

**РОБЕРТ  
СТИВЕНСОН**

IN THE SOUTH  
SEAS

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## In the South Seas

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*In the South Seas Being an Account of Experiences and Observations in the Marquesas, Paumotus and Gilbert Islands in the Course of Two Cruises on the Yacht «Casco» (1888) and the Schooner «Equator» (1889):*

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**Robert Louis Stevenson  
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**PART 1: THE MARQUESAS**

**CHAPTER I – AN ISLAND LANDFALL**

For nearly ten years my health had been declining; and for some while before I set forth upon my voyage, I believed I

was come to the afterpiece of life, and had only the nurse and undertaker to expect. It was suggested that I should try the South Seas; and I was not unwilling to visit like a ghost, and be carried like a bale, among scenes that had attracted me in youth and health. I chartered accordingly Dr. Merrit's schooner yacht, the *Casco*, seventy-four tons register; sailed from San Francisco towards the end of June 1888, visited the eastern islands, and was left early the next year at Honolulu. Hence, lacking courage to return to my old life of the house and sick-room, I set forth to leeward in a trading schooner, the *Equator*, of a little over seventy tons, spent four months among the atolls (low coral islands) of the Gilbert group, and reached Samoa towards the close of '89. By that time gratitude and habit were beginning to attach me to the islands; I had gained a competency of strength; I had made friends; I had learned new interests; the time of my voyages had passed like days in fairyland; and I decided to remain. I began to prepare these pages at sea, on a third cruise, in the trading steamer *Janet Nicoll*. If more days are granted me, they shall be passed where I have found life most pleasant and man most interesting; the axes of my black boys are already clearing the foundations of my future house; and I must learn to address readers from the uttermost parts of the sea.

That I should thus have reversed the verdict of Lord Tennyson's hero is less eccentric than appears. Few men who come to the islands leave them; they grow grey where they alighted; the palm shades and the trade-wind fans them till they

die, perhaps cherishing to the last the fancy of a visit home, which is rarely made, more rarely enjoyed, and yet more rarely repeated. No part of the world exerts the same attractive power upon the visitor, and the task before me is to communicate to fireside travellers some sense of its seduction, and to describe the life, at sea and ashore, of many hundred thousand persons, some of our own blood and language, all our contemporaries, and yet as remote in thought and habit as Rob Roy or Barbarossa, the Apostles or the Cæsars.

The first experience can never be repeated. The first love, the first sunrise, the first South Sea island, are memories apart and touched a virginity of sense. On the 28th of July 1888 the moon was an hour down by four in the morning. In the east a radiating centre of brightness told of the day; and beneath, on the skyline, the morning bank was already building, black as ink. We have all read of the swiftness of the day's coming and departure in low latitudes; it is a point on which the scientific and sentimental tourist are at one, and has inspired some tasteful poetry. The period certainly varies with the season; but here is one case exactly noted. Although the dawn was thus preparing by four, the sun was not up till six; and it was half-past five before we could distinguish our expected islands from the clouds on the horizon. Eight degrees south, and the day two hours a-coming. The interval was passed on deck in the silence of expectation, the customary thrill of landfall heightened by the strangeness of the shores that we were then approaching. Slowly

they took shape in the attenuating darkness. Ua-huna, piling up to a truncated summit, appeared the first upon the starboard bow; almost abeam arose our destination, Nuka-hiva, whelmed in cloud; and betwixt and to the southward, the first rays of the sun displayed the needles of Ua-pu. These pricked about the line of the horizon; like the pinnacles of some ornate and monstrous church, they stood there, in the sparkling brightness of the morning, the fit signboard of a world of wonders.

Not one soul aboard the *Casco* had set foot upon the islands, or knew, except by accident, one word of any of the island tongues; and it was with something perhaps of the same anxious pleasure as thrilled the bosom of discoverers that we drew near these problematic shores. The land heaved up in peaks and rising vales; it fell in cliffs and buttresses; its colour ran through fifty modulations in a scale of pearl and rose and olive; and it was crowned above by opalescent clouds. The suffusion of vague hues deceived the eye; the shadows of clouds were confounded with the articulations of the mountains; and the isle and its unsubstantial canopy rose and shimmered before us like a single mass. There was no beacon, no smoke of towns to be expected, no plying pilot. Somewhere, in that pale phantasmagoria of cliff and cloud, our haven lay concealed; and somewhere to the east of it – the only sea-mark given – a certain headland, known indifferently as Cape Adam and Eve, or Cape Jack and Jane, and distinguished by two colossal figures, the gross statuary of nature. These we were to find; for these we craned and stared,

focused glasses, and wrangled over charts; and the sun was overhead and the land close ahead before we found them. To a ship approaching, like the *Casco*, from the north, they proved indeed the least conspicuous features of a striking coast; the surf flying high above its base; strange, austere, and feathered mountains rising behind; and Jack and Jane, or Adam and Eve, impending like a pair of warts above the breakers.

Thence we bore away along shore. On our port beam we might hear the explosions of the surf; a few birds flew fishing under the prow; there was no other sound or mark of life, whether of man or beast, in all that quarter of the island. Winged by her own impetus and the dying breeze, the *Casco* skimmed under cliffs, opened out a cove, showed us a beach and some green trees, and flitted by again, bowing to the swell. The trees, from our distance, might have been hazel; the beach might have been in Europe; the mountain forms behind modelled in little from the Alps, and the forest which clustered on their ramparts a growth no more considerable than our Scottish heath. Again the cliff yawned, but now with a deeper entry; and the *Casco*, hauling her wind, began to slide into the bay of Anaho. The cocoa-palm, that giraffe of vegetables, so graceful, so ungainly, to the European eye so foreign, was to be seen crowding on the beach, and climbing and fringing the steep sides of mountains. Rude and bare hills embraced the inlet upon either hand; it was enclosed to the landward by a bulk of shattered mountains. In every crevice of that barrier the forest harboured, roosting and nestling there

like birds about a ruin; and far above, it greened and roughened the razor edges of the summit.

Under the eastern shore, our schooner, now bereft of any breeze, continued to creep in: the smart creature, when once under way, appearing motive in herself. From close aboard arose the bleating of young lambs; a bird sang in the hillside; the scent of the land and of a hundred fruits or flowers flowed forth to meet us; and, presently, a house or two appeared, standing high upon the ankles of the hills, and one of these surrounded with what seemed a garden. These conspicuous habitations, that patch of culture, had we but known it, were a mark of the passage of whites; and we might have approached a hundred islands and not found their parallel. It was longer ere we spied the native village, standing (in the universal fashion) close upon a curve of beach, close under a grove of palms; the sea in front growling and whitening on a concave arc of reef. For the cocoa-tree and the island man are both lovers and neighbours of the surf. 'The coral waxes, the palm grows, but man departs,' says the sad Tahitian proverb; but they are all three, so long as they endure, co-haunters of the beach. The mark of anchorage was a blow-hole in the rocks, near the south-easterly corner of the bay. Punctually to our use, the blow-hole spouted; the schooner turned upon her heel; the anchor plunged. It was a small sound, a great event; my soul went down with these moorings whence no windlass may extract nor any diver fish it up; and I, and some part of my ship's company, were from that hour the bondslaves of the isles

of Vivien.

Before yet the anchor plunged a canoe was already paddling from the hamlet. It contained two men: one white, one brown and tattooed across the face with bands of blue, both in immaculate white European clothes: the resident trader, Mr. Regler, and the native chief, Taipi-Kikino. ‘Captain, is it permitted to come on board?’ were the first words we heard among the islands. Canoe followed canoe till the ship swarmed with stalwart, six-foot men in every stage of undress; some in a shirt, some in a loin-cloth, one in a handkerchief imperfectly adjusted; some, and these the more considerable, tattooed from head to foot in awful patterns; some barbarous and knived; one, who sticks in my memory as something bestial, squatting on his hams in a canoe, sucking an orange and spitting it out again to alternate sides with ape-like vivacity – all talking, and we could not understand one word; all trying to trade with us who had no thought of trading, or offering us island curios at prices palpably absurd. There was no word of welcome; no show of civility; no hand extended save that of the chief and Mr. Regler. As we still continued to refuse the proffered articles, complaint ran high and rude; and one, the jester of the party, railed upon our meanness amid jeering laughter. Amongst other angry pleasantries – ‘Here is a mighty fine ship,’ said he, ‘to have no money on board!’ I own I was inspired with sensible repugnance; even with alarm. The ship was manifestly in their power; we had women on board; I knew nothing of my guests beyond the fact that they were cannibals; the

Directory (my only guide) was full of timid cautions; and as for the trader, whose presence might else have reassured me, were not whites in the Pacific the usual instigators and accomplices of native outrage? When he reads this confession, our kind friend, Mr. Regler, can afford to smile.

Later in the day, as I sat writing up my journal, the cabin was filled from end to end with Marquesans: three brown-skinned generations, squatted cross-legged upon the floor, and regarding me in silence with embarrassing eyes. The eyes of all Polynesians are large, luminous, and melting; they are like the eyes of animals and some Italians. A kind of despair came over me, to sit there helpless under all these staring orbs, and be thus blocked in a corner of my cabin by this speechless crowd: and a kind of rage to think they were beyond the reach of articulate communication, like furred animals, or folk born deaf, or the dwellers of some alien planet.

To cross the Channel is, for a boy of twelve, to change heavens; to cross the Atlantic, for a man of twenty-four, is hardly to modify his diet. But I was now escaped out of the shadow of the Roman empire, under whose toppling monuments we were all cradled, whose laws and letters are on every hand of us, constraining and preventing. I was now to see what men might be whose fathers had never studied Virgil, had never been conquered by Cæsar, and never been ruled by the wisdom of Gaius or Papinian. By the same step I had journeyed forth out of that comfortable zone of kindred languages, where the curse

of Babel is so easy to be remedied; and my new fellow-creatures sat before me dumb like images. Methought, in my travels, all human relation was to be excluded; and when I returned home (for in those days I still projected my return) I should have but dipped into a picture-book without a text. Nay, and I even questioned if my travels should be much prolonged; perhaps they were destined to a speedy end; perhaps my subsequent friend, Kauanui, whom I remarked there, sitting silent with the rest, for a man of some authority, might leap from his hams with an ear-splitting signal, the ship be carried at a rush, and the ship's company butchered for the table.

There could be nothing more natural than these apprehensions, nor anything more groundless. In my experience of the islands, I had never again so menacing a reception; were I to meet with such to-day, I should be more alarmed and tenfold more surprised. The majority of Polynesians are easy folk to get in touch with, frank, fond of notice, greedy of the least affection, like amiable, fawning dogs; and even with the Marquesans, so recently and so imperfectly redeemed from a blood-boltered barbarism, all were to become our intimates, and one, at least, was to mourn sincerely our departure.

## CHAPTER II – MAKING FRIENDS

The impediment of tongues was one that I particularly over-estimated. The languages of Polynesia are easy to smatter, though hard to speak with elegance. And they are extremely similar, so that a person who has a tincture of one or two may risk, not without hope, an attempt upon the others.

And again, not only is Polynesian easy to smatter, but interpreters abound. Missionaries, traders, and broken white folk living on the bounty of the natives, are to be found in almost every isle and hamlet; and even where these are unserviceable, the natives themselves have often scraped up a little English, and in the French zone (though far less commonly) a little French-English, or an efficient pidgin, what is called to the westward 'Beach-la-Mar,' comes easy to the Polynesian; it is now taught, besides, in the schools of Hawaii; and from the multiplicity of British ships, and the nearness of the States on the one hand and the colonies on the other, it may be called, and will almost certainly become, the tongue of the Pacific. I will instance a few examples. I met in Majuro a Marshall Island boy who spoke excellent English; this he had learned in the German firm in Jaluit, yet did not speak one word of German. I heard from a gendarme who had taught school in Rapa-iti that while the children had the utmost difficulty or reluctance to learn French, they picked up English on the wayside, and as if by accident. On

one of the most out-of-the-way atolls in the Carolines, my friend Mr. Benjamin Hird was amazed to find the lads playing cricket on the beach and talking English; and it was in English that the crew of the *Janet Nicoll*, a set of black boys from different Melanesian islands, communicated with other natives throughout the cruise, transmitted orders, and sometimes jested together on the fore-hatch. But what struck me perhaps most of all was a word I heard on the verandah of the Tribunal at Noumea. A case had just been heard – a trial for infanticide against an ape-like native woman; and the audience were smoking cigarettes as they awaited the verdict. An anxious, amiable French lady, not far from tears, was eager for acquittal, and declared she would engage the prisoner to be her children's nurse. The bystanders exclaimed at the proposal; the woman was a savage, said they, and spoke no language. '*Mais, vous savez,*' objected the fair sentimentalist; '*ils apprennent si vite l'anglais!*'

But to be able to speak to people is not all. And in the first stage of my relations with natives I was helped by two things. To begin with, I was the show-man of the *Casco*. She, her fine lines, tall spars, and snowy decks, the crimson fittings of the saloon, and the white, the gilt, and the repeating mirrors of the tiny cabin, brought us a hundred visitors. The men fathomed out her dimensions with their arms, as their fathers fathomed out the ships of Cook; the women declared the cabins more lovely than a church; bouncing Junos were never weary of sitting in the chairs and contemplating in the glass their own bland images;

and I have seen one lady strip up her dress, and, with cries of wonder and delight, rub herself bare-breeched upon the velvet cushions. Biscuit, jam, and syrup was the entertainment; and, as in European parlours, the photograph album went the round. This sober gallery, their everyday costumes and physiognomies, had become transformed, in three weeks' sailing, into things wonderful and rich and foreign; alien faces, barbaric dresses, they were now beheld and fingered, in the swerving cabin, with innocent excitement and surprise. Her Majesty was often recognised, and I have seen French subjects kiss her photograph; Captain Speedy – in an Abyssinian war-dress, supposed to be the uniform of the British army – met with much acceptance; and the effigies of Mr. Andrew Lang were admired in the Marquesas. There is the place for him to go when he shall be weary of Middlesex and Homer.

It was perhaps yet more important that I had enjoyed in my youth some knowledge of our Scots folk of the Highlands and the Islands. Not much beyond a century has passed since these were in the same convulsive and transitional state as the Marquesans of to-day. In both cases an alien authority enforced, the clans disarmed, the chiefs deposed, new customs introduced, and chiefly that fashion of regarding money as the means and object of existence. The commercial age, in each, succeeding at a bound to an age of war abroad and patriarchal communism at home. In one the cherished practice of tattooing, in the other a cherished costume, proscribed. In each a main luxury cut

off: beef, driven under cloud of night from Lowland pastures, denied to the meat-loving Highlander; long-pig, pirated from the next village, to the man-eating Kanaka. The grumbling, the secret ferment, the fears and resentments, the alarms and sudden councils of Marquesan chiefs, reminded me continually of the days of Lovat and Struan. Hospitality, tact, natural fine manners, and a touchy punctilio, are common to both races: common to both tongues the trick of dropping medial consonants. Here is a table of two widespread Polynesian words: —

	<i>House.</i>	<i>Love.<sup>1</sup></i>
Tahitian	FARE	AROHA
New Zealand	WHARE	
Samoan	FALE	TALOFA
Manihiki	FALE	ALOHA
Hawaiian	HALE	ALOHA
Marquesan	HA'E	KAOHA

<sup>1</sup>Where that word is used as a salutation I give that form.

The elision of medial consonants, so marked in these Marquesan instances, is no less common both in Gaelic and the Lowland Scots. Stranger still, that prevalent Polynesian sound, the so-called catch, written with an apostrophe, and often or always the gravestone of a perished consonant, is to be heard in Scotland to this day. When a Scot pronounces water, better, or bottle —*wa'er*, *be'er*, or *bo'le*— the sound is precisely that of the catch; and I think we may go beyond, and say, that if such

a population could be isolated, and this mispronunciation should become the rule, it might prove the first stage of transition from *t* to *k*, which is the disease of Polynesian languages. The tendency of the Marquesans, however, is to urge against consonants, or at least on the very common letter *l*, a war of mere extermination. A hiatus is agreeable to any Polynesian ear; the ear even of the stranger soon grows used to these barbaric voids; but only in the Marquesan will you find such names as *Haaii* and *Paaaeua*, when each individual vowel must be separately uttered.

These points of similarity between a South Sea people and some of my own folk at home ran much in my head in the islands; and not only inclined me to view my fresh acquaintances with favour, but continually modified my judgment. A polite Englishman comes to-day to the Marquesans and is amazed to find the men tattooed; polite Italians came not long ago to England and found our fathers stained with woad; and when I paid the return visit as a little boy, I was highly diverted with the backwardness of Italy: so insecure, so much a matter of the day and hour, is the pre-eminence of race. It was so that I hit upon a means of communication which I recommend to travellers. When I desired any detail of savage custom, or of superstitious belief, I cast back in the story of my fathers, and fished for what I wanted with some trait of equal barbarism: Michael Scott, Lord Derwentwater's head, the second-sight, the Water Kelpie, – each of these I have found to be a killing bait; the black bull's head of Stirling procured me the legend of *Rahero*; and what I knew

of the Cluny Macphersons, or the Appin Stewarts, enabled me to learn, and helped me to understand, about the *Tevas* of Tahiti. The native was no longer ashamed, his sense of kinship grew warmer, and his lips were opened. It is this sense of kinship that the traveller must rouse and share; or he had better content himself with travels from the blue bed to the brown. And the presence of one Cockney titterer will cause a whole party to walk in clouds of darkness.

The hamlet of Anaho stands on a margin of flat land between the west of the beach and the spring of the impending mountains. A grove of palms, perpetually ruffling its green fans, carpets it (as for a triumph) with fallen branches, and shades it like an arbour. A road runs from end to end of the covert among beds of flowers, the milliner's shop of the community; and here and there, in the grateful twilight, in an air filled with a diversity of scents, and still within hearing of the surf upon the reef, the native houses stand in scattered neighbourhood. The same word, as we have seen, represents in many tongues of Polynesia, with scarce a shade of difference, the abode of man. But although the word be the same, the structure itself continually varies; and the Marquesan, among the most backward and barbarous of islanders, is yet the most commodiously lodged. The grass huts of Hawaii, the birdcage houses of Tahiti, or the open shed, with the crazy Venetian blinds, of the polite Samoan – none of these can be compared with the Marquesan *paepae-hae*, or dwelling platform. The *paepae* is an oblong terrace built without cement

or black volcanic stone, from twenty to fifty feet in length, raised from four to eight feet from the earth, and accessible by a broad stair. Along the back of this, and coming to about half its width, runs the open front of the house, like a covered gallery: the interior sometimes neat and almost elegant in its bareness, the sleeping space divided off by an endlong coaming, some bright raiment perhaps hanging from a nail, and a lamp and one of White's sewing-machines the only marks of civilization. On the outside, at one end of the terrace, burns the cooking-fire under a shed; at the other there is perhaps a pen for pigs; the remainder is the evening lounge and *al fresco* banquet-hall of the inhabitants. To some houses water is brought down the mountains in bamboo pipes, perforated for the sake of sweetness. With the Highland comparison in my mind, I was struck to remember the sluttish mounds of turf and stone in which I have sat and been entertained in the Hebrides and the North Islands. Two things, I suppose, explain the contrast. In Scotland wood is rare, and with materials so rude as turf and stone the very hope of neatness is excluded. And in Scotland it is cold. Shelter and a hearth are needs so pressing that a man looks not beyond; he is out all day after a bare bellyful, and at night when he saith, 'Aha, it is warm!' he has not appetite for more. Or if for something else, then something higher; a fine school of poetry and song arose in these rough shelters, and an air like '*Lochaber no more*' is an evidence of refinement more convincing, as well as more imperishable, than a palace.

To one such dwelling platform a considerable troop of relatives and dependants resort. In the hour of the dusk, when the fire blazes, and the scent of the cooked breadfruit fills the air, and perhaps the lamp glints already between the pillars and the house, you shall behold them silently assemble to this meal, men, women, and children; and the dogs and pigs frisk together up the terrace stairway, switching rival tails. The strangers from the ship were soon equally welcome: welcome to dip their fingers in the wooden dish, to drink cocoanuts, to share the circulating pipe, and to hear and hold high debate about the misdeeds of the French, the Panama Canal, or the geographical position of San Francisco and New Yo'ko. In a Highland hamlet, quite out of reach of any tourist, I have met the same plain and dignified hospitality.

I have mentioned two facts – the distasteful behaviour of our earliest visitors, and the case of the lady who rubbed herself upon the cushions – which would give a very false opinion of Marquesan manners. The great majority of Polynesians are excellently mannered; but the Marquesan stands apart, annoying and attractive, wild, shy, and refined. If you make him a present he affects to forget it, and it must be offered him again at his going: a pretty formality I have found nowhere else. A hint will get rid of any one or any number; they are so fiercely proud and modest; while many of the more lovable but blunter islanders crowd upon a stranger, and can be no more driven off than flies. A slight or an insult the Marquesan seems never to forget. I

was one day talking by the wayside with my friend Hoka, when I perceived his eyes suddenly to flash and his stature to swell. A white horseman was coming down the mountain, and as he passed, and while he paused to exchange salutations with myself, Hoka was still staring and ruffling like a gamecock. It was a Corsican who had years before called him *cochon sauvage* – *coçon chauvage*, as Hoka mispronounced it. With people so nice and so touchy, it was scarce to be supposed that our company of greenhorns should not blunder into offences. Hoka, on one of his visits, fell suddenly in a brooding silence, and presently after left the ship with cold formality. When he took me back into favour, he adroitly and pointedly explained the nature of my offence: I had asked him to sell cocoa-nuts; and in Hoka's view articles of food were things that a gentleman should give, not sell; or at least that he should not sell to any friend. On another occasion I gave my boat's crew a luncheon of chocolate and biscuits. I had sinned, I could never learn how, against some point of observance; and though I was drily thanked, my offerings were left upon the beach. But our worst mistake was a slight we put on Toma, Hoka's adoptive father, and in his own eyes the rightful chief of Anaho. In the first place, we did not call upon him, as perhaps we should, in his fine new European house, the only one in the hamlet. In the second, when we came ashore upon a visit to his rival, Taipi-Kikino, it was Toma whom we saw standing at the head of the beach, a magnificent figure of a man, magnificently tattooed; and it was of Toma that we asked our question: 'Where

is the chief?' 'What chief?' cried Toma, and turned his back on the blasphemers. Nor did he forgive us. Hoka came and went with us daily; but, alone I believe of all the countryside, neither Toma nor his wife set foot on board the *Casco*. The temptation resisted it is hard for a European to compute. The flying city of Laputa moored for a fortnight in St. James's Park affords but a pale figure of the *Casco* anchored before Anaho; for the Londoner has still his change of pleasures, but the Marquesan passes to his grave through an unbroken uniformity of days.

On the afternoon before it was intended we should sail, a valedictory party came on board: nine of our particular friends equipped with gifts and dressed as for a festival. Hoka, the chief dancer and singer, the greatest dandy of Anaho, and one of the handsomest young fellows in the world-sullen, showy, dramatic, light as a feather and strong as an ox – it would have been hard, on that occasion, to recognise, as he sat there stooped and silent, his face heavy and grey. It was strange to see the lad so much affected; stranger still to recognise in his last gift one of the curios we had refused on the first day, and to know our friend, so gaily dressed, so plainly moved at our departure, for one of the half-naked crew that had besieged and insulted us on our arrival: strangest of all, perhaps, to find, in that carved handle of a fan, the last of those curiosities of the first day which had now all been given to us by their possessors – their chief merchandise, for which they had sought to ransom us as long as we were strangers, which they pressed on us for nothing as soon as we

were friends. The last visit was not long protracted. One after another they shook hands and got down into their canoe; when Hoka turned his back immediately upon the ship, so that we saw his face no more. Taipi, on the other hand, remained standing and facing us with gracious valedictory gestures; and when Captain Otis dipped the ensign, the whole party saluted with their hats. This was the farewell; the episode of our visit to Anaho was held concluded; and though the *Casco* remained nearly forty hours at her moorings, not one returned on board, and I am inclined to think they avoided appearing on the beach. This reserve and dignity is the finest trait of the Marquesan.

## CHAPTER III – THE MAROON

Of the beauties of Anaho books might be written. I remember waking about three, to find the air temperate and scented. The long swell brimmed into the bay, and seemed to fill it full and then subside. Gently, deeply, and silently the *Casco* rolled; only at times a block piped like a bird. Oceanward, the heaven was bright with stars and the sea with their reflections. If I looked to that side, I might have sung with the Hawaiian poet:

*Ua maomao ka lani, ua kahaea luna,*

*Ua pipi ka maka o ka hoku.*

(The heavens were fair, they stretched above,

Many were the eyes of the stars.)

And then I turned shoreward, and high squalls were overhead; the mountains loomed up black; and I could have fancied I had slipped ten thousand miles away and was anchored in a Highland loch; that when the day came, it would show pine, and heather, and green fern, and roofs of turf sending up the smoke of peats; and the alien speech that should next greet my ears must be Gaelic, not Kanaka.

And day, when it came, brought other sights and thoughts. I have watched the morning break in many quarters of the world; it has been certainly one of the chief joys of my existence, and the dawn that I saw with most emotion shone upon the bay of Anaho.

The mountains abruptly overhang the port with every variety of surface and of inclination, lawn, and cliff, and forest. Not one of these but wore its proper tint of saffron, of sulphur, of the clove, and of the rose. The lustre was like that of satin; on the lighter hues there seemed to float an efflorescence; a solemn bloom appeared on the more dark. The light itself was the ordinary light of morning, colourless and clean; and on this ground of jewels, pencilled out the least detail of drawing. Meanwhile, around the hamlet, under the palms, where the blue shadow lingered, the red coals of cocoa husk and the light trails of smoke betrayed the awakening business of the day; along the beach men and women, lads and lasses, were returning from the bath in bright raiment, red and blue and green, such as we delighted to see in the coloured little pictures of our childhood; and presently the sun had cleared the eastern hill, and the glow of the day was over all.

The glow continued and increased, the business, from the main part, ceased before it had begun. Twice in the day there was a certain stir of shepherding along the seaward hills. At times a canoe went out to fish. At times a woman or two languidly filled a basket in the cotton patch. At times a pipe would sound out of the shadow of a house, ringing the changes on its three notes, with an effect like *Que le jour me dure*, repeated endlessly. Or at times, across a corner of the bay, two natives might communicate in the Marquesan manner with conventional whistlings. All else was sleep and silence. The surf broke and shone around the shores;

a species of black crane fished in the broken water; the black pigs were continually galloping by on some affair; but the people might never have awaked, or they might all be dead.

My favourite haunt was opposite the hamlet, where was a landing in a cove under a lianaed cliff. The beach was lined with palms and a tree called the purao, something between the fig and mulberry in growth, and bearing a flower like a great yellow poppy with a maroon heart. In places rocks encroached upon the sand; the beach would be all submerged; and the surf would bubble warmly as high as to my knees, and play with cocoa-nut husks as our more homely ocean plays with wreck and wrack and bottles. As the reflux drew down, marvels of colour and design streamed between my feet; which I would grasp at, miss, or seize: now to find them what they promised, shells to grace a cabinet or be set in gold upon a lady's finger; now to catch only *maya* of coloured sand, pounded fragments and pebbles, that, as soon as they were dry, became as dull and homely as the flints upon a garden path. I have toiled at this childish pleasure for hours in the strong sun, conscious of my incurable ignorance; but too keenly pleased to be ashamed. Meanwhile, the blackbird (or his tropical understudy) would be fluting in the thickets overhead.

A little further, in the turn of the bay, a streamlet trickled in the bottom of a den, thence spilling down a stair of rock into the sea. The draught of air drew down under the foliage in the very bottom of the den, which was a perfect arbour for coolness. In front it stood open on the blue bay and the *Casco*

lying there under her awning and her cheerful colours. Overhead was a thatch of puraos, and over these again palms brandished their bright fans, as I have seen a conjurer make himself a halo out of naked swords. For in this spot, over a neck of low land at the foot of the mountains, the trade-wind streams into Anaho Bay in a flood of almost constant volume and velocity, and of a heavenly coolness.

It chanced one day that I was ashore in the cove, with Mrs. Stevenson and the ship's cook. Except for the *Casco* lying outside, and a crane or two, and the ever-busy wind and sea, the face of the world was of a prehistoric emptiness; life appeared to stand stock-still, and the sense of isolation was profound and refreshing. On a sudden, the trade-wind, coming in a gust over the isthmus, struck and scattered the fans of the palms above the den; and, behold! in two of the tops there sat a native, motionless as an idol and watching us, you would have said, without a wink. The next moment the tree closed, and the glimpse was gone. This discovery of human presences latent overhead in a place where we had supposed ourselves alone, the immobility of our tree-top spies, and the thought that perhaps at all hours we were similarly supervised, struck us with a chill. Talk languished on the beach. As for the cook (whose conscience was not clear), he never afterwards set foot on shore, and twice, when the *Casco* appeared to be driving on the rocks, it was amusing to observe that man's alacrity; death, he was persuaded, awaiting him upon the beach. It was more than a year later, in the Gilberts, that

the explanation dawned upon myself. The natives were drawing palm-tree wine, a thing forbidden by law; and when the wind thus suddenly revealed them, they were doubtless more troubled than ourselves.

At the top of the den there dwelt an old, melancholy, grizzled man of the name of Tari (Charlie) Coffin. He was a native of Oahu, in the Sandwich Islands; and had gone to sea in his youth in the American whalers; a circumstance to which he owed his name, his English, his down-east twang, and the misfortune of his innocent life. For one captain, sailing out of New Bedford, carried him to Nuka-hiva and marooned him there among the cannibals. The motive for this act was inconceivably small; poor Tari's wages, which were thus economised, would scarce have shook the credit of the New Bedford owners. And the act itself was simply murder. Tari's life must have hung in the beginning by a hair. In the grief and terror of that time, it is not unlikely he went mad, an infirmity to which he was still liable; or perhaps a child may have taken a fancy to him and ordained him to be spared. He escaped at least alive, married in the island, and when I knew him was a widower with a married son and a granddaughter. But the thought of Oahu haunted him; its praise was for ever on his lips; he beheld it, looking back, as a place of ceaseless feasting, song, and dance; and in his dreams I daresay he revisits it with joy. I wonder what he would think if he could be carried there indeed, and see the modern town of Honolulu brisk with traffic, and the palace with its guards, and the great

hotel, and Mr. Berger's band with their uniforms and outlandish instruments; or what he would think to see the brown faces grown so few and the white so many; and his father's land sold, for planting sugar, and his father's house quite perished, or perhaps the last of them struck leprous and immured between the surf and the cliffs on Molokai? So simply, even in South Sea Islands, and so sadly, the changes come.

Tari was poor, and poorly lodged. His house was a wooden frame, run up by Europeans; it was indeed his official residence, for Tari was the shepherd of the promontory sheep. I can give a perfect inventory of its contents: three kegs, a tin biscuit-box, an iron saucepan, several cocoa-shell cups, a lantern, and three bottles, probably containing oil; while the clothes of the family and a few mats were thrown across the open rafters. Upon my first meeting with this exile he had conceived for me one of the baseless island friendships, had given me nuts to drink, and carried me up the den 'to see my house' – the only entertainment that he had to offer. He liked the 'Amelican,' he said, and the 'Inglistman,' but the 'Flessman' was his abhorrence; and he was careful to explain that if he had thought us 'Fless,' we should have had none of his nuts, and never a sight of his house. His distaste for the French I can partly understand, but not at all his toleration of the Anglo-Saxon. The next day he brought me a pig, and some days later one of our party going ashore found him in act to bring a second. We were still strange to the islands; we were pained by the poor man's generosity, which he could ill

afford, and, by a natural enough but quite unpardonable blunder, we refused the pig. Had Tari been a Marquesan we should have seen him no more; being what he was, the most mild, long-suffering, melancholy man, he took a revenge a hundred times more painful. Scarce had the canoe with the nine villagers put off from their farewell before the *Casco* was boarded from the other side. It was Tari; coming thus late because he had no canoe of his own, and had found it hard to borrow one; coming thus solitary (as indeed we always saw him), because he was a stranger in the land, and the dreariest of company. The rest of my family basely fled from the encounter. I must receive our injured friend alone; and the interview must have lasted hard upon an hour, for he was loath to tear himself away. 'You go 'way. I see you no more – no, sir!' he lamented; and then looking about him with rueful admiration, 'This goodee ship – no, sir! – goodee ship!' he would exclaim: the 'no, sir,' thrown out sharply through the nose upon a rising inflection, an echo from New Bedford and the fallacious whaler. From these expressions of grief and praise, he would return continually to the case of the rejected pig. 'I like give present all 'e same you,' he complained; 'only got pig: you no take him!' He was a poor man; he had no choice of gifts; he had only a pig, he repeated; and I had refused it. I have rarely been more wretched than to see him sitting there, so old, so grey, so poor, so hardly fortune'd, of so rueful a countenance, and to appreciate, with growing keenness, the affront which I had so innocently dealt him; but it was one of those cases in which

speech is vain.

Tari's son was smiling and inert; his daughter-in-law, a girl of sixteen, pretty, gentle, and grave, more intelligent than most Anaho women, and with a fair share of French; his grandchild, a mite of a creature at the breast. I went up the den one day when Tari was from home, and found the son making a cotton sack, and madame suckling mademoiselle. When I had sat down with them on the floor, the girl began to question me about England; which I tried to describe, piling the pan and the cocoa shells one upon another to represent the houses, and explaining, as best I was able, and by word and gesture, the over-population, the hunger, and the perpetual toil. '*Pas de cocotiers? pas do popoi?*' she asked. I told her it was too cold, and went through an elaborate performance, shutting out draughts, and crouching over an imaginary fire, to make sure she understood. But she understood right well; remarked it must be bad for the health, and sat a while gravely reflecting on that picture of unwonted sorrows. I am sure it roused her pity, for it struck in her another thought always uppermost in the Marquesan bosom; and she began with a smiling sadness, and looking on me out of melancholy eyes, to lament the decease of her own people. '*Ici pas de Kanaques,*' said she; and taking the baby from her breast, she held it out to me with both her hands. '*Tenez— a little baby like this; then dead. All the Kanaques die. Then no more.*' The smile, and this instancing by the girl-mother of her own tiny flesh and blood, affected me strangely; they spoke of so tranquil

a despair. Meanwhile the husband smilingly made his sack; and the unconscious babe struggled to reach a pot of raspberry jam, friendship's offering, which I had just brought up the den; and in a perspective of centuries I saw their case as ours, death coming in like a tide, and the day already numbered when there should be no more Beretani, and no more of any race whatever, and (what oddly touched me) no more literary works and no more readers.

## CHAPTER IV – DEATH

The thought of death, I have said, is uppermost in the mind of the Marquesan. It would be strange if it were otherwise. The race is perhaps the handsomest extant. Six feet is about the middle height of males; they are strongly muscled, free from fat, swift in action, graceful in repose; and the women, though fatter and duller, are still comely animals. To judge by the eye, there is no race more viable; and yet death reaps them with both hands. When Bishop Dordillon first came to Tai-o-hae, he reckoned the inhabitants at many thousands; he was but newly dead, and in the same bay Stanisla0 Moanatini counted on his fingers eight residual natives. Or take the valley of Hapaa, known to readers of Herman Melville under the grotesque misspelling of Hapar. There are but two writers who have touched the South Seas with any genius, both Americans: Melville and Charles Warren Stoddard; and at the christening of the first and greatest, some influential fairy must have been neglected: ‘He shall be able to see,’ ‘He shall be able to tell,’ ‘He shall be able to charm,’ said the friendly godmothers; ‘But he shall not be able to hear,’ exclaimed the last. The tribe of Hapaa is said to have numbered some four hundred, when the small-pox came and reduced them by one-fourth. Six months later a woman developed tubercular consumption; the disease spread like a fire about the valley, and in less than a year two survivors, a man and a woman, fled from

that new-created solitude. A similar Adam and Eve may some day wither among new races, the tragic residue of Britain. When I first heard this story the date staggered me; but I am now inclined to think it possible. Early in the year of my visit, for example, or late the year before, a first case of phthisis appeared in a household of seventeen persons, and by the month of August, when the tale was told me, one soul survived, and that was a boy who had been absent at his schooling. And depopulation works both ways, the doors of death being set wide open, and the door of birth almost closed. Thus, in the half-year ending July 1888 there were twelve deaths and but one birth in the district of the Hatiheu. Seven or eight more deaths were to be looked for in the ordinary course; and M. Aussel, the observant gendarme, knew of but one likely birth. At this rate it is no matter of surprise if the population in that part should have declined in forty years from six thousand to less than four hundred; which are, once more on the authority of M. Aussel, the estimated figures. And the rate of decline must have even accelerated towards the end.

A good way to appreciate the depopulation is to go by land from Anaho to Hatiheu on the adjacent bay. The road is good travelling, but cruelly steep. We seemed scarce to have passed the deserted house which stands highest in Anaho before we were looking dizzily down upon its roof; the *Casco* well out in the bay, and rolling for a wager, shrank visibly; and presently through the gap of Tari's isthmus, Ua-huna was seen to hang cloudlike on the horizon. Over the summit, where the wind blew

really chill, and whistled in the reed-like grass, and tossed the grassy fell of the pandanus, we stepped suddenly, as through a door, into the next vale and bay of Hatiheu. A bowl of mountains encloses it upon three sides. On the fourth this rampart has been bombarded into ruins, runs down to seaward in imminent and shattered crags, and presents the one practicable breach of the blue bay. The interior of this vessel is crowded with lovely and valuable trees, – orange, breadfruit, mummy-apple, cocoa, the island chestnut, and for weeds, the pine and the banana. Four perennial streams water and keep it green; and along the dell, first of one, then of another, of these, the road, for a considerable distance, descends into this fortunate valley. The song of the waters and the familiar disarray of boulders gave us a strong sense of home, which the exotic foliage, the daft-like growth of the pandanus, the buttressed trunk of the banyan, the black pigs galloping in the bush, and the architecture of the native houses dissipated ere it could be enjoyed.

The houses on the Hatiheu side begin high up; higher yet, the more melancholy spectacle of empty paepaes. When a native habitation is deserted, the superstructure – pandanus thatch, wattle, unstable tropical timber – speedily rots, and is speedily scattered by the wind. Only the stones of the terrace endure; nor can any ruin, cairn, or standing stone, or vitrified fort present a more stern appearance of antiquity. We must have passed from six to eight of these now houseless platforms. On the main road of the island, where it crosses the valley of Taipi, Mr. Osbourne

tells me they are to be reckoned by the dozen; and as the roads have been made long posterior to their erection, perhaps to their desertion, and must simply be regarded as lines drawn at random through the bush, the forest on either hand must be equally filled with these survivals: the gravestones of whole families. Such ruins are tapu<sup>1</sup> in the strictest sense; no native must approach them; they have become outposts of the kingdom of the grave. It might appear a natural and pious custom in the hundreds who are left, the rearguard of perished thousands, that their feet should leave untrod these hearthstones of their fathers. I believe, in fact, the custom rests on different and more grim conceptions. But the house, the grave, and even the body of the dead, have been always particularly honoured by Marquesans. Until recently the corpse was sometimes kept in the family and daily oiled and sunned, until, by gradual and revolting stages, it dried into a kind of mummy. Offerings are still laid upon the grave. In Traitor's Bay, Mr. Osbourne saw a man buy a looking-glass to lay upon his son's. And the sentiment against the desecration of tombs, thoughtlessly ruffled in the laying down of the new roads, is a chief ingredient in the native hatred for the French.

The Marquesan beholds with dismay the approaching extinction of his race. The thought of death sits down with him to meat, and rises with him from his bed; he lives and breathes under a shadow of mortality awful to support; and he is so inured to the apprehension that he greets the reality with relief. He does

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<sup>1</sup> In English usually written 'taboo': 'tapu' is the correct Tahitian form. – [Ed.]

not even seek to support a disappointment; at an affront, at a breach of one of his fleeting and communistic love-affairs, he seeks an instant refuge in the grave. Hanging is now the fashion. I heard of three who had hanged themselves in the west end of Hiva-oa during the first half of 1888; but though this be a common form of suicide in other parts of the South Seas, I cannot think it will continue popular in the Marquesas. Far more suitable to Marquesan sentiment is the old form of poisoning with the fruit of the *eva*, which offers to the native suicide a cruel but deliberate death, and gives time for those decencies of the last hour, to which he attaches such remarkable importance. The coffin can thus be at hand, the pigs killed, the cry of the mourners sounding already through the house; and then it is, and not before, that the Marquesan is conscious of achievement, his life all rounded in, his robes (like Cæsar's) adjusted for the final act. Praise not any man till he is dead, said the ancients; envy not any man till you hear the mourners, might be the Marquesan parody. The coffin, though of late introduction, strangely engages their attention. It is to the mature Marquesan what a watch is to the European schoolboy. For ten years Queen Vaekehu had dunned the fathers; at last, but the other day, they let her have her will, gave her her coffin, and the woman's soul is at rest. I was told a droll instance of the force of this preoccupation. The Polynesians are subject to a disease seemingly rather of the will than of the body. I was told the Tahitians have a word for it, *erimatua*, but cannot find it in my dictionary. A gendarme, M. Nouveau, has

seen men beginning to succumb to this insubstantial malady, has routed them from their houses, turned them on to do their trick upon the roads, and in two days has seen them cured. But this other remedy is more original: a Marquesan, dying of this discouragement – perhaps I should rather say this acquiescence – has been known, at the fulfilment of his crowning wish, on the mere sight of that desired hermitage, his coffin – to revive, recover, shake off the hand of death, and be restored for years to his occupations – carving tikis (idols), let us say, or braiding old men's beards. From all this it may be conceived how easily they meet death when it approaches naturally. I heard one example, grim and picturesque. In the time of the small-pox in Hapaa, an old man was seized with the disease; he had no thought of recovery; had his grave dug by a wayside, and lived in it for near a fortnight, eating, drinking, and smoking with the passers-by, talking mostly of his end, and equally unconcerned for himself and careless of the friends whom he infected.

This proneness to suicide, and loose seat in life, is not peculiar to the Marquesan. What is peculiar is the widespread depression and acceptance of the national end. Pleasures are neglected, the dance languishes, the songs are forgotten. It is true that some, and perhaps too many, of them are proscribed; but many remain, if there were spirit to support or to revive them. At the last feast of the Bastille, Stanislaio Moanatini shed tears when he beheld the inanimate performance of the dancers. When the people sang for us in Anaho, they must apologise for the smallness of

their repertory. They were only young folk present, they said, and it was only the old that knew the songs. The whole body of Marquesan poetry and music was being suffered to die out with a single dispirited generation. The full import is apparent only to one acquainted with other Polynesian races; who knows how the Samoan coins a fresh song for every trifling incident, or who has heard (on Penrhyn, for instance) a band of little stripling maids from eight to twelve keep up their minstrelsy for hours upon a stretch, one song following another without pause. In like manner, the Marquesan, never industrious, begins now to cease altogether from production. The exports of the group decline out of all proportion even with the death-rate of the islanders. 'The coral waxes, the palm grows, and man departs,' says the Marquesan; and he folds his hands. And surely this is nature. Fond as it may appear, we labour and refrain, not for the rewards of any single life, but with a timid eye upon the lives and memories of our successors; and where no one is to succeed, of his own family, or his own tongue, I doubt whether Rothschilds would make money or Cato practise virtue. It is natural, also, that a temporary stimulus should sometimes rouse the Marquesan from his lethargy. Over all the landward shore of Anaho cotton runs like a wild weed; man or woman, whoever comes to pick it, may earn a dollar in the day; yet when we arrived, the trader's store-house was entirely empty; and before we left it was near full. So long as the circus was there, so long as the *Casco* was yet anchored in the bay, it behoved every one to make his visit; and

to this end every woman must have a new dress, and every man a shirt and trousers. Never before, in Mr. Regler's experience, had they displayed so much activity.

In their despondency there is an element of dread. The fear of ghosts and of the dark is very deeply written in the mind of the Polynesian; not least of the Marquesan. Poor Taipi, the chief of Anaho, was condemned to ride to Hatiheu on a moonless night. He borrowed a lantern, sat a long while nerving himself for the adventure, and when he at last departed, wrung the *Cascos* by the hand as for a final separation. Certain presences, called Vehinehae, frequent and make terrible the nocturnal roadside; I was told by one they were like so much mist, and as the traveller walked into them dispersed and dissipated; another described them as being shaped like men and having eyes like cats; from none could I obtain the smallest clearness as to what they did, or wherefore they were dreaded. We may be sure at least they represent the dead; for the dead, in the minds of the islanders, are all-pervasive. 'When a native says that he is a man,' writes Dr. Codrington, 'he means that he is a man and not a ghost; not that he is a man and not a beast. The intelligent agents of this world are to his mind the men who are alive, and the ghosts the men who are dead.' Dr. Codrington speaks of Melanesia; from what I have learned his words are equally true of the Polynesian. And yet more. Among cannibal Polynesians a dreadful suspicion rests generally on the dead; and the Marquesans, the greatest cannibals of all, are scarce likely to be free from similar beliefs. I hazard

the guess that the Vehinehae are the hungry spirits of the dead, continuing their life's business of the cannibal ambushade, and lying everywhere unseen, and eager to devour the living. Another superstition I picked up through the troubled medium of Tari Coffin's English. The dead, he told me, came and danced by night around the paepae of their former family; the family were thereupon overcome by some emotion (but whether of pious sorrow or of fear I could not gather), and must 'make a feast,' of which fish, pig, and popoi were indispensable ingredients. So far this is clear enough. But here Tari went on to instance the new house of Toma and the house-warming feast which was just then in preparation as instances in point. Dare we indeed string them together, and add the case of the deserted ruin, as though the dead continually besieged the paepaes of the living: were kept at arm's-length, even from the first foundation, only by propitiatory feasts, and, so soon as the fire of life went out upon the hearth, swarmed back into possession of their ancient seat?

I speak by guess of these Marquesan superstitions. On the cannibal ghost I shall return elsewhere with certainty. And it is enough, for the present purpose, to remark that the men of the Marquesas, from whatever reason, fear and shrink from the presence of ghosts. Conceive how this must tell upon the nerves in islands where the number of the dead already so far exceeds that of the living, and the dead multiply and the living dwindle at so swift a rate. Conceive how the remnant huddles about the embers of the fire of life; even as old Red Indians, deserted on

the march and in the snow, the kindly tribe all gone, the last flame  
expiring, and the night around populous with wolves.

## CHAPTER V – DEPOPULATION

Over the whole extent of the South Seas, from one tropic to another, we find traces of a bygone state of over-population, when the resources of even a tropical soil were taxed, and even the improvident Polynesian trembled for the future. We may accept some of the ideas of Mr. Darwin's theory of coral islands, and suppose a rise of the sea, or the subsidence of some former continental area, to have driven into the tops of the mountains multitudes of refugees. Or we may suppose, more soberly, a people of sea-rovers, emigrants from a crowded country, to strike upon and settle island after island, and as time went on to multiply exceedingly in their new seats. In either case the end must be the same; soon or late it must grow apparent that the crew are too numerous, and that famine is at hand. The Polynesians met this emergent danger with various expedients of activity and prevention. A way was found to preserve breadfruit by packing it in artificial pits; pits forty feet in depth and of proportionate bore are still to be seen, I am told, in the Marquesas; and yet even these were insufficient for the teeming people, and the annals of the past are gloomy with famine and cannibalism. Among the Hawaiians – a hardier people, in a more exacting climate – agriculture was carried far; the land was irrigated with canals; and the fish-ponds of Molokai prove the number and diligence of the old inhabitants. Meanwhile, over all the island world, abortion

and infanticide prevailed. On coral atolls, where the danger was most plainly obvious, these were enforced by law and sanctioned by punishment. On Vaitupu, in the Ellices, only two children were allowed to a couple; on Nukufetau, but one. On the latter the punishment was by fine; and it is related that the fine was sometimes paid, and the child spared.

This is characteristic. For no people in the world are so fond or so long-suffering with children – children make the mirth and the adornment of their homes, serving them for playthings and for picture-galleries. ‘Happy is the man that has his quiver full of them.’ The stray bastard is contended for by rival families; and the natural and the adopted children play and grow up together undistinguished. The spoiling, and I may almost say the deification, of the child, is nowhere carried so far as in the eastern islands; and furthest, according to my opportunities of observation, in the Paumotu group, the so-called Low or Dangerous Archipelago. I have seen a Paumotuan native turn from me with embarrassment and disaffection because I suggested that a brat would be the better for a beating. It is a daily matter in some eastern islands to see a child strike or even stone its mother, and the mother, so far from punishing, scarce ventures to resist. In some, when his child was born, a chief was superseded and resigned his name; as though, like a drone, he had then fulfilled the occasion of his being. And in some the lightest words of children had the weight of oracles. Only the other day, in the Marquesas, if a child conceived a distaste to any stranger,

I am assured the stranger would be slain. And I shall have to tell in another place an instance of the opposite: how a child in Manihiki having taken a fancy to myself, her adoptive parents at once accepted the situation and loaded me with gifts.

With such sentiments the necessity for child-destruction would not fail to clash, and I believe we find the trace of divided feeling in the Tahitian brotherhood of Oro. At a certain date a new god was added to the Society-Island Olympus, or an old one refurbished and made popular. Oro was his name, and he may be compared with the Bacchus of the ancients. His zealots sailed from bay to bay, and from island to island; they were everywhere received with feasting; wore fine clothes; sang, danced, acted; gave exhibitions of dexterity and strength; and were the artists, the acrobats, the bards, and the harlots of the group. Their life was public and epicurean; their initiation a mystery; and the highest in the land aspired to join the brotherhood. If a couple stood next in line to a high-chieftaincy, they were suffered, on grounds of policy, to spare one child; all other children, who had a father or a mother in the company of Oro, stood condemned from the moment of conception. A freemasonry, an agnostic sect, a company of artists, its members all under oath to spread unchastity, and all forbidden to leave offspring – I do not know how it may appear to others, but to me the design seems obvious. Famine menacing the islands, and the needful remedy repulsive, it was recommended to the native mind by these trappings of mystery, pleasure, and parade. This is the

more probable, and the secret, serious purpose of the institution appears the more plainly, if it be true that, after a certain period of life, the obligation of the votary was changed; at first, bound to be profligate: afterwards, expected to be chaste.

Here, then, we have one side of the case. Man-eating among kindly men, child-murder among child-lovers, industry in a race the most idle, invention in a race the least progressive, this grim, pagan salvation-army of the brotherhood of Oro, the report of early voyagers, the widespread vestiges of former habitation, and the universal tradition of the islands, all point to the same fact of former crowding and alarm. And to-day we are face to face with the reverse. To-day in the Marquesas, in the Eight Islands of Hawaii, in Mangareva, in Easter Island, we find the same race perishing like flies. Why this change? Or, grant that the coming of the whites, the change of habits, and the introduction of new maladies and vices, fully explain the depopulation, why is that depopulation not universal? The population of Tahiti, after a period of alarming decrease, has again become stationary. I hear of a similar result among some Maori tribes; in many of the Paumotus a slight increase is to be observed; and the Samoans are to-day as healthy and at least as fruitful as before the change. Grant that the Tahitians, the Maoris, and the Paumotuans have become inured to the new conditions; and what are we to make of the Samoans, who have never suffered?

Those who are acquainted only with a single group are apt to be ready with solutions. Thus I have heard the mortality

of the Maoris attributed to their change of residence – from fortified hill-tops to the low, marshy vicinity of their plantations. How plausible! And yet the Marquesans are dying out in the same houses where their fathers multiplied. Or take opium. The Marquesas and Hawaii are the two groups the most infected with this vice; the population of the one is the most civilised, that of the other by far the most barbarous, of Polynesians; and they are two of those that perish the most rapidly. Here is a strong case against opium. But let us take unchastity, and we shall find the Marquesas and Hawaii figuring again upon another count. Thus, Samoans are the most chaste of Polynesians, and they are to this day entirely fertile; Marquesans are the most debauched: we have seen how they are perishing; Hawaiians are notoriously lax, and they begin to be dotted among deserts. So here is a case stronger still against unchastity; and here also we have a correction to apply. Whatever the virtues of the Tahitian, neither friend nor enemy dares call him chaste; and yet he seems to have outlived the time of danger. One last example: syphilis has been plausibly credited with much of the sterility. But the Samoans are, by all accounts, as fruitful as at first; by some accounts more so; and it is not seriously to be argued that the Samoans have escaped syphilis.

These examples show how dangerous it is to reason from any particular cause, or even from many in a single group. I have in my eye an able and amiable pamphlet by the Rev. S. E. Bishop: ‘Why are the Hawaiians Dying Out?’ Any one

interested in the subject ought to read this tract, which contains real information; and yet Mr. Bishop's views would have been changed by an acquaintance with other groups. Samoa is, for the moment, the main and the most instructive exception to the rule. The people are the most chaste and one of the most temperate of island peoples. They have never been tried and depressed with any grave pestilence. Their clothing has scarce been tampered with; at the simple and becoming tabard of the girls, Tartuffe, in many another island, would have cried out; for the cool, healthy, and modest lava-lava or kilt, Tartuffe has managed in many another island to substitute stifling and inconvenient trousers. Lastly, and perhaps chiefly, so far from their amusements having been curtailed, I think they have been, upon the whole, extended. The Polynesian falls easily into despondency: bereavement, disappointment, the fear of novel visitations, the decay or proscription of ancient pleasures, easily incline him to be sad; and sadness detaches him from life. The melancholy of the Hawaiian and the emptiness of his new life are striking; and the remark is yet more apposite to the Marquesas. In Samoa, on the other hand, perpetual song and dance, perpetual games, journeys, and pleasures, make an animated and a smiling picture of the island life. And the Samoans are to-day the gayest and the best entertained inhabitants of our planet. The importance of this can scarcely be exaggerated. In a climate and upon a soil where a livelihood can be had for the stooping, entertainment is a prime necessity. It is otherwise with us, where

life presents us with a daily problem, and there is a serious interest, and some of the heat of conflict, in the mere continuing to be. So, in certain atolls, where there is no great gaiety, but man must bestir himself with some vigour for his daily bread, public health and the population are maintained; but in the lotos islands, with the decay of pleasures, life itself decays. It is from this point of view that we may instance, among other causes of depression, the decay of war. We have been so long used in Europe to that dreary business of war on the great scale, trailing epidemics and leaving pestilential corpses in its train, that we have almost forgotten its original, the most healthful, if not the most humane, of all field sports – hedge-warfare. From this, as well as from the rest of his amusements and interests, the islander, upon a hundred islands, has been recently cut off. And to this, as well as to so many others, the Samoan still makes good a special title.

Upon the whole, the problem seems to me to stand thus: – Where there have been fewest changes, important or unimportant, salutary or hurtful, there the race survives. Where there have been most, important or unimportant, salutary or hurtful, there it perishes. Each change, however small, augments the sum of new conditions to which the race has to become inured. There may seem, *a priori*, no comparison between the change from ‘sour toddy’ to bad gin, and that from the island kilt to a pair of European trousers. Yet I am far from persuaded that the one is any more hurtful than the other; and the unaccustomed

race will sometimes die of pin-pricks. We are here face to face with one of the difficulties of the missionary. In Polynesian islands he easily obtains pre-eminent authority; the king becomes his *mairdupalais*; he can proscribe, he can command; and the temptation is ever towards too much. Thus (by all accounts) the Catholics in Mangareva, and thus (to my own knowledge) the Protestants in Hawaii, have rendered life in a more or less degree unliveable to their converts. And the mild, uncomplaining creatures (like children in a prison) yawn and await death. It is easy to blame the missionary. But it is his business to make changes. It is surely his business, for example, to prevent war; and yet I have instanced war itself as one of the elements of health. On the other hand, it were, perhaps, easy for the missionary to proceed more gently, and to regard every change as an affair of weight. I take the average missionary; I am sure I do him no more than justice when I suppose that he would hesitate to bombard a village, even in order to convert an archipelago. Experience begins to show us (at least in Polynesian islands) that change of habit is bloodier than a bombardment.

There is one point, ere I have done, where I may go to meet criticism. I have said nothing of faulty hygiene, bathing during fevers, mistaken treatment of children, native doctoring, or abortion – all causes frequently adduced. And I have said nothing of them because they are conditions common to both epochs, and even more efficient in the past than in the present. Was it not the same with unchastity, it may be asked? Was not the Polynesian

always unchaste? Doubtless he was so always: doubtless he is more so since the coming of his remarkably chaste visitors from Europe. Take the Hawaiian account of Cook: I have no doubt it is entirely fair. Take Krusenstern's candid, almost innocent, description of a Russian man-of-war at the Marquesas; consider the disgraceful history of missions in Hawaii itself, where (in the war of lust) the American missionaries were once shelled by an English adventurer, and once raided and mishandled by the crew of an American warship; add the practice of whaling fleets to call at the Marquesas, and carry off a complement of women for the cruise; consider, besides, how the whites were at first regarded in the light of demi-gods, as appears plainly in the reception of Cook upon Hawaii; and again, in the story of the discovery of Tutuila, when the really decent women of Samoa prostituted themselves in public to the French; and bear in mind how it was the custom of the adventurers, and we may almost say the business of the missionaries, to deride and infract even the most salutary tapus. Here we see every engine of dissolution directed at once against a virtue never and nowhere very strong or popular; and the result, even in the most degraded islands, has been further degradation. Mr. Lawes, the missionary of Savage Island, told me the standard of female chastity had declined there since the coming of the whites. In heathen time, if a girl gave birth to a bastard, her father or brother would dash the infant down the cliffs; and to-day the scandal would be small. Or take the Marquesas. Stanisla0 Moanardini told me that

in his own recollection, the young were strictly guarded; they were not suffered so much as to look upon one another in the street, but passed (so my informant put it) like dogs; and the other day the whole school-children of Nuka-hiva and Ua-pu escaped in a body to the woods, and lived there for a fortnight in promiscuous liberty. Readers of travels may perhaps exclaim at my authority, and declare themselves better informed. I should prefer the statement of an intelligent native like Stanislaο (even if it stood alone, which it is far from doing) to the report of the most honest traveller. A ship of war comes to a haven, anchors, lands a party, receives and returns a visit, and the captain writes a chapter on the manners of the island. It is not considered what class is mostly seen. Yet we should not be pleased if a Lascar foremast hand were to judge England by the ladies who parade Ratcliffe Highway, and the gentlemen who share with them their hire. Stanislaο's opinion of a decay of virtue even in these unvirtuous islands has been supported to me by others; his very example, the progress of dissolution amongst the young, is adduced by Mr. Bishop in Hawaii. And so far as Marquesans are concerned, we might have hazarded a guess of some decline in manners. I do not think that any race could ever have prospered or multiplied with such as now obtain; I am sure they would have been never at the pains to count paternal kinship. It is not possible to give details; suffice it that their manners appear to be imitated from the dreams of ignorant and vicious children, and their debauches persevered in until energy, reason, and almost life itself are in

abeyance.

## CHAPTER VI – CHIEFS AND TAPUS

We used to admire exceedingly the bland and gallant manners of the chief called Taipi-Kikino. An elegant guest at table, skilled in the use of knife and fork, a brave figure when he shouldered a gun and started for the woods after wild chickens, always serviceable, always ingratiating and gay, I would sometimes wonder where he found his cheerfulness. He had enough to sober him, I thought, in his official budget. His expenses – for he was always seen attired in virgin white – must have by far exceeded his income of six dollars in the year, or say two shillings a month. And he was himself a man of no substance; his house the poorest in the village. It was currently supposed that his elder brother, Kauanui, must have helped him out. But how comes it that the elder brother should succeed to the family estate, and be a wealthy commoner, and the younger be a poor man, and yet rule as chief in Anaho? That the one should be wealthy, and the other almost indigent is probably to be explained by some adoption; for comparatively few children are brought up in the house or succeed to the estates of their natural begetters. That the one should be chief instead of the other must be explained (in a very Irish fashion) on the ground that neither of them is a chief at all.

Since the return and the wars of the French, many chiefs have been deposed, and many so-called chiefs appointed. We

have seen, in the same house, one such upstart drinking in the company of two such extruded island Bourbons, men, whose word a few years ago was life and death, now sunk to be peasants like their neighbours. So when the French overthrew hereditary tyrants, dubbed the commons of the Marquesas freeborn citizens of the republic, and endowed them with a vote for a *conseiller-général* at Tahiti, they probably conceived themselves upon the path to popularity; and so far from that, they were revolting public sentiment. The deposition of the chiefs was perhaps sometimes needful; the appointment of others may have been needful also; it was at least a delicate business. The Government of George II. exiled many Highland magnates. It never occurred to them to manufacture substitutes; and if the French have been more bold, we have yet to see with what success.

Our chief at Anaho was always called, he always called himself, Taipi-Kikino; and yet that was not his name, but only the wand of his false position. As soon as he was appointed chief, his name – which signified, if I remember exactly, *Prince born among flowers*– fell in abeyance, and he was dubbed instead by the expressive byword, Taipi-Kikino —*Highwater man-of-no-account*– or, Englishing more boldly, *Beggar on horseback*– a witty and a wicked cut. A nickname in Polynesia destroys almost the memory of the original name. To-day, if we were Polynesians, Gladstone would be no more heard of. We should speak of and address our Nestor as the Grand Old Man, and it is so that himself would sign his correspondence. Not the

prevalence, then, but the significance of the nickname is to be noted here. The new authority began with small prestige. Taipi has now been some time in office; from all I saw he seemed a person very fit. He is not the least unpopular, and yet his power is nothing. He is a chief to the French, and goes to breakfast with the Resident; but for any practical end of chieftaincy a rag doll were equally efficient.

We had been but three days in Anaho when we received the visit of the chief of Hatiheu, a man of weight and fame, late leader of a war upon the French, late prisoner in Tahiti, and the last eater of long-pig in Nuka-hiva. Not many years have elapsed since he was seen striding on the beach of Anaho, a dead man's arm across his shoulder. 'So does Kooamua to his enemies!' he roared to the passers-by, and took a bite from the raw flesh. And now behold this gentleman, very wisely replaced in office by the French, paying us a morning visit in European clothes. He was the man of the most character we had yet seen: his manners genial and decisive, his person tall, his face rugged, astute, formidable, and with a certain similarity to Mr. Gladstone's – only for the brownness of the skin, and the high-chief's tattooing, all one side and much of the other being of an even blue. Further acquaintance increased our opinion of his sense. He viewed the *Casco* in a manner then quite new to us, examining her lines and the running of the gear; to a piece of knitting on which one of the party was engaged, he must have devoted ten minutes' patient study; nor did he desist before he had divined the principles; and

he was interested even to excitement by a type-writer, which he learned to work. When he departed he carried away with him a list of his family, with his own name printed by his own hand at the bottom. I should add that he was plainly much of a humorist, and not a little of a humbug. He told us, for instance, that he was a person of exact sobriety; such being the obligation of his high estate: the commons might be sots, but the chief could not stoop so low. And not many days after he was to be observed in a state of smiling and lop-sided imbecility, the *Casco* ribbon upside down on his dishonoured hat.

But his business that morning in Anaho is what concerns us here. The devil-fish, it seems, were growing scarce upon the reef; it was judged fit to interpose what we should call a close season; for that end, in Polynesia, a tapu (vulgarly spelt 'taboo') has to be declared, and who was to declare it? Taipi might; he ought; it was a chief part of his duty; but would any one regard the inhibition of a Beggar on Horse-back? He might plant palm branches: it did not in the least follow that the spot was sacred. He might recite the spell: it was shrewdly supposed the spirits would not hearken. And so the old, legitimate cannibal must ride over the mountains to do it for him; and the respectable official in white clothes could but look on and envy. At about the same time, though in a different manner, Kooamua established a forest law. It was observed the cocoa-palms were suffering, for the plucking of green nuts impoverishes and at last endangers the tree. Now Kooamua could tapu the reef, which was public property, but he

could not tapu other people's palms; and the expedient adopted was interesting. He tapu'd his own trees, and his example was imitated over all Hatiheu and Anaho. I fear Taipi might have tapu'd all that he possessed and found none to follow him. So much for the esteem in which the dignity of an appointed chief is held by others; a single circumstance will show what he thinks of it himself. I never met one, but he took an early opportunity to explain his situation. True, he was only an appointed chief when I beheld him; but somewhere else, perhaps upon some other isle, he was a chieftain by descent: upon which ground, he asked me (so to say it) to excuse his mushroom honours.

It will be observed with surprise that both these tapus are for thoroughly sensible ends. With surprise, I say, because the nature of that institution is much misunderstood in Europe. It is taken usually in the sense of a meaningless or wanton prohibition, such as that which to-day prevents women in some countries from smoking, or yesterday prevented any one in Scotland from taking a walk on Sunday. The error is no less natural than it is unjust. The Polynesians have not been trained in the bracing, practical thought of ancient Rome; with them the idea of law has not been disengaged from that of morals or propriety; so that tapu has to cover the whole field, and implies indifferently that an act is criminal, immoral, against sound public policy, unbecoming or (as we say) 'not in good form.' Many tapus were in consequence absurd enough, such as those which deleted words out of the language, and particularly those which related to women. Tapu

encircled women upon all hands. Many things were forbidden to men; to women we may say that few were permitted. They must not sit on the paepae; they must not go up to it by the stair; they must not eat pork; they must not approach a boat; they must not cook at a fire which any male had kindled. The other day, after the roads were made, it was observed the women plunged along margin through the bush, and when they came to a bridge waded through the water: roads and bridges were the work of men's hands, and tapu for the foot of women. Even a man's saddle, if the man be native, is a thing no self-respecting lady dares to use. Thus on the Anaho side of the island, only two white men, Mr. Regler and the gendarme, M. Aussel, possess saddles; and when a woman has a journey to make she must borrow from one or other. It will be noticed that these prohibitions tend, most of them, to an increased reserve between the sexes. Regard for female chastity is the usual excuse for these disabilities that men delight to lay upon their wives and mothers. Here the regard is absent; and behold the women still bound hand and foot with meaningless proprieties! The women themselves, who are survivors of the old regimen, admit that in those days life was not worth living. And yet even then there were exceptions. There were female chiefs and (I am assured) priestesses besides; nice customs curtseyed to great dames, and in the most sacred enclosure of a High Place, Father Siméon Delmar was shown a stone, and told it was the throne of some well-descended lady. How exactly parallel is this with European practice, when princesses were suffered to

penetrate the strictest cloister, and women could rule over a land in which they were denied the control of their own children.

But the tapu is more often the instrument of wise and needful restrictions. We have seen it as the organ of paternal government. It serves besides to enforce, in the rare case of some one wishing to enforce them, rights of private property. Thus a man, weary of the coming and going of Marquesan visitors, tapus his door; and to this day you may see the palm-branch signal, even as our great-grandfathers saw the peeled wand before a Highland inn. Or take another case. Anaho is known as 'the country without popoi.' The word popoi serves in different islands to indicate the main food of the people: thus, in Hawaii, it implies a preparation of taro; in the Marquesas, of breadfruit. And a Marquesan does not readily conceive life possible without his favourite diet. A few years ago a drought killed the breadfruit trees and the bananas in the district of Anaho; and from this calamity, and the open-handed customs of the island, a singular state of things arose. Well-watered Hatiheu had escaped the drought; every householder of Anaho accordingly crossed the pass, chose some one in Hatiheu, 'gave him his name' – an onerous gift, but one not to be rejected – and from this improvised relative proceeded to draw his supplies, for all the world as though he had paid for them. Hence a continued traffic on the road. Some stalwart fellow, in a loin-cloth, and glistening with sweat, may be seen at all hours of the day, a stick across his bare shoulders, tripping nervously under a double burthen of green fruits. And on the far side of the gap a

dozen stone posts on the wayside in the shadow of a grove mark the breathing-space of the popoi-carriers. A little back from the beach, and not half a mile from Anaho, I was the more amazed to find a cluster of well-doing breadfruits heavy with their harvest. 'Why do you not take these?' I asked. 'Tapu,' said Hoka; and I thought to myself (after the manner of dull travellers) what children and fools these people were to toil over the mountain and despoil innocent neighbours when the staff of life was thus growing at their door. I was the more in error. In the general destruction these surviving trees were enough only for the family of the proprietor, and by the simple expedient of declaring a tapu he enforced his right.

The sanction of the tapu is superstitious; and the punishment of infraction either a wasting or a deadly sickness. A slow disease follows on the eating of tapu fish, and can only be cured with the bones of the same fish burned with the due mysteries. The cocoa-nut and breadfruit tapu works more swiftly. Suppose you have eaten tapu fruit at the evening meal, at night your sleep will be uneasy; in the morning, swelling and a dark discoloration will have attacked your neck, whence they spread upward to the face; and in two days, unless the cure be interjected, you must die. This cure is prepared from the rubbed leaves of the tree from which the patient stole; so that he cannot be saved without confessing to the Tahuku the person whom he wronged. In the experience of my informant, almost no tapu had been put in use, except the two described: he had thus no opportunity to learn the nature

and operation of the others; and, as the art of making them was jealously guarded amongst the old men, he believed the mystery would soon die out. I should add that he was no Marquesan, but a Chinaman, a resident in the group from boyhood, and a reverent believer in the spells which he described. White men, amongst whom Ah Fu included himself, were exempt; but he had a tale of a Tahitian woman, who had come to the Marquesas, eaten tapu fish, and, although uninformed of her offence and danger, had been afflicted and cured exactly like a native.

Doubtless the belief is strong; doubtless, with this weakly and fanciful race, it is in many cases strong enough to kill; it should be strong indeed in those who tapu their trees secretly, so that they may detect a depredator by his sickness. Or, perhaps, we should understand the idea of the hidden tapu otherwise, as a politic device to spread uneasiness and extort confessions: so that, when a man is ailing, he shall ransack his brain for any possible offence, and send at once for any proprietor whose rights he has invaded. 'Had you hidden a tapu?' we may conceive him asking; and I cannot imagine the proprietor gainsaying it; and this is perhaps the strangest feature of the system – that it should be regarded from without with such a mental and implicit awe, and, when examined from within, should present so many apparent evidences of design.

We read in Dr. Campbell's *Poenamo* of a New Zealand girl, who was foolishly told that she had eaten a tapu yam, and who instantly sickened, and died in the two days of simple terror. The

period is the same as in the Marquesas; doubtless the symptoms were so too. How singular to consider that a superstition of such sway is possibly a manufactured article; and that, even if it were not originally invented, its details have plainly been arranged by the authorities of some Polynesian Scotland Yard. Fitley enough, the belief is to-day – and was probably always – far from universal. Hell at home is a strong deterrent with some; a passing thought with others; with others, again, a theme of public mockery, not always well assured; and so in the Marquesas with the tapu. Mr. Regler has seen the two extremes of scepticism and implicit fear. In the tapu grove he found one fellow stealing breadfruit, cheerful and impudent as a street arab; and it was only on a menace of exposure that he showed himself the least discountenanced. The other case was opposed in every point. Mr. Regler asked a native to accompany him upon a voyage; the man went gladly enough, but suddenly perceiving a dead tapu fish in the bottom of the boat, leaped back with a scream; nor could the promise of a dollar prevail upon him to advance.

The Marquesan, it will be observed, adheres to the old idea of the local circumscription of beliefs and duties. Not only are the whites exempt from consequences; but their transgressions seem to be viewed without horror. It was Mr. Regler who had killed the fish; yet the devout native was not shocked at Mr. Regler – only refused to join him in his boat. A white is a white: the servant (so to speak) of other and more liberal gods; and not to be blamed if he profit by his liberty. The Jews were perhaps the first

to interrupt this ancient comity of faiths; and the Jewish virus is still strong in Christianity. All the world must respect our tapus, or we gnash our teeth.

## CHAPTER VII – HATIHEU

The bays of Anaho and Hatiheu are divided at their roots by the knife-edge of a single hill – the pass so often mentioned; but this isthmus expands to the seaward in a considerable peninsula: very bare and grassy; haunted by sheep and, at night and morning, by the piercing cries of the shepherds; wandered over by a few wild goats; and on its sea-front indented with long, clamorous caves, and faced with cliffs of the colour and ruinous outline of an old peat-stack. In one of these echoing and sunless gullies we saw, clustered like sea-birds on a splashing ledge, shrill as sea-birds in their salutation to the passing boat, a group of fisherwomen, stripped to their gaudy under-clothes. (The clash of the surf and the thin female voices echo in my memory.) We had that day a native crew and steersman, Kauanui; it was our first experience of Polynesian seamanship, which consists in hugging every point of land. There is no thought in this of saving time, for they will pull a long way in to skirt a point that is embayed. It seems that, as they can never get their houses near enough the surf upon the one side, so they can never get their boats near enough upon the other. The practice in bold water is not so dangerous as it looks – the reflex from the rocks sending the boat off. Near beaches with a heavy run of sea, I continue to think it very hazardous, and find the composure of the natives annoying to behold. We took unmingled pleasure, on the way

out, to see so near at hand the beach and the wonderful colours of the surf. On the way back, when the sea had risen and was running strong against us, the fineness of the steersman's aim grew more embarrassing. As we came abreast of the sea-front, where the surf broke highest, Kauanui embraced the occasion to light his pipe, which then made the circuit of the boat – each man taking a whiff or two, and, ere he passed it on, filling his lungs and cheeks with smoke. Their faces were all puffed out like apples as we came abreast of the cliff foot, and the bursting surge fell back into the boat in showers. At the next point 'cocanetti' was the word, and the stroke borrowed my knife, and desisted from his labours to open nuts. These untimely indulgences may be compared to the tot of grog served out before a ship goes into action.

My purpose in this visit led me first to the boys' school, for Hatiheu is the university of the north islands. The hum of the lesson came out to meet us. Close by the door, where the draught blew coolest, sat the lay brother; around him, in a packed half-circle, some sixty high-coloured faces set with staring eyes; and in the background of the barn-like room benches were to be seen, and blackboards with sums on them in chalk. The brother rose to greet us, sensibly humble. Thirty years he had been there, he said, and fingered his white locks as a bashful child pulls out his pinafore. '*Et point de résultats, monsieur, presque pas de résultats.*' He pointed to the scholars: 'You see, sir, all the youth of Nuka-hiva and Ua-pu. Between the ages of six and

fifteen this is all that remains; and it is but a few years since we had a hundred and twenty from Nuka-hiva alone. *Oui, monsieur, cela se dépérit.* Prayers, and reading and writing, prayers again and arithmetic, and more prayers to conclude: such appeared to be the dreary nature of the course. For arithmetic all island people have a natural taste. In Hawaii they make good progress in mathematics. In one of the villages on Majuro, and generally in the Marshall group, the whole population sit about the trader when he is weighing copra, and each on his own slate takes down the figures and computes the total. The trader, finding them so apt, introduced fractions, for which they had been taught no rule. At first they were quite gravelled but ultimately, by sheer hard thinking, reasoned out the result, and came one after another to assure the trader he was right. Not many people in Europe could have done the like. The course at Hatiheu is therefore less dispiriting to Polynesians than a stranger might have guessed; and yet how bald it is at best! I asked the brother if he did not tell them stories, and he stared at me; if he did not teach them history, and he said, 'O yes, they had a little Scripture history – from the New Testament'; and repeated his lamentations over the lack of results. I had not the heart to put more questions; I could but say it must be very discouraging, and resist the impulse to add that it seemed also very natural. He looked up – 'My days are far spent,' he said; 'heaven awaits me.' May that heaven forgive me, but I was angry with the old man and his simple consolation. For think of his opportunity! The youth, from six to fifteen, are

taken from their homes by Government, centralised at Hatiheu, where they are supported by a weekly tax of food; and, with the exception of one month in every year, surrendered wholly to the direction of the priests. Since the escapade already mentioned the holiday occurs at a different period for the girls and for the boys; so that a Marquesan brother and sister meet again, after their education is complete, a pair of strangers. It is a harsh law, and highly unpopular; but what a power it places in the hands of the instructors, and how languidly and dully is that power employed by the mission! Too much concern to make the natives pious, a design in which they all confess defeat, is, I suppose, the explanation of their miserable system. But they might see in the girls' school at Tai-o-hae, under the brisk, housewifely sisters, a different picture of efficiency, and a scene of neatness, airiness, and spirited and mirthful occupation that should shame them into cheerier methods. The sisters themselves lament their failure. They complain the annual holiday undoes the whole year's work; they complain particularly of the heartless indifference of the girls. Out of so many pretty and apparently affectionate pupils whom they have taught and reared, only two have ever returned to pay a visit of remembrance to their teachers. These, indeed, come regularly, but the rest, so soon as their school-days are over, disappear into the woods like captive insects. It is hard to imagine anything more discouraging; and yet I do not believe these ladies need despair. For a certain interval they keep the girls alive and innocently busy; and if it be at all possible to save the race, this

would be the means. No such praise can be given to the boys' school at Hatiheu. The day is numbered already for them all; alike for the teacher and the scholars death is girt; he is afoot upon the march; and in the frequent interval they sit and yawn. But in life there seems a thread of purpose through the least significant; the drowsiest endeavour is not lost, and even the school at Hatiheu may be more useful than it seems.

Hatiheu is a place of some pretensions. The end of the bay towards Anaho may be called the civil compound, for it boasts the house of Kooamua, and close on the beach, under a great tree, that of the gendarme, M. Armand Aussel, with his garden, his pictures, his books, and his excellent table, to which strangers are made welcome. No more singular contrast is possible than between the gendarmerie and the priesthood, who are besides in smouldering opposition and full of mutual complaints. A priest's kitchen in the eastern islands is a depressing spot to see; and many, or most of them, make no attempt to keep a garden, sparsely subsisting on their rations. But you will never dine with a gendarme without smacking your lips; and M. Aussel's home-made sausage and the salad from his garden are unforgotten delicacies. Pierre Loti may like to know that he is M. Aussel's favourite author, and that his books are read in the fit scenery of Hatiheu bay.

The other end is all religious. It is here that an overhanging and tip-tilted horn, a good sea-mark for Hatiheu, bursts naked from the verdure of the climbing forest, and breaks down shoreward

in steep taluses and cliffs. From the edge of one of the highest, perhaps seven hundred or a thousand feet above the beach, a Virgin looks insignificantly down, like a poor lost doll, forgotten there by a giant child. This laborious symbol of the Catholics is always strange to Protestants; we conceive with wonder that men should think it worth while to toil so many days, and clamber so much about the face of precipices, for an end that makes us smile; and yet I believe it was the wise Bishop Dordillon who chose the place, and I know that those who had a hand in the enterprise look back with pride upon its vanquished dangers. The boys' school is a recent importation; it was at first in Tai-o-hae, beside the girls'; and it was only of late, after their joint escapade, that the width of the island was interposed between the sexes. But Hatiheu must have been a place of missionary importance from before. About midway of the beach no less than three churches stand grouped in a patch of bananas, intermingled with some pine-apples. Two are of wood: the original church, now in disuse; and a second that, for some mysterious reason, has never been used. The new church is of stone, with twin towers, walls flangeing into buttresses, and sculptured front. The design itself is good, simple, and shapely; but the character is all in the detail, where the architect has bloomed into the sculptor. It is impossible to tell in words of the angels (although they are more like winged archbishops) that stand guard upon the door, of the cherubs in the corners, of the scapegoat gargoyles, or the quaint and spirited relief, where St. Michael (the artist's patron)

makes short work of a protesting Lucifer. We were never weary of viewing the imagery, so innocent, sometimes so funny, and yet in the best sense – in the sense of inventive gusto and expression – so artistic. I know not whether it was more strange to find a building of such merit in a corner of a barbarous isle, or to see a building so antique still bright with novelty. The architect, a French lay brother, still alive and well, and meditating fresh foundations, must have surely drawn his descent from a master-builder in the age of the cathedrals; and it was in looking on the church of Hatiheu that I seemed to perceive the secret charm of mediæval sculpture; that combination of the childish courage of the amateur, attempting all things, like the schoolboy on his slate, with the manly perseverance of the artist who does not know when he is conquered.

I had always afterwards a strong wish to meet the architect, Brother Michel; and one day, when I was talking with the Resident in Tai-o-hae (the chief port of the island), there were shown in to us an old, worn, purblind, ascetic-looking priest, and a lay brother, a type of all that is most sound in France, with a broad, clever, honest, humorous countenance, an eye very large and bright, and a strong and healthy body inclining to obesity. But that his blouse was black and his face shaven clean, you might pick such a man to-day, toiling cheerfully in his own patch of vines, from half a dozen provinces of France; and yet he had always for me a haunting resemblance to an old kind friend of my boyhood, whom I name in case any of my readers

should share with me that memory – Dr. Paul, of the West Kirk. Almost at the first word I was sure it was my architect, and in a moment we were deep in a discussion of Hatiheu church. Brother Michel spoke always of his labours with a twinkle of humour, underlying which it was possible to spy a serious pride, and the change from one to another was often very human and diverting. ‘*Et vos gargouilles moyen-âge,*’ cried I; ‘*comme elles sont originates!*’ ‘*N’est-ce pas? Elles sont bien drôles!*’ he said, smiling broadly; and the next moment, with a sudden gravity: ‘*Cependant il y en a une qui a une patte de cassé; il faut que je voie cela.*’ I asked if he had any model – a point we much discussed. ‘*Non,*’ said he simply; ‘*c’est une église idéale.*’ The relievo was his favourite performance, and very justly so. The angels at the door, he owned, he would like to destroy and replace. ‘*Ils n’ont pas de vie, ils manquent de vie. Vous devriez voir mon église à la Dominique; j’ai là une Vierge qui est vraiment gentille.*’ ‘Ah,’ I cried, ‘they told me you had said you would never build another church, and I wrote in my journal I could not believe it.’ ‘*Oui, j’aimerais bien en faire une autre,*’ he confessed, and smiled at the confession. An artist will understand how much I was attracted by this conversation. There is no bond so near as a community in that unaffected interest and slightly shame-faced pride which mark the intelligent man enamoured of an art. He sees the limitations of his aim, the defects of his practice; he smiles to be so employed upon the shores of death, yet sees in his own devotion something worthy. Artists, if they had the same sense

of humour with the Augurs, would smile like them on meeting, but the smile would not be scornful.

I had occasion to see much of this excellent man. He sailed with us from Tai-o-hae to Hiva-oa, a dead beat of ninety miles against a heavy sea. It was what is called a good passage, and a feather in the *Casco's* cap; but among the most miserable forty hours that any one of us had ever passed. We were swung and tossed together all that time like shot in a stage thunder-box. The mate was thrown down and had his head cut open; the captain was sick on deck; the cook sick in the galley. Of all our party only two sat down to dinner. I was one. I own that I felt wretchedly; and I can only say of the other, who professed to feel quite well, that she fled at an early moment from the table. It was in these circumstances that we skirted the windward shore of that indescribable island of Ua-pu; viewing with dizzy eyes the coves, the capes, the breakers, the climbing forests, and the inaccessible stone needles that surmount the mountains. The place persists, in a dark corner of our memories, like a piece of the scenery of nightmares. The end of this distressful passage, where we were to land our passengers, was in a similar vein of roughness. The surf ran high on the beach at Taahauku; the boat broached-to and capsized; and all hands were submerged. Only the brother himself, who was well used to the experience, skipped ashore, by some miracle of agility, with scarce a sprinkling. Thenceforward, during our stay at Hiva-oa, he was our cicerone and patron; introducing us, taking us excursions, serving us in every way, and

making himself daily more beloved.

Michel Blanc had been a carpenter by trade; had made money and retired, supposing his active days quite over; and it was only when he found idleness dangerous that he placed his capital and acquirements at the service of the mission. He became their carpenter, mason, architect, and engineer; added sculpture to his accomplishments, and was famous for his skill in gardening. He wore an enviable air of having found a port from life's contentions and lying there strongly anchored; went about his business with a jolly simplicity; complained of no lack of results – perhaps shyly thinking his own statutory result enough; and was altogether a pattern of the missionary layman.

## CHAPTER VIII – THE PORT OF ENTRY

The port – the mart, the civil and religious capital of these rude islands – is called Tai-o-hae, and lies strung along the beach of a precipitous green bay in Nuka-hiva. It was midwinter when we came thither, and the weather was sultry, boisterous, and inconstant. Now the wind blew squally from the land down gaps of splintered precipice; now, between the sentinel islets of the entry, it came in gusts from seaward. Heavy and dark clouds impended on the summits; the rain roared and ceased; the scuppers of the mountain gushed; and the next day we would see the sides of the amphitheatre bearded with white falls. Along the beach the town shows a thin file of houses, mostly white, and all ensconced in the foliage of an avenue of green puraos; a pier gives access from the sea across the belt of breakers; to the eastward there stands, on a projecting bushy hill, the old fort which is now the calaboose, or prison; eastward still, alone in a garden, the Residency flies the colours of France. Just off Calaboose Hill, the tiny Government schooner rides almost permanently at anchor, marks eight bells in the morning (there or thereabout) with the unfurling of her flag, and salutes the setting sun with the report of a musket.

Here dwell together, and share the comforts of a club (which may be enumerated as a billiard-board, absinthe, a

map of the world on Mercator's projection, and one of the most agreeable verandahs in the tropics), a handful of whites of varying nationality, mostly French officials, German and Scottish merchant clerks, and the agents of the opium monopoly. There are besides three tavern-keepers, the shrewd Scot who runs the cotton gin-mill, two white ladies, and a sprinkling of people 'on the beach' – a South Sea expression for which there is no exact equivalent. It is a pleasant society, and a hospitable. But one man, who was often to be seen seated on the logs at the pier-head, merits a word for the singularity of his history and appearance. Long ago, it seems, he fell in love with a native lady, a High Chiefess in Ua-pu. She, on being approached, declared she could never marry a man who was untattooed; it looked so naked; whereupon, with some greatness of soul, our hero put himself in the hands of the Tahukus, and, with still greater, persevered until the process was complete. He had certainly to bear a great expense, for the Tahuku will not work without reward; and certainly exquisite pain. Kooamua, high chief as he was, and one of the old school, was only part tattooed; he could not, he told us with lively pantomime, endure the torture to an end. Our enamoured countryman was more resolved; he was tattooed from head to foot in the most approved methods of the art; and at last presented himself before his mistress a new man. The fickle fair one could never behold him from that day except with laughter. For my part, I could never see the man without a kind of admiration; of him it might be said, if ever of any, that

he had loved not wisely, but too well.

The Residency stands by itself, Calaboose Hill screening it from the fringe of town along the further bay. The house is commodious, with wide verandahs; all day it stands open, back and front, and the trade blows copiously over its bare floors. On a week-day the garden offers a scene of most untropical animation, half a dozen convicts toiling there cheerfully with spade and barrow, and touching hats and smiling to the visitor like old attached family servants. On Sunday these are gone, and nothing to be seen but dogs of all ranks and sizes peacefully slumbering in the shady grounds; for the dogs of Tai-o-hae are very courtly-minded, and make the seat of Government their promenade and place of siesta. In front and beyond, a strip of green down loses itself in a low wood of many species of acacia; and deep in the wood a ruinous wall encloses the cemetery of the Europeans. English and Scottish sleep there, and Scandinavians, and French *maîtres de manœuvres* and *maîtres ouvriers*: mingling alien dust. Back in the woods, perhaps, the blackbird, or (as they call him there) the island nightingale, will be singing home strains; and the ceaseless requiem of the surf hangs on the ear. I have never seen a resting-place more quiet; but it was a long thought how far these sleepers had all travelled, and from what diverse homes they had set forth, to lie here in the end together.

On the summit of its promontory hill, the calaboose stands all day with doors and window-shutters open to the trade. On my first visit a dog was the only guardian visible. He, indeed,

rose with an attitude so menacing that I was glad to lay hands on an old barrel-hoop; and I think the weapon must have been familiar, for the champion instantly retreated, and as I wandered round the court and through the building, I could see him, with a couple of companions, humbly dodging me about the corners. The prisoners' dormitory was a spacious, airy room, devoid of any furniture; its whitewashed walls covered with inscriptions in Marquesan and rude drawings: one of the pier, not badly done; one of a murder; several of French soldiers in uniform. There was one legend in French: '*Je n'est*' (sic) '*pas le sou.*' From this noontide quietude it must not be supposed the prison was untenanted; the calaboose at Tai-o-hae does a good business. But some of its occupants were gardening at the Residency, and the rest were probably at work upon the streets, as free as our scavengers at home, although not so industrious. On the approach of evening they would be called in like children from play; and the harbour-master (who is also the jailer) would go through the form of locking them up until six the next morning. Should a prisoner have any call in town, whether of pleasure or affairs, he has but to unhook the window-shutters; and if he is back again, and the shutter decently replaced, by the hour of call on the morrow, he may have met the harbour-master in the avenue, and there will be no complaint, far less any punishment. But this is not all. The charming French Resident, M. Delaruelle, carried me one day to the calaboose on an official visit. In the green court, a very ragged gentleman, his legs deformed with

the island elephantiasis, saluted us smiling. 'One of our political prisoners – an insurgent from Raiatea,' said the Resident; and then to the jailer: 'I thought I had ordered him a new pair of trousers.' Meanwhile no other convict was to be seen – '*Eh bien,*' said the Resident, '*où sont vos prisonniers?*' '*Monsieur le Résident,*' replied the jailer, saluting with soldierly formality, '*comme c'est jour de fête, je les ai laissé aller à la chasse.*' They were all upon the mountains hunting goats! Presently we came to the quarters of the women, likewise deserted – '*Où sont vos bonnes femmes?*' asked the Resident; and the jailer cheerfully responded: '*Je crois, Monsieur le Résident, qu'elles sont allées quelquepart faire une visite.*' It had been the design of M. Delaruelle, who was much in love with the whimsicalities of his small realm, to elicit something comical; but not even he expected anything so perfect as the last. To complete the picture of convict life in Tai-o-hae, it remains to be added that these criminals draw a salary as regularly as the President of the Republic. Ten sous a day is their hire. Thus they have money, food, shelter, clothing, and, I was about to write, their liberty. The French are certainly a good-natured people, and make easy masters. They are besides inclined to view the Marquesans with an eye of humorous indulgence. 'They are dying, poor devils!' said M. Delaruelle: 'the main thing is to let them die in peace.' And it was not only well said, but I believe expressed the general thought. Yet there is another element to be considered; for these convicts are not merely useful, they are almost essential to the French

existence. With a people incurably idle, dispirited by what can only be called endemic pestilence, and inflamed with ill-feeling against their new masters, crime and convict labour are a godsend to the Government.

Theft is practically the sole crime. Originally petty pilferers, the men of Tai-o-hae now begin to force locks and attack strong-boxes. Hundreds of dollars have been taken at a time; though, with that redeeming moderation so common in Polynesian theft, the Marquesan burglar will always take a part and leave a part, sharing (so to speak) with the proprietor. If it be Chilian coin – the island currency – he will escape; if the sum is in gold, French silver, or bank-notes, the police wait until the money begins to come in circulation, and then easily pick out their man. And now comes the shameful part. In plain English, the prisoner is tortured until he confesses and (if that be possible) restores the money. To keep him alone, day and night, in the black hole, is to inflict on the Marquesan torture inexpressible. Even his robberies are carried on in the plain daylight, under the open sky, with the stimulus of enterprise, and the countenance of an accomplice; his terror of the dark is still insurmountable; conceive, then, what he endures in his solitary dungeon; conceive how he longs to confess, become a full-fledged convict, and be allowed to sleep beside his comrades. While we were in Tai-o-hae a thief was under prevention. He had entered a house about eight in the morning, forced a trunk, and stolen eleven hundred francs; and now, under the horrors of darkness, solitude, and a bedevilled

cannibal imagination, he was reluctantly confessing and giving up his spoil. From one cache, which he had already pointed out, three hundred francs had been recovered, and it was expected that he would presently disgorge the rest. This would be ugly enough if it were all; but I am bound to say, because it is a matter the French should set at rest, that worse is continually hinted. I heard that one man was kept six days with his arms bound backward round a barrel; and it is the universal report that every gendarme in the South Seas is equipped with something in the nature of a thumbscrew. I do not know this. I never had the face to ask any of the gendarmes – pleasant, intelligent, and kindly fellows – with whom I have been intimate, and whose hospitality I have enjoyed; and perhaps the tale reposes (as I hope it does) on a misconception of that ingenious cat's-cradle with which the French agent of police so readily secures a prisoner. But whether physical or moral, torture is certainly employed; and by a barbarous injustice, the state of accusation (in which a man may very well be innocently placed) is positively painful; the state of conviction (in which all are supposed guilty) is comparatively free, and positively pleasant. Perhaps worse still, – not only the accused, but sometimes his wife, his mistress, or his friend, is subjected to the same hardships. I was admiring, in the tapu system, the ingenuity of native methods of detection; there is not much to admire in those of the French, and to lock up a timid child in a dark room, and, if he proved obstinate, lock up his sister in the next, is neither novel nor humane.

The main occasion of these thefts is the new vice of opium-eating. 'Here nobody ever works, and all eat opium,' said a gendarme; and Ah Fu knew a woman who ate a dollar's worth in a day. The successful thief will give a handful of money to each of his friends, a dress to a woman, pass an evening in one of the taverns of Tai-o-hae, during which he treats all comers, produce a big lump of opium, and retire to the bush to eat and sleep it off. A trader, who did not sell opium, confessed to me that he was at his wit's end. 'I do not sell it, but others do,' said he. 'The natives only work to buy it; if they walk over to me to sell their cotton, they have just to walk over to some one else to buy their opium with my money. And why should they be at the bother of two walks? There is no use talking,' he added – 'opium is the currency of this country.'

The man under prevention during my stay at Tai-o-hae lost patience while the Chinese opium-seller was being examined in his presence. 'Of course he sold me opium!' he broke out; 'all the Chinese here sell opium. It was only to buy opium that I stole; it is only to buy opium that anybody steals. And what you ought to do is to let no opium come here, and no Chinamen.' This is precisely what is done in Samoa by a native Government; but the French have bound their own hands, and for forty thousand francs sold native subjects to crime and death. This horrid traffic may be said to have sprung up by accident. It was Captain Hart who had the misfortune to be the means of beginning it, at a time when his plantations flourished in the Marquesas, and

he found a difficulty in keeping Chinese coolies. To-day the plantations are practically deserted and the Chinese gone; but in the meanwhile the natives have learned the vice, the patent brings in a round sum, and the needy Government at Papeete shut their eyes and open their pockets. Of course, the patentee is supposed to sell to Chinamen alone; equally of course, no one could afford to pay forty thousand francs for the privilege of supplying a scattered handful of Chinese; and every one knows the truth, and all are ashamed of it. French officials shake their heads when opium is mentioned; and the agents of the farmer blush for their employment. Those that live in glass houses should not throw stones; as a subject of the British crown, I am an unwilling shareholder in the largest opium business under heaven. But the British case is highly complicated; it implies the livelihood of millions; and must be reformed, when it can be reformed at all, with prudence. This French business, on the other hand, is a nostrum and a mere excrescence. No native industry was to be encouraged: the poison is solemnly imported. No native habit was to be considered: the vice has been gratuitously introduced. And no creature profits, save the Government at Papeete – the not very enviable gentlemen who pay them, and the Chinese underlings who do the dirty work.

## CHAPTER IX – THE HOUSE OF TEMOANA

The history of the Marquesas is, of late years, much confused by the coming and going of the French. At least twice they have seized the archipelago, at least once deserted it; and in the meanwhile the natives pursued almost without interruption their desultory cannibal wars. Through these events and changing dynasties, a single considerable figure may be seen to move: that of the high chief, a king, Temoana. Odds and ends of his history came to my ears: how he was at first a convert to the Protestant mission; how he was kidnapped or exiled from his native land, served as cook aboard a whaler, and was shown, for small charge, in English seaports; how he returned at last to the Marquesas, fell under the strong and benign influence of the late bishop, extended his influence in the group, was for a while joint ruler with the prelate, and died at last the chief supporter of Catholicism and the French. His widow remains in receipt of two pounds a month from the French Government. Queen she is usually called, but in the official almanac she figures as '*Madame Vaekehu, Grande Chefesse.*' His son (natural or adoptive, I know not which), Stanislaio Moanagini, chief of Akau, serves in Tai-o-hae as a kind of Minister of Public Works; and the daughter of Stanislaio is High Chiefess of the southern island of Tauata. These, then, are the greatest folk of the archipelago; we thought

them also the most estimable. This is the rule in Polynesia, with few exceptions; the higher the family, the better the man – better in sense, better in manners, and usually taller and stronger in body. A stranger advances blindfold. He scrapes acquaintance as he can. Save the tattoo in the Marquesas, nothing indicates the difference of rank; and yet almost invariably we found, after we had made them, that our friends were persons of station. I have said ‘usually taller and stronger.’ I might have been more absolute, – over all Polynesia, and a part of Micronesia, the rule holds good; the great ones of the isle, and even of the village, are greater of bone and muscle, and often heavier of flesh, than any commoner. The usual explanation – that the high-born child is more industriously shampooed, is probably the true one. In New Caledonia, at least, where the difference does not exist, has never been remarked, the practice of shampooing seems to be itself unknown. Doctors would be well employed in a study of the point.

Vaekehu lives at the other end of the town from the Residency, beyond the buildings of the mission. Her house is on the European plan: a table in the midst of the chief room; photographs and religious pictures on the wall. It commands to either hand a charming vista: through the front door, a peep of green lawn, scurrying pigs, the pendent fans of the coco-palm and splendour of the bursting surf: through the back, mounting forest glades and coronals of precipice. Here, in the strong thorough-draught, Her Majesty received us in a simple gown of

print, and with no mark of royalty but the exquisite finish of her tattooed mittens, the elaboration of her manners, and the gentle falsetto in which all the highly refined among Marquesan ladies (and Vaekehu above all others) delight to sing their language. An adopted daughter interpreted, while we gave the news, and rehearsed by name our friends of Anaho. As we talked, we could see, through the landward door, another lady of the household at her toilet under the green trees; who presently, when her hair was arranged, and her hat wreathed with flowers, appeared upon the back verandah with gracious salutations.

Vaekehu is very deaf; '*merci*' is her only word of French; and I do not know that she seemed clever. An exquisite, kind refinement, with a shade of quietism, gathered perhaps from the nuns, was what chiefly struck us. Or rather, upon that first occasion, we were conscious of a sense as of district-visiting on our part, and reduced evangelical gentility on the part of our hostess. The other impression followed after she was more at ease, and came with Stanislaos and his little girl to dine on board the *Casco*. She had dressed for the occasion: wore white, which very well became her strong brown face; and sat among us, eating or smoking her cigarette, quite cut off from all society, or only now and then included through the intermediary of her son. It was a position that might have been ridiculous, and she made it ornamental; making believe to hear and to be entertained; her face, whenever she met our eyes, lighting with the smile of good society; her contributions to the talk, when she made

any, and that was seldom, always complimentary and pleasing. No attention was paid to the child, for instance, but what she remarked and thanked us for. Her parting with each, when she came to leave, was gracious and pretty, as had been every step of her behaviour. When Mrs. Stevenson held out her hand to say good-bye, Vaekehu took it, held it, and a moment smiled upon her; dropped it, and then, as upon a kindly after-thought, and with a sort of warmth of condescension, held out both hands and kissed my wife upon both cheeks. Given the same relation of years and of rank, the thing would have been so done on the boards of the *Comédie Française*; just so might Madame Brohan have warmed and condescended to Madame Broisat in the *Marquis de Villemer*. It was my part to accompany our guests ashore: when I kissed the little girl good-bye at the pier steps, Vaekehu gave a cry of gratification, reached down her hand into the boat, took mine, and pressed it with that flattering softness which seems the coquetry of the old lady in every quarter of the earth. The next moment she had taken Stanislaos arm, and they moved off along the pier in the moonlight, leaving me bewildered. This was a queen of cannibals; she was tattooed from hand to foot, and perhaps the greatest masterpiece of that art now extant, so that a while ago, before she was grown prim, her leg was one of the sights of Tai-o-hae; she had been passed from chief to chief; she had been fought for and taken in war; perhaps, being so great a lady, she had sat on the high place, and throned it there, alone of her sex, while the drums were going twenty strong

and the priests carried up the blood-stained baskets of long-pig. And now behold her, out of that past of violence and sickening feasts, step forth, in her age, a quiet, smooth, elaborate old lady, such as you might find at home (mittened also, but not often so well-mannered) in a score of country houses. Only Vaekehu's mittens were of dye, not of silk; and they had been paid for, not in money, but the cooked flesh of men. It came in my mind with a clap, what she could think of it herself, and whether at heart, perhaps, she might not regret and aspire after the barbarous and stirring past. But when I asked Stanislo – 'Ah!' said he, 'she is content; she is religious, she passes all her days with the sisters.'

Stanislo (Stanislaos, with the final consonant evaded after the Polynesian habit) was sent by Bishop Dordillon to South America, and there educated by the fathers. His French is fluent, his talk sensible and spirited, and in his capacity of ganger-in-chief, he is of excellent service to the French. With the prestige of his name and family, and with the stick when needful, he keeps the natives working and the roads passable. Without Stanislo and the convicts, I am in doubt what would become of the present regimen in Nuka-hiva; whether the highways might not be suffered to close up, the pier to wash away, and the Residency to fall piecemeal about the ears of impotent officials. And yet though the hereditary favourer, and one of the chief props of French authority, he has always an eye upon the past. He showed me where the old public place had stood, still to be traced by random piles of stone; told me how great and fine it was,

and surrounded on all sides by populous houses, whence, at the beating of the drums, the folk crowded to make holiday. The drum-beat of the Polynesian has a strange and gloomy stimulation for the nerves of all. White persons feel it – at these precipitate sounds their hearts beat faster; and, according to old residents, its effect on the natives was extreme. Bishop Dordillon might entreat; Temoana himself command and threaten; at the note of the drum wild instincts triumphed. And now it might beat upon these ruins, and who should assemble? The houses are down, the people dead, their lineage extinct; and the sweepings and fugitives of distant bays and islands encamp upon their graves. The decline of the dance Stanislaos especially laments. ‘*Chaque pays a ses coutumes,*’ said he; but in the report of any gendarme, perhaps corruptly eager to increase the number of *délits* and the instruments of his own power, custom after custom is placed on the expurgatorial index. ‘*Tenez, une danse qui n’est pas permise,*’ said Stanislaos: ‘*je ne sais pas pourquoi, elle est très jolie, elle va comme ça,*’ and sticking his umbrella upright in the road, he sketched the steps and gestures. All his criticisms of the present, all his regrets for the past, struck me as temperate and sensible. The short term of office of the Resident he thought the chief defect of the administration; that officer having scarce begun to be efficient ere he was recalled. I thought I gathered, too, that he regarded with some fear the coming change from a naval to a civil governor. I am sure at least that I regard it so myself; for the civil servants of France have never appeared to

any foreigner as at all the flower of their country, while her naval officers may challenge competition with the world. In all his talk, Stanisla0 was particular to speak of his own country as a land of savages; and when he stated an opinion of his own, it was with some apologetic preface, alleging that he was 'a savage who had travelled.' There was a deal, in this elaborate modesty, of honest pride. Yet there was something in the precaution that saddened me; and I could not but fear he was only forestalling a taunt that he had heard too often.

I recall with interest two interviews with Stanisla0. The first was a certain afternoon of tropic rain, which we passed together in the verandah of the club; talking at times with heightened voices as the showers redoubled overhead, passing at times into the billiard-room, to consult, in the dim, cloudy daylight, that map of the world which forms its chief adornment. He was naturally ignorant of English history, so that I had much of news to communicate. The story of Gordon I told him in full, and many episodes of the Indian Mutiny, Lucknow, the second battle of Cawn-pore, the relief of Arrah, the death of poor Spottiswoode, and Sir Hugh Rose's hotspur, midland campaign. He was intent to hear; his brown face, strongly marked with small-pox, kindled and changed with each vicissitude. His eyes glowed with the reflected light of battle; his questions were many and intelligent, and it was chiefly these that sent us so often to the map. But it is of our parting that I keep the strongest sense. We were to sail on the morrow, and the night had fallen, dark,

gusty, and rainy, when we stumbled up the hill to bid farewell to Stanisla0. He had already loaded us with gifts; but more were waiting. We sat about the table over cigars and green cocoa-nuts; claps of wind blew through the house and extinguished the lamp, which was always instantly relighted with a single match; and these recurrent intervals of darkness were felt as a relief. For there was something painful and embarrassing in the kindness of that separation. ‘*Ah, vous devriez rester ici, mon cher ami!*’ cried Stanisla0. ‘*Vous êtes les gens qu’il faut pour les Kanaques; vous êtes doux, vous et votre famille; vous seriez obéïs dans toutes les îles.*’ We had been civil; not always that, my conscience told me, and never anything beyond; and all this to-do is a measure, not of our considerateness, but of the want of it in others. The rest of the evening, on to Vaekehu’s and back as far as to the pier, Stanisla0 walked with my arm and sheltered me with his umbrella; and after the boat had put off, we could still distinguish, in the murky darkness, his gestures of farewell. His words, if there were any, were drowned by the rain and the loud surf.

I have mentioned presents, a vexed question in the South Seas; and one which well illustrates the common, ignorant habit of regarding races in a lump. In many quarters the Polynesian gives only to receive. I have visited islands where the population mobbed me for all the world like dogs after the waggon of cat’s-meat; and where the frequent proposition, ‘You my pleni (friend),’ or (with more of pathos) ‘You all ’e same my father,’ must be received with hearty laughter and a shout. And perhaps

everywhere, among the greedy and rapacious, a gift is regarded as a sprat to catch a whale. It is the habit to give gifts and to receive returns, and such characters, complying with the custom, will look to it nearly that they do not lose. But for persons of a different stamp the statement must be reversed. The shabby Polynesian is anxious till he has received the return gift; the generous is uneasy until he has made it. The first is disappointed if you have not given more than he; the second is miserable if he thinks he has given less than you. This is my experience; if it clash with that of others, I pity their fortune, and praise mine: the circumstances cannot change what I have seen, nor lessen what I have received. And indeed I find that those who oppose me often argue from a ground of singular presumptions; comparing Polynesians with an ideal person, compact of generosity and gratitude, whom I never had the pleasure of encountering; and forgetting that what is almost poverty to us is wealth almost unthinkable to them. I will give one instance: I chanced to speak with consideration of these gifts of Stanislaos with a certain clever man, a great hater and contemner of Kanakas. 'Well! what were they?' he cried. 'A pack of old men's beards. Trash!' And the same gentleman, some half an hour later, being upon a different train of thought, dwelt at length on the esteem in which the Marquesans held that sort of property, how they preferred it to all others except land, and what fancy prices it would fetch. Using his own figures, I computed that, in this commodity alone, the gifts of Vaekehu and Stanislaos represented between two and

three hundred dollars; and the queen's official salary is of two hundred and forty in the year.

But generosity on the one hand, and conspicuous meanness on the other, are in the South Seas, as at home, the exception. It is neither with any hope of gain, nor with any lively wish to please, that the ordinary Polynesian chooses and presents his gifts. A plain social duty lies before him, which he performs correctly, but without the least enthusiasm. And we shall best understand his attitude of mind, if we examine our own to the cognate absurdity of marriage presents. There we give without any special thought of a return; yet if the circumstance arise, and the return be withheld, we shall judge ourselves insulted. We give them usually without affection, and almost never with a genuine desire to please; and our gift is rather a mark of our own status than a measure of our love to the recipients. So in a great measure and with the common run of the Polynesians; their gifts are formal; they imply no more than social recognition; and they are made and reciprocated, as we pay and return our morning visits. And the practice of marking and measuring events and sentiments by presents is universal in the island world. A gift plays with them the part of stamp and seal; and has entered profoundly into the mind of islanders. Peace and war, marriage, adoption and naturalisation, are celebrated or declared by the acceptance or the refusal of gifts; and it is as natural for the islander to bring a gift as for us to carry a card-case.

## CHAPTER X – A PORTRAIT AND A STORY

I have had occasion several times to name the late bishop, Father Dordillon, ‘Monseigneur,’ as he is still almost universally called, Vicar-Apostolic of the Marquesas and Bishop of Cambysopolis *in partibus*. Everywhere in the islands, among all classes and races, this fine, old, kindly, cheerful fellow is remembered with affection and respect. His influence with the natives was paramount. They reckoned him the highest of men – higher than an admiral; brought him their money to keep; took his advice upon their purchases; nor would they plant trees upon their own land till they had the approval of the father of the islands. During the time of the French exodus he singly represented Europe, living in the Residency, and ruling by the hand of Temoana. The first roads were made under his auspices and by his persuasion. The old road between Hatiheu and Anaho was got under way from either side on the ground that it would be pleasant for an evening promenade, and brought to completion by working on the rivalry of the two villages. The priest would boast in Hatiheu of the progress made in Anaho, and he would tell the folk of Anaho, ‘If you don’t take care, your neighbours will be over the hill before you are at the top.’ It could not be so done to-day; it could then; death, opium, and depopulation had not gone so far; and the people of Hatiheu, I was told, still vied with each

other in fine attire, and used to go out by families, in the cool of the evening, boat-sailing and racing in the bay. There seems some truth at least in the common view, that this joint reign of Temoana and the bishop was the last and brief golden age of the Marquesas. But the civil power returned, the mission was packed out of the Residency at twenty-four hours' notice, new methods supervened, and the golden age (whatever it quite was) came to an end. It is the strongest proof of Father Dordillon's prestige that it survived, seemingly without loss, this hasty deposition.

His method with the natives was extremely mild. Among these barbarous children he still played the part of the smiling father; and he was careful to observe, in all indifferent matters, the Marquesan etiquette. Thus, in the singular system of artificial kinship, the bishop had been adopted by Vaekehu as a grandson; Miss Fisher, of Hatiheu, as a daughter. From that day, Monseigneur never addressed the young lady except as his mother, and closed his letters with the formalities of a dutiful son. With Europeans he could be strict, even to the extent of harshness. He made no distinction against heretics, with whom he was on friendly terms; but the rules of his own Church he would see observed; and once at least he had a white man clapped in jail for the desecration of a saint's day. But even this rigour, so intolerable to laymen, so irritating to Protestants, could not shake his popularity. We shall best conceive him by examples nearer home; we may all have known some divine of the old school in Scotland, a literal Sabbatarian, a stickler for the letter

of the law, who was yet in private modest, innocent, genial and mirthful. Much such a man, it seems, was Father Dordillon. And his popularity bore a test yet stronger. He had the name, and probably deserved it, of a shrewd man in business and one that made the mission pay. Nothing so much stirs up resentment as the inmixture in commerce of religious bodies; but even rival traders spoke well of Monseigneur.

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