when I found myself with a number of small boys taking rides on the back of a turtle in the lagoon. The turtle was a captive, of course; and his chances of escape were nil, but always he headed for the reef and the open sea. One held him with both hands by his shell, and then flinging oneself across his back, and taking a very deep breath, down to the bottom of the lagoon one would go, praying that it would be possible to last out as long as the turtle. After an eternity, it seemed, we would both return to the surface, the turtle would give another sob-like sigh, and down we would go again. Personally, I never could last out quite as long as the turtle, but the boys could, easily. Nevertheless it was not difficult to catch him again, for he had a long rope attached to one of his flappers. The performance was like dancing at a funeral, more interesting than amusing.

Most people have eaten sea turtle, and every one knows that the flesh is even more delicious than the best beef steak. I don't know exactly how the natives cook the turtle; frankly I never inquired,



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TEAEA A MIHIMANA BRINGING IN FEII

In spite of the length of his name, Teaea a Mihimana, is a proper man. He drove thirty miles to meet us, and when at the end of two days of fatiguing work, desiring to reward him, and having no adequate present to make him we suggested giving him money, he was filled with consternation. He is the right-hand man of the chief of Papenoo.



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PREPARING BAMBOO FOR HAT MAKING

The tough outer skin of the bamboo is removed by the women. Beneath this skin, a silky ribbon-like material is found easily removable in long strips. A hat made of bamboo material is light, and can be fashioned into any shape. A white man is invariably presented with many during a visit to Tahiti. The vahine lines it with pale blue or pink silk, and she is often pleased to work a spray of flowers on the silk, expressing her feelings of regard. Unless treated very carefully, the bamboo hat quickly loses its shape, and a shower of rain spoils it.



ON THE ROAD TO PAPENOO

Captain Cook landed near this spot, finding the country inhabited by a large population of happy, light-hearted people. Today, a complete muster of all living in the area within the picture would hardly number more than forty.



THE BEACH

Where the shelving reef creeps up on to the main island and the shores are washed by the rollers of the Pacific.



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but I am convinced that they still go through some kind of ceremony during the cooking.

The turtle seem to drift with the warm currents, living on seaweed and merely going ashore to lay their eggs. Turtle eggs as food are not unlike ordinary chicken eggs; they look very tempting sitting around the beef steak when it comes to table.

The turtle are common property on the island, and a fair share is handed round to each and all. When I left the Paumotus I was given a large turtle and it was carried to Papeete on the schooner. It sighed during the whole voyage, but showed no other signs of excitement.

CHAPTER XIX

THE MARAI AND MIGGIMIGGI

WHO doesn't believe in spirits?

Tenuaha had taken me for a day's outing in the launch across the lagoon and we had landed at the further and deserted end of the island. Here was the ancient temple of the island—the *Marai*. It consists merely of a great heap of dark coloured coral upon which nothing grows except low-lying scrub. The summit was fairly level and at regular intervals were small coral slabs, placed in the ground, and tottering like tombstones in a deserted cemetery. The whole place was dreary—fearful—and my mind went back but a few years to the time when many a poor wretch had breathed his last on this huge ungainly altar. I imagined the natives standing before their little slabs of stone, looking with hungry eyes at the priest doling out the turtle flesh or perhaps the flesh of human beings. The place seemed haunted with the spirits of the past; I wanted to run away; one native had refused to join us, but waited at the base of the temple, showing signs of nervousness; it was terrible, haunting, weird. One could hardly believe that this was part of the cheerful

palm-clad island. Below us the waves were rolling in with terrific force.

"Come," said Tenuaha, "I will show you something." He led me a little way down the side of the *Marai*, and removed a slab of coral exposing a small chamber neatly lined with smooth coral. "One very bad man come here," he explained, "he took his woman, and he killed her, and stayed some days eating her."

We climbed once more onto the *Marai*. The heat was suffocating, and the coral burnt through my shoes. I looked out towards the horizon, and to my astonishment I saw great angry clouds rising up with some haste. In a remarkably short space of time the sky became overcast and a terrific thunderstorm was upon us. We ran for shelter, and as we ran the old hag in the village four miles away called to the chief who was passing, "The *papaa Paratane* is on the *Marai*; the gods are angry; there will be a big storm." She retired to her filthy *fare* muttering prayers, but not to the God of the Christians.

During the storm we sheltered at the foot of the *Marai*; the natives were frightened, but Tenuaha merely laughed.

However, every storm has an end, and we were soon out on the lagoon shooting birds for supper.

Now it happened that a certain mother bird remained too long on her nest and she was shot, leaving behind her a young bird almost

ready to use its own wings. We landed on the *pahua* mound and the young bird was highly incensed. However, very gently, I picked her up and introduced myself to a very dear little bird friend who for some months became my constant and loving companion. She hated me at first, but when she found that I was the source of many little fish, and her very affectionate father, she grew to love me dearly. Since the days of this young lady's babyhood I have sympathized with mother birds. There is no rest. You have simply got to catch fish all day and even keep some ready in a pool for the morning. I have given this baby of mine twenty-five little fish and she has sunk into slumber and awakened in ten minutes, if disturbed, demanding more.

I called her *Miggimiggi*—a horrid name, but if the bird had not received this name I would have been branded with it. For, in the South Seas, one is often given a native name. A stout old *vahine*, having taken a fancy to a young white man, will say lazily, "You my *tamare*—I your modder." She will then give him a name quite carelessly, and will possibly forget the incident, but the white man, new to the South Seas, is pleased. He naturally asks the meaning of the word and is often horrified to find how appropriate the name is.

I was given the name of *Miggimiggi*; which name I disliked at once. There is something com-

monplace, childish, absurd about the name that displeases me. I asked for the meaning and was told that *Miggimiggi* was the hard and tough wood taken from a small tree that grows near the edge of the island. This tree tries to grow upright but fails, with the result that it twists and turns and is very useful for making hooks for turtles. The idea was to pay a compliment to the toughness and strength of the British race.

But the explanation displeased me more than the sound of the word, which was bad enough. How could one sign oneself as Miggimiggi Jones, or would it sound nice to hear a butler announce one to an astonished drawing-room full of men and women as "Mr. Miggimiggi Smith"? Still *Miggimiggi* seemed an excellent name for a fat little dog or a charming kitten.

Then I decided to call my bird *Miggimiggi*. *Miggimiggi* she was called, and it is hoped that she is still so called, for I left her a little more than a year ago, in charge of a young native boy, who when very sick with the influenza, could not rest unless he was assured that some one had been catching fish for *Miggimiggi*.

I took her back to Tahiti with me and I would have carried her to England, only I loved her too well. I know she missed me sadly. I feel that for a long time she waited in the trees at night-time, ready to flop down from her tree and nestle close up beside my chin making cooing sounds

and sometimes demanding food, even when she was old enough to catch her own fish. She accompanied me always, out on the reef, in the canoe, everywhere. If I came home during the day and found her absent I merely called out towards the usual number of the birds flying about, "*Miggimiggi*," and she'd leave them and return. At one time I was given a small white bird which I fondled a little, and then left in a box attached to a tree. I had no sooner left it, than *Miggimiggi* flew down from her tree and promptly killed it, and after the murder she had the impudence to sit on my shoulder. She was a little larger than a good-sized thrush, but judging by the number of fish she could consume at a sitting, she ought to have been as large as an ostrich. It is to be hoped that she's alive now, but I dare say she found a mate and has forgotten her father in the joys and horrors of matrimony. But I sincerely hope that, when she is driven out of her wits with her own babies, she will give me a solemn thought of sympathy.

CHAPTER XX

WAITING FOR THE NOEL

LIFE continued on Fagatau until the time came when the *Noel* should arrive from Hikuero, from whence many schooners would be sailing for Papeete. At this time it was decided to give a particularly heavy feast; and I gladly contributed two sacks of flour to the entertainment.

Preparations went on apace, and soon in the centre of the *place* a rotunda of green cocoanut leaves was erected. Many pigs, turtles and chickens were killed, and the people, dressed magnificently, gathered round to eat heartily.

Inside the rotunda tables were arranged, college dining-hall fashion. The chief and the elders sat at the high table looking with some anxiety at the array of silver knives and forks which Tenuaha the magnificent had placed in front of them. During the meal which followed, the ordinary folk at the lower tables, or on the ground, gorged vast quantities of pork, chicken and turtle with satisfaction, but the poor dignitaries could hardly eat a bite with any comfort. They watched one another carefully, but got no assistance. The chief felt simply hopeless. The situation could

have been saved by a display of true courtesy, to compensate for Tenuaha's love of the magnificent in creating such a situation, but it was not. However, by turning well around, and talking to the man on my right, the chief had a few opportunities of grabbing a leg of a chicken and taking a few happy bites. But Tenuaha and his servant, the latter waiting in the most perfect fashion, were disrespectfully amused and enjoyed watching the difficulties of their elders and betters.

The meal was extremely intricate, and course after course arrived, perfectly cooked *à la Française*. Hence the chief had to tackle a dainty hors d'oeuvre consisting of turtle eggs and asparagus, he had to drink octopus consommé; he struggled with some small portions of lobster mayonnaise; he became hopeless with portions of the chicken; and his courage had completely disappeared when the turtle beef steak appeared in dainty portions. But the waiter, with a faint suggestion of amusement, removed the plates, supplied him with fresh knives and forks, until it is certain that he would have been used as a human sacrifice, if the chief could have got at him.

And in spite of all the suffering endured by the chief and elders they were very proud of Tenuaha, and glad to shake his hand when he condescended to be nice to them.

The farewell feast was considered by all to be a great success and, although meant as a fitting

good-bye, several weeks passed before a schooner arrived. It turned out afterwards that the *Noel* had left Hikuero to come to Fagatau, but after six hours' unequal battle with a stiff trade wind she became so full of water that she was compelled to return to Hikuero. But we were ignorant of this on Fagatau, and as the weeks passed I became very anxious.

One day, alone, I wandered to the windward side of the island to watch the horizon for signs of a sail. Except at night time, when we sometimes wandered out on to the great mounds of coral, I had seldom visited this side of the island.

The heat was intense, so intent upon reaching a long peninsula in the distance, I wandered along a path that fringed the edge of the scrub. The path seemed well trodden, and I wondered exactly where it led to. I had been walking for about a quarter of a mile when I came to a small clearing in which were three native huts—a miniature village—and judging by the domestic utensils lying about it was obvious that the houses were occupied. This was astonishing, for it seemed strange that people should live so near to the village, and yet not actually in it. For the Polynesian must have mortal company, because of his firm belief in the existence of a vast company of malignant immortals who stalk about when the sun has left his island. Small companies, not without many fears, venture afield during the copra making season, but

they return to the main village the moment their work is finished. I knew that no Paumotun would willingly spend a night three-quarters of a mile from his village.

Beside one of the houses was a grave, so badly filled in that the mound had sunk almost to the level of the ground, forming a miniature valley round the edges.

This isolated grave lent additional mystery, for the dead of Fagatau sleep in company, protected by a huge ungainly crucifix.

Convinced that I was being stared at through the bamboo poles forming the sides of the *fares*, I walked on, wondering greatly. At one hundred paces from the *fares* I looked back, and from each of the huts I saw a head disappear, while a small boy scuttled out of sight.

Having searched in vain for the schooner, I returned through the small village again, and once more experienced that air of mystery which had been so persistent before.

Upon returning home I sought the Alsatian trader and asked him for an explanation of the houses in the clearing.

“You see the grave?” he said. “She was a young girl, eh—pretty, prettiest on the island—came from the Gambia where they are very handsome—half Spanish. She married a man, but all the natives sought her. Her man was old, so she had two men who lived with her when her husband

was not looking. Her man, he went to Papeete, and while he was away the two men lived with her unashamed. They did not tell the priest. Soon it was said her man was sick on Tahiti, and had been placed in the leper station at Pappino. So her two lovers were afraid. She got sick, too, and died very quickly. No one would bury her, and the chief with much paraffin placed her in the grave. It is not long ago, and now her two lovers live in the house near her grave. They, too, have leprosy, and there is a small boy with them. He is sick, too. His father ran away. Soon they will die, but the natives take them food. The priest takes them the communion when he comes."

I asked Tenuaha about the little settlement and he said, "It is a bad place; don't you go there."

There are many stories told about lepers, but the saddest, nay, the loveliest, is the story of Hinano. But to tell the story we must go back some years to the days when Fagatau had not been well planted with nuts, and when the remoteness of the island made the copra trade of little value.

Before the coming of the white man and his religion, like the custom prevailing in Tahiti, many babies were not permitted to live more than a second. Obeying a practical instinct of self-preservation, the parents killed them. Had all the children born on the island been suffered to live, the result would have been unthinkable. There were cocoanuts, of course, and the *taro* was culti-

vated to a certain extent, but the fact remained that the island could support so many and no more. As it was, the seasons when the turtle failed to appear marked a period of great suffering.

However, Christianity taught the natives that it was wrong to murder infants, and realizing this, and also understanding that their isolation from the rest of the world had partially ceased, the practice was given up, with the result that Fagatau became over-populated. This would have been serious had not the Bishop of Tahiti arranged for the emigration to Moorea of a large number of the people. The emigrants, finding the climate of Moorea delightful, and food easy to obtain, commenced to deteriorate, and some became an easy prey to European diseases. The Chinese had brought a certain amount of leprosy to Tahiti and this was easily communicated to the natives of Moorea.

Later, when the islands of the Paumotus commenced to export copra in large quantities, the emigrants to Moorea felt that they had got the worst of the bargain and many returned to Fagatau, claiming their share of the profits. The food difficulty had been eliminated by the presence of stores, both Chinese and European.

Amongst those who returned to Fagatau was a man called Tati. He had inherited land on Moorea, so that his return was looked upon with

some surprise by the natives, who nevertheless gave him a great welcome. He brought with him his wife Tina, and his daughter by adoption named Hinano. Hinano came from Mangarewa and was half Chilean. She was a small person with a great mass of brown hair which shone like gold in the lamplight when she sat with the others at the evening *himine*. But if her hair were lovely and attractive, it was perhaps her eyes that arrested one's attention more. They were very large, and strangely enough there was a suggestion of blue lurking in their depths. In fact, her whole appearance was so attractive that the local white trader decided to dismiss his wife at once in favour of Hinano.

Now, although the trader's wife had grown fat, this did not prevent her being annoyed at the suggestion. She had long enjoyed the privilege of being the *papaa's* wife and she had no intention of abdicating without a struggle. "There's no need to marry her," she urged; "give Tina a roll of calico and she will be blind when you take Hinano after the *himine*. I also will be blind, for you are right, I have indeed grown stout."

But this suggestion was not acceptable. Years before, the trader had not been blind when his wife, in her thinner days, had strolled amongst the cocoanut trees with younger men than himself. In fact, he saw that as an occasional gallant he would be a miserable failure; there was more at-

traction in the idea of being a regular kindly husband, and Hinano would inherit much land. The trader saw a life of relief from Chinese competition and a happy old age accompanied by a rum jar.

Hence he approached Tina, who received the idea and a sack of flour graciously. "But, yes, we are of a truth greatly honoured," she said. "I will see Tati at once." Tati thought that he ought to have felt more honoured than he actually did feel; but he said he would think it over and discuss the matter with Hinano.

The trader's wife had been lurking in the woods near the house during this dialogue with Tina, and when she saw the flour accepted by Tati's wife, she gave herself up as lost, and ran into the woods weeping. Now the house of Tati was situated some little distance from the native village, for Tati had developed modern notions, and it was alleged that he feared not ghosts at night time. The trader's wife, who in her grief had forgotten time, found herself near the house after the sun had set. Filled with deadly forebodings of spirits, and fearing the return journey to the village, she approached Tati's house upon the veranda of which a light was burning. On the veranda sat Tati, Tina and Hinano. Tati had rolled up the sleeve of his shirt exposing his great beautiful arm. Just as the trader's wife came near, he had beckoned Tina to approach, and together they

examined what appeared to be a large white sore on the forearm. "I fear it is the white sickness," Tati remarked. "It is good that we have left Moorea where I should have been sent to the place of the two white churches where the people fear to show themselves."

The trader's wife waited to hear no more, but defying the ghosts, she rushed home to her man and told what seemed to her good news.

The trader decided to walk warily, and feeling that Hinano should run no further risk of infection, he told the priest, and soon Tati's object in returning to Fagatau was exposed. He was a man of wealth, and could not be treated summarily, but Hinano and Tina were compelled to leave him and to live in a small house near the village. It was unnecessary to order the natives to keep away from poor Tati; his segregation was complete. Tina was not sorry since she had disliked living so far out of town, but the white blood in the veins of Hinano made her cling to her adopted father, whom she loved dearly.

Therefore, at night time, armed with a basket of provisions, she would risk the spirits and the orders of the chief, and often spent nearly the whole night with Tati. In fact, she was with him when he died. No one thought it strange that Hinano had found him dead.

It was some time after the death of Tati that the trader's interest revived in Hinano. He had

watched her very closely until he at last decided that her chances of catching the disease were remote.

He therefore again approached Tina with his original proposal that he should marry Hinano in the church properly and in a fitting manner.

Tina, greatly flattered, agreed to arrange the matter and promptly approached Hinano. "It is good that the *papaa* should marry you; he is a nice man, and his present woman has grown huge and ungainly. She has been very proud, and it was her fault that the sickness of Tati was discovered. Therefore, you must marry the trader."

But Hinano, while acknowledging the honour, remarked that she would much rather go to Papeete and perhaps marry the purser of the mail steamer. For the trader was old, and she feared life might be very dull.

Tina pointed out that the honour of marrying the white man was so great that it far outweighed the disadvantage of his age. "In any case," she continued, "he will be drunk always, and there are many young men on the island."

At this time, and during these negotiations, the wife of the trader was once more in a state of extreme anxiety amounting to sheer panic. But she took to sharing the rum jar with the trader. Which helped her to forget.

And there is little doubt but what Hinano would have gone the way of all young native



A TAHITIAN FAMILY PREPARING TO EAT BREADFRUIT

The old lady to the right, and the grandmother of the children, of colour various, came to my hospital with a small boy, woefully ill. She liked the hospital so well that she endeavoured to become a patient, but failed completely and decided to scrub floors instead. Hanging from the roof of the verandah are feis, the wild plantain, which attain a beautiful maroon and yellow shade. Eaten cooked with fish, they are not more interesting than potatoes.



THE PEAKS OF TAHITI

The country above the level land fringing the shore of the lagoon is but seldom explored, sometimes a white enthusiast will engage a few bored natives to accompany him into the interior. There is a lake at the head of the largest valley in which eels with human ears are found (sic). They are descendants of a hapless maiden who got into difficulties with a malignant god.



A GROUP OF TAHITIAN NATIVES

Copyright, Kroepelein

This picture shows a mixed collection of Tahitians. They look commonplace enough, like negroes in Bermuda, but there is hardly a native in the picture that the ordinary white man is not proud to call friend. They just photograph badly. It is safe to say that half these folk died under frightful conditions during the epidemic.

PAPARA, TAHITI

From the heavy swell breaking in the background it can be gathered that Papara is situated on the windward side of the island. The lagoon stretching on each side, but not seen in the picture, seeks an outlet at this point, and a fierce current of half salt water undermines the breakers which collapse in a mass of angry surf. The fresh-water stream, interfering with the work of the coral insect, has created a pass in the reef.





THE RIVER PUNARUU, TAHITI

A TAHITIAN HILL CASTLE

"I will find peace by the stream in the valley," said a native called Moe. So he built a fare of some modernity and accompanied by his wife, his wife's relations, his sister's husband and children, his grandmother and her descendants, he sought peace by the stream in the valley. He almost found it—permanently.

Gauguin, the painter, lived in a house like this in the valley of Fataua.



BAY OF OPUNOHOU

Copyright, Kroepelin

Before the sun bids farewell to a beautiful portion of God's vineyard.

IN THE LAGOON AT FAGATAU

We had borrowed a native's canoe, and while junketing in the lagoon, the outrigger of the canoe was broken. Lazily, and aimlessly, we are trying to mend it.



girl flesh, if it had not been for the arrival of the schooner *Tiare* from Papeete with a young half-caste native on board called Peeano. Peeano, whose father was a stray white man, possessed some rank in Tahiti for his mother's father was a native prince and a wealthy landowner. Peeano had received a liberal education at the school of the Brothers at Papeete, and his grandfather, who himself had been educated in England at a good public school, had endeavoured to instil into his mind strange ideas of morality. Hence, while innocence was an unknown experience to Peeano, he had, strangely enough, kept himself pure and clean. So much so, in fact, that his grandfather, although responsible for this virtue, had grown anxious.

He had therefore sent Peeano off to cruise on the schooner, hoping that the boy would find a suitable wife or at least lose his more inconvenient ideals.

Peeano was an exceedingly handsome young man. Exposed to the sun, his face, naturally almost white, had attained a rich golden bronze while fair hair marked his Saxon descent.

Owing to the fact that he had read some English books, including an ancient copy of "Ivanhoe" which had been left behind by his father, his ideas in regard to his future wife were those of the hero of most English novels. He regarded himself as Ivanhoe, and at the time of his arrival in Fagatau

he was still looking for the Lady Rowena. The Brothers at Papeete hoped that he would not find her, since they believed that he had a vocation for the priesthood.

The arrival of the schooner was of course an event on Fagatau, and a great *himine* was promptly arranged for that very night.

At the beginning of the entertainment Peeano stood with the captain and shook hands with the chief and the natives, including Tina and Hinano. Hinano thought that she had never seen any one quite so wonderful as Peeano, and she hoped that at the end of the *himine*, when the natives, seizing their sweethearts and other people's wives, stroll midst the cocoanuts, she would be chosen by Peeano. As for Peeano he had hardly noticed her, for he was busy shaking hands and answering questions about Papeete and his grandfather.

Finally, the reception being over, the natives grouped themselves around the lamps in the clearing and commenced their chanting. Hinano sat apart with Tina, close to a large lamp. The light from the lamp, while transforming her hair into threads of bronze, yet performed a sweeter office in illuminating her great big eyes which were fixed with a shy wonder upon the face of Peeano. She made a sweet picture, and the trader, who was gradually edging nearer, congratulated himself.

The *himine* is invariably a long affair, so it was

not surprising that after a time Peeano grew bored, until his eyes, wandering from the singers, met the gentle gaze of Hinano. "What a pretty girl," he thought. Just at that moment the trader had come very close, and his arm wandered round the waist of Hinano. She started, looked at the heavy old features of the white man, and then pushing him away she said angrily, "Go, pig, go!" The trader laughed, and, exerting his strength, endeavoured to force his attention upon the unwilling girl.

An amatory struggle of this sort is not unusual in the South Seas, and it would have passed unnoticed if Peeano had not jumped up quickly, and, encircling the singers, reached the side of Hinano, where laughingly he said, "No, Mr. Smith, this *vahine* is not for you; she is mine, eh little girl?" Peeano was not to be gainsaid, and the trader withdrew gracefully. There was plenty of time, he thought, but when his wife saw Peeano stroll off with Hinano she took courage, and commenced to shriek her treble part in the *himine* with even more energy than the rum jar had given her.

Of course, Hinano was perfectly willing to give herself body and soul to Peeano, so that it was with some astonishment that she found herself being treated in precisely the same way that her father had treated her. It must be admitted that she found the proceedings dull at first, but when Peeano led her to the beach and, sitting under the

shade of a young palm tree, commenced to tell her how pretty she was, her white blood reacted. And Peeano's personality being insistent, his thoughts were easily communicated, and a sweet peace seemed to possess her little mind. The two boys lurking behind them, hidden by the cocoanut palms, said, "The man's a *mahu*," and withdrew.

A strange romance now commenced. Peeano, much to the regret of the schooner captain, decided to remain on Fagatau for a few weeks, and he directed the captain to call for him on his way back from the Marquesas. The two lovers erected a small *ne-au* shelter near the shore and Peeano used to sit on a large lump of coral while Hinano, busy making him a sugar-cane hat, would listen while he told her tales of Papeete and the great world outside the reef.

At last the schooner returned, and the heart of Hinano grew sad when she realized that Peeano must leave her.

They spent their last evening together in the little shelter, and Peeano, taking a ring which he had bought from the Chinaman, placed it on her finger, telling her that they were now engaged.

"This ring," he said, "is sacred; it has magic, so that when you wear it you are mine. No white man nor native will come near you until we are married. I will return to Papeete to consult my grandfather about the wedding, and then I will

return to you, and we will be married. It is good."

Still it was a heartbroken girl that stood on the end of the reef when the schooner disappeared below the horizon. But her faith was infinite, and she spent many happy hours in the shelter, busy making all kinds of muslin gowns ready for her marriage.

But months passed and there was no sign of the schooner, so that her heart began to sink within her.

"Peeano is a very rich man," the trader said; "he will surely marry a white woman. Why not come with me? I will take you to Tahiti and we will see this woman that he has taken."

But Hinano merely showed him her ring. "Why not marry Tina?" she suggested. "Tina is a good woman and when I go she will have the lands of Tati; I belong to Peeano."

Finally, a schooner appeared on the horizon and there was much excitement. Hinano, clad in her smartest frock, was waiting at the landing-place when the first surf boat came over the reef. But, alas, Peeano was not on board. There was a letter, however, stating that his grandfather, while agreeing to their marriage, had yet urged him to go to San Francisco to buy furniture and to perform some business of importance. Peeano urged Hinano to wait, saying that he would surely return.

Hinano was greatly comforted, and the trader's wife felt more assurance.

And so the months passed.

Now one day it happened that Hinano, frying some pork chops, managed to burn herself badly. One of those unfortunate minor explosions had occurred, and in the panic she had dropped the pan, with the result that the boiling fat poured over her forearm. The burn, badly attended to, refused to heal. It would show signs of healing at one part only to break out in another. After a time her heels became affected, and finally a condition similar to that on her arm developed.

The white trader became interested, and reported the matter to the priest who decided to investigate. It was fairly obvious that Hinano was suffering from the disease that had ended poor Tati's life.

We will pass over the unfortunate details merely by saying that Hinano was forced to live alone in the old *fare* where Tati had died. Her mother used to bring her food, and reported developments to the trader.

Hinano became dazed. She felt little pain, but the thought of Peeano's return disturbed her greatly. One moment she would hope that he had married the white woman at Papeete, and then the next she prayed to God that he would come and see her. "No, he must not see me," she said, "I will look at him through the bamboos."

When the village was sleeping she would wander off to the little *ne-au* shelter, and there her mind would wander back to the happy days she had spent with Peeano. She would rest her head on the coral chunk where he had sat, and often the rising sun would find her still dreaming. But unfortunately, in her hurry to return to her house one day, she left her shawl, and this was discovered by a native wandering by. The place was watched, and her mother gave her an order from the chief, that if she went to the shelter again, her food would be stopped, and perhaps they would send her off to Papeete to be segregated. For a time Hinano obeyed this order, but finally the temptation was irresistible and she returned only to find the place burned to the ground. But with her hands she managed to clear away the débris until she found the coral chunk upon which Peeano used to rest. It was heavy, but each night she rolled the stone nearer and nearer to her house. Weeks passed before she finally managed to get the stone to the compound, but as she lay with her head on its rough surface, she felt that the work had been well worth while. The stone indeed became like Jacob's stone at Bethel—the base of a ladder that took her worn-out spirit away from the sorrows of life.

Meanwhile Peeano, having accomplished his business in San Francisco, had returned to Papeete laden with desirable presents for Hinano.

The clerk in a large store in San Francisco, interested in the handsome boy who wanted to buy charming presents for his sweetheart, had sold him a simple bridal frock, together with a coronet of orange blossoms. She had put them on for him, and the vision of Hinano similarly garbed had overjoyed him.

Hence he waited with some impatience until a schooner was ready to take him to Fagatau.

Once more he sailed on the *Tiare*, and the captain was astonished when he heard that Peeano had remained faithful to Hinano. "Why didn't you find a girl in America?" he asked.

"Indeed, the white women in Frisco are beautiful, but there are none like Hinano in the whole world. Besides, I gave her the sacred ring," he explained, finally.

After many days, Fagatau appeared on the horizon, but the wind was contrary, and, although in sight of the island all day, it looked doubtful whether it would be possible to attempt a landing before sunset. However, the captain liked the impatient young man, and Peeano, with a small bag which contained the bridal frock and the coronet, was put ashore while the schooner went off to cruise until the morning.

Peeano left the bag on the shore, and commenced to walk towards the village. It was already quite dark when he reached the houses, but the barking of innumerable dogs soon awakened

the sleeping natives. Many called "Who's that?" but Peeano walked on to the little house where Tina lived and called, "Hinano—Hinano." There was no response until the hoarse accents of Tina replied, "Who calls Hinano? She is not here." Finally she arose from the veranda, grunting as her huge body became perpendicular. "Who is the fool that wants Hinano? Does he not know that she is no good to men now?" She came slowly down the steps and recognized Peeano. His handsome, boyish face was smiling mischievously.

"Hush, Tina, not a word; I want to give Hinano a surprise. Don't let her hear. Where is she? Is that her on the veranda with you? What's the matter, Tina? Why do you laugh? She hasn't gone away? Don't laugh, Tina, I've got a present for you, too. What is it, Tina?"

The situation seemed infinitely droll to Tina. Never having loved Hinano, since she had stolen the affection of Tati, Hinano's misfortune had seemed providential.

It is possible that she might have been brutal in communicating the news, if the chief, scenting a tragedy and recognizing Peeano, had not approached.

"Come with me, Peeano," he said.

"But no, I want to surprise Hinano. Where is she? I want to surprise her," said Peeano impatiently.

“It will not be Hinano that will receive a surprise,” said Tina, “but Peeano.” She cackled unpleasantly.

“What is it? Quick, tell me. Has the trader taken my sweetheart? Where is he? I will kill him.” Peeano was becoming angry.

“Hinano is sick,” said the chief. “She has the white sickness; tomorrow you must return on the schooner; you may not see her.”

“No, no! She has not the white sickness,” Peeano at first failed to understand the significance of the chief’s words. “Where is she? I must go to her,” he shouted; “tell me, you fools; why do you stand around like dead people; where is she?”

“She is in the house of Tati on the windward side, but it is forbidden to visit her,” said the chief gently; “besides, it is better not.”

“Let the fool go,” said Tina. “He will come back—running.”

Peeano left the house and wandered aimlessly around the village, while the dogs barked and little groups of natives assembled watching, but not interrupting him. Finally he commenced to walk quickly, and the natives lost sight of him as he disappeared along the avenue leading to the landing-place.

“I am going to see Hinano,” he said. “I’m going to see Hinano.” He laughed happily.

There was a canoe drawn up on the coral.

"I will paddle round to the house," he said.

The tide was high and there was enough water on the reef shelf to make this possible.

"But I must take the wedding gown, and the wreath of flowers; Hinano will like that."

He was in an ecstasy, as he quickly removed these from the bag. In a few minutes he was paddling along the miniature lagoon towards the little house of Tati.

At the house of Tati, Hinano, worn out from a day of pain and discomfort, was sleeping. Her head was resting upon the coral chunk but her mind was miles across the water. Dreaming, she had gone to Papeete in a schooner, and as the schooner approached the beach, a canoe had put off from the shore bearing a young man whose figure gradually became that of Peeano. She bent over the side of the schooner.

"Peeano, you have come to meet me," she said; "the sea has been very stormy and the wind always blowing against the schooner. Now we are in calm waters. It is good."

But Peeano answered never a word. The canoe was close beside the schooner, but Peeano stood looking up at her with love and gladness in his eyes. He seemed to be trying to speak, but his words failed to come.

"Speak, Peeano!" cried Hinano. "Speak, speak!" she shrieked.

The sound of her voice awoke her, and the

reality of her position once more came upon her. Weeping bitterly, she felt the coral chunk, and, after a few moments, she was sleeping once more.

Therefore, when she was awakened by a voice calling, "Hinano! Hinano! I have come back. It is I—Peeano," it seemed to her to be part of her original dream.

"He can speak now," she thought.

But the voice went on calling, so that she rose from her mat on the veranda, and looking across the lagoon where the moon had made a pathway of light, she saw a canoe approaching. Still believing herself to be dreaming she went out and commenced walking down to the beach. The canoe came up onto the beach with a crunching sound and Peeano stepped ashore. "Come, my Hinano, come," he said. He stretched out his arms. Hinano now half-awake, hesitated, but obeying an irresistible impulse, she flew into his arms. "You waited a very long time," he said, "a very long time, but now the wedding is ready; here are the wedding garments."

He handed her the long silken wedding frock, and the wreath of orange blossoms, which she quickly donned. Peeano did not see the drawn face, the disfigured arms. He merely saw a beautiful maiden with gorgeous hair hanging round her shoulders. He saw Hinano as he had dreamt about her, as she had been.

“Come into the canoe,” he said; “there is little time, we must hurry.”

She stepped into the canoe, sitting in the stern, while Peeano took the paddle.

“Always we are together now, my Hinano,” he said; “always.”

In a few minutes they reached the edge of the reef. The sea was calm, but the heavy ocean swell burst upon the rocks with some fury. But Peeano was expert, and soon they were out on the bosom of the great Pacific, following the pathway of the moon who looked down kindly upon two lovers reunited. And so they went on forever and ever—Peeano and Hinano.

And at night time when a schooner is becalmed on the Pacific, and when the natives, tired of singing and dancing, are sleeping on the deck, the man at the wheel can sometimes hear a faint murmur in the distance.

“It is Peeano calling Hinano,” he says, as he strikes a light and starts another cigarette.

CHAPER XXI

THE *TEARIA*

At last a schooner arrived. She had appeared off the island during the night, and her presence was made known by a small boy rushing along the avenue calling, "*Pahi! Pahi!*" A ship, a ship!

A few minutes afterwards, an exceedingly handsome boy of thirteen years, nicely dressed in white linen, approached and handed me a letter from Captain Brander. The letter stated that the *Noel*, having been wrecked, was unable to reach Fagatau, but that he had asked his very good friend Monsieur La Farge to call for me. La Farge would take me to Tahiti for \$150.

The ordinary fare from Fagatau to Papeete is \$40, therefore it was difficult not to feel depressed. However, when La Farge arrived himself, I pointed out that he was charging me nearly four times the usual amount. He admitted this politely but he agreed to take anything I liked to give him, and as a matter of fact at the end of the journey he at first refused to take a penny. But he received his ordinary fare with a slight addition.

M. La Farge is an interesting character. Although he has lived in the islands for many years,

he has never learnt the language. He does not want to. Neither does he speak more than three words of English. He had been married happily in Paris, but his wife had died giving birth to his first baby. Overcome with grief he had sought rest for his mind in the South Seas. The baby had grown up and had become a famous French actor, and M. La Farge used to visit him every five years. Unfortunately his son had been killed early in the war, and La Farge had little intention of visiting France again.

He had taken unto himself a wife from among the people of Mangarewa, who had been in her youth very lovely and even when I knew her she was still beautiful. La Farge treated her gently, and received from her a dog-like affection.

He had bought an ancient, though fast, schooner, and his entire life was spent on the *Tearia*. Even in Papeete he refuses to leave his little ship, sleeping and eating on board.

The whole population of Fagatau came to the beach to say farewell. It was heart-rending. However, accompanied by Tenuaha, and covered with beads and flowers, we were rowed out to the schooner, where La Farge sold as much merchandise as possible to Tenuaha.

It was hard to say good-bye to Tenuaha. A parting with a friend, and a well-loved friend, is a heart-sinking experience.

However, after a few hours Tenuaha went ashore and the journey commenced.

The *Tearia*, seeking copra, decided to visit Fakahina, a neighbouring atoll, and with little wind and still less to follow, it seemed, we passed into the night.

But before darkness came upon the face of the waters Tenuaha could be seen standing on the reef. For a long time, with a powerful glass, I could see his trim figure. He was waving occasionally, watching the schooner as she slowly disappeared. It was only distance and the night that made him go into his house.

The after cabin of the *Tearia* was a veritable little home. Madame, slightly ill, alas, lay on a bunk, but the boy Gaston and the captain kept up an hysterical form of conversation with M. La Farge. It is extraordinary how a Frenchman can last out. His eternal vivacity must cause a tremendous strain upon his nervous resistance.

The captain, with one-quarter French blood in his veins, was the Frenchiest person I have ever met. He had a fierce French moustache and he used his hands violently as he spoke. Gaston, the boy, was almost white; he probably had but one-eighth native blood. His eyes were large and of a wonderful Chinese blue colour, with a faint suggestion of pink over them. He was an exceedingly bad and charming boy. La Farge

adopted him, and said that his blood was royal. It probably was.

Eating was invariably an affair on the *Tearia*, nay a ceremony. Bowing one another to chairs we would all sit down. La Farge bowed to the captain, the captain bowed to me, while Gaston made some highly irritating remark to the captain, which both annoyed and pleased M. La Farge. Then the menu, so vital, would be discussed, while a native boy waited perfectly, not minding the hysterical curses and epithets flung at him by both men. The cook was an artist, and we ate soup, fish, turtle beef steak, a p^âte of pork and finally some cherries followed by coffee and cigarettes.

Madame did not sit at table; she was ill; there was no room; and besides she had never aspired to such an honour in spite of her twenty-three years' devotion to La Farge. She would have hated it anyway. But La Farge chose her food, laughing, joking, and treating her like a charming child. Madame is religious; she worships two gods; one and the most favoured is La Farge. Like all her race she loves to give, and during her first conversation with me she gave me pearls, oranges, strings of beads and a cake of soap.

After dinner we all sat on the poop. The night was glorious, without a ripple on the water. M. La Farge commenced to sing, and it was terrible. But he had no sooner stopped, much to the relief

of the captain, when we heard that quick insistent sound of native music on a mouth-organ, allied to much boyish laughter. The crew were having a dance, so I joined them. One man, the second mate, was lying on his stomach playing the mouth-organ, while a native, called Rou, was busily dancing.

Rou, about nineteen years old, was a perfect type of the native of the past. His head was small and well shaped with a fine forehead; the nose was slightly Jewish, while his lips were thin and well formed. His hands and feet were not large, and his chest was deep and great. His legs were beautifully modelled and altogether, he might easily have posed for the statue of a Greek athlete. There was nothing about him large nor coarse, and his head was covered by a mass of soft brown curly hair.

Although his hair was beautiful, his one dread was that he might be mistaken for a Fijian. He danced in the moonlight while the sail flapped and the cheery accents of M. La Farge from the poop could be heard singing, "Bon soir, Madame de la lun—e." The dance ended with a staccato movement midst much laughter. Soon the man at the wheel was relieved and he came down and joined the party. This man was a different type, being huge and brawny. If Rou suggested a Greek athlete, Aro, for so he was called, reminded one of a picture of a Roman gladiator. His features

were slightly coarse, but his body was perfect. On one of his huge biceps was tattooed "*Aro taata Tahiti,*" Aro a man of Tahiti. Aro had the body of a colossus, the mind of a child, and absolutely no power to resist drink. After rum and wine have got him fairly by the neck, he becomes a miserable sodden fool. But he had to live, he had no land, and generally he put up no resistance when urged to join a schooner. Possibly this was the best thing in the world for him, for on the *Tearia* he got no drink, and he became just a delightful clean fine boy, full of fun and humour, always willing to dance, sing and even to speak a little English. Aro is a famous Tahitian boxer.

After a time Madame joined us and became Maria, a cheery native woman who could *hula-hula* with the best of them. And so we danced and sang, while the steady old moon looked even more benignant than usual. The schooner was rolling gently and kindly. The spirit of Robert Louis must have been with us.

The chief mate was white, and might have been called an International, for he had British, American, Danish, Norwegian, Spanish and German blood in him. The result was a blond sort of person. He lived for'ard with a photograph of his wife's family and a raw-boned Scotch-looking native of great strength. Ashore, he too is a drunkard, but at sea he is a thoroughly good seaman. For while the captain was snoring in the

cabin, the chief mate was always sitting on the poop near the wheel, seeing that all was well.

The captain snored distressingly. If during fine weather we were sleeping on the after deck, above the creak-creaking of the mainsail boom as it strained at the lashing, above all the other sounds that a ship makes during a calm—those ghostly creaks and ripples—above everything, the fearsome snore of the captain could be heard. During heavy weather it was quite impossible to sleep in the cabin with the snore of the captain. It was only when he got up to play solitaire at four in the morning, that sleep became possible. This snore combined the sound of the ordinary conventional snore with the noise as of escaping gas through a pipe.

The captain had lost his young wife, recently, and ashore he is suitably decorated with *crêpe*.

Owing to the lack of wind it took us twenty-four hours to reach Fakahina.

Fakahina, having been planted with cocoanuts for a considerable period, is an exceedingly wealthy island. One capitalist—a native—owns a *château*, with a capacious veranda like that of a boating club. Wearing a hat swathed in *crêpe*, and surrounded by innumerable relations, he received us with a sweet melancholy air of importance. His rooms were large and furnished in the correct French style. A few hundred yards out in the lagoon, he had built himself a small sleeping-

chamber, where he slept free from mosquitoes. This gentleman very kindly presented me with a large turtle.

We lunched with a French trader, drinking strange liquids from bottles, and feeling elevated afterwards.

The chief having decided to give a formal reception, I soon found myself possessed of thirty roosters, a deceased pig, many beads and some pearls. I met my old friend Peeno who had been a fellow-traveller on the *Tereora*. He had married the quarter-caste and seemed happy though uncertain. As we passed his house we heard a cracked voice singing, "Farewell my love, my own true love, this parting gives me pain——," and an old white-headed Englishman emerged from a palm-leaf hut and entered another. He was the father-in-law of Peeno and was drunk. He had become mad, and lived always with a large rum jar. His income is roughly \$5,000 per year, so his daughters allow him plenty of rum, while they use his money. His native wife had bequeathed him a great deal of land. A pathetic picture of a dead man!

Since there was no copra to be obtained at Fakahina, we left that evening, and a fine stiff breeze brought us to Hikuero the next day.

We loaded pearl shell at Hikuero, and then sailed for Papeete. During the voyage we stopped at an uninhabited island to shoot wild fowl, and to

get fish for *Miggimiggi*. That young lady had been the cause of constant worry.

I had brought a can filled with small fish and several small eels from Fagatau, but she had soon eaten these, leaving us worried as to her diet.

She refused to eat turtle or meat. Once we opened a tin of sardines and cutting the turtle into strips we camouflaged these with the sardine skins. This was successful, once.

One day a large shark was seen hovering round the schooner. Swimming just above his huge back were the usual striped pilot fish. So we decided to catch the shark, hoping to spear the pilot fish for *Miggimiggi* when we should get the shark to the surface. A stout line with a huge hook was flung overboard near the shark. He promptly disappeared like streaked lightning, but after a time the two pilot fish approached the bait, and having smelt it, they in turn disappeared. A few moments afterwards the shark made a quick dart, and soon four men were pulling him to the side of the schooner. The pilot fish, imagining that their master was having a particularly heavy feast, kept close beside him as he lashed the water into foam, but all efforts to spear them proved abortive. Finally the shark was drawn close enough to the schooner to allow Aro to crash a great spar onto his head, and in a few moments he was on board. Fixed to his abdomen was a small parasite fish, and this apparently proved toothsome to *Miggi-*

miggi. She ate of the shark, too, but did not like it very much. The sailors ate certain portions of the flesh, but except for the great fins which were reserved for sale to the Chinese in Papeete, most of his carcass was thrown overboard.

The uninhabited island was small and teeming with bird life. Fish were plentiful, and the sailors had great sport spearing many more than they could possibly eat. Having no gun, and, since we needed game for the menu, it was necessary to climb the trees and kill the young birds. These were nearly as large as geese, and they objected strenuously to being killed. They felt so helpless, so large and ungainly, and any effort to escape merely caused them to flop onto the ground, smashing their great baby wings in the process. Their flesh is not unsavory, but the process of killing them was unpleasant.

There were many birds of *Miggimiggi's* breed flying about, and Gaston succeeded in catching one who had just left the parental nest. Too old to be tamed, it would probably have died a slow, lingering death in captivity, but Gaston pointed out that it was precisely the same size as *Miggimiggi*, and he wanted to keep it badly. All efforts to make him let the bird go having failed, it was necessary to take more drastic action, which being successful, so enraged the young man that he ran up a cocoanut tree, swearing that he would drop and kill himself. But when it was pointed

out to him that this would rid the world of an exceedingly bad boy, he lost his suicidal idea and commenced saying, "*Pua Paratane, pua Paratane,*" pig of an Englishman. The natives listening to this blasphemy, grew frightened, expecting the world to end, but when they told M. La Farge later, he became hysterical, furious, sarcastic, and finally placed Gaston across his knee, and there were sharp cracking sounds, followed by a hideous wail. Gaston neither forgot nor forgave.

A fair breeze lasted us all the way to Tahiti, and the *Tearia* often made eight knots. The voyage was delightful, but when we finally got inside the lagoon I was extremely glad. *Miggimiggi* was also very happy, especially when we reached my house, when I was able to catch her fifty or so little fish.

It was a relief to be back at the little house at Taunoa. Wong beamed with delight at my return and shook me warmly by the hand.

He'd robbed the Norwegian, who had lived in my house during my absence, of one hundred francs.

CHAPTER XXII

FIRE-WALKING ON TAHITI

“THE interesting part of fire-walking is the alleged immunity of the performers from burns. On this point authorities and eye-witnesses differ greatly. . . . S. P. Langley who witnessed a fire-walk in Tahiti, declares, however, that the whole rite as there practiced is a mere symbolic farce.”

I quote from the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, to whose hospitable pages I went seeking some scientific explanation of the undoubted fact, that sixty or so odd souls, or soles (the pun is irresistible), including my own of little faith, passed along a trench two feet below the surface, crammed with white-hot stones, without more discomfort than a feeling as of having removed a steaming ginger cake from a hot oven. I sought scientific information, because a big burly Anglo-Saxon, who had not been invited to the ceremony because of his irreligious face, gave that night at dinner a plausible, exact, and satisfactory explanation of the whole phenomena. His explanation was so plausible, indeed, that I lacked the courage to question him. The *Encyclopædia* is more humble, though quite vague; the only thing to do is to tell

you in the simplest manner possible exactly what happened when I saw the Tahitian fire-walkers.

I admitted above that I had myself walked over the white-hot stones, but fearing to lie in print, I hastily add that although I fumbled with the laces of my canvas shoes, I was easily persuaded to keep them on while I fire-walked. Still, the rubber soles, which normally give so unpleasant an odour when exposed to heat, passed through the fiery test unscathed.

Although I haven't the heart to call the ceremony a "symbolic farce," because, like you, I don't know what a symbolic farce is, I would be pleased' to give you a more scientific explanation than is here contained, if I knew of one. But I don't.

Kroepelien, who shared my *fare* during my remaining days in Tahiti, arranged the whole thing with 200 francs. While the 200 francs were necessary, they were in a sense incidental, for I suspect that no other white man on the island could have managed the affair so well. Except for Kroepelien and myself, the hidden valley near the coast was happily immune from white men. Both of us kindly persons, we were slightly hurt when it was reported to us that an old woman with teeth hanging like festoons, had remarked in a guttural voice, "These *papaa* (white men) are pleased to look; not long ago, we'd have been pleased to look at them—roasting."

In the centre of a woodland glen, surrounded by breadfruit trees and banana palms, a trench, twelve feet long, four feet deep and four feet wide had been dug. Some hours before the ceremony, a fire had been kindled in the trench. On top of the fire, which consisted of large burning logs, sufficient stones of eight to ten inches in diameter had been placed to line the bottom of the trench two deep. On top of the stones, a second and fiercer fire had been kindled, and when the logs, below and on top of the stones, became red hot, the whole was covered with earth so that the heat might be contained.

A short time before the ceremony, the earth and ashes were removed, exposing the trench filled with white-hot stones. You could see that shivering effect, noticeable in the immediate air surrounding any hot object. I threw a piece of paper onto the stones—the heat was sufficiently great to make this operation trying—and at once the paper became carbonized; it hardly had time to break into open flame.

Sixty or so natives, men, women and dogs, including a few highly respectable half-castes, had arrived. They felt hysterical, and appeared silly.

Near the trench stood six handsome young natives dressed in spotless white linen, with white handkerchiefs fastened tightly round their heads. At their head stood the chief, or the high priest of the ceremony. Fastened to the breasts of their

tunics were two star-like objects, cut from some sacred palm leaf. Each bore in his right hand one of those small palms for which you pay so heavily on Fifth Avenue, but which grows wild in Tahiti.

At a nod from Kroepelien—I'm sorry about the nod, but here the 200 francs spoke—the high priest gave a sharp command. With military precision, the six young men sprang to attention, precisely like an excellent squad on parade. Holding the base of the small palm, firmly clasped, with the fingers to the front and the thumb pointing upwards to the rear, they closed their eyes, while the priest commenced a long prayer in a sonorous voice suggesting that of a Methodist priest. I don't think he was praying to the devil, for his voice was reverent and kindly, but you never can tell.

At the end of the first prayer, led by the chief, the priestly company solemnly marched seven times round the trench of white-hot stones. (Please don't seek symbolism, nor significance in the number seven. I didn't count; it may have been five or eight times!) The rank and file now stood back, while the chief, waving his palm in a precise manner, walked towards the trench, making many prayers. He beat his feet with the palm, he beat the hot stones immediately in front of him with the palm, then slowly, and in the most ordinary manner, he walked along the white-hot pathway. One expected to see and smell steam arising,



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THE FIRE-WALKERS OF PIRAE

The Procession of Fire-walkers approaching the Oven.



THE CHIEF OF THE PRIESTLY PARTY
OF FIRE-WALKERS



THE PROCESSION ENTERING THE
TRENCH OF HOT STONES



HALFWAY ACROSS THE TRENCH



THE END OF THE CEREMONY PROPER,
BEFORE THE CROWD WERE ALLOWED
TO WALK



OUR HOSPITAL STAFF AND AMBULANCE



THE AVENUE LEADING TO THE RESIDENCE OF THE FRENCH GOVERNOR OF THE SOCIETY ISLANDS



CROSSING TEAVAVA, MOOREA

It had been hoped that the flu would not spread to Moorea, where there was no resident doctor. But although Moorea is separated from Tahiti by some miles of water, no effective attempt was made to save the population from death. One boat started off from Tahiti to reach Moorea, but the crew, smitten with the scourge, gave up all effort to sail the craft and she drifted onto the reef.

like that arising when a new horseshoe is fitted to a well-rasped hoof; but no, he arrived at the other end without mishap. Having made a few more prayers, of thankfulness, I presume, he once more returned over the stones to his company of disciples, some of whom appeared decidedly nervous.

Each man now raised a foot in turn, while the chief swished their soles with his palm. More prayers followed, and then the little company solemnly walked along the trench. Apparently, one or two, possibly weak brethren with little faith, or not enough, were burnt, for they received particular attention from the chief in the way of palm swishing on the soles of their feet. The priestly party, having walked up and down the white-hot pathway seven times, the trench was thrown open to the proletariat, who, however, showed a decided unwillingness to venture.

Nevertheless, the old hag who had made the suggestive remarks about Kroepelien and myself, came forward, and without a pause, she walked over the stones, muttering the most blood-curdling prayers. After some hesitation she was followed by others, until it was necessary to form a queue.

After a short discussion with the chief, Kroepelien walked, and I followed.

I don't believe in spirits—much; the only spook I've detected at a séance has been the ubiquitous spirit of Ego; but as I walked over that uneven pathway of hot stones, the Spirit-Of-The-Many-

Things-Not-Understood filled my mind with a great wonder.

That the stones I walked over were burning hot, (not white hot when I walked, for more than half an hour had elapsed since their exposure to the air), I am willing to swear by—anything. I felt the heat on my legs, on my face—fierce, intolerable. Yet the soles of my canvas shoes were unharmed.

The whole performance took place before luncheon, a highly unromantic time. That an experience, seeming at the time normal, bordering on the banal, cannot be suitably explained by the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, or any one else, is strange.

I tried to discover the true significance of the ceremony, but no suitable explanation was forthcoming.

This fire-walking ceremony was the only relic of heathen days I detected in Tahiti. Princess Matauero with her husband used to attend some dark meetings at Papara, but, since the ceremonies were mixed up with Christian prayers, she found little to interest or amuse her.

They're dying, the Tahitians—nothing can save them now. It would not be surprising if, *de profundis*, the remnant called unto the gods of happier days to save them.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE EPIDEMIC

“OH, God, I am very sorry;” the voice grew almost inaudible, but midst the death rattles, the fight for breath, it continued: “I am sorry for all the things that I have done wrong; please forgive me for Jesus Christ’s sake.”

The dying man looked at me gently and beckoned me nearer.

“What is your name?” he asked.

I told him.

“Ah, I will not forget you. You go now? It is sad.”

“Yes, Monsieur, I must go. There is much to do for many are sick. Good-night, Monsieur, good-bye.” I shook hands gently with the man, and hurried to the other side of the room where the schooner captain lay dying.

“Good-evening, captain! Not so well tonight, eh?”

The captain shook his head. And he knew, as I knew, that he was near his end. That grey look which is seldom mistakable had crept over his face. He could hardly breathe. Poor old chap, he had arrived in Papeete a week before

with a fine cargo of pearl shell. The passage had been stormy, for the hurricane season was approaching, but he had managed to make port all right.

We said a prayer together. Religion has not played an important part in my life during the past few years; but that prayer *had* to be said. And the captain in whose life religion had also not played an important part, yet struggled to say the prayer. Word by word came out. His eyes were fixed on me.

“Get on quickly; all seems slipping away from me; there is little time,” his great eyes, filled with fear, seemed to say.

We finished the prayer. Then there was peace.

“Will you send Jim Smith to me, please?” he said. We shook hands. The captain was game. He was going to face death with a fine courage. “Send Jim Smith to me,” he said

The captain was dying; he knew it; therefore he had the right to make any request. The wishes of the dying are always attended to.

“Yes, Captain,” I replied, “I’ll try and get Jim Smith for you.”

But Jim Smith and all his family had been dead for days. On Tahiti it was no longer possible to regard one’s death as important.

I looked round the room, saw that the light in the lamp would outlive the spark of life in my patients’ bodies, waved good-bye to the two men

whose eyes were fixed on me with much yearning, closed the door gently, and passed out into the singing tropical night.

A great full moon seemed to be rushing across the sky; the air was filled with the scent of flamboyant blossoms and gardenia, *tiare Tahiti*; nature seemed to be singing a Te Deum to her Creator; and I leant against the house and wept, thinking of the two men who were soon to die alone.

As the flamboyant blossoms were living and loving life, as the gardenias were filling the air with scent, so these men in their day had lived and loved. But the blood red of the flamboyant blossoms would become brown; soon they would fall and be trampled under foot; the gardenia also would wither. Back to mother earth. We all go back to mother earth. That is the only verity.

Knowing that these two men should die that night, I had carried them from the main ward to the "room of the gateway." Here it was quiet and peaceful, and their last moments would not disturb the other patients. A clean island mat covered the floor, the walls were newly white-washed, lace curtains draped the windows, flowers were everywhere. My helpers smiled at the idea of making this little room lovely; the flowers amused them.

"But," you are saying, "this is not a magic carpet; we're riding in a hearse. Let's get back

to the reef; give us cocoanuts to drink; bring some more oranges.”

That is precisely what we all felt on Tahiti when the epidemic became a reality. We went to get our laundry, for the laundress had not come to the house, and we found her very ill with all her family. Our Chinese servants not appearing, we went to the market ourselves, but only a few Chinamen were there. There was nothing to be bought but potatoes and vegetables and perhaps a few eggs. The butcher was ill; there were no policemen; the little town of Papeete became dead.

“But soon it will be all right,” we thought. Then Lavina died and we were greatly troubled.

“Why did the French allow the *S. S. Navua* from influenza-stricken San Francisco to berth?” we said. “Why didn’t we think that she was probably a pest ship? We would not then have invited the officers and captain to our peace celebrations, where the atmosphere was close, and where germs could be communicated.”

Lavina was dead. We followed her hearse to the cemetery, and some of us came home to die.

Around the one drug store a large crowd had gathered, while several volunteers helped the druggist to make capsules.

Then the deaths commenced. The two hearses and two undertakers could not cope with the

work. The dead were buried in boxes. Soon it was impossible to make the boxes in time.

We held a meeting, ten of us, to combat the disease that was killing fifty people a day.

We fought the battle and were beaten. The disease simply ran through the population in the most casual manner; nothing could stop it. It worked quietly amongst the palm trees, in the huts of the peasants, in the large *fares* of the chiefs; it spared no one. Money meant nothing; the possession of a large number of servants merely added more trouble, for they simply lay down in the kitchen and died—all of them. And you, in the best bedroom, could call and call in vain, until the fear of death came upon you. You struggled up and walked out to the kitchen. Here three people lay dead across the once spotless floor. What could you do? You lay on your bed, and thought until a great fear came upon you. You struggled to retain consciousness, but in vain, and in a few hours you were mad and raving like the rest of them. A few days afterwards they burnt you and your house.

It was hopeless. I had been given a certain district to nurse, containing roughly 500 patients. I would enter a large room where ten people were ill. I would give each of them a small bottle of medicine and much advice. "If you remain in bed, keeping yourself warm and taking the medicine regularly, in a few days you will be well," I

would say. "If you get up and bathe in the stream while you have fever you will certainly die. If you ask the children to pour cold water over your head while your hair is hanging out the window, you will certainly die." They all promised to do what I said and the next day I would find them bathing and doing all the things they had been urged not to do. Hence, to do any effective nursing was out of the question. Two thousand people in Papeete were going to die. That seemed certain.

Three large motor lorries were being used as death carts. These, driven by roaring drunk seamen, dashed along the street with legs and heads of hair hanging over the sides.

At the beginning of the epidemic we had thought of opening the cinema halls and forming rough hospitals. But this idea was abandoned because it was alleged that the native hated hospitals. This was the reasoned judgment of those who knew the country. How wrong they were! What a tremendous block reasoned judgment always is when something quick and effective must be done!

But when the full horror of the pest was upon us, nobody cared what anyone did, and with several friends I opened a hospital with the object of saving fifty lives out of the two thousand that must die in Papeete. Fifty lives! It seemed absurd.

The French governor, the once charming

French gentleman, had become ill and weak. He agreed to anything, and I was given supreme command of some empty barracks.

Here we found plenty of beds and blankets, and with the financial aid of the American we started work.

The hospital filled up at once. There were many difficulties, not the least being the opposition of sundry white men who gave advice. The idea was to take only those in the preliminary stages of the disease so that lives might be saved. To take poor dying souls shrieking and yelling, and to place them in the ward with those who were recovering, seemed polite murder. My helpers saw that, and were loyal. No one else did.

“Will you take Tina, my *vahine*?” a white man would say. “She’s very bad, and there’s no one to feed her.” One of us would promptly visit Tina. If she were just commencing the disease, or had not gone too far, we would take her; if she were dying; we had to refuse. Then the white man would storm, and after hurling insulting language at us, he would go off and talk about our heartlessness.

He did not understand. At the hospital three men nursed by day, and two at night. There were twenty-five women patients and about twenty-five men. None of them were allowed to leave their beds. The women, of course, presented the greatest difficulty. Our deaths averaged three

per day, for, of course, it was impossible to turn any one away. The corpses had to be looked after.

There was no effective drainage at the hospital.

Still we fought, and if you entered the hospital you found fifty or so cheery people. We made them laugh, and this was only possible by removing the dying to a small room.

Finally one girl recovered and she was told that she must go home for her bed was needed. She said she was dreadfully ill. She was not; she wanted to stay. But we refused to permit this, so she went to the store, and buying a large piece of soft muslin, she bound this round her head, and, having cut out a large red cross from a piece of red cotton, she returned and became a Red Cross nurse. I sent her into the town and her appearance was so attractive that she brought back with her six others. And so my female nursing staff commenced.

These six girls were the wickedest young women of Papeete, it was alleged, but to us they were angels of mercy.

They flirted with the patients, they flirted with the male helpers, but they were very gentle and kind, and saved the lives of many.

After a time the epidemic showed signs of breaking, the hospital was working excellently, my temper had become a menace to its smooth working, so I decided to return to England at the first opportunity.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE *SALVOR*

THERE'S no comfort in tramp ships—nothing but smells, salt water, canned tongues, arguments, and a contempt for those land lubbers who sometimes sign on as second stewards, giving the captain five dollars a day, and at the end of the voyage swearing that they will never do it again.

I left Tahiti in a tramp ship. This had not been my intention, but the captain of the *Moana*, who put into Papeete towards the end of the epidemic, refused to take me, fearing germs. His refusal, annoying at the time, can now be regarded as admirable.

Turning away from the *Moana* in a low condition, I was greeted by an individual in a soft felt hat whom I recognized as the captain of a small tramp ship which had been kept at Papeete during the epidemic.

“What’s the matter, old top” said he. “If that guy won’t take you, I will. I sail tomorrow; you can have the owner’s cabin; it’s got a brass bedstead in it.”

I thanked him, and gladly accepted his offer. His ship, the *Salvor*, leant heavily against the

wharf. She had tall rakish masts and a funny little funnel popping out of a veranda-like bridge. Fifty years old, built before the days of steel ships, her history was romantic and interesting. She had formed part of the brave procession of ships that passed through the Suez Canal at its opening, and at one point in her history, she had borne the body of David Livingstone home from Africa. Her more recent history had been equally romantic, since she had spent many years salvaging wrecked ships off the British Columbian coast, and keeping for her own personal adornment any fittings that took her fancy. Her cabins were filled with ornate mirrors, and handsome wash-stands, which looked well enough so long as you didn't try to wash in them. If you removed the plug from the basin the water flowed over the deck.

From the dock she suggested a very old maid disguised as a *débutante*. I never want to see her again—except from a dock.

We left Tahiti the following evening at sunset, commencing a peculiar voyage.

The first day out, the chief mate and the chief engineer had "words," culminating in some violence, which caused the chief engineer to retire to his cabin expecting death any minute, but it didn't come. They had quarrelled about coaling. This is not an unusual occurrence on small steamers, for a nice co-ordination is difficult to attain when

the deck hands join the engine-room staff in common labour.

It was absurd of the chief engineer to expect death from a mere crack over the head with a handspike. As he told me himself, he was a very lucky man. He had been wrecked ten times and burnt at sea thrice. Men had died around him by the dozen, but he had always come out safe and sound. Before the voyage ended we looked upon him with some suspicion. He was a thin, red-haired Glasgow Scotchman, with a cautious glint in his eye.

No one objected to his remaining in his cabin, but unfortunately his absence from the engine-room caused the remaining engineers to be overworked, and the firemen got out of hand, stoking badly, and never getting as much steam on the ship as the amount of coal burnt warranted. For with a stiff breeze behind her, the *Salvor* flew over the waves at the rate of seven knots an hour; in the "variables" she either stood still or went backwards, with her nose in the right direction, but nothing more.

The second day out, one of the mirrors in the cabin unshipped and crashed onto the deck, breaking into atoms. We kept this from the crew.

Their superstitious minds were already overburdened since the discovery of a Russian Finn in the fo'cs'le. Some seamen will refuse to sail with a Russian Finn, since he is regarded as an

unlucky shipmate. This man, a tall, handsome, blue-eyed giant, had denied being a Finn, and for some days the crew believed him, until, in a moment of confidence, he had admitted that his last voyage had been spent flying from a burning ship in mid-ocean. This settled his nationality.

The third day out, the chief engineer appeared in the dining-cabin. He reminded one of a geranium plant kept in a dark room. The barometer had been falling anyway, but while Girtie, the cabin boy, served us with our portions of pink canned tongues and mashed potatoes, the old ship became convulsive. Having no "fiddles," those arrangements which make the heart of a land lubber sink when the stewards attach them to the tables, eating on the *Salvor*, during a heavy sea, required training and experience. One sighed for the tentacles of an octopus. The chief engineer sat opposite me, clad in an oily suit of overalls. While reaching up for the mustard pot, which hung from a hook above, my plate of tongues and mashed potatoes slid gaily across the table towards the lap of the chief. In his efforts to repel my food, he removed his hand from his own plate, which promptly slid onto his lap. Losing his head completely, he found himself covered with every imaginable form of food. While apologizing, I placed the cruet on the table, and this went hurtling across the table, joining the tongues and mashed potatoes. The engineer was annoyed, but

the captain, who could always find something amusing in other people's troubles, remarked that the arrangement was excellent. Girtie, the cabin boy, enjoyed the captain's humour, more than any one else. The captain rewarded him with a smile.

The second engineer was efficient and uninteresting, but the third was more promising. As far as one could glean, his only reason for occupying the position of third engineer lay in the fact that he had driven a Ford car in San Francisco, and had attained some fame as a trick bicyclist. He used to sing duets with the chief steward, just outside my cabin window. The fiercest gale would not stop him. I used to play bridge with the third engineer, the Marconi man and the chief steward. It was an unusual form of bridge, since any man discovering that neither he nor his partner had been vouchsafed an average hand, promptly suggested a fresh deal. It was a nice "brotherly love" sort of bridge, but not exciting. But if you didn't play, the third would sing—loudly; at bridge he merely hummed.

The third day out a storm of some violence developed, and the *Salvor* displayed much vivacity. She used to rise on a sea, and then with a shudder and a crash she would land on the next, submerging her old bows and allowing the wave to roll over her decks. At this time I took refuge on the brass bedstead—not seasickness, but a desire to ignore the raging water around. But it

found me out all right, for with a sickly stare I used to watch shoes, articles of clothing, and chunks of manuscript floating about the cabin.

When the storm passed, we descended the forward hold to examine the cargo. The mate carried a naked candle in his hand. "Weak between wind and water," he murmured, as the wind passed through the bow plates and blew the candle out; "but it will be all right, so long as we don't get another storm."

With a lucky chief engineer, a Russian Finn, and a broken mirror on board, how could we avoid another storm! It lasted two days, after which we came into more gentle water four days off the New Zealand coast. But our troubles were not yet over, for according to the captain's reckoning, the amount of coal in our bunkers would not last us to Wellington. This was bad enough, but when the Marconi man reported that his wireless outfit refused to function, a few months' tossing about the lonely Pacific Ocean in the *Salvor* seemed possible.

The Marconi man did what he could. This consisted in rising at ten, and after breakfast entering the wireless room from which would immediately come forth long drawn out buzzings and bad language. "Bu——z—Bu——z—the set's rotten—damn rotten," we would hear. Then the Marconi man, a tall, pale-faced, pale-haired, and

pale-eyed youth, would join us in the cabin. Here he would fling a few epithets at Girtie, the cabin boy; after this he would go to sleep.

In spite of all our troubles, we at last sighted the New Zealand coast. It looked very pleasing to our eyes. Hugging the land from Gisborne down to Wellington, the old ship cleverly avoided the rocks and shoals in her course, and finally, with three tons of coal in our bunkers, we staggered around Cape Palliser, just avoiding a "southerly buster," against which the *Salvor* would have been powerless.

Our ship may have been small and insignificant, but we determined to show the signal man at Wellington that our knowledge of modern signalling was vast. We draped ourselves with flags, telling, in cheerful colour, that we commanded the ship *Salvor*, that we desired both a pilot and a doctor, and that we carried His Majesty's mail. A few other particulars were also given.

The signalman at Wellington read that our engine had broken down, that we were in no hurry to enter port, and that the doctor could take his time. The pilot, eating ham and eggs in his home in Wellington, received the message, finished his ham and eggs, read the paper, and strolled leisurely down to the dock. He joined us in a large funnelled tug, just as we were preparing to anchor with child-like faith close beside a huge cargo ship. The pilot pointed out that this ship was sitting on a

rock, having been driven there by a stiff breeze Our course was altered quickly!

After passing through the usual inspection, we at last docked. A large crowd had gathered on the pier, and three newspaper reporters came on board desiring stories, and although we filled them up with information, we searched in vain for the result of their efforts in the newspapers.

And now our journey is ended; I must bid you good-bye. If, perchance, you have enjoyed your voyage on my carpet, and a happy fate takes you to Tahiti, I will be greatly honoured if you will claim my friendship. It isn't much value anywhere else, but if you will stroll out to Taunoa, when the heat of the day has passed, you may find it useful, for Te-te—you simply can't miss her—will make much of you and will certainly send Marco running up the nearest cocoanut tree to get you *poppihari* to drink.

And before returning to Papeeta, walk out onto the point and watch the sunset. And before the sun drops behind Moorea, while he is painting the lagoon every imaginable colour, call up the spirits of Robert Louis Stevenson and Melville, and they will tell you, as I tell you, that the fairyland of the South Seas, as the Kingdom of Heaven, is likened unto a little child.

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